**ANTIGONE “Because you buried your brother you must die”**

**(2 Women, 1 MAN)**

**Creon (Cree-on) HAEMON (hay-mon)**

**ANTIGONE (an-tea-go-knee) POLYNEICES (polly-nigh-sees)**

**ISMENE (Iss-may-nay) ETYOCLES (eh-tea-oh-clees)**

**Creon:** You! You with the head to the ground! Do you admit your guilt?

**Antigone:** I admit, my guilt. Yes, I did it!

**Creon:** You again! Tell me with a few, quick words. Were you aware of the proclamation that forbade anyone from burying Polyneices?

**Antigone:** Of course I did. Everyone did.

**Creon:** And you had the audacity to break that law?

**Antigone:** Yes, because this was not a law decreed by Zeus, nor by Zeus’ daughter, Justice, who rules with the gods of the Underworld. Nor do I believe that your decrees have the power to override those unwritten and immutable laws decreed by the gods. These are laws which were decreed neither yesterday nor today but from a time when no man saw their birth; they are eternal! How could I be afraid to disobey laws decreed by any man when I know that I’d have to answer to the gods below if I had disobeyed the laws written by the gods, after I died? I knew that my death was imminent, of course I did and even if it came sooner, I would still think it a good thing because when one lives in such a dreadful misery why should he not think death to be a good thing? There is no pain in this death but the sight of the body of my mother’s son, dead and unburied would be a painful thing for me for me to endure. Nothing else hurts me and if you think I’m a mindless woman then perhaps it’s a mindless man who recognises a mindless woman.

**Chorus**My King! I see a savage head from a savage father! It has yet to learn how to bend with ill fortune!

**Creon: (**To the chorus) .Know this, though: The tougher the mind, the easier it falls. The tougher the iron is made in the burning fire, the easier it breaks or cracks. And it is a light pull of the reins which teaches the most spirited horses obedience because it’s not right for a slave to be arrogant. This woman knew the arrogance of her deed she performed, and was aware of her disobedience to our laws yet she still continued with the performance of that deed and laughed at her achievement. Were she to gain the upper hand in this and keep it with impunity she would be seen as being the leader of this land and not I! What, is she a man? Even though she’s my sister’s child and even though she’s the closest blood relative to me here, of all of us who revere Zeus, she will not escape the ultimate penalty. She will not escape death. Even her sister will be put to death because I accuse her, too, of the same crime because she too had schemed the burial of Polyneices’ corpse.

(To the soldiers) Call her here immediately. I saw her only a minute ago behaving like a raving lunatic.

(Soldiers exit) The soul of those who scheme of evil deeds in the cover of darkness and shadows are often disclosed even before those deeds are accomplished. And there’s nothing I hate more than when someone is caught committing a crime and tries to hide it by embellishing it with sweet words.

**Antigone:** Kill me then! Or are you waiting for something else?

**Creon:** Who, me? No, I need nothing else. I have everything I need.

**Antigone:** So what are you waiting for? I find no pleasure in your words either now nor, dare I say, will I, in the future. And the feeling, I am sure is mutual: none of my actions please you. Where can I get higher pleasure than by burying my brother? All these men here would agree with me if only their tongue was not stopped by fear. Kings, though, among all the other benefits they get with the crown, they can also do and say as they please!

**Creon: (**To the chorus) You’re the only ones among them who sees this. The only ones of all the Thebans!

**Antigone:** They, too, can see but they hold their tongue when you’re near.

**Creon:** Aren’t you ashamed of yourself standing apart from all the others in this?

**Antigone:** No, I feel no shame wanting to honour my own flesh and blood!

**Creon:** Was not Eteocles also your flesh and blood?

**Antigone:** Yes. Same father, same mother.

**Creon:** How then do you honour Polyneices when this is a dishonour to your other brother?

**Antigone:** Eteocles would not bring this up in the Underworld.

**Creon:** But, though one is a traitor, you honour them both in the same way.

**Antigone:** I’m burying a brother, not a slave!

**Creon:** The one was fighting against his country while the other in its defence.

**Antigone:** Hades, however seeks similar laws for all.

**Creon:** But it is not right for good and evil to be rewarded by the same lot.

**Antigone:** Who might know if such things are of any value down below.

**Creon:** No enemy will become a friend in the Underworld.

**Antigone:** I am for sharing love, not hatred.

**Creon:** Well then, if you must love, love those you’ll meet down below but so long as I am on Earth, no woman will be the ruler!

**Chorus:** Ah! Here is Ismene coming through the gates. She is shedding sisterly tears.

**Chorus:** Moist cheeks, bright red face, marred by a huge cloud over her brow.

**Creon: (**To Ismene) You, too, ey? Locked up in the palace, like a snake that’s secretly sucking someone’s blood! I had no idea I was nurturing two curses, two women who wanted to topple my throne! Come here! Will you admit that you took part in this burial or will you swear that you knew nothing about it?

**Ismene:** Yes, I did it. If she admits to doing it, so do I. Yes, I, too, accept responsibility.

**Antigone:** No! Justice will not allow you to do this! You neither wanted to help me bury our brother nor did I take you with me when I did it.

**Ismene:** But, Antigone, in such troubled times I feel no shame in sharing the dangerous journey with you.

**Antigone:** Hades and all the gods below have no idea who did this deed and I can’t tolerate a sister who loves only with words.

**Ismene:** Let me die with you, Antigone and let me pay my debt to our dead brother. Don’t refuse me this honour.

**Antigone:** My own death is enough. I have no need of your company down below and you should not claim for yourself rewards for which you haven’t lifted a finger!

**Ismene:** But what sort of life will be left for me if I lose you, dear sister?

**Antigone:** Ask Creon! It’s him you’re worried about!

**Ismene:** But what do you gain by hurting me so much?

**Antigone:** If I’m hurting you I’m also hurting myself.

**Ismene:** Yet even now, tell me, how can I help you?

**Antigone:** Save yourself. I do not envy your escape of death.

**Ismene:** So, we can’t share the same fate?

**Antigone:** No, because you chose to live and I chose to die.

**Ismene:** At least let me tell you my reasons for doing so.

**Antigone:** Indicating the group of people around them, including Creon. Because you believed in their system of Justice and I believe in mine.

**Ismene:** Yet the fault weighs us equally.

**Antigone:** Courage. You live but my soul has been dead for a long time now. It died so as to serve our dead.

**Creon: (**Laughs) These women! One of them just showed herself to have just become mad and the other to have been mad since birth!

**Ismene:** Because, my King, even the mind leaves one, when he’s stricken by disaster.

**Creon:** Your mind has left you the moment you started mingling with evil doers.

**Ismene:** How shall I live without her?

**Creon:** Her? Forget her now. She no longer exists.

**Ismene:** Will you kill your son’s bride-to-be?

**Creon:** There is much more fertile land in the world for my son, Haemon.

**Ismene:** But the love between these two, can it be found elsewhere?

**Creon:** I’d hate my son to have an evil wife.

**Ismene:** Poor Haemon! How your father disgraces your name!

**Creon:** You and all your talk about marriage is making me mad. It’s Hades who’ll put an end to this wedding. (To his soldiers) Right! Let us put an end to all this. Men, take them inside and from now on they should be tied up because no matter how courageous a man is, the moment Death approaches, he wants to flee.