

He Tried and Failed

Oedipus is one of the most famous tragic characters of Greek drama. Sophocles, a famous composer of tragic Greek drama, wrote Oedipus the King. In this drama, Oedipus is just a good king trying to help his people by punishing a criminal for a certain crime he committed. Even though he tries so hard not to do what was foretold that he would do, he ends up doing it all the same. He was innocent of the knowledge of what he was doing, but guilty of the act he commits. He is a good king in trying to help his people, without his knowing it, he is the cause of the problem he is trying to solve, and when he tries to avoid the unavoidable, he finds that he is the reason for the problem.

Oedipus is a good king, just trying to save his people by removing the plague. In his attempt at trying to be the savior of his people, he condemns the man who killed the former king. He wants to punish that man because he is the reason for the plague that is harming his people. He says, "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." (161-4) What he does not realize is that he is the culprit, the reason for the problem, and because he is going unpunished, the plague had continued.

When Oedipus is a young adult, he goes to the oracle of Apollo, who tells him that he will one day kill his father and marry his mother. Oedipus, who has no idea that he is adopted at the time, flees his home in fear that he will cause harm to the parents he loves. After he leaves Delphi, the place of the oracle, he meets a man in a chariot whose charioteer tells him to move aside. When he refuses, the other man attacks him, and then

Oedipus turns and kills them all. He comes to Thebes; the people were under siege by a Sphinx. After he saves the town, he is given the queen, Jocasta, to be his wife as a reward. What he does not know was that the one of the men he killed was his father and the woman that he marries is his mother.

Oedipus the king never considers what he had done, until he hears certain pieces of information and starts to piece things together. He finds out that what was foretold to him, his killing his father and marrying his mother; was also foretold to his wife, the former queen, and her former husband, the late king of Thebes, about their child. After everything starts to come together, he realizes what had happened, and that he has done exactly what he did not want to do. He killed the father he never knew, and he is married to the woman who gave birth to him.

He is just a king trying to help his people, and in trying to help his people, unknowingly condemns his own self. He left the only parents that he ever knew and loved, then killed his father and then marries the woman who conceived him. He has gone unpunished for killing his father, the late king of Thebes, and therefore a plague has fallen upon his people. He is trying to support his people; in helping them he condemns his own self without knowing it, and finds out that no one can avoid the unavoidable.