

Dramatic irony in Oedipus the King



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Oedipus the King the use of dramatic irony develops the play through pathos towards the tragic hero, creating suspense, and foreshadowing the outcome of the play. Oedipus knows about the prophecies yet he does not know they have come through, however the audience is aware of everything going on in Oedipus' life.

The readers know Oedipus is the murderer of Laius but looking at Oedipus' personality the novel also depicts how angry he is with whoever killed Laius. "As for the murderer himself, I call down a curse on him.... may he drag out an evil death-in-life misery. And further I pronounce a curse on myself if the murderer should, with my knowledge share my house" This creates terror and suspense in the readers' mind as to what Oedipus would do when he finds out he is the murderer of Laius. This also creates anticipation among the readers, as they will want to know what is to come next.

Another use of dramatic irony is used when Oedipus is talking to Tiresias. "Save yourself and the city, save me, from all the infections caused by the dead man. We are in your hands" This foreshadows and also creates suspense as to what Tiresias might say next to Oedipus. The reader knows Tiresias cannot save Oedipus for this curse it is himself that has to see the truth on his own. Therefore a bit of tension arises as to how Tiresias might respond to him and what Oedipus will do once he is told the truth.

Finally, Oedipus the King is a tragic play that depicts the characteristics of a tragic hero and how destiny plays an unfortunate game with him. The whole novel is based on the concept of dramatic irony. Where the audience knows about Oedipus' prophecies, his past and the murder he committed, but he

himself is blind to. His destiny could not be controlled or changed; a man born with poor fortune and a dishonored life, who saved the people of Thebes from the sphinx and brought light to everyone's life at the end, gets rid of the light of his own eyes and ends his life in darkness.