

# **The PROCLAMATION at Baghdad**

by Martin Burke

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*The stage is bare except for a flag hanging at the back of the stage.  
 There are two poles on which loud-speaks are hanging.  
 Throughout the play 1<sup>st</sup> Voice is male and 2<sup>nd</sup> Voice is female.  
 The chorus enter –men from the left, women from the right*

### **Scene One**

**CHORUS:** War! War! War! War! War!

*There is a crash and roll of drums that reach a crescendo as the chorus continues*

**CHORUS:** War! War! War! War! War!

*A soldier enters and unfolds a large parchment from which he reads*

**SOLDIER:** Now hear this-  
 This is the will of General Creon.  
 Orders have been issued  
 Commands have been formulated.  
 Proclamations will be made to the people  
 And the people must obey them.  
 The war is over.  
 Victory has arrived.  
 Peace will follow like the blessings of spring  
 But only on those who obey.  
 Much will be forgiven  
 But not all will be forgiven.  
 Not everything can be nor should be  
 For much remains to be done.  
 Pockets of resistance,  
 And they are no more than that,  
 Will have to be mopped up.  
 We are busy with this  
 And it will not take long.  
 Be assured.  
 The new commanders are your friends  
 And will do everything to protect you  
 But you must also play your part.  
 Nothing must be done to interfere with the army.  
 The army has a task to perform  
 And they will perform it.  
 Obey whatever orders they issue.  
 Be submissive before their commands  
 And blessings will follow.  
 If you do not do this,  
 If you rise up defiant like an arrogant mob  
 Then there will be reprisals.  
 Make no mistake:  
 The army is mild but can be fierce.

The army is your friend but can become your enemy.  
 You have seen it in action  
 You know what it can do.  
 You know that its justice is terrible and swift  
 Yet it is justice.  
 So be careful.  
 Enemies are still active but will be dealt with.  
 No actions will be allowed to break the peace which we have won.  
 Peace is the prize we have fought for.  
 Peace has always been the goal of this war.  
 Peace is the gift that the army now gives to the people.  
 So be forewarned.  
 Much has been achieved and much awaits fulfilment  
 Yet all will be fulfilled.  
 Of that you can be sure.  
 Of our vigilance and readiness you can also be sure.  
 We bring you the gifts of peace and justice  
 But will punish those who disobey.  
 Do what is expected of you.  
 Be meek, bow down, obey.  
 Only this is asked of you in this the first proclamation of the new ruler-  
 The new ruler who has grasped the cord of power  
 And will use it to good ends.  
 Go then to your homes.  
 Await further instructions.  
 All will be asked and all will be given.  
 Long live the ancient order that we bring!

*The soldier leaves*

**CHORUS (male)** : old year and new year-  
 The wind blows both ways  
 Yet it is singing death and death in the warm afternoon of this city.  
 We pray to ancient custom  
 We pray to the god who guards all things-  
 Send calm to the earth  
 Send peace to our hearts  
 Let all sorrow be saved and blessed.

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE**: What do we sing but the sorrow of our hearts.  
 We pray for peace but the echoes of new wrongs linger everywhere.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE**: Do not speak too loud-  
 The wind hears all that we say  
 And carries it away –  
 But to where and to who?  
 Enemies are everywhere.  
 Who can say who is friend  
 When the winds blows over the city  
 And the new masters issue orders?

I cannot say though I would if I could.  
 As it is I am a voice of Baghdad in the spring of a year  
 That brings a new alliance.

**CHORUS (male):** Death and death-  
 What can we sing of this war but death and death?  
 Voices carry in the wind  
 I hear the moans of the dead calling for retribution and revenge  
 And who, who will answer?  
 Other voices say 'I will' but who are they and what do they bring?  
 Old year, new year, and it is the same  
 The masters make the orders.

**CHORUS (female):** Sing sweetly of the dead -they are worth it.  
 I do not know the price of this war except that it was paid for by death.  
 Proclamations are issues that do not stir my soul.  
 My soul is stirred by the memory of the dead who should be living.  
 I see the unborn children.  
 I see them play  
 I hear them laugh.  
 That laughter will not echo over the city  
 It is lost to the wind and I cannot sing  
 I have only this death-song to offer.

**CHORUS (male):** Sing the dirge growing in your heart  
 The living do not begrudge the dead  
 We do not begrudge your song.

*Antigone enters*

**ANTIGONE (sings):**  
*A day in May you left me  
 A day in the month of May  
 Now beauty it deserts me  
 And death is my only friend*

*Death is my only friend in May  
 Death is my only friend  
 Now beauty it deserts me  
 And death is my only friend*

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** Old songs for new wrongs  
 Yet what worth can a song have  
 Against the new desolations?  
 What can we sing  
 To appease the heart of this city?

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Be quiet, be quiet.  
 The wind hears everything.  
 The army hears the wind.

All things conspire against the troubled heart  
And there is no peace for the citizens of this world.

**ANTIGONE:** What do I care for old years or old wrongs?  
Death has entered my house and reduced all to mourning  
Death has turned to cold ash the hope of all the years that I once had.

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** It has done so to everyone.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Death had defiled us all.

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** Defiled, defiled, the earth is defiled.  
This is our great sorrow.  
Sorrow has broken over the land.  
The war has broken us all.  
New masters issue orders and proclamations  
And what can we do but obey?

**ANTIGONE:** Obey?  
I will not obey!  
I have my duty and my soul  
And they do not bow down to those new voices in our city.

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** Quiet child.  
Someone may hear you.  
Words and meanings are carries by malicious mouths  
In this time after war.  
The war is over but the peace has not come.  
Nothing is stable.  
The earth is restless  
And there are those who seek to profit from our loss.

**ANTIGONE :** But I want to be heard!  
I want the new masters to hear my voice.  
It is the voice of a woman who has lost her country  
And her brothers-  
What else have I to loose?  
What worth have I that it can be taken from me?  
What profit can be gained from my grief?

**CHORUS:** I shudder in dread of the power, abhorred by heaven,  
Which is at work here.  
Old visions come to life, prophesy runs riot,  
The curse that was spoken now comes to pass  
And none can escape, escape, escape.

Who will clean the holy places of this foulness-  
Who will bring back the wholesome air?  
An ancient curse has come to life  
And no brother may escape it.

No brother may escape it.

Curses, inherited from long ago,  
 Bring a heavy burden on this town.  
 The city is a shipwreck that none can save  
 For brother has killed brother  
 And in the blood all will drown.

When is there to be any calmness?  
 When will the world lie quiet?

**ANTIGONE:** Sorrow breaks my voice.  
 Many deaths, many rights and wrongs,  
 Many minds and one prize-  
 Father, is this our legacy?

Tears flow  
 For the living and the dead-  
 And for whom will I weep  
 If not for these two?

Sorrow breaks my voice-  
 Yet what can I do?  
 Which one can I disown  
 And which claim as my brother?

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Let us leave this place.  
 War is the business of men  
 And war is over.  
 There is nothing that we can say  
 That will change the outcome.

**ANTIGONE:** Why are you afraid?  
 My brothers are dead  
 What other harm can befall me?

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** This is no safe place nor situation for you.  
 Your brothers were both the victors and the defeated.  
 Perhaps the new powers will seek to punish you  
 For your association with them.

**ANTIGONE:** There is no victory here for me  
 There is only death.  
 What happens next  
 Is not my concern.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Come away, come away.  
 Men will decide these issues  
 And decide what is to happen to you.

**CHORUS:** Yours is a sorry lot.  
 Fate has brought you to this  
 So what is there to be done?  
 You must bow your heads to fate and accept  
 Whatever will happen next.

**ANTIGONE:** And what will happen next?  
 What new sorrow will be cast upon me?  
 Can you tell me that?  
 Tell me if you can  
 Be silent if you cannot.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** I will not be silent.  
 I don't know what will happen next -who does?  
 I only know that we have to be careful.

**ANTIGONE:** That is good advice for the living  
 But I am already half dead.  
 First our mother, then our father  
 Now my two brothers-  
 I have nothing more to give to fate  
 Than my own unconcern at what will happen.  
 I loved them both  
 As a sister should.  
 I make no favourite of one above the other  
 Now that they are dead.

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** Have a care, have a care,  
 The fates may be listening

**ANTIGONE:** What do I care who listens?  
 I have nothing left to live for.  
 I would trade my own death  
 For one or both of them  
 If hell would accept the bargain.

**CHORUS:** Quiet child, quiet.  
 There are harsher forces  
 Than fate that listen to all we say.  
 Think on your life  
 Think on what yet may befall you.  
 After all, sometime the fates are kind.

**ANTIGONE:** Kind or cruel –it does not matter.  
 My life is over.  
 I have no one in this world.

### **Scene Two**

*Two Generals enter from the right of the stage. They ignore the chorus and Antigone*



**GENERAL CREON:** It has been a satisfying war so far-  
Short, but to the point  
Satisfying –except for the minor details

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** The devil rest there.  
No doubt about it.  
And yet you are right.  
All has gone according to plan  
All has followed the flawless mind that cast his mind  
Over this country.

**GENERAL CREON:** You call this a country?  
I call it a den of lice and filth!

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL** (*laughing*): How right you are  
A nest of lice -but also dangerous

**GENERAL CREON:** O yes, rebellion seethes underground  
The water is infested with it  
And the crops rot because of it.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Let them plot all they like.  
Plans cannot be altered nor defeated.  
Everything happened as everything must  
Nothing can change that now.

**GENERAL CREON:** True. True.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Their fate has been fore written.  
The book of the leader's mind has cast its shadow upon their lives  
And nothing can change that

**GENERAL CREON:** We are the inevitable-  
But will they accept that?  
Only time will tell.  
Only time can unfold destiny and circumstance.  
We are the inevitable therefore we are more than the products of history-  
We are history!  
We are the name whose time has come.  
We are the wind that blows where it will.  
We are the necessity that will act as we see fit.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** History –I like that.

**GENERAL CREON:** It's more than a question of like or dislike.  
We are the immovable.  
We are the necessity of the moment.  
We have taken shape in the womb of time  
Yet we shatter times and its demands when we act.

**VOICE-OVER ON THE LOUD SPEAKERS:** Now hear this. Now hear this!

The Leader will address the nation tonight.

Don't forget to watch.

Don't forget to listen!

Now hear this! Now hear this!

The Leader will address the nation tonight.

Don't forget to watch.

Don't forget to listen!

**CHORUS:** When the strong ones speak

The weak listen and tremble.

When the strong ones speak

The earth blushes with shame.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Listen to them-

Is this the rabble we fought for?

**GENERAL CREON:** We did not fight for them.

History acts for the few, not the many.

They are merely spectators of a greater drama

In themselves they have no worth.

**CHORUS:** Who weeps for the earth?

Who weeps for the crippled and the maimed?

Harsh times have come upon us

Harsher still will be the times that follow.

The mother cries for her child

The child cries for her mother

But neither hears the other.

The high places of the earth

Are covered in blood,

The low places of the earth

Are covered with gore.

Who will listen?

Who will atone for the earth?

Who will give it back its peace?

Who weeps for the earth?

Who weeps for the crippled and the maimed?

**VOICE-OVER:** Silence.

The time has come.

The Leader will speak and all will listen.

Prepare yourself for the leader.

*The lights go down and military music plays. When it stops the light then come up on the Leader standing solemnly under an archway of flowers. He is dressed in white*

**LEADER:** Brothers! Citizens!

I talk to you at a great moment in our beloved country's history.

The forces of freedom and hope have begun their march upon the enemy and that enemy has fled like the coward he was.

Everywhere our troops are meeting success.

Everywhere our troops are greeted by joyous people glad to be liberated from the yoke of tyranny.

This nation is fulfilling its mission and destiny.

This nation has always been in the vanguard of hope and freedom and we are there now with our brave boys, who are the best this country has to offer, as they advance towards those last pockets of a useless resistance.

Make no mistake about it.

Our victory has been total.

This is what you would expect of a great nation.

This is what you would expect of the troops which we have committed to the battle.

Nor did we enter this war lightly.

It was the enemy who desired war.

It was the enemy who left us with no other option when he would not bow down to our wishes.

And our wishes and aims are just –that he give up those weapons with which he could have and was planning to threaten the people of the region with.

We gave him every opportunity to conform with our aims. We gave him ample time in which to comply.

He has done neither.

He, in his cowardice, has chosen to put the common citizenry of his country into every dugout and foxhole which that inhospitable territory has to offer.

He has chose to sacrifice his people, but not himself, on the altar of his despotic madness.

This is what he has done before and this is what he would do again and again and again.

This is why we had no choice but to confront him on the territory of his choosing.

And make no mistake about it.

This war was not pursued lightly.

He presented a clear and present danger to the security of our beloved homeland and therefore we had to act And we have acted not only with shock and awe but also with mercy.

Food will be brought to the people.

Water will be piped in.

Electricity, the facilities for which the enemy in his desperation has destroyed, will be restored to the people.

Then they will see the difference between freedom and tyranny and what a sweet difference that is .

Then they will taste the free air for the first time and that air will be nourishment for them.

Much remains to be done.

The war is all but over but they are still tasks awaiting completion.

These are matters which I sure you will appreciate I cannot as yet talk about.

Even so, even at this stage I want to salute the brave men of that fighting force who have liberated that country.

There have been casualties.

That is the price of war and it is also the price of justice.

They have fallen in a noble cause and our country will honour them as befits heroes.  
Their sacrifice has not been in vain nor will they be forgotten.

Brothers! Citizens!

This is a great day for our beloved country.

The province of freedom has been extended. Liberty has marched over the dregs of dictatorship and a people long imprisoned have been given that most unique gift which this country has to offer –freedom.

Freedom to live.

Freedom to prosper and become good consumers.

Freedom to give the children of that troubled land a new beginning!

May the deity who watches over us all bless our troops and bless this homeland also.

Goodnight

**CHORUS:** Who weeps for the earth?

Who weeps for the crippled and the maimed?

Harsh times have come upon us

Harsher still will be the times that follow.

The mother cries for her child

The child cries for her mother

But neither hears the other.

The high places of the earth

Are covered in blood,

The low places of the earth

Are covered with gore

Who will listen?

Who will atone for the earth?

Who will give it back its peace?

Who weeps for the earth?

Who weeps for the crippled and the maimed?

**VOICE-OVER:** Do not move!

Do not go to your homes

The generals have a proclamation for you

It is one that you must hear and observe!

**GENERAL CREON** (*address the chorus*): This ancient war

This endless battle.

We have been fighting it as long as time can name us.

We have given it different names.

We have called it My Lai

We have called it Ieper and Verdun

We have called it Thebes

But it is the one war.

The same struggle

The endless wave that moves over the sand of your lives.

Your lives and ours.  
 Soldiers and citizens.  
 Fighting men and those who watch.  
 Well, I propose an ancient solution.  
 Those who fought and died that we might win,  
 Those who history will bless with remembrance,  
 These will be buried with all due honour.  
 Salvos will be fired and flags will be lowered  
 And the honoured dead will be named and blessed.  
 Those who opposed us however-  
 Those who sought to divert the tide  
 Will be left to rot where they fell.  
 Let the dogs eat them.  
 Let every foul thing come to nest there.  
 Let nothing cover their festering corpses as they rot.  
 No honour give.  
 No god appeased.  
 No tradition honoured.  
 No, they will rot like the foulness they are.  
 It is an ancient punishment for an ancient crime.  
 This is my decree.  
 This is the law I proclaim.  
 This is the proclamation I issue today.  
 Obey this and all will be well.  
 Defy it and punishment will follow.  
 You have been warned.  
 You have been warned.  
 Take heed of that good warning!

*The two Generals quickly leave the stage*

### **Scene Three**

**ANTIGONE:** They cannot do this thing-  
It is against all the traditions!

**SOLDIER:** The General has spoken –all must obey.  
There can be no questioning of what he said.

**ANTIGONE:** Then he has said too much!  
Generals have many rights and they must be obeyed.  
This is the way of the world  
And I do not seek to overturn it.  
But, and it is a large ‘but’,  
Even Generals have limits to their rule.  
He cannot expect me to deny my sisterhood  
And leave my brother unburied.  
This he cannot expect of me.

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** But you are setting yourself against the state!

Don't you realise what can happen?

**ANTIGONE:** That is not my intention.  
I am not moving towards rebellion  
Or a change in power.  
But simply put  
I do not recognise anybody's right  
To defy the traditions  
And deny my brother a burial.  
This cannot be expected of me-  
Nor should it be expected of you!

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** I don't like this law  
Any more than you do-  
However it is the law  
And we must be cautious.

**ANTIGONE:** Caution?  
Is that what you call it?  
I call it sanctioning an offence  
That cries out to heaven!

**SOLDIER:** Do not flaunt the city's laws!  
They have been promulgated and must be obeyed.

**ANTIGONE:** Your words are meaningless to me.  
They are less than meaningless compared to that  
Which I owe to the dead.

**SOLDIER:** You should listen to my words  
A people so recently escaped from death  
Are apt to be stern towards any disobedience.

**ANTIGONE:** Call it whatever you will.  
Call it the order of the state  
Or the whim of a General –I don't care.  
But I will bury my brother.

**SOLDIER:** You would do this for an enemy of the city?  
For one who fought against us?

**ANTIGONE:** These are meaningless concepts to me.  
I do this for a brother  
No more and no less.

**SOLDIER:** Brother or no brother  
He fought with the enemy at the gates of this city  
Now he must pay the price.

**ANTIGONE:** He answered wrong with wrong.

It is a man's way of answering.

**SOLDIER:** He endangered the state.

**ANTIGONE:** Call it what you will  
But he is still my brother and I will bury him.  
The rest is meaningless to me.

**SOLDIER:** This is forbidden.  
You would do well to listen to me.  
Consequence will follow disobedience  
Like a dog follows its master.

**ANTIGONE:** I am master of nothing.

**SOLDIER:** Then list to me and do the State's will.  
Anything else is destruction!

*The soldier leaves.*

#### **Scene Four**

**CHORUS:** The law is harsh but it is the law.  
No one can set themselves against it.  
This is hard for you to bear as his sister  
Yet this is the will of the city.

**ANTIGONE:** Then I will set myself against the will of the city.

**CHORUS:** Hush child, hush,  
Who knows who is listening  
To whatever you say.

**ANTIGONE:** I do not care. I obey  
The older laws of our city-  
Not the will of some Johnny-come-lately.

**CHORUS:** War and grief and death in Baghdad  
And it is not ended-  
So where does history begin and end?  
In your words child  
Lies a future death.

**ANTIGONE:** What is that to me?

**CHORUS :** I fear for you child.  
Your will is strong  
But the law is set against you.  
Accept, accept, accept

What the new masters have decreed  
 Or you will set yourself against  
 The ruling powers.  
 Modesty and obedience are good in a woman  
 Yet you speak  
 With the recklessness of a man.  
 No good will come of it.  
 No good ever has.  
 You come from an unhappy family  
 And your grief is not yet over.  
 Bend to the will of the new masters-  
 Is this so much to ask,  
 So hard to accept?  
 They make the laws in the aftermath of war  
 And this must be understood  
 So obey them.  
 Do not start a revolt that may get out of hand.  
 Who knows where this thing will end  
 If you begin it?  
 Think  
 Hard, dear child, think hard.

**ANTIGONE:** I do not care where it will end-  
 That is not my concern.  
 The new masters do not concern me  
 Why then should I concern them?  
 Is General Creon so afraid of one woman?  
 Is he so afraid what this burial might bring?  
 Question him if you must question anybody  
 But leave me to myself.  
 I will do what I have said I will do  
 And no one will stop me.

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** Think again, child, think again,  
 You don't know where all this will end

**ANTIGONE:** It will end in death as all things end.  
 This is the law I obey.

*The lights dim, then come up to suggest dawn, Antigone stands alone*

### **Scene Five**

**ANTIGONE:** It is dawn but the dawn does not please me.  
 Nothing can.  
 Not even the beauty of this city.  
 Not even the prayers I make to the gods  
 Who do not reply.

Death seems everywhere.



I am a woman but I do not wail.  
 Death seems everywhere.  
 The smell of it infests the air.  
 The earth is polluted with the dead.

Dawn, dawn on Baghdad-  
 Death and death and war's aftermath.  
 The living are stained and the dead are restless.  
 My brother stalks my mind.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Come away, come away.  
 Someone will see you  
 Someone will hear you.  
 Think of the trouble this could bring.

**ANTIGONE:** What trouble could we know  
 That we do not already know?  
 The gods have been generous with giving out  
 Misfortune and ill luck to us.  
 It seems there is nothing we have not known-  
 Exile and death  
 And death again-  
 For you and for me  
 Wherever we have gone.  
 Now death has come again-  
 What could be worse than this?

And now the new master publishes his edict everywhere.  
 Wherever you go in you see it.  
 But you know this-  
 I am telling you something you are familiar with.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** That does not matter. I am familiar  
 With what he wants but I am also familiar  
 With what my heart wants.  
 How are these two things to be reconciled?  
 Tell me if you know-  
 Or do you know something else?

**ANTIGONE:** Isn't it enough that I know all this?  
 Isn't that enough for any one?  
 What other burden do I need to carry?

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** What is it?  
 What's eating you?  
 You are planning something-  
 I can see that  
 But what exactly are you planning?

**ANTIGONE:** Listen.

The new masters have issued their orders  
 And they are clear-  
 Honour to one of our brothers  
 Dishonour and shame to the other.  
 One has been buried with full pomp.  
 Everything was done according to tradition  
 And all the rites were fulfilled.  
 He has been honoured  
 His place among the dead is assured.  
 But as for the second, now that's another story.  
 They have ordered that the body remain where it is.  
 That his corpse shall not be buried.  
 That he shall have no sacred rites!  
 They want the dogs to feed on it  
 And make a mockery of his life.  
 This is something I cannot accept.  
 This is something I will not accept!  
 The new masters have no rights to do this.  
 Masters have many rights but this is not one of them.  
 To shame the dead is a terrible crime  
 Yet if any disobey their will in this  
 Then they are to be put to death.  
 This is not right.  
 It may be the law but it is not just.  
 Surely you feel the same?

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Poor sister, poor troubled sister  
 I agree with you.  
 But what can we do?  
 You cannot go against the law.

**ANTIGONE:** That is where we differ-  
 A small but important point  
 The law is not my concern-  
 Or rather, only the ancient law is.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** I do not like this-  
 You're up to something –what is it

**ANTIGONE:** Yes, I have a plan-  
 Will you help me?

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** You mean to bury him –  
 Even though it is forbidden?

**ANTIGONE:** Yes, that's my plan.  
 I will do my part so will you do yours?  
 He is also your brother.  
 Surely you also feel the shame?

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** You are being reckless.  
That was always part of your nature.  
But this is madness.

**ANTIGONE:** The madness is not mine.  
The madness resides elsewhere.  
They have no jurisdiction over the traditions.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Is this always to be the way for us-  
Hate and scorn and death following  
Everything that we do?  
First there was our father's crime  
For which he blinded himself  
And our mother hanged herself.  
Then exile.  
Long years in strange lands  
Returning to this city to find it in war  
And both our brothers the cause of it.  
Now we have lost them both.  
What more can be asked of us?  
We have given everything  
But even that it seems is not enough.  
Now we must obey this new decree-  
Well, obey it we will.  
We cannot lift our hands against the state  
Nor cross the will of the captains.  
We are women, not men.  
We have no choice.  
This is the way of the world.  
You have always rebelled against it  
But do not rebel now.  
Accept our fate.  
Bite hard and bow down-  
This is the only way

**ANTIGONE:** No!  
I will not dishonour the dead  
No matter who forbids it!  
Do what you want to or don't want to.  
Do not help me if that is your choice  
But do not expect me to accept this edict  
As meekly as a lamb.  
The edict is wrong.  
The captains have no rights over the dead.  
They cannot expect me to comply  
They cannot expect me to dishonour my brothers.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** I do him no dishonour;  
But to defy the State-

I have no strength for that.

**ANTIGONE:** Have it your own way –  
But I will go and bury him.  
I will bury every body if I can.  
I will do what you will not.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** I'm frightened for you.

**ANTIGONE:** Don't be frightened for me.  
Look after yourself.  
Look into your soul and find what comfort you can there.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Then at least don't tell anyone  
What you're up to and neither will I.

**ANTIGONE:** You can tell who you like.  
In fact, the more who know about it the better.  
This is something that should be published all over the city.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** I said you were reckless.  
And this proves it.  
Think again, think again.  
Terrible consequences will follow your acts.

**ANTIGONE:** That is one more difference between us.  
You call it recklessness,  
I call it duty to the brother I love.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** No!  
You are being reckless –  
And you know it!

**ANTIGONE:** What does it matter what you call it?  
Names are not perhaps important in this time  
Or they have become so important  
That we no longer know how to use them properly.  
So think on this anyway that you like.  
I only know this thing must be done  
And that I will do it.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** But it's hopeless!  
You know that!

**ANTIGONE:** When you talk like that  
You get nothing but hatred from me.  
However that is no concern of mine  
At the moment.  
I only know that he must be buried  
And that I will do it.

At least I will not be ashamed  
When I go to meet the dead.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Then do what you have to do  
Only, don't hate me.  
I don't have your strength,  
I never had.  
So this is something I can have  
No part in.

*ANTIGONE leaves*

**Scene Six**

**CHORUS:** Sun, bright sun, to you all glory!  
Once more you shine on the beauty of Baghdad  
Once more you give life to all things

The seven gates are unbroken!  
The army has had a great victory  
This you looked down on  
Looked down and aided us

Sun, bright sun, are you not Apollo  
Who turns a battle-loss into a battle-gain?  
Surely you are.  
Surely you are.

The warriors had white shields.  
Their plums flashed and the captains were arrogant.  
Yet what did that avail them?

Sun, bright sun, you looked down on us  
And sided with us  
Therefore we are the victors.

And victory tastes sweet to your city-  
Its gates are yours, its people are yours,  
Yours is the power and yours is the glory.

Sun, bright sun, to you all glory!  
The city stands at your command.  
Issue one word and we will obey.

*Enter the two generals*

And now, nearing this place  
General Creon and his helper come to talk to the people  
For he is King  
And he is the law

The right man in the right place  
 At the right time,  
 Who know what needs to be done  
 And the one to do it.  
 So talk King –tell us your will  
 And it will be obeyed.  
 The gods have been fortunate with you  
 May you also be the same with us.

**GENERAL CREON** : Citizens of Baghdad,  
 Good countrymen.  
 Some people say that the State is a ship.  
 Well, if that's the case, then our ship has been  
 Through some troublesome waters.  
 However, by our skill and the aid of the gods  
 We have reached a good harbour –  
 So all is well again.  
 Which is why I have come here today.  
 Your fidelity to power is well known.  
 You were faithful to the former masters  
 And then, until all changed, you were faithful  
 To those who followed.  
 After that you were faithful  
 To their sons until they found death  
 In each other's arms.  
 Now that loyalty passes to me.  
 I have the throne.  
 I have the power.  
 I can expect no less than loyalty from each one of you.

No man can be fully known  
 Until he is tested in rule and law giving.  
 That ruler must listen to the best councils  
 And act accordingly. If he does not  
 Then he is at fault –indeed we could say  
 That he is the fault.  
 The same is true of him  
 If he holds friendship more sacred  
 Than his fatherland  
 Or if he makes his city's enemy  
 His friend.  
 This cannot be tolerated.  
 This will not be tolerated.  
 Remember-  
 Our city is a ship and only she can bring us  
 To a safe harbour.  
 Only when the voyage is good  
 Can we make true friends.  
 Such are the rules by which I guard this city's greatness.  
 And in accord with them is the edict which I have now published

Concerning those who fought with us  
 They have been granted all due honours.  
 This is fitting.  
 This was a pleasing task to perform.  
 However, those who opposed us;  
 Those who stood against all that we represent  
 And sought to destroy all that this city stands for  
 And all that she represents -for them  
 It had been decreed that none shall grace them with a lament  
 But leave them unburied, a corpse for birds and dogs to eat  
 A ghastly sight of shame.  
 Such is the spirit of my dealing  
 And no act of mine shall honour the wicked instead of the just.  
 Those who bear allegiance and honesty to Baghdad  
 Shall be rewarded.  
 Those who do not shall be punished.

**CHORUS:** When the strong one speaks  
 The weak suffer.  
 When the strong go to war  
 It is the weak  
 Who pay the price.

What can we now expect  
 But more bloodshed and pain?  
 What can we expect  
 But that our tears will flow again.

Yet you will is our law.  
 All will be done accordingly  
 For whatever you set your mind to you can accomplish.  
 This law holds for the living and the dead

**GENERAL CREON:** Then you will see to it that it is observed

**CHORUS:** But surely that is a task for younger men.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Young men have been found to guard the corpses

**CHORUS:** What then do you expect of us?

**GENERAL CREON:** That you do not take the side of whoever  
 Might see fit to break this law

**CHORUS:** Only a fool in love with death would do that

**GENERAL CREON:** Then let us hope  
 That there are no fools  
 To be found in this kingdom

**Chorus:** Who will mourn the dead  
 When there is no one left to mourn?  
 Who will attend the graves  
 And give due homage  
 To the fallen and the maimed?

The earth is soaked with blood  
 And the earth weeps.  
 But who weeps for the earth  
 And the crippled and the maimed?

Sun, go away,  
 Moon, hide your light.  
 What happens on this earth  
 Is a crime and a shame.

The earth moans with blood  
 The sun has hidden its blaze.

*The soldier enters*

**Scene Seven**

**SOLDIER:** General, I will not say that I am breathless  
 From running hard  
 Or that I used all speed to get here  
 Yet here I am even though along the way  
 I had second thoughts about this task.  
 My mind was going this way and that, saying  
 ‘Fool, you are going to your doom!’  
 And  
 ‘Fool, why do you hesitate?’  
 That’s the way I’ve come, this way and that,  
 This thought and that thinking  
 Making a short road into a long one.  
 However, here I am, even if my story  
 Is not one that will please you  
 Nor earn me much favour with you  
 However, if that’s to be my fate  
 Then so be it

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Get a hold on yourself man,  
 Come to the point

**SOLDIER:** Then let me first say  
 I didn’t do it  
 Nor did I see the one who did  
 Therefore it wouldn’t be right to punish me.



**GENERAL CREON:** Out with it man-  
Tell me what you have to say.  
Don't defend yourself before I know  
What the situation and the crime is.

**SOLDIER:** It's not a good situation.  
It goes contrary to all that you ordered.

**GENERAL CREON:** Then out with it!  
The quicker you tell your story  
The quicker you can return to your post.

**SOLDIER:** Well, this is it.-it's the bodies  
Some one has begun to bury them  
Earth has been piled up on them  
And some rites have been performed

**GENERAL:** What?  
Who would dare do such a thing?  
Has the brazen head of rebellion shown itself so soon?

**SOLDIER:** I don't know.  
The ground was hard and unbroken so no one could dig there  
But earth has been scooped over the body.  
Whoever it was left no trace.  
They were as nimble as could be.  
And when the first -watchman showed it to us  
We were all dumbfounded.  
Someone with a high disregard for the law did this thing.  
Someone with no regard for the words of the captains or the consequences.

Then words flew fast and furious among us  
Each one accusing the other of the act  
And it nearly came to blows between us-  
Some of us had to be restrained-  
And every man taking an oath  
That he had nothing to do with the act  
Nor knew anyone who did.  
We searched around but we found no clues  
And then one spoke up saying that we should draw lots  
To see who would be the one  
To bring the news to you.  
I drew the short straw and so here I am with a story  
Which I don't want to tell  
And you don't want to hear.

**CHORUS:** Be careful, be careful.  
Don't do anything rash-  
Judge well the worth of this story  
After all, this might be the work of the gods.

**GENERAL CREON:** You are talking like foolish old men.  
 Do you think the gods would intervene  
 To bury one who came to burn their shrines  
 And sacred treasures, and scatter the laws of this city  
 To the wind?  
 This is not the way of the gods.  
 So don't anger me with your foolish prattle.  
 I know what's at work here.  
 I know what forces seek to destabilize my throne.  
 The gods never honour the impious so enough of that.  
 That's not what is at work here.  
 For ever since I came to power  
 Certain disaffected elements within the city  
 Have sought to undermine my rule.  
 They have the will and they have the money –  
 And money, as you know,  
 Can get a lot of things done.  
 From the beginning they worked against this edict –  
 And now, somehow, they have found the means to do what they set out  
 To do.  
 They bribed the guards –some to look the other way  
 And some to offer some ritual of death to the corpse.  
 Yes, money is the root of the evil here.  
 Money makes men disobey the lawful king and cross his will.  
 Money makes sinners of all men and teaches them to be dishonest.  
 So don't tell me this is the work of the gods.  
 This is not the way the gods work.  
 This is not the sort of action they condone.  
 So don't talk to me about the gods.  
 Men did this and those men will pay the price.  
 So guard, I charge you, if you know who did this thing  
 Then speak up.  
 This is your one chance to save yourself  
 And produce the culprit.  
 Do this and you shall go free.  
 Refuse and you will share the same fate as the one that did it –  
 For sooner or later I will find out who did this thing  
 And then they will be made to pay.

**Chorus :** Who weeps for the earth?  
 Who weeps for the crippled and the maimed?

Harsh times have come upon us  
 Harsher still will be the times that follow.

The mother cries for her child  
 The child cries for her mother  
 But neither hears the other.

The high places of the earth  
 Are covered in blood,  
 The low places of the earth  
 Are covered with gore

Who will listen?  
 Who will atone for the earth?  
 Who will give it back its peace?

Who weeps for the earth?  
 Who weeps for the crippled and the maimed?

**SOLDIER:** Can I say something –  
 Or do you want me to leave?

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** You can speak-  
 Even though your voice offends me.

**SOLDIER:** And what is it I offend –your ears or your pride?

**GENERAL CREON:** Have a care old man, have a care.

**SOLDIER:** The one, or ones, who did this thing offend your mind  
 Whereas I only offend your ears.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** You talk too much old man.

**SOLDIER:** Maybe I do-  
 But that doesn't make me guilty.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** You have sold your self for a few pieces of silver.

**SOLDIER:** It's strange to see that those who should judge  
 Misjudge.

**GENERAL CREON:** You can play with words for all you're worth  
 But unless you bring me the one who did this  
 You will pay for it with your life.

*The generals leave*

**Chorus :** Nothing is more terrible than the world without gods  
 To worship and please.  
 The rivers go awry  
 The sun refuses its warmth  
 And winter lasts forever.

Earth becomes barren  
 Of those qualities

Which keep men alive.  
 Mothers in birth  
 Scream with pain,  
 The child cries  
 To an empty heaven,  
 The father does not know  
 If the child is his.

With what shall we  
 Appease the wrath  
 Now come upon us?  
 With what shall we  
 Plough the earth  
 And grow fruits by?  
 We live in an evil time of war  
 The self-appointed king  
 Has brought upon  
 An innocent people  
 Who die  
 As we die  
 For a ragged idea  
 Conceived in the cold womb  
 Of hate.

Earth is no longer beautiful.  
 Earth is no longer good.  
 The lessons of history have not been learned.  
 A tattered flag flies above the battleground.  
 No the earth is no longer beautiful  
 But where else can we go  
 When the homeland is soiled and troubled?

**SOLDIER:** Well I hope the culprit is found soon.  
 If not I'm done for  
 Though so far I've escaped the worst.  
 And my thanks go to the gods for that.

*The soldier leaves*

**CHORUS:** Wonders are many but none is more wonderful than man.  
 He brings his skill to the waters and the land  
 And takes from them a harvest.

What bird, what beast can he not snare in his nets?  
 He bends all things to his will, he is master of many situations.  
 He tames the horse and the tireless mountain bull .

Then speech and the subtle workings of his mind  
 Fashions the State. He has many resources, medicine and art,

Only death –only death is the one thing he cannot conquer.

He is cunning and fertile, prone to evil and to good,  
He erects his city to the glory of the gods  
And makes laws that both punish and reward.

**Scene Eight**

**ANTIGONE:** (*sings*)

*A day in May you left me  
A day in the month of May  
Now beauty it deserts me  
And death is my only friend*

*Death is my only friend in May  
Death is my only friend  
Now beauty it deserts me  
And death is my only friend*

*She kneels as if to scoop up handfuls of earth to cover the bodies of the fallen*

**ANTIGONE:** Duty and death, love and death-

This is the fate of a woman.

My fate is cast by this country and my choice  
And my choice would be the same regardless of the country  
I was in.

Duty and death –how these two cords have woven the rope of my life!  
How they bind me to this moment and to the moments that will follow.  
Nothing escapes.

This terrible war has come upon us and no one escapes the fate that it brings.  
It brings a cold fate.  
It brings cruel masters.

Cold fate and cruel masters –that is the history of this land.  
First the one then the other and always the women burying the dead.

*A day in May you left me  
A day in the month of May*

Elsewhere in the city there are celebrations.

I can hear the laughter.

I can hear the voices.

But I will not join in.

I will not sing of death as if it came like a gift.

The wind that blows from the west is a harsh wind

And all the sands of time have been disturbed.

Disturbed?

They have been scattered to a foretold fate!

The land is more ancient than its masters.

Lives rooted here before time measured their lot.

We are old.  
 The earth is old.  
 The honour by which we live and die is as old as the earth and older.  
 Perhaps I do no more than attempt to re-gather the scattered grains of sand  
 And raise a mound of honour?  
 Perhaps I can do no more than that?  
 Perhaps in offering the fallen some sort of burial  
 I am attending an ancient need of the race and of the land?  
 Perhaps it is the land that spurs me on to do these things?

Who can say?  
 A woman gathers sand and history scatters it.  
 I am a woman working against history  
 But not against tradition.  
 Traditions!  
 They are rooted in the fibre of my soul.  
 They show me a past and preserve a little of me for the future.  
 Future?  
 What future?  
 The new masters will fall in time and others will replace them  
 But until then they appear invincible.  
 How many have also thought this in the past?  
 How many kings since Gilgamesh?  
 Kings.  
 Captain.  
 New Masters.  
 The name changes but the story stays the same.  
 Even now they refer to themselves as king.  
 They want to occupy not only the present but the past as well.  
 They have come with history written on their weapons and flags  
 And mean to claim what they can.  
 Yet what will they claim but death?  
 What will they claim but the desolations?

*A day in May you left me*  
*A day in the month of May*  
*Now beauty it deserts me*  
*And death is my only friend*

Death is always woman's friend-  
 Her friend and enemy.  
 We know it well.  
 We look into its cold eye and know what it claims  
 And we are the ones to close that eye  
 And send the dead to their rest.  
 This is what I do.  
 Following the ancient custom of woman  
 Following the ancient rites of birth and death.  
 We are the guardians of these rites.  
 We are the custodians of the sacred acts.

The priests know the formulas  
 But the women know the core.  
 Birth and death, birth and death, and the sorrows in-between.  
 The Captains do not know this.  
 They know maps and strategies.  
 They know plans and calculations.  
 But they do not know the cost.  
 We know the cost.  
 We know what the captains can never know.  
 That is our burden.  
 That is our blessing.  
 Love and death –this is the fate of a woman.

*A day in May you left me*  
*A day in the month of May*

Is it May?  
 Has spring come to these waters and this city?  
 I no longer know.  
 Time has been wiped out of history and there is only sorrow.  
 Sorrow knows eternity and resides in time.  
 Sorrow knows death as a brother.  
 I mourn for a brother.  
 I mourn for all of those who were my brothers.  
 Right or wrong does not concern me.  
 Obedience to the new Masters does not concern me.  
 I follow a more ancient rhythm than they come with.  
 I was here when rock was split and water flowed  
 And the first cry of woman shook that garden.  
 I have been here since then.  
 I have never left this station.  
 He called it My Lai, Ieper and Verdun, and Thebes-  
 I have always been there at the gate of every city.  
 No matter the name I was there.  
 Names mean nothing.  
 Cities mean nothing.  
 Names fall and cities fall but woman remains.  
 The traditions remain.  
 The sacred dead call out for honour and honour will be given.  
 This is my task.  
 In May and spring  
 And whenever the bitter wars follow.  
 Though in the spring and autumn  
 There are no righteous wars.

So I sing to the dead, the beautiful dead,  
 My brother among them.  
 I have found his body and covered it with sand  
 And make some basic rituals.  
 That will have to do.

I could do no more.  
 This simple act,  
 This small atonement for his life-  
 What will it now unleash?  
 I don't care.  
 My duty is to the dead not to the living who cower before  
 The new masters and their proclamations.  
 I have no time for politics.  
 My actions are few but born out of the sacred well of the past  
 And so they cast their shadow into the future.  
 The future –and what will that be?  
 More of the same and then more of the same;  
 The new masters drunk with power and then the backlash  
 And the war will begin again, again, again.

War, ancient war, it has never left these gates.  
 We fight and we fall, we fight and we fall  
 And fall to rise again.  
 Brother, you will not rise.  
 You will rest in the earth and the world continues with its crimes.  
 Sorrow will come, sorrow will come, and I will sing the same song.

*A day in May you left me  
 A day in the month of May  
 Now beauty it deserts me  
 And death is my only friend*

*Death is my only friend in May  
 Death is my only friend  
 Now beauty it deserts me  
 And death is my only friend*

With a song I dress your grave  
 The way I should have dressed your wounds.  
 Wounds I dress now in the silence of the earth  
 To which you are committed.

### **Scene Nine**

*The soldier enters*

**SOLDIER:** You! You are the one!

**ANTIGONE:** Yes, I'm the one

**SOLDIER:** (*grabbing her by the arm*): Stop that!  
 You know it's forbidden.  
 You raise your hand against the Captains and the Kings  
 When you do this thing.



**ANTIGONE:** I raise my hand in defence of the dead

**SOLDIER:** The dead are traitors!  
They fought against a just campaign.  
Punishment has followed for them as it will for you.

**ANTIGONE:** There is nothing you can do against me

*The soldier leads her away*

### **Scene Ten**

*The Male Chorus enters*

**CHORUS:** War! War! War! War! War!

*They take up a position of a semi-circle on the stage*

**CHORUS:** Old visions come to life, prophesy runs riot,  
The curse that was spoken now comes to pass  
And none can escape, escape, escape

Who will clean the holy places of this foulness-  
Who will bring back the wholesome air?  
An ancient curse has come to life  
And no brother may escape it  
No brother may escape it.

Curses, inherited from long ago,  
Bring a heavy burden on this town.  
The city is a shipwreck that none can save  
For brother will kill brother  
And in the blood all will drown.

When is there to be any calmness?  
When will the world lie quiet?

*The soldier enters still holding Antigone by the arm*

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** But what's this?  
My soul is amazed!  
He comes the guard bringing Antigone with him  
Luckless child of a luckless time –  
What does this mean?  
Are you the one who disobeyed the king's orders?

**SOLDIER:** Here she is, the one who did it.  
Caught this girl burying him –  
But where is the General

*The Generals hurriedly enter*

**CHORUS:** Here they come as if in answer to your need

**GENERAL CREON:** What is it?  
What's all the fuss about?  
What makes my coming timely?

**SOLDIER:** General, here I am again  
Even though I swore that I would not return –  
I was so scared by your threats.  
But this time it's different  
This time I don't fear what might happen to me  
For I caught her at it.  
Dab smack in the middle of it you might say.  
Me and no one else.  
No need for the short straw this time.  
Question her and see if I'm not telling the truth.  
I told the truth before  
But this is more pleasant for me.

**GENERAL CREON:** And just what did you capture her at?

**SOLDIER:** She was burying her brothers –against your orders.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Am I hearing you right?  
This girl was burying her brothers?

**SOLDIER:** I saw her burying the corpses you have forbidden to bury.  
Is that plain and clear?

**GENERAL CREON:** And how did this happen?

**SOLDIER:** Well it happened like this.  
When I went back to the place where the corpse lay  
We swept away all the earth that covered them  
So that they were once more naked to the sky  
Then we sat down wind –because of the smell,  
And every man kept awake and kept his neighbour awake  
With threats of what would happen him  
If he fell asleep or prove careless in this task.

Well soon enough it was noon  
And the heat began to burn and then, suddenly,  
A whirlwind lifted up a storm of dust and trash  
And covered everything.  
You could hardly breath  
It was that bad and we nearly choked.  
There was nothing

For it but to buckle down and wait for the storm to pass

Well eventually the storm passed  
 And then we saw her and heard her crying aloud  
 With the sharp cry of a bird in its bitterness.  
 As soon as she saw the naked corpse she began to wail  
 And called down every curse imaginable on whoever  
 Had stripped the body of its earth.  
 And then she fell to the ground and began to scoop handfuls of earth  
 Over the corpse, poured water over it from a jar  
 That she was carrying and so crowned the dead

I rushed forward when we saw it  
 And held her down –but she did not struggle  
 Then I asked here if she had done this before-  
 And would you believe it, she didn't deny a thing!  
 Bold as brass she was.  
 Proud almost that she had done this thing.  
 And not caring what it would cost her.  
 I didn't know if I should be glad or sad for her.  
 To escape from misfortune  
 Is a great thing and so I was glad for myself  
 But I was sorry for her –yet, after all, few things  
 Are more precious to me than my own safety

**GENERAL CREON** (*to Antigone*): Well –do you admit it?

**ANTIGONE**: I do

**GENERAL CREON** (*to GUARD*): You can leave now.  
 There is nothing more  
 That I have to say to you.

*The Soldier leaves*

**GENERAL CREON**: So, you admit that you buried the body –so tell me  
 Did you know that this was forbidden?

**ANTIGONE**: I knew it.

**GENERAL CREON**: You knew it, but you broke the law –deliberately?

**ANTIGONE**: Yes, I did.  
 It was not the gods who published this law  
 This law was not cast according to justice.  
 You wrote it and thereby tried to deny the rights of the dead.  
 Why then should I obey it?  
 What rights do you claim over me?  
 You may be King but you cannot abolish

The traditions that are sacred –no matter what you think.  
Why then should I obey a corrupt law?

And I will die for it –I know that but don't care.  
I'll answer to the gods below and that will be enough for me.  
But if I am to die before my time –then I don't care.  
For if you lived as I have lived, suffering one misfortune  
After another, then what can death bring that I should be  
Afraid of it?

So for me this doom is a trifling grief;  
But if I had suffered my mother's son to lie in death  
As an unburied corpse, that would have grieved me  
And I am not grieved.  
If my acts offend you  
Then look to yourself to see where injustice and foolishness lives.

**CHORUS:** King, she is as passionate as her father was  
She does not know how to bend before you

**GENERAL CREON:** She'll bend.  
She'll break.  
Stubborn spirits are frequently humbled.  
Stiff iron shivers and snaps in the fire.  
Wild horses are tamed by the right sort of discipline.  
There is no room for pride when you are in pain.  
And she has broken the law –twice,  
First by her acts and then by boasting of it.  
One crime is as bad as the other and both will be punished.

I am King here –she is not.  
The victory will belong to me.  
She will not avoid her doom no more than her co-conspirators will  
For if I am right then they also had a hand in this.

So bring them out –they are in the palace raving that they  
Knew nothing about this but I do not believe them.  
Minds plot mischief in the dark but all crimes  
Are brought into light.  
This is as hateful as the act that was perpetrated.  
All the more so when one stands here  
Glorying in her crime

**ANTIGONE:** Isn't one life enough for you?  
Isn't my life, and death, enough for you?

**GENERAL CREON:** Every crime has its penalty  
The guilty parties will be punished.

**ANTIGONE:** Then why delay?

Your words are offensive to me  
 And always will be –in the same way that my words  
 Are offensive to you.  
 And yet, all is glory for me at this moment!  
 What nobler death could I have  
 Then a death paid out for burying my brother?  
 There are many who think the same as I do  
 But their lips are closed in fear.  
 Generals and captains have many rights  
 Including the power to act as they will.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** That is where you differ from all these citizens in that view.

**ANTIGONE:** No, they side with me but are afraid to say it.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Aren't you ashamed to think and talk like this?

**ANTIGONE:** No; there is nothing shameful in piety to a brother.

**GENERAL CREON:** Was it not a brother who died in the opposite cause?  
 A traitor, an enemy, a thing fit to be despised.

**ANTIGONE:** A brother by the same mother and father.

**GENERAL CREON:** He would not condone your actions.

**ANTIGONE:** The dead disagree.

**GENERAL CREON:** You have treated the pious and the wicked alike.

**ANTIGONE:** It was his brother, not his slave, that perished.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Wasting this land; while the other died defending it.

**ANTIGONE:** Nevertheless, Hades demands these rites.

**GENERAL CREON:** You cannot treat good and evil in the same way.

**ANTIGONE:** Who knows but this seems blameless in the world below?

**GENERAL CREON:** An enemy is never a friend-not even in death.

**ANTIGONE:** It's not my nature to hate.

**GENERAL CREON:** Then you will pass into the world of the dead  
 Where you can love them forever.  
 While I live, no woman shall rule me.

*Enter female chorus*

**MALE CHORUS:** Look, here come the women crying, crying  
Already they cry for the loss of a sister

**GENERAL CREON:** So, you have nothing but tears –the tears of a snake  
Who was secretly draining my life-blood!  
I took you into my house and this is the thanks I get –  
Sisters plotting against my throne!  
Or will you now say  
That you had nothing to do with it?

**FEMALE CHORUS:** No! I did it!  
She cannot deny me that much.  
I will also pay the price

**ANTIGONE:** No, that would not be justice to say that.  
You had no part in the act.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** But you are our sister!  
We cannot let you face this doom alone.

**ANTIGONE:** Who did this thing?  
I did, and Hades and the dead are my witness.  
A friend in words is not the friend I love.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** No, don't reject us.  
Let us die with you  
And together we will honour the dead.

**ANTIGONE:** Don't share my death nor claim a part  
In something in which you had no part.  
My death will be more than enough.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** And what would life be for us without you?

**ANTIGONE:** Ask the new masters –  
You were more concerned for them than for our brothers.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** Now you are mocking me.

**ANTIGONE:** Perhaps, but there is pain in my heart  
When I do it.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** Then tell me, what can we do to help you?

**ANTIGONE:** Save yourself. I do not begrudge you that.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** And are we to have no part in your fate?

**ANTIGONE:** Your choice was to live,  
Mine was to die.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** But we don't want you to die!

**ANTIGONE:** My choice is my wisdom  
Your choice is your wisdom.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** But the offence is the same for both of us.

**ANTIGONE:** Take courage and live.  
My life has long been given to death that so I might serve the dead.

**GENERAL CREON:** Women, you are only recently foolish.  
Your sister however has been malignant from the start.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** You are asking me to be reasonable-  
But how can I be reasonable at a time like this?

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** You need it more than ever-  
Now that your sister is about to die.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** But what life could we endure without her?

**GENERAL CREON:** Don't speak of her. She is already dead.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** But will you kill your son's future wife?

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** There are women enough in the world.

**FEMALE CHORUS:** But there can never be such love as bound him to her.

**GENERAL CREON:** I do not want a malignant wife for my son.

**ANTIGONE:** Haemon, your father wrongs you!

**GENERAL CREON:** Enough! There will be no more talk of marriage.

**MALE CHORUS:** Will you widow your son before he is a groom?

**GENERAL CREON:** Death will determine everything.

**MALE CHORUS:** Then you are determined that she will die.

**GENERAL CREON:** I am.  
Nothing will change my mind on that.  
So go inside.  
You are women and have no freedom to go where you please.  
You will not escape.  
Death is closing in  
And there will be no escape

*The female chorus and Antigone leave the stage*

**Scene Eleven**

**CHORUS:** Blest are they whose days have not tasted of evil.  
A curse of heaven falls upon a house  
And passes from generation to generation.  
There is no escape  
From the sea of troubles that follow

Sorrow stalks this house.  
None escape the shadow that falls.  
The gods strike them down.  
They have no deliverance.  
There is no escape  
From the sea of troubles that follow.

What hope for such a house?  
For such children?  
For whatever may yet befall?  
Nothing good falls from heaven upon them.  
There is no deliverance.  
There is no escape from the seas of troubles that follow.

Lord your power transcends human understanding.  
Your power never sleeps.  
You dwell in the high place  
While the children of one father and another  
Live out their lives on this earth.

Nothing that is vast enters into the life of mortals without a curse.  
For that hope whose wanderings are so wide is to many men a comfort,  
But to many a false lure of false desires; and the disappointment  
Comes on one who knows nothing till he burns in hot fire.

In evil times evil can seem good  
All the laws are cast down and foolishness is the law.  
There seems no deliverance.  
There is no escape  
From the sea of troubles that follow.

*The soldier hurriedly enters*

**SOLDIER:** Silence.  
The time has come.  
The Leader will speak and all will listen.  
Prepare yourself for the Leader.  
Prepare for a special announcement.



*The lights go down and military music plays. When it stops the light then come up on the Leader standing solemnly under an archway of flowers. He is dressed in white*

**LEADER:** Ladies and Gentlemen –we’ve got him!

*Loud cheering breaks out, there is the sound of applause and delighted voices in the distance.*

**LEADER:** Acting on information and general surveillance our troops entered the area about the Dictator’s hometown and started looking for likely hiding places.

The information in regard to this was specific but as you can appreciate any such information has to be tested in the spot.

Well the result is that they discovered the Dictator in a hole in the ground not far from a farmhouse where he had obviously been staying.

He offered no resistance in spite of always claiming that he would never be taken alive.

He gave himself up rather meekly in fact to our troops and is now in safe custody at a secure location.

He will be given a full medical examination and treated as a prisoner of war should be.

Questioning of the Dictator will take place at once.

Now in making this announcement the government are acutely aware that this will have a demoralising effect on those remaining few supporters who refuse to accept the fact that the game is over and that they have lost.

It also shows to our friends with what swiftness and speed justice has occurred and will occur in the future.

I want to extend my congratulations to the officers and men involved and intend to decorate each and every one of them as soon as they return to the Homeland.

I think we can now safely say that the war is well and truly over and that peace will soon descend upon that troubled land.

God bless the people,

God bless the homeland!

**CHORUS:** I shudder in dread of the power, abhorred by heaven,

Which is at work here.

Old visions come to life, prophesy runs riot,

The curse that was spoken now comes to pass

And none can escape, escape, escape.

Who will clean the holy places of this foulness-

Who will bring back the wholesome air?

An ancient curse has come to life

And no brother may escape it

No brother may escape it.

Curses, inherited from long ago,

Bring a heavy burden on this town.

The city is a shipwreck that none can save

For brother will kill brother

And in the blood all will drown.

When is there to be any calmness?

When will the world lie quiet?

*Military music plays and the lights come up*

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** So, the rat is in the trap!  
Nothing moves in this flee-hole but we know it.  
Nothing moves to malicious ends but we intercept it.

**GENERAL CREON:** Rats in a cage.  
Evil rounds of the moon.  
Rebellion crushed and decapitated in one move.  
This is the life I like.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Kill one and you kill all.  
The year is new and we are fresh with victory.  
I feel some celebration is at hand.  
Some expression of our power and might.

**GENERAL CREON:** And expression there will be  
Nothing will go unpunished.  
Nothing will escape the penalty  
And the minimum penalty is death.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Decisive action-  
That's what they will understand.  
Action that lets them know we are the masters here  
Not some intruder on a heap of sand.

**GENERAL CREON:** Victory flows in my veins like fresh blood.  
I am made new by this campaign.  
There is nothing I cannot accomplish!

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Well said, well said.  
And will we now drink to that victory?  
Will we go to our rooms and take our fun?

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** General, do not leave.  
Here comes Haemon, the last of your sons  
Grieving for Antigone and his promised marriage

*Enter HAEMON dressed in a soldier's uniform; the 2<sup>nd</sup> General leaves*

### Scene Twelve

**GENERAL CREON:** We shall soon know what he is grieving for –  
So tell me my son, are you here to berate me for my orders  
Or do you accept the course that I have set?

**HAEMON:** I do.  
Your law is the law I will obey.

No marriage could give me pleasure  
That did not meet with your approval.

**GENERAL CREON:** That's the kind of talk I like to hear!  
That's the proper respect towards a king and a father!  
I'm blessed in this.  
A wayward son, one who shows disrespect to his father  
Is a terrible burden to bear.  
If this was what you were like then my enemies  
Would find comfort in it.  
As it is they are confounded by your obedience.  
Nothing is so false and treacherous  
As a false friend or a son.  
So, I'm glad to see  
That you have your wits about you and haven't  
Thrown them aside for a woman.  
She is also your enemy.  
Don't forget that.  
So let her go to hell and find a husband there.  
I have said what her fate will be and I will not  
Make a liar of myself before the people.  
Therefore she will die.

So let her appeal for all she wants to the claim of blood  
Between us.  
She has proved herself to be no kin of mine.  
He who does his duty in his own household will be found  
Righteous in the State also.  
But if any one transgresses,  
And does violence to the laws, or thinks to dictate to his rulers,  
Such a one will get short shift from me.  
No, whomever the city appoints at its King,  
That man must be obeyed in all things.  
Whoever obeys is a good subject and whoever does not  
Is not fit to live.  
Such a one cannot be trusted.  
Such a one cannot be relied on in difficult times.

Disobedience is the worst of evils.  
It makes ruins of cities and makes homes desolate.  
Through disobedience the ranks of allies are broken in battle.  
We owe our safety to obedience.  
Therefore we must support the cause  
Of order, and in no wise suffer a woman to defeat us.  
Better to fall from power, if we must, by a man's hand  
Then we should not be called weaker than a woman.

**CHORUS:** King, your words are right and we have no cause  
To go against them.

**HAEMON:** Father, the gods gave us reason at the greatest  
 Of all gifts. I do not say that I am more skilled in it  
 Than you, and yet another man might also have said  
 Useful things and also have reason on his side.  
 After all, it's my duty as your son to watch and listen  
 To all that goes on in this city and I have to tell you  
 That there are whisperings and murmurs in the dark  
 Concerning Antigone. 'No woman,' they say,  
 'Ever merited her doom less,-none ever was to die  
 So shamefully for doing something so glorious;  
 Who, when her own brother died would not leave him  
 Unburied, to be devoured by the stray dogs, or by any bird  
 No, she deserves more than the death that is promised her'

Such is the dark rumour that spreads in secret.  
 Such are the words that could give way to a rebellion.  
 For me, father, nothing is so precious as your welfare.  
 What is nobler for children than a father's fame?  
 Therefore I ask you –think again.  
 Don't think that only you have a right to wisdom.  
 Whoever thinks this of himself is heading  
 Headlong into disaster.

No matter how wise you are, and you are,  
 You can also learn from others.  
 Trees that bend in the wind survive the storm  
 Those that do not are uprooted.  
 It's the same in a boat. Sometimes you must keep  
 The sail taut but there are times when you  
 Slacked it unless you want to end up with the keel  
 Upside down in the water  
 So allow yourself to change.  
 Don't hold to this course.  
 I don't have your wisdom, I know that,  
 And yet even you as King can learn from those  
 About you.

**CHORUS:** King, listen to him.  
 He has said much that is good.  
 He can learn from you  
 And you can learn from him.

**GENERAL CREON:** So, I am to receive instruction from a younger man?

**HAEMON:** I am saying nothing foolish.  
 Listen to my words  
 And don't look to my age.

**GENERAL CREON:** So, should the disaffected be rewarded?

**HAEMON:** That's not what I am asking for.

**GENERAL CREON:** But she is disaffected. She admits it.

**HAEMON:** The people say differently.

**GENERAL CREON:** And will the people decide how I will rule?

**HAEMON:** Now you are talking like a young man.

**GENERAL CREON:** And am I to rule this land according to the judgement of others?

**HAEMON:** This city is not the property of one man.

**GENERAL CREON:** Is not the city held to be the ruler's?

**HAEMON:** You would make a good king of a desert.

**GENERAL CREON:** You plead her cause too well.

**HAEMON:** No father, I plead for yours.

**GENERAL CREON:** Now your are being disobedient.

**HAEMON:** Only when I see that you are being unjust.

**GENERAL CREON:** So, my laws are unjust?  
Is this the first sign of rebellion?

**HAEMON:** Your laws must also respect  
The laws and traditions of the gods.

**GENERAL CREON:** Now you sound just like her.

**HAEMON:** Only when I find that she is right.

**GENERAL CREON:** All your words plead for that girl.

**HAEMON:** And for you and for me, and for the gods below.

**GENERAL CREON:** You will never marry her.  
Not on this side of the grave at least.

**HAEMON:** Then she must die, and in death destroy another.

**GENERAL CREON:** Rebellion! Just like I said!  
It's rebellion!

**HAEMON:** No, its not rebellion.  
But you are following a course I can't condone.

**GENERAL CREON:** You will regret it.

**HAEMON:** If you weren't my father I would call you a fool.

**GENERAL CREON:** You are talking like a slave of that woman.

**HAEMON:** Don't try and taunt me  
You just won't listen to reason.

**GENERAL CREON:** You will regret this –regret it and pay for it.  
Bring out Antigone, bring her out, so that she may die  
At her bridegroom's feet!

**HAEMON:** No, not at my feet.  
Never!  
Nor will you ever see me again.  
I'm leaving and leaving you  
To whoever can endure you.

*Exit HAEMON*

**CHORUS:** Haemon is gone in anger.  
No good will come of this.

**GENERAL CREON:** Let him go and do as he pleases.  
He will not save them from death.

**CHORUS:** Are you going to kill all of them?

**GENERAL CREON:** No, you are right.  
They are innocent.  
They will not die.

**CHORUS:** And how do you mean to kill her?

**GENERAL CREON:** I will take her by a lonely path  
And hide her in a cave.  
She will be given as much food  
As piety prescribes  
So that the city may escape the stain of her death.  
There she can pray to hell for all she's worth.  
Those are the gods she believes in. And maybe  
They will give her release from that. Either that  
Or she will learn the price of her acts  
And that it is useless to revere the dead.

*The General leaves*

**CHORUS:** Love unconquered in the fight,

Love making havoc of wealth,  
 Keeping your vigil on the soft cheek of a girl  
 You roam over the sea and among the homes  
 Of the dwellers in the wilds; no immortal  
 Can escape you,  
 Nor any among men whose life is for a day  
 And he to who you have come is mad.

The just have their minds warped by you  
 You have stirred up the present ruin  
 The love-light kindles from the eye of a bride  
 A power enthroned with eternal laws  
 Aphrodite is working her unconquerable will.

*Antigone, accompanied by the female chorus, is led out of the palace by two soldiers who are about to conduct her to her doom.*

**CHORUS:** But now I also am carried beyond the bounds of loyalty,  
 And cannot keep back my tears  
 She is passing into that bridal chamber  
 Where all are eventually laid to rest.

### Scene Thirteen

**ANTIGONE:** See me, citizens,  
 Setting out on my last way,  
 Looking my last on the sunlight.  
 Hades who gives sleep to all leads me on  
 And I will see the sunlight no more.  
 I am the bride to death that I have always been.  
 Nothing could ever run from that fate.

**CHORUS:** Nothing could ever run from that fate.  
 You go to the deep places of the earth  
 And shall be remembered  
 As having outwitted sickness and old age.  
 Yes, you will pass into Hades.  
 You could never escape  
 Your sea of troubles.

**ANTIGONE:** Old songs tell old stories  
 The daughter of Tantalus-  
 Did she not also die in stone?  
 I will die like she did  
 My death will be no less.  
 This was always to be my fate.

**CHORUS:** She was a goddess of gods  
 We are mortals, and of mortal race.  
 But it's a great renown for a woman who dies

That she should have shared the doom of the godlike,  
In her life, and afterward in death.

**ANTIGONE:** I am mocked!  
In the name of our fathers' gods,  
Can ye not wait till I am gone?  
O my city, and ye, her wealthy sons,  
Holy ground of my city,  
Bear me witness, as I pass  
Who had no home on the earth  
No home with the living or with the dead.

**CHORUS:** You went headlong into danger.  
And moved against the King.  
Now you pay for your crime  
And your father's sin  
And there is no escape.  
You could never escape  
That sea of troubles.

**ANTIGONE:** You touch on bitter thoughts  
A new lament for my father  
And his famous house.  
Now to them I go  
Accursed, unwed,  
Brother –your death  
Has undone my life.

**CHORUS:** Reverent action claims a certain praise for reverence  
But an offence against royal power cannot be overlooked  
By him who has that power in his keeping.  
Your self-willed temper wrought this ruin.  
You could never escape this sea of troubles.

**ANTIGONE:** Friendless,  
Knowing no marriage song  
I am led in sorrow.  
No longer to see  
The daylight and the moonlight  
While no one cries for my fate.  
This is the sea of my troubles.

*The Generals enter*

**GENERAL CREON:** Songs and wailing before death  
Are of no use.  
Away with her.  
And when you have locked her in  
Leave her to her fate.



She may live if she wishes  
 She may die if she wishes.  
 My hands are clean.  
 I have no part in that act!  
 However this much is certain-  
 She will never see the light again

**ANTIGONE:** Chamber of stone  
 Chamber of death  
 Persephone will receive me among the dead.  
 I will be welcomed by my father.  
 I will be welcomed by my mother.  
 I have washed and am prepared.  
 I have poured offerings at the grave of the dead  
 There is nothing more to do.

Chamber of stone  
 Chamber of death  
 I have no regrets!  
 There has been no wedding song for me.  
 There was no husband nor children to love.  
 Let it be so.  
 I obeyed the laws of the gods  
 And have no regrets  
 There is nothing more to do.

And what law of heaven have I broken?  
 I have not earned the name of impious.  
 If all this is pleasing to the gods  
 Then I am pleased.  
 I regret nothing  
 And for you, general-king  
 I feel even less than nothing.  
 Nothing you do can harm me now-  
 I am inviolate!

**CHORUS:** Nothing has changed-  
 Neither her recklessness  
 Nor her foolish pride.

**GENERAL CREON:** Her guards will not be so lax this time.

**ANTIGONE:** Those words bring me closer to my death.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** You will not be offered false hope.

**GENERAL CREON:** The sentence will be carried out.

**ANTIGONE:** City of my fathers,  
 Land that I have loved

Gods who are eldest of our race!  
 Watch as they bring the last daughter of this house  
 To her death  
 Because she would not dishonour you.

*Antigone is led away by the guards*

**CHORUS:** Danae was also of a proud lineage  
 Yet she also endured.  
 But fate is blind and there is no deliverance.  
 There is no escape  
 From that sea of troubles.

The son of Dryas was sent to a rockery prison  
 Where he came to know there is no deliverance.  
 Yet he was led into grace by the fact that there is no escape  
 From the sea of troubles.

All the old stories confirm this  
 No matter what story you read it is always the same  
 The good go down and there is no deliverance  
 Nor escape from that sea of troubles.

All the stories, all the songs.  
 We would sing them all for you but what would that do?  
 You always knew that there was no deliverance  
 And that you cannot escape a sea of troubles.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** They mutter and moan-  
 Perhaps we should intervene?  
 After all, revolutions begin with a moan.

**GENERAL CREON:** Let them moan.  
 Let them rot in their wailing.  
 Voices of despair do not trouble me.  
 I have my troops, I have my weapons.  
 Nothing will thwart my purpose.  
 No woman going to her death  
 Nor the cries of those who mourn her.  
 Let them mourn.  
 There will be death enough to moan all over this land.  
 I am come with a terrible swiftness.  
 I am come with a terrible power.  
 I unleash both against those who oppose me.  
 Am I not king of this city?  
 Have I not the power and the authority at my command?  
 I have everything I need.  
 I have my troops and I have their loyalty-  
 What more then do I need?  
 Why then should I fear the wailing of the women?

They wail but cannot act.  
 They wail and offend my ears but what of it?  
 I let them wail against this death  
 But may yet usher them towards it.

**Scene Fourteen**

**Chorus:** We will weep for the earth  
 We will weep for the women  
 We will weep for the sun which has to rise  
 Above this troubled land.

We will weep  
 But our tears will be useless;  
 Again the metal of their guns  
 Our tears are no ammunition.

We will weep for the earth  
 We will weep for the women  
 We will weep until the war is over  
 And peace returns to this land –if it can.

For on the lyre of fate and consequence  
 God plucked a string  
 And the city was born-

Born but not to beauty nor peace,  
 Born but not to wholesome times,  
 Born but not to the child's delight.

We sing, we mourn.  
 New masters make new laws;  
 A harsh wind blows over our city.

We dream, we dream,  
 Only dreams are left us;  
 We dream that days that will not come  
 We dream the days that were.

Fathers, you who have gone before us,  
 See now our troubled inheritance;  
 See us as we struggle and fall,  
 See the pit awaiting us.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** All this wailing for one woman-  
 Is that the extant of their vision?

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** Weeping for her we weep for ourselves  
 For ours is a troubled fate.

**GENERAL CREON:** Sing whatever you want to sing.  
 The war has been won and we are the masters.  
 Remember that.  
 Do not forget it.  
 We make the laws and break the past  
 Upon the iron will of our resolve.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** King, yes you are king in all but name,  
 King I see what cannot be seen and I hear what cannot be heard.

**GENERAL CREON:** And what is it that you hear Mother-  
 What news does the wind carry to your ears  
 That it does not carry to mine?

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** I see the coming destruction.  
 I see the loosing of every bond.  
 I see the tide flow in reverse  
 And the dead pile up like mountains before you.

**GENERAL CREON:** You see nothing but your imagination.

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** No, listen to her.  
 She is a seer.  
 We have listened to her and trusted her in the past.  
 Whatever she says will happen.  
 It has been so before, it will be so again.  
 Listen –listen and act and you may escape  
 The fate creeping towards you.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Fate? What fate?

**GENERAL CREON:** I fear no fate.  
 I make my will extend from the present to the future  
 And all will bend to it.  
 My fate is your fate.  
 My will becomes your will.  
 You cannot escape.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Laugh or don't laugh.  
 Belittle the visions I'm burdened and blessed with  
 But that will change nothing.  
 You will loose all.  
 You will loose your son  
 You will loose control  
 You will loose everything that you have amassed  
 You will be left with nothing.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Prophets!  
 This country is full of them  
 And they work for easy coins.

Do you want good weather?  
 Pay them, and they will prophecy it.  
 Do you want victory in battle?  
 Pay them, and they will prophecy it.  
 Do you want your enemy's death?  
 Pay them and they will foretell it

**GENERAL CREON:** I am not troubled by this.  
 I have laid my plans.  
 I know what my next move will be.  
 And as for my son-  
 Well, let him cool his heels.  
 He will return.  
 He is a soldier and will do his duty.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** There are two duties-  
 Duty to the earth and duty to the heart  
 And which of these will win is easy to say.

**GENERAL CREON:** You say too much old woman.  
 Silence, silence and submission would be better for you.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Can the wind be silent?  
 Can the sea cease?  
 The mountain may divert its course  
 But the river keeps on flowing.  
 I am that wind, I am that sea.  
 I am what I am and have always been  
 And will be so after you are gone.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Sedition! Sedition!  
 Who paid you to say these things?  
 Who put those words into your mouth!

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** The dead and the unborn  
 Put those words in my mouth:  
 The dead and the unborn

**GENERAL CREON** (*to 2<sup>nd</sup> General*) She troubles me.  
 I've studied this region for long enough to know  
 That the laws of the homeland do not operate here.  
 No, some different mythos guards their lives.  
 We see but cannot penetrate the shield of their fate  
 And it is a strange fate.  
 Some quirk of history  
 Some aberration of circumstance  
 I can be no clearer than that.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** You are thinking on your son

**GENERAL CREON:** I am

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Then think right.  
Is he not a soldier?  
Will he not do a soldier's duty?  
Of course he will, of course he will.  
The rest are merely a blind woman's ramblings.

**VOICE-OVER THE LOUD SPEAKERS:** Now hear this! Now hear this!  
I'm standing here outside the central police station in the capital when a car bomb exploded a few moments ago.  
A lot of damage has been done to the building and there are reports of two people dead.  
How this happened and who is responsible for it is something which is too early to say, but coming as it does on the heels of reports of looting in other parts of the city it could well be a development which the army, for one, will not like to see.

**GENERAL CREON:** That was to be expected.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** As our response will be

**GENERAL CREON:** We will be swift  
We will be swift.  
We will blow like the wind and the waves of the sea.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** These are my words  
These are my words:-  
A woman's death unleashes the wind  
And the wind is not of your making.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** She rambles.  
Words to suit every occasion  
But they carry no threat nor meaning.

**CHORUS:** Words on the wind.  
Words on the wind.  
The wind blows over our city  
With words and fears and foretellings.

**2<sup>ND</sup> GENERAL:** Ramblings and mutterings  
Ramblings and mutterings  
Women talk and talk.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Women talk.  
They hear the wind.  
They hear the song of lonesome birds  
And the deep cry of the ocean.  
And from her cave  
I hear the cry  
Of the woman you have imprisoned.

**GENERAL CREON:** Who can hear the dead?

For surely she is dead as she deserved to be.

The dead do not sing.

The wind carries no echo of them.

The wind merely moans its emptiness.

**VOICE-OVER THE LOUD SPEAKERS:** Now hear this! Now hear this!

You join me as reports are coming on of two further explosions in the southern quarter of the city.

What has caused them, what have been the targets and if there have been casualties is something which we do not as yet know.

As you can imagine it is not easy in the current situation to obtain accurate information about what is going on but I can tell you that rioting and looting has broken out throughout the city. Obviously this does not occur at those buildings that are guarded but elsewhere chaos is beginning to make its appearance.

Just to give you one example.

An hour ago I was outside the National Museum as it was being looted.

People were laying their hands on anything they could get. I saw them emerging with treasures and artefacts of this country's past which though priceless can have no practical value for them.

Never the less a mood has gripped this city and nothing seems capable of stopping it for the moment.

Shops and coffee houses are also being targeted and people are taking away every item that is not nailed down.

Our forces seem to be taken by surprise at these developments and as yet have no strategy for dealing with it.

Yet something must surely be done if this lawlessness is not to spread.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** She stalks your days

And will stalk your night.

A terrible ghost with a ghost's intention and power.

Fear her.

Fear her.

She is the force that has been unleashed.

**GENERAL CREON:** I have no belief in ghosts.

I have no belief in the dead.

Only the living conspire against us today

Only the living will conspire against us tomorrow.

**VOICE-OVER THE LOUD SPEAKERS:** Now hear this! Now hear this!

We are getting confirmed reports of shooting and explosions from the other major cities in the country.

And in a worrying development, troops were in one incident, attacked by the mob and had to open fire upon them.

Reports are also coming in from all parts of the country where demonstrations have been held for the release of the woman known as Antigone.

Somehow she has become a symbol of the people's resistance to the authorities and one wonders what will happen next.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** I'll tell you what will happen next-  
 She will rot.  
 No freedom for traitors.  
 No concessions to the mob.  
 No going back on what we have started.  
 No changing course in mid-stream.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** They call for her, they call for her  
 And what will you do –what will you do?

**GENERAL CREON:** What will I do?  
 I will do what I always intended to do.  
 I'll keep a tight lid on this city.  
 Nothing will move without my permission.  
 Nothing will move without my say-so.

**CHORUS:** Old wrongs and new wrongs  
 This year and every year.  
 Where o where is the healing hand?  
 Where the cleansing voice?  
 She was our voice.  
 She spoke our hearts.  
 She made known our secret thoughts.  
 Now she lies in the pit of the world  
 And we are without a mother.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** Release her.  
 Release her now.  
 The tide can be turned  
 And the wind can be stilled  
 If only, if only you release her.

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** No prisoners will be released.  
 All disaffected people will share her fate.

**GENERAL CREON:** I do not listen to the wind.  
 I do not fear the turning of the tide.  
 She is only one woman  
 We are the controlling power-  
 What force can she wield against us?

**2<sup>nd</sup> VOICE:** She can wield the force of her name.  
 That name is whispered everywhere.  
 That name is the secret flame that warms our fires.  
 She is a flame.  
 She is a fire.  
 Fire will burn and flame devour  
 The notions that you have of power.

**VOICE-OVER THE LOUD SPEKERS:** Now hear this! Now hear this!



Two more car bombs have exploded in the city.  
 Five people are dead and twenty are injured.  
 Troops have been attacked in various parts of the city.  
 In one incident an ambulance was not allowed through a makeshift blockage.  
 Troops are returning fire as we speak.

**GENERAL CREON:** All war is a test of power.  
 We will meet that test.  
 We have met it before and will do so again.  
 I fear neither this woman  
 Nor the wind she unleashes.  
 I can also be the wind-  
 The wind that will harrow this land.  
 Where all is planted I will uproot.  
 Where all is a mound I'll make it flat.  
 I also have power.  
 I also have authority and command and men at my command.  
 I fear no wind she brings.

**CHORUS:** I am worried.  
 She can be rough but she is never wrong-  
 Never in the past and I fear never about the future.

**GENERAL CREON:** The mutterings of women are not my concern.  
 Prophets and blind-women-  
 This country is full of them  
 And they all have a story to tell.  
 Well I have also a story  
 And that story is war.

**CHORUS:** War! War! War! War! War!

**GENERAL CREON:** Chant or don't chant-  
 I don't care.  
 War has its tempo and music  
 And this is the music I play.

**CHORUS:** War! War! War! War! War!

**2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL:** Play that music again!  
 Play the pipes that wail a lament and celebration.  
 Beat the drum that beats the tempo of our blood!  
 Play war music and all else is forgotten.

**CHORUS:** War! War! War! War! War!

**GENERAL CREON:** This pleases me  
 This pleases me.  
 Enemies face-to-face and eye-to-eye.  
 Open warfare in the pit of the world.

The wailing and the gnashing and the fallen gaining ground.  
 And the ground red-soaked with the enemies' blood.  
 This is the world I love.  
 This is the world I want.  
 This is the war for which you will pay the price.  
 I go from here to another place and war will follow where I go.  
 I am the arrow of fate!

**CHORUS:** Gods of this city-  
 Look on us.  
 Injustice is being granted a prime place  
 All right is being blotted out  
 From the pages of the world

The wheel turns and turns again  
 And again injustice triumphs.  
 The traditions will be dishonoured  
 And no honour given  
 To the dead  
 Come then to this city  
 Most pleasing of cities-  
 Here you are honoured  
 Here the festivals are observed by all  
 And all glory your name.

So come and bring healing-  
 A plague brings us down  
 To the level of beasts.  
 But we are not beasts  
 We are men who worship you.

And worshiping you  
 We call on you again-  
 Come to Baghdad,  
 Wipe away the stain,  
 Let wholesomeness reign

*The soldier enters*

**SOLDIER:** General,  
 Again I come to you,  
 Again I bring news that grieves the heart that must carry it.

**GENERAL CREON:** Save the melodrama.  
 Say what you have to say  
 Like any soldier addressing his Captain.

**SOLDIER:** There is nothing in life  
 That can be counted as fixed.  
 Fortune comes and fortune goes

From day to day  
And no one can prophesy those things  
Which will happen.

**GENERAL CREON:** Get to the point-  
If it's good news then the sooner we hear it the better.  
If it's bad news then bad news won't wait.

**SOLDIER:** I come with grief on my heart and my tongue.

**CHORUS:** And what new grief do you bring?

**SOLDIER:** Death; and the living are guilty for the dead.

**GENERAL CREON:** And who is dead and who is guilty?

**SOLDIER:** Haemon is dead –but not by a stranger.  
The prism of his mind that cast bright colours  
Is now cast in darkness.

**GENERAL CREON:** My son is dead?

**SOLDIER:** Already he greets those underground.

**GENERAL CREON:** By some assassin's hand, or by his own?

**SOLDIER:** His own. He did it himself.

**CHORUS:** The words of the prophet were true.

**SOLDIER:** I'll tell you what I saw  
And won't try and sweeten the story with words  
Which would prove to be false.

There was a disturbance in the city-  
A mob crying revenge for Antigone  
And death to all who harmed her.  
It grew and grew.  
It grew in force and numbers.  
It grew wild and untameable.  
It broke though the ranks we formed about it.  
There was nothing we could do  
Short of slaughtering them all.  
Yet like any mob it developed a will of its own  
And that will raised a cry and a demand:  
Antigone free, Antigone free, Antigone free  
They shouted as the moved towards the city gates.  
We followed.  
Or rather, I followed.  
I needed to see what would happen.

I needed to be able to give you an exact report.  
 They moved towards the outskirts  
 And took the road we had previously taken  
 To the cave we put her in.  
 Nothing could or would stop them.  
 They were a wave rolling onwards.  
 They were an ocean with one destination.  
 And soon they came to the cave-  
 And what did we see  
 But that the entrance was breeched, stones removed,  
 And a loud wailing coming from within.  
 Within was a ghastly sight.  
 She was hanging by a rope  
 Dead as only the dead can be  
 And clinging to her  
 Calling her name  
 Lay Harmom distraught and wild with grief.  
 Did he seek to defend himself  
 Or did he seek to attack those who entered?  
 I cannot say.  
 I can only say that he took out his pistol  
 Fired some wild shots  
 Then turned the gun on himself,  
 Called out her name  
 And pulled the fateful trigger.  
 We knew he loved the girl but this was more than we could bear  
 So we left him there-  
 A corpse clinging to a corpse.  
 These are, I suppose, his marriage-rites.  
 Yet he is married in hell –not in this world

*The Generals run off stage*

**CHORUS:** Too late you have seen what you should have seen  
 And too late do we see it also.  
 All men are guilty.  
 There is no deliverance.  
 There is no escape from that sea of trouble.

*The General enters carrying the body of Harmom on a bier*

**CHORUS:** Here is the king carrying his grief-  
 Not the work of strangers  
 But of his own actions.

**GENERAL CREON:** I cry for the sins of my dark soul.  
 I have killed my son.  
 He died in his youth but the folly of that  
 Was mine –not his.  
 Nothing can appease hell!

It has no mercy for me.  
 Misfortune and ruin –that’s the lot that is mine.  
 What destiny waits for me?  
 I raise my son  
 In these arms that held his loving mother  
 And now they are nothing but dead bones.  
 My child!  
 This guilt can never be give to another soul  
 It is mine and mine alone to bear.  
 I am less than miserable so lead me away  
 Lead away the one whose life is death.

**CHORUS:** Perhaps that is for the best.

**GENERAL CREON:** Not to see the light of the day that is coming-  
 That would be the best fate for me.

**CHORUS:** These things are in the future;  
 Present tasks claim our care:  
 The ordering of the future rests where it should rest.

**GENERAL CREON:** All my desires, at least, were summed in that prayer.

**CHORUS:** Pray no more. You cannot escape your fate

**GENERAL CREON:** Lead me away.  
 I am a fool.  
 I have killed my son.  
 I don’t know what to do  
 Or where to hide.  
 I have no one to turn to.  
 There is no deliverance.  
 There is no escape from this sea of troubles.

*All leave the stage in a solemn procession*

**1<sup>st</sup> VOICE:** old year and new year-  
 The wind blows both ways  
 Yet it is singing death and death in the warm afternoon of this city.  
 We pray to ancient custom  
 We pray to the god who guards all things-  
 Send calm to the earth  
 Send peace to our hearts  
 Let all sorrow be saved and blessed.

*The stage is now empty*

**VOICE-OVER THE LOUD SPEKERS:** Now hear this! Now hear this!  
 Demonstration in favour of the Dictator are taking place near his hometown.  
 Three soldiers lost their lives when they were ambushed at a junction in the capital.

Fires have broken out in the downtown shopping area.  
People are protesting for bread and clean water.  
A pall of smoke hangs over the capital.  
The city is full of comfortless noises.

**The end**