

Antigone



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the play *Antigone*, written by Sophocles, there are many complications. The most important event is the killing of Antigone's two brothers, Eteocles and Polynices. It was the main inspiration for the whole play. It all starts after King Oedipus was exiled from the city of Thebes after he learns that he has committed incest and patricide, his younger son Eteocles declares to be the king, exiling his older brother Polynices. Polynices then attacks Thebes with a huge army, but none of the two brothers wins the war because they both kill each other in combat. Creon then declares to be the king of Thebes, and he decides that Eteocles should be buried and honored as a hero while Polynices' body shouldn't be honored, but it should be thrown in the streets of Thebes left for dogs and birds to be eaten in humiliation. Creon decides that the punishment for trying to bury the body of Polynices will be death. Antigone, Eteocles and Polynices' sister, insists that her brother's body must be buried so that his spirit can rest in peace, in spite of the cautious advice of her younger sister, Ismene. She goes to the battleground, pouring sand over Polynices' body and performing burial rites. After that the guards discover that someone was trying to bury the body, they uncover the dust from the body, and they start to look for who does that. Antigone comes back insisting on burying her brother's body. She finally allows herself to be captured after coming out of hiding when some guards try to uncover the body again, and a rebellious Antigone is brought to Creon. He decides to execute only Antigone since Ismene's is innocent and Antigone is sent outside of Thebes to starve to death in a cave. Even though Antigone was nothing but a girl left alone, she faces many obstacles by herself to do what she believes it is right without any concerns about the consequences.

The first obstacle that faces Antigone was her sister, Ismene. They were the only two family members left after their father's death and their two brothers' shameful war against each other and killing each other in the battlefield. Instead of supporting her sister, and trying to keep what's left of the family together, Ismene abandons Antigone and tries to convince her to obey the king's orders. The author quotes Ismene saying " The worst of all if we violate the laws and override the fixed decree of the throne, its power- we must be sensible. Remember we are women, we're not born to contend with men" (Sophocles 1144). It is clear that Ismene is so frightened of Antigone's decision to bury her brother Polyneices. It is also clear how Creon, the king, put his fear in his people's minds so he will has full control over his kingdom. Antigone doesn't worry about Creon's punishment and decides to continue. The author quotes her answering her sister " So, do as you like, whatever suits you best- I'll bury him myself. And even if I die in the act, that death will be a glory." (Sophocles 1144). This quote shows how determined Antigone is to bury her brother without having any concerns about the result. It also shows how she considers the death a glory to her for doing what's she believes is right. She considers honoring her brother by giving hem the proper burial is her obligation. Antigone overcomes this obstacle by excusing her sister from joining her to bury their brother.

The second obstacle that faces Antigone is the king himself. He wanted to force his authority and power over the kingdom after the disturbance that happened in Thebes. He wants his orders and commands to be followed by everyone. Creon creates a monster of himself to scare his people; he likes power, authority, and to be obeyed. That's why everybody was scared and

afraid to disobey Creon except Antigone. She did what's right; she wasn't even afraid when the guards arrested her, she bravely surrendered to them (1152). Creon felt that he lost his power and authority once Antigone disobey his orders. Creon says, " This girl was an old hand at insolence when she overrode the edicts we made public. But once she'd don it- the insolence, twice over- to glory in it, laughing, mocking us to our face with what she'd done" (Sophocles 1154). He considers Antigone's act an insult to the king without considering that she wants to give her brother the proper burial to honor him as prince. That explains why he was so harsh in his verdict to execute her by starvation. Antigone knows that she is doing what's right and she surrenders to her destiny to be killed. On the other hand she seems to refuse to be killed by Creon, that's why she killed herself as if she considers killing herself more honor than Creon kills her.

The final obstacle that faces Antigone is her lover, Haemon, who was Creon's son and who was very sad that he's going to lose his pride. Antigone thinks about her lover. She doesn't want to die and leave him because she loves him so much. She is between two difficult decisions. One of them is if she decides to step on what she believes in and forget about her honored brother to stay with her lover, the other decision is to leave her lover and to die for what she believes in. Antigone doesn't think about her happiness; she rather dies because of what she believes in than stays with Haemon. She overcomes this obstacle by deciding to kill herself. Haemon, on the other hand, was used by Gods to punish Creon for his acts. He was not convinced with his father's actions. Haemon states, " I see my father offending justice-wrong" (Sophocles 1161). He continues his conversation asking " Protect

your rights? When you trample down the honors of the gods?" (Sophocles 1611). Haemon realizes the fact that his father doesn't realize, is that he dishonors the gods. Haemon wants to explain to Creon that no matter what happened don't disobey or disrespect the gods. Another thing Haemon realizes that Creon doesn't realize that there is more powerful force than Creon's force which is the gods force. Creon thinks that he has the ultimate power and authority that's why he can't see Haemon point of view. Haemon goes to Antigone's grave and he couldn't see her kills herself in the front of him, so he kills himself.

In the play, Antigone faces a lot of obstacles, and she overcomes them all. She doesn't give up, and once she feels that the king's authority will bring her down, she decides to take her own life rather than the injustice system does. She is determining to do what she feels is right, no matter what the laws of the kingdom says. She is motivating by her obligations towards her family, and by her personal beliefs. She first faces her sister who is against her from the beginning, because she is afraid of Creon's decrees. Antigone excuses her sister from burying her brother with her. Second obstacle Antigone faces is the rigorous king, Creon, who gives his strict orders that whoever bury Polynices will die. Antigone doesn't care about Creon's decrees; she knows the consequences will be the death penalty, but she stands bravely in front of Creon. The final obstacle Antigone faces is her lover who is so in love with her and he can't see her dieing. Antigone also can't see her lover cries and she can't leave him as well. This is the most difficult obstacle that faces Antigone. Finally she kills herself when she finds that it's more honor to kill herself than Creon kills her. Antigone knows that

she will die for what she did. She put what she believes in before her and sacrifices her own life to do what's right.