

ANTIGONE'S SISTER

BY

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CHARACTERS

for a cast of 5 or more, may be all female

ISMENE	A woman, married to JOCARTHUS. ISMENE is ANTIGONE's sister, early twenties but may seem older in contract to Antigone. ISMENE lives bound and thoroughly schooled in the culture and laws of her time.
ANTIGONE	A young woman of about fifteen. She is extremely energetic, a free spirit, bound to nothing and no one. Blossoming sexually.
CARNOS	A soldier, male. Late teens to twenties.
ANDROS	A soldier, male. Older than CARNOS.
VIOLATUS	A soldier, male. Older than ANDROS. Menacing. pronounced: Vee-oh-LAH-tus, VEE-o for short.
JOCARTHUS	Male, husband of ISMENE. A war-mongering, Southern, evangelist Senator, in charge of the "witch hunt" that destroyed the lives of over seventy men after the Mutilation of the Herms.
FLATULLUS	A male guard in armor.
CRAYON	Majority Leader of the Senate, older male. pronounced: CRAY-on as in Crayola.
WOMAN 1, 2, 3, 4	A chorus.

This play was originally written for an all-female cast of 5 with additional 3 or more non-speaking roles in scene vii, however, it can be performed with a larger cast if desired, and it can be performed with men playing male roles if desired. If it is performed as originally written, then the doubling/tripling breaks down as follows:

ANTIGONE/WOMAN 1 - always doubles for dramaturgical purposes

CARNOS/FLATULLUS/WOMAN 2

ANDROS/CRAYON/WOMAN 3

VIOLATUS/JOCARTHUS/WOMAN 4

ISMENE does not double

If casting with a large ensemble there are eleven speaking roles and as many non-speaking roles as desired for the cave scenes, the Festival of Adonia, and the Circus Senate. Non-speaking roles in scene vii, CRAYON's Circus Senate, should be able to perform acts like juggling, magic, sword-swallowing, mime and gymnastic feats.

TIME

415 BCE Autumn; moves back to the height of summer and ends that same year in autumn.

PLACE - UNIT SET

A closed up, womb-like cave in the rocky hillside used as a solitary prison (the cave is a real place in real time, however the rest of the set occurs in the landscape of ISMENE's memory and imagination)

The women's section of the House of Jocarthus, an enclosed and womb-like chamber with a loom (actual loom unnecessary)

Outside the city gates in the sand (actual sand unnecessary)

The rooftops and streets where one might find a statue or statues of Hermes (a simple colymb with a carved head at the top and a protruding phallus just below eye level)

A prison cell

Crayon's Circus Senate -- as open and unwomb-like as possible - outside

In the workshop production at the University of Iowa, seating was three-quarter with a balcony used for the rooftops and the Senate Speaker's platform. A noose hanging from a tree root floated over the cave upstage which held a stool and a knife. There were three pillars fitted with break-away plaster phalluses and crowned with soldier heads. Ismene's flasks remained onstage at all time, but there was no loom, no sand. Light created spaces. There was no interval, but if desired, there are two places marked in the script where an interval might occur.

Asterisks in the dialogue indicate where the next speaker begins to speak

I conceived of this production with an all-female cast in order to mirror the Ancient Greek practice of using only male actors. Male roles should be costumed with phalluses. This casting can illuminate certain aspects of Ismene's world, but it may, creating distance, lessen the impact of the violence which may or may not be desirable.

This play was influenced by and uses the myth of Antigone which also influenced and inspired Sophocles, but I have not taken any of his text nor relied on any turns of phrase which his translators proffer. I consider this an entirely new play which draws on a myth known long before Sophocles was born.

I set it in 415 BCE in Athens because of the nature of life under patriarchy in Greece then, and while I draw on actual events that occurred there that year, it is the events that may have occurred then but were never formally recognized that have truly inspired me, events that were perhaps among the earliest in the history of feminism. I credit Eva C. Keuls whose book *The Reign of the Phallus* was a major inspiration.

general herstory

Antigone is the youngest daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta and the niece of Crayon. Ismene is Antigone's older sister. Polyneices and Eteocles were their brothers, Eteocles being the eldest of them all, Polyneices a bit older than Antigone. Oedipus, who has just died, wandered in the Greek wilderness with Antigone for the past four years. Jocasta hung herself seven years ago, and Ismene and Antigone remember it, although it means different things to each sister. Hayman, Crayon's son, is Antigone's fiance. Jocarthus is Ismene's husband, a hawk in favor of going to war with Sicily, an issue hotly debated in the Senate, 415 BCE.

With special thanks to Morgan Jenness, Sherry Kramer, Pauline Tyer, Art Borreca, and the Iowa Playwrights Workshop, this play is dedicated to all my sisters, especially Kathryn Hope.

*Someone, I tell you
will remember us.
--- Sappho*

ANTIGONE'S SISTER

prologue

(AT RISE: ISMENE is incarcerated in a cave. SHE is miserable, bruised and beaten. Hanging from a tree root at the roof of the cave is a rope tied as a noose. In her hand, a knife.)

ISMENE

Hermes,
conductor of souls to Hades,
have you forsaken me?

I am so accustomed to the world:
the weaving, the spinning, the counting of grain,
the tracking of seasons, the sharp taste of olives.
To go from life to -- this:
a dry cave
of dirt and stone
a darkened space
a silent tomb.
Should I prefer death to this place?

(Behind ISMENE are the bodies of many
WOMEN. Some have hung. Some have
slashed their wrists. THEY whisper to her.)

WOMAN 1

There are many available ways to die here.

WOMAN 2

It is only a matter choosing which.

WOMAN 3

There was a woman once who tried to end her life by hurling herself under the wheels of a chariot.

WOMAN 4

She was stopped by a soldier.

WOMAN 2

Always there are soldiers.

WOMAN 1

He told her to find a more womanly way to die.

WOMAN 3

And if she could not find a method more suited to her sex,

WOMAN 4

he would be happy to help her himself.

WOMAN 2

There are many ways to die here.

WOMAN 1

It is only a matter of choosing.

WOMAN 3

Which.

(ISMENE drags the stool, crawling toward the rope.)

WOMAN 4

Which?

WOMAN 1

The rope?

(ISMENE is exhausted before SHE gets the stool below the rope. SHE stops.)

WOMAN 2

Or the knife?

(ISMENE looks at the knife and examines HER skin.)

WOMAN 3

The knife?

WOMAN 4

Or the rope?

WOMAN 1

There are many ways to die.

(ISMENE vacillates.)

WOMAN 3

The rope.

WOMAN 4

The knife

The knife
WOMAN 2

The rope
WOMAN 1

The rope
WOMAN 3

The knife
WOMAN 4

CHOOSE
WOMAN 1, 2, 3, 4

(ISMENE holds up the knife.)

Enough of blood! If I can
ISMENE

transcend
ISMENE (cont'd) with WOMAN 1

	WOMAN 2 and 4	WOMAN 3
Transcend?		She will transcend?

this world, my sex,
ISMENE

Her sex?
WOMAN 4

Her womanhood?
WOMAN 3

Her gender?
WOMAN 2

If I can transcend this world, my sex, then it will be with rope.
ISMENE

(ISMENE tosses the knife away and moves toward rope with stool.)

Rope.
WOMAN 1

Rope.
WOMAN 3

She chooses rope
WOMAN 2

One of those
WOMAN 4

A bloodless woman
WOMAN 3

(ISMENE climbs up onto the stool under the rope.)

The rope
WOMAN 1

She has chosen
WOMAN 2

A rope.
WOMAN 4

Like so many of us.
WOMAN 3

(ISMENE reaches the rope and peers through it.)

How many of us have been sent here to hang?
WOMAN 4

How many steal back our lives in death?
WOMAN 1

WOMAN 2

Like the women of Melos conquered in May

WOMAN 3

and brought to Athens as slaves.

WOMAN 4

The poor

WOMAN 4 (cont'd) and WOMAN 2

poor

WOMAN 4

women of Melos

WOMAN 1

who hung themselves rather than learn the ways of a foreign land,

WOMAN 2

under a foreign flag,

WOMAN 3

a foreign tongue,

WOMAN 4

a foreign hand.

WOMAN 1

So many reasons to die here.

WOMAN 2

She chose the rope.

(ISMENE climbs back onto the stool and reaches for the rope. About to hang herself, ISMENE sees the names of WOMEN carved into the cave walls. SHE stops.)

ISMENE

We've carved our names.

Naera --

that means belly. She must have been a prostitute.

ISMENE (cont'd)

And Helen --

A beauty that one.

And Gyne --

Woman. That one's simple enough.

What will I carve?

WOMAN 3

Carve your wrists.

WOMAN 2

The way I did.

WOMAN 4

Carve your name.

ISMENE

What name?

WOMAN 3

You must have had a name.

WOMAN 2

Have you forgotten?

WOMAN 3

Sister.

WOMAN 4

Sister.

WOMAN 2

Sister.

WOMAN 1

You were not a sister.

ISMENE

Here is

ISMENE (cont'd) and WOMAN 1

Antigone.

ISMENE
You carved your name, Antigone.

WOMAN 1
Carve yours.

ISMENE
They called me the wife of Jocarthus.

WOMAN 3
The busiest bee,

WOMAN 2
a good worker,

WOMAN 4
good wife,

WOMAN 3
good mother,

ISMENE
all good things to be.

WOMAN 2
And look at her.

WOMAN 3
Clutching the rope.

WOMAN 4
Will she take it?

WOMAN 1
Don't we all?

ISMENE
There is no one to remember my name.
My flasks were crushed. My urns were shattered.

WOMAN 3
Her name destroyed.

She is gone. WOMAN 2

And her sister is gone. WOMAN 4

And my name died years ago. ISMENE

Unspoken. WOMAN 4

Unused. WOMAN 3

Forgotten. WOMAN 2

For years. ISMENE

We never speak. WOMAN 1

Not the good women. WOMAN 4

Our tongues are useless. WOMAN 3

Alive or dead. WOMAN 2

What is a name? WOMAN 4

What good are tongues? WOMAN 3

What will I carve? ISMENE

(WOMAN 2 and ISMENE the knife, but
ISMENE shudders at the knife and turns to
the cave wall, the names again.)

By our own hands we die. We --	ISMENE
Why didn't you listen?	WOMAN 4
Listen.	WOMAN 3
Why didn't you listen to me?	WOMAN 1
Could I have saved you? I wanted to save you.	ISMENE
Saved me?	WOMAN 1
Your sister Antigone?	WOMAN 3
Antigone was a young girl.	WOMAN 2
Barely fifteen.	WOMAN 3
Marriage age.	WOMAN 4
A young girl.	WOMAN 2
I was Antigone.	WOMAN 1
And I?	ISMENE

Antigone's sister. WOMAN 3

Sisters WOMAN 2

who could not be sisters. WOMAN 4

ISMENE
 Come back from the shores of the river of death.
 Come back from those wild places you haunt
 and visit me as you were,
 returned from father's journeys.
 Come to me Antigone
 and let me be your sister anew.

(WOMAN 1 breaks from the group, enters
 the women's chambers in the House of
 Jocarthus, dancing.)

Try again. WOMAN 1

Rework. WOMAN 4

Remake. WOMAN 3

Reweave. WOMAN 2

ISMENE
 If only I had my loom
 I'd weave a tale
 with the fabric of myth and memory
 hope and dream mixed and memory
 hope and dream mixed and entwined
 until the two indistinguishable become one cloth
 to give warmth to this prison-cave
 to soothe me in sleep which will not come
 for the God Hermes does mischief against me

ISMENE (cont'd)

as if my sister's deeds were my own,
as if he would punish me for her transgressions
acts that shake this city still.

Antigone, Antigone
I weave this tale for you
and me
your sister who might have loved you better.
Speak to me! I need to hear your voice.

scene i

(ANTIGONE dances wildly in the women's quarters of the
House of Jocarthus.)

ANTIGONE

Antigone will not lose her name
Antigone will not suffer
the woes and wails of the marriage bed
Antigone will not die in vain
Will not Should not
Doth not Never not
Never Never Never Never Never!

(ISMENE enters with spinning and loom
work in baskets. ANTIGONE is used to
being heard but not seen, so ANTIGONE
stops her chant but continues her dance.)

ISMENE

What music moves you to this effect?

ANTIGONE

Ismene, come and dance with me.

ISMENE

I hear no lute or lyre and find no reason in this.

ANTIGONE

Ismene, come.
Must I have a reason to dance here?

ISMENE

Stop your feet.
My husband will hear and come to question me.
Remember your place Antigone.

ANTIGONE

It is small,
smaller than I recall if dancing disturbs it so.

ISMENE

When you live in the House of Hayman
you might dance to your heart's content,
but here please take a lighter step.
I have important news, Sister.

ANTIGONE

And I have news for you
for I will never live in the House of Hayman
Never Never Never!

(ANTIGONE takes up her dancing again.)

ISMENE

Why Antigone? Speak.

ANTIGONE

If I went to live there I should die before a fortnight.

ISMENE

What an awful thought! Three rows at the loom to remove it. Come.

ANTIGONE

I've no need to weave it away. I'll never marry Hayman or any other man.

ISMENE

Last night there was none of this.

ANTIGONE

When you explained and I listened?
All the news since I've been gone.
Marriages, births and deaths
of good women who I knew as a child
and then

“Father arranged your dowry with Crayon to marry Hayman!”

ISMENE

(aside)

Perhaps I should have put that first.

ANTIGONE

I won't follow in their footsteps.

Not my friends, not my cousins.

Why even our nurse's girl

-- who was like a second sister to me --

gone to the grave with a child

-- you said it was breach? --

I don't like the sound of that word,
and strangled blue with its own chord?

Not for me!

ISMENE

But I have borne three and still live and breathe.

ANTIGONE

So you say, but you are not the Ismene I knew as a child.

I put that blame on Jocarthus. He makes you cower

-- I have seen it with my own eyes --

and walk these boards as though they would crack.

ISMENE

This house is well built.

ANTIGONE

How often since your marriage has the earth given way to make you take such timid steps?

ISMENE

I take a lady's step, nothing more.

ANTIGONE

Nothing more that less than human.

And then there is the question of thy name.

ISMENE

What question?

ANTIGONE

It kept me up all night.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

My eyes were glued to a spider there
who spins her web alone and knows her name, Arachne.

ISMENE

(with a dustcloth to the corner)
I'll toss it out.

ANTIGONE

No, Ismene!
She is my luck and fortune
and keeps those parasites away.

ISMENE

Your fortune goes in the way of a dowry to Hayman as is just.

ANTIGONE

Just is giving me a choice in the matter,
not between Hayman and some other man who would make me his slave,
but perhaps a little shelter and the means to make a living wage.

ISMENE

Woman of our station do not go to market, and as for shelter all is arranged.

ANTIGONE

Stations, arrangements. I'll have none of these.

ISMENE

Most women of marriage age accept these laws, and so will you.

ANTIGONE

Whose laws?

ISMENE

Please Sister, I have the most disturbing news.

ANTIGONE

Father never rules me in the hills. He taught me well that man makes up his own mind, and so will I.

ISMENE

You're not a man and must not be confused by the words of an aging ogre.

ANTIGONE

Ismene, Father is barely on the road to Hades, and you would slight his memory so?

ISMENE

You've been away and are unschooled.

ANTIGONE

I have seen pheasant teach pheasant to fly while peacocks laugh but remain forever grounded.

ISMENE

I'm a patient women, Sister, but your marriage comes soon.

ANTIGONE

So you say.

ISMENE

But first I have news.

(ANTIGONE begins to dance again in rebellion of this proposed marriage.)

ISMENE

I cannot speak if you will act this way.
So many customs must be planted in your mind,
let me teach you while we work,
for Hayman will be Speaker of the House one day,
and you his proper wife and capital hostess.

ANTIGONE

Wife or most tamed? Or most wild before taming?

(ISMENE prepares to begin work at the loom and sets up the wheel for ANTIGONE who continues to dance.)

ANTIGONE

Ismene, don't you long to leap and jump?

ISMENE

Dancing is saved for the marriage feast.

ANTIGONE

We could ford the streams of life, Ismene!

ISMENE

Well and good, but --

ANTIGONE

Aim my arrows at music, the open sky. Ismene --

ISMENE

We've much to do to prepare the way. Come. I need to speak with you.

ANTIGONE

Remember Ismene how I danced as a child
-- all bone -- ?

ISMENE

I see you've filled out and know the ways of the feminine moon*, from cycle to --

ANTIGONE

*but I want to remain Antigone, the same as in my youth.

ISMENE

And so did Persephone, and all Demeter's tears could not bring her back. Laws are laws.

ANTIGONE

Ismene, how can you speak this way?

ISMENE

Enough with my name! It rings of days gone years ago.
I'm known as Woman now or Mother, Sister to you. I've no use for a title.

ANTIGONE

Mother, peace be hers, did give it. To refuse is wrong of you.

ISMENE

And what do you know of right or wrong? Or law and custom?
You've been gone and missed half a world of learning in your absence.

ANTIGONE

I know laws. I know customs. There is no place better to learn
than where I lived with father, where nature rules.

ISMENE

Custom is to let names go, since you'll be given the name of your husband. Not as punishment but honor.

ANTIGONE

Is a man's name better than my own?

ISMENE

(producing urns and flasks, ignoring ANTIGONE)

In death your name will once again be used for we are buried with our flasks and urns where you see Ismene writ.

ANTIGONE

So the man may marry again and again without the graveyards littered with his name!

ISMENE

Your insolence is unbecoming.

ANTIGONE

And I will have these monograms too?

ISMENE

Of course! And from a fine stone craftsman, the same as did my own.

ANTIGONE

I should marry Death and keep my name for myself.

(to ISMENE, dancing)

I forsake your laws for a moment in the hills where I gathered the names of all creatures, flowers, berries and brambles from Artemis.

Would you know again how to build again the first Promethean blaze from a stick?

ISMENE

Your voice, Antigone --

ANTIGONE

The walls are thick.

(ANTIGONE continues to dance.)

ISMENE

I should leave you to your dance,
incur the wrath of Jocarthus,
while I mourn inside myself
for do not think I am not sad*,
despite this edict from Crayon
to leave Polyneices on the field
where first he fell*
while Eteocles lies in state
all bathed and beatified, lamented*
and without our invitation.

ANTIGONE

*Sad? Why sad?

*What? Who fell?

*Who lamented?

ANTIGONE

Ismene, what news is this?

ISMENE

Our brothers are dead. Both in one battle. The key to our house gone forever.

ANTIGONE

Polyneices?

ISMENE

Aye, both he and Eteocles

ANTIGONE

I won't spin an inch

ISMENE

dead at the outer city wall to the north.

ANTIGONE

How did it happen?

ISMENE

Eteocles defended our gates and our glory against Polyneices who challenged with Father's sword and shield.

ANTIGONE

They fell together? brother to brother?

ISMENE

Their blood mixed and mingled, as if one couldn't live without the other, coming both from the same womb of shame inflamed by its own seed -- Aye, the old story again!

ANTIGONE

We must lament.

ISMENE

Crayon has forbid any burial rights or lamentations. No one dares approach the body.

ANTIGONE

Would Crayon make laws against the Gods themselves?

ISMENE

It is not for me to say.

ANTIGONE

Then who will say it?

ISMENE

Come, we have much work to do.

ANTIGONE

Have you flasks and urns to wash his body? Herbs and petals to sweeten his way?

(ANTIGONE begins to assemble her needs,
first a basket.)

ISMENE

Please, be calm.

ANTIGONE

While our brother departs unlamented?

ISMENE

There's no changing Crayon's law.

ANTIGONE

But Ismene, Polyneices.

ISMENE

Put it out of mind.

I so look forward to your wedding feast. I've spin thread for a dress for you which we must set to loom.

ANTIGONE

It looms enough.

ISMENE

(returning to her work at the loom)

We must do something with your hair. It's so unruly, so un --

ANTIGONE

Sister, wait! There's work to be done.

ISMENE

You never learned to weave.

ANTIGONE

Our brother's lying on the sand.

ISMENE

I'll teach you.

ANTIGONE

No time for dresses.

(ANTIGONE takes several flasks.)

ISMENE

Ah, but we'll have so much fun.

ANTIGONE

All manner of scavengers can prey upon him.

ISMENE

It's very simple.

ANTIGONE

I'll attend to his wounds,

(ANTIGONE procures a few clean rags.)

ISMENE

The yarn is spun round the shuttlecock, like this.

ANTIGONE

and prepare all the rites.

ISMENE

Your hands are the perfect size.

ANTIGONE

I'll need herbs like myrrh,

(ANTIGONE pulls aside a water jug.)

ISMENE

It's a matter of slipping through.

ANTIGONE

Do you think he'll be guarded?

ISMENE

You'll want to keep an even pace.

ANTIGONE

If not by men then by vultures, ugh.

ISMENE

If you could just sit still.

ANTIGONE

And something to wrap his body in.

(ANTIGONE gets some cloth by the loom
and cradles it in her arms.)

ISMENE

Just think, soon you'll have babies to care for.

(ANTIGONE sees the cloth is too small,
disgusted, drops it.)

ANTIGONE

What will I do with the armor he wore?

ISMENE

That's the best part you know.

ANTIGONE

Bring it home or bury it there?

ISMENE

I finally found something I'm good at.

ANTIGONE

Did you say it was Father's crest?

ISMENE

Except the last one was a girl.

ANTIGONE

(sings nursery rhyme of her youth)

"Sons have armor and daughters have curls.

Strap her to a rock on high, the world's no place for girls."

ISMENE

But I don't mind -- she takes up little space... eats almost nothing.

ANTIGONE

(searching for her sandals)

Have you seen my sandals?

ISMENE

Hardly ever cries.

(referring to sandals absentmindedly)

Over there.

(referring to baby)

So there was no need to expose her, some rock somewhere.

ANTIGONE

Here they are!

(ANTIGONE puts on her sandals.)

ISMENE

When she wakes I'll bring her in and you can hold her. Oh, you'll love it.

ANTIGONE

(gathering up her things)

Polyneices,

ISMENE

Only don't be rough.

ANTIGONE
It won't be long now.

ISMENE
She's just a girl.

ANTIGONE
I'm on my way to the battlefield.

ISMENE
That's no place for you.

ANTIGONE
But I must bury him.

ISMENE
You'll do no such thing!

ANTIGONE
Ismene, I will, and I'll call you by name.

ISMENE
You bring shame on us all to act this way.

ANTIGONE
No one will think you tried to help me. I'll swear to it. And it won't be a lie either.

ISMENE
Crayon will put you to death.

ANTIGONE
But death is no reason to tremble so, if for necessity I must die.

ISMENE
Please, Sister.

ANTIGONE
What is life without God's true laws?
That Crayon would challenge them is no cause to give in.

ISMENE
Antigone, wait!

ANTIGONE

I'll be forced to move you.

(ANTIGONE approaches ISMENE and touches her shoulder lightly. ISMENE winces as if from a bruise.)

ISMENE

Then do so with your words and not your body. I am injured there.

ANTIGONE

Sister?

ISMENE

Not for you to care, but hurt me not with deeds that speak to regain a name you've not yet lost.

ANTIGONE

I'll bury our brother at any cost.

ISMENE

You won't get far. A woman alone on the streets? You'll be stoned before you even reach the place.

ANTIGONE

I lived in the hills so long, believe me when I speak of marauders Father and I often met, and know that i have tongue and wit, will make my way past throngs of men, with nothing to stop nor prevent this burial as the Gods watch over me.

ISMENE

Does it matter whether you achieve your goal?

ANTIGONE

O Sister, leave off. I made him a pact. It's my duty by Zeus and I'll fly.

ISMENE

(with a cape for ANTIGONE to wear)

IF you're so determined then at least put something on.

ANTIGONE

(taking cape)

I will not let Polyneices go -- a tortured ghost --
This world's already too thick with hosts to provide one more.
I gave him my word at Colonus. And by this task I will abide.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

If it's to death I go, the funeral comes first.

(ANTIGONE exits.)

ISMENE

Antigone, I implore you -- !

(ISMENE watches ANTIGONE leave as a memory.)

ISMENE

I see you standing by the statue of Hermes who used to guard our house,
my baby sister, clutching my cape,
about to step beyond all boundaries into a world you barely knew.

scene ii

(ANDROS and CARNOS appear by a small shelter of stones used as cover for field battles outside the northern gate of Athens. Dried blood mixed into sand, littered with corpses and remains of battle. The warrior, POLYNEICES, dead, his shield nearby, his sword gone. ISMENE "sets" them in opposing stances.)

ISMENE

I have known soldiers. They begin as tiny boys, so sweet, and then they turn, how I don't know, but the world seems divided against nature.

CARNOS

It stinks.

ANDROS

What did you expect?

CARNOS

The perfumes of Arabia.

ANDROS

It does stink.

CARNOS

The whole thing stinks.

ANDROS

That too, but I wasn't going to mention --

CARNOS

Here it comes.

ANDROS

You think I'm going to bring it up again? Well, I'm not.

CARNOS

Suits me.

ANDROS

Surely it would. For you know I was right, and I'd be right to mention I was right, so you might get it through your skull for once.

CARNOS

It's in my skull. It permeates the whole atmosphere, Your Rightness. It stinks.

ANDROS

So 'tis my fault, eh?

CARNOS

I didn't say that. I only said it stinks.

ANDROS

'Tis true.

(Pause.)

CARNOS

How long do you think it takes a body to rot?

ANDROS

How should I know?

CARNOS

'Tisn't my fault.

ANDROS

What, to be assigned thus? To be forced to sit here guarding the dead as if they'd up and run away? What is it, mine?

CARNOS

If you hadn't made us both late that one time.

ANDROS

And what was I to do? Send you on ahead?

CARNOS

You always take so long.

ANDROS

That's the pleasure of it.

CARNOS

But you're not supposed to miss a battle.

ANDROS

No, you're not.

CARNOS

What's to be said.

ANDROS

(as if to CRAYON)

Thank you Your Leadership for such leniency in our punishment.

CARNOS

I'll not eat crow.

ANDROS

I'm a lover, not a fighter.

CARNOS

Now you're a guard for the dead.

ANDROS

Feeling amorous today, chickpea?

CARNOS

Will you leave off?

ANDROS

But the sigh of this carnage could be taken for a stimulant.

CARNOS

I'll not get drunk off this scent. To inhale too much might cause me to keel over.

ANDROS

Breathe deeply then Carnos, and bend if you will.

CARNOS

That's how we got into this mess in the first place.

ANDROS

Adonis, wasn't it worth it?

(CARNOS throws ANDROS a look: are you kidding?)

ANDROS

(with teasing sympathy)
Aw, 'tis the stench.

CARNOS

Doesn't do much for my morale.

ANDROS

Won't even share a bit of ambrosia with me, honeycakes?

CARNOS

O no. I'm not falling for that one.

ANDROS

You think this is a trick?

CARNOS

Talk to me of Corinth.

ANDROS

That time it was your fault.

CARNOS

And pray tell what befell us in Delos?

ANDROS

Go to, I've said I had a few problems there, but --

CARNOS

And every time we ruin a mission, what happens?

ANDROS

We fight over whose fault it was.

CARNOS

We lose our rank. We lose out on the best whores. We never get to rape or pillage!

ANDROS

We get demoted, don't forget that part.

CARNOS

I said that first -- we lose our rank.

ANDROS

By Zeus, it stinks here.

CARNOS

Zeus had nothing to do with it.

ANDROS

What's your point?

CARNOS

We don't even get to watch live prisoners anymore. We mess this up, there's no lower station. There's no other place for us to go. This is the bottom, the pit, the lowest, rankest of rank.

ANDROS

The stench of this stink!

(ANDROS drinks harder.)

CARNOS

And you'd have us sink til we're sunk. Put your flask away. I'm not for messing this up.

ANDROS

You think some fool would risk his life to come out here and bury this man?

CARNOS

No.

ANDROS

You think Polyneices will stand up and walk off?

CARNOS

No.

ANDROS

Then why not have a few belts and relax? Might take the stench away.

CARNOS

I doubt it's strong enough for that, but...

ANDROS

Might make it bearable

CARNOS

T'might, but...

ANDROS

What? You think Crayons's sending men to waste time spying on us?

CARNOS

No, but...

ANDROS

You think anyone would use that well downwind of this and see us slacking off?

CARNOS

No, but...

ANDROS

(with drink)
You'd better catch up.

CARNOS

'Tis easier to take it that way?

ANDROS

This and some olive oil -- I'll show you how to take it.

CARNOS

I'll judge for myself, Andros.

(CARNOS takes the flask and inhales the fragrance.)

CARNOS

‘Tis melting my nose hairs. Still smells bad though.

(CARNOS drinks heartily.)

CARNOS

At least we can pass the time well.

(CARNOS takes another long gulp.)

ANDROS

I’ll not have you puke on me.

(THEY begin to pass the flask back and forth between them.)

ANDROS

Here’s to Majority Leader Crayon!

CARNOS

And here’s to his nephew!

ANDROS

(referring to POLYNEICES)
You’d drink to that man?

CARNOS

The other brother.

(ANDROS looks around as if for the other brother.)

CARNOS

The one who fought on our side. The General! Have you not paid attention at all -- in the gymnasium, at symposia? Aye, you’re a fool.

ANDROS

Don’t be calling me a fool. That House is in such disarray, ‘tis a burden on the mind.

CARNOS

Such as yours, I'll give you that.

(THEY grow tipsy.)

ANDROS

We're missing all the action in town, my nymph.

CARNOS

Can't miss the battle and expect to be decorated with whores.

ANDROS

Still I wanted to have me a piece of meat for my supper.

CARNOS

All we've got are rations.

ANDROS

I might arrange a bit of meat for you to suck.

CARNOS

Drink up.

ANDROS

Come round these stones where I've laid my cloak. The ground is softer, and the shade is cool.

CARNOS

Must we keep our armor on?

ANDROS

Against the dead? Here, I'll help you with that.

(THE GUARDS move off behind the stones. ANTIGONE enters, tossing off ISMENE's cape and puts down her basket and water jug. SHE begins to strip POLYNEICES of his armor.)

ANTIGONE

I offer my life in supplication to the Gods and Goddesses who granted me safe passage through the streets to the Seventh Gate, the same one Father and I passed through at the start of our wandering.

Now returned, I come here to begin my own journey out.

(POLYNEICES is naked now except for the customary pouch in which men tied up their genitals as a sign of achieving manhood. ANTIGONE begins to organize her items for the ceremony.)

ANTIGONE

Let me summon the necessary powers of mourning
that come from these female depths
where our wombs carry the grief and sorrow
of the whole of humanity.

Let ululations come to my tongue
in a woman's madness carried out

in the beating of my breasts,
in the tearing of my hair,
in the wailing and flailing

-- that greater battle within for life's sweet freedoms --
and you will be mourned as was my promise.

(ANTIGONE begins the ritual placing 3 green leaves in a low bowl and over this pours water, herbs and rose petals. ANTIGONE begins to wash the body, attending to the wounds and general cleansing beginning with his head working her way down.)

ANTIGONE

when I was three and you were five
your lips a curve of smiles;
the round of your earlobe --
the circle dance of our childhood;
the circle of this cloth on your skin
in remembrance of all that once was:

when I was four and you were six
the hollows of your throat
and this lump like sorrow
echoed more laughter and song than cries
but you are no more.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

when I was five and you were seven
 and half a man, your broad shoulders
 and back carried me as a horse its rider
 in games in the courtyard;
 when I was six and you were eight
 your chest I beat in anger at your teasing.
 but you are no more.

when I was seven and you were nine
 your stomach could hold
 more honeycake than mine
 belch much louder than Father
 and make me hiccough in excitement;
 but you are no more.

when I was eight and you were ten
 your hips and legs ran beyond
 the walls of our home
 into the streets and out
 into a world I wanted
 much more than you did;
 but you are no more.

I'd like to go back to when
 you were five and I was three
 your feet, these awful toes
 that scratched e in sleep, but you are no more.

and this --

(ANTIGONE undoes the pouch covering
 POLYNEICES' genitals and proceeds to
 wash them.)

ANTIGONE

What a curiosity!
 with all the statues that depict man's shape,
 with all the cups and bowls that show it,
 I have never known such a thing in life,
 but I have wondered.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

How small and strange it is.
 Rather older than the rest of you
 with its wrinkly skin
 but also younger
 in color and texture,
 like an infant's babe's!

And to think this the origin of so much fuss. Hmm.
 But you are no more.

ISMENE

O, Antigone... It is for this reason
 young girls are kept from the funeral rites
 and only attend the burials.
 Such impropriety!

(Realizing there is no hole in which to bury
 him, ANTIGONE begins to pray.)

ANTIGONE

O that I could move the earth

ISMENE

O that I could urge the sun

ANTIGONE

to give your burial the speed and urgency of Apollo's chariot

ISMENE

to give back your days so that I'd be the one

ANTIGONE

blazing through the sky to its inevitable setting in the Adriatic sea.

ISMENE

to aid and assist you in your task which was mine as well

ANTIGONE

as you will find rest in your river.

ISMENE

a grave of rock and sand,
I might have helped you --

(ISMENE rushes from the cave and digs a
grave for POLYNEICES.)

ANTIGONE

Assist me Divinities in creating this dark earthly space
that will provide my brother the rest and comfort he deserves.

(ANTIGONE opens her eyes and see the
grave ISMENE has dug. ANTIGONE puts
POLYNEICES in the grave.)

ANTIGONE

And for this miracle of a grave so easily dug
I thank the Gods and Goddesses for their assistance
and the privilege of making their wishes into deeds.

(ANTIGONE covers POLYNEICES in
ISMENE's cape.)

ISMENE

Not my cape!

(ANTIGONE buries POLYNEICES,
sprinkling flowers and herbs upon the
grave.)

ANTIGONE

Let no wind come to deny the culprit of the deed who is myself, Antigone,

ISMENE

O what have I done?

ANTIGONE

and let my name be shouted from the streets and the walls of the city,

ISMENE

I aimed to save your life

ANTIGONE

and I will stand proudly for my execution,

ISMENE

not to doom it.

ANTIGONE

for such a crime has no malice in it.

ISMENE

A curse on the sands of time, the waves that ebb and flow.

ANTIGONE

This act is as just as living and breathing.

ISMENE

This act was rash and hastily done.

ANTIGONE

Aye, let it be known:
the perpetrator of this righting of wrong is Antigone.

(ANTIGONE writes her name in the sand
beside the grave.)

ISMENE

No, do not write your name!

ANTIGONE

Let them see that I walk through their streets.

ISMENE

Do not call attention to yourself.

ANTIGONE

Let them hear that I speak with my own mouth.

ISMENE

In the year you were born,

ANTIGONE

Let them know that I argue for my own thoughts and ideas.

(ISMENE starts to wipe away
ANTIGONE's name in the sand.)

ISMENE

Pericles said the greatest glory of a woman is to be the least talked about by men, whether they are praising you or criticizing.

ANTIGONE

Let them attest that I can act, for the best of my intentions are not to destroy the civilized world, but to add to its greatness as only woman can!

(ANTIGONE exits.)

CARNOS

I dreamed a terrible dream just now.

ANDROS

I dreamed a great owl did swoop down over this battlefield and devour all the dead.

CARNOS

I dreamed it was a sparrow, grown large and grotesque, filled with the bodies of our enemy.

ANDROS

I heard cries and lamentations.

CARNOS

I heard the ringing out of women's voices.

(Pause.)

CARNOS

I denounce this nectar.

ANDROS

We shall not drink again.

CARNOS

We won't touch another drop.

ANDROS

Never again! Oh my head.

CARNOS
 Your head?
 (seeing the burial mound)
 My eyes!

ANDROS
 (of his hangover)
 Your eyes? My mind!

CARNOS
 (pointing to the mound)
 Are we deceived?

ANDROS
 (finally seeing the mound)
 Do you not see what I don't see?

CARNOS
 I see what I should never see, that Polyneices has been buried.

ANDROS
 Buried indeed. With all the rights and lamenting.

CARNOS
 Herbs and flowers upon this mound. O, we are doomed!

ANDROS
 (holding his head)
 Not so loud.
 What shall we do?

CARNOS
 Dig him up?

ANDROS
 But that's sacrilegious.

CARNOS
 So was leaving him to rot.

ANDROS
 Aye but Crayon said --

CARNOS

Forget what Crayon said. Whoever heard of leaving the dead unburied?

ANDROS

You could challenge the Majority Leader?

CARNOS

Up, of course not. Let's dig him up.

ANDROS

Good, then no one'll know.

CARNOS

Wait. Someone will know.

ANDROS

(looking around nervously)
What? Is someone about?

CARNOS

Look here, the tiny feet!

ANDROS

Polyneices had no sons.

CARNOS

I can think of none who would have done this.

ANDROS

Gods! 'Twas the Gods defied.

CARNOS

Aye, we've angered Them.

ANDROS

O, now we're doomed in life and death.

CARNOS

We'll have to speak with the Majority Leader.

ANDROS

Do we have to say?

CARNOS
You'd prefer we run away?

ANDROS
We could join the Argive army.

CARNOS
I will not.

ANDROS
We could live in the hills and hunt for our meat.

CARNOS
Are you mad, man?

ANDROS
We're doomed for sure.

CARNOS
There must be a reason for this, some clue.

ANDROS
I can think of none.

CARNOS
One is the small size of the shoe.

ANDROS
If a funeral was indeed performed...

CARNOS
...it must have been a woman who lamented and adorned this grave.

ANDROS
A woman?

CARNOS
Who else? At least that explains the tiny feet.

ANDROS
'Tis no small feat to defy the Senate.

CARNOS

We've been duped and by a woman!

ANDROS

The rest of the men will surely scorn us.

CARNOS

Cover it up. All these small indentations.

(THEY begins to get rid of ANTIGONE's footsteps in the sand and wipe away the rest of her name which they don't even notice as a name.)

ANDROS

Good idea. And these strange markings too.

CARNOS

Wait, that may have been a clue.

ANDROS

Too late now.

CARNOS

What'll we do?

ANDROS

Leave him in his grave until the Senate gives us new orders.

CARNOS

And we'll say we were watching the whole time too.

ANDROS

Yes, and clear in our minds.

(THEY bury the flask that held the liquor.)

CARNOS

And we'll say we were watching the whole time too.

ANDROS

Yes, and clear in our minds.

(THEY bury the flask that held the liquor.)

And in the flash of an eye	CARNOS
as if by the will of the gods	ANDROS
(as if to CRAYON) Your Majesty's edict was denied.	CARNOS
As if by magic	ANDROS
or witchcraft	CARNOS
or heavenly powers	ANDROS
especially since this is the Seventh Gate!	CARNOS
How's that?	ANDROS
It faces Mt. Olympus where all the Gods have a clear view.	CARNOS
Exactly! That's what we'll say.	ANDROS
Who's we?	CARNOS
You and I.	ANDROS
Both?	CARNOS

ANDROS

You want to go alone?

CARNOS

No, but... No sense both of us losing our lives for this tale.

ANDROS

So you'd leave it up to me?

CARNOS

No, I'd make it fair. We could draw lots.

ANDROS

(pelvic gesture)
Long stick see the Senate?

CARNOS

Agreed.

(CARNOS and ANDROS exit.)

scene iii

(ISMENE goes to the grave and picks up the cape to use as a wedding dress.)

ISMENE

They say I weave better than the wife of Crayon.

(ISMENE drapes the fabric over herself with pleasure.)

ISMENE

This is for you, Sister.

(anxiously pacing)

O that you return so I might fit this to your size.

O that you would notice how I save all my best tricks for your cloth
and dress myself in the simplest stitch.

(ANTIGONE enters tossing off her sandals.)

ANTIGONE

Ismene, pinch me quick!

ISMENE

By Zeus, you've returned!

ANTIGONE

By Zeus and Persephone --

ISMENE

I was worried.

ANTIGONE

and by Artemis, Athena --

ISMENE

I was sick with it all afternoon.

ANTIGONE

and by so many others I cannot name them all, but you can see me?

ISMENE

Why, of course! Where is my cape?

ANTIGONE

Then pinch me here. I need to know if I'm alive.

ISMENE

(pinching her)

Is it done then as I heard?

ANTIGONE

I'm alive then. I'm alive! O, never was I so happy as this.

ISMENE

All through the town there is talk of your deed only they speak not of you.

ANTIGONE

Not of me?

ISMENE

You fooled the guards completely. They all believe it was the Gods who buried our brother.

ANTIGONE

Gods? Why yes, it is true, for a miracle did occur*
while I stood over the body, with no one but me to see it.
But you can see me, so I must exist!!!

ISMENE

*a miracle? That I'd like to see.

ISMENE

I thought of an alibi in case the guards inquire

ANTIGONE

(with concern)
I was ignored in the streets
as if I was air,

ISMENE

Here, take this cloth.

ANTIGONE

even as I brushed past others on my way they didn't shake their sticks,

ISMENE

You can say you spent the day weaving.

ANTIGONE

and after the deed was done I made a point to walk more slowly through Athens,

ISMENE

Then no one will know what you've done.

ANTIGONE

I even stopped briefly at the palace,

ISMENE

Foolish girl!

ANTIGONE

but no one even looked at me.

ISMENE

And what of my cape? Have you lost it?

ANTIGONE

I began to think some strange spell had been cast.

ISMENE

Ah, the festival of Adonis. All the women will be released into the streets, so no one looked on you (for once).

ANTIGONE

A festival? for Adonis?

ISMENE

Aye, the women all mourn the end of love, such notions we have! Three days ago it began with the planting of seeds in small pots on the rooftops, but we add no water, so the small shoots droop and dry up like such old fruit.

ANTIGONE

I should like to plant like that without a care as to what would grow.

ISMENE

It is quite a shame I think. And the dancing...

ANTIGONE

Dancing?

ISMENE

and singing.

ANTIGONE

Singing?

ISMENE

and howling, such laments you've never heard. Nonsense, really. Then the body of Adonis is carried through the town to the sea where he is thrown.

ANTIGONE

And we are going?

ISMENE

No. You committed treason today and should act at least the well-behaved.

ANTIGONE

All the better reason to celebrate since in time I will be found. I spelled my name on the sand by the gravesite.

ISMENE

What's the use of trying to announce yourself?

ANTIGONE

But if no one knows,

ISMENE

Madness.

ANTIGONE

if they think it was the Gods and Goddesses, then they'll never repeal the law.

ISMENE

(aside)

She's a statesman.

(to ANTIGONE)

Perhaps the wind blew the shape of your letters away.

ANTIGONE

But I prayed to be discovered for the act. I must be!

ISMENE

But you've done it. Your promise was kept. Enough now. You're too lucky.

(ISMENE hands ANTIGONE the cloth for her wedding dress.)

ISMENE

Take it.

ANTIGONE

I'll have none of this. For wedding or excuse.

ISMENE

You will be married now the deed is done.

ANTIGONE

Polyneices was lucky.

ISMENE

You'll lift this gown on your wedding day and kiss your dreams of Adonis away

ANTIGONE

He had a name in life.

ISMENE

and bear your babes with the strength of two mares as our mother and her mother before her,

ANTIGONE

He didn't need your urns.

ISMENE

and you will stop with these complaints,

ANTIGONE

He'll always be remembered as a man who lived

ISMENE

and no more talk of crimes, they don't befit your station.

ANTIGONE

whereas women like you, Sister, can only be known as having died.

ISMENE

You insolent -- !

ANTIGONE

I'll follow him to his resting place as sure and swiftly as I hope his mortal wounds came to take his breath.

ISMENE

For certain you've lost your mind.

ANTIGONE

Today I dowered Death for the privilege of burying our brother.

ISMENE

You try my patience.

ANTIGONE

For the privilege the Gods and Goddesses bestow upon me.

ISMENE

You come into my house, jumping up and down all the time...

ANTIGONE

The laws for civilization itself -- !

ISMENE

Haven't listened to a word I've said.

ANTIGONE

A higher moral order than the laws of Man.

ISMENE

And Jocarthus now suspects.

ANTIGONE

(of Man)

Who deny the nature of life.

ISMENE

When the guards came to announce this breach --

ANTIGONE

For how should we sustain ourselves without prayer and lamentations?

ISMENE

He asked for you and wondered if you'd brought some shame on us.

ANTIGONE

Through war alone?

(THE CHORUS OF ADONIA can be heard
quietly in the distance.)

ISMENE

Take this cloth, and we'll cut it to your size.

The sooner you wed the sooner I can restore my own marriage.

(ANTIGONE does not take the cloth.)

ANTIGONE

I'm sorry if I'm a burden to you, but all that can be easily fixed.

(ANTIGONE puts her sandals back on.)

ISMENE

What now?

ANTIGONE

I'm going to the festival.

ISMENE

You will not leave this house again.

ANTIGONE

No, after this, I won't return.

ISMENE

But the doors will not be locked tonight. Jocarthus has gone to the Senate to debate the war in Sicily.

ANTIGONE

And I'm sure he is all for it.

ISMENE

He's three ships in the harbor and much to gain.

ANTIGONE

More slaves for your house. You must be pleased.

ISMENE

Antigone, I fear...

ANTIGONE

I'll spend the night with Polyneices.

ISMENE

You should not leave in such a state.

ANTIGONE

Surely the guards will find me then,

ISMENE

You go too far.

ANTIGONE

and I'll be brought before Crayon and can argue my case.

ISMENE

Who gives you these ideas? Was it Father?

ANTIGONE

He spoke to me of many things such as girls never do get to hear.

ISMENE

Did he fill your head with stories of the Gods as if he knew them, as if they would do his bidding?

ANTIGONE

What if he did?

ISMENE

Hmph, some goods the Gods did him. And you expect the same privilege? Whose gods are they? Yours? I think not.

ANTIGONE

Ismene, what are you saying?

ISMENE

If you think that stone of a pillar out there has real power
know that he was built only to keep me within these walls,
not that I would run,
but I have no need to pray to him or expect my prayers will be answered.
And neither will yours.

(THE CHORUS OF ADONIA can be heard
closer now.)

ANTIGONE

Then to me it's more important to find recognition
for my self and my sex
than to quiet the waves of society's ocean
and go to my grave in obscurity.

(ANTIGONE exits to join the festival.)

ISMENE

I recognize myself in her words.
Woman, the quieter of waves. Yes, that's me.
And she, the opposite. So it our fate.

(ISMENE drops the cloth for the wedding
dress.)

scene iv

(ANTIGONE joins WOMEN on rooftops carry out the ritual of the festival. ISMENE, in cave, remains alone, isolated. The CHORUS OF ADONIA should float through the space as if eternal.)

CHORUS OF ADONIA

We all know there are rules against affection
between man and wife which say there's none to share
so I'll keep my own Adonis, in my heart protect hi,
for I know my husband never looks in there.

ISMENE

Antigone, I hear you now clearly as I heard you then.
You haunt my days, your voice resounds in this cave
as if the essence of you will echo forever.

CHORUS OF ADONIA

There's a way to love a woman and it goes (kiss, kiss)
there's a way to love a woman and it's fun
if you tell her that you love her every day to day
she'll be sure to love you back and never run

(TWO WOMEN and ANTIGONE dance
and scatter flower petals.)

ISMENE

Antigone, your voice is strong like the song of a bird
lifted by the wind and carried through space across time --
I hear you in all towns, on all hills,
in women's rooms, and on the paths we tread.
You won't be heard in the Senate of Athens
but maybe in the courts that will come.

(JOCARTHUS appears at a podium in the
Senate.)

CHORUS OF ADONIA

O Adonis knows to touch me on my lips (lips, lips)
both the ones above and yes the ones below
he takes such delight in gyrating his narrow hips

and he takes his time to let my pleasure grow

JOCARTHUS

It has been seven months, my friends, seven months since we returned from Melos, taught our slaves obedience, and reminded our women of the same.

CHORUS OF ADONIA

O the myrtle berry hides in the bush bush bush
and it misses the attention of your tongue
how I know you like to get down to the push push push
but if you would lick it for me, O what fun!

(WOMEN light torches.)

JOCARTHUS

And now, in order to fulfill the destiny that belongs to this great democracy, what more can be done here but to ready ourselves to conquer again?

(WOMEN and ANTIGONE leave the rooftops as night falls with an effigy of Adonis which they carry through the city.)

CHORUS OF ADONIA

When my husband goes to war I am not lonely
When my husband is away I never cry
'Cause Adonis comes to hold me and console me
He's my darling, you can see the reason why.

JOCARTHUS

Our fine allies the Segestans come to us as leaders in the hopes that we rout the barbarism and tyranny they are subject to in Sicily. Our democracy is a beacon to them, degraded as they are, victims of a cruel system they ask our help to rise above.

CHORUS OF ADONIA

O Adonis knew the places on my body
O Adonis knew to touch me where to rub
if my husband knew a thing or two about yours truly
he might receive a kiss and not a snub.

JOCARTHUS

Is it not our duty as Statesmen so highly evolved to bring grave destruction on this base island that denies Man the sweet freedoms we take to be our natural rights? I say we have a

responsibility to insure Man's liberties, to live enlightened and blessed and pay the price of establishing democracies throughout the world for the Gods and for the glory!

(Cheers from the Senate and ululations from WOMEN all across the polis.)

CHORUS OF ADONIA

When my man returns from war, his balls be hangin'
for the time he's spent akillin on the sea
if they're not you can be sure he's been abangin'
and the girl he put his thang in wasn't me!

(The WOMEN pass a statue of Hermes.)

WOMAN 2

Out of my way, penis! You're dead,

(WOMAN 2, in play, smacks at the phallus on the herm, and it breaks off and falls to the ground. Before WOMAN 2 realizes what she has done, SHE continues with her jest.)

WOMAN 2

and I'm in mourning!

(SHE surveys the damage.)

WOMAN 2

Finally I've made a dent in the world.

WOMAN 3

More than that. What'll we do?

ANTIGONE

I wish you'd done that outside the House of Jocarthus.

WOMAN 3

The Senator? O no!

WOMAN 2

We can go back that way. I'm often clumsy.

WOMAN 3

(handling the fallen phallus)
It's rather large, don't you think?

WOMAN 2

I've only known one.

ANTIGONE

They don't look like that.

WOMAN 2

How would you know?

WOMAN 3

You're not married yet.

ANTIGONE

My brother's was much smaller.

WOMAN 2

I wouldn't know.

WOMAN 3

Do you think my husband comes to me with a lamp?

WOMAN 2

(to WOMAN 3)

Can you imagine -- to be so used while knowing what it is they're using!

ANTIGONE

I've a mind to knock them all off.

WOMAN 3

But that seems so -- so --

WOMAN 2

Unnatural!

ANTIGONE

To let them stand without relief is unnatural.

WOMAN 3

(agreeing)

Priapism goes hard with men.

But what'll we do with them? WOMAN 2

Use them for playthings! WOMAN 3

(taking the phallus)
Look! I'm a herm-aphrodite! WOMAN 2

We'll drop them in the sea to cool them down. ANTIGONE

Bury them forever? WOMAN 2

So they won't be reattached. ANTIGONE

Why? WOMAN 3

To relieve the pressure. ANTIGONE

I see. WOMAN 2

She's right. They're an exaggeration of nature. WOMAN 3

A burden. WOMAN 2

A threat. ANTIGONE

Into the sea with them. WOMAN 2

All of them? WOMAN 3

WOMAN 2

But there are so many.

WOMAN 3

Outside every house.

WOMAN 2

In front of all the public buildings.

WOMAN 3

Even the altars have Herms to guard them.

ANTIGONE

A phallus to remind us always of our place.

WOMAN 3

Everywhere we go.

WOMAN 2

When we're permitted.

WOMAN 3

When we're not shut in,

WOMAN 2

or locked up.

ANTIGONE

As if they would watch our every move.

WOMAN 2

Like my husband, only colder.

WOMAN 3

And harder for longer.

WOMAN 2

I'm glad he's quick about it myself.

ANTIGONE

Let's destroy them.

WOMAN 2

By accident?

ANTIGONE

On purpose, as if we were amazons.

WOMAN 3

Even the ones by the Senate?

ANTIGONE

Especially those.

WOMAN 2

In the Garden of Herms?

WOMAN 3

Outside every single home!

ANTIGONE

Every

ANTIGONE (cont'd) and WOMAN 3

phallus

ANTIGONE (cont'd) and WOMAN 3 (cont'd) and WOMAN 2
in the city!

(THEY ululate and set out on a spree to knock all the phalluses off of the Herms. The cave/prison where ISMENE has been observing anxiously.)

ISMENE

Was there any way I could have stopped you? Please tell me. What could I have done? I couldn't keep you in, but I was wrong to let you out.

(ANTIGONE enters cave as a ghost.)

ANTIGONE

You know how it ends.

ISMENE

I warned you. I scolded you. Should I have barred the door? Called for men?

ANTIGONE

We can't be saved by them.

ISMENE

Yet I always dream and hope. I thought their laws would save you. I lived by them too.

ANTIGONE

Who is it hurts you most?

(ANTIGONE exits. If desired an interval may occur here.)

scene v

ISMENE

I loved my brothers before they went to battle.
I love my sons though I am warned against it.
What will they think of me, their mother?

(Lights up on VIO, ANDROS and CARNOS late at night. A tableau at the gravesite where POLYNEICES has been horribly mutilated. VIO leads ANDROS and CARNOS to kick the mutilated POLYNEICES.)

VIOLATUS

Come on boys!

ANDROS

Take that you bully!

VIOLATUS

Put a little life in it!

CARNOS

I'll show you, Polyneices!

VIOLATUS

(in disapproval, gathering ANDROS and CARNOS)
Boys, boys, boys.

(ANDROS with POLYNEICES' armor.
CARNOS in ISMENE's cape prancing and

laughing with ANDROS. VIOLATUS tears
the cape from CARNOS in anger.)

VIOLATUS

What are you, a woman?
(with cape)
'Tis from the House of Jocarthus.

CARNOS
Huh?

ANDROS
Whose house?

VIOLATUS

(referring to cape's distinctive trim)
Can you not recognize the colors? You shall take it to the Senate.

ANDROS

(with POLYNEICES' shield)
This'll make a fine gift for him as well.

VIOLATUS

Are you blind, man? 'Tis not for gifts, but proof of treason.

CARNOS

And the crest of Oedipus has been known to turn him red with anger.

ANDROS

We could melt it down for something finer.

CARNOS

Sucking up to Crayon, are you?

ANDROS

Is that all that's on your mind?

CARNOS

Since when did you get so high and mighty?

VIOLATUS

Go to. Let's pass this flask and set the tone for a night of good soldiering.

ANDROS

Um, uh, we've sworn off.

CARNOS

We wanted to keep a keen eye.

VIOLATUS

No wonder you've lost rank.

CARNOS

But --

ANDROS

We thought...

VIOLATUS

What most heightens the sense of man besides good drink from a fine cellar?

CARNOS

You've got a point there.

ANDROS

I can see that. Uh-huh.

VIOLATUS

When you've had your fill of meat, Carnos, what most aids in the digestion?

CARNOS

Good liquor.

VIOLATUS

And when your spirits drop so that you cannot focus on the task at hand, what excited a man more, Andros, than to revive himself with new spirit?

ANDROS

Besides good spirits to drink? A woman?

VIOLATUS

And what better time to fill man's guts with alcohol and lust than the night he waits on the field of battle ready to snatch and expose his enemy?

(CARNOS howls to the moon. THEY pass VIOLATUS's flask and drink heartily, howling and braying at the moon throughout the next few lines.)

VIOLATUS

You wanted me to tell you of my last great conquest, in Melos?

CARNOS

How many women did you bed?

VIOLATUS

Couldn't say for sure, but more than I could count.

CARNOS

Did you bring them back with you?

VIOLATUS

What for?

ANDROS

You just left them there? Free?

VIOLATUS

When I was done with that city, there was no free.

ANDROS

I heard it was a real bloodbath.

CARNOS

Aye! We heard the few you left alive were sold as slaves or whores

ANDROS

in Athens and the port of Piraeus.

VIOLATUS

Boys, that's not the point at all. I'll speak on the joys of my battles. There's a way to make better soldiers of you.

(VIOLATUS illustrates his actions physically using CARNOS and ANDROS as women, but HE is not actually hurting them, only mimicking the acts.)

(CARNOS and ANDROS repeat - echo - all capitalized words where indicated by the asterisks. CARNOS and ANDROS might also pantomime VIOLATUS's actions, but they don't really understand what VIOLATUS is teaching them.)

VIOLATUS

What sets your teeth to gnashing and your eyes to flame?

What is the worst thing a man can be called? WOMAN.*
 But what is woman anyway - a lesser form of man? Perhaps.
 But how does she come to be this way? MAN MAKES HER SO.*
 And how does man do this?

With an UPPER CUT to the cheek,* a LEFT to the jaw.*
 For as they cower, we EXPAND.*
 As they cry out, we hear music.
 Does it not make you hot to think of the woman of your dreams in CHAINS,* her legs spread
 wide to expose that ugly flower of her sex for your enjoyment?

CARNOS and ANDROS

Hot, yes, hot!

VIOLATUS

We are not slappers and scratchers. WE ARE MEN.*
 And women would be men for for the woe we add to their name
 with a TWIST of their nipple*
 for did they not toss us off when we were babes?
 And must we not SCORN THEM for the power they held at that time?*
 How else should we be men?

ANDROS

How?

CARNOS

How else?

VIOLATUS

To think of our enemies in battles as these women we so desire,
 and to DESTROY them one by one IN HEAT **
 and then to take their WOMEN*
 -- the best ones are those respected in the town --
 and DRAG them out of their homes with their babes,*
 and humiliate the so they no longer show their teeth,
 for they have NO more TEETH to show**
 -- 'tis all the better for their sucking too --
 and make them your plaything, and you will GROW.*
 You will find your MANHOOD unshakably certain,*
 and you will be the GLORY OF ATHENS,*
 as strong as the columns that hold up the great Temple
 -- you'll feel as WIDE -- *
 for there is nothing like the PRIDE that comes*
 from the LOWERING of those creatures *
 who have borne you out of their own subjugation
 to the men we emulate all our lives,
 our own FATHERS,*

the HEROS of this city. *

(Growling, howling and barking ensues.)

ANTIGONE

(offstage)

There's a way to love a woman and it goes (kiss, kiss)

There's a way to love a woman and it's fun

VIOLATUS

Sssssh, someone's coming.

(ANTIGONE enters with phallus in hand
singing the chorus of Adonia.)

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

if you tell her that you love her every day to day --

(seeing POLYNEICES)

All my work, all my prayers destroyed,

I curse you Crayon --

VIOLATUS

(from behind the stone, unseen)

Who goes there?

ANTIGONE

It is Antigone, daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta, sister to Polyneices.

(in anguish at the desecration)

Polyneices.

(gestures strongly with herm phallus)

I am Antigone!

(CARNOS and ANDROS move towards
ANTIGONE with VIOLATUS pressing
THEM forward. THEY stalk her like
predators their prey, close in on her, howl
and curse her.)

CARNOS

Woman!

VIOLATUS

Are you boys?

We are soldiers!	ANDROS
Are you men?	VIOLATUS
Aye, men, men, we are men!	CARNOS and ANDROS
I've got her wrists. Be a man now!	VIOLATUS
Woe to thee!	ANDROS
Lowest creature!	CARNOS
Show her what you're made of!	VIOLATUS
Small one!	ANDROS
Beast! Sow!	CARNOS
At her boys!	VIOLATUS
Piglet!	ANDROS
Cunt!	CARNOS
Animal!	ANDROS
Whore!	CARNOS and ANDROS

(In the cave, ISMENE screams as if from a shock or a nightmare.)

ISMENE

Stop!

(Interval may take place here.)

scene vi

ISMENE

Is it my fault you were raped?
 Women are raped in battle -- this is one thing of which I am certain.
 But our battles are not only fought on distant fields:
 there are battles in the streets, at the wells, in our homes.
 And it isn't always men telling us where to go and how to act.
 We tell ourselves. And I told you, Sister. Over and over again.

(A dank, dark prison. ANTIGONE lays on the floor bruised and beaten, bloodied. ISMENE, also bruised, is thrown into the prison with ANTIGONE. ISMENE keeps a certain distance.)

ISMENE

Sister poor Sister, sweet Sister sweet, Sorrow sweet Sister, sweet Sister sweet.

ANTIGONE

I cannot move for burning.

ISMENE

This blood is all your tears unleashed, and I lament for you sorrow as I know you would for mine.

ANTIGONE

You know I do. I fear I've caused you harm.

ISMENE

I tried to stop you, didn't I?

ANTIGONE

Who said I could be stopped?

ISMENE

Are you not sorry for it now?

ANTIGONE

I am in pain, but I am not sorry.

ISMENE

But surely the guards have punished you firmly* even if --

ANTIGONE

Is that what the guards were sent to do?
I'll beg Crayon to let me end my life.

ISMENE

Only one more insult you add to his injury.

ANTIGONE

His injury? What of mine?

ISMENE

You broke the rules.

ANTIGONE

I must be a very bad woman then.

ISMENE

Women who uphold the rules of man are kept safe.

ANTIGONE

Safe from what?

ISMENE

From men of course.

Little one, how can I expect you to understand? You don't know men.

ANTIGONE

I know why you cry at night.

ISMENE

I cry, yes, for the sorriest of creatures,
Man, who could be a god but fell too short.

ISMENE (cont'd)

A man is a fragile and broken thing
 who has no real footing in the world
 without a woman,
 and if he should be shown that which he desires,
 he may burst if he cannot have it.

 It is a physical fact
 that to deny a man might cause hi to harm himself,
 so like the eggshell grows the bird.

ANTIGONE

Eggshell indeed!

ISMENE

I cry for trying to please him,
 and I cry for having failed
 (though I am punished well for it).

ANTIGONE

Why Ismene, why?

ISMENE

I'm vigilant always with myself to boost him up,
 deny him nothing, offer him whatall I can give,
 for he would have nothing without it, and then I would be lost as well.

ANTIGONE

You've never made a choice with yourself in mind, have you?

ISMENE

A choice? For what? Betrayal? Treason? No, I don't make choices like that.

ANTIGONE

And whoever does should be beaten, should be used in such a manner as I've been used?

ISMENE

Don't like what you asked for?

ANTIGONE

I asked to right a wrong done to the dead, against the Gods' laws, against the family, yet you are satisfied to see me thus. What does that mean, Sister?

ISMENE

You were out too late at night.

ANTIGONE

Are there hours for women and hours for me?

ISMENE

I should say.

ANTIGONE

Then time is touched by gender?

ISMENE

You were hardly dressed.

ANTIGONE

I am not ashamed, are you?

ISMENE

And my cape lent in good faith returned by Crayon's guards to disgrace my house.

ANTIGONE

When I argue for a woman's right to bury her own brother, I argue for you and your place in the world.

ISMENE

My place was secure.

ANTIGONE

I acted on a natural urge to bring harmony to the city, and now I'm blamed for trying to achieve balance --

ISMENE

Is it harmonious to provoke them by smashing the Herms?

ANTIGONE

If the world was filled with images of women baring their breasts or their thighs, would the world be a safe one? Don't you think it would create the same dissonance?

ISMENE

I was not aware of it, no.

ANTIGONE

The world might turn without your notice, but I will challenge it again and again to prove it is mistaken in its turning.

ISMENE

You went too far.

ANTIGONE

And when Jocarthus beats you with his hand, a rope, a club, is it your fault?

ISMENE

Fault is there.

ANTIGONE

His. Not yours. Did it ever occur to you that we are so low in the world that moving across a room -- as a worm would crawl a field -- we might be stepped on, and cursed, only for being there?

ISMENE

Not you. No. You would rise up and bite the closest ankle. I know you.

ANTIGONE

Then condemn me yourself. Condemn me to be like you, nothing.

ISMENE

You don't know what you want.

ANTIGONE

And you live by codes that ring your mind.

ISMENE

You're a child tugging at the world's hem.

ANTIGONE

Like the songs our mother used to sing to put us to sleep. They meander through our brains until we no longer know when we sing and when we are silent. You no longer remember where you learned these tunes to which you dance.

ISMENE

Pushing on Crayon's law as if he'd change it for you. As if Father was still the king. You've gone mad.

ANTIGONE

I have gone angered.

ISMENE

Reject as you will, the court will now decide your fate. And when you're brought before them -- I dare you -- to teach them a different song.

ANTIGONE

When it is my turn to speak, I will not do so as a lady.

ISMENE

Your turn to speak will never come.

ANTIGONE

When it is my turn to speak, I will speak as myself.

ISMENE

Do you imagine they would waste their time listening to the likes of you?

ANTIGONE

The likes? You mean my size? Perhaps my age? my skin? Or is it a question of purity, for that was their doing surely not mine. Speak plainly that I might know how I've come to be so silenced.

ISMENE

You are a woman.

ANTIGONE

Have I no mouth? No tongue to shape my thoughts? No thoughts to explain my deeds?

ISMENE

How many times must I remind you of your sex and your place as your sex defines it/

ANTIGONE

Last night I dreamed you came to me with a bowl of bitter plums too young and green to have fallen from the tree limbs on their own, and your hands were rough from the difficult plucking. "Eat," you said and demonstrated without pucker, plum after bitter plum, until I questioned the possibility of such ingestion.

ISMENE

And what of their pits?

ANTIGONE

You became one.
Swallowing the laws of man as if their poison would not reduce you to a simple seed.

ISMENE

From one seed a plant may grow.

ANTIGONE

Though I may starve or hang, know that you have never comforted me,
not once in my agony,
nor held out a hand for me to rise again to stand with you.
No, you are not a sister, and know that I will die alone!

(THEY pace without touching. THEY
frown and look down. Pause.)

ISMENE

You do me grave injustice, Antigone. To say that all the female things of life are worthless is to turn your back on all women.

ANTIGONE

You misunderstand me, Ismene. I would honor any task you chose for yourself, but I question whether you ever invited the path you tread so lightly.

ISMENE

There are rewards in what I do and who I am, a woman foremost. I learned at the age of fourteen, younger than you are now, to train and manage a staff of twelve which has grown to twenty, to organize and inventory equipment and supplies for the house, store and manage the distribution of grain, wine and oil, meet an annual budget, and see to the making of all household linen and clothing from raw fleece to the finished pieces, all this with his mother, sisters and soldiers looking on.

ANTIGONE

But you are not free to come and go as you please.

ISMENE

Where would I go?

ANTIGONE

Do you care for this work which you manage so well?

ISMENE

I never imagined one should care about something so set in the ways of the world.

You think I live a lie, don't you?

Do I seem overly proud?

the best a woman can be,

having married well,

such an honorable house,

and three children, two of them boys who will grow up to be just like there - father?

I have no standing in your eyes, do I? You don't believe it is a good thing to keep a house for a man, especially one who makes - war - on innocent people like those from Melos.

All those slaves he brought back were honorable women once like me,

you think I don't know that?

And surely it is not honorable to suffer his beatings for my own good, due to my own failings --

(ISMENE breaks off unable to speak further.)

ANTIGONE

They are due to his fear of you and your goodness.

ISMENE

I have failed you.

ANTIGONE

You were Mother's daughter all spindle and thread,

ISMENE

It is no wonder you don't wish to marry,

ANTIGONE

and I was Father's questioning the laws of man over mountainous terrain.

ISMENE

I am a poor model to follow.

ANTIGONE

He did encourage me.

ISMENE

More like a son, I'd say.

ANTIGONE

But always a daughter.

ISMENE

There is no way to change one's path.

ANTIGONE

But paths are changed. It is stations, society's strictures, that take such tie and force of will.

ISMENE

We have no such time or force. If I take some pride in being the wife of Jocarthus, then the Gods may strike me dead one day, but to say that I am an object of your scorn

ANTIGONE

I have not said that.

ISMENE

for doing work you see as low and meaningless is to discount all of my accomplishments and make a woman mean less than she is,

ANTIGONE

No, Ismene, no.

ISMENE

and that, I imagine, is something you would be against at all costs. You would destroy our entire world.

ANTIGONE

I would try to offer you a new one. Know that you do not struggle against imaginary demons. You are not less and less each day as Jocarthus would have you believe but more and more.

ISMENE

More and more? It is only my hips I see growing.

ANTIGONE

Know that Jocarthus is afraid of you,

ISMENE

Afraid?

ANTIGONE

and he would have you hate yourself, so the worst thing you could do to revenge his brutality is to love yourself, in spite of him, for you survive his cruelty.

ISMENE

Well-provoked.

ANTIGONE

He does not beat you for your own good but for his. There are no lies in your mind but the ones he gives you. Erase them and the world will begin to change.

ISMENE

Like that?

ANTIGONE

Because you will have changed and begun to trust your mind and heart and take strength from all you experience.

ISMENE

My experience counts for nothing.

ANTIGONE

Millions of women suffer as you do, and know what you know, and we might come together to form an alliance.

ISMENE

Why should I wish to ally myself with you?

ANTIGONE

Because we are sisters and should act that way for our own benefits. It is a gift we should not refuse. If you don't see now, perhaps one day you will, and I won't have died in vain.

ISMENE

I will speak to my husband on your behalf. I will beg him, I will plead with --

ANTIGONE

No.

ISMENE

No? No, of course. What could I say? I can't go back there. You've poisoned me against him. O Antigone, let me stay with you. The roads have washed away. There is no path I might tread but for the mud, and Hermes will curse us both, and our souls will be lost forever. At least we might be together in our wandering.

ANTIGONE

There is no way to save me now. You must find a way to save yourself.

ISMENE

But how? What can I do?

ANTIGONE

Sssh. Someone's coming.

ISMENE

I will not be silent. I will not let you go in silence.

(Armored FLATULLUS on stilts enters the cell.)

ISMENE

I will scream if I have to.
I will screech like a giant bird
and tell of your deed, and you must too.
Weave it into the fabrics of my home,
and I'll never forget it.

FLATULLUS

Come.

The Majority Leader will speak.
Come.
Come!

scene vii

(Circus music. The court of CRAYON is revealed with CRAYON at the center. CRAYON's throne is appropriately high to indicate his stature. JOCARTHUS stands at a high podium to address CRAYON and the court. FLATULLUS approaches threshold to court and waits for CRAYON to acknowledge HIS presence with ANTIGONE and ISMENE.)

JOCARTHUS

This abomination will not stand. Our great city, our glorious democracy, has been attacked from within. The very virility of this country has been called into question at a time when the anti-war movement gains momentum. Provocateurs and saboteurs against the movement to make war with Sicily will be duly investigated. We cannot allow this type of terrorism to go unpunished. Whoever has information regarding the herm choppers, or any other acts of sacrilege that may have been committed against the citizens of Athens, immunity will be granted to any informant, and those found guilty of these treasonous and heretical acts will be condemned under the great and democratic laws of this country, I assure you.

CRAYON

Thank you Senator Jocarthus.

JOCARTHUS

Speaker Crayon.

CRAYON

And I'd also like to thank the kind Senator for agreeing to chair the Committee on Anti-Athenian Activities which I hope will be swift and sure in its search for the culprits of this heinous crime.

(CRAYON beckons PERFORMERS to enter, all women playing men with phalluses, some of whom play men playing women, jugglers, mimes, etc. play to the audience and CRAYON who applauds generously and indicates the audience should applaud with him. Social commentary may be a part of the PERFORMER's acts, i.e. the JUGGLER may juggle oversized drachma coins to emphasize the materialist culture, or perhaps a babydoll, a scrub brush, and a briefcase to emphasize the juggling of a woman's life, the MIME might climb a ladder of success fighting off would-be enemies, etc. JOCARTHUS, very much a yes-man to CRAYON, also applauds these acts as CRAYON's indication of pleasure is the barometer of JOCARTHUS's response.)

(CRAYON sees FLATULLUS with ANTIGONE and ISMENE.)

CRAYON

(to JOCARTHUS)

Did we debate this order of business?

JOCARTHUS

This morning sir. I debated with the young senator Hayman, you son, sir, remember?

CRAYON

Ay, yes. And did I come to a decision?

JOCARTHUS

(producing scroll of decision)

I took the liberty of having my aide write it down, sir.

CRAYON

(scrolling scroll)

And what a fine liberty too. Good thing we have such a thing -- liberty.

(to FLATULLUS)

Yes, yes, let them be seen.

(FLATULLUS brings ANTIGONE and ISMENE into the court which is an outdoor arena, brightly lit from the afternoon sun. ISMENE has tried to remain pristine in her garments, statuesque in her bearing while ANTIGONE looks as if she has slept in filth. PERFORMERS may make fun of the women, their walk, their bearing.)

CRAYON

(to FLATULLUS, then indicating JOCARTHUS)

Take the married one over to her husband.

(FLATULLUS has no idea which is “the married one.” HE presents one and then the other to JOCARTHUS, much like a clown act, and eventually JOCARTHUS grabs ISMENE and keeps her by his side. FLATULLUS shrugs and directs ANTIGONE to where she should stand with him.)

CRAYON

We have heard much testimony on your behalves

-- thank you Senator Jocarthus --

wasn't he eloquent, gentlemen?

(CRAYON applauds as JOCARTHUS bows.)

CRAYON

and we have come to decisions regarding your crimes. Wife of Jocarthus, step forward!

(ISMENE does so.)

ANTIGONE

I petition the court to speak!

(FLATULLUS reminds ANTIGONE of his presence.)

CRAYON

The court does not recognize female speech.

(MIME mimes choking/strangling.)

FLATULLUS

I have a cough sir. Please excuse me.

CRAYON

Excused.

(speaking extremely fast, from scroll)

Accused, the wife of Jocarthus, for aiding and abetting her sister in crimes against the city. The court has heard the final testimony of her husband and guardian Senator Jocarthus, owner of three ships off the coast, and has decided his wife can return with him under his strict supervision. 'Tis the belief of the court that she was merely accessory to the act because of her inability to differentiate between right and wrong and the easy way in which women can be swayed to act against their own interests.

(CRAYON nods to ISMENE who returns to JOCARTHUS who takes her severely in hand and would lead her out of the court, but ISMENE would stay and hear ANTIGONE's verdict.)

ANTIGONE

Will the court hear testimony to the contrary?

CRAYON

Perhaps the court should restrict the accused once again to a cell.

FLATULLUS

Sorry sir. Touch of indigestion.

(FLATULLUS physically restrains ANTIGONE as TWO PREGNANT CLOWNS, women playing men in drag as women, phalluses showing beneath their pregnancies, bat stomachs in an act about

two women fighting over the supremacy of their unborn. CRAYON applauds.)

ISMENE

Can we not stay to hear my sister's case?

JOCARTHUS

You have no sister.

(JOCARTHUS continues to steer ISMENE out of the court. ANTIGONE struggles with FLATULLUS.)

ANTIGONE

I will speak.

ISMENE

If I am not to have a sister, then I must at least be permitted to say good-bye to her.

(ISMENE breaks from JOCARTHUS and goes to ANTIGONE, but JOCARTHUS swiftly intervenes and ISMENE is forced to leave the court and is put in the cave.)

ISMENE

Antigone!

ANTIGONE

Ismene!

ISMENE

Tell them everything!

ANTIGONE

Ismene!

ISMENE

All about the Herms!

ANTIGONE

Ismene, I will remember your name -- !

(FLATULLUS covers ANTIGONE's mouth. THEY wrestle with each other as if involved in some slow macabre dance.)
(FLATULLUS is disadvantaged by the fact that he must use one hand to cover ANTIGONE's mouth at all times or she speaks.)

CRAYON

(clears throat audibly)

The court has heard enough of this madness.*1
Debate in this democracy did include all the
conventional wisdom of our time*2 with
Senators asking for your pardon, even my own
son argued in your defense*3, but now that
I've heard them, my judgement is all the more
firm in it's stance,*4 having been privy to both
sides*5, and heard what people would have
me decide. *6 To uphold the God's laws over
Man's *7! How can treason agree with the
Gods?*8 and arguing for family ties won't
save you in my eyes.*9

ANTIGONE

*1 I am not mad!
*2 I challenge your wisdom!
*3 I can defend myself!
*4 You have no right --
*5 You cannot judge me!
*6 Not my side!
*7 I will not --
*8 -- be silent!
*9 I do not look to you to be saved.

(MIME returns to show a woman's voice
falling on deaf ears. CRAYON applauds as
ANTIGONE succeeds in pinning
FLATULLUS to the floor, and speaks now
as fast as SHE can for fear of being
silenced.)

ANTIGONE

It is not to argue the merits of attending to my brother's grave I asked to speak.

CRAYON

Remove her from this court at once.

(FLATULLUS moves to take ANTIGONE.)

ANTIGONE

Are you afraid to debate with a woman?

CRAYON

Wait. She will not cow us.

(FLATULLUS awaits his next command.
JOCARTHUS returns from throwing
ISMENE in the cave.)

ANTIGONE

There are two kinds of law, the just and the unjust. An unjust law is out of harmony with nature. Is it unnatural to mourn the dead? A law that degrades the people -- and women must be counted as people -- is an unjust law. An unjust law relegates a person to the status of a thing, and I am not your thing.

I am a person.

CRAYON

She thinks like a man.

ANTIGONE

I am a woman. Your guards can attest to this fact.

CRAYON

Not man nor Amazon. She does confound us.

ANTIGONE

Woman. Woman. Woman! That which you loath, rule over and against, denying my rights in all respects, and to prove that woman has mind and body to carry out her thoughts as deeds, I have acted against your whims -- which you call laws -- to prove that women can act and succeed over man and live to accept the consequences.

CRAYON

Consequences she shall have.

(Circus music grows loud and discordant as ANTIGONE speaks but only few of her words - the ones before brackets - can be heard although SHE attempt to be heard over music and competing conversation, JOCARTHUS and CRAYON's private but miked talk, while CLOWNS and MIMES have fun with ANTIGONE by insinuating SHE could not possibly have done what SHE says.)

ANTIGONE

I chopped the Herms.

JOCARTHUS

We must ignore her claim.

CRAYON

Of course.

ANTIGONE

I destroyed the phalluses (that keep watch on this city)

CRAYON

By all means.

ANTIGONE

in a blatant act against this polis (against you against your forbears)

JOCARTHUS

I have a list of the doves we might persuade to vote our way on the war in Sicily.

ANTIGONE

Against whomever will come (in the future to case women to bear)

JOCARTHUS

We need only insinuate that they committed the mutilation of the Herms.

ANTIGONE

the brunt of the PATRIARCHAL* order (--a CULT that will one day be replaced --)

(*SOUND effects such as hisses and loud farting on the word PATRIARCHAL)

CRAYON

Did I hear a sound like the word patriarchy? What would a girl-child know of that?

ANTIGONE

Patriarchy is (-- by it's very nature--)

CRAYON

What language is she speaking?

ANTIGONE

incompatible with the life of woman.

CRAYON

Would she speak to us in tongues?

ANTIGONE

I will strain (against this yoke I'm forced to bear)

CRAYON

Does she still flap her lips?

ANTIGONE

and I will continue to refuse your command of me

CRAYON

I can hardly hear her!

ANTIGONE

long after you pronounce (against me)

CRAYON

She has lost all her senses. Hysterical!

ANTIGONE

in the spirit which lives on (and moves the souls of other women to speak out for generations and generations to come)

CRAYON

Imagining she might commit grave acts that only men could perform.

JOCARTHUS

To think she could even conceive of such acts.

ANTIGONE

You have not heard me out. (I will be heard here. I will persuade all who sit)

JOCARTHUS

She must have heard my speech on the matter. She was in the room at the time.

ANTIGONE

(in this "hallowed" place)

CRAYON

A delusion.

JOCARTHUS

A wild fantasy!

ANTIGONE

I will not be silenced. (If you silence me, it is out of your own fear that what I say may be true, and if you do not face this now it will come to haunt you in the future. For generations and generations to come.)

JOCARTHUS

I already have lists of names from good witnesses who know the herm choppers were men.

CRAYON

What else would they be? TAKE HER AWAY!

(FLATULLUS forces ANTIGONE to exit.
CRAYON reads from scroll.)

CRAYON

The State will not bear the responsibility of her martyrdom. She shall be locked away where none will hear her raving. The State will feed her for as long as she will eat -- which as her guardian was my responsibility anyway -- and her waster dowry will pay for it.

(to JOCARTHUS)

A good decision that.

(PERFORMERS form kick line, women as men as women, CRAYON watches.)

CRAYON

Now why couldn't she have turned out like them?

scene viii

(ISMENE in the women's quarters of the House of Jocarthus where ISMENE's funeral urns and flasks are on the floor as if SHE has been lamenting for ANTIGONE in absentia. ISMENE holds what would have been ANTIGONE's wedding dress.)

ISMENE

There are no myths or stories I know
that speak on the strength of the sisterly bond.

You are gone.

ISMENE (cont'd)

Always we are pitted against each other,
driven apart, our differences remarked upon.

But you are gone.

When you were born, they said pretty and bright
I lowered my head and I learned how to weave.
Now I gather this cloth about me for consolation.

But there is none.

It was not bad to be a good worker
while you were everyone's star.
I might have loved you better
if I imagined you ever looked to me
with anything other than scorn.

Antigone, my sister, Antigone is gone.

(JOCARTHUS enters. Without looking at
him, ISMENE feels HIS presence.)

ISMENE

Jocarthus.

JOCARTHUS

You lament no ghost, and your lamentations a drain on my ears.

ISMENE

(aside)

But I was so quiet!

JOCARTHUS

If I say your sister is dead then she is dead
to you and the rest of this house,
but no lament shall go out to her
as my word is sure as Crayon's here,
and though he's seen fit to confine her
to the cave of Aurelos

complete with food for all her days
she lives and breathes in that dark recess, so end this wailing.

(JOCARTHUS watches for her reaction.
ISMENE is conflicted.)

JOCARTHUS

Speak then if you must.

ISMENE

I cannot celebrate her life? nor can I mourn the loss of it?
I am torn up and bleeding inside this pain.
I dare not think what will come of it.

JOCARTHUS

(slaps her face)
This is pain. Not your wild hysterics.
(slaps her again)
This is pain. And to stop it, there is silence.
And tears will get you nowhere with me.

ISMENE

I am sorry, Jocarthus. I must seem a terrible mother.

JOCARTHUS

Mother? I care not. Your job there is finished. My boys are almost of age to leave this darkened space to enter the academy, and that she-wolf you bore me who howls in my nightmares should have been exposed her first day! To think of how she eats so much grain -- production of which has fallen off, and the wines have been drained from the sorrows you simmer with letting the slaves think the house is theirs.

(HE breaks ISMENE's flasks and urns
which bear her name.)

JOCARTHUS (cont'd)

And I have wasted days thinking of nothing but your theatrics. Remember 'twas only my oratory that saved you in court or the size of the noose the only question for you.

ISMENE

O thank you, husband Jocarthus,
so kind, just and true.
To think I am such the lucky wife
to have dowered a man to teach me
the proper ways of Athenian society
and keep me from my inherent evil
so easily slipped into
when a sister should remind me
of the joys of life
like the death of my last brother,

ISMENE (cont'd)

the forced marriage of my kin.

Without your gentle notification
of my bondage and necessary homage
owed to man, my relinquishing of self
is never so easy as when you beat it out of me.

(JOCARTHUS, puzzled, exits. ISMENE
wails and screams, full voice.)

ISMENE

Antigone!

(JOCARTHUS enters again furious. HE
begins to beat her.)

JOCARTHUS

Woman, you go too far.
Do you think I enjoy being forced
to reprimand you with the might of
my body? My hands? There is so
much wrong in you to be righted
what else is a man to do? And
the town so full with news of your
errant sister. When will you
learn to be a proper wife
to me you must obey? You must obey!
You must obey!

ISMENE

Yes, beat me. I know what I am.
I have been poisoned by my sister
who would say that men are the lesser
of the sexes, she has trained my mind
to an errant course, and thoughts of
rising against you do come. I cannot
help myself. You see these bruises, old
and yellowed, you must keep them fresh
or there's no telling what I might do.
Even I am afraid of my next act.

(JOCARTHUS is done.)

ISMENE

I will take these fresh bruises to the court and petition for divorce.

JOCARTHUS

You got what you asked for.

ISMENE

There is no more love between us.

JOCARTHUS

Love? Was there ever that?
 The courts expect me to punish you --
 think of this week's betrayals!
 And Crayon will not take you as his charge.
 He has just finished with your sister.

ISMENE

You smashed my name flasks purchased from my dowry.

JOCARTHUS

Your name means nothing to me.

ISMENE

(folding wedding gown into baby bundle)
 Then I will take you at your wish and expose myself with your daughter. Let the natural world
 decide our fate.

JOCARTHUS

Then go so I may find a new melissa with a dowry to replace the grain you've spent on my
 account.

(ISMENE exits.)

JOCARTHUS

All the eligible women of the town will line up outside my door to replace you!
 Mothers wait with baited breath to slip their daughters into my bed! 'Tis an honor!
 Women.

scene ix

(ANTIGONE, in the cave, sees the rope for hanging.)

ANTIGONE

They make it so easy.
 They make it so easy to die here.
 They make it so easy to rid the world of one more woman.

(WOMEN 2-4 enter. ANTIGONE takes
 hold of the end of the rope and pulls herself
 toward the hanging noose.)

WOMAN 2

There was a woman once who was caught in a net,

ANTIGONE

and I could see this net,

WOMAN 3

and she sought to dissolve it,

WOMAN 4

but no matter how hard she struggled against it,

WOMAN 2

railed and raged against it,

ANTIGONE

I only managed to get further tangled

WOMAN 3

until one day she found herself strangled

WOMAN 4

in the very net she so wanted to escape.

(ANTIGONE stands by the noose. SHE gets the stool and places it below the noose. ISMENE, with her infant enters the area outside the mouth of the cave where stones were put to bar the entrance. ISMENE puts down her child and begins to remove the stones. ANTIGONE approaches the rope with great purpose now.)

ANTIGONE and ISMENE

This will be done.

ANTIGONE

I have chosen.

WOMAN 2

The rope.

The rope. WOMAN 3

She chose the rope. WOMAN 4

Sister? ISMENE

Let them laugh. ANTIGONE

Sister? ISMENE

Let them say I was a fool. ANTIGONE

Sister, are you in there? ISMENE

Aye, ANTIGONE

Here she is. WOMAN 2

hearing voices at the end, ANTIGONE

She is. WOMAN 3

She lives. ISMENE

as if someone comes to save me. ANTIGONE

I hear you, Sister. I'm coming. ISMENE

ANTIGONE

form to suit his own needs

WOMAN 3

Phaedra.

ANTIGONE

to teach the lessons of his time,

WOMAN 4

Leda.

ANTIGONE

his world,

WOMAN 3

Fulvia.

ANTIGONE

lessons that will make him the hero at my expense.

WOMAN 4

Thisbe.

ANTIGONE

I'll carve my own name. Antigone.

(ISMENE breaks into the cave carrying
baby bundle.)

ANTIGONE

Look, Ismene! There were women here before me.

WOMAN 2

Hera,

WOMAN 3

Athena,

WOMAN 4

Jocasta.

ANTIGONE

I'm not the first.

ISMENE

Come down from there.

ANTIGONE

Are you another spirit sent to betray me the way Mother did?

(ISMENE rushes to ANTIGONE, holding her to steady her on the stool.)

ISMENE

I believe you're drunk with misery. Stop this.

ANTIGONE

You can't make me.

ISMENE

I've taken my daughter and left Jocarthus.

(ISMENE gives ANTIGONE the baby bundle. ANTIGONE allows it to unravel revealing nothing, only cloth, but ISMENE doesn't seem to notice.)

ISMENE

I need your help and your knowledge of these hills. Say you'll come with us.

ANTIGONE

Come with you?

WOMAN 2

You come with me.

WOMAN 3

Come with us.

WOMAN 4

Come

with
WOMAN 2

Antigone.
WOMAN 3

Come with me.
ANTIGONE as WOMAN 1

(ANTIGONE joins the WOMEN with the cloth which becomes the rope that entangles them in a dance of suicide. ISMENE realizes she is back where she began.)

ISMENE
I might have saved you.
I could have saved you. I have seen it in my mind,
the two of us
living out our days some distant place.
Together.
I tried to speak.
I tried to tell them my name.
They said I was mad, but like you, I was angered.
It didn't take much to end up here, by this rope.
This stool, its faithful companion, and this knife,

forever this knife
WOMAN 2

and this hunger
WOMAN 3

and this anguish
WOMAN 4

and silence
WOMAN 1

ISMENE
and forever mourning your death.

(Pause.)

ISMENE
I could have saved you.

WOMAN 1
We remained too far apart.

WOMAN 3
Like so many sisters who remain

WOMAN 2
and might hang from the same rope,

WOMAN 4
still swaying from its root.

ISMENE
I tried to speak, to tell them what you'd done. They refused to believe me, to think that women might have acted in such a manner. And they put seventy men to death instead.

WOMEN 1
The world is not safe for either sex.

(Pause.)

ISMENE
There are so many ways to die here.

WOMAN 1
It's only a matter of choosing which.

WOMAN 2
There was a woman once who could not cry for help

WOMAN 3
although her pains were written on her body

WOMAN 4
with dark bruises.

ISMENE
I returned again and again

WOMAN 3
to the pain,

WOMAN 1
refusing to see how thick her skin had grown.

WOMAN 2
There was a woman once who played the busiest of melissas.

WOMAN 3
A honey bee,

WOMAN 4
she smiled so hard all day

ISMENE
my face felt as if it would break.

WOMAN 1
Afraid to face yourself,

WOMAN 2
to keep from cracking.

WOMAN 3
We are like Helen,

WOMAN 2
given so much beauty,

WOMAN 1
yet cursed for using it.

ISMENE
This rope,

WOMAN 1
this rope

WOMAN 3
this rope

She is so strong
WOMAN 1

some go out of their way
WOMAN 2

to destroy her.
WOMAN 3

(ISMENE begins to pull on the rope and this
pulls on the root. WOMEN join her.)

But think of two women
WOMAN 4

or three
WOMAN 2

four
WOMAN 3

five.
WOMAN 1

What if we stood together?
ISMENE

As sisters?
WOMAN 1 as ANTIGONE

(ISMENE and ANTIGONE and WOMEN
pull down the rope which brings down the
root and MOONLIGHT streams into the
cave.)

One woman on solid ground
WOMAN 2

might find a sister underneath
WOMAN 3

WOMAN 4
who has a rope that has held for many years.

ANTIGONE
Would you come and lift me out?

ISMENE
The journey is not far,

ISMENE (cont'd) and ANTIGONE
and the road is lit with moonlight.

END OF PLAY