

I, Antigone

Carlo Gébler

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Carlo Gébler's *I, Antigone*, recounts the Greek tragedy of Oedipus Rex. Speaking with anguish, eloquence, and love, Oedipus's daughter, Antigone, tells Oedipus's story to justify her father's actions.

Oedipus's curse begins with the compulsions of his father, Laius. Before becoming king of Thebes, Laius feels intense attraction toward Chrysippus, a royal youth. Laius gives wine to Chrysippus and rapes him, and the traumatized boy commits suicide. The reason for his death is known only to Laius, Chrysippus, and the gods.

Laius is later told by the Delphi oracle that his own son will kill him, a punishment decreed by Zeus because of his violation of Chrysippus. Laius thus concocts a secret plot to abandon and kill his newborn son. The infant is brought to another king's home, however, and is raised as his child.

In a captivating, fateful tone, the novel follows the saga of Oedipus as he fulfills his prophecy of unknown patricide and solves the riddle of the Sphinx. Oedipus marries his widowed mother, Queen Jocasta, and has children with her; afterwards, he blinds himself, horrified over the revelation of his sins. *I, Antigone* infuses immediate, vibrant energy into this classic myth. The "leonine" Sphinx is described as having a "dripping head" and snake-like tail, her "hot breath" smelling of "straw and dates." Prisoners are hurled off of Mount Phicium at sunrise in public executions. And as Antigone tells her harrowing story, she notes the gentle rustling of olive trees, and the chirping of "sparrows as they bathe in the dry bitter dust of the red earth."

Both epic and intimate, the riveting, sinuous novel *I, Antigone* recreates ancient Greek stories of capricious gods, fantastic creatures, and troubled mortals.

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