

## Story of Oedipus

When **Oedipus was born**, a prophet announced that the baby would grow up to kill his father and marry his mother, the king and queen of Thebes, **Laius and Jocasta**. To avoid this, king **Laius** sorrowfully ordered one of his servants to kill the baby. The servant took **Oedipus** onto a hill top, but he could not kill the innocent child. He left **Oedipus** instead with a shepherd, who brought him across the mountains to the king of Corinth. This king claimed the boy and raised him as his own.

When **Oedipus** grew to manhood, a prophet warned him about his prophecy. Not knowing he had been adopted, and that his real parents were **Jocasta and Laius**, **Oedipus** left the country to avoid committing such crimes. While crossing over the mountain, he fought a caravan of men who tried to force him off the road. He killed them all unaware that one of them was **King Laius**, his father.

**Oedipus** came to the outskirts of his original country **Thebes**. **Thebes** was being menaced then by the **Sphinx**, who would ask its visitors a riddle and kill those who could not answer correctly. Shocked by the mortal's correct answer, the **Sphinx** fell over dead. As a reward from the **Theban** people, **Oedipus** was named new King, for the former king had recently been killed. His bride, the queen **Jocasta**, they had four children. Several years later, plagues began to destroy **Thebes**. **Oedipus** strove to discover the reason. A prophecy hints that the murderer of the former king, **Laius**, was living unpunished in **Thebes**. Until this murderer was punished, plagues would sweep the country. **Oedipus** questioned everyone: old servants, his wife, and the famous seer **Teiresias**. He slowly put together the facts that pointed to him. Cursing his fate, **Oedipus** blinded and exiled himself. His mother and wife, **Jocasta** hanged herself for her part. **Oedipus** was the unhappiest man who ever was. He lived in suffering

**to an old age, accompanied by his daughter Antigone, until the gods pitied his pain and whisked him off the face of the earth.**