

GUARD

Yes, let's hope he's found . . .
 though whether found or not is up to chance:
 what's certain, though, is that you'll not
 be seeing me again.
 It's more than I could hope
 that I've got safe away this time—
 for that I owe the gods much thanks.

330

The guard departs back towards the plain.

SECOND CHORAL SONG

CHORUS

°There are many formidable things,
 but none more formidable° than
 are human beings.
 They sail over ocean's grey wastes
 with southerly storm-winds between
 towering waves.
 And the god most primeval of all—
 undying, unwearying Earth—
 by turning the soil
 they repeatedly rake her and tear,
 as horses pull ploughs back and forth,
 year after year.

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The birds in thought-fluttering flocks
 are captured in snares, and wild beasts
 trapped by their tricks,
 and the shoals of the fish in the sea
 get entangled in spiralling nets—
 man's ingenuity!
 They've invented devices and wiles
 to domesticate animals that
 roam in the wilds;
 the resolute mountain-bred ox
 and shaggy-maned horse are controlled,
 necks under yokes.

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Humans have learnt the skills to use
 language and reason quick as the breeze;
 and attitudes that bind the town;
 and shields from frost and pelting of rain.
 This all-resourceful human creature,
 short of resource for nothing in future! 360
 Only from death there's no release—
 though cures have been found from dire disease.

They turn their clever aptitude
 sometimes to bad, and sometimes to good.
 Those who honour the country's law,
 revering the gods, raise their city secure:
 yet there's no city^o for someone veering 370
 off into ways of error through daring.
 May one committing things like those
 not join in my thoughts, nor visit my house.

SCENE 4

The guard returns bringing Antigone as a prisoner.

CHORUS-LEADER

I'm bewildered by this portent:
 there is no denying this is
 young Antigone. O wretched
 child of wretched father, what has 380
 happened? Surely they're not bringing
 you for disregarding royal
 edicts, caught in something foolish?

GUARD

This is the one who did the deed,
 arrested in the act of burying.
 But where's Creon?

CHORUS-LEADER

Here, coming from the palace just as he is wanted.