**Antigone**Character List

**Analysis of Major Characters**

**Antigone** - The play's tragic heroine. In the first moments of the play, Antigone is opposed to her radiant sister Ismene. Unlike her beautiful and docile sister, Antigone is sallow, withdrawn, and recalcitrant.

**Creon** - Antigone's uncle. Creon is powerfully built, but a weary and wrinkled man suffering the burdens of rule. A practical man, he firmly distances himself from the tragic aspirations of Oedipus and his line. As he tells Antigone, his only interest is in political and social order. Creon is bound to ideas of good sense, simplicity, and the banal happiness of everyday life.

**Ismene** - Blonde, full-figured, and radiantly beautiful, the laughing, talkative Ismene is the good girl of the family. She is reasonable and understands her place, bowing to Creon's edict and attempting to dissuade Antigone from her act of rebellion. As in Sophocles' play, she is Antigone's foil. Ultimately she will recant and beg Antigone to allow her to join her in death. Though Antigone refuses, Ismene's conversion indicates how her resistance is contagious.

**Haemon** - Antigone's young fiancé and son to Creon. Haemon appears twice in the play. In the first, he is rejected by Antigone; in the second, he begs his father for Antigone's life. Creon's refusal ruins his exalted view of his father. He too refuses the happiness that Creon offers him and follows Antigone to a tragic demise.

**Nurse** - A traditional figure in Greek drama, the Nurse is an addition to the Antigone legend. She introduces an everyday, maternal element into the play that heightens the strangeness of the tragic world. Fussy, affectionate, and reassuring, she suffers no drama or tragedy but exists in the day-to-day tasks of caring for the two sisters. Her comforting presence returns Antigone to her girlhood. In her arms, Antigone superstitiously invests the Nurse with the power to ward off evil and keep her safe.

**Chorus** - Anouilh reduces the Chorus, who appears as narrator and commentator. The Chorus frames the play with a prologue and epilogue, introducing the action and characters under the sign of fatality. In presenting the tragedy, the Chorus instructs the audience on proper spectatorship, reappearing at the tragedy's pivotal moments to comment on the action or the nature of tragedy itself. Along with playing narrator, the Chorus also attempts to intercede throughout the play, whether on the behalf of the Theban people or the horrified spectators.

**Second Guard** - Largely indistinguishable from his cohorts, the Second Guard jeeringly compares Antigone to an exhibitionist upon her arrest.

**Third Guard** - The last of the indifferent Guardsmen, he is also largely indistinguishable from his cohorts.

**Messenger** - Another typical figure of Greek drama who also appears in Sophocles' *Antigone,* the Messenger is a pale and solitary boy who bears the news of death. In the prologue, he casts a menacing shadow: as the Chorus notes, he remains apart from the others in his premonition of Haemon's death.

**Eurydice** - Creon's kind, knitting wife whose only function, as the Chorus declares, is to knit in her room until it is her time to die. Her suicide is Creon's last punishment, leaving him entirely alone.