

Creon Why have you come?

Teiresias Will you listen to me, Creon?

Creon Teiresias...?

Teiresias Will you listen to me?

Creon Teiresias, why now...?

Teiresias Time was you'd listen to me. Time was, before you chose, when you would come to me and I would guide you. You needed me before. You need me now again.

Creon Teiresias?

Teiresias You're balanced on the razor's edge of Fate.

Creon What do you mean? What have I done? Tell me! Teiresias. Teiresias! Tell me!

Teiresias What can I tell you that you don't already know? Blind, old, so ancient that I seem suspended between life and death, caught on a threshold I can never cross, dried up and sexless, like the withered maggot of what once was man. And always listening. And always listening. Deep in the womb of nature, listening, as beetles scuttle in decaying trees, as spiders spin their webs.

But a new sound came, a new sound, a sound that stopped my blood. Nature, Creon. Nature tearing at its bowels. Birds screeching, screaming, rasping. Torment and cacophony. And wings beat, talons tore, the air choked. Feathers. Flesh. Bird corpses tumbling from an oily sky, their drumbeat pounding like demonic fists into the cracking earth. And mingled with the flesh of birds, the flesh of man.

I tried to use my magic. I tried to sacrifice. But no flames caught. Only thick and acrid smoke, a chemical pollution choking as the fat oozed, bubbled, blistered in the viscous ash, spat, hissed with mucous, bile-bags boiling, bursting... and everywhere the stench of dying, everywhere the stench of death.

Thebes is polluted, Creon. Thebes is a waste-land. You thought you could bend nature to your laws. You thought that you knew best. But there's still time. Give in. Give in. Admit that you were wrong. Don't goad the dead. Give in.

Creon How much did Haemon bribe you to come here? Not Haemon? Who, then? How much did they pay?

Teiresias No-one bribed me, Creon.

Creon No? I don't believe you.

Teiresias Creon...

Creon Haemon's got you in his pocket. Can't you see? He's using you. They're all using you to undermine me, to overthrow me.

Teiresias Creon! Remember! Remember how I used to guide you.

Creon And I now know why.

Teiresias Why, Creon?

Creon Why? Because you thought that when I was in power I'd be so grateful that I'd overlook how you were using me for your own ends, so you could worm your way in here, into my government. You're clever, Teiresias, but not so clever you can fool me. Nobody can fool me.

Teiresias *(suddenly, he's had enough)* Creon. Stop.

Creon Stop?!! Teiresias, don't think...

Teiresias Stop talking, Creon! Now. And listen.

Creon Listen?

Teiresias Listen. *(beat)*

Creon What? What? Tell me! Only don't look for me to give you anything when you're done.

Teiresias You've nothing left to give. *(beat)*

Creon Well, speak. Speak, Teiresias! Speak!

Teiresias Balance, Creon. Balance.
Life. Death. Balance.
The balance of nature, Creon. The balance of nature.
Take. Give. Take.
You must *give*, Creon. You must *give* your son as payment to the dead, because you buried one who was alive and kept a corpse from burial. So you upset the balance.

And the dead do not forgive.

Can you not feel them gathering? Can you not feel them here, now, in this room?

No? No?

You will. You will. And you will long for death.

No-one bribed me, Creon. No-one bribed me.

No, I felt the future rippling towards me. There was nothing I could do. I heard the voices sobbing. Your voice, Creon. And the jeers, the sneers, the city's contumely.

You left a dead man in the fields for the rats to gnaw, and birds to tear, a bloating stench, a blossoming of maggots.

You made your choice. And all the time you knew that you were wrong.

And yet you could not change because you were afraid. And now you know what terror really is, you've no more choices left.

Teiresias *"shuts down"*

Aide He's never misled us before, sir.

Creon No. He's never misled us. What am I going to do?

Aide You want me to advise you?

Creon Advise me. Yes. I don't know what to do.

Aide Two things, sir.

Creon What?

Aide Free Antigone and bury Polyneices.

Creon That's your advice?

Aide Yes.

Creon Yes. Yes. You're right. I only hope we're not too late.