

# Antigone as a typical tragic hero

Literature



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## **Antigone**

A tragic hero is a character that makes an error in judgement or has a fatal flaw which in combination with fate results in a tragedy. Tragic hero's must fall from good luck and the wellbeing to misery and misfortune. They cause a sense of pity through the tragic downfall that weakens the character. In the play Antigone by Sophocles, Antigone goes with her own beliefs by giving her own brother a proper burial even if it means breaking the law set by Creon. Because of Antigone's innocent actions she is punished unjustly and unfairly. Though her risky and unselfish actions, wanting to follow her own beliefs, and perseverance Antigone is the one true tragic hero of this play.

Antigone makes many important and good decisions through her risky and selfless actions. When she buries her brother, Polyneices, she does it because she wants her brother to be able to live a satisfying after life and so that the gods will not be angry. Through her powerful decision making and strong will she says, " I will bury the brother I love' (694). She is an strong follower of tradition and does not want to upset the gods or the dead. This means that she will do anything possible to help her brother out even if it means being harmed innocently in the process. When Antigone is caught by Creon for burying her brother she is immediately sentenced to death and cannot be saved by anyone. Before she is sent to be executed by her sister, Antigone states, " Save yourself, I shall not envy you, there are those who will praise you, I shall have honor too" (711). In this statement, Antigone is trying to prevent her sister, Ismene, from getting involved in her being in jail and going to be executed. She doesn't want Ismene to be punished for

something she never did. Through Antigone's innocent, risky, and selfless act, she is faultlessly killed for no reason.

However, Antigone's ability to follow her beliefs results into the tragic death of herself. She is from a royal family and has the power and authority to do what she believes in. Antigone believes in the following traditions and exercises that have power when she says, " I will bury him, and if I must die, I say that the crime is holy: I shall lie down with him in death, and I shall be as dear to him as he to me" (694). She follows her beliefs while following tradition and doing what she feels is the best. She does this because she knows that she is doing the right thing and knows that she will be repaid in some way or another. Therefore, Antigone justifies her actions by telling Creon the reasons that motivated her to bury her brother. She refuses to give into the beliefs and continues to think in her own separate way. She takes a stand against the king when she says, " Think death less than a friend? This death of mine is of no importance, but if I had left my brother lying in death unburied, I should have suffered. Now I do not. You smile at me. Ah Creon, think me a fool, if you like, but it may well be that a fool convicts me of folly" (709). She believes what she is doing is the correct thing to do and she proves that to Creon, but he is still not convinced about that. It's important for Antigone to do what she believes in and that she acts on this because she wants to be satisfied with the outcomes of her actions. Her ability to pursue her own goals and to do what she wants proves her to be the tragic hero of this play.

Antigone's perseverance and courage allows her to stand up for her beliefs. She has the courage to carry on and to push through her actions, even if

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everyone she knows is against her. Antigone knows that she will die because of her actions, but she still carries on living through her perseverance. For example, she was going to marry Haimon but she chooses to give up a life of happiness when she admits to her sister, "you are alive, but I belong death" (711). She has a feeling of sadness when she says this but she also has no regrets about what she has done. Antigone is proud about her achievements that occurred through her perseverance and courage. Antigone shows her courage in other ways as well. Her perseverance in meeting death is courageous and purposeful. Antigone knows exactly what she has to do and does what is needed to do. For Antigone "there is no guilt in reverence for the dead" (711). She is fearless and has the courage to face her consequences even if it means it ending up in death. Antigone is not afraid to pay for her consequences because she knows what she has done was the correct thing to do. Through her perseverance and courage, she fits the role of the tragic hero perfectly.

Antigone's ability to follow her own beliefs, to make proper actions, and to follow through on her actions with courage make her the perfect tragic hero. It is important to follow one's own beliefs and to pursue the right things in life so the outcome will turn out well. With having no courage and perseverance it is very easy to be challenged and stopped from your goals being perused. The tragic hero of any story has all these qualities and has the ability to do what they want when they want. A tragic hero must be someone who follows their beliefs no matter what the outcome may be. Although sometimes the outcome may involve death, a tragic hero can be anyone who wishes to follow their own beliefs, has the ability to learn to

preserve, and can do the right thing under any circumstance no matter what it is.