

OEDIPUS REX: PRE-ANTIGONE BACKGROUND STORY

What is a tragedy?

A tragedy is a literary genre whose definition was established by _____. It is any literary work in which a worthy but _____ protagonist suffers a _____ (or "tragic fall") resulting from his or her hamartia, or _____, or from the intervention of nature or fate. The emotional results of the ordeal produce a _____ of pity and fear in the readers. The _____ is typically of high _____ and encounters a reversal of fortune or _____ through a fault of character or an uncontrollable accident. A tragic hero experiences a succession of _____ resulting from his or her _____ or "tragic flaw."

Before *Antigone*, there was *Oedipus Rex*...

It all began in Greece, in a city-state by the name of _____.

King _____ and Queen _____ were expecting their first child when they received a rather disturbing prophecy: Their son would kill his father. Faced with this prophecy, Laius and Jocasta decide to kill their new baby. They _____ in order to abandon him to his death on a mountainside. They entrust this task to one of their faithful _____. The shepherd doesn't like this situation at all. He can't kill the baby either!

On the _____, different shepherds bring their sheep to graze. The shepherd from Thebes gives the baby to a shepherd from _____, thinking the baby will never make it back to Thebes.

Shepherd #2 gives the baby to King _____ and Queen _____ of Corinth, who haven't been able to have their own children. They raise Oedipus (whose name means swollen foot) as their child, never telling him that he is, in fact, adopted.

But, the truth will surface. At a wedding several years later, a guest who has indulged a bit too much, tells Oedipus that _____ are not his parents. Oedipus confronts Polybus and Merope, who promptly _____ it.

Oedipus loves a good _____, so he decides to go to the _____ to ask it about his parents, hoping for a straight answer. Of course, the Oracle isn't really good at straight answers. Oedipus asks the Oracle if Polybus and Merope are his real parents. The Oracle answers him by giving him a prophecy: "You will _____ and beget (have) children by your _____." Oedipus decides that he can't go back home (Corinth), otherwise he may kill his father (Polybus) and marry his mother (Merope).

But, as the reader knows, Polybus and Merope are not his _____.

Therefore, he could go back to Corinth if he wanted to. The worst way that he could head is towards Thebes.

Therefore, he unknowingly heads towards Thebes, the home of his biological parents (Laius and Jocasta).

Meanwhile, back in Thebes, a _____ has beset the people of _____ in the form of the _____. The Sphinx asks a _____ and _____ those unable to answer correctly. To help his people, King _____ decides to travel to the _____ to seek a solution.

Guess who meets at the crossroads of three roads? If you guessed _____, you'd be right. Oedipus is running from the Oracle and Laius to it. Only, neither knows that they are _____! They argue over who has the right of way. Legend has it that Laius strikes Oedipus, and Oedipus gets a little angry. They fight and _____.

Oedipus continues onto Thebes and meets the Sphinx, which is still terrorizing the people. The Sphinx asks Oedipus its riddle: "What goes on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?"

After correctly answering the riddle (MAN) and ridding Thebes of the Sphinx, the people wish to reward Oedipus by making him their _____. The easiest way to accomplish this promotion is for him to _____, Jocasta (his birth mom).

Oedipus and Jocasta marry and over the years have four children: 2 boys, _____, and 2 girls, _____. This is the point at which Sophocles' play Oedipus Rex begins.

_____ start dying. The Delphic Oracle is consulted and reveals that Thebes is suffering because it is harboring the murderer of Laius. The murderer must be brought to justice or exiled from Thebes.

Oedipus declares he will save Thebes (again) and begins an investigation. After ignoring the truth from _____, Oedipus summons the old shepherd who knows the truth.

Jocasta realizes the _____ before Oedipus learns it, and begs him to stop _____. Stubborn Oedipus will not stop when he realizes that he can learn the truth of his own _____.

The shepherd's story reveals the awful truth. Jocasta meanwhile has _____. Oedipus, now 'seeing' the truth, _____. He then goes into _____.

Jocasta's brother _____ rules until _____ and _____ are old enough to rule. Upon reaching ruling age, the two brothers arrange to each rule Thebes on alternating years.

Eteocles rules first but then _____ to let Polynices have his turn. Polynices _____ and attacks seeking to take Thebes. The attack fails, but the _____ in the battle.

_____ is ruler again. He has _____ buried with honors but orders _____ to be left _____ rotting in the sun as an enemy of Thebes.

The play begins the next day with _____ mourning the death and fate of her brother.