

Lines 34-38:

“We have not come as suppliants to this altar because we thought of you as a God, but rather judging you the first of men in all the chances of this life and we mortals have to do with more than man”

- **Speaker:** Priest
- **Spoken To:** Oedipus in presence of Chorus
- **Context:** Thebes is falling to plague, it's women are sterile, and the livestock is dying. In addition to giving background info on thebes' current dire situation, the priest also praises Oedipus for past deeds (killing the sphinx). He asks Oedipus to save their city and find the cure to the problems, because he saved them in the past.
- **Significance:** This quote shows and develops Oedipus' character and the status that he holds in Thebes. Develops oedipus as a feared and revered ruler as shown by the hyperbole “first of men”, which builds his hero-status and pride which later leads to his downfall.

Lines 85-86:

“But when he comes, then may I prove a villain, if I shall not do all the God commands”

- **Speaker:** Oedipus
- **Speaking to:** Priest in presence of chorus, specifically a crowd of children
- **Context:** Oedipus is speaking about how he will do everything in his power and in God's command to solve the issue with Thebes, and that if he doesn't, they may condemn him as a villain. He also expresses his pity to thebans and promises to save them.
- **Significance:** “when he comes”: Oedipus is referring to Creon, who he has sent to receive message from Apollo through an oracle to tell him how to save the city. This quote is an example of Sophoclean irony as Oedipus later is revealed to be the killer of the king, and he is condemning himself. It also shows Oedipus' noble persona as he is willing to do anything to help and will take his greatest efforts in order to aid Thebes.

Lines 168-171:

“Whoever he was that killed the king may readily wish to dispatch me with his murderous hand; so helping the dead king I help myself”

- **Speaker:** Oedipus
- **Speaking to:** Creon in presence of Priest and Chorus
- **Context:** Creon just brought Apollo's message that Thebes' plague is being caused by the presence of Laius' murderer. Oedipus then heroically pledges to find the murderer of Laius.
- **Significance:** This is Sophoclean irony as the audience knows from previous knowledge that Oedipus is actually Laius' murderer. So, by putting in effort to help the king, rather than helping himself he is actually bringing his demise by revealing his past
 - Showcases his noble nature as he stresses his intention to be directly involved in the search for the murderer despite the potential danger. Instead of going somewhere safe, he stays in Thebes to help the city.

Lines 266-269:

“Upon the murderer I invoke this curse-whether he is one man and all unknown, or one of many-may he wear out his life in misery to miserable doom!”

- **Speaker:** Oedipus
- **Speaking to:** Chorus/monologue
- **Context:** Attempts to ask the chorus for the murderer’s identity. Then he curses the king’s killer, and lists the punishments that they will endure once he catches them. He is saying that they will be banished from all the homes in Thebes and will be forced to wander aimlessly and miserably for the rest of their life.
 - **Significance:** In cursing the king’s killer, he makes a significant remark that will impact his own future once he is revealed as the unknown killer. This is again Sophoclean irony due to his own passion for justice dooming him and enforcing his own claims/punishments against himself. This also foreshadows the “miserable doom” he will later experience.

Lines 347-348:

“Alas, how terrible is wisdom when it brings no profit to the man that’s wise! This I knew well, but had forgotten it, else I would not have come here”

- **Speaker:** Teiresias
- **Speaking to:** Oedipus presence of little boy and chorus
- **Context:** Teiresias has been called by Oedipus to Thebes in order to offer prophetic insight on the root of the problems in Thebes (why there’s a plague). However, upon arrival, Teiresias laments that he should not have come because the knowledge he has does not help anyone’s situation but Oedipus becomes angry because he thinks Teiresias is trying to lie to him.
- **Significance:** Teiresias has resisted oedipus’ summons because he knows that he will not benefit from telling Oedipus the prophecy. This quote reveals Teiresias’ prophetic gifts but also reveals that his character is reluctant to give information where there is nothing for him to gain. Teiresias insinuates the future that Oedipus will have and that it is not any good, and this foreshadows the negative impact the prophecy will bring because Teiresias’ judgement on attempting to retain the information was correct.

Lines 482-483:

“You have your eyes but see not where you are in sin, nor where you live, nor whom you live with. Do you know who your parents are?”

- **Speaker:** Teiresias
- **Speaking to:** Oedipus presence of chorus
- **Context:** Teiresias and Oedipus are arguing and Teiresias is responding to Oedipus’ accusation of treason. Teiresias is angered by Oedipus’ demands and claims that he is not his citizen, and in his anger gives Oedipus the views for his own future.
- **Significance:**
 - Teiresias references the fact that Oedipus is oblivious to his involvement in the murder of Laius and that he is sleeping with mother. Also develops Teiresias as prophetic and wise character as he can recognize situation despite being blind. This also shows a comparison

between Teiresias and Oedipus: One has eyes but is completely oblivious, while and one is blind but can see the truth (Teiresias knows Oedipus' past while Oedipus himself doesn't even know it)

Lines 531-534:

"Blindness for sight and beggary for riches his exchange, he shall go journeying to a foreign country tapping his way before him with a stick"

- **Speaker:** Teiresias
- **Speaking to:** Oedipus in presence of chorus
- **Context:** Oedipus insults Teiresias because he thinks Teiresias' is withholding information. Teiresias then goes into more detail to prove that he is speaking the truth of the future. He says that Oedipus will go blind, and that he will leave Thebes for another country. He then mentions that Oedipus will be both father and brother to his own children later in the quote. Despite everything Teiresias said, Oedipus still refuses to trust Teiresias
- **Significance:** This is significant because it provides a more detailed version of Oedipus' future and the detail of these prophecies are what encourages Oedipus to try to find out about his past/future which leads to his downfall. The quote foreshadows Oedipus' blindness and exile (foreign country). There is also symbolism, as blindness represents his lack of knowledge about the truth. Real sight is later traded for intellectual sight. It also emphasizes Oedipus' ignorance as he refuses to accept this knowledge and builds suspense with the audience as they are told what happens before the characters are.

Lines 583-587:

"One man may pass another in wisdom but I would never agree with those that find fault with the king till I should see the word proved right beyond doubt."

- **Speaker:** Antistrophe/Chorus
- **Speaking to:** Audience
- **Context:** After Teiresias accuses Oedipus, the chorus defends him, saying that they will not believe Oedipus has committed such wrongs until there is proof. They comment that his wisdom and courage has already been proven with the Sphinx incident and that they will not disprove this until there is solid evidence.
- **Significance:** It shows the present loyalty the citizens have to Oedipus, building the image of him as a very well-respected king due to his previous actions and decisions, which still prevails even though currently he is being shown as ignorant and stubborn. The loyalty shown in the quote worsens Oedipus' tragic demise since he is currently so respected. This allows for a larger fall when the same citizens eventually turn against him once sufficient evidence surfaces

Lines 633-634:

"If you think obstinacy without wisdom a valuable possession, you are wrong."

- **Speaker:** Creon
- **Speaking to:** Oedipus, Chorus also present
- **Context:** Creon has returned, and since he was the one to suggest hiring Teiresias, Oedipus accuses him of committing treason against him due to Teiresias' accusations without any solid

evidence. He refuses to listen to Creon's voice of reason, and Creon tells him that he is being stubborn without intelligence and that he will suffer loss from it.

- **Significance:** It shows the other aspect of Oedipus' character as it emphasizes how he is quick to jump to conclusions. This also reveals Creon's character as it portrays him as a rational and logical thinker even in the face of Oedipus' threats which could theoretically harm him very much. It contrasts the two characters as they differ in their way of thinking and their decision making capabilities.

Lines 710-714:

"It's not just lightly to count your knaves as honest men, nor with honest men as knaves. To throw away an honest friend is, as it were, to throw your life away, which a man loves the best."

- **Speaker:** Creon
- **Speaking to:** Oedipus in presence of the Chorus
- **Context:** Oedipus is still accusing Creon of plotting against him, and Creon tells him prior to this line that he has not and that Oedipus may go to another oracle to confirm this truth. He says that Oedipus is making a bad decision to accuse him when he is his good friend
- **Significance:** This quote develops and contrasts the characters of Creon and Oedipus. It illustrates Creon's good and honest character who gives logical reasoning against Oedipus' emotional and irrational accusations. It is also a warning to Oedipus to not throw away his lifelong and true friends since throwing away an honest man is akin to dying

Lines 742-745:

"Are you not ashamed to air your private griefs when the country's sick? Go in, you, Oedipus, and you, too, Creon, into the house. Don't magnify your nothing troubles."

- **Speaker:** Jocasta
- **Speaking to:** Creon and Oedipus in presence of chorus
- **Context:** Jocasta enters in the midst of the argument and is annoyed at this public display of immature disagreement. She tells the two men to argue in private since this is an internal matter that doesn't need to be publicized
- **Significance:** This introduces Jocasta and also shows her as a contrast to Oedipus as she recognizes the futility of such small issues and that they must focus on saving Thebes first. It develops Jocasta's rational character because she is able to overcome emotional strifes for the good of the city. As well, this quote contrasts Creon's earlier attempt to privatize these matters when he initially returned to Thebes with the message from Apollo in the Prologue. Jocasta is now the voice of reason who attempts to privatize these matters in order to prevent the situation from escalating.

Lines 814-815, 833-836:

"Do not concern yourself about this matter; listen to me and learn that human beings have no part in the craft of prophecy.... So clear in this case were the oracles, so clear and false. Give them no heed, I say; what God discovers need of, easily he shows to us himself."

- **Speaker:** Jocasta

- **Speaking to:** Oedipus
- **Context:** Oedipus is complaining to Jocasta that Creon has betrayed due to him bringing in Teiresias as well as airing a concern to Jocasta that there may be truth in his words. Jocasta tries to reassure him and responds and tells him that oracles and whatever words they say can not be relied upon. She complains that oracles cannot be relied upon because only God has the power of prophecy, not humans, which she backs up with a story that an oracle once told her but turned out false.
- **Significance:** This is significant because it shows Jocasta's cunning as she attempts to prevent Oedipus from discovering the secrets that she herself hid by accusing the prophet of lying. This is also ironic as the prophecy that she claims is wrong actually is true due to details revealed later in the book; the son of the king did kill him as the son was Oedipus.

Lines 1009-1013:

"If a man walks with haughtiness of hand or word and gives no heed to Justice and the shrines of Gods despises-may an evil doom smite him for his ill-starred pride of heart!"

- **Speaker:** Chorus/Strophe
- **Speaking to:** Audience
- **Context:** Oedipus has decided to continue to try and find out his true parentage and past, despite Jocasta's warnings. He is stubborn and refuses to listen to her. The chorus is warning the audience about what happens when a man is so ignorant and does not pay attention to possible consequences or justice for his actions. They ask for evil doom to punish such a man.
- **Significance:** This is a contrast to the chorus' earlier sentiments that they were loyal and respected Oedipus as a ruler. This contrast is significant because it helps indicate his turn of fortune in the story. Now, they are cursing/scorning him because of his arrogance when he was speaking with Creon and Jocasta. This quote creates tension as the audience is able to hear the citizens' change of heart towards Oedipus while Oedipus is largely unaware.

*****Lines 1105-1106:**

"Before this, in dreams too, as well as oracles, many a man has lain with his own mother. But he whom such things are nothing bears his life most easily"

- **Speaker:** Jocasta
- **Speaking to:** Oedipus in presence of Chorus and messenger
- **Context:** Jocasta and Oedipus are talking about the prophecy that Oedipus would kill his father and sleep with his mother. Oedipus tried to escape this prophecy by coming to Thebes. With Polybus dead, Oedipus is overjoyed as he wrongly believes part of the prophecy failed to come true. However, there is still the chance that the other part of the prophecy about his mom, might come true since his mom is still alive. She tries to reassure him by saying that it is common to fantasize or actually sleep with one's mother.
- **Significance:** Sophoclean irony is present when Jocasta tells Oedipus it is okay to have thoughts about his own mom because the audience knows that Jocasta is actually his mother. Jocasta tries to normalize Oedipus' fear, by discrediting the rarity of this type of prophecy. This is also ironic because she ends up committing suicide out of grief and shock from the truth.

Lines 1364-1368:

Light of the sun, let me look upon you no more after today! I who first saw the light bred of a math accursed and accursed in my living with them I lived with, cursed in my killing.”

- **Speaker:** Oedipus
- **Speaking to:** Having a conversation with Herdsman. Chorus and second messenger were also in the scene.
- **Context:** The Herdsman is forced by the messenger and Oedipus to reveal Oedipus’ lineage. He reveals that Jocasta gave him the child and told him to kill it. She did this in fear of what the oracle said, but the Herdsman gave the child to the messenger instead because he thought he could save it by sending it to another country.
- **Significance:** This is significant because it is Oedipus’ climatic moment as he fully realizes his past and his actions. As well, this is the realization that sparks his downward spiral in the next scene when he fully grasps the situation he is now in. It again has dramatic irony/foreshadowing due to the mentions of light and seeing being related to his future blindness and self-mutilation. It also shows imagery and symbolism in that he finally sees the light/sun representing truth and he is now cursed due to this truth.

****Lines 1607-1609:**

“Be quick and take him in. It is most decent that only kin should see and hear the troubles of kin.”

- **Speaker:** Creon
- **Speaking to:** Servant. Oedipus and Chorus on stage
- **Context:** Creon, who is now the ruler of Thebes, arrives to talk to Oedipus. Creon pities Oedipus, who has just blinded himself. He then decides to tell a servant to help guide Oedipus inside the house so the public cannot see him
- **Significance:** This shows Creon’s mercy as even though he knows that Oedipus has killed the king and indirectly killed his mother (Jocasta), he shows pity and humanity on him as he sees his mutilated state and asks for the servants to have him moved so that he may have privacy. This mirrors an earlier scene in the beginning of the play where Creon also gives Oedipus the option to give him privacy to avoid ruining his reputation. This further develops Creon’s ability to put aside past arguments for family.

Lines 1641-1645:

“Yet I know this much: no sickness and no other thing will kill me. I would not have been saved from death if not for some strange evil fate. Well, let my fate go where it will”

- **Speaker:** Oedipus
- **Speaking to:** Creon in presence of a servant(s)
- **Context:** This is near the end of the play, after he discovers his lineage, Jocasta commits suicide and after he has blinded himself with Jocasta’s brooches. Oedipus believes he deserves to be punished, but he also wants to look out for his family. He asks Creon to bury his wife and allow him to live in exile.
- **Significance:** This is significant because it shows Oedipus’ change in mindset; he used to believe he could change his fate as seen when he left his parents in order to try to not fulfill the old

prophecy, but ultimately, he still succumbs to fate and cannot change this. This is a significant plot point as Oedipus finally stops believing he can escape fate by exercising free will. He now has resigned himself to a life of punishment and misery as dictated by his fate. This contrasts his mindset earlier in the play when he attempts to escape the prophecy by going to Thebes.

Lines 1721-1723:

“Do not seek to be master in everything, for the things you mastered did not follow you throughout your life.”

- **Speaker:** Creon
- **Speaking to:** Oedipus in the presence of Antigone and Ismene.
- **Context:** Oedipus asks Creon to take care of his children because they will suffer from his tarnished reputation. Oedipus also asks Creon to exile him from Thebes. Ultimately Creon agrees to take him away from Thebes as Oedipus mourns everything and everybody that he has lost to the cruelty of fate. Creon delivers the final line of dialogue by telling Oedipus to let go of his children.
- **Significance:** This is significant because it summarizes the theme of loss/tragedy in the story because everything that Oedipus built up throughout his life and work ultimately leave him as fate is the deciding hand. This is also a conclusion to the theme of free will and destiny present throughout the book as it implies that no matter how powerful you are, you will suffer immensely if it is your fate.

Notes on Greek Theatre/Oedipus:

- Sophocles was born in 497 BCE in Athens, Greece
- Lived in exclusionary democracy; run by elected officials in open assemblies that were not open to women, slaves, and other “non-citizens”
- Sophocles was wealthy but aware of human injustices; plays often tried to warn his fellow wealthy citizens about what would happen to them if they continued to treat certain people that way
- Greek pantheon of gods included hundreds of deities (most “well known” ones that resembled humans were only small part)
- Gods were immortal and powerful but not all-powerful; subject to faith and one another
- Free will somewhat accepted (in that you eventually face the consequences of your actions) but not as strong as destiny
- Acting invented in 600-500 BCE by Thespis who stepped in front of a crowd and performed a solo
- Athens made advancements in sciences, arts, rhetoric, etc. in 400-500 BCE
- Tragedies written and performed every year at Great Dionysia (religious festival to celebrate Dionysius)
- Each playwright created 3 tragedies and a comedic satyr-play; Sophocles won 20 of these competitions
- Sophocles’ “Theban plays” are often considered trilogies but are actually distinct and separate
- Aeschylus was another famous playwright that introduced the use of a second actor and more complicated plots while Sophocles brought a third actor on stage
- Use of dramatic irony was common because the plays were often based on well-known myths so the audience knew about the plot more than the characters; suspense was in how the plot was carried out
- Plays always acted in daytime, with only male actors; use of wigs and costume with minimal props
- Unity of time, unity of place, and unity of subject
 - Continuous acting throughout a limit of 24 hours, limited to one setting, one single main plot with no subplots
- No violence due to religion; messenger came up and verbally talked about any deaths or violence
- 15-20 man chorus represented citizens and were always onstage to provide commentary/background info
- Chorus set the tone, recalled past events, interpreted/summarized past scene, asked questions, offered opinions, gave advice, remained objective, and sometimes acted as jury
- Chorus consisted of strophe, antistrophe, and epode
 - Strophe was first part, moved from left to right/east to west; antistrophe followed strophe and moved in opposite direction; epode followed both strophes and was third part
- Characters often ended scene with Chorus in a song called *kommos*
- Greek tragedy focuses on reversal of fortune and downfall of a tragic hero + events leading to this
- In Oedipus, these events revolve around the battle between free will and destiny
- When hero accepts his consequences, he teaches audience a lesson which leads to them feeling purged/drained and more understanding of life (*catharsis*)

- Tragic flaw was often hamartia which is an error in judgement that they themselves are not able to see but is apparent to others
- The hamartia is commonly hubris, or exaggerated self-pride and confidence that often results in fatal retributions
- Oedipus' arrogance and rash decision making shown when he meets Laius on the road and kills him out of anger; his hubris against the gods is consistent with other works of Greek theatre

Oedipus' Backstory:

- Backstory not shared in play as Greek audience would have most likely known it already
- Oedipus was son of Laius and grandson of Labdacus (all kings of Thebes)
- Laius travelled to Pisa as a youth when his father died and his cousins attempted to steal the throne by killing him
- He became tutor of King of Pisa's son, and abducted and killed him when he returned to Thebes
- Due to this crime and his hubris, Laius and his entire family was cursed
- He was told not to have children with Jocasta as that child would one day kill him, but one day, in drunkenness, Oedipus was conceived
- Thus, Oedipus' very existence is often considered an act of Fate in order to punish his father due to his own crimes