

ANTIGONE
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Fifth Draft

PERSONS OF THE PLAY **a n t i g o n e**:

All parts are played by the THREE FATES, also THREE FACTS, on their way to becoming the THREE GRACES; with the exception of ! , THE SHRIEK OPERATOR, (pronounced "E shriek") an unknown god of unknown origin; who is named for the special symbol of logical notation as described in the appendix of The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 1999 edition. The traditional parts are: CREON, ISMENE (ANTIGONE's sister), CREON'S son, HAEMON (ANTIGONE's betrothed), CREON's wife EURYDICE (in my version also the prophet, TEIRESIAS), and a CHORUS of Theban citizens.

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This version of the tale has been commissioned by the Classic Stage Company, Barry Edelstein, Artistic Director, through the NEA for Paul Lazar and Annie-B Parsons' Big Dance Company.

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... and on the roof of my head ...

:Mazzy Star

ANTIGONE

PART I [**red bullet**]

Once, at the beginning of time, the three Fates, unpleasant young girls, enacted the story that was to become that of Antigone. The three girls played all the parts with hats instead of masks, and a whole rack of customary costumery.

A battle field. Heaps of dead clothing. Dead clothing strewn all over. Three girls watch from a distance. Unknown god as a bodiless shadow approaches. As a swirl of fabric. I am the Shriek Operator. ! . I am the unique situation. I am the uncanny and have come to this place, place crowded with corpses and the stench of death. I am the Shriek Operator and am very pleased with all this slaughter, this horror, this misfortune. Misfortune out of

contrast, sprung hinges, what creaks, what is fundamentally broken. Sand pours without anyone willing it. Pours from above. From the sky. Something is covered. Something mangled and horribly dead. Pours. Horripilation. Who. Who did this? I am and I am not named Antigone, daughter of a man whose name. The one of whom it is said, he possessed one eye too many. Saw too much. learned too little from what he saw. Incurious. Curious, how incurious. Mind made up. Driven from place to place by ! . The Shriek Operator. The shorthand for "... there exists a unique situation ...". The shorthand that stands in total contradistinction to the shorthand for "it will always be that". Shorthand for "it always was that".

A song: Thus, it always was/ thus it will always be that/ thus, if I am named/ who I think I am/ I will always be caught in the terrible terrible/ cat's cradle. For I// both must and must not/ bury my dead brother,/ Polyneices.

A Chorus: Of all things strange, humankind/ is the most strange./ The cat's cradle/ is news to the spider,/ for all things go round and round; for/ I was a stranger and you took me in; for/ I was a stranger and you took me not in; for// straw, straw, straw,/ straw shows which way the wind blows,/ and an empty belly thinks the moon is green cheese; for// (the King of Spiders)// Up he was stuck/up he was stuck/up he was stuck/ and in the very upness/ of his stuckitude/ he fell.// (Straw, straw, straw, straw.)// And what I learned from my long/ life of spinning string,/ life of measuring string,/ life of snip, snip, snip:// You can't beat something with nothing.

Creon watches her. I wonder what she is. Doing in her thinking. He says: The rule is: Eteocles, hero. Polyneices, the logical

opposite: traitor. If one, then not the other.
This is an unanalysable truth. Truth is true.
(That is why it is called the truth.) A rupture.
Time backs up and shakes itself like a wet dog.

I am a stranger, Ismene, my eyes see the
clearest. I'm clearing out. As she goes: Devil
take the hindmost. Antigone. A hint's as good
as a kick. Take the double-faced mask (that
they were wearing). I see so clear I don't
need one. What I need is a good hat. A fatal
hat. She puts one on. She carefully balances
an egg on one end.

3 Fates dance the Dance of Hollow Time and
Hollow Earth. Everything hollow with a hole in
it. Earth and sky. Ocean and the. Vast,
electromagnetic carpets of stars and eggs and
all possible hats. Celestial eggs. Egg egg egg.
Most eggs are electrical in some way. Most
aren't. Let's turn her in. Who? Antigone.
Let's turn her inside out. See what god. You
can't carry an egg in two baskets. You can't
be in the same place at the same time. You
simply can't.

She did it. Creon, she. Did what? You know.
The bad thing, at the bad place. She buried
him, or tried to.

A Chorus. Let us invoke/ the rupture of silence
in the hollow of uncanniness.// Let us invoke/
the pause before the rupture of the already
known in/ the presence of the already dead.//
(Gods love to collect at the place of the dead
as though it were a compass focus)// Let us
invoke/ the arrival of the gods and the
dissolution of all/ that is merely human.// Let
us invoke the pause before the silence before
all of this;/ for earth, hollow earth,// (hollow,
hollow, hollow)// is the house of the dead, and
the place/ of engendering. The branching of
facts,/ facts which are opposed, contradictory./

Dog and cat facts.// Let us invoke/ the howl
before the primordial howl. Let us invoke/ the
spider that taught the spider, the/ very first
one,// How to be a spider./ How to creep./
(And be creepy). They all do the spider. They
all howl. They all creep.

A Chorus. Humankind is the most terrible,/ the most terrible of all things./ For/ when you step on your own head/ it is time to go home, and harmony/ seldom makes a headline./ Some wheelbarrows are red, but/ all insects have antennae/ for the name of an actual world is pronounced 'a round'/ once you allow the Facts to slide// (Slide, slide, slide.)// All down the slope to chaos will glide/ and what is not yet hidden/ will learn to hide, hide, hide/ and to abide// (Hide, hide, hide)// There on that slippery slope/ of the terrible unbidden, oh/ that I had in the wilderness of logic/ a place for wayfaringmen/ Those// Who mind the difference between/ things that are, and things that are not/ things that are, and things that are not/ things that are, and things that are not.// Hold on Antigone, hold on./ Abide, you bride of silence. abide.// Coda:/ Save soap and waste paper./ Two pizzas for one low price.

Creon as Antigone arrests Antigone who is Creon. A confusion arises. Someone does something. All change hats. Nothing feels right.

PART II [red fox]

This includes what is buried. Harvest, ingathered by lightning, in view of all. This was done by Antigone, her, a bride of quietness, one of the symparanekromenoi, one of the living dead.

Verdict. Interment in the house of death,
while yet alive. Agon. Antigone. In her
geode.

Chorus of ordinary citizens. Well.... Eleven
don't make a dozen. Give 'em an ell and
they'll take a mile. The end of the thief is the
gallows. The end crowns the work. The heavy
end of the match is the light end. Ask the
spider. She knows. They fall silence and
dance the Dance of Charm and Distance.
Silence. Pause. Distance. They dance the
Dance no one has ever. They dance the Dance
of Withdrawal. They dance a nothing dance. !
The Shriek Operator appears. The hidden
takes them all, perhaps. (... there exists a
unique situation ...) Teiresias (played by
Eurydice) appears. He is a man and
sometimes not. Creon

Your offerings have been rejected. Creon: I do
not have much information on this except the
general statement of the Agency that there is
nothing in the files to disprove her (Antigone's)
communist connections [This is not a comment
on communism; it is an instance of logical
error.]. Okay. Okay. Eteocles, hero.
Polyneices, traitor. That's simple enough. The
news is what has been forgotten. The
mystery. The absolute. The uncanny. The
unanalysable, Creon. The unanalysable. Big
words no one understands, or pretends not to.
A little hole will sink a ship. A big old ship. A
hole is nothing at all, but you can break your
neck in it. No one can dig up a hole. Wisdom
doesn't always speak Greek. The unseen, too.
The incomprehensible. A wise man sees twice
as much as he talks about. If things were to

be done twice, all would be wise. Just let things rock along.

Haemon watches Antigone as she watches Creon. Fell in love with her violet eye. She thinks. Do the thing and have done with it. Teiresias turns on Creon. Creon turns on Haemon. Haemon turns on Antigone. Pause. Silence. Pause. Antigone turns on Creon, as the whirlwind watches from out of the cat's-cradle. She says. Someone is always watching someone else, Creon. Someone is always overhearing. Why must this be. Each thing has a right place if you know how to place it. My brother's body, for instance. There is such a thing as motion in one place. Spirit is action. This attempted burial is re-action. You dramatize the issue. To dramatize is to think against the self. To hell with self, any self, yours or mine or another. I got my idea like you got yours. By watching another. I? A watcher? Precisely. You watched me and despise me for my clean, unpleasant spirit. I watched the burial of my brother by an unknown god. Death and crumpled paper. The true folly is the folly of burying the dead. May I go now. She goes. Fool. Fool. Teiresias goes: Those who speak truth, speak shadows. He that is not with me is against me. For every action there is a reaction. Disaster being the final logic of human action (Haemon). I don't give a damn for any damn man that don't give a damn for me.

A battle field. Heaps of empty clothing. Dead clothing strewn all over. Two girls watch from a distance. Unknown god as a bodiless shadow approaches as a swirl of fabric. I am the Shriek Operator. ! . I am the unique situation. I am the uncanny, and have slunk to this place crowded with corpses and the scent of death. I am the Shriek Operator and am very pleased by all this misfortunate contrast,

this contradiction, this contraction, because I am what lies outside language and therefore cannot be understood. Cannot be understood, do you understand? You are all housed in your unhousedness. The sand that buried Polyneices poured without anyone pouring it (... there is the unique ...). The unique is what is outside language and they dance the Dance of What is Outside Language. This is a dance of nothing. All go. The earth is dark. The nothing that happens now is the force that fills what is empty. All go except for Teiresias. Who mourns in a little Dance of Error and Disclosure. He says: Polyneices lived his death above the ground. Antigone below. The hidden take us far, far from the place we know, perhaps. A chorus: He who speaks of nothing does not know/ what he is doing.// In speaking of nothing he makes it into/ a something.// In speaking he speaks against/ what he intended./ He contradicts himself.

Another chorus: What is more weird than man?/ What is more weird than man/ and woman?// All mastery depends on motion./ Climbing the purple hills./ Driving through the mountainous/ seas. For even the purple murex/ lacks the red; for/ the bugle-cry of what's red is the/ pot calling the kettle black.// (Kettle, kettle, kettle.)// The hole and the patch should/ be commensurate, as the/ dog to his man should/ be obedient. It is as if I/ ask you to prove this bicycle/ belongs to Hector, and you reply/ "all the bicycles around here/ belong to Hector"; or the// fallacy of too many questions, the/ fallacy of affirming the consequent, or the/ fallacy of denying the antecedent, or the/ fallacy of hasty generalization, or the/ fallacy of irrelevant conclusion, or the/ fallacy of misplaced concreteness, or the/ fallacy of many questions, or the/ fallacy of accident; or the fallacy of bad faith.// What is more weird

what is more weird/ than red feather than
black kettle/ what is more weird.

Eurydice (played by Teiresias) walks in a slow circle. She is thinking of what to say to Creon. A part of the city has been swallowed by mud (we hope it's mud). A lahar it is called. Is this a god's dog's doing or what? Shall the hole in the center of the world be stopped by a girl? And not by the corpse of my son who fell in love with her violet eyes. Violent eye. We already know what will happen. Why? Why must we go into the whole damn piece of crapshoot playacting if we know the dice are loaded. Time does not like this remark. Becomes a weasel, or a vicious hedgehog, backs up, puffed up in raging horripilation. Antigone is stamping her foot. Teiresias as Teiresias: What are you trying to do? The three FACTS go in and out of a line like a. Like a cat's-cradle. The three Fates Clotho Lachesis Atropos. I am trying to stop something by stamping my foot. Omens are over. The signlessness of the omens is the most uncanny. Terrible, terrible, terrible. I am unable to stop thinking. Thinking of how to make a curse capable of ripping through human flesh like a goldarn bullwhip. We are surrounded by omens we cannot read. Surrounded by death and crumpled paper. News print we cannot read. All the print that fits the new, us, the walking dead, dead shadows. Symparanekromenoi.

Antigone. A witness to her own death. Thereby twice dead. A voyeur. A stranger in the house of being. Antigone: I am going to shave my belly. I am going deep into a hole. I am going to watch them. The ones who think they can watch over me. Deep in a hole and come out the other side. Place where things stand as they are. One two three. They follow her. The three FACTS, each

wrapped up in her own fabric. Each carries her own dumb, expensive wand. Day. Night. Death and crumpled paper. Creon and Haemon are unable to speak to each other. Circle and stare. Watchers watched. Night says no to day. Silence.

Pause. A small unpleasant animal crosses the vast emptiness of infinite spaces. They watch this. Not a very nice animal, in fact.

Silence.

We behold, for the first time the curvature of the earth. Someone looks out and holds an egg. If X, then Y. Logic, someone says. A song: Thus it will always be/ thus it will always be/ thus it will always be;/ kettle, kettle, kettle,/ boil up a fragrant tea for me./ On the day of my final day/ on the anniversary of me./ The fatal anniversary of me.// Looks around, shivering and afraid. Look at her (this is a command). Alone and cold. No one to love her. No one to protect her. Nothing but stillness. Stillness laying waste. The laying waste of stillness. Now she is the focal point of stillness. And

and

and

and the gods are coming. Unknown ones and the unseen.

Collision of the necessary and insoluble in her girl's face. Each FACT denies another. All change hats. Nothing works. Nothing works, and the Rock emerges from the gloom. Castle Rock. In the middle of air. High above us. What is closed begins to open. Something catches us by surprise. It is Haemon, falling upon his sword, as is the tragic fashion. We

hear his death agony. Slow way to die. Time passes unconcerned. His death is horrible. We watch him from a distance (this is a command). We feel nothing for him. We feel nothing human. We feel cold and alone. Antigone looks at us. We look at Antigone. Nothing moves us. Nothing moves Antigone. This is the cat's-cradle. We feel nothing because we are no longer what's called "human".

A song: The devil wipes his tail with Creon's pride./ Listen to Little Jack fry up an eyeball for an egg./ Bubba tubba bubba tubba bubba tubba bup.// I am the kind of girl tired of always being wise./ I am the tin can tied to my own damn tail.// Fry up an eyeball for an egg/ Leg up, leg down, leg up, leg down/ Egg, egg, egg, egg, stupid old egg// Oedipus, he had one eye too many perhaps//. Quietly, one of the three: I am the tin can tied to my own damn tail. Slow fade to black in which we hear them sing the song over again till they get it right. More right. Over and over. Silence

Pause. In which Time becomes a one-legged crow. Crow on a withered bough. Crow having a hard time cleaning her wing.

Silence.

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Once senses the presence of an unknown god. Then another. Then another. We behold for the first time (once more) the curvature of the earth. Once more the Rock appears. Castle Rock. In the middle of air. High above us. The Rock opens. A brilliant geode, violet and luminous. Antigone is enshrined within. She looks almost like a goddess. Which one? No man can say. No man can say. No man can say. How many can stay. And I slipped out

the back and I made myself very small and I slipped out the back way and when I awoke. I was in a different place, a thin place, as though it were the place of a compass focus. And the lines of force radiated out from my heart in all directions and I could feel these lines of force as though I were a god and not merely a nasty girl, a girl tired of being the wise one. Radiated out from my still beating heart

And I traveled to the center of the world and and I made wicked-awful charms and devised ghastly rituals and some of these are for the propitiation of unknown gods. Unseen gods. Gods both unknowable and unseeable. For what lies buried in the center of the world are the last words of the barely alive but just about to be dead: Lord help my poor soul./ Jesu./ Give it (a candle) to me; it is time now./ Peace, peace, peace./ ...Addio, Mamma mia, addio, Mamma mia./ Edith./ It is very beautiful , but I want to go farther away./ I am not worthy./ Fire./ Moderately. I am continuing to orbit./ Death today, 66./ It is time.... Ay, Jesus./ Let not poor Nelly starve./ I want to go there./ Always. Always water for me./ Thank you, doctor./ Doro, I can't get my breath./ Well, if it must be so./ I am better now./ Don't give up the ship. Blow her up./ I have a terrible headache./ May God never abandon me./ Get

my "swan" costume ready."/ I shall be glad to find a hole to creep out of the world at.

All now. And what lies buried below shall engender a time to come with many wonderful things. Let there be Spiders and Eggs and, and Hats, and gods. For all good things come in threes. Three Fates. Three Graces. Three blind mice.... Three dead Greeks. Dead Eurydice. Dead Haemon. Dead Antigone. And as I wondered, freely and threely, I thought I could see back to the old days at Thebes. She watches from within her geode. A place she calls "The Rat Minaret". Watches Creon and the Shriek Operator (!). The one torments the other. City half buried in a tide of shit, Creon. Hey, Creon, look at me. Look at me. Creon, if it looks like shit, smells like shit, tastes like shit.... Hey, Creon, baby. Look at me. Hey, I got no teeth. I'm on drugs. He plays the washboard and sings a song: I've been a sinner, I've been a scamp,/ but now I'm willin' to trim my lamp,/ So blow, Gabriel, blow! Oh yes, Creon, yes, yes, yes. Of course we'll go back to Albania one day. But meanwhile we have to make a new life for ourselves at The Ritz. Whoopee! Creon flees. ! The Shriek Operator flies after gesticulating with a meat hook.

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PART III [**red cloud**]

Once, at the beginning of time, the Three Fates, young girls then, enacted the story that was to become that of Antigone. The three girls played all the parts, with hats instead of masks (well, maybe one mask is allowed), and a whole rack of customary costumery.

In this way they learned their nature and the nature of things and became the three Graces.

Aglaia. Thalia. Euphrosyne. The one who gives. The one who receives. The one who returns. Three FACTS who are the three Fates who are the three Graces who are the three FACTS. Who are the three. Who are the. Who are. Who. The Fates turn into Graces just at the precise moment, Antigone, in their enactment, turns into a flame.

After the transformation they discover a puppet SOPHOCLES in a wooden box. Using an ear trumpet they recite the first stanza from the Second Stasimon, in Greek, into the puppet's ear (Actually, there is no puppet, only a girl's hand enacting the puppet).

There is wonder in his eyes; but there is much they will not reveal, much that must be withheld:

There is much that
is strange, but
nothing that
surpasses man in
strangeness ...

—

Lights up. They do something with expensive, stupid wands. Strange uncanny looks and smiles. First: To be positive: To be mistaken at the top of one's voice. Second: Fish and visitors smell in three days. Third: The play is finished.

Indeed it is.

End of play.
Almost.

Repeat the whole X 3 so that each may play ANTIGONE, each CREON. So that each may be a whirlwind. Repeat X 3 exactly the same

(only different). The first repetition, being partially erased, is seven minutes long; the second, only three. Silence. Pause. Silence. The third repetition takes no time at all. Now the play is truly finished (some may not think so).