

# Oedipus the king summary part 1 2



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The first half of the play, " Oedipus the King" is mainly about the King of Thebes and his quest to save his land from a plague that has caused serious damage. Oedipus became king due to his earlier triumph of saving Thebes from the curse of the Sphinx. His people now rely on him to once again save the land from its misery. Oedipus, as he walks out of his palace, is approached by a group of local priests who are surrounded by the suffering citizens of Thebes. A priest goes on to explain that Thebes has been struck by a plague and citizens are dying.

Oedipus asks why the citizens are gathering around his palace and the priest responds that the city has lost all hope, and is now counting on Oedipus to save it. Oedipus makes it clear that he understands what Thebes is going through and explains how he has done all that he can do to solve the city's problem. He says that he has already sent Creon, his brother in law, to the oracle at Delphi in an attempt to find out the cause of the plague. Creon soon arrives with a message from the oracle and asks Oedipus whether or not he wants to hear the message in private.

Oedipus tells him that he would like all of Thebes to hear. Creon goes on to explain to all of Thebes what he had heard. He says that the god Apollo spoke through the oracle, saying that Laius, the man who was king of Thebes before Oedipus, was murdered. He then states that the murderer is in Thebes and must be driven out in order for the plague to come to an end. Creon tells the story of Laius's murder and Oedipus begins to question why the people of Thebes made no attempt to find the murderers. Creon explains to him that at time of Laius's murder, the people were more concerned about the curse of the Sphinx.

After hearing this, Oedipus feels that it is necessary for him to take it upon himself and solve the murder. + A chorus enters, calling on the gods to save Thebes. Oedipus returns and confidently says to stop praying to the gods, and that he will take care of the issue on his own. He then asks the members of the chorus if anyone knows who had killed Laius. Oedipus makes it clear that Laius's murderer will suffer no greater punishment than exile. When he receives no answer, Oedipus curses Laius's murderer and anyone who is staying quiet to protect him. Oedipus also curses himself, saying that if the murderer was to be a member of his

own family, they will get the same exile and punishment than anyone else will. The Chorus's leader then suggests for Oedipus to talk to Tiresias, the blind prophet, and Oedipus says that he had already planned on doing so. Tiresias soon arrives, being escorted by a young boy. Oedipus immediately starts begging him to reveal the truth but Tiresias insists that it would be better for both of them if Oedipus were to not find out. Oedipus is confused at why Tiresias will not reveal the identity of Laius's murderer. Out of frustration, Oedipus begins to insult the prophet, going as far as accusing Tiresias of being Laius's murderer.

Fed up with Oedipus's words, Tiresias tells Oedipus what he knows, which is that Oedipus himself is the cause of the curse. Oedipus, who obviously doesn't believe Tiresias, begins to insult his blindness, but Tiresias just says that soon all of the insults will be turned on Oedipus by all of Thebes. Oedipus then comes up with a ridiculous theory that Tiresias and Creon are trying to overthrow him. The leader of the Chorus tells Oedipus to calm

down, saying that he is only speaking out of anger. Tiresias then mocks Oedipus by saying that he doesn't even know who his parents are.

When Oedipus asks who his parents are Tiresias responds with a riddle, mocking Oedipus because he is supposed to be the best at solving riddles. Oedipus then asks Tiresias to leave and Tiresias responds that he is only there because Oedipus called for him to be there. Tiresias leaves and the Chorus, quite confused, decide that they will stand by the King unless they see proof that Tiresias's accusations were true. Creon returns and, having heard of the things that Oedipus had accused of him, he decides to go tell the people of Thebes that he was not plotting against the King, and had no plans of attempting to overthrow him.

Oedipus still begins to accuse Creon of trying to turn against him. Creon begs for Oedipus to listen but Oedipus keeps on going on about how he had to have been plotting against him because he was the one who wanted him to go see Tiresias. Oedipus then asks Creon how long it had been since Laius had been murdered. Creon tells him that Laius was killed a long time ago, making Oedipus question why Tiresias had never accused him of being the murderer earlier.

Creon explains to Oedipus that Tiresias usually keeps quiet. Creon, finally getting a chance to speak, says that he would never plot against Oedipus and if he doesn't believe him he can go to Delphi himself and examine the Oracle. The Leader of the Chorus and Creon beg Oedipus to be rational and not jump to conclusions. Oedipus doesn't buy what Creon is telling him and wants Creon dead. Creon says that Oedipus is not being fair and is ruling unjustly. The arguing ends when Jocasta, Oedipus's wife, shows up.