

CREON. All this is really beside the point. You have your whole life ahead of you-and life is a treasure. And you were about to throw it away. Don't think me fatuous if I say that I understand you; and that at your age I should have done the same thing. A moment ago, when we were quarreling, you said I was drinking in your words. I was. But it wasn't you I was listening to; it was a lad named Creon who lived here in Thebes many years ago. He -was thin and pale, as you are. His mind, too, was filled with thoughts of self-sacrifice. Go and find Haemon. And get married quickly, Antigone. Be happy. Life flows like water, and you young people let it run away through your fingers. Shut your hands; hold on to it, Antigone. Life is not what you think it is. Life is a child playing around your feet, a tool you hold firmly in your grip, a bench you sit down upon in the evening, in your garden. People will tell you that that's not life, that life is something else. They will tell you that because they need your strength and your fire, and they will want to make use of you. Don't listen to them. Believe me, the only poor consolation that we have in our old age is to discover that what I have just said to you is true. Life is nothing more than the happiness that you get out of it.

CREON. The pride of Oedipus! Oedipus and his headstrong pride all over again. I can see your father in you-and I believe you. Of course you thought that I should have you killed! Proud as you are, it seemed to you a natural climax in your existence. Your father was like that. For him as for you human happiness was meaningless; and mere human misery was not enough to satisfy his passion for torment. You come of people for whom the human vestment is a kind of strait jacket: it cracks at the seams. You spend your lives wriggling to get out of it. Nothing less than a cosy tea party with death and destiny will quench your thirst. The happiest hour of your father's life came when he listened greedily to the story of how, unknown to himself, he had killed his own father and dishonored the bed of his own mother. Drop by drop, word by word, he drank in the dark story that the gods had destined him first to live and then to hear. How avidly men and women drink the brew of such a tale when their names are Oedipus-and Antigone! And it is so simple, afterwards, to do what your father did, to put out one's eyes and take one's daughter begging on the highways.

CREON (to himself). A kid! (He looks away from the
GUARD.) I broke the back of the rebellion

but like a snake, it is coming together again.

Polynices' friends, with their gold, blocked by
my orders in the banks of Thebes. The leaders of
the mob, stinking of garlic and allied to envious
princes. And the temple priests, always ready for
a bit of fishing in troubled waters. A kid! I can
imagine what he is like, their kid: a baby-faced
killer, creeping in the night with a toy shovel
under his jacket. (Looks at his PAGE.) Though
why shouldn't they have corrupted a real child?

Very touching! Very useful to the party, an
innocent child. A martyr. A real white-faced
baby of fourteen who will spit with contempt at
the guards who kill him. A free gift to their
cause: the precious, innocent blood of a child on
my hands.

Listen, now. You will continue on duty. When the relief
squad comes up, you will tell them to return to barracks.

You will uncover the body. If another attempt is
made to bury it, I shall expect you to make an arrest
and bring the person straight to me. And you will keep
your mouths shut. Not one word of this to a human
soul. You are all guilty of neglect of duty, and
you will be punished; but if the rumor spreads
through Thebes that the body received burial,
you will be shot-all three of you.