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# THREE CLASSICS

## by Jason Grote

*(Anti)gone*..... 7

Genre: Comedy/Drama  
Duration: 30-45 minutes  
Casting: 2 females, 2 males, 2 either  
(5-22 actors possible)

*In His Bold Gaze, My Ruin is Writ Large*..... 37

Genre: Comedy  
Duration: 10-25 minutes  
Casting: 3 females, 2 males  
(5-8 actors possible)

*Prometheus Rendered*..... 51

Genre: Drama  
Duration: 10-25 minutes  
Casting: 1 females, 1 males, 2 either  
(4-6 actors possible)

# **(ANTI)GONE**

## **Cast of Characters**

ANTIGONE, female, daughter of Oedipus

ISMENE, female, her sister. May be doubled with Tiresias / Spirit of Jail.

KREON, male, Antigone's uncle, tyrant king of Thebes

TIRESIAS, male/female, androgynous prophet. May be doubled with Ismene, must be doubled with the Spirit of Jail.

ERISYCHTHON, male, cursed by the gods to be constantly hungry, currently a venture capitalist. May be doubled with Sentry #1.

HAEMON, A DICK, male, Kreon's son, Antigone's boyfriend. May be doubled with Sentry #2.

SPIRIT OF JAIL, male/female, Ghost that haunts Thebes' jail

SENTRIES 1 & 2, soldiers

CHORUS, may be doubled with preexisting cast, or puppets may be used in place of actors, but multiple voices must be heard when they speak

## **Time and Place**

The Thebes and environs of the original *Antigone*, but globalized and updated so that it has become “no place”—the bland, generic environment of airports, malls, highways, and hospitals.

# (ANTI)GONE

## by Jason Grote

*(This play may be performed on a bare stage, though the general feeling should be one of generic, artificial spaces, worn-down from overuse: parking lots, strip malls, airports, underneath highway overpasses.)*

*(A slash ["/"] in the dialogue means an interruption.)*

*(The important thing about the CHORUS is the sound of multiple voices. Ideally, the chorus would consist of an assortment of 5-12 human actors and/or puppets, but as long as we hear multiple voices, what we see on stage doesn't matter so much. The voices may be live, spoken offstage, miked, or pre-recorded, or some combination of all of these. Some distortion might be interesting, giving a robotic, frightening, or technological effect to the voices.)*

**CHORUS.** Time large, press children. When pay tone person town begin.

Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K. because

Without doing anything wrong he was

Arrested

One fine morning

Uh huh

Oh yeah

Check it out. His landlady's cook, who always brought him his breakfast at eight o'clock, failed to appear on this occasion

That had never happened before.

### 1. the void

*(Sounds of cars and airplanes, like we are off of a highway by an airport.)*

*(ISMENE enters, extremely pregnant, pushing an shopping cart, overfull with products. Perhaps she is wheeled out in a contraption that simulates monstrous pregnancy and spits out the various appliances. The appliances do not have to look anything like what they are*

*said to be, though they should be as wet, plastic, and angular as possible.)*

**ISMENE.** *(Whispering:)* Antigone! Psst!

*(Sniffs; to no one in particular:)*

It can be smelled. The end of this.  
In the wind. Like money, mixed with milk and blood.

*(Whispering again:)*

Antigone!

**ANTIGONE.** *(Off:)* Ismene? Where are you?

**ISMENE.** Shhh! Over here.

*(ANTIGONE enters.)*

**ANTIGONE.** You shouldn't be here.  
It isn't safe to be outside your car here.

**ISMENE.** It isn't safe to be outside your car anywhere.

*(ANTIGONE feels ISMENE's stomach.)*

**ANTIGONE.** How is your baby?

**ISMENE.** I was afraid the gods would do strange things to my children. But they have rewarded me instead with these.

*(Holds up a vial of pills.)*

One of the gods came to my door wearing nothing but a steel hat and a Member's Only jacket, I think it was Apollo, anyway he gave me these, and I have been giving birth to many wondrous children. Look.

*(She points to the shopping cart.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Did you go shopping?

**ISMENE.** No. They are my children. Watch. Unh. Here comes one now.

*(She goes into labor; ad-lib as needed:)*

Oh. OWWW! OWWWWW!

*(Perhaps water splashes out from Ismene's contraption.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Oh goodness. Ismene!

**ISMENE.** Shhh. Sh. Grab it. Grab it when it comes out I don't want it to break when it OHHHH AHHHH OHMIGOD

**ANTIGONE.** Ismene! Um, breathe. I don't know what to.

*(A wet, hard, black plastic thing drops from ISMENE into ANTI-GONE's hands.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Oh.

**ISMENE.** Give it.

*(She does. Beat.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Is that your child?

*(No answer.)*

What is it?

**ISMENE.** *(Looks close at it:)* A TiVo.

You can record the television programs you like with this and you don't have to watch any commercials.

*(It doesn't have to look like a TiVo unit.)*

**ANTIGONE.** This came out of you?

How did this happen?

**ISMENE.** *(Shopping cart:)* I gave birth to lots of things.

Look. Look at my children.

Look.

**ANTIGONE.** A toaster.

An answering machine.

Culottes.

Microwave popcorn.

Hand sanitizer?

**ISMENE.** My children are gifts. From the gods. I am proud of my children Oh. Hold on a minute. Oh.

Oh!

*(A wet iPod pops out of her.)*

**ANTIGONE.** An iPod.

**ISMENE.** Awesome.

*(She grabs it.)*

It's got songs on it already.

*(She puts the ear buds in, dances without joy.)*

U2.

*(Long beat. ISMENE dances to music we can't hear. Sounds of cars, airplanes. ANTIGONE is impatient.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Why did you call me here?

Ismene.

I don't like it here, it isn't pleasant.

Ismene.

Why did you call me here?

*(ISMENE removes the iPod, stares at ANTIGONE.)*

**ISMENE.** Hold on.

*(“Labor”:)*

Oh. OHHH. Oh.

*(She gives birth to a PDA, reads from it robotically:)*

**ISMENE.** There is a devil in you

A disobedient devil that fills you with great shame

You do not appreciate the gifts of our king

His impossible abundance

His ocean of forged meaning

His beautiful verdant lawns in which hide small devils

Known as crickets. You are a cricket, Antigone.

**ANTIGONE.** I don't understand.

**ISMENE.** Will you let me finish, please? Will you please not interrupt me, please?

**ANTIGONE.** Okay.

**ISMENE.** (*Reading:*) We all thought there was a war.  
But now we know there was no war.  
We will forget there ever was this war that there never was anyway.  
Like the dead drinking water from the river Lethe we will drink  
deeply from our mall fountains and water filters and forget. For-  
getting is delicious, like Schweppes Ginger Ale. Like Snapple.  
There is one bit of business left and that's you.

**ANTIGONE.** I don't understand. Why are you saying this? There  
was a war. It was terrible. Our brothers fought, we watched our  
father die. He jumped off of that thing, the, like rocky outcropping,  
cliff thing.  
Anyway it was awful.

**ISMENE.** You're being ridiculous. Look.  
Look around you.  
There wasn't a war.

**ANTIGONE.** There wasn't?  
Everything looks devastated to me.

**ISMENE.** That's just how it always looks.

**ANTIGONE.** Yeah I guess you're right.

*(Beat. Sounds of cars etc.)*

**ISMENE.** But anyway in order for us to forget there must be a sacri-  
fice. That sacrifice is you. You will bury our brother Eteocles or  
Polynices, I've forgotten which one it is already (ha ha!) against  
Kreon's orders and he will order you to be dead.

*(Stops reading, affectless:)*

I beg of you Antigone don't do this.

**ANTIGONE.** I'm not doing anything.  
There is nothing left of our brother. Either of them.  
One was in a plane, shot down over Pelops. The other was burnt,  
with napalm, not even his bones are left.  
This isn't funny, Ismene, I miss them.  
I know we didn't talk to them much but still. I remember when we  
were little and Eteocles would throw us up in the air and we would  
scream and laugh and Polynices would sneak up and pull our shirts

up and do raspberries on our stomachs. At least I think I remember that, I was so young and then the stuff with Dad happened. Do you remember that?

**ISMENE.** I know it is our way to bury the bodies of our loved ones but for the sake of the House of Kadmos and the City of Thebes you must leave Eteocles or Polynices' body, whichever it is, to dry in the sun like a Craisin.

**ANTIGONE.** Ismene.  
There is no body.

**ISMENE.** (*Labor; ad-lib as needed:*) Oh. OHHHH! OOh.

*(She gives birth to a George Foreman Grill.)*

**ISMENE.** It's a George Foreman Grill.  
You can have it. We already have one. The bigger one.

*(Sad:)*

This one's perfect for preparing quick, low-fat meals for one or two people.

**ANTIGONE.** Ismene. Please tell me why you're saying these things.

**ISMENE.** Don't do it, Antigone.  
The double-sided grill surface heats in less than five minutes to an even temperature perfect for grilling most foods.  
Don't bury him.

*(ISMENE moves to leave.)*

**ANTIGONE.** There is no body. Talk to me, Ismene.  
Don't go.  
Please. Something isn't right, I can feel it.

**ISMENE.** (*Mournfully:*) It leaves attractive grill marks and makes surprisingly little smoke.

*(She exits. ANTIGONE stands, alone. Blackout on her.)*

**CHORUS.** Product, final record came, develop. Kind short cost cross dark.

K. was informed by telephone that next

Sunday a short inquiry into his case would  
take place

A machine for making emptiness

His attention was drawn to the fact that these inquiries would now  
follow each other regularly,

not every week,

Uh huh

Oh yeah

but at more frequent intervals as time  
went on.

Operate small her surface ground.

Too, tell house. Science by, he indicate for pose great. Write serve  
ring paragraph metal, little distant.

but on the other hand, the interrogations must be thorough in every  
respect, although, because of the stain involved, they must  
never

last

too

long.

## 2. shrank back

*(KREON gives a speech. Great fanfare. Long silence. He is old, mean, oily, burnished, metallic, damaged. He wheezes contemptuously at the crowd.)*

**KREON.** Draw a line between need  
and desire. See?

You can't.

We are all cyborgs now.

*(Great applause, cut short. Blackout.)*

## 3. meanwhile, in coach

*(A plane. ERISYCHTHON and TIRESIAS sit next to each other in coach. ERISYCHTHON talks on a cell phone. He devours airplane pretzels ravenously, spitting crumbs as he talks. TIRESIAS is in female form, but hermaphroditic—his/her female aspects should look fake, even if played by a woman.)*

**ERISYCHTHON.** I think, uh, they had a dump around Buffalo or something.

I think it's Nikkei number two. Where's my HRB?

GSL? Hm.

YHL?

Last night they got a thirty-million dollar contract to work all the F-16s in the country. I have this whole aerospace thing going.

I'm gonna show you some weird stocks when I see you. I got an oddball page. I got a baby Warren Buffet stock.

Listen, I gotta go. I'm on the plane, yeah.

*(He hangs up, pushes the call button, waves to a flight attendant. The plane begins takeoff. Beat.)*

**ERISYCHTHON.** Yeah, hello, yeah. Can we get some more pretzels over here?

God damn I am hungry.

**TIRESIAS.** You are always hungry. The gods cursed you to be hungry.

**ERISYCHTHON.** Yeah well.

How you feeling?

**TIRESIAS.** Fine. Yourself?

**ERISYCHTHON.** Never better.

*(Beat. The plane takes off. Things get a little bumpy.)*

**ERISYCHTHON.** Where's those god-damn pretzels. Pretzels!

**TIRESIAS.** Nervous?

**ERISYCHTHON.** Me? No.

**TIRESIAS.** You should be.

*(He squints at him/her. Beat. The plane starts shaking violently.)*

*(TIRESIAS smiles at him.)*

*(Oxygen masks drop from above them. The plane plummets.)*

*(Blackout.)*

**4. the vulgar mind that sees only**

*(Two guards, guarding nothing. They eat. Sounds of cars, planes, etc. Long beat.)*

**SENTRY #1.** Someday I am going to shit on the moon.

*(Long silence. They eat.)*

**SENTRY #1.** Two for a dollar.

*(He exits. SENTRY #2 chews thoughtlessly. Beat.)*

*(ANTIGONE enters, holding the George Foreman Grill.)*

**SENTRY #2.** You.

**ANTIGONE.** Um hi.

**SENTRY #2.** I don't want to fight you but I will.

**ANTIGONE.** I don't want to fight at all.

**SENTRY #2.** They said you would come. They said you would come bearing a grill like that one, a George Foreman Grill, but the small one, like the college students use. Get away from the body.

**ANTIGONE.** There's no body here.

**SENTRY #2.** Kreon's orders. Don't make me do this.

**ANTIGONE.** I'm not making you do anything.

**SENTRY #2.** May the gods forgive me, Antigone.

*(He takes out his sword and fights with her, even though she stands far away, doing nothing. He fights as if against a formidable foe.)*

**ANTIGONE.** What are you doing? Stop. Stop that.

*(He takes the George Foreman Grill from her and manipulates it, like she's attacking him with it.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Stop it.

That was a gift.

**SENTRY #2.** NOOOO!

**ANTIGONE.** You're being stupid. Knock it off.

*(He turns it on and closes it over his own head. Real pain, screaming.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Stop it, stop it, don't!

*(He dies, screaming. It should be genuinely painful, not comic.)*

**ANTIGONE.** *(Sad:)* Why did you do that?

*(SENTRY #1 enters. He unsheathes his sword.)*

**SENTRY #1.** Majesty.

You are a murderer.

**ANTIGONE.** Put your sword away. I'm not going to fight you.

**SENTRY #1.** Strong words. I see you will stop at nothing in your revolutionary zeal.

**ANTIGONE.** He did that to himself.

**SENTRY #1.** You must not bury your brother Eteocles. Or Polynices, whoever. The bad one. He was a traitor to Thebes, whichever one he was.

**ANTIGONE.** Stop saying that. It's offensive. There's nothing left of him to bury.

*(He grabs her.)*

**ANTIGONE.** What are you doing? Stop! Get off!

*(He forces her to dig into the cracked asphalt.)*

**ANTIGONE.** OW! That hurts! Stop it! It's pavement! Stop!

**SENTRY #1.** Stop digging. Majesty.

**ANTIGONE.** I'm not. I'm not.

*(SENTRY #1 takes out a pistol.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Why are you doing this?

Please.

Don't.

**SENTRY #1.** Now you see the fate of traitors.

*(He shoots himself in the head.)*

---

(ANTIGONE stands for a moment, stunned, holding her bloody hands, looking at the spectacle before her: two dead cops.)

(She gets her bearings, grabs the George Foreman Grill, runs.)

**CHORUS.** During the next week K. waited day after day for a new summons

He would not believe that his refusal to be interrogated

had been taken

literally, and

Uh huh.

Oh yeah.

How is the Empire?

The rift

The hemorrhage

Uh huh

### 5. from love to law and back again

(HAEMON, A DICK, shaves his father KREON with a straight razor.)

**KREON.** Slowly Haemon, take it slowly. One thing after another. You make me feel giddy.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Fuck you, Dad.

**KREON.** What do you mean? What an odd thing to say?

**HAEMON, A DICK.** I said Fuck You. I hate this. God.

**KREON.** Son. I have an idea. For the kingdom. It involves culture.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Whatever it is, it's stupid.

**KREON.** A great kingdom is not great without its culture.

It is our art that tells the future what kind of people we were.

They think me a brute, a privatizer, happy to abandon the people of Thebes to the television and the smooth rhythm and blues love ballad. But I am a gentle, civil man who loves the arts.

Here is my idea: a commission. No, a contest. The great poets, painters, and sculptors of Thebes will sit under highway overpasses, train tracks, airports, military bases, farms, factories. They

will wait for accidents. And when the accidents happen they will not do anything to help the people in the accidents but instead will chronicle the painful, erotic union of flesh and metal.

This is beautiful, to me. Oil coating our skin and hardening it into hard plastic. This is our culture. This is what the future must know. What is your opinion of this project, my son Haemon?

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Who cares? Shut up, I hate you. God. You're totally ruining my thing here.

**KREON.** My beautiful son. You will be a king envied by other kings.

*(He tries to kiss HAEMON, A DICK.)*

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Knock it off! Jeez!

**KREON.** Come to me, son.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Stop!

*(HAEMON, A DICK slits KREON's throat. He bleeds, chokes. KREON's choking turns to laughter. He still bleeds.)*

**KREON.** Oh, Haemon. You will amuse our guests so.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Fuck you.

**CHORUS.** My lord Kreon.  
Tiresias and Erisychthon have arrived.

## 6. long since forgotten

*(Same. TIRESIAS enters. His/her clothing is in tatters from the plane crash. Underneath his/her tatters s/he wears a fake, rubber novelty item—the boobs and stomach of a woman. S/he holds the remains of ERISYCHTHON in a box.)*

*(Perhaps there is a tinny, recorded fanfare. Cut short.)*

**ERISYCHTHON.** *(From the box:)* Uh, excuse me, is this going to take long?

**TIRESIAS.** A word about Erisychthon, gentle audience:  
Erisychthon was not part of the original story of Antigone.

Erisychthon was a man, a man who angered the gods, or a god, and was made hungry forever, constant, sucking hunger, an unfathomable hunger that could not be satisfied, in the way that these Greek afflictions tended to be.

Eventually he ate himself.

In this story, he was incinerated in a plane crash and his remains are in this box.

He is present here as an idea of hunger,

As ash,

As clock,

As metaphor.

(To KREON:)

Majesty.

**KREON.** Tiresias. Do you look different somehow?

You look different somehow.

**TIRESIAS.** I am a woman now. Also, I was in a plane crash.

**KREON.** Is it your hair?

**TIRESIAS.** I was in a plane crash. Also, I'm a woman now.

**KREON.** Are those fake breasts?

**TIRESIAS.** What, these? No.

**KREON.** They look fake to me.

**TIRESIAS.** No. Don't touch.

**KREON.** I wasn't.

(Beat.)

**TIRESIAS.** You look different too. You have been damaged.

**KREON.** Have I?

(HAEMON, A DICK *stabs* KREON *in the back.*)

**KREON.** This is my son. He's amusing. What's in the box.

**TIRESIAS.** Erisychton.

What's left of him.

**ERISYCHTHON.** *(From the box:)* Actually I hate to be rude but I have another meeting to get to.

*(Beat.)*

**KREON.** So, uh.  
What's up?

**TIRESIAS.** We have come with prophecy.  
You will not listen to the prophecy. You never listen.  
My gifts of clairvoyance do strange things to the way I perceive the world.

**KREON.** I'm sorry, I wasn't listening.

**TIRESIAS.** My gifts of clairvoyance do strange things to the way I perceive the world, I am experiencing every moment at once. I can see the future, but the past grows hazy. Prophecy plays havoc on one's memory. We have done this so many times. You don't remember, I think that I have even tried to tell you this before, but you never listen to anything. You will soon find out that the body is gone. Eteocles, or Polynices, whichever one it is. Antigone has done this.

**ERISYCHTHON.** Did anyone hear me? About this meeting?  
I mean, I'm not designing like fucking an ethnic cleansing on PowerPoint or anything, but, you know, there's like a fuckload of money at stake here.

**KREON.** What is this you say? Antigone has buried the body of her traitorous brother, Eteocles? Or, uh, Polynices?

**TIRESIAS.** You do not hear me, because not hearing me is what you do. I have with me the ashes of Erisychthon. The ashes of hunger.

**ERISYCHTHON.** Excuse me. Was that a reference to me? Because thank you. Because I happen to have very little control over my mobility because I seem to be some fragmentary remains in a box and I would appreciate it if someone could get me to this very important meeting for which I am very late **DO YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH FUCKING MONEY I'M LOSING EVERY MINUTE HERE?**

**KREON.** We must seize Antigone. Haemon: you must choose your loyalty. Your family and the state or the heretic cousin who stirs your sex.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Will you all SHUT UP?  
You're always ruining everything. All of you. I wanna play fucking PSP.

**KREON.** Good. That is the way to behave. Subordinate everything else to your father's will.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Fuck you.

*(Out on them.)*

**CHORUS.** Idea star change spell. In the next few days  
K. found it impossible to exchange  
even a word  
with Fraulein Burstner  
Oh yeah uh huh  
He tried to get hold of her by every means he could think of,  
but she always managed  
to elude him

## 7. the pit of babel

*(Haemon, a Dick's room. He plays a first-person shooter video game, extremely involved in it. ANTIGONE is there, ragged from being on the run, her damaged hands wrapped in torn cloth, holding the Foreman Grill.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Haemon. Haemon, do you have to play that?

**HAEMON, A DICK.** I have to otherwise I can't get into fucking you. You know that. God.

**ANTIGONE.** I've missed you.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Yeah, whatever.

**ANTIGONE.** Everyone's gone crazy. They said I buried my brother's body, but there wasn't a body there.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** FUCK!

**ANTIGONE.** What.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Not you, the game.

**ANTIGONE.** I've missed you. Your touch.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Uh-huh.

**ANTIGONE.** How you feel under me. Your hips, and stomach. Did you miss me?

**HAEMON, A DICK.** What? Yeah.

**ANTIGONE.** I want you, Haemon.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Sure.

*(She straddles him. He remains engrossed in his video game, but she comes almost instantly.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Unh. Oh. Oh

**HAEMON, A DICK.** YEAH!

**ANTIGONE.** Haemon? Did you come?

**HAEMON, A DICK.** What? No. Duh. I killed a crack whore. I mean, duh. God. You should change into that thing.

**ANTIGONE.** Thing?

**HAEMON, A DICK.** You know, the thing. I mean Jesus, I can't think of everything. You know, like the thing. The thing in the top drawer in my dresser. Then I can get, you know, like into it.

**ANTIGONE.** The negligee you got me for my birthday? I mean, I picked it out. And paid for it. But you are so thoughtful!

I'm going to change.

Thank the gods you're here, Haemon.

I love you.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Uh-huh.

*(She exits. He looks around to make sure the coast is clear, then pulls out a cell phone.)*

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Dad. She's here.

I don't have all fucking day, just she's here so come down here and get her out of my fucking hair! Jesus!

*(Beat. He plays.)*

*(ANTIGONE reenters, wearing the negligee and still holding the George Foreman Grill, for reasons even she is not sure of. The negligee shouldn't be too revealing; it should be like something a housewife would wear to make herself feel sexy, but not necessarily look sexy.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Haemon. I'm here.

How do I look? Do you like it?

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Yeah, just uh give me a minute, almost done.

**ANTIGONE.** Okay.

*(Beat. He plays.)*

*(Enter KREON.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Kreon?

**KREON.** Antigone.

Why did you try to bury your brother?

**ANTIGONE.** I didn't bury him.

**KREON.** I had forbidden it.

**ANTIGONE.** I didn't, Kreon, this is crazy, why are you doing this, there was no body.

**KREON.** You heard my edict. You read my edict. You knew the punishment I ordered for anyone who tried to give him burial. And still you chose to defy me. You went so far as to murder two loyal officers of the state. Men with families, men who loved this country, with long, distinguished records of service. Why did you do this?

**ANTIGONE.** I don't know what to tell you. I didn't kill those men. I didn't do anything.

**KREON.** I am prepared to offer you mercy. But it comes with a price. You must renounce your burial of Eteocles (or Polynices) and endorse my decree.

**ANTIGONE.** Sure, okay. If it'll stop this craziness, fine.

**KREON.** Still you are defiant.

**ANTIGONE.** No. No I'm not, I'll do what you want, there is no body. Tell him, Haemon.

**KREON.** You must very much want to die. You look like a trapped animal.

**ANTIGONE.** Haemon, stop him. This is insane.

**KREON.** Stubborn woman! Daughter of prideful Oedipus! If I were one of the petty tyrants of Greece I would not even attempt to give you this mercy and still you spit on it. Haemon, take her!

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Fuck you, dad. Jeez.

**ANTIGONE.** I know you wouldn't betray me.

**KREON.** He has betrayed you already. It was your Haemon who has called me here. Show her, my son. Show this vile offspring of a cursed juncture of mother and son, this train wreck of genetic material, show her where your loyalties lie.

*(BANG! HAEMON, A DICK takes his video-game gun and shoots KREON. It doesn't have to look real, but it should be noisy, and KREON should bleed and collapse.)*

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Shut up!

**ANTIGONE.** I knew it. I knew it, Haemon. You still love me, I knew it.

*(He shoots her. Again, it doesn't have to look real; however, unlike KREON, its effects on her should be heartbreakingly real; a non-fatal but painful and threatening wound. Perhaps she wheezes from a punctured lung.)*

**ANTIGONE.** *(Wheezing, heartbroken, in pain:)* AAA  
Why?

**HAEMON, A DICK.** I don't fucking love you. I never did love you. You look fat in that stupid thing.

*(KREON arises, bloody, sputtering.)*

**KREON.** Let her take her things. She will live out what remains of her days in that cave.

**CHORUS.** K. was passing along the Bank corridor from his office to the main staircase—he was almost the last to leave, only two clerks in the dispatch department were still at work by the dim light of a glow lamp—when he heard convulsive sighs behind a door, which he had always taken to be the door of a lumber-room, although he had never opened it.

The brutal charm of the terrorist act, uh huh.

The hidden face where the object crumbles.

Main trucut disp biopsy twin-tray.

Oh yeah.

### **8. a number of embarrassments**

*(ANTIGONE limps into a jail cell. She has been to the hospital; her side and hands are bandaged. From the shadows, the SPIRIT OF JAIL hisses at her.)*

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *Hisssssss...*

*(Brief silence.)*

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *RIGHT?*

**ANTIGONE.** Uh.

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *Hisssssss...*

*(The SPIRIT OF JAIL starts hacking, coughing.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Are you okay?

My name is Antigone.

My boyfriend shot me. It burned, there was a burning. My lung was punctured, you could hear the air hissing out of it. They took me to the hospital and stopped my lungs from collapsing. They cleaned and bandaged the cuts on my hands.

I thought he loved me but I suppose he was never very nice.

He said I looked fat in this but I don't think he really meant it. I think he was just being mean.

I wish I had some other clothes but at least this is clean.

What I had on before was really starting to smell (ha!).

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *(Coughing; sibilant:) Sssuccesss hhhasss alwaysss hhhad itsss priccce, I guesss, and I lllearnned thhhat lllesssonnn thhhe hhharrrd wwwayyy in Octoberrr of Nnninneteennn eighty-fffivvve, whhhennn Ffforbesss mmmagazzzine nnnammmed mmme thhhe sssocalled “rrrichessst mmmannn innn Ammmerrrica.”*

*(She starts hacking even more uncontrollably.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Are you all right? You sound like there’s something wrong with you. Do you want to see a doctor? Because I just saw the doctors, they’re very good. Maybe they have special doctors for me because of who I am, you know, but I can insist that they see you if you want. Do you want me to insist?

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *HISSSSS! I donnn’t knnnow whhhat causssssesss a perssonnn to be ammbitiousss fffromm thhhe timmme I hhhit thhhe grrrounnd, and I exxxpect my brrrothher’sss prrroabllly rrright. Annntigonne. Annntigonne.*

*(Coughs.)*

Annntigone.

**ANTIGONE.** *(Genuine concern:)* Yes? I’m here.

**SPIRIT OF JAIL / TIRESIAS.** *(Coughing:)* I cannot stay for long Antigone I am possessing this form I have a message for you Antigone.

*(The SPIRIT OF JAIL emerges from the shadows. She is TIRESIAS. This can be done by doubling, or by using two separate actors and a visible costume change.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Tiresias?

What’s going on?

**TIRESIAS.** Yes and. No. I am in this form, in this form of the Spirit. Of Jail. That’s who has been speaking to you in those. Words. The Spirit of Jail. She is old, older than the jail, some think, though no one. Remembers. Some say she is. You, the first. Antigone, who. Hung herself in the. Cave.

**ANTIGONE.** I don't understand. I never hung myself in a cave. Or wait, I did. Did I? Then how am I here?  
I think maybe you've all mistaken me for someone else.

**TIRESIAS.** There are strange things happening to all of our memories, those of us who care enough to remember.  
This is what you have done, year after year. For countless years. You rebel against the state in the form of Kreon, he banishes you to a cave, this jail used to be the cave in fact, and you kill yourself, precipitating a chain of events that destroy Kreon's family.  
But the world is sick. The ritual has become threadbare. I am weak, I can not stay here for long. I must give this form up soon, the Spirit of Jail is strong. I have brought you this.

*(S/he holds out the box containing Erisychthon's remains.)*

**ANTIGONE.** What is it?

**TIRESIAS.** It is your only. Hope.

**ERISYCHTHON.** It is Erisychthon. Listen, I had somewhere to be sixteen fucking hours ago.

**ANTIGONE.** Erisychthon?

**TIRESIAS.** You have heard of. Him.

**ANTIGONE.** Yes.

The gods were angry with him for something so they made him always hungry, constant, empty, ravenous hunger. Eventually he devoured himself.

**ERISYCHTHON.** No, see, that's a myth. I learned to invest, aggressive, high-growth portfolios. You never have to stop eating if you play your cards right.  
Listen, I really have to get going.

**ANTIGONE.** Why is he in a box? Is he small?

**TIRESIAS.** He is ashes. We were in a plane crash.

*(Changing back to the SPIRIT:)*

Nggg listen. I don't I don't *HISSSSS* she iss coming back the Ssspirrit of the Jjjailll iss commminng back. I can't ssstay in

uhhhh I can't ssstay in thiss ffform long. Take thhhiss. Take it. They will try Kreon will try to kill you. Carry Erissychthhhon withhh you annnd *whhhennn thhhe timmme HISS whhhennn thhhe timmme commmesss you wwwill knnowww.*

**ANTIGONE.** Why are you helping me?

**TIRESIAS.** *I wwwasss I wwwasss thhhiss iss jjusst the wwwayyy thhhingss hhhappennn. I exxxperiennccce evvverythhhinnng at onnnccce I donnn't bellievvve in fffrree wwwill*

*(She becomes the SPIRIT OF JAIL again:)*

*HISSSSSSS...*

*(She licks ANTIGONE:)*

*Hhhunnngry. Tassste good.*

**ANTIGONE.** Listen. No. I would prefer you not touching me. Especially not licking me.

**ERISYCHTHON.** She's not touching you. She's going to eat you.

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *(Points to grill:)* *Nnnowww thhhat wwwe wwverre out of debt, wwwe coulld rreally do sssomethhhinnng wwwithhh ourrr key ssstrateggy, whhhich wwwasss sssimpllly to put good sssizzed disscounnt ssstoress innnto llittle onnne-hhhorsse townnsss whhhich evvverrybody elllsse wwwasss ignnorinnng.*

**ANTIGONE.** What? What do you want? What does she want?

**ERISYCHTHON.** It's me. She got some of my ashes on her and it made her starving.

*(The SPIRIT OF JAIL puts her hands in the ashes, then in ANTIGONE's mouth.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Ew.

*(Beat.)*

Oh. Oh, that's good.

**ERISYCHTHON.** Listen, take me away from her, she's going to eat me.

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *(Eating, sharing with ANTIGONE:.)* Byyy nnnowww, I'vvve givvvennn yyyou a prrretty clearr immmprrresssionnn of whhhat mmy busssinnness prrriorritiesss hhhavvve beennn ovvverrr thhhe yyyearrrsss...

**ANTIGONE.** *(Eating ashes:)* Oh, that's good.

**ERISYCHTHON.** Hey. This isn't funny. Hey.

**ANTIGONE.** You know what would be a great idea? The grill. We can make little ash-burgers. That would be so delicious. And cute!

**ERISYCHTHON.** Hey. Stop fucking around.

**ANTIGONE.** Here, come on, Spirit. Help me make the burgers.

*(ANTIGONE and the SPIRIT OF JAIL make burgers by mixing the ashes with water, and cook them into the Foreman Grill.)*

**ERISYCHTHON.** Hey. Come on, knock it off.

Hey.

Hey, please.

Hey.

*(They continue. Out on them.)*

**CHORUS.** Outsource your heart  
Feel the illegible violence in your skin  
At long last  
Oh yeah  
K.  
Had made up him mind  
To take his case  
Out  
Of his advocate's hands.

### **9. even the span of a normal happy life**

*(Later. ANTIGONE and the SPIRIT OF JAIL languish, full from burgers. There is one burger left.)*

**ANTIGONE.** You know what? This is crazy, but I'm actually still hungry.

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *Hissssss.*

**ANTIGONE.** You said it. Hey, do you mind if I eat that last one?

*(ANTIGONE reaches for the burger, the SPIRIT OF JAIL bites her. Blood.)*

**ANTIGONE.** OW. Jeez.

*(Beat. It is in Antigone's nature to offer the burger to her cellmate, but something is different now.)*

**ANTIGONE.** You know, it's totally in my nature to offer you the last burger but now I really don't think I'm going to.

*(Beat. ANTIGONE goes for the burger.)*

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *HISSSS!*

*(A struggle. ANTIGONE gets the burger. Eats it.)*

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *HISS.*

*(She comes at ANTIGONE, who dodges. The SPIRIT OF JAIL clangs her teeth again the bars of the cell [or otherwise injures herself].)*

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *AHHHH!*

**ANTIGONE.** I'm sorry I'm sorry.

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *(Pain:) HAAA AH AH*

*(ANTIGONE inhales the burger.)*

**ANTIGONE.** Oh. I'm still so hungry. You know, it's like I can't help myself. Oh, you know what?

*(ANTIGONE jumps at the SPIRIT OF JAIL and takes a bite. It's a big bite. Blood drips down ANTIGONE's throat.)*

**SPIRIT OF JAIL.** *(Howls:) OOOWWW!*

**ANTIGONE.** You know what? That was so delicious.

*(She descends on the SPIRIT, devouring her, as she screams and whimpers. Blackout on them.)*

---

**10. what remains**

*(The jail cell. It is empty and dark.)*

*(Enter KREON and HAEMON, A DICK, [who plays a portable video game module]. It is minimally illuminated.)*

**KREON.** Look: Antigone has made a noose out of her fine linen veil. Haemon lays beside her, his arms around her waist, lamenting her.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** What? I'm not doing that. I'm glad she's dead.

**KREON.** What have you done, children? Speak to me.

**HAEMON, A DICK.** Will somebody turn on a fucking light?

**KREON.** It is dark in here, isn't it?

I am frightened.

How odd.

I feel a clatter underneath my feet. What are. Are those bones? Wait! Did you hear that?

*(Silence, except for the sound of Haemon's video game.)*

**KREON.** Haemon. Turn that off.

*(HAEMON ignores him. More bleeps and boops.)*

**KREON.** Wait. There.

Listen.

A hiss.

A light. Turn on a light.

Where is she? Is she here? She is supposed to have killed herself.

**ANTIGONE.** *(In the dark:) Hiss!*

**KREON.** What was that?

*(KREON swings a torch around the space. He comes upon a bloody ANTIGONE, around a heap of bones. It is terrifying.)*

**ANTIGONE.** *HISSSSSS!!!*

*(She leaps on KREON, taking a big bite.)*

*(Blackout.)*

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.  
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

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**IN HIS BOLD GAZE,  
MY RUIN IS WRIT LARGE**

## **Cast of Characters**

PHAEDRA, daughter of Minos, wife of Theseus. A queen.

THESEUS, a King. Husband of Phaedra, returning from a long battle.

HIPPOLYTUS, Theseus' beautiful and irresistible son, the love object of Phaedra. May be played by a puppet.

OENONE, Phaedra's confidante, a bad influence. May be played by a puppet.

APHRODITE, Goddess of love. Jealous, angry with Phaedra for worshipping Artemis.

ISMENE, Aricie's confidante. A teenage girl. May be played by a puppet.

ARICIE, Hippolytus' love interest, a teenage girl.

POSIEDON

# IN HIS BOLD GAZE, MY RUIN IS WRIT LARGE

by Jason Grote

BASED ON JEAN RACINE'S PLAY *PHAEDRA*

## One: Theseus

*(At rise, a man sits at a table, in front of an old-timey radio mic. The man is wearing a goofy fur hat. He is THESEUS, King of Athens. He speaks:)*

**THESEUS.**

I don't consider myself a "street fighter."

I'm at that point of life that I don't want any problems with people...

...but if they insist, I'll still do whatever I have to and can to stop the problem.

I've known enough yahoos that wanted to test their abilities on the street and paid quite a price for it that I wouldn't ever advise anyone to try that route.

Sure, TRAIN as if you're going to be using your techniques on the street...

But don't go looking for opportunities.

Often enough, they'll come looking for YOU...

*(A bell rings.)*

## Two: Hippolytus and Phaedra

*(The palace. Theseus' son, HIPPOLYTUS, sits with his stepmother PHAEDRA. PHAEDRA wears a swimming cap. She is dying. HIPPOLYTUS stares at her.)*

**PHAEDRA.** Why are you looking at me like that?

**HIPPOLYTUS.** Like what?

**PHAEDRA.** That.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** I think I should go.

**PHAEDRA.** Go where.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** There is a girl. Aricie.  
This palace is weird and it smells.

**PHAEDRA.** How do you know it smells you don't have any nostrils.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** OK that's really inappropriate, you always have to go right to this really insulting and confrontational place and that's inappropriate behavior, and anyway Dad says he doesn't want me to be with Aricie because she's like from this rival clan or whatever and I'm like so what! Dad! Screw you!

**PHAEDRA.** So tell him that.  
What are you telling me that for? I don't care, marry her, don't marry her. I'm not your mother.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** He's out of town.

**PHAEDRA.** He'll be back.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** I'll be gone though.

**PHAEDRA.** You know what, Hippolytus, I'm trying to die and you're ruining it.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** ...

**PHAEDRA.** Stop looking at me like that.

*(HIPPOLYTUS exits. A moment. PHAEDRA stands, takes a glass of red wine. She puts some of the red wine on her fingers and drizzles it down her chin and neck. She does this for a while, until it looks like she's been cut.)*

*(Phaedra's friend OENONE enters, and looks at PHAEDRA. PHAEDRA keeps pouring the red wine on herself, not noticing OENONE.)*

**OENONE.** What are you doing?

**PHAEDRA.** Nothing.  
Mind your own business.  
I'm not doing anything.

**OENONE.** How are you feeling?

**PHAEDRA.** Like a rabbit.  
A dying rabbit.

**OENONE.** You need a bath.

**PHAEDRA.** Who asked you?

**OENONE.** Can I bathe you?

**PHAEDRA.** Not now.

**OENONE.** I have all the things for the bath. I have the washcloth, and the loofah, and the body wash, and the, and the other things. The bath beads.

**PHAEDRA.** I said not now. Why does everyone feel the need to bother me?

**OENONE.** You'll feel better.

**PHAEDRA.** Maybe I don't want to feel better.

*(Sound Effect: Lightning and Thunder.)*

*(APHRODITE, goddess of love, appears at the table, in front of the old-timey radio mic. She is very serious.)*

**APHRODITE.** Then, a great shadow traces itself upon the ground. That shadow is me. I hover like a great bird, a great bird with a monstrous wingspan, but with breasts, seven of them, large but shapely, pitilessly symmetrical, except for that extra seventh one. Obviously. They suckle my young, which is you. The milk that emanates from my seven shapely breasts cuts the lips and burns the throats of my young, which is you. This is a service I do for you. The world needs beauty, right?

Your bread is gone and so is your water. Someone must have taken it in the night. Aren't you thirsty? Drink.

*(APHRODITE disappears.)*

**PHAEDRA.** Why are you being so weird, Oenene?

**OENONE.** Remember how you used to feel sometimes when you were pregnant? When Theseus wouldn't touch you because he thought you were disgusting, too fat and damp, and he would spend all his time with boys? And sometimes one of the boys

would be hanging around, maybe he had just been with them, maybe he didn't feel like it that day, maybe they would be in the kitchen, fixing themselves a sandwich? And you would hobble over to them, this is when you were big, and they would flinch because they weren't the kind of slaves who knew how to deal with a pregnant queen, they were slaves for being with the king, and all they wanted was a sandwich or maybe some soda or something, and you would take your finger and move a single blond curl back from their foreheads because one of their hairs was sticking in their eyes? Like this.

*(OENONE moves a curl from in front of PHAEDRA's face. PHAEDRA shudders.)*

**OENONE.** Do you still feel like you want to die?

**PHAEDRA.** *(Ecstatic:)*

No I.

No.

**OENONE.** Have you ever looked at your stepson Hippolytus? Like really looked at him.

**PHAEDRA.** What are you.  
What are you doing to me.

**OENONE.** I made a deal. With Aphrodite.  
I didn't want you to die. I'm really sorry.

*(APHRODITE appears and pours some wine onto PHAEDRA.)*

**OENONE.** I also have news for you.  
Your husband King Theseus is dead.

*(PHAEDRA shudders.)*

*(A bell rings.)*

### **Three: Aricie and Hippolytus**

*(We are in the bedchamber of ARICIE, Hippolytus' girlfriend. It looks like a garage made of pure gold. She and her girlfriend IS-MENE are soldering something with a Hungarian soldering thing.)*

---

*The Hungarian soldering thing has a magnifying glass and roach clips on it.)*

**ISMENE.** But anyway there was this thing, this like hollowed out thing, and inside it from the air it looked like squares, maybe made of pinkish colored wood, or maybe it was like marble or granite or something.

**ARICIE.** I think he works out. Also he's got really interesting features that make it so you can't stop looking at him and when he talks there's like this low tone in his voice, like a growl. But not really a growl.

**ISMENE.** When you look at pictures of it from the inside it's really different but from the air they were like these squares.

**ARICIE.** He's got a couple of holes, like in his chest? But actually I think that makes him more approachable.

**ISMENE.** Do you know about anything else except this guy?

**ARICIE.** What do you care? You're being like a total bitch.

**ISMENE.** You're the bitch.

**ARICIE.** Up yours.

**ISMENE.** No, up yours. *(Re: the soldering:)* See you totally messed it all up.

**ARICIE.** I didn't mess anything up.

*(HIPPOLYTUS enters.)*

**ARICIE.** Hippolytus!

*(ISMENE is annoyed.)*

**HIPPOLYTUS.** My father is dead. He died fighting with I don't know the Trojans or something. He used Hapkido, I think, and Jiu Jitsu, and the other one.

*(HIPPOLYTUS and ARICIE kiss.)*

**ISMENE.** Will you guys knock it off?

*(PHAEDRA enters.)*

**PHAEDRA.** Son.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** Phaedra?

**PHAEDRA.** Call me Mom.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** Uh OK.

**PHAEDRA.** I need to talk to you. About the succession. To the throne. About who gets to get the throne. And I think it should be my son, even though you're the Oh the hell with it, just come here.

*(PHAEDRA grabs HIPPOLYTUS.)*

**HIPPOLYTUS.** Phaedra what are you.  
Knock it off.

**PHAEDRA.** I told you call me Mom.

*(She kisses him all over his head. It looks like she's trying to devour him.)*

**ISMENE.** Gross!

**HIPPOLYTUS.** Phaedra this is really inappropriate.

**PHAEDRA.** Look at me. I love how you look at me.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** ...

**PHAEDRA.** Come home.  
I'll be waiting for you.

*(PHAEDRA exits.)*

**ISMENE.** Well that was like really nasty.

**ARICIE.** What was that all about?

**HIPPOLYTUS.** It was my stepmom she's crazy.

**ARICIE.** *(Wigged out:)* I think you should leave.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** Don't be like that.

**ARICIE.** Seriously, Hippolytus, I have stuff to solder.

*(Beat.)*

I'll call you later.

Seriously.

*(HIPPOLYTUS exits. ARICIE and ISMENE solder.)*

*(Bell.)*

#### **Four: Theseus in Battle**

*(THESEUS appears at the old-timey mic, wearing his fur hat.)*

**THESEUS.** It's very possible to train oneself in the releasing of adrenaline but on a street it's hard to sense a fight unless you are being taunted or it prearranged normally on the street you just get jumped and a combo of adrenaline and instinct takes over that's why training is so repeatative *(sic)*.

Fear I love it because it gives me the biggest adrenaline rush out of any other emotion...

Pain besides having a extremely high tolerance to it I strongly feel it really is weakness leaving the body...

When there is no pain you are rid of fear when you have no fear it is said that you are no longer human.

But is that a bad thing or a good thing  
...humans are very flawed

*(Bell.)*

#### **Five: In His Bold Gaze My Ruin is Writ Large**

*(The palace. PHAEDRA eats fruit.)*

*(HIPPOLYTUS enters.)*

**HIPPOLYTUS.** I didn't have anywhere else to go.

**PHAEDRA.** Come into my bed with me.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** No.

**PHAEDRA.** I have fruit.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** ...

*(PHAEDRA and HIPPOLYTUS look at each other for a while.)*

*(THESEUS enters.)*

**PHAEDRA.** King Theseus. You're alive.

*(THESEUS looks at them for a minute. They are nervous.)*

**THESEUS.** A point I would make is that when you reach over with your left hand to Grab the opponent's hand do not let the right just hang there, bring it up to strike the opponent (maybe a punch to the ribs) and then grab the elbow, or bring it up to do something, (never leave a weapon down) also if you bring that left hand over, with the opponent's hand, bring it to your waist to stretch his arm out and bring his head down.

One point would be that when being choked always drop the chin down to prevent the hold from being applied.

Again you left a weapon down, your left hand hung until the sternum chop. If you grabbed your brother's choking arm, it would have intensified the pain with the nose attack, or you could have used the left to punch him in the groin.

*(THESEUS exits.)*

**PHAEDRA.** Don't tell him.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** I'm not going to tell him.

**PHAEDRA.** I'm serious. He'll kill you and he'll kick both our asses.

**HIPPOLYTUS.** I said I'm not going to tell him.

*(Beat.)*

Anyway.

*(HIPPOLYTUS exits. PHAEDRA eats fruit.)*

*(THESEUS re-enters. Looks around for a minute. He moves to PHAEDRA as if he is about to speak to her, stops. Exits.)*

*(OENONE enters.)*

**PHAEDRA.** Theseus is alive.

**OENONE.** Yup.

**PHAEDRA.** Hippolytus is going to tell him.

**OENONE.** You don't know that.

**PHAEDRA.** He already told him. With his eyes.

**OENONE.** He doesn't have any eyes.

**PHAEDRA.** You know what I mean. I can see, in his gaze. A ruin, the future, dark, yellow grass, frost. I have to kill him. What gods do you know.

**OENONE.** Aphrodite. And the other one, St. Anthony, and Astarte. I only know gods with the letter "A."

**PHAEDRA.** Poseidon owes me a favor.

*(A bell rings.)*

### **Six: Poseidon**

*(Loud sounds of the sea, Foley if possible. POSEIDON. He talks to no one.)*

**POSEIDON.** I stay not to consider the rabid objections of Pighius, and others like-minded, who inveigh against this restriction, as rending faith, and laying hold of one of its fragments. No fun, my babe, no fun.

*(PHAEDRA enters.)*

**PHAEDRA.** My lord Poseidon, hear my favor that I have to ask you.

**POSEIDON.** But our definition of the image seems not to be complete until it appears more clearly what the faculties are in which man excels, and in which he is to be regarded a mirror of the divine glory.

**PHAEDRA.** I need you to kill Hippolytus.

**POSEIDON.** No fun to hang around Feeling that same old way No fun to hang around Freaked out for another day.

**PHAEDRA.** OK, then.

**NARRATOR.** Phaedra exits.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.  
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

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# **PROMETHEUS RENDERED**

## **Characters**

A, B, C, and D, playing a variety of roles, including PROMETHEUS, his INTERROGATORS, OKEANOS, IO, and a RAVEN.

## **Time**

None in particular; modern and mythic.

## **Place**

Ditto.

## **Acknowledgments**

This play was written and performed as part of Theaters Against War event at the Culture Project's Impact Festival, New York City, 2006. It was directed by Kristin Marting. It was also part of "Myth America," New York City, 2007.

## **Production Notes**

Each scene represents an actual torture method that has been used by U.S. government personnel at the military prison at Guantanamo Bay (and, presumably, other places).

A slash ("/") in a line of dialogue marks an interruption. The following line of dialogue should begin there.

# PROMETHEUS RENDERED

by Jason Grote

BASED ON AESCHYLUS' *PROMETHEUS BOUND* AND THE  
TORTURE TECHNIQUES USED BY THE UNITED STATES MILITARY

## One: Waterboarding

*(Up on A as PROMETHEUS, detained.)*

*(B, as INTERROGATOR 1, drips water from her fingertips onto PROMETHEUS.)*

*(C, as INTERROGATOR 2, speaks to him.)*

*(D is a RAVEN, off to the side.)*

**INTERROGATOR 2.** Drip.

Drip. Drip. One two.

Three. Drip. Fourfivesix.

Drip.

The sixth, and harshest, technique is known as waterboarding. The prisoner's face is wrapped in cellophane and water is poured over it, triggering an unbearable gag reflex.

**PROMETHEUS.** *(Defiant:)* By your mouth you die.

*(INTERROGATOR 2 nods to INTERROGATOR 1, who pours the water onto PROMETHEUS. He coughs, sputters. The INTERROGATORS look at him.)*

*(INTERROGATOR 1 nods to INTERROGATOR 2. They exit.)*

*(Beat.)*

*(The RAVEN whistles.)*

**RAVEN.** I'm going to eat your liver!

*(Blackout.)*

**Two: The Attention Grab**

*(Up on PROMETHEUS, blindfolded.)*

*(The INTERROGATORS look at him.)*

**PROMETHEUS.** I would like to speak to my lawyer. I would like to speak to my lawyer and determine why it is I'm here.

*(Pause.)*

I don't understand why it is I'm here.

*(The INTERROGATORS speak very quickly, almost overlapping.)*

**INTERROGATOR 2.** That's not true.

**INTERROGATOR 1.** It's not true.

**INTERROGATOR 2.** I don't think that's true. Do you think that's true.

**INTERROGATOR 1.** It's not true.

**INTERROGATOR 2.** He understands.

**INTERROGATOR 1.** You understand.

**PROMETHEUS.** I don't/ understand—

**INTERROGATOR 1.** Sit still.

**INTERROGATOR 2.** Sit still.

**INTERROGATOR 1.** I'll hold your throat.

**INTERROGATOR 2.** People will endure anything for a grain of truth.

**INTERROGATOR 1.** He knows why he's here.

**INTERROGATOR 2.** I'll hold your throat.

**INTERROGATOR 1.** She doesn't write poems anymore, does she?

**PROMETHEUS.** Who? Who are you talking/ about?

**INTERROGATOR 1.** Some people want to grow in their souls.

**INTERROGATOR 2.** At midnight, coming home, I passed a tiger.

**PROMETHEUS.** I don't understand what you're/ talking about—

**INTERROGATOR 2.** Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses  
Of their aërial tongues yet sound.

**INTERROGATOR 1.** At midday, coming home, I passed a goat.

*(They pretend to leave. Silence.)*

*(A little beat.)*

**PROMETHEUS.** Hello?

Hello, is there anyone there? Hello?

*(Silence. PROMETHEUS thinks he's alone.)*

*(He whistles.)*

*(He sings, maybe tunelessly. Maybe a song he makes up, or loves.)*

*(He falls silent.)*

**INTERROGATOR 2.** *(Screams:)* Während Sie sprechen, füllen Ihre  
Wörter, *(Pause.)* durch *(Pause.)*, meineigener vergessener Schlaf mit  
Formen!!!

**PROMETHEUS.** *(Jumps.)* !!!

*(They start violently shaking him, as if fighting over him in German.)*

**INTERROGATOR 1.** FOLGEN SIE, OH—, FOLGEN SIE! wie sie  
vorbei verschwanden!

**INTERROGATOR 2.** Und auf jedem Kraut, von dem Tau des  
Himmels gefallen war!

**INTERROGATOR 1.** Dergleichen wurden, wie mit einem ver-  
welkenden Feuer gestempelt!

**INTERROGATOR 2.** Ein Wind entstand unter den Kiefern!

**INTERROGATOR 1.** Die anhaftende Musik von ihren Ästen und  
dann!

**INTERROGATOR 2.** Niedrige, süsse, schwache Töne, wie der Ab-  
schied der Geister!

**INTERROGATOR 1.** Wurden gehört: OH—, FOLGEN, FOLGEN, FOLGEN MIR!

*(They leave, for real this time. Pause.)*

**PROMETHEUS.** Please  
I'm very frightened

*(Long silence.)*

*(From the corner, the RAVEN squawks.)*

### **Three: The Attention Slap**

*(INTERROGATOR 1 and PROMETHEUS. A sock.)*

*(To each of the Interrogator's questions, PROMETHEUS might try to answer, but gets out only guttural blurts. The INTERROGATOR speaks very, very quickly. With each question, before PROMETHEUS can answer, the INTERROGATOR slaps him with the sock.)*

**INTERROGATOR 1.** Which descendent of Io will free you of this torment?

*(Slap.)*

Animal, vegetable, or mineral?

*(Slap.)*

Does it make noise?

*(Slap.)*

Is it clever?

*(Slap.)*

Why is MySpace popular and what is it good for?

*(Slap.)*

Does it have a backbone?

*(Slap.)*

Who will overthrow Zeus?

*(Slap.)*

Who will overthrow Zeus?

*(Slap.)*

Will it protect you from the rain?

*(Slap.)*

What is a “CDO”?

*(Slap.)*

Is it colorful?

*(Slap.)*

Is it fuzzy?

*(Slap.)*

Can you walk on it?

*(Slap.)*

Who will overthrow Zeus?

*(Slap.)*

Is it made of wood?

*(Slap.)*

Does it have a hole in it?

*(Slap.)*

Do you use it at night?

*(Slap.)*

Which descendent of Io will free you of this torment?

*(Slap.)*

Is it found in a bathroom?

*(Slap.)*

Does it open?

*(Slap.)*

What is a super-typhoon?

*(Slap.)*

I can put a battery in the sock. We start with triple-A, those are the little ones, maybe move up to double-A, nine-volt, C, uh, D. I don't think there's a B. Is there a B? I can't remember. It doesn't matter, nobody ever gets past the nine-volt anyway.

*(Pause. PROMETHEUS breathes.)*

**INTERROGATOR 1.** Or. Or you know what? I also have this other thing, this chocolate candy. The other thing I can do is I can give you this chocolate candy to eat.

**PROMETHEUS.** I'll tell you whatever you want to hear. I'll tell you.

*(He gives PROMETHEUS the chocolate. He devours it.)*

*(Blackout.)*

#### **Four: The Belly Slap**

*(The INTERROGATORS hold PROMETHEUS down lifting his shirt. His face is covered. He squirms and struggles.)*

*(The RAVEN caws, flies in, eats PROMETHEUS' liver. This sounds like paper tearing.)*

#### **Five: The Cold Room**

*(PROMETHEUS, alone, wet, naked [these latter two can be indicated]. He shivers.)*

*(He has not slept in a while.)*

**INTERROGATOR 2.** The cold room. Prisoners left naked in cells kept in the 50s and frequently doused with cold water.

*(Pause. PROMETHEUS shivers.)*

*(Sounds of screaming, off.)*

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*(Perhaps PROMETHEUS speaks to ward off the freezing cold.)*

**PROMETHEUS.** I want to go home.  
I'll tell you anything you want.  
I want to speak to a lawyer.  
I want to speak to my consul.  
I want to go home.  
I want to sleep in my bed.  
I want my clothes back.  
I want to see a doctor.  
I think I need medicine.  
I want a cell fit for a human being.  
I think something might be broken.  
I want the rats to stop biting me.  
I want something to eat.  
I'll sign whatever you want me to sign.  
Why do you hate me so much?  
I think my skin is turning yellow.  
I want to go home.  
I want to see my wife.  
I want to see my children.  
I want my clothes.  
I want to see my cat.  
I want a book.  
I want to watch television.  
I am not a terrorist.  
I'll pledge my loyalty to Zeus.  
I want to go home.  
I want to go home.  
I want to go home.

*(More water. PROMETHEUS howls.)*

*(D enters as OKEANOS.)*

**OKEANOS.** When the mummy sounds off, the shit carries.

**PROMETHEUS.** Okeanos.

**OKEANOS.** Hello, my friend.

**PROMETHEUS.** Are you in here as well?

**OKEANOS.** They gave me the tire and the cable. They turned me upside down.

**PROMETHEUS.** I'm sorry.

**OKEANOS.** One alone shuts up well, but two shut up better.

**PROMETHEUS.** How long have you been here? What's happening to us?

**OKEANOS.** Don't be proud. Do not arouse the further wrath of Zeus by boasting of the God's future overthrow.

**PROMETHEUS.** But I'm not.  
I'm not.

**OKEANOS.** Please, it's not just you that's suffering from this. They have tortured your friends. I have heard that they have taken your wife and your son and your daughter. They will torture them beyond anything you and I have endured. These men are animals. The things they will do to women and children.

**PROMETHEUS.** I'm not boasting of anything  
I renounce everything  
I renounce it

*(Pause. Sounds of screaming, maybe from women and children.)*

**OKEANOS.** Oh and I heard them say they killed your cat.

*(OKEANOS tosses him a key.)*

Don't let them see you go.

*(He leaves.)*

**PROMETHEUS.** Okeanos. Okeanos, don't leave me, where are you going, OKEANOS!

*(But he's gone. Shivering, PROMETHEUS grabs the key. He fumbles, tries to use it to get out of an indicated door, finally opening it.)*

*(Both INTERROGATORS are waiting on the other side of the door. One of them squeals, sounding like a woman or child, making it clear that it was an imitation all along.)*

**INTERROGATOR 2.** *(Or 1.)* Hi "honey."

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