

*Have sometimes been known to count a few
comes too many. Sentry + Kreon*
(Enter Sentry from left.)

SENTRY: I'll not say that I'm out of breath from running, King, because every time I stopped to think about what I have to tell you, I felt like going back. And all the time a voice kept saying, "You fool, don't you know you're walking straight into trouble?"; and then another voice: "Yes, but if you let somebody else get the news to Kreon first, it will be even worse than that for you!" But good sense won out, at least I hope it was good sense, ~~and here I am with a story that makes no sense at all, but I'll tell it anyway, because as they say, where's going to happen's going to happen.~~

KREON: Come to the point. What have you to say?

SENTRY: I did not do it. I did not see who did it. You must not punish me for what someone else has done.

KREON: A comprehensive defense! More effective, perhaps, If I knew its purpose. Come: what is it?

SENTRY: A dreadful thing . . . I don't know how to put it —

KREON: Out with it! Well, then; The dead man — Polynices —

(Pause. The Sentry is overcome, fumbles for words. Kreon waits impassively.)

out there — someone, — New dust on the slimy flesh!

(Pause. No sign from Kreon.) Someone has given it burial that way, and Gone . . .

(Long pause. Kreon finally speaks with deadly control.)

KREON: And the man who dared do this? SENTRY: I swear I Do not know! You must believe me!

Listen: The ground was dry, not a sign of digging, no, Not a wheeltrack in the dust, no trace of anyone. It was when they relieved us this morning: and one of them, The corporal, pointed to it.

There it was, The strangest — Look: —

The body, just mounded over with light dust: you see? ~~Not buried, sentry, but not a sign of a corpse either. It just enough for the ghost's peace. And no sign Of dogs or any wild animal that had been there.~~

And then what a scene there was! Every man of us Accusing the other: we all proved the other man did it.

We all had proof that we could not have done it. We were ready to take hot iron in our hands, Walk through fire, swear by all the gods, It was not I!

I do not know who it was, but it was not I! (Kreon's rage has been mounting steadily, but the Sentry is too intent upon his story to notice it.)

And then, ~~when the Sentry said, "I did not do it," someone said, "I did not do it," and made us stare Down at the ground you had to be told the news,~~

And one of us had to do it! We threw the dice, And the bad luck fell to me. So here I am, No happier to be here than you are to have me: Nobody likes the man who brings bad news.

~~Creon: I have been wondering, King, can it be that the gods have done this?~~

KREON (furiously): Stop! Must you doddering wrecks Go out of your heads entirely? "The gods"! Insoluble!

The gods favor this corpse? Why? How had he served them? Tried to loot their temples, burn their images, Yes, and the whole State, and its laws with it! Is it your senile opinion that the gods love to honor bad men?

A pious thought! — No, from the very beginning There have been those who have whispered together, Stiff-necked anarchists, putting their heads together, Scheming against me in alleys. These are the men, And they have bribed my own guard to do this thing.

(Sententiously.) Money! There's nothing in the world so demoralizing as money. Down go your cities, Homes gone, men gone, honest hearts corrupted, Crookedness of all kinds, and all for money!

(For Sentry.) I swear by God and by the throne of God, The man who has done this thing shall pay for it! Find that man, bring him here to me, or your death

Will be the least of your problems. I'll string you up Alive, and there will be certain ways to make you Discover your employer before you die; And the process may teach you a lesson you ~~sententiously must.~~

The dearest profit is sometimes all too dear. That depends on the source. Do you understand now?

A fortune won is often misfortune. SENTRY: King, may I speak?

KREON: Your very voice distresses me. SENTRY: Are you sure that it is my voice, and not your conscience?

KREON: By God, he wants to analyze me now! SENTRY: It is not what I say, but what has been done, that hurts you.

KREON: You talk too much. SENTRY: Maybe; but I've done nothing. KREON: Sold your soul for some silver: that's all you've done.

SENTRY: How dreadful it is when the right judge judges wrong! KREON: Your figures of speech May entertain you now, but unless you bring me the man, You will get little profit from them in the end.

(Exit Kreon into the palace.) SENTRY: "Bring me the man" — I I'd like nothing better than bringing him the man! But bring him or not, you have seen the last of me here.

At any rate, I am safe! (Exit Sentry.)

ODE 1 • Strophe 1 CHORUS: Numberless are the world's wonders, but none More wonderful than man; the stormgray sea Yields to his prow, the huge crests bear him high; Earth, holy and inexhaustible, is graven With shining furrows where his plows have gone Year after year, the timeless labor of stallions.

Ode: Song sung by the Chorus.