

### **The setting:**

The Facility – a detention centre for young miscreants. The time is an indeterminate future in an undefined land, The Realm, where citizens are ruled by The Society: a rich and powerful political elite.

### **Characters:**

ANTIGONE	A miscreant
ISMENE	A miscreant, mother and Antigone's sister
POLYNICE*	A miscreant who speaks from beyond the grave
CREON	Prison governor and Haemon's father
HAEMON	Head of Education. Creon's son
GUARD 1	
GUARD 2	
MISCREANTS	Young inmates of The Facility
CROW	Creon's conscience
CHORUS	The community, faith leaders, animals, media, citizens, bureaucracy, the voice of reason, dancing men

### **A note on the staging:**

When staging the play, you may decide that the characters and chorus remain on stage at all times and the focus is shifted through lighting or action.

\* In Sophocles' play, the character was a man called Polynices. Here Polynice is female.

## *The Facility and Other Texts – Re-imagining Antigone*

### **Prologue**

ANTIGONE      Ismene listen. Wake up! They aren't telling us anything.

ISMENE        They told us that Polynice is dead.

ANTIGONE      But that's not enough. What about the how and why and when and where she died?

ISMENE        In her cell. Last night.

ANTIGONE      But how and why?

ISMENE        Shush. A guard is coming.

GUARD 2        (*SHOUTS*) Lockdown.

ANTIGONE      (*SHOUTS*) Oy! You have to let us out.

GUARD 2        Not today. Exercise is cancelled.

GUARD 1        Education is cancelled.

ANTIGONE      (*SHOUTS*) Let us out. Our friend is dead.

GUARD 2        Food will be brought to you. Work will be posted under your doors.

ISMENE        Please let us out. We need to talk about Polynice. We need to remember her.

GUARD 1        We should give them time to grieve together.

GUARD 2        (*SHOUTS*) Lockdown.

ANTIGONE      (*SHOUTS*) What happened to Polynice?

GUARD 2      (*SHOUTS*) Lockdown.

ANTIGONE      (*SHOUTS*) You have to tell us!

GUARD 2      (*SHOUTS*) Lockdown.

~

CHORUS      A tragedy  
                 An unfortunate incident  
                 Ill-fated  
                 Unavoidable  
                 Incomprehensible

~

ANTIGONE      You give us no explanation. You take  
                 no blame. You say no sorry.

GUARD 2      Polynice. Outsider.

GUARD 1      Polynice. Good at chess. Better than  
                 me.

GUARD 2      Lockdown.

~

CHORUS      Taunts and prods and pokes  
                 Graffiti scrawled across her wall  
                 A rat, dead in her bed  
                 Go home, whispered through her door

~

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ANTIGONE      Ismene! We have to do something.  
Creon will take the death of  
Polynice and wrap it up in  
administration, layer after layer,  
like chips in paper.

~

CHORUS          Polynice  
Disposable  
Forgettable  
Flotsam  
Jetsam  
Lagan  
Derelict  
Arrived in a ship  
Barely a boat  
Hardly afloat  
A dinghy  
Alone  
Already sinking

~

ANTIGONE      Creon will bury the truth along  
with her body. Our questions will  
forever be words rattling around our  
cells: rubbed smooth like seaglass  
until there are no sharp edges left  
to lash out with.

ISMENE        Your anger isn't helping. We need to  
                     grieve.

ANTIGONE      We need to scream.

ISMENE        We need to speak her name with  
                  dignity.

ANTIGONE      What is dignity when you die alone  
                    in The Facility?

ISMENE            Dignity is speaking the truth about  
                      who she was:  
                      she won at Chess with her back  
                      turned  
                      tied chewy purple snakes into knots  
                      with her tongue  
                      shared her shower gel with anyone  
                      and everyone  
                      recited poems by dead white men from  
                      long ago and far away.

ANTIGONE      'Darkling I listen'.

~

POLYNICE      ‘Darkling I listen; and, for many a  
                                         time  
I have been half in love with  
                                         easeful Death.’

—

ISMENE        Sung the Song of Solomon to rise  
                  above the rowdy night.

\* From 'Ode to a Nightingale' by John Keats

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ANTIGONE      'Set me as an amulet upon thine arm  
and upon they heart –'\*

~

POLYNICE      'For love is as strong as death.'\*

~

ISMENE          She used the kettle to cook eggs  
stolen from the kitchen. She drew a  
picture of my baby girl to give me  
on my birthday.

ANTIGONE      And wrote a poem to push under my  
door when I thought I couldn't take  
any more of this.

~

POLYNICE      We pawns move forward in formation  
To fight one step at a time, without  
ever turning back

~

ANTIGONE      We will fight for your name to be  
spoken Polynice. We will shout until  
your story is told. We will not be  
silenced. (*SHOUTS*) We will not be  
silent. Rise up with me Ismene.

GUARD 2        Governor Creon forbids it!

ANTIGONE      Let the death of Polynice fill these  
cells with rage!

\* Adapted from a translation of the 'Song of Solomon' or 'Song of Songs'

ISMENE            We don't need more rage. We need a quiet time to remember her. We need to gather and hold hands, to sit and share our stories and sing our songs. We need to cry.

ANTIGONE        Rise up!

GUARD 1         Quiet. Please.

GUARD 2         Governor Creon will not tolerate disobedience.

ANTIGONE        Rise up!

GUARD 1         You'll get a mark against your name. Loss of privileges. Loss of exercise time.

ANTIGONE        Bring it on!

GUARD 1         Trouble will mean no screens for weeks. No library. No contact.

ANTIGONE        You think we care about any of that?

ISMENE           Be careful, Antigone. They can stop our visits. They can do what they want.

*HAEMON enters.*

HAEMON           I've brought you the regulation worksheets to fill out: verbs and adverbs and other useless stuff. And when you've finished them, you can write an ode to Polynice.

## *The Facility and Other Texts – Re-imagining Antigone*

- ISMENE            Like to a nightingale.
- ANTIGONE        What happened to Polynice, sir? What happened in her cell last night?
- HAEMON          I have been told it was a tragedy.
- ANTIGONE        A tragedy? Yes! But not an accident.
- HAEMON          Polynice was a good student. The best.
- ANTIGONE        You don't believe someone can die alone in their cell by accident!
- HAEMON          I can't comment. There will be an enquiry.
- ANTIGONE        Was she being bullied? Harassed? Hassled? Manhandled?
- HAEMON          We all know Polynice lived through troubled times long before she arrived at The Facility. Long before she arrived in The Realm. I wrote up all of her history in my report.
- ANTIGONE        Report for what?
- HAEMON          To support her sanctuary claim. But it wasn't enough. Her application was turned down last night.
- ANTIGONE        You denied her sanctuary.
- HAEMON          Not me. Not us. We tried. But Creon said her case to stay in The Realm was weak.



ANTIGONE      Then Creon will pay for this!

HAEMON        I understand the agony you feel but  
                  lashing out won't bring Polynice  
                  back.

*ISMENE steps forward.*

ISMENE        Sir, we don't want to cause trouble  
                  but we don't want to share our  
                  sadness through locked cell doors.  
                  We want to be together to remember  
                  her.

HAEMON        I'll speak to Governor Creon but  
                  I can't promise he'll grant your  
                  request.

*CROW lands on CREON'S window.*

CREON          Not now Crow. It's not a good time.  
                  Can't you see that there's trouble  
                  in paradise?

CROW           How cruel to ask a blind crow what  
                  he can see.

CREON          Your eyes see more than mortals.

CROW           I can hear well enough and what  
                  I hear is that some of my soul's  
                  poetry is rubbing off on you Creon.  
                  Be careful, flesh of my flesh, or  
                  you may start listening to your  
                  conscience.

## *The Facility and Other Texts – Re-imagining Antigone*

CREON            I listen. I have listened. Just not  
right now. I'm busy. I fear there's  
trouble brewing.

CROW            I can never understand why you  
humans spend so much of your time  
in needless strife.

CREON            And what? You crows live and let  
live?

CROW            I'm not the one on trial here.

CREON            And neither am I!

CROW            No. But. A. Girl. Did. Die.