

Dear Sophocles,

I'm guessing that you haven't gotten much fan mail over the years, much less from fourteen year old girls. However, this is not fan mail. It's more of a thank you note, because I am truly thankful for the way your writing has affected me.

When I first read your play Antigone, I was struck by the many ways in which I resembled Antigone, the main character. You could stand us side by side and point out our similarities; we are both teenage girls with two brothers and a timid younger sister. We are also a bit bossy and headstrong. Unlike me, however, Antigone had a terrible choice to make early on in life. The choice was whether or not to bury her brother Polynices, who was considered a traitor to her country. Her uncle the king had made it against the law to bury him.

If I had been Antigone in this case, I would've been torn between the two forces that guided my world: my family and my country. On one hand, I could chose to not help my brother and obey my country's laws, and on the other I could bury my dead brother and be dutiful to my family, while also saving his soul. This would be the more dangerous path, and I would be risking my life if I chose to take it. If I were faced with this dilemma, wondering if I should risk my neck or not, I would look to one more significant factor that Antigone used and that I should use in all difficult decisions: my heart. What would be the right thing to do regardless of the circumstances? What would I respect myself for doing? Not, what would be the safest thing concerning my welfare, or what would be the easiest way out of the situation. For what Antigone realized and I now know is that a decision made selfishly will come back to haunt you... especially in her case where it dealt with an eternal soul.

With this in mind, Antigone's choice was clear. Despite the authority of her uncle and the possible danger to herself, she knew in her heart that everyone deserved to be buried, even traitors. After all, Polynices was her brother, no matter what he'd done. And she wanted his soul to be at peace. This was ultimately the right decision, because anyone would make the same choice if they looked to their heart.

So in the future, I can take many lessons from the play Antigone. One is that I should not simply follow in life, looking to everyone else for the answers. I should be able to judge and evaluate my surroundings and the rules that are laid down for me. I should ask myself every time I make a life-changing decision: am I being fair and just? Am I doing what I know in my heart is the right thing? And if the answers are "yes", then I know that I, like Antigone, am making the right choice.

The ultimate reward that I can take from being true to my heart and making the right choices is self-respect. My happiness and confidence will grow every day as I become the type of person that anyone can depend on to do the right thing. This

is especially important and valuable for a teenager to learn, because high school is a time in life where good decisions and self-respect are crucial.

So thank you Sophocles, for an Antigone that I can truly connect with. She is a spirited and courageous teenager who reaches from the past to touch lives today, inspiring myself and others to find the courage to listen to our hearts' guidance. And I know that as long as we can follow her example, Antigone will never be forgotten.

You should know one more thing before we go back to our separate worlds: I am amazed that you were able to write a play that lasted for centuries and still holds significance for a fourteen year old girl in the twenty-first century. That's true magic, more tangible than the magic found in any fantasy ever written. It is the magic of the written word, known only by a few today. And so I would like to thank you for one last thing: inspiring me to make some magic of my own.

Sincerely,
Sarah Freymiller