

**OEDIPUS**

by

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Adapted from plays

by

Sophocles and Euripides

OVER BLACK

We hear a woman's tormented SCREAM, muffled by her own will.

FADE IN:

A NEWBORN INFANT

wet with birth blood, takes its first breath and lets out a CRY. The baby's incessant HOWL echoes in the air.

INT. PALACE OF CORINTH - THRONE ROOM - DAY

KING POLYBUS, an old man in his early fifties, sits on his throne. The baby, clean and wrapped in a quilt, sleeps peacefully in his lap.

QUEEN MEROPE, a woman in her early forties, stands next to Polybus. He smiles at the baby and looks up at Merope. A smile breaks into her lips. Polybus touches the infant's scraped and bruised ankles.

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

EXT. PALACE OF CORINTH - DAY

The CORINTHIANS have gathered before the royal palace. Two huge doors open wide. FOUR GUARDS come out and assemble. Polybus walks out with the baby in his arms. Merope and a middle-aged MESSENGER follow him.

Polybus stands at the top of the stairs and gazes down at his people. He holds the baby high for all to see.

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

A cheer and applause goes up from the people. Polybus takes the baby into his embrace, kisses it lovingly on the forehead. The baby's eyes...

TIME-LAPSE

... turn into the eyes of a man. OEDIPUS, a handsome, young man with gentle eyes breaths heavily. Sweat pours over his face.

EXT. PALACE OF CORINTH - COURTYARD/BALCONY - DAY

Oedipus charges forward. He spars with wooden practice swords with another young man his age, ATROS.

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

Oedipus presses in on the attack. Atros shields himself and moves backwards. Oedipus swings without a pause, sword spinning with incredible speed.

Atros retreats until he's backed against a column. The sword slips from his hands. He stands helpless. Oedipus raises his sword in the air... and brings it to a halt mid-air. He stares at Atros and flickers a mischievous smile.

Oedipus lowers his weapon, turns his back on his adversary and walks away. Atros, overwrought with anger, picks up his sword, attacks Oedipus and hits him hard on the back. Oedipus is knocked down.

ATROS  
Victory! Victory!

He cheers, waving his sword in the air. Oedipus turns his ablaze eyes to Atros and stands up slowly.

OEDIPUS  
That was no victory, Atros. Your stroke was underhand.

ATROS  
A soldier does not turn his back on an enemy.

OEDIPUS  
A soldier that strikes the enemy on the back is not worthy of his title!

The boys get into a heated argument. Polybus, watching from the balcony, starts to laugh. Oedipus pushes Atros down to the ground. He stares at Oedipus, eyes blazing.

ATROS  
You are not father's son! Do you hear me? Your true father abandoned you!

Oedipus, shocked, moves closer to the boy.

OEDIPUS  
Atros, what is the meaning of your words?

Atros springs up, runs away. Oedipus' eyes drift to the balcony. Polybus is still laughing, while clapping his hands together.

INT. PALACE OF CORINTH - DINING ROOM - DAY

Polybus sits at the head of the table. Merope is next to him. Oedipus and a few MEN also sit around the table.

Oedipus has his lunch quietly. He steals a quick glance at his father talking and laughing with the men. Their eyes meet.

Polybus raises his goblet to his son. Oedipus raises his goblet to his father and fakes a smile. They both down their drink.

Oedipus glares at his father for several moments, bangs the goblet on the table, bolts up and leaves the table. His parents share a concerned look.

INT. PALACE OF CORINTH - STABLE - NIGHT

The door creaks open. A flaming torch flickers on as Oedipus enters the stable. The horses snort and whinny, spooked.

Torch aloft, Oedipus strolls to a horse at the back of the stable. He places the torch on a pillar, stands in front of the animal. He beams and affectionately scratches the horse's neck.

EXT. COUNTRY - SUNRISE

Oedipus sits on his horse atop of a hill and gazes at the city of Corinth from far away. He spurs the horse into a gallop.

EXT. COUNTRY - DAY

The city of Delphi can be seen in the distance. Oedipus rides towards the city, weariness suffusing his face. He clearly travelled quite a distance.

EXT. STREETS OF DELPHI - DAY

Oedipus crosses the city towards a magnificent temple ahead of him.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

A line of PILGRIMS has been created before the stairs of the temple. Oedipus rears the horse to a stop, leaps off and trails it at the end of the line where he takes his turn.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - LATER

Oedipus' turn comes. TWO PRIESTS dressed in white wait at the bottom of the stairs. One of them leads Oedipus' horse away and the other guides Oedipus up the steps.

They reach the top of the stairs. A statue of Apollo towers next to the impressive temple. The priest leads Oedipus to the entrance.

There are FOUR PRIESTS in grey robes before the closed doors. A sign on a stone above the entrance reads: "KNOW YOURSELF"

Two of the priests open the doors. Oedipus is perplexed. The faces of the priests encourage him to enter. Oedipus makes a hesitant step into the temple.

INT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO/ORACLE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

There are two lines of PRIESTESSES wearing grey robes along the hall. Oedipus paces through them. A PRIEST in black waits at the end of the hall and before the portal of the oracle chamber.

Oedipus approaches him. The priest greets him with an imperceptible inclination of the head. Oedipus returns the salutation.

PRIEST

Present your question, my child.  
Holy Pythia shall tell you  
everything you need to know.

Oedipus pauses for a moment, takes a deep breath and with a low and urgent voice:

OEDIPUS

"Who is... my true father?"

The priest goes into the chamber. Inside there are 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 leans over, whispers into Pythia's ear and moves away. Another priest with a torch in his hand sets the circle on fire. Flames emerge 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. Ghastly. Suddenly, her eyes flash open, staring directly at Oedipus.

Pythia signals to the priest. He dashes to her. Pythia whispers into his ear. The priest comes out of the oracle chamber, goes to Oedipus and stands before him.

PRIEST

My child, Pythia's unfailing words have spoken of your destiny.

Oedipus listens in agony.

PRIEST (cont'd)

You shall... kill your father and take your mother as your wife.

Oedipus drops his jaw and gasps in shock. He stands almost motionless, staring at Pythia. She stares back.

Two priests seize Oedipus' arms and drag him outside. He looks over his shoulder. Pythia watches him leave. Their eyes meet for a single moment.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

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

MONTAGE

I) Oedipus urges his horse into a full gallop through a verdant meadow. His face a mask of anguish, still in shock.

II) Corinth is visible in the distance. Oedipus reins his horse, gazes at the city and thinks. A moment later, he spurs the horse and moves away to the opposite direction.

III) The night has fallen. Oedipus looks up at the stars in the sky, fascinated.

IV) The sun kisses the horizon. Oedipus rides through a dense forest. Beams of light cut through the trees.

V) A lake ringed by the lush forest. The horse eats grass further away. Oedipus is bowed before the lake and washes his face. The waters go red. His clothes have splashes of blood hardly noticeable.

VI) It's mid-day and the sun is hot. Scorching. A desolate, desert landscape stretches for miles. Oedipus rides his horse, exhausted. A city appears far away.

END MONTAGE

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Huge rocks surround the road. Oedipus heads towards the city. As he gets closer to the rocks, something flies behind him.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Stranger...

Oedipus turns. Nothing there. Something flies ahead of him.

WOMAN'S VOICE (cont'd)

Stranger...

He spins in front of him, surveys the area. There's nothing unusual. Just rocks and sand-dunes. He keeps riding.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (cont'd)

STRANGER!

The horse bolts, knocking Oedipus to the ground and runs away. Oedipus shifts his gaze atop of the rocks.

The SPHINX stands on a high rock. She is a young woman with dog-like facial features and a pair of wings wrapped around her in a cocoon.

The Sphinx unfurls her massive wings, revealing a hideously deformed body that can barely be recognized as the body of a female.

Oedipus, startled, springs up, unsheathes a bloodstained sword and points it at the winged beast.

OEDIPUS

What kind of a creature are you?

SPHINX

Put your sword back in its sheath, stranger. There is only one way past these rocks and, mark my words, that is without the use of your blade.

Oedipus sheathes his sword.

OEDIPUS  
What way is that... dire  
creature?

SPHINX  
I am the Sphinx!

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

SPHINX (cont'd)  
Now, stranger, if you wish to  
cross to this city, you must  
answer a riddle that I will put  
before you. Solve my riddle and  
you shall pass. Fail... and you  
shall die.

Oedipus looks at her calmly.

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.

A short pause.

OEDIPUS  
Man...

Sphinx's evil smile fades away.

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. She raises a SCREAM that echoes far and wide, spreads her wings and flies off. Oedipus gapes at the Sphinx as she vanishes in the sky.

TWO VILLAGERS watch the incident from far away. They run to Oedipus. He walks 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, confused.

VILLAGER #1 (cont'd)

Come, come! Go with us!

The villagers lead ahead. Oedipus is behind them.

EXT. HIGH GATES - DAY

The gates open and they come through. When they approach the streets, the villagers start calling out their fellow citizens:

VILLAGER #2

People of Theva! We are saved!  
The monster has left the city!  
Theva is saved!

VILLAGER #1

Thevans! The Sphinx is no more!  
We are liberated! This man set  
us free! He solved her cunning  
riddle!

THEVANS leave their work unattended and go to them. People surround Oedipus overwhelmed with admiration for their new hero. Oedipus is dazed.

EXT. STREETS OF THEVA - DAY

A throng of people walk down the street. The two villagers lead the way, Oedipus and the rest of the people follow close behind.

VILLAGER #1

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, surprised, stares at him with wide eyes.

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

A flight of a hundred stone stairs lead up to the palace. There are two temples, one from the left and one from right side of the steps. A towering statue of Apollo rises before each temple. The people of Theva have been raised before the stairs.

TWO GUARDS stand rigid in front of the open palace gates. 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 villagers and Oedipus step up to the palace. When they reach near the entrance, the guards block their path. The villagers fall to their knees and bow their heads in respect. Oedipus follows their lead.

VILLAGER #1

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

Iocaste glares at Oedipus. He steals a quick glance at her. 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, raises his eyes to Creon and slowly stands up.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - LATER

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

The gathering of people applauds loudly. Iocaste glances at Oedipus blankly. He stares at her in admiration of her beauty.

EXT. MAIN SQUARE - NIGHT

Torches, shoved into the sand, round 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 in front of a window, gazing at the city. The MUSIC can be heard in the distance. Oedipus sits on the side of the bed and scans the length of Iocaste's gown. Her body. He gets up and motions to his wife.

Oedipus caresses Iocaste's arm. She goes stiff. Oedipus moves his hand on her cheek and brings her face to his. They stare at each other for a long moment and then kiss.

EXT. THEVA - SUNRISE

SUPERIMPOSE: 20 YEARS HAVE PASSED...

The sun is starting to rise over Theva. The city spreads below, shimmering with sunlight.

## MONTAGE

I) Dozens of crows fly in the sky, circling above the city.

II) A MAN walks down the street and leans against a nearby wall for rest. He stays there for a moment. When he tries to walk again, collapses face down to the ground, dead.

III) A YOUNG BOY cries. He enfolds his father's dead body lying on the side of the street. An OLD WOMAN grabs his arm, pulling him away. The boy won't let go. After a few more unsuccessful attempts, the woman quits her efforts and dashes away.

IV) A dead horse lies on the ground left to rot. A few crows are clustered around the animal and feast on its corpse.

V) A BABY cries in the arms of its dead mother, laying in the middle of the street. The infant's CRY echoes like thunder. TWO WOMEN passing by notice the baby. They keep walking, undisturbed.

## END MONTAGE

## EXT. MAIN SQUARE - DAY

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

TWO SCAVENGERS, a sheet covering their face, stack the bodies upon the cart. People of Theva stand further away and watch the process.

Men, women and children mourn for the loss of their loved ones. A GIRL tries to break free from her MOTHER's grip. The mother manages to restrain her daughter.

## EXT. HIGH GATE - DAY

The enormous gates leading in and out of Theva open wide. The cart drives through them.

## EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

An harsh environment expands as far as the eye can see. The wind blows strong. The scavengers cover their eyes against the grains of sand flying in the air.

The horses move with difficulty because of the hyperbolic transported weight. The driver whips up the horses and the cart dashes off.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

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

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Blazing flames. Dozens of corpses are burning in the middle of the desert. The scavengers stand by the fire, watching the dead scorch. Dark smoke blackens the clear blue sky.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - NIGHT

Around the altars of the palace numerous citizens of Theva are gathered, 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 looks down at 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 stands high on the stairs 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.

(MORE)

OLD PRIEST (cont'd)

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? And yet, while you suffer, no one is in more pain than I. There is one thing I ask from you. Patience. My fellow citizens, my friends, be patient. Creon will return and when he does, with the letter of the oracle in hand, whatever the gods demand, upon my honor, it shall be done.

The citizens exchange satisfactory looks.

OLD PRIEST

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

Oedipus bows in acknowledgement and steps up to the palace. The priest dismisses the suppliants.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Iocaste is sleeping. Oedipus is seated in a corner of the room and observes her. His unrestful and reflective face can still be seen in the dark.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Creon and his TWO FOLLOWERS enter the palace.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - HALLWAY - DAY

Creon walks in quick pace 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, distressed and impatient, paces about the room like a caged animal.

The doors fly open and Creon comes in. His followers stay near the doors. Oedipus darts to Creon. They embrace.

OEDIPUS

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

CREON

Good news, Oedipus.

OEDIPUS

Speak. What were the god's  
words?

CREON

The answer and strict command of  
Apollo is this. There is a taint  
on our land. A man born and bred  
on our soil infects us day by  
day. We must banish this man or  
settle his debt of blood for  
blood.

OEDIPUS

Whose blood?

CREON

There was a king, 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

How did Laius die?

CREON

He left the land to learn how we  
might be delivered from the Sphinx.  
That was the last day we ever saw  
him. He never came back.

OEDIPUS

Was there no word of his followers?

CREON

They all died, Oedipus... apart  
from one. He only told us one  
thing.

OEDIPUS

What was it? One thing may lead to others.

CREON

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

OEDIPUS

No thieves would do such a thing.

CREON

We never found out, Oedipus. When Laius died no leader helped us in our torments. Not until the gods sent you to us.

OEDIPUS

I will start from ground and bring everything to light. Not to hand some distant kinsman, but for myself. Whoever killed the king with the same lethal hand may try to kill me. By avenging Laius I defend myself.

(to the followers)

One of you, summon the city.

A follower bows and leaves the room.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

It is undeniable, Creon, that by the hands of the gods we rise... or fall.

EXT. MAIN SQUARE - DAY

An enormous crowd is collected before a stand, thronging the square. Every Thevan is here. Oedipus climbs 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

Thevans! You ask and shall have remedy to your sickness, if you hear my words and do as I say.

(MORE)

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 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)  
 Does anyone know if the murderer  
 is a stranger, a man from foreign  
 soil? Come, speak! You shall  
 receive a generous reward and  
 withhold gratitude in my heart!

Silence still. Oedipus starts losing his temper.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 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!  
 He is expelled from every home!  
 Thus, I will have done my duty 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 CITIZEN.

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.

CITIZEN  
 The command came from Apollo, my  
 king. He can tell us who the  
 offender is.

OEDIPUS  
 Well said, but you cannot force a  
 god to speak against his will.

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. Those who seek for the truth, Oedipus, can learn it from him clear as day.

Oedipus stares 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

Oedipus sits at the head of a huge table that spans the length of the room. Along with him TEN COUNSELLORS and PRINCE ETEOCLES are seated, constituting the Thevan council.

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

In a corner of the room stands 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

I shall tell you, Tiresias. First, collect your strength and catch your breath.

Oedipus helps Tiresias sit. Then he goes back and takes his seat at the table.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Tiresias, you may be blind, but you see well what sickness haunts our city. Apollo 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 if you bore your burden and I bore mine.

OEDIPUS

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

TIRESIAS

Your words are heading to no good end, so I have to protect myself.

Oedipus slams his hand against the table and springs up.

OEDIPUS

By the gods! Do not deny to speak!

Tiresias doesn't respond.

COUNSELLOR #1

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

TIRESIAS

(to the council)

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

(to Oedipus)

... or yours.

Oedipus dashes to Tiresias.

OEDIPUS

You know and will not tell?!

He walks past Polynices. Polynices touches his father's arm, trying to comfort him.

POLYNICES

Father, rest your temper--

Oedipus shoves Polynices' hand away.

OEDIPUS

Quiet!

He goes to Tiresias and kneels down in front of him. They are now face to face.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Will you stand and do nothing,  
and watch your city perish?

TIRESIAS

What will be, shall be, even if I  
wrap it in silence.

OEDIPUS

What will be, it is your obligation  
to tell.

TIRESIAS

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

Oedipus drowns himself in his thoughts.

OEDIPUS

Why would you want Laus' murder  
to stay concealed so desperately?  
Why, Tiresias? You know what I  
believe? I believe that you were  
behind his death, and if you had  
eyes to see I would have said  
that your hand had taken his  
life.

Tiresias lowers his head and smiles sarcastically.

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 anyone else in  
Theva. You are the infection of  
this land!

Oedipus bashes his hand down on the table. A few goblets drop, spilling wine on the table.

OEDIPUS

You disgraceful man! Are you not daunted to say a thing like that? How will you escape from it?

TIRESIAS

I have already escaped. Truth breathes inside of me.

OEDIPUS

Who put you up to this?

TIRESIAS

You did. You made me talk against my will.

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

OEDIPUS

(careless)

Talk all you please. Your words mean nothing. Living in eternal 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. He spoke in anger and so did you in a worthless conversation.

ETEOCLES

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

Oedipus is lost in his thoughts. Suddenly, an intuition wanders in his mind.

OEDIPUS

(to Tiresias)

If these are not your words, then whose words are they? Creon's?

Tiresias shakes his head.

TIRESIAS

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 loyal friend, why must  
you crawl behind me so lustily to  
overthrow me? I promise you, 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  
mock my blindness. Your precious  
eyes do not see your own doom?

OEDIPUS

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

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 gleams through a window. Iocaste sits before her  
dressing table with ANTIGONE, a young woman with an angelic  
face, brushing her hair.

Oedipus sits on the side of the bed and stares at his wife.  
She turns and looks at him. They share a smile.

OEDIPUS

Antigone, leave us. Go to your  
chamber.

Antigone bows and puts the brush down on the table.

ANTIGONE

Good night, mother.

Iocaste caresses her daughter's hair. Antigone goes to her father. Oedipus gives her a tender kiss on the forehead. Antigone exits the room. Oedipus rises and goes to Iocaste. He kisses her neck.

OEDIPUS

I do not know the reason, but 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 and touches her breasts. Iocaste surrenders in his hands. They engage in a passionate kiss.

EXT. MAIN SQUARE - DAY

Creon is on the stand and talks to a few CITIZENS of Theva.

CREON

My fellow citizens, I hear king  
Oedipus casts malicious  
accusations at me! I come before  
you for I cannot bear it! He  
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! Why are you here? Do you  
have the face to look at these  
people, you shameless man?

Oedipus climbs up to the stand and meets Creon.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

By the mighty gods, did you see  
any foulness in me to put such an  
envious plan in your mind? If  
you think you could win the  
kingship without wealth or power,  
you are a fool!

CREON

I should be a fool to believe  
that. Kingdoms are won by men  
and gold. But tell me, what do  
you think I did to you?

More people start gathering to the square.

OEDIPUS  
Wasn't it you that made me call  
for Tiresias?

Creon nods.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Now, answer me this. How long has  
it been since Laius vanished?

CREON  
The count would take you many years  
back.

OEDIPUS  
And did the prophet have his  
skills back then?

CREON  
He did, holding equal respect as he  
holds now.

OEDIPUS  
Did he ever mention me?

CREON  
Not in my hearing.

OEDIPUS  
Was there a search made into Laius'  
death?

CREON  
There was... in vain.

OEDIPUS  
And that man of knowledge, that  
respectful man as you call him,  
why was he silent then? Why did  
he not point at me?

He spreads his arms to the people, while waiting for an  
answer. A slight commotion rises 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.

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 nods.

CREON (cont'd)

Do I have a third part of royalty?

OEDIPUS

You did, until your shown treason.

CREON

(smiles sarcastically)

Oedipus, 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 everyone's favor. I  
am everyone'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

You may be glib with words,  
Creon, but I am not affected.  
The penalty for being a traitor  
is the same for a stranger... or  
a brother.

CREON

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

Oedipus shakes his head.

OEDIPUS

I want you dead, not banished.

CREON

What if you are wrong?

OEDIPUS

No matter. I must rule.

CREON

Not if you rule unfairly.

OEDIPUS

Hear him, people of Theva!

There's a loud commotion from the crowd. Oedipus' guards  
seize Creon. They put his hands behind his back and tie him  
up.

Iocaste walks among the people and fronts the stand.

IOCASTE

What is the point 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

Dear sister, your husband desires  
to see my death.

OEDIPUS

He was planning to cast me from my  
throne.

CREON

May I be cursed from the gods, if  
ever such a thought crossed my  
mind!

IOCASTE

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

CITIZEN #2

Consent, my king. Be merciful and  
relent.

OEDIPUS

Why should I relent?

CITIZEN #3

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

CITIZEN #4

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

CITIZEN #2

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

(to his guards)  
Let him go!

The guards turn Creon loose.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

(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.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - BALCONY - SUNSET

Oedipus gazes at the sun fading into the horizon. Iocaste comes out of the royal bedchamber, goes to Oedipus and grabs him around the waist. Oedipus puts his arm around her waist.

IOCASTE

My love, why have you conceived  
this terrible rancor against Creon?

Oedipus looks at her. He tenderly caresses her face. He pulls away.

OEDIPUS

He said, the killer of Laius... was  
no other man, but me.

Iocaste, startled, takes a step backwards.

IOCASTE

Why would he say such a vile thing?

OEDIPUS

He hides behind that devious  
prophet Tiresias.

Iocaste sighs in relief and flickers a smile.

IOCASTE

Believe me, Oedipus, no man holds  
the charisma of divination. Long  
ago, 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 is 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

To Phochis where two 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 motions to his bed, sits on the side obsessed by his thoughts. Iocaste comes in and sits next to him.

IOCASTE

What is it that shadows your mind, Oedipus?

OEDIPUS

(in agony)

I pray you do not question me, answer me! What did Laius look like?

IOCASTE

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

Oedipus springs up.

OEDIPUS

I think I have called 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

Four guardsmen and a herald.

OEDIPUS

Who brought the news to the palace?

IOCASTE

The herald. He managed to save himself.

OEDIPUS

Is he still in here? Can I speak with him?

Iocaste shakes her head.

IOCASTE

When he returned and found you on the throne, he held my hand and begged 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. 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 exits 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 comes before the altar and bows down on her knees. She looks up to the statue of Apollo.

IOCASTE

Kind Apollo, I visit your temples carrying these tokens of plea. 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 I cannot console him. So, I turn to you, Apollo. You the most compassionate of all gods, I come with prayers and offerings, and I implore 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. He stirs, troubled by uneasy dreams.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CROSSROAD - DAY

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

MONTAGE

A CHARIOTEER shouts at Oedipus -- Oedipus pushes him down from the chariot -- grabs his sword -- stabs him on the neck -- THREE GUARDSMEN dismount their horses -- and attack Oedipus -- After a quick quarrel, Oedipus kills them all -- He moves to the side a carriage -- LAIUS, a man in his late thirties, not much different than Oedipus, sits inside the chariot -- He hits Oedipus in the head with his staff -- Oedipus, at lightning speed, grabs the staff -- pulls Laius from the chariot -- and drives his sword into Laius' heart -- Laius' eyes go wide -- Oedipus, wild-eyed, lets out a wrathful SCREAM --

END MONTAGE

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

Oedipus sits bold upright in his bed. He gasps for air, swallows hard. His eyes drift to the side of the bed. Iocaste lies next to him, having a peaceful 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.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - POLYNICES' CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus stands in the doorway and peeks inside.

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

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus walks further down the hall and opens another door.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ANTIGONE'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus glimpses into the room and sees Antigone sleeping on her bed. He closes the door.

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 sadly.

Iocaste comes out of the palace, paces 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.

IOCASTE

My lord, may I hear what burdens your heart?

OEDIPUS

Iocaste... my dearest Iocaste, I can hide nothing from you. I've never spoken of this to anyone, yet of all people you deserve to know.

Iocaste looks at him curiously.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

When I left Corinth, my journey led me to a crossroad. 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 side, he hit me with his staff. Quick as lightning, I knocked him out and there... I killed him. I killed them all! Every mother's son!

(calms down)

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 fill my heart with fear.

OEDIPUS

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

IOCASTE

Why, Oedipus?

OEDIPUS

If he still holds to his words,  
that "thieves" killed Laius, I  
cannot be the murderer. 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 bows.

In the garden, Polynices falls to the ground, defeated.  
Eteocles stands above him, lines up his sword at Polynices'  
face and grins. Eteocles raises his sword in the air and  
gazes at his father. Oedipus manages a smile.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - DAY

The messenger arrives on his horse before the royal house.  
He gets off and ties up the horse. He walks up the stairs  
and meets ATTENDANT #1.

MESSENGER

Good morrow, my good man.

The attendant greets him with a smile.

MESSENGER (cont'd)

I wonder if you could take me to  
Oedipus, the king of Theva.

ATTENDANT #1

By all means, courtly stranger.  
Come, go with me.

They walk up the stairs. Iocaste steps down the stairs along with Antigone. They meet.

ATTENDANT #1 (cont'd)

Oh, here is the king's wife and  
the mother of his children.

The messenger bows respectfully to Iocaste.

MESSENGER

Grace attends you and all your  
house, my queen.

The attendant moves up and into the palace.

IOCASTE

I thank you for your greeting,  
kind man. Where are you from and  
what brings you to our city?

MESSENGER

I am sent from Corinth, my lady.  
I have brought you news. Good  
news for your master and his  
house.

IOCASTE

Well, then, speak!

MESSENGER

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

IOCASTE

Polybus is no longer the king?

MESSENGER

King Polybus is lost.

IOCASTE

Is this true? Is Polybus dead?

MESSENGER

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

IOCASTE

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

Antigone darts to the palace.

IOCASTE (cont'd)  
(to the messenger)  
Now, my good man, come. Come into  
our house and accept our  
hospitality. Your journey must  
have you tired.

They walk up to the palace.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - DINING ROOM - DAY

A grand table in the middle 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 bolts up and wipes his mouth with his hands.

OEDIPUS  
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 he?

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

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

OEDIPUS  
Let me have it from your lips.

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

Oedipus is shocked. His face is filled with emotion.

OEDIPUS  
How did he die?

MESSENGER

It does not take much to put an old  
body to rest.

Suddenly, a hint of a smile creeps across Oedipus' face.  
Little by little, his face starts to glow of relief and  
delight.

OEDIPUS

Why, my wife, why look at the  
Pythian fire, the prophecies  
and the forecasting birds that  
howl above us? They misled me on  
to the murder of my father. Now,  
he lies into the ground and I am  
here never put my hand on a  
sword. 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 fears deceived me.

IOCASTE

Think no more of this.

OEDIPUS

There is still my mother to fear.

Oedipus slides off Iocaste. She grabs his hand, holding  
him back. She places her hands on Oedipus' face and  
lovingly caresses 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

My darling, you have spoken  
fairly, but my mother is alive  
and while she is alive, horror is  
alive inside of me.

MESSENGER

Who is the woman that you fear, my  
king?

OEDIPUS

Merope, old man. The wife of Polybus and queen of Corinth.

MESSENGER

Why are you afraid of her?

OEDIPUS

An oracle... a warning from the gods said, I was foredoomed to take my mother as my wife and shed my father's blood.

MESSENGER

Was that the reason that kept you away from Corinth?

Oedipus nods.

MESSENGER (cont'd)

My dear boy, you are deluded.

OEDIPUS

How is that, good man?

MESSENGER

Polybus was not a kindred of yours.

OEDIPUS

What are you saying? Polybus was not my father?

The messenger shakes his head.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Then why did he call me his son?

MESSENGER

Polybus could not have children. You were given to him...

OEDIPUS

Given?

The messenger nods.

MESSENGER

... by these hands.

Oedipus can't believe his ears.

OEDIPUS

What?

MESSENGER

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

OEDIPUS

You found me?

The messenger nods. Oedipus battles with his emotions.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Is this true?

The messenger nods.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Was I hurt?

MESSENGER

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 face reveals unimaginable  
agony and terror.

MESSENGER (cont'd)

Your feet were bound together.

OEDIPUS

I have had these marks since I was  
a little boy.

MESSENGER

It is how you got your name, my  
son.

OEDIPUS

Who did this? My father or my  
mother?

MESSENGER

That I cannot say. The man who  
gave you to me should know.

OEDIPUS

You did not find me?

MESSENGER

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

OEDIPUS  
Is he still alive? Can I see  
him?

MESSENGER  
Your people here should know.

In agony, Oedipus 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 spins around. Iocaste is gone.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - GARDEN - DAY

Iocaste surrounded by magnificent flowers and plants, head  
in hands, sobs. Her cry is silent, nevertheless  
heartbreaking. Oedipus steps out of the palace and sees  
his wife.

OEDIPUS  
Iocaste! Iocaste!

He runs to her. Antigone and a few attendants come out of  
the palace and stop near the doors. Oedipus approaches  
Iocaste. Iocaste wipes her eyes and tries to compose  
herself.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Iocaste...

She doesn't turn around, still has her back on Oedipus.

IOCASTE  
Oedipus, for the love of your own  
life, end this quest.

OEDIPUS  
Iocaste, you know the man that we  
have sent for. Is he the same  
man the shepherd was talking  
about? Answer me.

Iocaste lost in delirium of emotions cannot articulate a  
single word. She fakes a smile, turns around.

IOCASTE

Listen to me, Oedipus. It does not matter anymore. The shepherd's words are empty. Pay no attention, nor give it another thought.

OEDIPUS

Nonsense! This is a path I must walk to the end! I have to solve the riddle of my birth!

Iocaste moves closer to Oedipus.

IOCASTE

Hear me, I implore you. Do not go on with this quest. Let my pains be enough for the both of us.

OEDIPUS

I cannot leave the truth unknown.

IOCASTE

Accept my advice, Oedipus. For your own good.

OEDIPUS

Your advice is more than I can take.

Iocaste gets closer to Oedipus and whispers into his ear:

IOCASTE

May you never find out who you are.

She races towards the palace.

OEDIPUS

(to an attendant)  
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 shoves Antigone aside and hurries into the palace.

OEDIPUS

Let all come out, no matter how shameful!

(MORE)

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
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 and shuts them behind her. She motions 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, Antigone! Leave me to  
my grief! Go hence!

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - UPSTAIRS HALL

Antigone scowls and walks away.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

A long country road surrounded by endless barleycorn fields. The royal wagon moves down the road at great speed. A DRIVER and Attendant #2 sit in the front. Two guards on their horses follow the wagon. WORKERS in the fields leave their jobs and gawk at the sight.

INT. ROYAL WAGON

Oedipus sits with the messenger across him. They exchange anxious looks.

EXT. FIELDS

The attendant points to a field and the driver immediately jerks the reins. The wagon pulls over to the side of the road. The guards rein their horses to a stop behind the wagon.

Oedipus steps down from the wagon, the messenger follows. Oedipus goes to the attendant, which has already moved further into the field. His hand guides Oedipus' gaze at a man far away.

INT. ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Iocaste sits on the side of her bed. Her tears have dried up. Almost like hypnotised, she stands up, motions 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 approaches him with his guards and the attendant beside him. The messenger is a little behind.

The shepherd spots Oedipus and immediately drops to his knees. Oedipus reaches in front of the shepherd.

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

The shepherd bows in homage, keeping his head down.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Corinthian messenger, take a good  
look. Is this him?

The messenger looks at the face of the shepherd and nods with certainty. Oedipus dashes to the shepherd. He forces his face up so he can clearly look at it. The shepherd's eyes still glance down.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Come, old shepherd, look me in the  
eyes and answer my questions.

The shepherd hesitantly raises his eyes.

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

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

OEDIPUS  
What did you do for the king?

SHEPHERD  
I grazed his flocks.

OEDIPUS  
Where did you do your grazing?

SHEPHERD  
To the foothills of mountain  
Cithaeron.

OEDIPUS  
(points to the  
messenger)  
This man here, do you know him?  
Did you ever see him there?

SHEPHERD

I do not know him, my lord.

Oedipus and the messenger exchange a look.

MESSENGER

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 used to lead my herds to my own pens for the winter and he used to go with his to Laius' folds.

(to the shepherd)

Was that the way of it?

The shepherd slowly nods.

MESSENGER (cont'd)

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

SHEPHERD

What are you asking me to say?

MESSENGER

Here stands that boy, my old friend.

He points at Oedipus.

SHEPHERD

Damn you! Hold your tongue!

OEDIPUS

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

SHEPHERD

What is it that I did, my king?

OEDIPUS

Answer his question!

SHEPHERD

My lord, he speaks madly, wasting his breath.

OEDIPUS

You shall speak, too... or I will make you!

He signals 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 the blade 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 die now unless you say the whole truth.

SHEPHERD  
The more I say, the worse death I shall meet.

Oedipus signals 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  
Was the boy 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  
Who was the father?

SHEPHERD  
Must I tell?

OEDIPUS  
You must! And I must hear!

SHEPHERD  
Laius! It was Laius' child! The  
queen, your wife, she knows  
everything.

FLASHBACK - INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Iocaste lays on the royal bed, exhausted, with a newborn  
infant in her embrace. She looks at the baby and  
suppresses a smile. Her eyes drift across the room to meet  
Laius' standing in a corner.

Laius nods to her. Tears fill Iocaste's eyes. She hands  
the baby to a YOUNG SHEPHERD. The boy starts to cry. Its  
piercing HOWL fills the air.

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

Oedipus almost bursts into tears.

OEDIPUS  
Why did she give you the child?

SHEPHERD  
To kill it.

Oedipus attempts to regain his composure.

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

SHEPHERD  
She was afraid of a wicked  
prophecy.

OEDIPUS  
A prophecy?

SHEPHERD  
The boy was meant to kill his  
father--

Oedipus rushes towards the wagon.

EXT. ROYAL WAGON - DAY

Oedipus leaps onto the wagon, grabs the reins and whips the horses. The wagon speeds away.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - DAY

The wagon rumbles to a halt before the palace. Oedipus gets off, darts up to the palace and through the open doors.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus comes in and rushes up the stairs.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus runs like a maddened beast down the hallway and hurls himself upon the closed doors of the royal bedchamber.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ROYAL BEDCHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus 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 lets out a high, wrenching CRY and sprints to her. He grabs her, 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.

OEDIPUS

Iocaste...

He notices the gold pins on Iocaste's dress. He takes a long look at them. In a rapture of madness, he rips off a pin and lifts it high.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Disgraceful eyes! No longer see  
this shame! No longer see those  
you should never have seen! From  
this day on... see nothing but  
night!

Oedipus digs the pin down the sockets of his eye. He raises the pin and rakes it down again this time in his other eye. Again and again.

Bloody tears run down his face. Not drops, but cataracts of scarlet tears cascade down his eyes, soaking his clothes. The bloodstained pin slips from his hand to the floor.

Iocaste slowly opens her eyes and glares at her husband. When she sees him bleeding hurt, gives a raging SCREAM and starts to sob. She touches his gory cheeks and gives him a warm embrace. Oedipus and Iocaste stay clasped in a pool of blood.

#### MONTAGE

I) Oedipus comes out of the palace, escorted by his sons and two guards. All the Thevans have gathered in front of the steps, disgust and pity carved in their faces. They hoot Oedipus. Eteocles signals to the guards. They lead Oedipus back inside.

II) The guards guide Oedipus inside a dark and dusty prison with a lone small window. Oedipus is left alone in the middle of the room. The door slams shut. Darkness shrouds his face.

III) Polynices and Eteocles stare at each other for a long moment. Then they embrace tightly.

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

V) Eteocles sits down on his throne. Iocaste, Antigone, a few servants and the Thevan council root him.

VI) Polynices gazes at the seven-gated walls of Theva from afar. He whips his horse and gallops away.

VII) Eteocles walks down the stairs of the palace towards the crowd of people. He wears the crown. Thevans applaud loudly, cheering their new king.

VIII) Oedipus is on his knees, head down. He lifts his face to the skies. Through the small window, a flash of lightning floods the room. His face and wounded eyes light for a split second. The SOUND of a DISTANT THUNDER.

#### END MONTAGE

#### EXT. DESERT - DAY

Storm clouds swirl in the sky. WIND blows. THUNDER crash. The Argive encampment. A sea of camps veils the desert.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Iocaste walks through the 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 opened for her. She steps inside.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Oedipus sits in a corner of the room, surrounded by shadows.

OEDIPUS

Who's 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  
to take me down to the place of  
no rest where I should pay for my  
all sins?

IOCASTE

It is I, Oedipus... Iocaste.

Oedipus rises and steps out of the shadows. His wounded eyes are now clearly visible.

OEDIPUS

Dear Iocaste, what destiny has  
come upon me? Lightless,  
intolerable night that has no  
day. Son of the mother I  
profaned by coupling my father's  
bed.

Iocaste turns her back on him.

IOCASTE

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

Oedipus touches her shoulder. Iocaste makes a few steps forward, moving away from him.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

I do not dare to look at you. Your eyes speak of unimaginable pain.

OEDIPUS

What good were eyes to me? How could I meet my father beyond the grave with those eyes? My mother against whom I have committed such an abominable evil? Could I still look at my children? The people of Theva?

(shakes his head)

Not with these eyes of mine. Never! I would not rest until I have damaged this body of shame!

Oedipus falls to his knees and with his arms spread to the skies, shouts:

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Zeus! You, 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 reaches out and smooths affectionately Oedipus' hair. She bows down, takes him into her embrace and holds him tight.

IOCASTE

Oedipus, calm yourself. The greatest gift the gods ever gave us was the gift of life. Do not ask to give it back. Honor it.

Oedipus warms to her words and a hint of a smile crosses his face. He turns to her.

OEDIPUS

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

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 and whispers into her ear:

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 (softly)  
 My torments are mine and I am the  
 one who must endure them.

Iocaste breaks free from his clasp and bolts up. She wipes her tears, composes herself and moves away.

IOCASTE  
 Torments come and never leave,  
 Oedipus. They remain like a  
 cloud that no air can take away.

Oedipus stands up, too.

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

Oedipus listens with great interest.

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

OEDIPUS  
 Speak plain, Iocaste. Your words  
 make no sense.

Iocaste takes her time.

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

Are you not still a Thevan? Do  
you not care for your fellow  
citizens? Are you not still a  
father? Do you not care for the  
fortune of your sons?

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 this dire conflict  
are meant to be punished for a  
crime that was not even theirs.  
Troubles must be solved with  
conversation, Oedipus, not  
countless dead bodies.

Oedipus stays silent for several breaths, loses himself in  
his thoughts. Then he spins around.

OEDIPUS

What can I do?

IOCASTE

Talk to your first born son and  
counsel him. Tell him to give  
Polynices what belongs to him and  
resolve this quarrel. 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. Theva 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 up his horse and moves up to the temple. He halts before the steps, looks up. Iocaste is waiting in front of the entrance of the temple.

Iocaste catches sight of her son and her face charges with joy. The love in her look is immeasurable.

IOCASTE

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

Polynices races up the stairs and hugs his mother.

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.

Polynices beams. Iocaste runs her fingers across his jaw line.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

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

Their eyes are very involved.

POLYNICES

Mother, it is not wise me being  
here among my enemies. When 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. Those who love you  
longed for you. Theva longed for  
you.

POLYNICES

Mother, 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 every day  
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, embraces his mother tightly.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

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

Their eyes lock for several breaths. 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.

POLYNICES

I have, mother.

IOCASTE

How did you meet 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

One night, I reached Adrastus'  
palace to ask for food and  
shelter. I was given some bread  
and a dusty room. That night  
another exile arrived. His name  
was Tydeus, son of Eneus.

IOCASTE

What happened then?

POLYNICES

Well, there was only one bed in the room. When we were fighting over who gets to sleep on the bed, Adrastus foresaw between us and those animals. So he gave his daughters to us.

IOCASTE

How did you induce the Argive army to march with you?

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 country.

(to the sky)

I summon all the gods to witness that I come against Theva with a heavy heart!

(pauses)

Mother, the undoing of this stays with you. Bring two brothers to agree on terms, and put an end to your sufferings, mine, and our city's, too.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON - DAY

Oedipus sits in the same corner. The door opens and Eteocles walks in. He goes to his father and stops before him.

ETEOCLES

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

OEDIPUS

Eteocles, my sweet boy...

He tries to rise. Eteocles assists him up.

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 would be faded with time. Hoping his dark fate would be buried in silence.

(MORE)

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

A fate that maddened him so, he called the most abominable curse upon his sons. You and your brother feared that if you lived under the same roof, the gods might make this curse come true. So, a bargain was made between you... a bargain not kept.

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 you and your brother, my boy. End it while time is still young. No good can come of this.

Eteocles shakes his head.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Listen to me. Give Polynices what he asks for, give him what is his. Make him retract his army and save the lives of your men.

ETEOCLES

Never! I shall never hand Theva over to a traitor! What reputation would she have, if through fear of Argive spearmen I, the king, surrendered 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!

(pauses)

I desire it for myself.

OEDIPUS

Nature, my boy, provided men the law of equality. Night's murky face shares equally the journey of every day with the bright sun.

(MORE)

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Each bows in turn and neither shines with envy. Shall day and night divide even duty, and you shall contempt the 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 world that we are living. Know that I am the true king of this land and shall not step down. Time for argument has finished. Any further words will be wasted.

He storms out of the room with the door shutting behind him. Oedipus sighs sadly.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

The temple's gates open. Eteocles comes in. He glares at his mother, but doesn't even turn his head to 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, look at your brother. If you see each others eyes, you shall talk better and better prize your talk.

Polynices glances at his mother. Her eyes are begging him. He drifts his harmless eyes to his brother. Eteocles' face is loaded with fury.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

Polynices, it is for you to speak first and may some godly power judge between you two and unravel your rancor.

POLYNICES

Mother, a fair reason needs no introduction.

(MORE)

## POLYNICES (cont'd)

Gods know that I treasured the prosperity of our house more than my father's crown. I longed to evade the curse which he called down upon us, so I left Theva giving my brother one year to hold the throne. And now, as agreed, I should receive my turn and rule. When I accept what is rightly mine, I will take my army out of Thevan territory, receive my kingdom, keep it one year and give it back for another year to him. I do not wish to attack the towers of Theva, but if my requests are not granted, know that I will!

## ETEOCLES

If every man 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? Besides, it is a dishonor to me if he gains all he wants by coming here with an army ravaging our land. If he wants to stay 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 degradation and despair, watched it leave. And this wealth you long for, what gain comes with it? A man's holdings are not truly his. 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.  
(MORE)

IOCASTE (cont'd)

And you in advancing to destroy  
your land showed yourself mad.  
Now, think. Say you win this  
war, how will you, the plunderer  
of your own city, offer sacrifice  
to the gods? Say you are  
defeated, 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 horrible.

ETEOCLES

All your goodwill, mother, can  
have no effect since like I said  
I will accept no others terms  
than those I stated. I shall  
rule and hold the scepters of  
Theva. No one else. Me. 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 are the hands of a  
wealthy coward.

ETEOCLES

So you brought this massive army  
to face a coward?

POLYNICES

Heed is a great quality in a  
king, not boldness.

ETEOCLES

Strong words, you braggart. Now,  
let a true king advise you. Never  
trust truce to protect your life.

POLYNICES

It protects yours as well. Once  
more I demand my crown and  
kingdom.

ETEOCLES

You are not in place to make  
demands!

POLYNICES

You stole my heritage--!

ETEOCLES

I will steal your life, too!

Polynices turns to the side of the city and spreads his  
arms.

POLYNICES

Hear me, my city!

ETEOCLES

Go to Argos. That is your city  
now.

Polynices glowers and nods.

POLYNICES

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

Eteocles shakes his head.

POLYNICES (cont'd)

My sister, then?

Eteocles stares at Polynices and snickers. They glare at  
each other with locked, intense eyes. A moment of tension.

Polynices turns away and goes to his mother. He kisses her  
in both cheeks.

POLYNICES (cont'd)

Farewell to you, beloved mother.

IOCASTE

I have no hope of faring well, my  
son.

POLYNICES

I am not your son anymore.

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

POLYNICES (cont'd)  
Where will you be in the battle?

ETEOCLES  
Krimean gate.

POLYNICES  
I will be there... to kill you.

ETEOCLES  
(smiles ironically)  
That will please me equally.

IOCASTE  
(in despair)  
Sons, what are you doing?! Will you not escape your father's curse?

ETEOCLES  
Not I! Damn the whole house!

Polynices leans over Eteocles and whispers in his ear:

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

He makes his way to the doors.

EXT. PALACE OF THEVA - TEMPLE OF APOLLO - CONTINUOUS

Polynices comes out, walks down the stairs. He turns to the side of the city.

POLYNICES  
Theva, for the doom you tolerate, blame him, not me! I came here unwillingly and without my will I leave!

He reaches at the bottom of the stairs 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...

(MORE)

POLYNICES (cont'd)

(to Eteocles)

... I shall destroy my enemy and be  
the rightful 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 greed  
and arrogance!

Polynices unties his horse and mounts it. Iocaste dashes to the palace. Eteocles stays outside, watching his brother leave. As Polynices gallops away their eyes meet one last time.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON - SUNSET

Oedipus stands before the small window. He falls to his knees, lowers his head.

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 exempt the  
people. By the greatness and  
rightness in you, have mercy on  
the souls of your beggars.

EXT. ARGIVE ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

A web of lightning CRACKS across the sky. Polynices rides through the Argive camp.

EXT. ADRASTOS' TENT - NIGHT

Polynices reaches before the largest tent in the camp and leaps off his horse.

INT. ADRASTOS' TENT - CONTINUOUS

Inside all the Argive leaders are around a table. At the head of the table sits a man in his late forties. He is KING ADRASTOS.

Next to him sits PROPHET AMPHIARAOS. The company of the leaders conclude: TYDEAS, a young man in early twenties. A tall and husky man in his early thirties named PARTHENOPEOS. A young man in middle twenties, PRINCE HIPPOMEDON and lastly KAPANEAS, a battle-scarred warrior in his early thirties. Polynices enters the tent.

POLYNICES  
 (to Adrastos)  
 Ares shall feast tonight. We go  
 to war!

Everyone is looking at Adrastos, waiting for his next words. Adrastos thinks for a moment and then:

ADRASTOS  
 (to the leaders)  
 You heard him! Get your men  
 ready!

A LOUD ROAR from all the leaders.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ARMORY - SUNSET

A huge room filled with racks of armaments. The room is crowded with soldiers, which arm themselves with spears, swords, shields, body armors.

Eteocles is near the doorway, wrath still burning his face, and checks his soldiers as they exit. Creon moves through the throng of soldiers. Eteocles spots him and darts to him.

ETEOCLES  
 Creon! Creon, you are here. I  
 wish to have a word with you.  
 Come.

Creon nods in response. They retire in a quiet corner where they can talk more privately.

ETEOCLES (cont'd)  
 Creon, you are the brother of my  
 own mother, 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.

Creon bows respectfully.

ETEOCLES (cont'd)

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

Your wish is my command, my king.

Eteocles pats him on the shoulder.

ETEOCLES

Now, I will leave at once and may fortune bring 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 darts out of the room and shouts to his soldiers:

ETEOCLES (cont'd)

Fetch me my armor and my weapons!  
The trail of blood is waiting for me!

MONTAGE

I) A sudden CRACK of THUNDER is heard and heavy rain starts to fall.

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

III) Behind the Krimean gate, Eteocles talks to SIX THEVAN LEADERS.

IV) Behind each of the seven gates, a share of hoplites are set to hold the gates against the attack. A Thevan leader stands before his share of troops.

V) The Thevan cavalry stands ready in the main square, so that help can quickly be brought whenever the Thevan defence is weak.

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

VII) Against the Neitean gate, Parthenopeos leads his seething ranks of shields.

IV) At the Proetian gate, advances prophet Amphiaraos with slaughtered animals on his chariot.

VIII) Towards the Ogygian gate, heads prince Hippomedon with his soldiers.

IX) At the Homoleodan gate, proceeds Tydeas and his men.

X) Against the Krimean gate, Polynices on his horse leads his troops.

XI) Towards the Electran gate, Kapaneas guides his men with thirst for battle.

XII) At the High gate, moves Adrastos along with his army.

XIII) The Argives array on the battlefield. The mingled ROAR of PAEAN and TRUMPETS rises high from all fronts. Seven armies are set against seven gates.

XIV) Iocaste stands on a balcony of the palace and stares off at the city, agonized.

XV) Creon sits in the dining room alone and has some wine.

XVI) Antigone lies on her bed, restless.

XVII) Polynices, eager for blood, is ready to thrust towards the city's walls.

XVIII) Eteocles observes the movement of the Argive army from the Krimean gate.

XIX) Oedipus stands in front of the window. Suddenly, he raises a SCREAM. His wordless CRY mingles with the piercing SOUND of the TRUMPETS in the battlefield.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

The TRUMPETS echo all over.

The Argive army thrusts against the Thevan walls with such tremendous force and speed that makes 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 and his hand suddenly drops.

ETEOCLES

FIRE!

Hundreds of arrows soar through the air, darkening even more the night 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 rain down. A few Thevans drop.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON

Oedipus paces about like a lion in a cage. He looks anxious, upset.

EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

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

## EXT. ELECTRAN GATE

The arrows whistle through the air and strike Capaneas' army. Many of his men totter and fall, but he doesn't even seem to notice.

Capaneas advances in raging fury, holding a ladder of prodigious length. He reaches before the gate and sets his ladder on the walls.

## EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

Dozens of scaling ladders are set on the walls. As the Argives charge at the gates, crashing stones are thrown at them from the battlements.

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

## EXT. NEITHAN GATE

Parthenopeos rushes as a hurricane at the gates, screaming WAR CRIES.

## EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

Polynices gallops across the walls with the bow in his hands. He aims quickly and lets his arrows fly, making a few of kills.

## EXT. HOMOLOEDAN GATE

Tydeas and his ranked combatants hurl their spears against the walls. Thevan soldiers dart away, leaving 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

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

## EXT. NEITHAN GATE

Ten Argive soldiers hold a battering ram. They clash it against the gate. They back up 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 throws a stone, which shatters Parthenopeos' head. His skull tears apart, soaking his hair and face in blood.

## EXT. KRIMEAN GATE

An Argive soldier comes up to a battling crest. Eteocles swords with him and kills him. He looks down at the ladder to see another man climbing up. Eteocles grasps his sword and drives it down to the man's head.

## INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON

Oedipus paces the cell. He rockets to the door and falls on it.

OEDIPUS

Release me! Release me from this  
prison! Many lives are in  
danger!

He falls to his knees.

## INT. PALACE OF THEVA - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY

Behind the door, a GUARD hears Oedipus plea.

OEDIPUS (O.S.)

I implore you, kind man, release  
me! Let me put an end to this  
disaster! I pray you.

The guard stands rigid. Expressionless. Impassive.

## INT. PALACE OF THEVA - PRISON

Oedipus lowers his head and with a low and urgent voice calls out:

OEDIPUS

I am a king on my knees and I beg  
you. Set me free.  
(MORE)

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Absolve me from my confinement,  
so I may absolve the people from  
their black destiny.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY

The guard doesn't react.

EXT. WALLS OF THEVA

The battle proceeds before the walls. Bodies fall. Heads lay open. Corpses gather everywhere.

EXT. KRIMEAN GATE

Quick as lightning, Polynices fires his bow. Bull's-eye! Two more Thevans are dead before they hit the ground. His eyes drift across the walls, obviously looking for someone. His brother!

On the walls, Eteocles flashes his sword through the air and drops two Argives. He stands on a crest, his bloody sword dripping, and gazes down at the battlefield. The brotherly eyes meet. A flicker of a smile crosses both their faces.

Polynices reaches for another arrow from his quiver. He prepares to throw, takes his time...

An Argive is knocked on Polynices' horse. The horse spooks just as Polynices fires. The arrow sails off course and grazes Eteocles' ear.

Eteocles notices a spear on the hand of a dead soldier, grabs it and hurls it at his brother. The spear rips through the air at high speed.

Polynices reacts without thinking and actually dodges the flying spear.

EXT. ELECTRAN GATE

Capaneas tops the rampart's crest and with a RAGING CRY draws his sword and holds it high in the air.

CAPANEAS  
It is the end of you, Thevans!  
Now, you fall!

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

An impressive thunderstorm suddenly starts. Repeated flashes of lightning strike every Argive soldier off the walls. ROLLING THUNDER. The quivering earth ROARS, terrifying everyone.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Adrastos watches the phenomenon, wide-eyed. Terrified, he shouts to his soldiers for retreat. Adrastos' army withdraws back beyond the trench.

EXT. KRIMEAN GATE

Eteocles sees this sign of favour. He blows a TRUMPET. A HEAVY SOUND echoes far and wide.

EXT. MAIN SQUARE

The Thevan cavalry awakens by the TRUMPET. The cavalrymen whip up their horses and race away from the square.

EXT. HIGH GATE

Behind the High gates, A Thevan leader waits along with his infantry. He looks at Eteocles shouting at the top of his lungs:

ETEOCLES

ATTACK!

The Thevan leader shouts to his men:

THEVAN LEADER

OPEN THE GATES! OPEN THE GATES!

The gates open.

THEVAN LEADER (cont'd)

Thevans, great and glorious, the time we have been waiting for is here! Defend your country! Die for your wives and your children!

Hundreds of Thevan hoplites thrusts to the battlefield, screaming BATTLE CRIES.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Adrastos' men flee in all directions. The Thevan hoplites charge in a mass against the Argive center. The Thevan cavalry follows close behind.

Thevan archers fire a deadly barrage of arrows. Hundreds of Argive men get slaughtered. Blood spouts. Corpses pile on corpses. Death and horror is let loose.

All of a sudden, a SHARP SOUND from a TRUMPET is heard. It's a bidden call for silence.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

Everyone freezes at once and looks in that direction.

EXT. KRIMEAN GATE

Eteocles stands on a high battlement. He raises a SCREAM.

ETEOCLES

Soldiers of Argos, lower your weapons and listen to what I have to say! Do not venture your lives in vain! This is not your war! I challenge my brother in a fight! If I am defeated, I shall yield him the throne! But 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 rides through the ranks, coming forth to the gate. He reins his horse to a stop.

POLYNICES

Well, brother, if as you say want to take my life 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, but 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.

A YOUNG MESSENGER stands before the gates and shouts towards them:

YOUNG MESSENGER

Who stands guard at the palace gates?! Open them wide!

Palace gates open. A guard comes out.

YOUNG MESSENGER (cont'd)  
Let me pass. I have urgent news  
for the queen.

The messenger and the guard enter the palace.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SUNRISE

A campfire burns on each side. A THEVAN PRIEST from one side and prophet Amphiaraos from the other perform their rituals. They chant in a bizarre language, throw muddy water and animal skin on the flames.

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

THEVAN LEADER  
(to Eteocles)  
You do not fight for yourself.  
You fight for Theva. Win for  
her! Be the lone holder of your  
crown!

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!

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - ENTRANCE HALL - SUNRISE

Queen Iocaste hurries down the stairs. An attendant follows her. She comes down to the hall and meets the messenger.

IOCASTE  
(in agony)  
Good man, what news? Tell me, is  
my son Eteocles alive or dead?

YOUNG MESSENGER  
He is alive, my lady. Set your  
heart at ease.

IOCASTE  
Do you have any news of Polynices?

YOUNG MESSENGER

Polynices is alive, too. Both of  
your sons breath the air of this  
world.

Iocaste sighs in relief.

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 digging into his  
eyes for an answer.

IOCASTE (cont'd)

You are hiding something dreadful  
that keeps me in the dark.

YOUNG MESSENGER

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

IOCASTE

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

The messenger takes a deep breath.

YOUNG MESSENGER

Your sons will confront in a  
fight away from their armies. A  
fight until death.

Iocaste puts her hands over her mouth.

IOCASTE

Great Apollo!

She darts upstairs.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SUNRISE

Eteocles and Polynices are bowed between the two armies,  
preparing to match their strength in a combat spear against  
spear. Polynices, on his knees, is praying.

POLYNICES

Honorable Hera, I am true to you.  
I took Adrastos' daughter for my  
wife and I live in your land.  
Give me strength to destroy my  
brother and redden my arms with  
his blood.

Eteocles, on his knees, is also praying.

ETEOCLES

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

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

Iocaste storms into the room. Antigone sits on the side of her bed. She bolts up. The shadows beneath her eyes verify she didn't sleep all night.

IOCASTE

(in despair)

Daughter Antigone! Your brothers  
are heading towards death!

ANTIGONE

Mother, what are you saying?

IOCASTE

Your brothers will meet in a  
fight. Come, go with me. We  
must prevent their bloodshed!

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

ANTIGONE

Mother, I cannot leave the  
palace. I am ashamed of the  
people.

IOCASTE

There is no time for shame.

They run out of the room.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SUNRISE

Eteocles and Polynices stand in position to start the fight. They grip 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 Hades. They fight without a pause.

At some point, Eteocles misjudges his footing and places his leg outside his shield's protection.

Polynices sees the offered chance, hits and drives his spear into Eteocles' shin. The Argive army ROARS in jubilation.

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

Polynices falls down with a CRY, his shield slips from his hand and his spear breaks in two. With his weapon useless, he retreats crawling backwards, using his hands and feet.

Eteocles walks towards Polynices menacingly. Polynices picks up a stone and tosses it at Eteocles. He easily dodges it.

Eteocles picks up a quicker pace. Polynices crawls backwards as fast as he can. Eteocles approaches, lifts his spear in the air and thrusts it down with tremendous power. The spear 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 smile spreads across Eteocles' face as he glances down at Polynices. Eteocles unnails the spear and throws it away. He turns his back on Polynices and walks away. Eteocles draws his sword and turns around.

Polynices bolts up, picks up his shield and unsheathes his sword. They grasp their weapons and hold their shields close to their bodies. They circle, eyes locked, while the clattery uproar of battle raises.

EXT. STREETS OF THEVA - SUNRISE

Iocaste and Antigone run through the streets, fear and anguish on their faces.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SUNRISE

Abruptly, Eteocles charges at 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' hits 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 strike each other with explosive passion. An even match.

At some point, a blow of Eteocles gives him the edge and stabs his brother in the spine. Blood cascades down the wound. Polynices grabs his sore in agony, topples forward and 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 tilts to the right and his eyes come to rest on his right arm. He comes to realize that the sword is still in his hand.

With his last bit of power in him and all his slender strength, Polynices grips the blade and digs into Eteocles' heart.

Eteocles goes wide-eyed. He looks at his wound, gasping. He clenches the sword and yanks it out slowly, making no scream, no sound of pain. Then he collapses next to his brother.

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

Iocaste comes in desperate haste with Antigone on her side. She sees her injured sons and dashes to them. She falls to her knees alongside them.

Iocaste notices that both their wounds are mortal and makes a heartbreaking CRY.

IOCASTE

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

Beside her, Antigone grieves, too.

ANTIGONE

Dear brothers, do not leave us!  
Stay with your family...

Iocaste leans over each in turn, weeps and mourns with tears flowing down her cheeks.

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

Polynices breaths heavily, 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 always was my brother. I beseech you both. Bury me in my homeland so I may profit as much as I can of my heritage for 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 embraces me...

Iocaste removes her hand. Polynices' eyelids are closed. He's gone. Iocaste stops crying. She stares at her dead children.

Abruptly, she grabs the bloody sword laying on the ground next to them. Antigone glares at her mother with wide eyes and SCREAMS.

ANTIGONE

MOTHER!

Iocaste rams the blade into her throat. Blood spouts from her open throat. Her dead body drops between her two sons.

Antigone runs to her mother and falls on her corpse, sobbing with grief. She weeps, inconsolable about the loss of her family. TWO SOLDIERS pull her back. Antigone tries to break free from their grasp.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

The outcome of a battle. 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 - PRISON - DAY

Oedipus is curled up in a ball in the middle of the room. The door opens and two guards enter.

INT. PALACE OF THEVA - TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

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

Oedipus comes in with the guards on his side. Antigone sees him, springs up and falls into his arms.

ANTIGONE

Father... Oh, father...

OEDIPUS

Dear child, there is stillness in the air. Something terrible has happened.

ANTIGONE

I have grievous news, father. Your sons... Eteocles and Polynices... they no longer see the light of the sun.

Oedipus lowers his head.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

And your wife, who always escorted your blind steps, is also gone with them.

Oedipus sighs in exasperation.

OEDIPUS

Is this true?

ANTIGONE

Every word, father.

Oedipus' face scrunches up, a wave of emotion rushes over him.

OEDIPUS

Wail for the hits that take me down! Three lives have left the daylight!

Antigone affectionately pats her father's hand and then gives him a warm embrace.

Creon enters accompanied by his followers and an attendant.

CREON

Grieve no more! It is time for burial rites!

He goes to Oedipus and stands before him.

CREON (cont'd)

Oedipus, hear these words. Your son Eteocles gives your daughter Antigone to my son Haemon as his wife. That leaves me the ruler of Theva.

(MORE)

CREON (cont'd)  
 And now, I, the new king, shall  
 do what your sons should have  
 done long ago.

Oedipus lowers his head. He already knows Creon's next words.

CREON (cont'd)  
 I will forbid you to stay in  
 Theva. You are banished!  
 Prophecies said it clearly.  
 While you are here this city has  
 no hope of prosperity. You will  
 go away and never come back.

OEDIPUS  
 Banishment can only mean one  
 thing for me... Death.

CREON  
 The cost of a city is greater  
 than the cost of a single life,  
 Oedipus.  
 (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 death for a man who came  
 to destroy the city of his birth.  
 (to an attendant)  
 And have this announced to the  
 citizens. Whoever covers this  
 corpse with earth... the penalty  
 would be death!

Antigone's eyes boil.

CREON (cont'd)  
 And you, Antigone, wipe your tears  
 and take yourself to your chamber.  
 Heamon will wait for your grief to  
 end, for you to be his bride.

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

ANTIGONE  
 You will not touch him!  
 (sobs)  
 Creon, you the new king of Theva,  
 I ask you.  
 (MORE)

ANTIGONE (cont'd)  
Why do you have to rewrite  
ancient laws for a lifeless body?

CREON  
These were Eteocles' decisions.

ANTIGONE  
Decisions unwisely made and now  
unwisely honored!

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

Antigone shakes her head, disgusted.

ANTIGONE  
I will bury him myself.

CREON  
You will bury yourself 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 I shall be a killer  
among the Danaids.

She snatches a sword from one of the guards, holds it up.

ANTIGONE (cont'd)  
I swear it on this sword!

CREON  
May I hear your reason?

Antigone moves closer to Oedipus and takes his hand.

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. Antigone grips the sword.

CREON

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

Creon walks away with his guards following him. The sword drops from Antigone's hand.

OEDIPUS

My beloved daughter, your devotion warms my heart.

ANTIGONE

How could I leave 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. Honorable.

Oedipus nods, understanding that Antigone has made her decision.

OEDIPUS

Guide me so I may touch Iocaste.

Antigone leads her father to the body of Iocaste. He kneels down. Antigone puts his hand on her mother'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 and stands. Antigone kisses her mother, too.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

A torch shoved into the sand lights the place. There is a horse further away.

Antigone digs a hole, using her hands and a wooden staff. Oedipus stands next to her unable to help. 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 to you.

She helps him bend down.

OEDIPUS

Place my sightless hand on his head.

Antigone places Oedipus' hand on the face 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 son's forehead and rises. Antigone kneels down and kisses Polynices' forehead as well. She stares at him for several moments. Then she pushes his body into the hole.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

(to the sky)

Apollo, you ordained my life. It is now time for you to ordain my death.

INT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO/ORACLE CHAMBER - DAY

Oedipus steps into the temple with the help of a PRIEST. They come before the oracle chamber. Pythia sees Oedipus and a smile breaks into her lips.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

Antigone is waiting outside. Oedipus and the priest exit the temple.

ANTIGONE

Father! What did the oracle say?

OEDIPUS

My dear, Antigone, I must go to Athens. There is a place, a hamlet called Colonus where Poseidon's sacred horses graze. There... I shall rest my bones.

Antigone puts her hand over her mouth, shocked.

EXT. EUMENIES' GROVE - DAY

A grove of olive trees. In the b.g., high walls bound a city. Antigone moves on foot through the trees, leading the horse. Oedipus is a little behind, walking with the help of a prop.

As they walk, they meet a stream leading to a swamp rounded by massive rocks. Around the swamp, the germination grows thicker and a low-hanging fog blankets everything.

Oedipus breaths heavily, sweat runs off his head. His exhaustion is apparent. He stops and leans on his prop.

OEDIPUS

Antigone, dear child, where can I sit?

Antigone notices a rock near the swamp.

ANTIGONE

Come, father.

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

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

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

Oedipus does. He rests for a moment, catches his breath.

OEDIPUS

Now, you the daughter of a blind father, can you tell me where we are? Whose turn it is to show hospitality to the wandering Oedipus? I do not ask for much and I am satisfied with less.

Antigone scans the area, looks over the trees and sees the walls in the distance.

ANTIGONE

Father, I can see walls bounding  
a city long way away. Shall I  
leave you here and go find out  
where we are?

OEDIPUS

That would be wise, Antigone.

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

ANTIGONE

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

OEDIPUS

He is coming our way? Where is  
he?

The man arrives. He dismounts his horse and motions to 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 eyes  
are 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 sacred.

OEDIPUS

Is it so? Which god is it  
dedicated?

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

Well, they may kindly greet me as their suppliant for I will stay here forever.

STRANGER

What do you mean?

OEDIPUS

A sign of destiny orders me to stay here.

The stranger nods, unsure what to reply.

STRANGER

Old man, I cannot ask you to leave, not before I learn what is right for me to do.

He turns to leave.

OEDIPUS

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

The stranger thinks for a moment. Then:

STRANGER

Fine. You will know as much as I know.

OEDIPUS

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

STRANGER

Everything that lies before us 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 here. Theseus is his name. His father was Aegeus.

OEDIPUS

Could you deliver a message to him?

STRANGER

What for?

OEDIPUS

A small favor shall earn him a great profit.

STRANGER

(ironically)

What can a blind man offer 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 decide your destiny. All I can do for you is guide you up 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. ATHENIAN GATE - DAY

A line of people, chariots and wagons extending up to the gates. SIX SENTRIES guard the entrance of Athens, checking the people walking in and out.

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

EXT. ATHENIAN GATE - LATER

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

SENTRY #1

Generous Zeus! Who are you, old man?

OEDIPUS

I am...

(hesitates)

... someone 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.  
And yet, if it is in my power, my  
friend, 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 not saying, old man?

OEDIPUS

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

SENTRY #1

And why is that?

OEDIPUS

My origin is dreadful...

SENTRY #1

Speak.

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

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

Oedipus nods in understanding.

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  
line. People whisper in uneasiness.

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

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

Oedipus nods. Sentry #1 turns to the others. They make a huddle. The sentries 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 to him.

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

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

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

Sentry #1 dashes to Oedipus, grabs him by the arms and pushes 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 matched with deception,  
old man. Now, leave! Get out of  
our city at once! Infect us no  
more!

Oedipus lowers his head, offended. Antigone goes to the sentries.

ANTIGONE  
Good people, since you cannot  
stand my father, have some mercy  
on me. I implore you. Let me  
speak for him, as blood sprung of  
your blood, not his.  
(MORE)

ANTIGONE (cont'd)

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 all that  
you suffer, but we fear the anger  
of the gods and do not dare to  
help you.

OEDIPUS

Is this the famous righteousness  
of Athens? Is this the renowned  
city of fairness? Where, if not  
here, can an aggrieved man seek  
refuge and comfort? Instead, you  
send me away fearful, not by my  
face, but by my name alone.  
Friends, I pray 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. Trust me, when you take  
me before your king you will hear  
it all and know it all.

The sentries exchange pensive looks and make a huddle  
again. They converse privately. A few moments later,  
Sentry #2 runs away, 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 signals to the rest of the sentries to go about  
their business. He, Oedipus and Antigone retract to the  
side.

OEDIPUS

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

SENTRY #1

He sure 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. ATHENIAN GATE - LATER

The Athenian gates open and Sentry #2 comes out. He goes to Sentry #1, dismounts and talks closely to him. Then Sentry #1 hastes to Oedipus.

SENTRY #1

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 through 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 first at the palace first. Close behind them come Oedipus and Antigone. Antigone dismounts and helps her father get off the horse.

INT. PALACE OF ATHENS - THRONE ROOM - DAY

Two huge doors are pushed open by the sentries. The throne room is a massive chamber endowed with the artistry of Athens. Sculptured colonnades, spectacular mosaics, elegant statues.

KING THESEUS is sitting on his throne. Theseus is a young, handsome man in his late twenties.

When Oedipus enters the room, Theseus bolts up and comes forth to greet him. He fronts Oedipus, recognizing him with great veneration. 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.

(MORE)

THESEUS (cont'd)

Your face reveals 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 hesitates. He seems uncomfortable.

OEDIPUS

Respectable Theseus, I would  
rather speak in privacy. Too  
many eyes and too many ears hold  
my words back.

Theseus turns to his guards and attendants.

THESEUS

Leave us alone. Give us some  
privacy.

The guards and attendants walk out of the room. Antigone  
stays next to her father.

OEDIPUS

You, too, my child. Go with the  
others. King Theseus and I must  
be left alone.

Antigone bows and leaves.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

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

THESEUS

What earnings are these?

OEDIPUS

In time you shall know.

THESEUS

When will this be?

OEDIPUS

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

Theseus is left speechless. He looks concerned, worried.

THESEUS

Oedipus...

OEDIPUS

Do not worry, Theseus. Death is  
a journey every man has to take.  
I am no different than any other  
man. When my time is here and  
the boatman awaits me, your land  
is to be rewarded. The only  
thing I ask from you is your  
hospitality and sympathy until  
that time comes.

THESEUS

Oedipus, everything I own is  
yours--

OEDIPUS

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

THESEUS

What conflict?

OEDIPUS

Theva is doomed 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  
between the two cities is fair,  
but 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  
scatter them to the winds. Then  
my cold body shall drink hot  
blood, if Zeus is still Zeus and  
Apollo is true.

THESEUS

The favor you ask me, Oedipus, is  
very small.

OEDIPUS

Choose your words very carefully,  
Theseus. I have been wronged  
again and again. I was driven  
away from home by my own flesh  
and blood. My destiny is to  
never go back.

THESEUS

Now, here is your home. While  
you are with us you can have  
everything you desire.

OEDIPUS

May gods reward you...

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

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

... my king.

Theseus helps him up.

THESEUS

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

OEDIPUS

I would never bind you with an  
oath 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, so let us feast  
until morning breaks!

INT. PALACE OF ATHENS - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It is a Greek feast. Music is playing and beautiful women  
are dancing. People are standing in the middle of the room  
talking, others are eating, drinking or dancing.

SERVANTS work the room, lading the table with platters of  
food and fruit, and filling goblets with wine.

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

THESEUS

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

OEDIPUS

What is it that you wish to hear,  
my king?

THESEUS

The grievous misery that you  
faced.

OEDIPUS

Kind host, I beg you, do not ask  
about the shameful things that  
happened to me.

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.

Oedipus nods.

OEDIPUS

I have suffered the worst  
injustice. I have suffered  
punishment unearned. Gods know  
none of this was my choice.

THESEUS

What do you mean?

OEDIPUS

Shamefully wedded to a  
marriage...

Oedipus pauses, on the verge of an emotional release.

THESEUS

... with your mother?

Oedipus nods.

OEDIPUS

It is death to me just to hear  
it. That is not all. She...

(MORE)

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 (points to Antigone)  
 ... is born of me.

THESEUS  
 What do you say?

OEDIPUS  
 Child and a curse bearer. Sprang  
 from the same womb, the same  
 mother, who brought myself to  
 life.

THESEUS  
 She is your daughter?

OEDIPUS  
 And sister! Her father's sister!

He bursts into tears and falls into Antigone's arms for  
 comfort.

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 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, but  
not unjustly.

Theseus is confused.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

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

Oedipus turns his darkened face to Theseus.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

I beseech you, my king. Ask  
nothing more.

Theseus nods understandingly.

EXT. PALACE OF ATHENS - GARDEN - DAY

The sun is out. The sky is bright blue. Oedipus is seated  
on a bench with Antigone keeping him company.

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

In short time, the sky fills with ominous dark clouds. A  
haunting gust of WIND rushes across the garden. Oedipus  
lowers his head, knowing what is about to happen.

A lightning bolt strikes far away. A DISTANT PEAL of  
THUNDER follows. There is occasional far off lightning and  
THUNDER.

Oedipus lifts his head, stands up. Antigone stands, too.  
She glances at her father bizarrely. Oedipus gives the  
impression he can see, but his eyes stay wounded.

OEDIPUS

Dear child, worthy Theseus must 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.

Antigone signals to a SERVANT. He goes inside the palace quickly. Antigone walks to her father.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
Caring daughter, the fated ending  
has come upon your father's life.  
It can not be avoided.

ANTIGONE  
How do you know, father?

OEDIPUS  
I know it all too well.

Oedipus in agony lifts his head to the sky. The air trembles. The wind is blowing hard.

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  
give back.

EXT. ATHENS - DAY

Dark clouds swirl in the sky. The WIND blows even harder. PEALS of THUNDER and lightning bolts continue to strike, tormenting the sky.

EXT. PALACE OF ATHENS - GARDEN - DAY

Theseus comes out to the garden accompanied by his guards.

THESEUS  
Oedipus?

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

THESEUS  
Why did you called for me?

OEDIPUS

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

THESEUS

Are you certain that your death is  
close?

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.

Theseus looks at the sky, astounded.

THESEUS

What is there for me to do?

Oedipus withdraws solemnly Theseus aside, so they can talk  
in private.

OEDIPUS

Son of Aegeus, what I will now  
disclose to you, shall be kept in  
your city's soul until the end of  
time. Soon I shall guide you, no  
hand to lead my way, to the  
location where I must die. Tell  
no man the place where it lies.  
Keep it eternally a secret. When  
your life is coming to an 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  
unharmd forever.

THESEUS

I will not fail you, Oedipus. I  
shall honor those words with the  
last breath of my body.

Oedipus nods his head in satisfaction.

OEDIPUS  
 We have to get going. The hand  
 of god directs me.

Oedipus takes a few steps towards the palace.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 (to Antigone)  
 Come, my child, follow me. It is  
 time for me to be your guide.

Antigone tries to help him.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)  
 Do not touch me. Let me find the  
 way to my grave, where this land's  
 ground will enwrap my body, alone.

Oedipus leads the way to his destiny with slow, but steady steps. Everyone watch him, surprised. They all 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. A few people trail them. As they advance through the streets more people follow to eventually become a huge throng.

EXT. ATHENIAN GATE - 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 moves into the fog until they are vanished.

EXT. EUMENIES' GROVE - SUNSHINE

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

Lightning flashes and THUNDER RUMBLES above him. The sky is on fire. Oedipus begins to take off his clothes.

OEDIPUS  
 Daughter, Antigone, help your  
 father wash.

Oedipus steps into the stream, knee deep. Antigone walks in, too, and helps her father cleanse his old, tired body. 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 and places it on Oedipus' head.

Oedipus stands ready. A king in all his glory. He goes to his daughter, touches her cheeks with both of his hands and brings his face to hers.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

My child, today your father  
leaves you. It is the end of me,  
of all that I was. It is the end  
of the heavy burden you bore 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.

Antigone starts to sob. She falls down, wrapping her father's legs. Oedipus lifts her up and takes her in his arms. They both cry, locked in each others arms.

A deep silence falls...

Suddenly, THUNDER crash so CONSTANT and LOUD 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 joins their hands.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

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" deep into Theseus' eyes. Theseus bows in respect.

THESEUS

I will, Oedipus.

OEDIPUS

My beloved Antigone, now you have to show courage in your heart. You must leave this place behind and never ask to see what gods forbid.

Antigone in tears falls into her father's embrace. She holds him tight. Oedipus slowly pushes her away.

OEDIPUS (cont'd)

Now, go. Only the chosen one shall witness this mystery.

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

A deep silence falls once more. For several moments, nothing can be heard. Nothing can be seen.

A massive bolt of lightning hammers down to earth.

Antigone looks over her shoulder. The wall of fog dissipates slowly, revealing king Theseus walking alone towards the walls. Oedipus is nowhere to be seen.

FADE OUT.

THE END