

The Children of Oedipus

A Re-Imagination of Sophocles' *Antigone*

By Nelly E. Cuellar-Garcia

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DEDICATION

For my sisters, Belinda, Wanda, and Vianey.

STORY OF THE PLAY

This new dramatic adaption of *Antigone* offers a voice to characters that were previously unheard in the traditional Sophocles version. Polynices, Haemon, Ismene, and Eurydice -- each one becomes an integral part of the storyline so that the audience fully understands what drives them to commit the actions they choose. Inventive new scenes, crisp dialogue, and beautiful choral work help develop the storm between Antigone and Creon to its inevitable conclusion, while tender moments between siblings allow us to see what drives their ambitions, their hopes, and their dreams. This play is particularly effective in the world of competitive theatre for it blends students with different strengths in acting, singing, dancing, and technical theatre. Performance time: about 70 minutes.

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

This play was commissioned by The Nest, a local community theatre, and premiered October 15, 2008, at Zapata High School in Zapata, Texas under the direction of the playwright. The cast was as follows:

CREON: Mario Zavala; ANTIGONE: Adriana Vela;
ISMENE: Monique Flores; EURYDICE: Sarah Liendo;
HAEMON: Daniel Lerma; TEIRESIAS: Roberto Garcia;
SENATOR: Adam Escamilla; SENTRY: Eduardo Flores;
GREEK CHORUS LEADER: Marco Regalado; GREEK
CHORUS: Adela Alvarez, Venessa Garcia, Mindy Sosa,
Alexis Garza, Jessica Martin, Alyssa Torres, Gloria
Jaurequi, Marlowe Bigler, Marco Regalado, Adam
Escamilla, BJ Morales, Jossue Velasquez, Rico Griffin,
Ramon Lara; TECH: Celissa Martinez, Vanessa Jasso, AJ
Crake, Carlos Garza.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 men, 3 women, 2 flexible, chorus, extras)

CHORUS LEADER: *(Flexible role)*

CHORUS: Any number.

ANTIGONE: Peace-seeking sister, determined.

POLYNICES: At war with his brother Eteocles.

ETEOCLES: At war with his brother Polynices.

CREON: King who believes man's law is above all else.

ISMENE: Antigone's wary sister.

EURYDICE: Queen, wife of Creon.

SENTRY: Captures Antigone.

SENATORS: Several, give advice to Creon.

HAEMON: Son of Eurydice, Antigone's betrothed.

TEIRESIAS: *(Flexible role)* A blind, but wise priest.

ARCHIMEDES: Guard who helps open burial cave.

ADDITIONAL NON-SPEAKING ROLES as soldiers, senators, citizens, attendants. Also, a child or servant may lead the blind Teiresias.

(POSSIBLE DOUBLING: Polynices and Eteocles may double as Haemon, Teiresias, or Archimedes.)

SETTING / SCENES

Place: The city of Thebes.

The set itself requires risers for the chorus, rubble of a ruined city, royal thrones for the king and queen, and the face of an open cave but little other scenery. However, the effects of drums, fighting, battle horns, fog, lightning, red lighting to symbolize violence, etc. add greatly to the overall mood of the production.

Scene 1: Polynices' war tent.

Scene 2: The battle.

Scene 3: The empty battlefield.

Scene 4: The next day, a festival.

Scene 5: A few moments later.

Scene 6: Eurydice's garden.

Scene 7: The next morning.

Scene 8: Later, in Eurydice's garden.

Scene 9: Before Creon and the Senators.

Scene 10: The rubbish heaps and cave opening.

The Children Oedipus

(AT RISE: SFX: The sound of beating war drums begins in the dark. We hear shouts, screams, and explosions as LIGHTS reveal a stage bathed in blood and chaos. Buildings are decimated; there is rubble everywhere. A scrim comes alive with color and shape. There is a crescendo of noise followed by a loud beat and then silence...)

Prologue

(CHORUS is formed in various tableaux. All hold instruments of war. The color red is predominant in bits and pieces around the stage. Low-lying fog swirls around the ankles of some in the tableaux.)

CHORUS LEADER: The House of Labdacus, cursed and crumbling, shudders and sighs, fighting for its last breath of life; war, the greatest harvester of men's souls, has come to Thebes. The last males of the line of Oedipus, Polynices and Eteocles, have raised vast armies in their bid for the throne and set upon each other so savagely, so fiercely that the seven gates and the seven hills of Thebes run scarlet with the blood of its own people. Mothers, daughters, fathers...sons... all weep for a past that cannot be restored and yearn for a world where possibility brings happiness instead of bereavement. Our new truth is steeped in the smoldering bonfires of the dead. There is no respite or solace for Thebes from this civil strife.

(SFX: Battle horns sound and MEN run for cover.)

CHORUS LEADER: The waging of war continues... *(Exits.)*

Scene 1

(POLYNICES is under an awning leaning over a table reviewing a map. ANTIGONE enters unnoticed. She calls to him from the shadows.)

POLYNICES: Who's there? Show yourself!

(ANTIGONE emerges from the shadows.)

POLYNICES: Antigone? *(Joyfully rushing towards HER.)*
Antigone! How did you get past our sentries?

ANTIGONE: I had a good teacher. *(Hugging HIM fiercely.)*

POLYNICES: *(Shaking HER slightly.)* You could have been killed. *(Enveloping her in a warm embrace.)* Always the impetuous one... *(Sighs and releases her.)* What possessed you to attempt such a visit?

ANTIGONE: Sheer desperation, brother. Our people cannot endure much longer. Stop this war.

POLYNICES: Did you ask the same of Eteocles?

ANTIGONE: Yes.

(FX: The scrim lights up with an explosion of colors.)

POLYNICES: And it is quite apparent what his answer was...

ANTIGONE: You are our last hope. Be the bigger man and walk away.

POLYNICES: You were there at the ascension ceremony Antigone; did he not promise as I did to rule jointly? One year each upon the throne of Thebes -- that was the decision! He must step down...honor dictates it.

ANTIGONE: Honor is a spirit that no longer resides within Eteocles. He becomes more arrogant and cruel as the chaos continues. Creon, our uncle, incites him to commit unspeakable cruelties to those that would oppose his views. Our brother speaks as if Thebes were a ship and he its captain.

End of Freeview

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