**Antigone Cutting**

ISMENE: Aren’t you well?

ANTIGONE: Yes, of course. Just a little tired.

ISMENE: I couldn’t sleep either.

ANTIGONE: Ismene, you ought not to go without your beauty sleep.

ISMENE: Don’t make fun of me.

ANTIGONE: I’m not, truly. This particular morning, seeing how beautiful you are makes everything easier for me. Oh, wasn’t I a nasty little beast when we were small? I used to fling mud at you, and put worms down your neck. I can remember tying you to a tree and cutting off your hair. Your beautiful hair! How easy it must be never to be unreasonable with all that smooth silken hair beautifully set around your head.

ISMENE: Why do you insist upon talkinga bout other things? (Pause) I thought about it all night long. Antigone, you’re mad. Creon will have us put to death.

ANTIGONE: Of course he will. But we are bound to go out and bury our brother. That’s the way it is. What do you think we can do to change it?

ISMENE: I don’t want to die.

ANTIGONE: I’d prefer not to die myself.

ISMENE: Listen to me, Antigone. I thought about it all night. I may be younger than you are, but I always think things over, and you don’t.

ANTIGONE: Sometimes it is better not to think too much.

ISMENE: I don’t agree with you! I pity polynices as much as you do. But all the same, I sort of see what Uncle Creon means. Uncle Creon is the king now. He has to set an example!

ANTIGONE: Example! Creon orders that our brother rot and putrefy, and be mangled by dogs and birds of prey. That’s an offense against every decent human instinct; against the laws of God and Man. And you talk about examples!

ISMENE: There you go, off on your own again- refusing to pay the slightest heed to anybody. At least you might try to understand!

ANTIGONE: I only understand that a man lies rotting, unburied. And that he is my brother, and that he must be buried.

ISMENE: But Creon won’t let us bury him. And he is stronger than we are. He is the king. He has made himself king. (Pause) I’m an awful coward, Antigone.

ANTIGONE: So am I. But what has that to do with it?

ISMENE: But Antigone! Don’t you want to go on living?

ANTIGONE: For pity’s sakes! Don’t! You say you’ve thought it all out. The howling mob; the torture; the fear of death; they’ve made up your mind for you. Is that it?

ISMENE: Yes.

ANTIGONE: All right. They’re as good excuses as any.

ISMENE: Antigone, be reasonable. It’s all very well for men to believe in ideas, and die for them. But you are a girl! Antigone, you have everything in the world to make you happy. All you have to do is- reach out for it. You are going to be married; you are young; you are beautiful-

ANTIGONE: I am not beautiful.

ISMENE: Oh, yes, you are! Not the way other girls are. But it’s always you that the little tough boys turn to look at when they pass us in the street. And when you go by, the little girls stop talking; they stare at you, until we’ve turned a corner.

ANTIGONE: “Little tough boy- little girls.”

ISMENE: And what about Haemon?

ANTIGONE: I shall see Haemon this morning. I’ll take care of Haemon. Go back to bed now, Ismene. The sun is coming up! And as you can see, there is nothing I can do today. Our brother Polynices is as well guarded as if he had won the war and were sitting on his throne.

ISMENE: What are you going to do?

ANTIGONE: Please go back to bed.

ISMENE: If I do- promise me you won’t leave the house?

ANTIGONE: Very well, then- I promise.