

**Oedipus the King**

Frederick Lane

Cathedral Catholic High School

World Literature

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(Option #1)

## How is Oedipus a Victim of fate

In Sophocles' tragic play "Oedipus Rex," Oedipus is portrayed as a tragic hero who is ultimately a victim of fate, as his attempts to escape his prophesied destiny only lead him closer to its fulfillment, demonstrating the inescapable power of fate over free will. The main character, Oedipus, is sometimes seen as a sad prisoner of fate, trapped by birthright prophecies that control his existence. Through the unfolding of the plot, it becomes obvious that despite Oedipus's efforts to avert his fate, he ultimately fulfills the prophecy that he would kill his father and marry his mother. You are this land's cursed polluter, as Tiresias tells Oedipus. This paper investigates how Oedipus is a casualty of destiny, highlighting the part of prescience, and the restrictions of human free will.

From the outset, Oedipus's life is overshadowed by a dire prophecy. The Oracle of Delphi predicted that he would wed Queen Jocasta and kill his father, King Laius, before he was even born. Laius and Jocasta choose to leave their young son to die on a mountainside in an effort to stop this prophecy from coming true. However, fate intervenes when a shepherd rescues the baby and takes him to Corinth, where he is adopted by King Polybus and Queen Merope. This initial act of trying to outmaneuver fate sets the stage for the tragic events that follow, illustrating the inescapable nature of the prophecy.

As Oedipus grows older, he learns of the prophecy and, believing that Polybus and Merope are his biological parents, flees Corinth to avoid his predestined fate. However, his journey leads him directly into the path of his true destiny. I must bring what is dark to light," declares Oedipus. His intelligence and determination, qualities that make him a respected leader. His relentless pursuit of the murderer of Laius, fueled by a sense of justice and duty, becomes a

quest of self-destruction. On the road to Thebes, he encounters Laius and, in a fit of rage, kills him, unknowingly fulfilling the first part of the prophecy. Upon reaching Thebes, Oedipus solves the riddle of the Sphinx and is hailed as a hero, subsequently marrying the widowed Queen Jocasta, thus unknowingly completing the prophecy. Jocasta tries to comfort Oedipus saying, “Fear! What has a man to do with fear? Chance rules our lives , and the future is all unknown.” These events underscore the futility of attempting to escape one's fate, as Oedipus's very actions to avoid it lead him directly into its fulfillment.

The concept of fate versus free will is central to "Oedipus Rex." While Oedipus is portrayed as a determined and proactive individual, his efforts to control his destiny are ultimately futile. The play suggests that human beings are limited in their ability to alter their fates, as the gods' will is absolute. Oedipus's tragic flaw is his hubris—his belief that he can outsmart the gods and avoid his destiny. This arrogance blinds him to the truth and leads to his downfall. The revelation of his true parentage and the realization that he has fulfilled the prophecy despite his best efforts highlight the powerlessness of humans in the face of divine will. When Oedipus came to realize what was going on, he said “ O, O, O, they will all come, all come out clearly! Light of the sun, let me look upon you no more after today!”

Oedipus couldn't believe what he had done to his whole family. His arrogance and cockiness has finally got in the way of the people he has cared about. He was so focused on finding all the secrets circulating him and not realizing how he would react when the truth came out. With all of this pain on his chest, he has chosen to gash his eyes out and go blind like the prophecy states. He says, “ Why should I have eyes? Why, when nothing I saw was worth seeing.” A prophecy from Tiresias also states that Oedipus will be blindsided with all the wrongs he has done.

The play explores the tension between fate and free will. Oedipus' story suggests that humans cannot escape their destined paths, no matter how hard they try. Like how he tried to convince himself that the prophecy was wrong. Oedipus even moved away from his parents, so the prophecy wouldn't be accurate. Even though his real parents were Laius and Queen Jocasta. His tragic story underscores the power of fate and the inevitability of destiny in human life. Since birth, Oedipus has always had to deal with fate. He was adopted and didn't even know it. Also had kids with his real mother and killed his real father. Can't really blame Oedipus for making all the choices he made because he really ain't no more about himself than he had thought. People have lied to him and kept secrets for a while to keep everything normal. Like it says in the play, "Whatever is in the dark, always comes to light."

In conclusion, Oedipus is undeniably a victim of fate. The prophecy that dictates his life is set in motion before his birth, and every action he takes to avoid it only brings him closer to its fulfillment. Sophocles' play serves as a unique update of the antiquated Greek conviction in the certainty of destiny and the confinements of human free will. Despite his efforts to avoid his destiny, he ends up fulfilling the prophecy that he would kill his father and marry his mother. His actions, driven by ignorance and a desire to do good, lead him directly into the tragic fate foretold for him. The most important thing is that Oedipus is really sorry for the people he hurt and the mistakes he has made. He totally understands the damage he has brought upon himself and the family. Oedipus's tragic story is a testament to the power of destiny and the inescapable nature of the gods' will, illustrating that no matter how much one tries to alter their course, fate ultimately prevails.

Work Cited

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