

**KING OEDIPUS**

by

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based on plays

by

Sophocles and Euripides

IN BLACK, we hear a baby crying...

FADE IN:

A NEWBORN BABY

covered in blood. Its wailing continues ceaselessly and suddenly stops.

INT. PALACE OF CORINTH - THRONE ROOM - DAY

King POLYBUS sits on his throne with the baby in his hands. Polybus is an old man in his early fifties with age overtaking his face features.

Queen MEROPE stands next to him. Merope is a woman in her middle forties.

Polybus holds the baby tenderly and smiles dreamily to it. Then he looks up at Merope. She smiles to him.

Polybus notices the wounds on the infant's ankles. The baby's feet have swollen up.

POLYBUS  
(softly)  
Oedi... pus...

EXT. PALACE OF CORINTH - DAY

The people of Corinth have gathered before the royal palace. The huge, wooden doors open, FOUR GUARDS get out and assemble. A moment later, Polybus comes out, holding the baby. Along with him come, Merope and MESSENGER #1.

Polybus moves to the edge of the stairs and looks around to the people. Then he lifts the baby in the air for everyone to see.

POLYBUS  
(shouts)  
Corinthians! This is my son! The  
heir of my fortune and the  
kingdom of Corinth! His name  
is... Oedipus!

The people start cheering and clapping in excitement. Polybus holds the baby in his embrace and kisses it lovingly on the forehead.

EXT. PALACE OF CORINTH - BALCONY/COURTYARD - DAY

King Polybus, much older now, stands on a balcony and gazes down at the yard.

OEDIPUS, a handsome, young man with gentle eyes, spars with wooden practice swords with another BOY at his age. Oedipus presses in on the attack.

The boy shields himself and retreats aback. Oedipus swings and swings without a pause. As the boy steps backwards his back comes against a column and the sword drops from his hands. He stands there helpless.

Oedipus stops swinging, looks at the boy and snickers. Then he turns his back to him and walks away. The boy, with an angry look on his face, picks up his sword, charges against Oedipus and hits him hard in the back. Oedipus falls down.

BOY

Victory!

Oedipus lifts his ablaze glance on the boy and stands.

OEDIPUS

That was no victory. You hit me  
in the back.

BOY

A soldier does not turn his back  
to an armed man.

OEDIPUS

A soldier that strikes the enemy  
in the back is not a man!

The boys get on a loud argument. Polybus observing from the balcony, starts to laugh. He watches Oedipus pushing the boy to the ground. The boy stares at Oedipus for a long moment. Then:

BOY

You are not father's son! Do you  
hear my words? Your father  
abandoned you!

Oedipus startled, moves closer to the boy.

OEDIPUS

What is the meaning of...?

The boy rises quickly and leaves running. Oedipus turns his eyes to the balcony. Polybus is still laughing while clapping his hands.

INT. PALACE OF CORINTH - DINING ROOM - DAY

Polybus sits at the head of the table with Merope next to him. At the table is also seated Oedipus and a FEW OTHER MEN.

Oedipus seems sullen and has his lunch quietly. He looks at his father. Polybus raises his glass to him. Oedipus raises his and fakes a smile.

Oedipus glares at his father for several moments, stands up and leaves the table. His parents look at one another concerned.

INT. PALACE OF CORINTH - STABLE - NIGHT

The door of the stable flies open. Oedipus steps inside with a torch in his hands. The horses start whinnying unrestfully.

Oedipus paces to the back of the stable and comes in front of a horse. He places the torch on a pole. Then he goes to the horse, pets it and grins.

EXT. COUNTRY - DAWN

Oedipus, on the horse, gazes at the city of Corinth from afar. Then he spurs the horse and moves away.

EXT. COUNTRY - DAY

The city of Delphi can be distinguished in the distance. Oedipus rides his horse, heading to the direction of the city. The weariness is obvious on his face. He clearly travelled quite a distance.

EXT. STREETS OF DELPHI - DAY

Oedipus gallops across the city, towards a magnificent temple ahead of him.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

A line of people has been created before the steps of the temple. Oedipus reins his horse, gets off and trails it to the end of the line where he takes his turn.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - LATER

Oedipus' turn comes. He bonds his horse on a pole. TWO PRIESTS dressed in white guide Oedipus up the stairs.

They reach atop of the steps. A marvelous statue of Apollo towers next to the temple. The priestesses lead Oedipus to the entrance. FOUR PRIESTS dressed in grey robes stand before the doors. There is a sign on a stone above them that reads: "KNOW YOURSELF"

Two of the priests open the doors. Oedipus looks perplexed. The faces of the priests encourage him to enter. Then he does.

INT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO/ORACLE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

There are two rows of WOMEN, dressed in grey robes, along the hall. Oedipus paces through them. A PRIEST dressed in black, waits at the end of the hall and before the portal of the oracle chamber.

Oedipus closes and faces him. The priest nods greeting Oedipus. He renders the salutation.

PRIEST

Present your question, child.

Oedipus pauses for a moment. Then:

OEDIPUS

"Who is... my true father?"

The male priest gets inside the chamber. There we see a FEW MORE PRIESTS in black, a statue of Apollo and PYTHIA dressed in a black, silk dress.

Pythia is a woman in her late forties with long, white hair and a garland on her head. She sits on a bronze tripod over a crack in the ground. A stone circle rounds the crack.

The priest fronts Pythia, whispers in her ear and moves away. Another priest in the chamber, with a torch in his hands, sets the circle on fire. Fire emerges around Pythia.

The rest of the priests throw laurel leaves on the fire. Pungent fumes and fragrant incenses come out of the flames. Pythia inhales the vapors and falls into a trance.

Oedipus watches astounded. After a few moments, the fire burns out. Pythia sits still hypnotised. Suddenly, she opens her eyes widely, staring directly at Oedipus.

Pythia waves to the male priest. He goes to her and she whispers in his ear. The priest walks out of the oracle chamber, goes to Oedipus and stands before him.

PRIEST

You are destined... to kill your father and marry your mother.

Oedipus drops his jaw. He tries to speak but nothing comes out. He stands there frozen. Two priests come from the back, take him by the arms and pull him outside. Oedipus turns and looks at Pythia one last time. Their eyes lock for a single moment.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

Oedipus runs down the stairs. He leaps onto his horse and races away from the temple.

MONTAGE

OEDIPUS

gallops through a meadow with a stone-cold face.

CORINTH

can be seen from afar. Oedipus reins his horse. He gazes at the city and thinks. Then he spurs the horse and moves away towards the opposite direction.

THE STARS

in the night sky guide Oedipus. He observes them fascinated.

THE SUN

rises in the east. Oedipus looks dreamily to it.

A FOREST

extends in long distance. Oedipus gallops through it.

A TREE

offers shadow to Oedipus. The horse eats grass further away.

OEDIPUS

bowed down before of a lake, washes his face. The waters in the lake go red. His clothes have splashes of blood, hardly noticeable.

THE SUN

is intolerably bright and hot.

A DESERT

expands before Oedipus. He rides his horse exhausted. Suddenly, a city appears in the horizon.

END MONTAGE

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Huge rocks are found in the middle of the road. Oedipus continues his course, moving towards the city. As he gets closer, something flies behind him.

WOMAN'S VOICE  
(whispers)  
Stranger...

Oedipus turns. Nothing there. Something wings behind him.

WOMAN'S VOICE (cont'd)  
(whispers)  
Stranger...

He quickly turns ahead of him and scans around. There's nothing unusual. He keeps riding.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (cont'd)  
(shouts)  
Stranger!

The horse frightened rises on two feet, throwing Oedipus down to the ground. The horse runs away. Oedipus lifts his sight atop of the rocks.

The SPHINX sits on a high rock. She has the head of woman, the body of a lion and the wings of an eagle.

SPHINX  
You cannot pass! If you wish to cross to this city, you must answer the riddle that I will put before you. Solve my riddle and you shall pass. Fail... and you shall die.

The Sphinx flies down to Oedipus and sits on a rock near him. Her face is smeared with dry blood.

SPHINX (cont'd)  
What is your answer... stranger?

Oedipus thinks.

OEDIPUS  
 Speak your riddle.

The Sphinx beams revealing her sharp teeth.

SPHINX  
 "What animal is that which in the  
 morning goes on four feet, at  
 noon on two and in the evening  
 upon three?"

Oedipus thinks. The Sphinx keeps smiling.

SPHINX (cont'd)  
 Answer, stranger... if you can.

OEDIPUS  
 Man...

The Sphinx erases her evil smile.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 ... who in childhood creeps on  
 hands and knees, in manhood walks  
 on two feet, and in old age with  
 the help of a staff.

The Sphinx stares at Oedipus for a long time. Then she  
 raises a scream that echoes far and wide. The Sphinx flies  
 up to the sky until she vanishes. Oedipus watches amazed.

TWO VILLAGERS see the incident from far away. They run to  
 Oedipus. He keeps heading towards the city. They meet.

VILLAGER #1  
 My good man, what is your name?

OEDIPUS  
 Oedipus. Son of...  
 (hesitates)  
 ... son of Polybus.

VILLAGER #2  
 You are a man blessed by the  
 gods!

VILLAGER #1  
 You broke our bondage to the  
 wicked monster! You sent the  
 Sphinx away!

Oedipus looks at them stumbled.

VILLAGER #1 (cont'd)  
 Come, come! Go with us!

The villagers move ahead and Oedipus follows them. As they come close to the walls, the villagers start shouting:

VILLAGER #1 (cont'd)  
 People of Theva! Come out the  
 walls! We are free! The monster  
 has left the city! Theva is free!  
 The Sphinx is no more!

The high gates open and PEOPLE come out one by one. Villager #1 sprints to them.

VILLAGER #1 (cont'd)  
 (shouts)  
 Thevans! The Sphinx is gone! We  
 are liberated! This man set us  
 free! He solved the riddle!

People keep coming out of the gates. They round Oedipus, looking at him with admiration. Oedipus glances around puzzled.

EXT. STREETS OF THEVA - DAY

A giant shoal moves across the streets. The two villagers lead ahead and Oedipus with the rest of the people follow.

VILLAGER #1  
 (shouts)  
 People of Theva! The Sphinx has  
 left the city! We are now free!  
 Tell Creon! Tell the queen! Theva  
 is delivered!

OEDIPUS  
 Where are you taking me?

VILLAGER #2  
 To the palace. You will be  
 crowned king of Theva.

Oedipus looks at him wide-eyed.

VILLAGER #1  
 The man that would liberate us  
 from the monster would win the  
 kingship. Many men before you  
 have tried, but they all suffered  
 a horrible death.

VILLAGER #2  
 The throne of Theva is yours now!  
 You will take the queen as your  
 wife.

## EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - DAY

In front of the royal house, a series of high steps lead up to the palace. Two grand temples stand splendorous from the left and right side of the steps. A towering statue of Apollo rises before each altar. The crowd has raised before the stairs.

Palace's gates open and TWO GUARDS stand next to them. Then CREON and queen IOCASTE come out.

Creon is a middle-aged man in his early forties. Iocaste has reached her late thirties, although someone can barely notice it because of her beautiful, ageless face and her long, black hair.

The two villagers and Oedipus step up to the palace. When they reach up to the entrance, the guards block their path. The villagers drop to their knees and bow their heads. Oedipus does the same.

VILLAGER #1

My queen, this is the man that  
made the monster fly away.

Iocaste looks down at Oedipus. He gives her a quick, modest glance. Creon goes to Oedipus and stands before him.

CREON

What is your name, my boy?

OEDIPUS

Oedipus.

CREON

Rise, Oedipus. Kings do not bow.

Oedipus surprised, lifts his eyes to Creon and slowly stands up.

## EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - LATER

Through the open doors, Oedipus comes out, dressed in a shiny cloth and wearing his crown. Alongside him walks Iocaste, wearing a beautiful, blue wedding dress, garnished with golden pins and with her crown on, too.

The gathering of people applauds loudly. Iocaste glances at Oedipus with a vacant look. He looks at her admiring her beauty.

EXT. MAIN SQUARE - NIGHT

Torches have been placed around the square. Music plays and people dance. It is a celebration for the Thevans. Wine and food for everyone.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Iocaste stands next to a window gazing at the city. The music and the people singing can be heard in the distance. Oedipus sits on the bed and glares at her. He gets up and goes to Iocaste.

Oedipus caresses Iocaste's arm. She goes stiff. Oedipus moves his hand up to her face and twists it so she can face him. They look at each other, hold a moment and then kiss.

EXT. THEVA - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED...

The sun shines above the city which appears glorious from above.

EXT. STREETS OF THEVA - DAY

Underneath, the streets are filled with pain and misery.

MONTAGE

A YOUNG BOY

cries. He enfolds his father's dead body lying on the ground. A WOMAN seizes his arm, pulling him away. The boy won't let go. After a few more abortive attempts, the woman quits her efforts and walks away.

A MAN

paces slowly and leans against a nearby wall for rest. He reposes for a moment. When he begins to walk again, he falls to his knees. Then he drops face down to the ground, dead.

DOZENS OF CROWS

fly in the sky, circling above the city.

A HORSE

lies on the side of the street, left to rot.

AN INFANT

cries in the arms of its dead mother. Its cry echoes like thunder. TWO WOMEN passing by notice the baby. They continue walking undisturbed.

END MONTAGE

EXT. MAIN SQUARE - DAY

A horse-drawn cart waits in the middle of the square, half loaded with dead bodies. Next to the cart, a pile of corpses lay spiritless.

TWO MEN, with a sheet masking their face, stack the bodies upon the cart.

EXT. HIGH GATE - DAY

The enormous wooden gates leading in and out of Theva open wide. The cart exits the gates.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A terrible wind blows fiercely. Grains of sand fly in the wind. The two men riding the cart, cover their face to protect themselves.

An endless harsh environment extends as far as the eye can see. The horses move with difficulty because of the hyperbolic transported weight. The driver whips them hard.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A herd of dead sheep lies on the road. The driver pulls the reins and the cart begins to slow down. It passes cautiously through the dead herd.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Blazing flames. Dozens of corpses are burning in the middle of the desert. The men stand next to the fire, watching the dead burn. Dark smoke blackens the blue sky.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - NIGHT

Around the altars of the palace are gathered numerous citizens of Theva, sitting in positions of supplication. They carry branches and garlands, and lay them on the shrines.

The doors of the palace open. Oedipus comes forward, stands atop of the steps and views the condition of his people. Behind him the guards take their positions.

Oedipus walks down to the crowd. Men wretched, seedy, and miserable, beg him for help. One man kneels before him and kisses his feet. Oedipus helps him up.

Oedipus walks up and positions high on the steps so everyone can get sight of him.

OEDIPUS

People of Theva! New blood of  
Cadmus' race, what is the meaning  
of this entreaty?

He notices an OLD PRIEST in the front row of the crowd.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

(to the priest)

You, old man, should talk for  
them. What brings you here? A  
sudden fear? A strong desire? I  
shall willingly do anything to  
help my people kneeling at my  
feet.

OLD PRIEST

My king, you have seen our city's  
sickness. Blight falls on our  
harvests. Herds sicken to their  
death. Women give birth to dead  
children. Theva is dying, my  
lord. Long ago, it was you who  
came to us and unchained us from  
the Sphinx. Now, Oedipus, great  
and worthy, we seek your help  
once again. Find some liberation  
for us. Revive our city to life.

OEDIPUS

I mourn for you, my poor  
children. How could I be blind to  
the reason that brings you here?  
How could I be blind to all that  
you suffer? Yet, while you  
suffer, no one suffers more than  
I.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Thus, I sent Creon to the oracle  
of Apollo to discover what doing  
of mine could help this ill-fated  
city. When he returns whatever  
the god demands, upon my honor,  
it shall be done.

The citizens exchange satisfactory looks.

OLD PRIEST

We thank you, my lord. You have a  
gentle heart.

Oedipus nods and steps up to the palace. The priest  
dismisses the suppliants.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Creon and his followers enter the palace.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - HALLWAY - DAY

Creon walks quickly through the long hallways of the  
palace.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - THRONE ROOM - DAY

An empty room with beautiful murals to decorate the walls.  
A lonely throne stands in the back.

Oedipus paces about the room, seeming distressed and  
impatient. The doors open and Creon comes in. Oedipus  
hastily goes to him. They embrace.

OEDIPUS

Creon, my noble brother, what news?  
What was the message from the mouth  
of god?

CREON

Good news, Oedipus.

OEDIPUS

There is confidence in what you  
have said so far. What were the  
god's words?

CREON

This is the answer and the strict  
command of Apollo. There is a  
taint in this land. Born and bred  
on our soil, it infects it day by  
day. This impure being must be  
sent away not kept among us to  
destroy us.

OEDIPUS

How can we be purified?

CREON

By banishing this man or settling  
the debt of blood for blood.

OEDIPUS

Whose blood?

CREON

There was a man, Oedipus, that  
reigned this land before you. His  
name was Laius.

OEDIPUS

So I heard.

CREON

He was murdered. The purpose of the  
god's charge is that we bring  
whoever responsible to justice.

OEDIPUS

Where shall we uncover the faded  
trails of that far-distant crime?

CREON

Here, the god said. Search and you  
shall find.

OEDIPUS

Where did Laius face his gory  
death?

CREON

He left the land to learn how we  
might be delivered from the Sphinx  
and never came back.

OEDIPUS

Was there no word of his followers  
who saw what happened?

CREON

They all died, Oedipus, apart from  
one. He had only one thing to tell  
us.

OEDIPUS

What was it? One thing may lead the  
way to others.

CREON

He said "thieves" attacked them.  
Not one but many put Laius to  
death.

OEDIPUS

No thieves would be so bold to slay  
a king.

CREON

We never discovered, Oedipus. When  
Laius died no leader appeared to  
help us in our torments. Not until  
the gods sent you to us.

OEDIPUS

I will start from ground and  
bring everything to light. I  
shall dismiss this taint, not to  
hand some distant kinsman, but  
for myself. Whoever killed the  
king, with the same lethal hand,  
may choose to kill me. By  
avenging Laius I defend myself.  
(to the guards)  
One of you, summon the city.

A guard leaves quickly.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Undeniable it is that by the  
hands of the gods we rise... or  
fall.

EXT. MAIN SQUARE - DAY

The people of Theva are collected before a stand, thronging  
the square. Oedipus steps up to the stand. Creon and two  
guards follow him. The fuss from the crowd begins to quiet  
down.

Through the people, TIRESIAS can be distinguished standing  
in a corner, far away from the gathering.

Tiresias is an elderly man, with long, white hair and a  
beard. He is blind and moves with the help of a prop.

OEDIPUS

(shouts)

Thevans! You ask and shall have a  
cure to your pains if you are  
willing to hear my words, and put  
in hand the remedy your sickness  
needs. If any of you knows whose  
hand murdered Laius, the son of  
Labdacus, let him announce it now  
to me. I promise you, he will not  
suffer. His fortune will be  
nothing worse than exile. No  
other harm shall find him.

Oedipus pauses, waiting for a reply. There is silence.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

(shouts)

If anyone knows if the murderer  
is an outlander, a man from  
foreign soil, come, speak! You  
shall receive a generous reward  
and withhold gratitude for you in  
my heart!

Silence still.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

(shouts)

If you will be silent and any man  
is found shielding himself or  
friend or kinsman, I here  
pronounce the damnation upon his  
head. No matter who he may be, he  
is banned to be sheltered or  
related with anyone in this city  
over which I rule! He is expelled  
from every home! Thus, I will  
have done my obligation to Laius.  
I will fight for him as if he  
were my father, cease at nothing,  
and hunt the world to set my  
hands on the man who spilled his  
blood. May gods damn all that  
disobey these words!

A hesitating voice comes from the crowd:

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I wish to speak, my king... if I  
may.

People withdraw, revealing a middle-aged MAN.

OEDIPUS

The right of speech is well valued  
in this land. Speak freely.

The man moves through the people, coming forth to the king.  
He halts before the stand.

MAN

The command came from Apollo, my  
king, and he, if anyone, could  
tell us who the offender is.

OEDIPUS

Well said. Yet, to compel a god to  
speak against his will is not in  
human power.

CREON

I have something to say.

OEDIPUS

Speak your thoughts, Creon. We could use your wisdom.

CREON

Prophet Tiresias sees with the eyes of Apollo and stands near him in divination. Anyone seeking for the truth, Oedipus, might learn it from him clear as day.

Oedipus looks at Creon while thinking.

CREON (cont'd)

The prophet in whom lives the manifested truth must come for he is needed, Oedipus.

Tiresias slowly walks away from the square.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - MEETING HALL - DAY

A vast table is found in the middle of the room. Oedipus waits seated at the head of the table, along with the Thevan council constituted by ten Thevan elders. Prince ETEOCLES is seated also.

Eteocles is a young man with a rough face, and the body of a warrior.

In a corner of the room standing, awaits prince POLYNICES. Polynices is a young man with an innocent, childlike face.

The doors open and Tiresias enters. His attendant guides him into the room. Oedipus leaves his seat to greet him.

OEDIPUS

Tiresias, welcome.

TIRESIAS

Why did you send for me, my king?

OEDIPUS

Collect your strength, catch your breath and I shall tell you.

Oedipus leads Tiresias to his seat. Then he takes his seat at the table.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Tiresias, you are the man that perceives it all, known and unknown.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Blind as you are, you may not see, yet you know well what sickness haunts our land. We have sent to Apollo. His oracle said that the road of our salvation has only one way. We must uncover the murderers of Laius, put them to death or send them into exile. I beseech you, Tiresias, spare not your gift and help us. Save your city... save yourself.

TIRESIAS

How horrible it is to see the truth when the truth is hollow to the one who sees it.

Oedipus' face darkens.

OEDIPUS

What is this? Why are you so unfriendly, Tiresias?

TIRESIAS

My king, let me go home. It would be wiser for you to carry your burden and me, mine.

OEDIPUS

How immoral and hostile to the land that bred and raised you to hold back the messages of the gods.

TIRESIAS

I see your words heading to no good end so I protect myself.

Oedipus slams his hand against the table and swiftly rises.

OEDIPUS

(shouts)

By the gods! Do not deny to speak!

Tiresias stays quiet.

COUNSELLOR #1

Tiresias, we are all your beggars, kneeling before you.

TIRESIAS

(to the council)

You are all deceived. I will never disclose my sinister secrets...

(to Oedipus)

... or yours.

Oedipus dashes to Tiresias.

OEDIPUS  
You know and will not tell?!

He passes by Polynices. Polynices touches his father's arm trying to comfort him.

POLYNICES  
Father, rest your temper--

Oedipus shoves Polynices' hand away.

OEDIPUS  
Silence!

He fronts Tiresias. Oedipus bows down to his knees so they come face to face.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
You are bent on forsaking us and  
watch your city perish?

TIRESIAS  
(calmly)  
I mean to absolve us both. Question  
no more. I will answer nothing.

Oedipus stands on his feet.

OEDIPUS  
Nothing?! You impudent rogue, you  
could anger a stone! How can  
someone restrain his temper when  
he hears you reject your city?

TIRESIAS  
What will be shall be even if I  
enclose it in silence.

OEDIPUS  
What will be it is your trade to  
tell.

TIRESIAS  
I tell no more. Rage at me all  
you will.

OEDIPUS  
I shall and speak my mind  
daringly, for now I see  
everything. I do believe you were  
behind the crime and if you had  
eyes to see, I would have said  
your hand had taken Laius' life.

Tiresias lowers his head and smiles.

TIRESIAS

Is it so? Then hear this. Upon your head falls the curse your lips have uttered. From this day on, never speak to me or any one else in Theva. You are the disease of this land!

Oedipus bashes his hand down on the table. A few glasses on it drop, spilling the wine on the floor.

OEDIPUS

You unashamed man! Are you not daunted to say such a thing? How will you escape from it?

TIRESIAS

I have escaped. Truth breathes inside me.

OEDIPUS

Who urged you for this?

TIRESIAS

You did. You made me talk against my will.

OEDIPUS

Talk again. Let there be no mistake.

TIRESIAS

Was it not clear or you will dare me further?

Oedipus turns his back on Tiresias and walks to his seat.

OEDIPUS

(careless)

Speak all you please. Your words mean nothing. Living in everlasting night, you cannot hurt me or any man that sees the daylight.

TIRESIAS

True. Your fate is not in my hands. It is in Apollo's hands.

Oedipus takes his seat.

COUNSELLOR #2

Forgive him, my lord. His words were spoken in anger, yours too, in a worthless conversation.

ETEOCLES

Father, all our thoughts should  
be how to discharge the god's  
command. Time is little and the  
sore of our land great.

Oedipus sits quietly deep into his thoughts. Suddenly, an  
intuition wanders in his mind.

OEDIPUS

(to Tiresias)

Is this Creon's saying then, if not  
yours?

TIRESIAS

Not Creon's either. Your enemy is  
yourself.

OEDIPUS

Wealth and sway, powers above all  
powers, why must you always be  
mated with envy? For this...

He stands up, takes off his crown and holds it up.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

... the crown the city gave me,  
Creon, my true and loyal friend,  
why must you crawl behind me so  
lustily to overthrow me, setting  
this plot on me? I promise you,  
Creon, you shall repent.

(to Tiresias)

If you were not as old as you are,  
sharp penalty would fall upon your  
head.

TIRESIAS

Know that I only serve Apollo and  
no one else. You are amused to  
scorn my blindness. Your precious  
eyes do not see your own doom? My  
boy, you will be shattered with  
worst spurn than ever fell on a  
man.

OEDIPUS

Shall I hear more of this?  
Vanish! Out of my sight, old man!  
Go back where you came from!

TIRESIAS

I would have never come if you  
had not called me.

OEDIPUS

If I knew you would speak such  
nonsense, you would have died  
waiting.

TIRESIAS

(to his attendant)

Give me your hand, my dear boy.  
Take me home.

His attendant helps him up.

OEDIPUS

Let him take you home! You are  
trouble here!

Tiresias and his attendant exit the room.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

The moon shines through a window. ANTIGONE, a young woman with an angelic face, brushes Iocaste's hair. Oedipus sits on the side of the bed and stares at Iocaste. She turns and looks at him. They share a smile.

OEDIPUS

Antigone, leave us. Go to your  
chamber.

Antigone nods and puts the brush down on the table.

ANTIGONE

Good night, mother.

Antigone goes to her father. Oedipus gives her a tender kiss on the forehead. Antigone leaves the room. Oedipus rises and goes to Iocaste. He kisses her neck.

OEDIPUS

I do not know the reason, yet you  
have never looked more beautiful.  
You share even beauty with the  
moon and the stars in the sky.

He sinks his hand down Iocaste's gown, touching her breasts. Iocaste stands and they kiss passionately.

EXT. MAIN SQUARE - DAY

Creon on the stand, talks to a few citizens of Theva.

CREON

My fellow citizens, I hear king  
Oedipus casts malicious accusations  
at me!

CREON (cont'd)

I come before you, for I cannot bear it! His words said that prophet Tiresias lied under my guidance! I will not live to stand such a blame if you, my friends, my country, call me a traitor!

Oedipus comes forward through the people. They withdraw, making way for him to pass.

OEDIPUS

Creon! What brings you here? Do you have the face to look at these people, you the proven, ravening thief, scheming to steal my throne?

Oedipus steps up the stand and fronts Creon.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

By the mighty gods, did you see any foulness in me to put such envious plan in your mind? If you believe you could win the kingship without wealth or power, you are a fool. Kingdoms are won by men and gold.

More people start gathering to the square.

CREON

Oedipus, listen to my reply and judge me then.

OEDIPUS

You may be glib with words, yet I do not wish to hear. You are now my enemy.

CREON

Let me tell you--

OEDIPUS

Tell me anything except that you are honest.

CREON

Do you think this stubbornness does you any good?

OEDIPUS

Do you think you can harm your house and avoid the penalty?

CREON

I should be a fool to think that. But tell me, what harm do you believe I did to you?

OEDIPUS

Was it you that made me send for  
that devious prophet Tiresias?

Creon nods.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Now, tell me. How long ago did  
Laius vanish? Faded from sight?

CREON

The count of the years would take  
you long ago.

OEDIPUS

And that "long ago," did the  
prophet have his skills?

CREON

He did, holding equal respect as he  
holds now.

OEDIPUS

Did he ever mention me at that  
time?

CREON

Not in my hearing.

OEDIPUS

Was there a quest made into Laius'  
death?

CREON

There was... in vain.

OEDIPUS

And that man of knowledge, why  
was he silent? Why he did not  
point at the killer then?

He turns and faces the people while he waits for an answer. A commotion begins to rise from the crowd as the people talk to one another.

CREON

That I do not know.

Oedipus moves closer to Creon.

OEDIPUS

You do know and you would talk if  
you had decency. Would Tiresias  
have ever dared to call me killer  
of Laius without your urging?

CREON

If he would, you know better.  
Now, I have the right to learn  
from you as you have learned from  
me.

OEDIPUS

Ask, for I shall never be proven  
guilty of murder.

CREON

Am I or am I not the brother of the  
queen?

OEDIPUS

You are. There is no denying that.

CREON

Does the queen have an even share  
with the king in reign of the land?

OEDIPUS

Everything she desires is hers by  
right.

CREON

Do I have a third part of royalty?

OEDIPUS

You did, until your shown treason.

CREON

Now, think and ask yourself.  
Would any man trade a peaceful  
life with noble position ensured  
for a restless throne? To be a  
king in name was never my  
ambition, enough for me to live  
as one.

(to the people)

I stand in all men's favor. I am  
all men's friend. Why would I  
exchange this life, I ask you,  
for the other? A man of sense,  
someone who sees things clearly,  
would never submit to treachery.

He kneels down, takes Oedipus' hand and kisses it.

CREON (cont'd)

Neither have I, my king. I have  
no longing for betrayal in me,  
nor could I ever stand one who  
does.

Oedipus pulls his hand away.

OEDIPUS

Like I said, you may be glib with words, yet I am not affected. The penalty for a traitor is the same for a stranger or a brother.

CREON

What do you want then? Do you want me banished?

OEDIPUS

I want you dead, not banished.

CREON

Not until you show me in what way I have wronged you.

OEDIPUS

You talk like a man that has no intention to bow his head and obey.

CREON

I know you are mistaken.

OEDIPUS

I know I am right.

CREON

In your eyes, not mine. What if you are wrong?

OEDIPUS

No matter... I must rule.

CREON

Not if you rule unfairly.

OEDIPUS

Hear him, people of Theva!

CREON

Myself one of them.

There is excessive fuss from the crowd.

Iocaste walks through the people until she faces the stand.

IOCASTE

What is the meaning of this roaring discussion? Are you not ashamed at this time of sorrow to declare your personal argues? Come, let's away, my husband, and you, Creon, go home.

CREON

My sister, your husband is bent on a choice of punishment for me. He desires to see my death.

OEDIPUS

He was cunningly planning against me.

CREON

May the gods curse me forever, if I have done you the wrong you charge me with.

IOCASTE

I implore you, Oedipus, believe him. Respect his vow to the gods.

CITIZEN #1

Consent, my king. Be merciful and learn how to relent.

OEDIPUS

Why should I relent?

CITIZEN #2

He has been no fool in the past, my king, and now he is strong with the oath he took.

CITIZEN #3

It is not wise to condemn a vowed friend, my lord, on the power of misty hearsay alone.

CITIZEN #1

My lord, it is ill-advised on top of this land's old grieves to add another one.

Oedipus thinks. After a few moments:

OEDIPUS

Let him leave!

(to the people)

Your voice not his, has won my mercy. He, wherever he goes, my hatred goes with him.

Creon steps down from the stand.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

(to Creon)

Leave us! Be gone!

CREON

I will leave, misjudged by you  
alone, not them.

Creon walks away.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - BALCONY - SUNSET

Oedipus gazes at the beautiful sunset. From inside the  
bedchamber comes Iocaste. She stands next to Oedipus and  
puts her arm around his waist. He enwraps her waist with  
his arm.

IOCASTE

My king, tell me, I beg you. Why do  
you have conceived this dreadful  
rancor against Creon?

Oedipus looks at her. He tenderly touches her face.

OEDIPUS

He said the murder of Laius was my  
doing.

Iocaste startled, takes a step back.

IOCASTE

Does he know by some mystical  
knowledge or plain rumor?

OEDIPUS

He hides himself behind a devious  
prophet.

Iocaste smiles in disbelief.

IOCASTE

Believe me, Oedipus, no man holds  
the charisma of divination. Years  
back, an oracle was given to  
Laius, that doom would find him  
by the hands of a son... our  
son... Laius as it is known was  
killed by thieves at a place  
where three roads meet. As for  
the baby, it was not even three  
days old when it was cast out to  
die on a wild mountain. Apollo  
brought neither thing to pass.

Oedipus seems worried.

OEDIPUS

Did you say that Laius was killed  
at a place where three roads meet?

Iocaste nods.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Where is this place?

IOCASTE  
Phochis, where two turning roads  
route to Delphi and Daulia.

OEDIPUS  
Iocaste, when did Laius die?

IOCASTE  
Shortly before you arrived and  
were hailed king of Theva.

OEDIPUS  
(to the sky)  
Gods... what have you planned for  
me?

Oedipus steps into the chamber.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus goes to his bed, sits on the side. He appears  
abstracted by his thoughts. Iocaste comes inside, too and  
sits alongside him.

IOCASTE  
What is it, Oedipus, that shadows  
your mind?

OEDIPUS  
Do not question but answer. What  
did Laius look like?

IOCASTE  
He was tall with gray hair. His  
appearance was not much different  
than yours.

Oedipus hastily gets up.

OEDIPUS  
I think I have called down a  
dreadful curse upon myself. A  
curse I was not aware of.

IOCASTE  
I tremble to look at you. What  
are you saying?

Oedipus goes to a near window.

OEDIPUS

(to himself)

Could it be? Did the prophet have eyes then?

(to Iocaste)

I must know one more thing. How many men escorted the king?

IOCASTE

Five men with a herald among them.

OEDIPUS

I now see it all clear as the sun! And who brought the news to the palace?

IOCASTE

The herald who saved himself.

OEDIPUS

Is he still in the palace?

Iocaste shakes her head.

IOCASTE

When he returned and found you on the throne, he held my hand and implored me to send him to the hinterlands to pasture, as far as possible from the city's eyes. And I did. He may have been a slave, yet he had won the favor.

OEDIPUS

Could we have him before us?

IOCASTE

We could. Why do you ask?

OEDIPUS

Dear Iocaste, I am afraid I have already said too much. I must see this man.

IOCASTE

I will send for him, Oedipus, as soon as day breaks.

Oedipus nods and leaves the room.

EXT. THEVA - SUNSET

The sun goes down glooming Theva and the Thevan desert.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - TEMPLE OF APOLLO - NIGHT

Iocaste walks towards the temple, carrying a garlanded branch. She fronts the altar and bows down to her knees. She looks up to the statue of Apollo.

IOCASTE

Kind Apollo, I visit your temples carrying these tokens of supplication. Oedipus is beside himself. Aggrieved with agony, he is at the pity of every passing voice, if the voice speaks of terror. I advise him gently but cannot console him. Thus, I turn to you, Apollo. You the most compassionate of all gods, I come with prayers and offerings, and I beg you. Cleanse us, release us from defilement.

She places the branch on the shrine.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Oedipus lays on his bed, having a restless sleep.

FLASHBACK - EXT. COUNTRY - DAY

Images come fast and sharp. Pieces of a memory chosen to forget:

Oedipus pushes a CHARIOTEER down from a chariot, grabs his sword, stabs him on the neck, THREE GUARDSMEN dismount their horses and attack Oedipus, he defends himself and after a quick quarrel he kills them all, then he goes to the side a carriage, LAIUS hits Oedipus in the face with a staff, Oedipus grabs the staff, pulls him down from the chariot, and with a rapid move drives his sword in Laius' heart, Laius eyes go wide, Oedipus screams in anger.

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

Oedipus sits bold upright in his bed. He pants and tries to catch his breath. He looks at the other side of the bed. Iocaste lies next to him, having a serene sleep.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Oedipus paces along the hallway. He goes to a door up ahead of him and slowly opens it. He stays in the doorway and peeks inside.

Eteocles is sleeping on his bed. He looks to the other side of the room and sees Polynices sleeping on his. He beams, gets out and closes the door.

Oedipus walks a bit further down the hall and opens another door. He glimpses inside and sees Antigone sleeping on her bed. He closes the door.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Iocaste sleeps on the bed. Oedipus seated in a corner of the room observes her. His unrestful and reflective face can still be distinguished in the dark.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - GARDEN/COURTYARD - DAY

Oedipus walks in the garden and sits on a bench. He watches Eteocles and Polynices practice with swords in the courtyard. He smiles bitterly.

Iocaste comes out of the palace, goes to Oedipus and takes a seat next to him. They stay quiet for several moments, watching at the swordplay. The fight is on even terms. Finally:

IOCASTE

My lord, may I hear what burdens your heart?

OEDIPUS

Iocaste... my beloved Iocaste, I can hide nothing from you. I've never spoken of this to anyone, yet of all people you deserve to know more the dark fate I have reached.

Iocaste looks at him curiously

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

When I left Corinth, my journey led me to the place where your king, as you said, faced his death. There I crossed paths with a carriage. The driver cruelly commanded me out of the way and pushed me aside. I stroke him in anger. Inside the carriage, there was an old man. When I neared his wheels, he brought his staff straight at my head. Quick as lightning, I knocked him out and there... I killed him. I killed them all! Every mother's son!  
(calmly)

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

But now, if the blood of Laius  
ran in this man's veins, there is  
no creature more miserable than  
I. It is I, whom no citizen must  
take to his house. I, whom none  
may talk. On me lays the curse  
that no one but I, have declared.

He looks away at Eteocles and Polynices. The fight  
continues without a victor.

IOCASTE

Oedipus, you load my heart with  
fear.

OEDIPUS

Fear has only one companion...  
hope. That shepherd is my only  
hope.

IOCASTE

Once he comes, what then?

OEDIPUS

If he still holds to his words,  
that "thieves" killed Laius, I  
cannot be the murderer. One is  
not more than one. But if he  
speaks of one man, one man alone,  
there is no escape for my guilt.

IOCASTE

My king, I assure you, that was  
what he said. He cannot take it  
back for everyone heard it. And  
even if he changes his first  
saying, my lord, still he could  
never make the murder of Laius as  
was foretold. Apollo said my  
husband was condemned to be  
murdered by my son. It was not to  
be poor baby, for its life  
finished before it began.

OEDIPUS

Still let us have the shepherd  
here.

Iocaste nods. Polynices falls to the ground. Eteocles  
stands above him with his sword pointed to Polynices face  
and grins. Eteocles lifts his sword in the air and gazes at  
his father. Oedipus fakes a smile.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - DAY

Messenger #1 arrives, on his horse, before the royal house. He dismounts and ties it to a pole. He walks up the stairs and meets ATTENDANT #1.

MESSENGER #1

My good man, I wonder if you could lead me to Oedipus, king of Theva, if you know where he is.

ATTENDANT #1

This is the king's palace, stranger, and the king is inside.

Iocaste steps down the stairs along with Antigone.

ATTENDANT #1 (cont'd)

Here is his wife and the mother of his children.

The messenger nods respectfully to Iocaste.

MESSENGER #1

Grace attends you and all your house, my queen.

The attendant moves up and into the palace.

IOCASTE

Blessings on you, gentle stranger, and I thank you for your greeting. What brings you here?

MESSENGER #1

I have brought you news, my queen. Good news for your master and his house.

IOCASTE

Who sent you?

MESSENGER #1

Corinth. The message I bring cannot but please you... thought it may cause you distress.

IOCASTE

What can have such power to content and to grief at once?

MESSENGER #1

People of Corinth, wish to make your husband king of all the land.

IOCASTE

Is Polybus king no longer?

MESSENGER #1

King Polybus is lost. Death has got him into the ground.

IOCASTE

Is this true? Is Polybus dead?

MESSENGER #1

He is, my queen. I swear it on my life.

IOCASTE

Antigone, go to your father quickly! Report him these news.

Antigone goes in haste.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

(to the sky)

You revelations of the gods, where are you now? The man whom Oedipus feared for years is now dead by no act of his.

(to Messenger #1)

Now, my good man, come. Come inside the palace and accept our hospitality. Your journey must have you tired.

They enter the palace.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - DINING ROOM - DAY

A grand table extends at the length of the room. The messenger feeds his hunger and quenches his thirst with the food and wine offered to him. Iocaste stands in front of a window gazing at the view.

Oedipus comes in. Antigone and a few attendants follow him. The messenger rises at once and wipes his face and hands.

OEDIPUS

My dear wife, what urgent news requested my presence?

Iocaste rushes to Oedipus. She takes him by the hand and leads him before the messenger.

IOCASTE

Hear this man and see for yourself what the oracles of the gods have turned to.

OEDIPUS  
Who is this man?

IOCASTE  
He comes from Corinth. He has come  
to tell you that your father's  
life... has ended. Polybus is dead.

Oedipus daunted, stares at Iocaste in disbelief. He turns  
to the messenger.

OEDIPUS  
Let me have it from your lips.

MESSENGER #1  
This, I guarantee you, my lord.  
Polybus is gone.

OEDIPUS  
How? By murder or some tortuous  
sickness?

MESSENGER #1  
A light thrust can put an old body  
to rest.

OEDIPUS  
So illness wore him down.

The messenger nods. A hint of a smile tracks Oedipus' lips.  
Little by little his face starts to glow of relief and  
delight.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Why, my wife, why look to the  
Pythinian fire, the prophecies,  
the forecasting birds that howl  
above our heads? They misled me  
on to the murder of my father. He  
lies now into the ground and I am  
here, never put hand on a blade.  
The letter of the oracle is  
unfulfilled, and rests like  
Polybus dead.

Iocaste's face lights up as well. She hugs Oedipus.

IOCASTE  
Have I not said so all this time?

OEDIPUS  
You have. My fear deceived me.

IOCASTE  
Think no more of this.

OEDIPUS

There is still my mother's bed to  
dread.

Oedipus leaves Iocaste's embrace. She grabs his hand halting him. She places her hands on Oedipus' face, lovingly caressing his cheeks.

IOCASTE

(softly)

What should a man fear when he is  
blessed by fortune and fortune  
rules our lives? Many men in  
their dreams have shared their  
mother's bed. We must forget the  
past in order to endure the  
future.

OEDIPUS

Loved Iocaste, you have spoken  
fairly, but my mother is alive  
and while she is alive, fear is  
alive inside me.

MESSENGER #1

Who is the woman whom you fear?

OEDIPUS

Merope, old man. The wife of  
Polybus.

MESSENGER #1

Why are you afraid of her?

OEDIPUS

A dire oracle sent by the gods.  
Phoebus said I was foredoomed to  
take my mother as my wife, and  
shed my father's blood. So, I  
stayed away Corinth for years,  
and it has been my favorable  
fortune.

MESSENGER #1

Was that the reason that expelled  
you from Corinth?

OEDIPUS

It was, for I would not slay my  
father.

MESSENGER #1

My dear boy, you are deluded.

OEDIPUS

How is that, good man?

MESSENGER #1

The fear that bars you from your home--

OEDIPUS

The words of Apollo can still come true.

MESSENGER #1

Know this. Your fears are senseless.

OEDIPUS

How can that be? I was their son.

MESSENGER #1

You are no kindred of Polybus.

OEDIPUS

What are you saying? Polybus was not my father?

MESSENGER #1

No more than I.

OEDIPUS

Why then did he call me his son?

MESSENGER #1

You were given to him... by my hands.

OEDIPUS

Given? And yet he loved me as his own child?

The messenger nods.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Was I brought or found?

MESSENGER #1

I found you on the slopes of mountain Cithaeron as I was grazing my flocks.

OEDIPUS

You were a herdsman?

MESSENGER #1

I was, and your savior as well, my son.

OEDIPUS

Was I hurt when you found me?

MESSENGER #1

The wounds on your ankles tell the story.

Oedipus looks at his feet. Through his sandals, the marks on his ankles are evident.

Iocaste goes white in fear. Her mind wanders in dim, forepassed days. Her face exposes unimaginable agony and terror.

MESSENGER #1 (cont'd)

Your ankles were nailed together, and I unbound you.

OEDIPUS

It is true. I have borne these stigmata forever.

MESSENGER #1

To that tragedy you own your name.

OEDIPUS

Was this my father's or my mother's doing?

MESSENGER #1

I do not know. The one that handed you to me should know more.

OEDIPUS

You did not find me?

MESSENGER #1

Another shepherd handed you over to my care. He was one of Laius' servants.

OEDIPUS

Is he still alive? Can I see him?

MESSENGER #1

Your people here should know.

Oedipus in agony turns to his attendants.

OEDIPUS

Does anyone know the shepherd whom he speaks of? Has anyone seen him in the fields or here in the city? Speak if you know.

ATTENDANT #2

I think he is the same country man whom you have already asked for, my king. Queen Iocaste is the one to say.

OEDIPUS

Iocaste, you know the man whom we have sent for. Is that the man he means?

Iocaste lost in a delirium of emotions, cannot articulate a single word. She feigns a smile.

IOCASTE

It does not matter. His words are empty. Pay no attention, nor give it another thought.

OEDIPUS

Nonsense! I must pursue this trail to the end, until I have solved the riddle of my birth.

IOCASTE

For the love of your own life, Oedipus, end this quest. My passions are enough.

OEDIPUS

Even if my mother is proven to be a slave and I, a slave, your honor is not insulted.

Iocaste moves closer to Oedipus.

IOCASTE

Hear me, I implore you. Do not go on with this search.

OEDIPUS

I must. I cannot leave the truth unknown.

IOCASTE

For your own good, accept my advice.

OEDIPUS

Your advice is more than I can take.

Iocaste turns her back on Oedipus.

IOCASTE

You are doomed. May you never learn who you are!

She dashes out of the room.

OEDIPUS  
 (to attendant #2)  
 Hurry, prepare the royal wagon.  
 Take me to that shepherd right  
 away!

Iocaste halts before the doors.

IOCASTE  
 (to Oedipus)  
 You are damned! That is the only  
 name I have for you! No other!

She hurries outside. Antigone runs behind her.

OEDIPUS  
 Let all come out, no matter how  
 shameful! I do not wish to be any  
 man other than I am! I wish to know  
who I am!

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Queen Iocaste breaks in through the doors in desperate  
 passion and closes them behind her. She goes to her bed,  
 falls on it and starts wailing.

From behind the doors, a sweet voice sounds:

ANTIGONE (O.S.)  
 Mother? May I come inside?

IOCASTE  
 Leave me! Leave me to my grief!  
 Be gone!

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

Antigone scowls and walks away.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

The royal wagon moves speedily through the endless fields  
 of barleycorn. A DRIVER and attendant #2 sit on the front.  
 TWO GUARDS on their horses ensue the wagon. The workers in  
 the fields quit their jobs and watch astounded.

INT. ROYAL WAGON - DAY

Oedipus is seated inside the wagon with the messenger  
 opposite him. They exchange quick looks.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

The attendant points to a certain site on a field and the driver immediately pulls the reins. The wagon stops on the roadside and so are the guards on their horses. Oedipus steps down first and the messenger second.

Oedipus goes to the attendant that has already moved further into the field. He shows Oedipus a man far away.

INT. ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Iocaste sits on her bed. Her tears have dried up. Almost like hypnotised she stands, goes to her wardrobe and takes out her wedding dress. She begins to undress.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

An elderly SHEPHERD pastures a herd of goats. Oedipus closes on him in quick pace with his guards and the attendant walking next to him. The messenger follows a little behind.

The shepherd gazes at Oedipus and falls on his knees. Oedipus reaches before the shepherd. So is everyone else.

OEDIPUS  
(to the shepherd)  
Good day, good fellow.

The shepherd keeps his head down, not looking at Oedipus.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Corinthian messenger, is this the  
man your words referred to?

The messenger tries to look at the face of the shepherd.

MESSENGER #1  
This is the man.

Oedipus goes to the shepherd. He forces his face up so he can clearly look at it. The shepherd's eyes glance down.

OEDIPUS  
Come, old shepherd, look at me and  
answer my questions.

The shepherd hesitatingly lifts his sight on Oedipus' face.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Now, tell me. Were you in king  
Laius' labor?

SHEPHERD

I was, a slave. Born and bred in  
the palace.

OEDIPUS

What work did you do for him?

SHEPHERD

I was grazing his flocks.

OEDIPUS

Where did you do your grazing?

SHEPHERD

To the foothills of mountain  
Cithaeron.

OEDIPUS

(pointing to the  
messenger)

This man, do you know him? Did you  
ever see him there?

SHEPHERD

I do not remember.

Oedipus and the messenger exchange a look.

MESSENGER #1

No wonder he does not know who I  
am, but I will make him remember.  
He would not forget the days when  
he and I pastured our herds on  
the slopes of Cithaeron. I would  
lead my herds to my own pens for  
the winter and he would go with  
his to Laius' folds.

(to the shepherd)

Was that the way of it?

SHEPHERD

It was, yet so long ago.

MESSENGER #1

Back then, you entrusted me a baby,  
a little boy to dear as my own.

SHEPHERD

What are you asking me to say?

MESSENGER #1

Here stands that boy, my old  
friend.

He points at Oedipus.

SHEPHERD

Damn you! Hold your tongue!

OEDIPUS

Do not swear at him, old fellow.  
You are the one who should be sworn  
at.

SHEPHERD

What did I do wrong, my lord?

OEDIPUS

Answer his question!

SHEPHERD

He speaks madly, wasting his  
breath.

OEDIPUS

If you do not talk with your will,  
you shall talk with pain!

He nods to his guards. They seize the shepherd.

SHEPHERD

Do not harm an old man!

One guard pulls out his sword, and puts the point of it  
against the shepherd's throat.

SHEPHERD (cont'd)

(in pain)

What more do you long to know?

OEDIPUS

This boy, was it you that gave to  
him?

SHEPHERD

It was me! I wish I would have died  
that very day!

OEDIPUS

You will now, unless you say the  
truth.

SHEPHERD

The more I speak, the worse death I  
will meet.

Oedipus motions to his men. The guard rams his sword until  
the shepherd's throat starts to bleed.

SHEPHERD (cont'd)

(in pain)

Have I not said I gave it to him?  
What more do you crave?

OEDIPUS  
The boy, was it yours?

SHEPHERD  
Someone gave it to me.

OEDIPUS  
Who? Who gave it to you?

SHEPHERD  
By all the gods, my king, ask me no more!

OEDIPUS  
Answer! If I have to ask again, you will die!

SHEPHERD  
The child came from the house of...  
(hesitates)  
... Laius.

OEDIPUS  
Was it a slave's or born of his own blood?

SHEPHERD  
Must I tell?

OEDIPUS  
You must! And I must hear.

SHEPHERD  
It was his child. The queen, your wife, knows better.

OEDIPUS  
Did she give it to you?

SHEPHERD  
She did, my lord.

OEDIPUS  
What for?

SHEPHERD  
To kill it.

Oedipus almost bursts into tears. He tries to retain his composure.

OEDIPUS  
Her own child? This cannot be. This cannot be!

SHEPHERD

She was afraid of a wicked prophecy.

OEDIPUS

What prophecy?

SHEPHERD

The boy was meant to slay his father.

OEDIPUS

Why then did you not kill it? Why did you give it to this man?

SHEPHERD

I did not have the heart to kill it, my lord. I hoped he would take it far away to his land and release it from this destiny. If you are the one who he says you are... know that you were born to suffer.

Oedipus rushes towards the wagon.

EXT. ROYAL WAGON - DAY

Oedipus gets on the wagon, grabs the reins and whips the horses. The wagon speeds away.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - DAY

The wagon reaches before the palace. Oedipus gets off, sprints up to the palace and through the open doors.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus comes in and dashes up the stairs.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus runs like a maddened beast down the hallway.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus hurls himself upon the closed doors and stumbles into the chamber. He sees Iocaste falling down from a footstool with a woven noose around her neck. She cradles high, hanging by the neck, wriggling back and forth.

Oedipus makes a high, wrenching sob and sprints to her. He slips the halter from her throat and slowly eases her down.

Iocaste starts to come around, coughing and fighting for her breath. Oedipus holds her close to his body and weeps black tears above her.

In a rapture of madness, he rips off the gold pins from her dress and lifts them high.

OEDIPUS

Eyes that should no longer see  
this disgrace, no longer look  
upon those you should never have  
looked! From this day on... see  
nothing but darkness!

Oedipus digs the pins down the sockets of his eyes. He raises them and rakes them down again. Again and again.

Bloody tears run down his face. Not drops, but cataracts of scarlet tears, shed down from his eyes soaking his clothes.

Iocaste slowly opens her eyes and looks at her husband. When she sees him bleeding hurt, gives a raging blare and starts wailing. She touches his gory cheeks and gives him a warm embrace. They stay there clasped, girdled by a pond of blood.

MONTAGE

OEDIPUS

comes out of the palace escorted by his sons and two guards. The people of Theva have gathered before the steps. Disgust and pity carved in their faces. They hoot Oedipus and throw various objects at him. Eteocles nods to a guard. He leads Oedipus inside.

A GUARD

guides Oedipus inside a dark and dusty prison. Oedipus is left alone in the middle of the room. The door closes and darkness enlaces the room.

POLYNICES AND ETEOCLES

look at each other for a long moment. Then they embrace tightly.

IOCASTE

in the royal bathroom cuts her hair with a dagger. She seems weak and vulnerable. Antigone stands in the doorway and stares at her mother.

ETEOCLES

walks down the stairs of the palace towards a mass of people. He wears the crown. The people applaud loudly, cheering their new king.

POLYNICES

gazes the seven-gated walls of Theva from afar. He whips his horse and moves away.

ETEOCLES

sits down on his throne. Iocaste, Antigone, servants, the Thevan council root him.

OEDIPUS

is on his knees, head bowed. He lifts his face to the skies.

END MONTAGE

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Dark clouds swirl in the sky. Wind blows. Thunder crash. We see the Argive encampment. A sea of camps covers the desert.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Iocaste paces through the dark, torch-lit corridors of the palace.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Iocaste fronts a guard standing on duty outside a wooden door. She nods to him and the door is open for her. She steps inside.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus sits in a corner surrounded by shadows.

OEDIPUS

Who is there? Could it be another  
thunder sent by the hand of Zeus  
to vanish me from the face of the  
earth without a trace, or could  
it be the spirits sent by Hades,  
the lord of the underground, to  
take me down to the place of no  
rest where I should pay for my  
dreadful sins?

IOCASTE

It is I, Oedipus... Iocaste.

Oedipus rises and comes away from the shadows. His wounded eyes are now visible.

OEDIPUS

Dear Iocaste, what destiny has  
come upon me? Lightless and  
intolerable night that has no  
day. Son of the mother I profaned  
by coupling my father's bed,  
spawning lives in the loins that  
spawned mine. Unspeakable to  
mortal ear, too awful for eyes to  
see.

IOCASTE

Oedipus, I have no eyes to look  
upon your face, no gentle word to  
ease your grieves. Twice tormented  
you are, in the soul and in the  
flesh. And with you, I suffer. I,  
the mother of a son that would be  
my husband. Both trapped in the  
same curse, forced to bear the same  
heinous sins.

She turns her back on him, covering her eyes with her hands.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

I dare not to see. I am shielding  
my eyes for I cannot stand what  
most I long to look, and what I  
long to feel the most I fear. Your  
eyes speak of unimaginable pain.

OEDIPUS

What good were eyes to me? How  
could I meet my father beyond the  
grave with seeing eyes?

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 My mother against whom I have  
 committed such an abominable  
 evil? Could I still look at my  
 children, begotten as they were  
 begotten? The people of Theva?  
 Not with these eyes of mine.  
 Never! I would not rest until I  
 have damaged this body of  
 disgrace!

Oedipus drops to his knees and with his arms open to the  
 skies, he shouts:

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 Zeus, the god above all gods,  
 strike me away from this earth, put  
 my trials to rest, I beseech you!  
 Take my life! Kill me!

Iocaste touches affectionately Oedipus' shoulder. Then she  
 slowly bows down alongside him.

IOCASTE  
 Troubles come and never leave,  
 Oedipus. They remain like a cloud  
 that no air can take away, and  
 haunt us for eternity.

Oedipus solaced turns to her.

OEDIPUS  
 Iocaste, your face I cannot see,  
 yet I can hear your voice. It  
 comforts me so, giving me strength.  
 You are my only and ever faithful  
 friend still at my side.

He takes Iocaste's hand and places it on his tired, wounded  
 face.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 Touch me. Touch the man of pain.  
 Have no fear.

Iocaste feels his face and starts to sob. Oedipus takes her  
 in his arms.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 (softly)  
 My torments are mine and I am the  
 one who must sustain them. No  
 other.

Iocaste keeps crying. Oedipus is sensing something wrong.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
What is it, Iocaste? What is it  
that worries you so? What cloudy  
knowledge wanders in your mind?

Iocaste doesn't respond.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
By the power of the gods, speak.

Iocaste stands and moves away.

IOCASTE  
Time heals no wounds, Oedipus,  
yet brings a thousand others.

Oedipus gets up, too.

IOCASTE (cont'd)  
Your sons, a deadly crime they have  
committed when they locked you in  
this dark prison. A deadly crime  
you have committed when you laid a  
curse upon them. And now, Theva  
sits on trial.

OEDIPUS  
Speak plain, Iocaste.

IOCASTE  
Polynices, along with the Argive  
army, has come to fight for his  
throne and claim the due share of  
his native land. His soldiers  
array outside the Thevan walls as  
we speak.

Oedipus careless turns his back on Iocaste.

OEDIPUS  
Such cares are made for the king  
of the land. I am a king no  
longer...

IOCASTE  
Do you not care for the fortune  
of your sons? For the people of  
this land?

OEDIPUS  
The fortune of my sons was set by  
my curse... my wish.

IOCASTE

The men and women of Theva captured  
in the middle of a dire conflict  
are meant to be punished for a  
crime that was not even theirs.  
Troubles are supposed to be solved  
with conversation, not with  
countless dead bodies.

Oedipus stays silent for several breaths, secluded into his thoughts. Then he turns around.

OEDIPUS

What must I do?

IOCASTE

Talk to your first born son and  
counsel him. Tell him to resolve  
this quarrel. Tell him to give  
Polynices what belongs to him. Do  
everything within your power to  
resolve this insanity. I have  
induced our sons to meet under  
truce before the battle. My  
messenger reports that Polynices  
will come. I shall have Eteocles  
before you to speak. That is all  
we can do. The rest falls into  
the hands of the gods.

OEDIPUS

If gods are wise then wisdom would  
not let misery settle upon people's  
lives.

EXT. STREETS OF THEVA - DAY

Polynices gallops through the city. The city is naked with just a small number of people in the streets.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

Polynices arrives outside the temple. He dismounts, ties his horse to a pole and advances to the temple. He halts before the steps, looks up and eyes his mother, waiting in front of the entrance of the temple.

Iocaste's face charges with joy. She stands still, staring at her son. The love in her look is immeasurable.

IOCASTE

Oh, my son! After all this time,  
thousands of days, I see your face.

Polynices' face lightens of happiness. He hurries up the stairs and enfolds her.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

Put your arms around me, hold me tight. My son, I did not believe that you would come to your mother's embrace.

Iocaste runs her hands down his jaw line.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

I now see you and hold you. What can I say to you? How can I grip the bliss of the old days? By touching you? By speaking to you?

They hold a look.

POLYNICES

Mother, it is not wise being here among my foes. As I entered Theva's walls, afraid that my brother would try to kill me, one thing gave me courage. The longing to see your face.

IOCASTE

My precious son, your father's house was left lonely when you went away. We who love you longed for you. Theva longed for you.

POLYNICES

What a vile, sinister thing, mother, is hatred within a family. Now, tell me. How is my wretched father, living in the dark? And my sister? Does she mourn for my banishment?

IOCASTE

Your poor father cries everyday in despair. One time he stabbed himself with a blade. Another he made a rope and tried to hang himself, moaning for the curse he laid on his sons. Your sister Antigone weeps and weeps immoderately for you.

Polynices clearly emotional, falls to his mother's embrace for consolation.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

I ban whatever begot all this. Whether iron, fury or whatever demon nestled on Oedipus' house.

Their eyes lock for a while.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

What led you to Argos, my son?  
What did you have in mind?

POLYNICES

I do not know. Some strange force  
attracted me.

IOCASTE

How did you live all this time?

POLYNICES

Some days I had food...

IOCASTE

Did your father's friends help  
you?

POLYNICES

Friends disappear when you are  
unfortunate, mother.

Iocaste nods. They enter the temple.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - TEMPLE OF APOLLO - CONTINUOUS

Iocaste and Polynices pace about the temple.

IOCASTE

Polynices, I hear you have found  
yourself a wife to please your  
bed and bear your children.

POLYNICES

I have, mother.

IOCASTE

How did you win your bride?

POLYNICES

King Adrastus had an oracle from  
Apollo. The oracle said: "Marry  
your daughters to a boar and a  
lion."

IOCASTE

What could you have to do with  
those animals, my son?

POLYNICES

That is the fortune gods gave me.  
One night, I reached Adrastus'  
palace in quest of a bed to spend  
the night. Then another exile  
arrived. His name was Tydeus, son  
of Eneus.

IOCASTE

Did Adrastus foresee between you  
and those animals?

POLYNICES

The way we fought over a bed. So  
he gave his daughters to us.

IOCASTE

How did you incite the Argive army  
to march with you against Theva?

POLYNICES

Adrastus vowed an oath to us, his  
sons-in-law. He vowed to bring  
each back from banishment to his  
inborn land, with me first. A  
legion of sovereign men were  
gathered for my sake and offered  
their armies for I to march  
against my fatherland.

(to the sky)

I summon the gods to witness that  
I come against my country without  
my will! Mother, the undoing of  
this stays with you. Bring two  
brothers to agree on terms, end  
your sufferings, mine, and our  
city's, too.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON - DAY

Oedipus sits in a corner. The door opens and Eteocles walks  
in. He paces to his father and stops in front of him.

ETEOCLES

Father, you have asked for me. I am  
now before you.

OEDIPUS

Eteocles, my dear boy...

He tries to stand up. Eteocles assists him.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

... I hold no anger upon you. You  
were a boy that grew into a man.  
Your piteous father you kept  
behind locked doors, hoping his  
horrible story might be faded  
with time, and his dark fate  
might be buried in silence. A  
fate that maddened him so, he  
called on the most abominable  
curse upon his sons.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

You and your brother feared that if you lived under the same roof, the gods might make this curse come true. Thus, a bargain was made between you... a bargain not kept. And now, Argive soldiers are led here against these very walls by your brother, my son, which claims his father's throne.

ETEOCLES

Father, your words speak of old news. What is the occasion of your call? Speak in haste for I must arrange our defenses and direct our army on our walls.

OEDIPUS

End this brawl between and your brother, my boy. End it while time is still young. No good can come of this. Hand over Polynices what he asks for... hand him what is his. Make him retract the enemy forces and save the lives of your men.

ETEOCLES

Never! I shall never grant Theva to a traitor! What reputation would she have if through fear of Argive spearmen I, the king, gave over my crown? It was immoral for him to look for an agreement by the force of arms. So now, let fire and iron be let loose. Stain the whole desert with blood!

OEDIPUS

Reason with yourself, my son--

ETEOCLES

I will not give my throne to Polynices! I desire it for myself. In all other matters, father, piety is well. But since there must be wickedness, there is no worthier plea for it than a crown.

OEDIPUS

There is a worthier plea, my boy. To honor fairness which ties forever friend to friend, city to city and ally to ally. Nature provided men the law of equality.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Night's murky face shares equally the journey of every day with the bright sun. Each bows in turn and neither shines with envy. Shall day and night divide even duty and you shall contempt your rightful share of your home, and refuse your brother's equal right?

ETEOCLES

There is no such thing as "equal right," father. These are words. They do not exist in the real world. Know that I am the true king of the land and shall not step down. Time for argument has finished. Any further words will be wasted.

He exits the room with the door closing behind him. Oedipus exhales deeply.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

The temple's gates open. Eteocles comes in. He eyes his mother, but doesn't turn his head to see his brother. Polynices doesn't look at Eteocles either.

ETEOCLES

Mother, I have come. This was your wish. What must be? Let someone begin talking.

IOCASTE

Less haste, my son. Sense does not agree with haste. Settle your vicious scowl. This is not the Gorgon's severed head that stands before you. It is your dear brother. And you, Polynices, turn your sight and look at your brother. If you see each others eyes, you shall talk better and better prize your talk.

Polynices looks at his mother. Her eyes are begging him. He turns his harmless face to his brother. Eteocles' face is livid, loaded with fury.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

Polynices, it is for you to speak first, since you have guided the Argive army here and vouch to have been unfairly treated.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

And may some godly power judge  
between you and unravel your  
rancor.

POLYNICES

Mother, a fair reason needs no  
introduction. As you know I  
treasured my own well being and  
my brother's more than the  
possession of my father's house.  
I longed to evade the curse which  
he called down upon us.  
Therefore, I left Theva giving my  
brother one year to hold the  
throne. And now as it being  
agreed, I should receive my turn  
and rule. When I accept what is  
fairly mine, I shall take my army  
out of Theva to receive my  
kingdom, keep it one year, and  
rightly give it back for another  
year to him. Not attack my  
fatherland and the towers of  
Theva. All which, if my rights  
are not granted, I will do.

ETEOCLES

If everyman shared one opinion of  
what is sensible and moral, then  
all arguments would disappear  
from the world. Mother, I will be  
sincere to you. I would go, if it  
were possible, to the regions of  
the stars to keep this precious  
possession. Shall I let for  
another man to hold what I can  
have for myself? A man who  
resigns the more to receive the  
less is an inglorious man.  
Besides, it is a dishonor to me  
if he gains all he wants, by  
coming here with an army ravaging  
the land. If he wants to remain  
in Theva on other terms, he may  
do so, but what he asks I will  
not give it. Not until I must.

IOCASTE

My loving son, Eteocles, why set  
your heart to the most envious of  
all graces... ambition? It is a  
devious power. Many prosperous  
cities have welcomed it and then  
in demotion and despair, watched  
it leave. And this wealth you  
long for, what gain comes with  
it? A man's holdings are not  
truly his.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

We keep in trust what belongs to  
the gods, who will in turn take  
from us what is theirs.

She turns to Polynices.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

The favor Adrastus showed you,  
Polynices, was a real absurdity.  
And you in advancing to destroy  
your city showed yourself mad.  
Now, think. Say you capture  
Theva, how will you, the  
plunderer of your own land, set  
up tokens and offer sacrifice to  
the gods? Say you are defeated,  
driven from the field by Thevan  
arms and leaving thousands dead,  
when you return to Argos, what  
shall be your welcome? My son,  
you are heading straight for two  
evils. Argos will deny you or  
Theva will see you fall. Both of  
you put aside this fierce  
passion. When stubborn fools  
meet, the outcome is always  
terrible.

ETEOCLES

All your goodwill, mother, can  
have no impact since like I said,  
I will accept no others terms  
than those I stated. I shall rule  
and hold the scepters of Theva.  
Myself, no one else. So spare me  
any further words of advice.

(to Polynices)

And you, get out of the city at  
once or you will die.

Polynices moves closer to his brother. They come face to  
face.

POLYNICES

And who will kill me? Who is so  
invulnerable that shall thrust his  
sword in my chest without dying for  
it?

ETEOCLES

You are coming close instead of  
leaving? Look at my hands.

His fists are powerful.

POLYNICES

All I see is a wealthy coward.

ETEOCLES

Against a coward you came bringing  
this massive army?

POLYNICES

Heed and wisdom are more useful  
than boldness in a king.

ETEOCLES

Strong words, you braggart,  
trusting truce to protect your  
life.

POLYNICES

It protects yours as well. I  
demand my crown and heritage once  
more.

ETEOCLES

I hear no demands. I will stay in  
my kingdom.

POLYNICES

Holding what you stole?

ETEOCLES

I say so. Now, leave my city!

Polynices turns to the side of the altar.

POLYNICES

Oh, shrines and temples of Apollo,  
watch me thrown out from my own  
land with injustice!

ETEOCLES

Temples which you came to burn to  
the ground!

POLYNICES

(to the sky)  
I ask for justice!

ETEOCLES

Call on gods of Argos', not  
Theva's.

POLYNICES

You shameless man!

ETEOCLES

Shameless may be, but not my  
country's enemy.

POLYNICES

You took my heritage--

ETEOCLES

I will take your life as well!

POLYNICES

Hear me, my city!

ETEOCLES

Go to Argos. That is your city now.

Polynices glowers and nods.

POLYNICES

I will go. First, let me see my father.

ETEOCLES

I shall not grant you any favors.

POLYNICES

My sister, then?

ETEOCLES

Your sister shall never see again.

Polynices and Eteocles look at each other and hold a moment. A moment of tension. They glare at each other with locked, intense eyes.

Polynices turns away and goes to his mother. He kisses her in both cheeks. They look directly into each other's eyes.

POLYNICES

Farewell to you, beloved mother.

IOCASTE

I have no hope of faring well, my son.

POLYNICES

I am your son no more.

Iocaste's eyes fill with tears. Polynices walks by Eteocles. They face each other. Immeasurable hate sparkles from their eyes.

POLYNICES (cont'd)

Where will you stand in battle?

ETEOCLES

The Krimean gate.

POLYNICES

I will be there... to kill you.

ETEOCLES

(smiles ironically)

That will please me equally.

IOCASTE  
 (shouts in despair)  
 Sons, what are you doing?!

POLYNICES  
 The act will show.

IOCASTE  
 Will you not escape your father's  
 curse?

ETEOCLES  
 Not I! Damn the whole house!

POLYNICES  
 (softly)  
 My blade shall no longer rest  
 idle, it will bleed soon.

Polynices gets out, steps down the stairs. He turns to the side of the city.

POLYNICES (cont'd)  
 The soil that nourished me and all  
 the gods I call as witnesses, how  
 with infamy and shame I am expelled  
 from my home! Therefore, for the  
 doom you tolerate, Theva, blame him  
 not me! I came here unwillingly and  
 without my will I leave!

He reaches the bottom of the steps and turns to the statue of Apollo.

POLYNICES (cont'd)  
 And you, Apollo, guard of the  
 streets, dear home, farewell. Who  
 knows whether fate will let me  
 greet you again? And yet, my hope  
 is alive, and with gods' help...  
 (shouts to Eteocles)  
 ... I shall destroy my enemy and be  
 king of Theva!

ETEOCLES  
 Out of my borders, Polynices! Be  
 gone! Father had a divine  
 foresight when he gave you that  
 name! A name birthed after enmity  
 and mischief!

Polynices unties his horse and mounts it. Iocaste dashes to the palace. Eteocles remains outside watching his brother leave. Their eyes meet one last time.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON - SUNSET

Oedipus is kneeling, head down, before the small window.

OEDIPUS

Mighty Zeus, I kneel before your graceful eyes with no offerings to offer, nor prayers to pray. All I have is this solemn wish, not for my own profit, but for the people of Theva. Be gracious to them, be merciful to them, and protect them from the trials to come. It was I that bred this disaster, it is I that should be punished, not them. I beg you, torture this wicked body as much as you please, but absolve the people. By the greatness and righteousness in you, have mercy on the souls of your beggars.

EXT. ARGIVE ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Polynices rides through the Argive camp.

EXT. ADRASTOS' TENT - NIGHT

The largest tent in the camp. Polynices dismounts his horse and enters the tent.

INT. ADRASTOS' TENT - CONTINUOUS

Inside we see all the Argive leaders around a table. In the head of the table sits ADRASTOS. Next to him sits prophet AMPHIARAOS. Seated at the table is also: TYDEAS, PARTHENOPEOS, prince HIPPOMEDON and KAPANEAS.

POLYNICES

(to Adrastus)

We go to war.

ADRASTOS

(to the leaders)

Get your men ready.

A loud roar from all the leaders.

INT. WALLS OF THEVA - SUNSET

The gigantic walls of Theva rise to the sky. Behind them, the Thevan army prepares its forces. Soldiers walk on by, arming themselves with: spears, swords, shields, body armors.

Eteocles stands on the walls and directs his soldiers. We can still notice the wrath burning his face.

Creon arrives on his horse. He rains it and dismounts. Eteocles sees him. He comes down from the walls.

ETEOCLES

Creon, you are here. I crave to speak with you. Come.

Creon nods respectfully. They retire in a corner where they can converse quietly.

ETEOCLES (cont'd)

You are my mother's brother, so there is no need for many words. If this night fate forsakes me--

CREON

My king--

ETEOCLES

Hear me, Creon! If I die tonight, give my sister Antigone to your son Haemon as his wife. I consider the betrothal already made. One thing I have yet to tell you, Creon. I give you and Theva this strict command. No Argive body shall be given burial in Thevan soil. Not even Polynices'. Any man who buries him or any other Argive, must die.

Creon nods.

ETEOCLES (cont'd)

These shall be, Creon. I will leave at once and may fortune deliver me my brother as my opposite, faced shield against shield...

He grabs a spear from the wall.

ETEOCLES (cont'd)

... until with this spear, I strike him dead!

He hastens away, shouting to his soldiers:

ETEOCLES (cont'd)  
Fetch me my weapons and my armor!  
The trail of blood awaits me!

EXT. WALLS OF THEVA - NIGHT

Heavy rain starts.

The Thevan army arranges its forces. Hundreds of archers take their place on the walls and towers.

Behind the Thevan gates, Eteocles arranges his six leaders, each with his share of troops, to hold the gates against the attack.

Behind each gate are set cavalry with supporting ranks of horsemen. Hoplites have hoplites reserves, so that help can quickly be brought whenever their defence is weak.

MONTAGE

THE ARGIVE ARMY

advances close by the Thevan trench. The rain and mud makes their marching even harder. The Argive soldiers quicken pace and charge towards their bastions.

AGAINST THE NEITEAN GATE

Parthenopeos leads his seething ranks of shields.

AT THE PROETIAN GATE

advances prophet Amphiaraos, with slaughtered animals on his chariot.

TOWARDS THE OGYGIAN GATE

heads prince Hippomedon with his soldiers.

AT THE HOMOLOEDAN GATE

proceeds Tydeas and his men.

AGAINST THE KRIMEAN GATE

Polynices on his horse leads his soldiers.

## TOWARDS THE ELECTRAN GATE

Kapaneas, with thirst for battle, guides his men.

## AT THE HIGH GATE

moves Adrastus along with his army.

## THE ARGIVES

array on the battlefield. The mingled roar of paeon and trumpets rises high from all fronts. Seven armies are set against seven gates.

## ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Polynices on his horse, is ready to thrust towards the city's walls.

## AT THE KRIMEAN GATE

Eteocles observes the movement of the Argive army.

## IN HER BEDROOM

Antigone lies restless on her bed.

## IN THE DINING ROOM

Creon sits at the table drinking wine.

## ON A BALCONY

of the palace, Iocaste gazes over at the city.

## IN PRISON

Oedipus stands in front of the window. He screams. His wordless cry compounds with the piercing sound from the trumpets in the battlefield.

## END MONTAGE

## EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

The trumpets echo all over.

The Argive army thrusts forward. They advance to the walls of Theva with tremendous force and speed, making the earth shiver.

EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

Thevan archers prepare to fire. They pull back the strings of their bows and hold.

EXT. KRIMEAN GATE

Eteocles raises his hand. He stares at the Argive forces getting closer and closer. His hand stays in the air.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

The Argive army charges at full speed.

EXT. KRIMEAN GATE

Eteocles waits for the perfect moment. He holds patiently. The Argives appear at close range, then his hand suddenly drops.

ETEOCLES  
(shouts)  
Fire!

Hundreds of arrows soar through the air blackening even more the dark sky.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Argive soldiers fall dead as if they are hit from nowhere.

Polynices gives the signal for his archers to render the fire. Every Argive leader does the same. The archers from all the sides prepare to fire.

A fusillade of arrows is unleashed from the attacking side.

EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

Thevan soldiers take cover behind the embrasures. Arrows whistle through the air.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON

Oedipus whirls around the prison anxious.

EXT. NEITHAN GATE

Parthenopeos rushes as a hurricane to the gates, screaming war cries.

EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

The Thevan archers from all sides hail another swarm of arrows.

EXT. ELECTRAN GATE

The arrows rain down striking Capaneas' army. Many of his men fall dead, but he doesn't notice. He advances in raging fury, holding a ladder of prodigious length. Capaneas reaches before the walls and sets on his ladder.

EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

Dozens of scaling ladders are set on the walls.

As the Argives charge before the walls, crashing stones are thrown at them from the battlements.

A few ladders are being pushed off the walls. The men on them dash to the ground or on other Argive soldiers.

EXT. HOMOLOEDAN GATE

Tydeas and his ranked combatants hurl their spears so thick against the walls, that Thevan soldiers run and leave the crests unguarded.

EXT. ELECTRAN GATE

Capaneas foot by foot comes up the walls. He keeps his body close under his shield to avoid the rain of stones.

CAPANEAS

(shouts)

Not even the immortal flame of  
Zeus could stop me from laying  
your highest towers on the  
ground!

EXT. NEITHAN GATE

Ten Argive soldiers hold a battering ram. They clash it against the gate. They pull back and viciously clash again.

One of the soldiers on the ram falls dead from an arrow. Parthenopeos hastily takes his place.

As the ram comes close to the gate, a Thevan soldier hurls down a stone which shatters Parthenopeos' head. The sutures of the skull break apart, soaking his hair and beard in blood.

EXT. KRIMEAN GATE

An Argive soldier gets up to the battling crest. Eteocles swords with him and kills him. He looks down to the ladder to see another man walking up. Eteocles clenches his sword and drives it down to the man's scalp.

EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

Polynices on his horse, gallops across the walls with his bow in his hands. Quick as lightning he throws his arrows making a few kills.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON

Oedipus whirls around the room restless. He dashes to the door and falls on it.

OEDIPUS

(shouts)

Release me! Release me from my  
prison to end this disaster! Many  
lives are in danger! My people  
are dying...!

He drops to the floor.

EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

As the battle proceeds before the walls, bodies fall, heads lay open, corpses gather everywhere.

EXT. ELECTRAN GATE

Capaneas tops the rampart's crest and with a raging cry, pulls out his sword and holds it high.

At that moment, a thunder strikes down to his sword and his soaked body. Capaneas' whirling corpse flings far and crashes to the ground.

Hundred of thunder follow, hitting the Argive men off the Thevan walls. The quivering earth roars, horrifying everyone.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Adrastos sees the phenomenon wide-eyed. He shouts terrified to his soldiers for retreat. Adrastos' army withdraws back beyond the trench.

EXT. KRIMEAN GATE

Eteocles sees this sign of favour. He gives the order to the Thevan leader to open the High gates.

EXT. HIGH GATE

The gates open. The Thevan cavalry and hoplites thrusts to the battlefield in a mass, against the Argive center.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Death and horror is let loose. Blood spouts and corpses pile on corpses. Hundreds of Argive men get slaughtered.

A sharp sound from a trumpet sounds...

It is a bidden call for silence.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Everyone freezes at once and turns their head to that direction.

EXT. KRIMEAN GATE

Eteocles stands on a high battlement. He screams.

ETEOCLES

(shouts)

Leaders and soldiers of Argos, do not for me or Polynices venture your lives! I will deliver you from this danger! I challenge my brother to a fight! If I am defeated, I shall yield him the throne. If I take his life, I shall be the one and only king of Theva! So Argives drop your weapons and go back to your land! Do not leave another life in Thevan soil!

Polynices gallops through the ranks, coming forth to the gate. He reins his horse.

POLYNICES

If you want to take my life, my brother, so the lives of these men are spared, I have no other words to you than these. You are welcome to attempt! There is mercy in me for them, yet not for you. You shall bleed and die and be forever lost in the depths of the underworld!

A loud roar of consent rises from both armies.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - SUNRISE

The rain softens and finally stops.

MESSENGER #2 stands before the gates and shouts towards them:

MESSENGER #2

Who is on guard at the palace gates? Open them wide!

Palace gates open. A GUARD comes outside.

MESSENGER #2 (cont'd)

(to a guard)

I have urgent news for the queen. Let me pass.

The messenger and the guard enter the palace.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SUNRISE

The two brothers cover their bodies head to foot in bronze armors, with friends helping them wear their gear. Nobles of Theva arm Eteocles. Argives nobles arm Polynices.

ADRASTOS

(to Polynices)

It lies with you Polynices to rise a statue of Hera in gratitude for triumph. Now go and bring glory to the land of Argos.

THEVAN LEADER

(to Eteocles)

You battle for Theva. Fight and defeat. Be the only holder of your crown.

Priests from both sides make sacrifice to the gods, as a way to pacify and allure them, for promise of victory and prevention of defeat.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ENTRANCE HALL - SUNRISE

Queen Iocaste walks down the stairs. An attendant follows her. She fronts the messenger.

IOCASTE

(in agony)

Good man, what news? Is my son Eteocles alive? You are the man beside him, shielding him by the enemy spears. Tell me, is he alive or dead?

MESSENGER #2

He is alive. Set your heart at ease.

IOCASTE

Do you have any news of Polynices?

MESSENGER #2

Polynices is alive, too. Both of your sons breath earthly air.

IOCASTE

Be blessed! The gods and fate have both been proven kind. But now speak, where are my sons?

The messenger doesn't respond. Iocaste is looking in his eyes for an answer.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

You hide something dreadful, keeping me in the dark.

MESSENGER #2

My queen, I do not wish to cancel good news with bad.

IOCASTE

You shall escape only if you find wings to fly. What more is there to know?

The messenger takes his time. Then:

MESSENGER #2

Your sons will confront in a combat parted from their armies. So, go, my queen, use whatever wisdom or power in you, and draw your sons back from this direful fight. The danger is great and the value in tears for you unbearable.

Iocaste leaves running, heading upstairs.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SUNRISE

Eteocles and Polynices wait bowed between the two armies, preparing to match their strength and fight spear against spear. Polynices on his knees is praying.

POLYNICES

Honorable Hera, I am true to you.  
I took for my wife Adrastus'  
daughter and live in your land.  
Help me slay my brother and  
redde[n] my arm with his blood.

Eteocles on his knees is also praying.

ETEOCLES

Athena, daughter of Zeus, help me  
to thrust my spear from this hand  
into my brother's chest and kill  
the man who came to destroy my  
land.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ANTIGONE'S BEDCHAMBER - SUNRISE

Iocaste rushes inside the room. Antigone is seated on her bed. She stands swiftly. The shadows beneath her eyes verify she didn't sleep all night.

IOCASTE

(shouts in despair)  
Daughter Antigone! Your brothers  
are heading towards death! Come,  
for we must prevent their  
bloodshed!

ANTIGONE

Dear mother, what bitter news are  
you calling for your family?

IOCASTE

They are meeting in a fight. Come,  
go with me.

Iocaste seizes her daughter's hand forcing her out the room.

ANTIGONE

Where? Away from the palace?

IOCASTE

To the battlefield.

ANTIGONE

Mother, how can I? I am ashamed of  
the people.

IOCASTE

There is no time for shame.

They exit the room in a hurry.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SUNRISE

Eteocles and Polynices stand in position to start the fight. They clench their spear on one hand, their shield on the other, and wait.

The wail of a trumpet sounds the signal for the beginning of the fight.

The two brothers charge at each other with tremendous force. They spring out their spears, exchange powerful and rapid swings, and hastily bend behind their round shields so that the opponent's spear glance off harmlessly.

The two armies in terror for their champion's life, watch breathless. Eteocles and Polynices strike, parry and strike again. Every blow is an invitation to death. They fight without a cessation.

At some point, Eteocles misjudges his footing on a stone under his tread and places his leg outside his shield's protection.

Seeing the offered chance, Polynices hits and drives his spear to Eteocles' shin. The Argive army roars in jubilation.

In that effort, Polynices leaves his shoulder bare, and wounded Eteocles sinks his lance with fierce force to his brother's chest. This gives joy to the Thevans which acclaim in excitement.

Polynices falls down and his spear breaks. With his weapon useless, he retreats crawling backwards, using his hands and feet.

Eteocles menacingly goes towards Polynices. Polynices picks up a stone and tosses it at Eteocles. He easily avoids it.

Eteocles speeds his pace. Polynices crawls backwards as fast as he can. Eteocles closes, lifts his spear in the air and thrusts it down with tremendous force. It finds its target.

For a moment, everything seems still...

Polynices' eyes are wide as he glares down at his body. The lance has struck the ground between his legs. He looks up at his brother.

A hint of a smile crosses Eteocles' lips as he looks down at Polynices. Eteocles unnails the spear and throws it away. Then he turns his back on Polynices and walks away.

Eteocles draws his sword. Polynices rises, and draws his. They grip their weapons and hold their shields close to their bodies. They circle while the clattery uproar of battle raises.

EXT. STREETS OF THEVA - SUNRISE

Iocaste and Antigone run through the streets.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SUNRISE

Abruptly, Eteocles dashes brutally against his brother, striking with monstrous power. Polynices takes cover under his shield.

Eteocles hacks without mercy. Polynices holds his shield strong while taking steps backwards to soften the blows. Eteocles' strikes are lethal. Polynices blocks and blocks, but doesn't have the advantage to swing back.

Finally, with a rapid, daring move, Polynices shifts his shield and parries with his sword. He launches himself forward. He hits with everything he's got. Eteocles blocks and strikes back.

Their swordplay is amazingly fast and forcible. They bash at each other with explosive passion. It is an even match.

At some point, a blow of Eteocles gives him the edge and drives his sword in his brother's spine. Polynices leans forward. He spouts blood and grabs his sore in agony. Then he falls to the ground.

Eteocles triumphal at his victory abandons his weapon and begins to undress the armor of his adversary, giving no concern to his own protection.

Polynices lies on the ground where he had ingloriously fallen. His head leans to the right and his eyes fall at his right hand. He perceives that the sword is still in his palm. With his last powerful gasp and all his slender strength, he grips the blade and digs into Eteocles' heart.

Eteocles looks at his wound while panting. He clenches the sword and pulls it out slowly, making no screech, no sound of pain. Then he collapses next to his brother.

Side by side, biting the muddy earth, they lay with victory in neither hands.

While the two brothers stay wounded, Iocaste comes in desperate haste with Antigone on her side. She sees her sons and starts crying. She falls on her knees alongside them.

Iocaste notices that both their wounds are mortal and makes a shattering cry. Then she sobs:

IOCASTE

My sons! I came to save you, yet I  
came too late!

She bends over each in turn. She weeps and mourns, with tears flowing down her cheeks. Next to her, Antigone grieves also:

ANTIGONE

My beloved brothers, to you our  
mother looked for help in the old  
age and I for hopes of marriage.  
You have left us lonely!

Eteocles hears his mother moan and puts his weak hand on hers. His lips utter no sound, yet his eyes send her a loving message. He heaves from his breast one dying gasp.

Polynices breaths heavily and looks at his mother and sister.

POLYNICES

Mother, my life has ended. I am  
regretful for you... for my  
sister... and my dear brother. He  
was my brother and became my  
enemy. And yet, he was still my  
brother. I beseech you both, bury  
me in my homeland. Quiet the  
outrage of our country so I may  
profit as much as I can of my own  
heritage though I have lost  
everything else. Now, close my  
eyelids with your hand, mother...

He sets her mother's hand upon his eyes.

POLYNICES (cont'd)

... darkness enfolds me...

Iocaste stops crying. She stares at her dead children. Then she grabs the bloody sword that lay on the ground by them. Antigone glares at her mother with wide eyes and screams.

Iocaste digs the blade through her throat. Her dead body falls between her two beloved sons.

Antigone dashes to her mother and hugs her corpse. TWO SOLDIERS pull her back. Antigone weeps inconsolable for the death of her family.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Thousand of corpses litter the battlefield. The two armies pull back. They take care of their wounded men and count their casualties.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

The three bodies lay down on the floor. Antigone is grieving above them.

Oedipus comes inside with two guards on his side. Antigone sees him, falls into his arms and starts to sob.

ANTIGONE

Oh, father...

OEDIPUS

My dear child, why have you brought me away from my dark prison?

ANTIGONE

I have woeful news, father. Your sons... no longer see the light of the sun. Along with them gone is your wife who always escorted your blind steps.

OEDIPUS

Wail for the strikes that bend me down! Three lives have left the daylight!

Antigone affectionately touches his hand. Oedipus gives her a warm embrace.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

My daughter... what brutal destiny took them away?

ANTIGONE

I do not mean to blame you, father, yet in mournful pain, it was the black curse of yours. Ravenous enmity fell upon your sons. Locked in a fatal combat, sword against sword, fought like lions left in the same pen... and from their wounds flowed the cold, bloody libation dedicated to Hades by Ares, the god of war.

Oedipus groans.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

Affliction is following your  
tortured parts, dear father. What  
if you could still lift your eyes  
to the flaming sun and with the  
same glance look at the bodies of  
these dead?

OEDIPUS

And Iocaste? What blow of death  
ended her life?

ANTIGONE

She went to her sons with sad  
tears streaming down her face.  
When she found them lay mortally  
wounded, from beside the bodies  
she grabbed a sword... and buried  
it deep in her throat! Then she  
fell on the ground and with her  
cold hands she clasped her sons.

Creon enters accompanied by FOUR GUARDS.

CREON

(shouts)

Grieve no more! It is time for  
burial rites!

He moves closer to Oedipus and stands before him.

CREON (cont'd)

Oedipus, hear these words. Your  
son Eteocles left me the ruler of  
the land as a portion to Haemon,  
whom he gives your daughter  
Antigone as his wife. And now, I,  
as the new king of Theva, shall  
do what your sons should have  
done. I will bar you from staying  
in Theva. You are banished!  
Prophecies said it clearly. While  
you are here this city has no  
hope of prosperity. You will  
leave far away and never come  
back.

OEDIPUS

Fate! You birthed me for torment  
and eternal pain! What should  
happen to a rogue such as I, now?  
Who shall lead my blind feet?  
Here lies the one who helped me  
when she was alive. She is now  
dead!

ANTIGONE

Dear father, bitter misery bounds  
you. I mourn for you more than I  
mourn for these dead.

OEDIPUS

Why Creon, why must you kill me?  
Know that you kill me if you  
exile me.

CREON

May be, yet the cost of a life is  
lighter than the cost of a city.  
(to the guards)  
Take Eteocles' body to the royal  
tomb!

Two guards pick up the body of Eteocles and move it further  
into the temple.

CREON (cont'd)

Throw the other body out of our  
borders to rot unburied! A suitable  
ending for a man who came to ruin  
the city of his birth.

(to an attendant)

And have this announced to the  
citizens. Whoever is caught  
covering this corpse with earth...  
the penalty would be death! And  
you, Antigone, wipe your tears and  
take yourself to your chamber.  
Heamon shall wait for your grief to  
end, for you to be the bride to his  
bed.

Two guards try to move Polynices' body. Antigone falls onto  
her brother's body.

ANTIGONE

You shall not touch him!  
(wails)

You, Creon, new king of Theva, I  
ask you. Why for a lifeless body  
must you rewrite ancient laws?

CREON

These were Eteocles' decisions, not  
mine.

ANTIGONE

Decisions unwisely made and now  
unwisely honored!

CREON

Am I not allowed to execute orders?

ANTIGONE

Not if they are wicked orders  
uttered in spite!

CREON

Is it not justice for him to be  
thrown to dogs?

ANTIGONE

I will bury him myself!

CREON

You will bury your body next to  
him.

ANTIGONE

One grave for two friends.

CREON

These tears are dire for your  
wedding.

ANTIGONE

I shall not marry your son! Not  
while I live! Know that the first  
night you shall count me as a  
killer, among the Danaids.

She snatches a sword from one of the guards.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

I swear it on this sword!

CREON

What is your reason?

Antigone moves closer to Oedipus and grasps his hands.

ANTIGONE

I will share my father's exile.

Oedipus and Creon seem startled by Antigone's words.

CREON

A righteous, yet quite senseless  
thought.

ANTIGONE

I do not care. I would die for my  
father.

Creon thinks.

CREON

Do as you please. Leave this country and take this shameless corpse with you, away from Theban soil!

Creon goes with his guards following him.

OEDIPUS

Beloved daughter, your devotion warms my heart.

ANTIGONE

How could I marry while you wander alone?

OEDIPUS

Stay here and be prosperous.

ANTIGONE

And who will take care of you, father?

OEDIPUS

Fate will show me the way.

ANTIGONE

I have to share your agonies.

OEDIPUS

It is a disgraceful fate for a daughter to share her father's banishment.

ANTIGONE

Not disgraceful, father. Honorable.

Oedipus nods, understanding Antigone has made her decision.

OEDIPUS

Guide me so I may touch Iocaste.

Antigone leads her father to the body of Iocaste. He bends down. Antigone puts his hand on Iocaste's face.

ANTIGONE

Touch her with your hand.

OEDIPUS

Dear mother... dear wife... you endured endless pains and sufferings. Rest now.

Oedipus kisses Iocaste's forehead. He stands. Antigone kisses her mother too.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

A torch nailed to the ground lightens the place. A horse waits on the side.

Antigone digs a hole using her hands and a wooden staff. Oedipus stands next to her unable to help her. Polynices' body lies alongside them.

Antigone finishes and pulls Polynices' body closer to the hole.

ANTIGONE

Father...

OEDIPUS

Where is Polynices?

ANTIGONE

He lies close by you.

She helps him bend down.

OEDIPUS

Place my sightless hand on his head.

Antigone places Oedipus' hand on the head of Polynices.

ANTIGONE

This was your son. Feel his harmless face.

OEDIPUS

Dear son... I grieve for your bitter death. Forever rest in peace.

He kisses gently his forehead and rises. Antigone bends down and kisses Polynices' forehead as well. She gazes at him for several moments. Then she starts pushing his body into the hole.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Now, my daughter, we must head to Delphi. Apollo ordained my life. It is now time for him to ordain my death.

Antigone shocks.

INT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO/ORACLE CHAMBER - DAY

Oedipus paces inside the temple with the help of a PRIEST. They come before the oracle chamber. Pythia notices Oedipus and a snicker is drawn on her lips.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

Antigone waits outside. Oedipus and the priest exit the temple.

ANTIGONE

Father! What did the oracle say?

OEDIPUS

I must go to Athens. There's a hamlet called Colonus, where Poseidon's sacred horses graze. There... I will lay my bones.

EXT. EUMENIES' GROVE - DAY

A grove of olive trees. Oedipus and Antigone walk through it. Antigone trails the horse, holding it by the reins. Oedipus walks with the help of a staff, knocking before his steps. In the background, the walls of Athens can barely be seen.

As they walk they meet a stream leading to a swamp rounded by massive rocks. At the place around the swamp, the germination grows thicker and a dense fog blankets everything.

Oedipus exhaustion is apparent. He stops and leans on his staff.

OEDIPUS

(breaths heavily)

Antigone... my dear child... where can I sit?

Antigone notices a rock near the swamp.

ANTIGONE

Come, father.

Antigone takes her father by the hand and directs him to his seat.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

Sit down and rest, father. You have come a long way.

Oedipus sits. He reposes for a moment.

OEDIPUS

Now, you the daughter of a blind father, can you tell me where we are? What is this place, my child? Country or town?

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Whose turn is it this day to show  
hospitality to the wandering  
Oedipus? It is little I ask and I  
am satisfied with less.

Antigone looks through the trees.

ANTIGONE

Father, I can see walls bounding  
a city long way away. The city is  
Athens, that I know, but not this  
place. Shall I leave you here in  
order to find out where we have  
come to?

OEDIPUS

That would be wise, my child.

Antigone gazes far into the distance. A middle-aged STRANGER  
on a horse approaches.

ANTIGONE

There is no need for me to go,  
father. I can see a man coming.

OEDIPUS

Coming to our side? Where is he?

The man arrives. He dismounts his horse and treads towards  
Oedipus.

ANTIGONE

Speak, father. He is close to you,  
now.

Oedipus stands up leaving his seat, without moving away  
from it.

OEDIPUS

Stranger, my daughter whose sight  
is hers and mine, tells me you came  
this fair day as a guide and an  
answer to our question.

STRANGER

Before you ask me, come away from  
there. That place is hallowed.

OEDIPUS

Is it so? To what god is it  
devoted?

STRANGER

It is untouched... uninhabited...  
forbidden. Fearful goddesses,  
daughters of darkness and earth,  
keep it for themselves.

OEDIPUS

What can I call these goddesses  
in my prayers?

STRANGER

"Eumenides."

OEDIPUS

Then they may kindly greet me as  
their prayer, for I will stay  
here forever.

STRANGER

What is it you mean?

OEDIPUS

It is the sign of my fate.

The stranger nods, unsure what to reply. Then:

STRANGER

I would not take it upon me to move  
you, not before I ask what is right  
for me to do.

He turns to leave.

OEDIPUS

I beseech you, decent stranger, do  
not condemn a poor vagabond such as  
I am and answer my questions.

STRANGER

I shall not deny you. You will know  
as much as I know.

OEDIPUS

What is this region? Where have we  
set our feet?

STRANGER

All that lies before you belongs  
to the hamlet of Colonus.

Oedipus beams.

OEDIPUS

Are the people here ruled by one  
man or by the public voice?

STRANGER

The king of Athens rules all these  
parts.

OEDIPUS

Who holds the reins of decision and  
order?

STRANGER

Theseus is his name. His father  
was Aegeus.

OEDIPUS

Could you deliver a message to him?

STRANGER

For what purpose?

OEDIPUS

A small favor shall earn him a  
great profit.

STRANGER

(cynically)

What can a blind man give to a  
king?

OEDIPUS

My deeds will not be blind.

STRANGER

Gentle friend, one can understand  
you are a good man and you mean  
no harm. Yet, like I said, I  
cannot set your destiny. All I  
can do for you is steer you to  
the gates of the city, and there  
the guardians of Athens will do  
the deciding for you. Whether you  
should stay or go away from here.

Oedipus nods.

EXT. GATES OF ATHENS - DAY

A row of people and chariots extends up to the gates. In  
front of them, SIX SENTRIES watch the entrance to Athens,  
examining the people walking in and out.

Oedipus, Antigone wait in line for their turn. People look  
uneasy in the sight of Oedipus. They whisper to one another  
nervously.

After a while, Oedipus turn comes. He walks forth. The  
sentries wear looks of disgust as soon as they see him.

SENTRY #1

Generous Zeus! Who are you, old  
man?

OEDIPUS

I am...

(hesitates)

... a man not favored by fortune.

SENTRY #1

Poor man. No eyes, no sight. Your face says it all. The life you lived was a life of torture. Yet, if it is in my power, no further disasters will find you. But now speak, who are you? What is your name and where is your homeland?

OEDIPUS

I have no home. Do not...

Oedipus pauses.

SENTRY #1

What are you holding back, old man?

OEDIPUS

Do not ask me who I am. Do not ask me anything.

SENTRY #1

Why should not I ask?

OEDIPUS

My origin is dreadful...

SENTRY #1

Speak.

Oedipus doesn't respond. The sentry is losing his patience and raises his tone of voice.

SENTRY #1 (cont'd)

What is your lineage, stranger? Who was your father?

OEDIPUS

(to Antigone)

My child, what must I do now?

ANTIGONE

(whispers)

Father, you have reached the edge. You must tell them.

Oedipus nods.

SENTRY #1

We are waiting to hear.

OEDIPUS

Do you know of... Laius?

A gasp of horror from the sentries and the people in the row. People whisper in uneasiness.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 And the stock of Labdacus? And  
 the miserable, racked... Oedipus?

SENTRY #1  
 You...? You are Oedipus?

Oedipus nods. Sentry #1 turns to the others and make a huddle. They talk lowly but we can still hear the restlessness in their voices. Oedipus makes a few steps towards them.

OEDIPUS  
 Do not fear.

The sentries are not paying attention.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 My destiny was so miserable.

The sentries are still not paying attention to him. Oedipus turns to Antigone.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 (frightened)  
 My child, what will happen?

Then sentry #1 dashes to Oedipus, grabs him by the arms and shoves him away. Oedipus falls down.

SENTRY #1  
 Stay out of our city! Away! Be  
 gone!

Antigone runs to her father and assists him get back on his feet.

OEDIPUS  
 Will you abandon all that you  
 promised?

SENTRY #1  
 Deception opposed with deception.  
 Falseness repays you in pain, not  
 grace, old man. Out of this  
 place! Away! Leave our country  
 before you defile it!

Oedipus bends his head offended. Antigone goes to the sentries.

ANTIGONE  
 Good people, since you cannot  
 stand my father for the things he  
 has done, have some mercy on me.  
 I implore you.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

Let me speak for him, as blood  
sprung of your blood, not his.  
Let my poor father find sympathy  
in your hearts. I beseech you. By  
all that you hold dear, by your  
children, by your wives, by your  
gods.

SENTRY #1

Daughter of Oedipus, we feel  
compassion for you and the  
misfortunes that you stand, yet  
we fear the anger of the gods and  
cannot help you.

OEDIPUS

Is this the respectable rightness  
of Athens, the city of fairness?  
Where, if not here, an aggrieved  
stranger should seek for refuge  
and comfort? Instead, you send me  
away fearful not by my face, but  
by my name alone. Friends, I beg  
you by the gods, do not ask me to  
leave. I come as someone blessed,  
someone filled with kindness and  
power, bearing a great gift for  
your people. And when you take me  
before your king, you will hear  
it all and know it all.

The sentries make a huddle and converse confidentially. A few moments later, SENTRY #2 leaves, mounts a horse and enters the gates of Athens. Sentry #1 goes to Oedipus.

SENTRY #1

I must show great respect to your  
words, old man, for you spoke in a  
fair way. I can say nothing more to  
you. The king must be and shall be  
your only judge.

Sentry #1 motions to the rest of the sentries to keep on with their work. He, Oedipus and Antigone retract to the side.

OEDIPUS

Where is he, good man, the lord of  
your land?

SENTRY #1

In the palace of the city.

OEDIPUS

You think he would have such regard  
for a blind man that will agree to  
see him in person?

SENTRY #1

To be sure that he will, as soon as  
he hears your name.

OEDIPUS

Who is to tell him my name?

SENTRY #1

One of our men has gone to deliver  
him the news and once he hears it,  
he will ask for you. Your name is  
known in all the world.

OEDIPUS

Then let him welcome me for the  
good of his city and for mine, too.

EXT. GATES OF ATHENS - LATER

The Athenian gates open and sentry #2 comes out. He speaks  
closely with sentry #1.

SENTRY #1

(to Oedipus)

King Theseus has agreed to see you.  
We shall have you before him.

The two sentries mount their horses. Oedipus and Antigone  
mount theirs. They ride inside the gates.

EXT. STREETS OF ATHENS - DAY

Oedipus, Antigone and the sentries gallop through the city.  
People of Athens give them odd looks. Some recognize  
Oedipus with awe, others are appalled by his appearance.

EXT. PALACE OF ATHENS - DAY

The sentries arrive at the palace first. Behind them come  
Oedipus and Antigone. Antigone dismounts and helps her  
father get off the horse.

INT. PALACE OF ATHENS - THRONE ROOM - DAY

King THESEUS is seated on his throne. Theseus is a young man  
in his late twenties.

When Oedipus enters the room, he rises hastily and comes  
forth to greet him. Theseus fronts Oedipus, recognizing him  
with great reverence. He takes Oedipus' hand and grasps it  
respectfully.

THESEUS

From all I have heard for the bloody tragedy that blinded your eyes, son of Laius, you are not a stranger to me. Your rags, your face, reveal who you are. So, unfortunate Oedipus, kindness instructs me to ask you for what purpose you present yourself here today?

OEDIPUS

Theseus, your soul's courtesy in those short words allows me no need of a long answer. As you have said, you know who I am. All is left to say is my occasion and everything is told.

THESEUS

Speak, then.

OEDIPUS

I come to offer you a present, a tormented body, no feast for the eyes, yet the earnings it possesses are greater than beauty.

THESEUS

What earnings are these?

OEDIPUS

In time you shall know.

THESEUS

When will this present unveil?

OEDIPUS

When I am dead and you have put my body in the ground.

THESEUS

You ask for the utmost things of life, Oedipus, neglecting all that come in between.

OEDIPUS

I will achieve them all, with my burial.

THESEUS

Then the favor you ask me is small.

OEDIPUS

I have been wronged again and again.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

I was driven away from home by my own flesh and blood, my wife's brother... my brother. My destiny is never to go back.

THESEUS

Now, here is your home.

OEDIPUS

Beware. There is nothing marvelous about my residence or the conflict it will spawn.

THESEUS

What conflict is that?

OEDIPUS

Theva's is condemned to be defeated by your land.

THESEUS

What trouble should ever come between Athens and Theva?

OEDIPUS

Time, my friend, creates havoc everywhere. Today the sky is fair between Athens and Theva, yet the eternal time gives birth to many nights and many days, and a day will come when sealed agreements will break at the smallest word, and a spear will cast them to the winds. Then my cold body in its secret sleep, shall drink hot blood, if Zeus is still Zeus and Apollo is true.

THESEUS

You have an noble soul, Oedipus. Which man would disregard the friendship of such a man? While you stay here you can have everything you desire. Your wish shall be my command.

OEDIPUS

May gods reward you... my king.

Oedipus touches Theseus' hand with respect and kneels before him. Theseus helps him up.

THESEUS

By the powerful gods, Oedipus, I will not forsake you.

OEDIPUS

I would never bind you with an oath, my friend, to insult your honor.

THESEUS

I have given my word. No oath could bind me more. Now, come with me. Your presence here, from all you say, will be a mighty grace, thus let us feast until morning breaks.

He waves to his attendants. They leave the room in haste. Theseus and Antigone lead Oedipus out of the room.

INT. PALACE OF ATHENS - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It is a Greek feast. The room is filled with people which eat, drink and entertain themselves. Music is playing and beautiful women are dancing. Servants cross the room filling the table with food and wine.

In the head of the table is seated king Theseus, with Oedipus next to him. Beside Oedipus is seated Antigone.

THESEUS

A fearful thing, my friend, to wake an old sorrow sleeping for so long. However, I long to know.

OEDIPUS

What do you wish to hear?

THESEUS

The grievous misery you met.

OEDIPUS

Kind host, I beg you, do not dig into the despicable things I bore.

THESEUS

I want to know the truth of what is, to this day, so well buried.

OEDIPUS

Disgrace...

Oedipus pauses.

THESEUS

Grant me my wish just as I granted yours.

Oedipus nods.

OEDIPUS

I have endured the worst  
injustice. I have endured  
punishment unearned. Gods know  
nothing was my choosing.

THESEUS

What do you mean?

OEDIPUS

Shamefully wedded to a marriage  
which my city bound me without my  
knowledge.

THESEUS

And with your mother you shared a  
sinful bed in this knot of shame?

OEDIPUS

It is death to me just to hear  
it. She...  
(points to Antigone)  
... is born of me.

THESEUS

What do you say?

OEDIPUS

Child and curse bearer.

THESEUS

Oh, merciful Zeus!

OEDIPUS

Sprang from the same womb... the  
same mother... who brought myself  
to life.

THESEUS

Is she your child?

OEDIPUS

(shouts)  
And sister! Her father's sister!

Oedipus falls in Antigone's arms for solace.

THESEUS

Horror!

OEDIPUS

Horror and horror striking a  
thousand times upon my head.

THESEUS

A fortune--

OEDIPUS  
An unnameable fortune.

THESEUS  
What you did--

OEDIPUS  
No doing of mine.

THESEUS  
What then?

OEDIPUS  
Accepted as a gift. A reward for  
what I did for my city. A reward  
I wish I would have never earned.

THESEUS  
You also spilled the blood--

OEDIPUS  
What more? What more do you seek?

THESEUS  
-- of your father?

OEDIPUS  
I spilled my father's blood, yet  
not without justice.

THESEUS  
Justice?

OEDIPUS  
He whom I killed, had sought to  
kill me first! The law absolves  
me innocent as unaware of my  
deed...

Oedipus turns his darkened face to Theseus.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
I beseech you. Ask nothing more,  
my king.

Theseus nods understandingly.

EXT. PALACE OF ATHENS - GARDEN - DAY

A regular day, clear sky.

Oedipus is seated in the garden with Antigone keeping him  
company.

Palace garden is magnificent. Statues of the twelve gods, divided in two rows, expand in the courtyard. Lawn sprouts on the ground. Lush flowers grow on the walls.

In short time, the weather becomes cloudy and windy. Oedipus bows his head, knowing what is about to happen.

A distant peal of thunder.

Oedipus raises his head. He stands up. Antigone stands, too. She glances him in a bizarre way. Oedipus gives the impression he can see, yet his eyes stay wounded.

OEDIPUS

(serenely)

Dear child, worthy Theseus should be here. Is there a messenger who could bring him?

ANTIGONE

What orders so urgent, father?

OEDIPUS

Zeus sends his flying thunder across the sky to take me to Hades. Send for Theseus, quickly.

A distant peal of thunder.

Antigone motions to a SERVANT. He gets inside the palace quickly.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Loving daughter, the preordained ending has come upon your father's life. I can not evade it.

ANTIGONE

How do you know, father?

OEDIPUS

I know it all too well.

Oedipus fearfully raises his head to the sky.

A distant peal of thunder. Lighting.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Is Theseus coming? Will he be here before I die? Before my mind is shadowed?

ANTIGONE

What secret do you want to entrust him, father?

OEDIPUS

All the generosity and goodwill I  
accepted from him, I shall now  
pay it back.

EXT. ATHENS - DAY

Dark clouds swirl in the sky. Wind blows frantically. Peals  
of thunder and lightning torment the sky.

EXT. PALACE OF ATHENS - GARDEN - DAY

Theseus comes followed by his guards.

THESEUS

Why do you summon me this time,  
Oedipus?

OEDIPUS

My king, there must be a god who  
grants the good fortune of your  
coming.

THESEUS

What is the reason you called for  
me, Oedipus?

OEDIPUS

My hour is near, my king. I must  
not die untrue to my commitment to  
you and to your land.

THESEUS

What assures you, your death has  
come?

OEDIPUS

Gods are the heralds themselves,  
bringing me the word with unfailing  
signs.

THESEUS

What signs do you mean?

OEDIPUS

Peals of thunder and lightning  
thrown by the invincible hand.

A distant peal of thunder. Lighting.

Theseus looks at the sky astounded.

THESEUS

What is there for me to do?

Oedipus withdraws solemnly Theseus aside, so they can talk discreetly.

OEDIPUS

Son of Aegeus, what I will disclose to you now shall be kept in your city's soul ageless to the end of time. Soon I shall guide you, no hand to lead my way, to the location where I must die. Reveal no man the region where it lies. Keep it eternally a secret. When your life is coming to its end, reveal it to one alone, your selected heritor, and he to his and so forever and ever. Thus, it will be for you a spring of strength, greater than thousand shields, greater than thousand of allied spears and keep your city unharmed forevermore. Now, it is time to be going. The hand of god directs me.

A distant peal of thunder. Lighting.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

(to Antigone)

Come, my child, follow me. It's time for me to be your guide.

Oedipus takes a few steps. Antigone tries to help him.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Do not touch me. Let me to find the way to my grave where this land's ground will enwrap my body.

Oedipus leads the way to his destiny with slow but sure steps. Everyone watch him surprised. Then they follow him. First Antigone, then Theseus and his guards.

EXT. STREETS OF ATHENS - DAY

They walk through the city. The citizens of Athens gaze at them eerily. Some people trail them. As they advance through the streets more people follow to eventually become a huge throng.

EXT. GATES OF ATHENS - DAY

They move through the gates. The sentries hold the people behind the gates, forbidding them to pass.

EXT. VALLEY - SUNSHINE

They walk away from the gates. A grey wall of fog covers everything, expanding from the city walls to the olive groves beyond the valley. They advance into the fog until they are vanished.

EXT. EUMENIES' GROVE - SUNSHINE

They move through the heavy fog until they meet the same swamp. Oedipus halts before the stream. He stands still. Everyone glances at him curiously, waiting patiently. Oedipus lifts his head to the sky.

A huge peal of thunder. Lighting.

Oedipus begins to take off his garments.

OEDIPUS

Daughter, Antigone, help me so I  
might wash.

Oedipus steps into the stream knee deep. Antigone walks in, too, and helps her father wash. Theseus takes off his shiny cloak.

Oedipus comes out of the stream. Theseus waits with the cloak in his hands. He gives it to Antigone. She helps her father put it on. Theseus takes off his crown. He puts it on Oedipus' head. Oedipus stands ready. A king in all his glory.

A huge peal of thunder. Lighting.

Fear begins to conquer Antigone. She trembles, weeps and falls down wrapping her father's legs. Oedipus lifts her and takes her in his arms.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

My child, today your father  
abandons you. This is the end of  
all that I was and the end of the  
heavy burden you carried of  
caring for me. One word renders  
you for that burden. Love, my  
dear child. You had more love  
from me than from any other man  
in this world.

They sob locked in each others arms.

A deep silence falls.

Suddenly, thunder crash so loud and constant that sound almost like a VOICE. The voice cries out:

VOICE  
OEDIPUS! OEDIPUS! OEDIPUS!

Over and over. Echoing all around.

VOICE (cont'd)  
OEDIPUS! OEDIPUS! OEDIPUS!

And then stops. Everyone holds still. Oedipus sedated moves closer to Theseus.

OEDIPUS  
(to Theseus)  
My valued friend, give my daughter  
the pledging oath of your right  
hand.

He reaches for Theseus' hand. Theseus offers it.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
(to Antigone)  
And you, my child, give me your  
hand.

Antigone gives him her hand. Oedipus unites their hands.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Now, Theseus, promise that you  
will never renounce her and that  
you will do everything within  
your power and courtesy,  
everything that is good for her,  
for now and for always.

Oedipus "looks" into Theseus' eyes. Theseus nods.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
My beloved Antigone, now you have  
to show courage and nobleness in  
your heart. You must leave this  
place behind and never ask to see  
what gods forbid.

Antigone in tears falls to her father's embrace. She enfolds him passionately. Then he pushes her away.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Now, go. Only the chosen one shall  
behold this mystery and witness  
what will happen.

Antigone sobs streaming tears and moves away towards the city, along with the guards. Oedipus and Theseus are going the other direction where the fog grows thicker and disappear...

A deep silence falls once more. For several moments the stillness overcomes everything. Nothing can be seen. Nothing can be heard.

A blazing bolt strikes the earth.

Antigone turns to that direction. The wall of fog gradually fades away, revealing king Theseus walking alone towards the walls. Oedipus is nowhere to be seen.

FADE OUT:

THE END