wild and bearded messenger walks in from some wild and distant valley—which is what happened to your dad—and tells me that he's not quite sure who my parents were, but thinks that my wife Eurydice is actually my mother, I shall ask him to do me the kindness to go back where he came from; and I shan't let a little matter like that persuade me to order my wife to take a blood test and the police to let me know whether or not my birth certificate was forged. Kings, my girl, have other things to do than to surrender themselves to their private feelings. (He looks at her and smiles.) Hand you over to be killed! (He rises, moves to end of table and sits on the top of table.) I have other plans for you. You're going to marry Haemon; and I want you to fatten up a bit so that you can give him a sturdy boy. Let me assure you that Thèbes needs that boy a good deal more than it needs your death. You will go to your room, now, and do as you have been told; and you won't say a word about this to anybody. Don't fret about the guards: I'll see that their mouths are shut. And don't annihilate me with those eyes. I know that you think I am a brute, and I'm sure you must consider me very prosaic. But the facts, I have always been fond of you, stubborn though you always were. Don't forget that the first doll you ever had came from me. (A pause. ANTIGONE says nothing, rises and crosses slowly below the table towards the arch. CREON turns and watches her; then) Where are you going? ANTIGONE (stops downstage, without any show of rebellion). You know very well where I am going.

CREON (after a pause). What sort of game are you playing?

ANTIGONE. I am not playing games.

CREON. Antigone, do you realize that if, apart from those three guards, a single soul finds out what you have tried to do, it will be impossible for me to avoid putting you to death? There is still a chance that I can save you; but only

if you keep this to yourself and give up your crazy purpose. Five minutes more, and it will be too late. You understand that?

ANTIGONE. I must go and bury my brother. Those men uncovered him.

CREON. What good will it do? You know that there are other men standing guard over Polynices. And even if you cover him over with earth again, the earth would again be removed.

ANTIGONE. I know all that. I know it. But that much, at least, I can do. And what a person can do, a person ought to do.

Pause.

CREON. Tell me, Antigone, do you believe all that flummery about religious burial? Do you really believe that a so-called shade of your brother is condemned to wander for ever homeless if a little earth is not flung on his corpse to the accompaniment of some priestly abracadabra? Have you ever listened to the priests of Thèbes when they were mumbling their formula? Have you ever watched those dreary bureaucrats while they were preparing the dead for burial—skipping half the gestures required by the ritual, swallowing half their words, hustling the dead into their graves out of fear that they might be late for lunch?

ANTIGONE. I don't.

CREON. And did you never say to yourself as you watched them, that if someone you really loved lay dead under the shuffling, mumbling ministrations of the priests, you would scream aloud and beg the priests to leave the dead in peace?

CREON. And you still insist upon being put to death—merely because I refuse to let your brother go out with
that grotesque passport; because I refuse his body the wretched consolation of that mass-production jibber-jabber, which you would have been the first to be embarrassed by if I had allowed it. The whole thing is absurd!

CREON. Then why, Antigone, why? For whose sake? For the sake of them that believe in it? To raise them against me?

CREON. For whom then if not for them and not for Polynices either?

A pause as they stand looking at one another.

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

CREON. You have become a thin, hard animal; you have lost your mind, I think.

CREON. Ask of you. I am not going to be able to fight ever.

CREON. I step towards her. I want to save you.

ANTIGONE. But I am the king, and you are all-powerful.

CREON. You think you cannot do.

CREON. Neither save me nor stop me.

CREON propels ANTIGONE round below him to his side.

ANTIGONE. Only this can you do: have me put to death.

ANTIGONE. Have you tortured, perhaps?

CREON. Why would you do that? To see me cry? To hear me ask for mercy? Or to swear whatever you wish, and then have me again?

A pause.

ANTIGONE. Not. You are squeezing my arm. I soften, I don't know.

CREON. I shall take off my coat and place it on the chair."

CREON. I shall say the house is empty, the chair is empty, the life in the chair is empty, the house is empty, the life in the house is empty.

CREON. I shall say:\n
CREON. I shall say: The sky is empty, the earth is empty, the air is empty, the universe is empty, and nothing is left to do today without