



# Antigone

*Sophocles*

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*Sophocles*

## **Antigone** Sophocles

Antigone is a complex tragedy written by Sophocles as early as 441 BC. It outlines the story of Antigone, sister of Polyneices and Eteocles - two brothers who had fought against each other and died in the Thebes civil war. Creon, the ruler of Thebes, orders that Eteocles' body be treated with great honor, while Polyneices was to be left on the battlefield for the worms and vultures - one of the harshest punishments considered at the time. Without hesitating, Antigone began plotting to offer her brother a proper burial in secret, and tried to convince her sister Isimene to help her. Unfortunately, she is caught, and the punishment that Creon prepares for her out of anger displeases the gods, leading to a dramatic chain of events that are far from what the ruler truly wanted. The story of Antigone is the third and last of the Theban plays created by Sophocles as an elaborate, powerful set of plays designed to offer a more detailed view of the Theban legends about the strong-willed Antigone and her family. Elements of her legend appear in many other forms, including a description of an ancient painting by Philostratus, or a sarcophagus in the Roman Villa Doria Pamphili. Sophocles is one of the acclaimed Ancient Greek tragedians of his time, having written a total of 120 plays, with Antigone being one of his most successful, as well as famous. Sophocles is constantly compared with his contemporary, Euripides, as well as the earlier writings of Aeschylus. Although in many ways tragic and difficult to fully digest, the story of Antigone is quite beautiful in its exemplification of the heroine's strength and integrity. Sophocles' masterful ability to animate strong, morally opposite characters who would stop at nothing to achieve their goals also leadstocharacters like Creon becoming a strong example fortheway in which the lessonsofpride and judgment can eventually leadtowisdom,albeit through thegreatestpain and mostdifficultlosses.

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