

The Study of Oedipus Downfall

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The unsolved mystery of the murderer of King Laius remains to be undiscovered, and yearned to be solved. A newly crowned king named Oedipus steps up for the city of Thebes and saves the city by solving a riddle from the plague called the Sphinx. Oedipus is a very hubris man with a short temper who seeks further for the truth of the killer of King Laius. Suddenly he realizes that finding the truth will be a lifelong regret. Oedipus, a hubris king wanting to know the truth of the killer; loses his temper and mind by trying to escape his prophecy, and ends up devastated by his own actions.

Raised in Corinth, Oedipus is prophesied to kill his own father and sleep next to his mother. When he was growing up, a drunken man yells out saying ‘you are not your fathers son’, and this leaves Oedipus questioning his life. After hearing this statement he moves to Thebes to try and escape his prophecy and runs into a three-way road. Later in life Oedipus becomes King of Thebes by solving the riddle of the Sphinx. As the devastating plague of Thebes comes to an end, Creon returns and reports that suddenly that they must discover the murderer. Oedipus demands to the unknown killer, “we must find the murderer of King Laius. We must execute them or expel them from the Land” (Oedipus 19). The punishment for the murder of King Laius is set in stone, but Oedipus does not realize what fate he has set out for himself. With this punishment Oedipus is very confident that he did not kill the previous king, and starts to try and put things together. Calling upon the gods for help on the murder, Oedipus seeks for the truth once more by asking help from Teiresias. Teiresias tries to convince Oedipus that he should stop reaching out for the truth and leave it alone, and carry on with his life. Oedipus doesn't listen to him and continues to search for the truth. He starts to become very angry with Teiresias, and then Teiresias becomes angry at Oedipus saying that the murderer is among him and is a well known

king. He also lets Oedipus know that “To his children he will be both brother and father. To her who gave him birth both son and husband. And to his father he will be both killer and the man who shared his bed” (Teiresias 25). Everyone is trying to stop Oedipus from finding out the mystery; because his whole life will change when he finds out about the truth of the murder.

After Teiresias accuses Oedipus of being the murderer, Oedipus swears he didn't kill the King. Creon then enters the play after Oedipus accuses him of killing Laius. He thinks that he killed the King to gain royalty alongside his sister. The two men become angry and continue to argue with each other until Oedipus loses his temper. Oedipus being very upset with Creon yells out to him “Exile? No! I want you dead. I want the world to see the punishment that treason brings” (Oedipus 30). Oedipus starts to lose his temper with everyone because trying to solve this mystery is causing him to slowly lose his mind. At this point in the play, his temper is starting to take over him, and he can't seem to control it. His wife Jocasta steps in to break her brother and husband up and to try and settle Oedipus emotions down. After talking for a while Oedipus keeps gathering information and hears about Jocasta's prophecy about her first born. Jocasta's first born son was prophesied to kill his own father, so she sent her child with a shepherd to take care of the child. After hearing all about this prophecy, he is slowly starting to lose it all. “My hopes are dying, but they will await the coming of this shepherd” (Oedipus 38). Oedipus catches something that Jocasta says about highwaymen and asks to see the shepherd and hear what he has to say.

Oedipus is seeking for the truth once again bringing shepherds and messengers from other lands to figure out who this killer is. He is interrogating everyone and demanding for others to speak about what they know on who it could possibly be. Jocasta steps in to calm down Oedipus and demands him to leave this mystery alone. Jocasta has put two and two together

figuring out that Oedipus is the killer of King Laius. “Why does it matter? Leave it alone. It is a waste of time to worry about such trivial things. If you care for your life... stop now. No more! My pain is hard enough.” (Jocasta 46-47). Jocasta comes to realize the truth about Oedipus also it means that her prophecy has come true as well. She gave birth to her first born, and that he is now son and husband. Oedipus, still wrapping all this around his head, asks the shepherd once more to speak about the child that he had given Polybus and Merope. The shepherd speaks up saying “I felt for the child, and thought he’d take it to a safe country away from Thebes to Corinth. If Oedipus is really who the messenger says he is... god have mercy on you. You were born into a life of misery.” (Shepherd 51). Oedipus is raging from the truth and annoyed at himself from his actions. He runs to his chamber and finds his wife and mother Jocasta hanging from a rope. Oedipus then proceeds to become angrier to the point that he stabs his own eyes out. This caused his eyes to bleed out, and he became completely blind. Oedipus, regretting everything he has done in his life up to this point, asks Creon to bring his children to him, so he can hold them one last time. “He tells them that he is now father and brother, and share the same mother. Then he asks Creon to take over as their father so they can live in peace as he wanders the Earth.” (Oedipus 61). Agreeing to do this, Creon accepts his children as a good man would do. Then, Creon grants Oedipus his wish of being sent off from the city of Thebes into a place far away.

Oedipus, a hubris king desperate to know the truth of the murder of King Laius, loses his temper and mind by trying to escape his prophecy, and blinds himself from his own actions.

Oedipus was a man on a mission trying to save his city. In doing so, he discovers that the murderer ends up actually being himself. Oedipus, an overconfident man not thinking before he speaks, ruins his own life by finding out the truth of his prophecy and parents. Not only did he

ruin his life, but he ruined the lives of his children and his mother. If only the shepherd would have followed the orders of King Lauis and Queen Jocasta this all could be a very different story.

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