

DRAMA CLASSICS

SOPHOCLES

ANTIGONE

Characters

ANTIGONE (Ant-TI as in it-go-knee)

ISMENE (Is-MEE-nee)

CREON (KREE-on)

HAEMON (HIGH-mon)

TEIRESIAS (Tie-REE-see-ass)

GUARD

MESSENGER

EURYDICE (You-RID-ih-see)

CHORUS

It is night.

ANTIGONE

Sweet Ismene, my dearest sister, you know how much we've suffered; how we have had to live with the sins of our father Oedipus, and all that they brought – pain, shame, and humiliation. And now, after all that, this new proclamation from our ruler. Have you heard about it? Or don't you care about what our enemies are doing to us?

ISMENE

I've heard nothing since our two brothers killed each other; nothing either good or bad since the invading army left.

ANTIGONE

That is why I've called you outside away from the others. I wanted to speak to you alone and tell you what I've heard.

ISMENE

What is it? You frighten me, Antigone.

ANTIGONE

Yes. I want to frighten you. Creon has honoured one of our brothers with burial and dishonoured the other. He has buried Eteocles in proper observance of right and custom, so that he can be honoured among the dead below. But he ~~has~~ forbidden anyone to bury or weep for Polyneices. His

body must be left unmourned, without a tomb, a feast for scavenging birds. This is the worthy Creon's decree; he's coming here in person to spell it out. He doesn't take this lightly: anyone defying the proclamation is to be stoned to death. Yes. That's the situation. So now you have the chance to show whether you are true to your noble birth, or a coward.

ISMENE

My poor sweet Antigone. But, if this is so, what can we do about it?

ANTIGONE

I have a plan. Are you prepared to join me?

ISMENE

You frighten me again. What do you want us to do?

ANTIGONE

Will you help me honour the dead?

ISMENE

Bury Polyneices? But you've just said that's forbidden.

ANTIGONE

I shall bury our brother, even if you don't want to. I, for one, will not betray him.

ISMENE

You are out of your mind Antigone. Creon is the law.

ANTIGONE

He has no right to come between my brother and me.

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