

Oedipus: A Victim Of Fate

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Oedipus The King, a play by Sophocles, tells the story of Oedipus, the King of Thebes, who unknowingly killed his father and married his mother. In this play, Oedipus receives a prophecy from an oracle that states Oedipus will kill his father and marry his mother. Oedipus tries to escape this prophecy by moving away from his parents and home in Corinth. In reality, he moves to Thebes, where his biological parents rule. Oedipus was a victim of fate due to the prophecies given to him by the gods when he was born, his blindness of the truth, as well as his suffering when he found out his whole life was full of lies.

Oedipus was a victim of fate when he was born. In the play Oedipus The King, Oedipus is unaware of his true parents. Oedipus grew up thinking King Polybus and Merope were his biological parents, but in reality, they were not, Queen Jocasta and King Laius were. Jocasta and Laius were told their son would one day marry his mother and kill his father by an oracle from Delphi. To prevent this prophecy from coming true, King Laius decided to stick a pin through the baby's ankles, leaving him to die in the woods of Cithaeron (Sophocles: 429 BC). We find out later in the play, that Oedipus was saved by a shepherd and was given to Polybus as a gift (Sophocles: 429 BC). From that point, Polybus and Merope raised Oedipus as their son.

When Oedipus was older, a prophet warned him of his prophecy. Oedipus was aware of his fate, so he moved to Thebes to get away from who he thought was his biological parents. On the way there, a carriage carried King Laius and his men. They accidentally struck Oedipus, which made him terribly angry. Then, Oedipus decided to murder the King and his men, not knowing it was King

Laius, or his biological father (Sophocles: 429 BC). Therefore, Oedipus fulfilled his prophecy unknowingly. While he was in Thebes, Creon told the village if they could solve the Sphinx's riddle, they would be given the opportunity to be king. Oedipus was able to save the village from the Sphinx, making him able to marry Jocasta, which in reality, is his mother (Sophocles: 429 BC). No matter what Oedipus did, his prophecy would be fulfilled without him knowing.

Oedipus was given many signs that he was the one who killed King Laius, but chose to ignore them. A plague came over the town of Thebes, because of the unsolved murder of King Laius. Because Oedipus was king, all of the people from the village begged him to help find his killer. The people of Thebes thought of Oedipus as a great wise king. Although Tiresias warned him to not find out the truth, Oedipus vowed to exile whoever was responsible (Sophocles: 429 BC). The first clue that Oedipus was the murderer was that King Laius was killed on a four way road, where Oedipus killed the people due to road rage. However, a witness of the murder said it was a bunch of highwaymen who killed King Laius, making Oedipus confident that he was not responsible for the murder (Sophocles: 429 BC). Later on in the story, the witness sees Oedipus and confirms him as King Laius's killer.

Oedipus was told about his parents' identity, but didn't believe it. Oedipus was at a banquet when a drunken man blurted that King Polybus was not Oedipus's real father. He asked his "mother" Merope about the matter, to which she didn't respond, which led Oedipus to go to the oracle and get his prophecy. While trying to find King Laius's murderer, Oedipus sent for the servant who was a witness. Oedipus expresses his concern about his prophecies, to which the servant told him he has no reason to fear going to Corinth, because he has no blood ties to King Polybus (Sophocles: 429 BC).

Therefore, he shouldn't worry about killing him and fulfilling his prophecy because King Polybus isn't his father. He asks Jocasta about the servant, which Jocasta begs Oedipus to stop looking for the truth. (Sophocles: 429 BC)

Finding out the truth about Oedipus's life didn't just affect Oedipus, but also affected Jocasta and their children. When Oedipus finally knows the truth, he is sickened by the horror of his wife also being his mother. He is both brother and father to his children. When he goes to ask Jocasta about his terrible realization, he finds out that she has hung herself to escape from the horrible reality of sleeping with her son. Oedipus feels that he should no longer see the things he has done, so Oedipus tore the brooches off of her robe and stabbed both of his eyes so he could be blinded from the truth (Sophocles: 429 BC). He begs Creon to exile him from Thebes for his horrible sins. Oedipus says goodbye to his daughters, and tells them that no man will ever want to marry them because of his father (Sophocles: 429 BC). The play ends with Oedipus being exiled to live on the hills of Cithaeron, where he says he was destined to die.

In conclusion, Oedipus was a victim of fate because no matter what he did, he would still fulfill his prophecy of killing his father and marrying his mother. In a way, Oedipus never had free will, and was controlled by Apollo the God. He was lied to his whole life, which led to his downfall of moving to Thebes and being introduced to his biological parents. He ignored all of the warnings other people gave him to not seek the truth. If Oedipus listened to the other people's warnings, the truth would not be known, and Jocasta and Oedipus would still be alive and happy. Oedipus's blindness of the truth, and his prophecies given to him caused him to suffer, making him a victim of fate.

References

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