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Topic : - Notes on Characters from Oedipus the King

Oedipus the King Major Characters

Oedipus is the king of Thebes, married to Jocasta. He is unaware, at the start of the play, that he has murdered his father and slept with his mother. Soon he learns that it was he that put his kingdom at such terrible risk, and blinds himself using a brooch. He has a 'tell-tale limp', a piercing wound in his ankles, made as a child by the father who exposed him. This echoes his name, which roughly translates as 'swollen-feet'. In line with most tragic 'heroes,' Oedipus has a clear hamartia - or tragic flaw - which precipitates his woeful fate. In this case, it's his pride, which allows him to disbelieve the Gods and hunt the source of a plague instead of looking inside himself. That said, Oedipus' hamartia is not always so clear - since it appears that his prideful sins occurred long before the start of the play. Indeed, Oedipus' greatest sin appears to take place when he kills a man at a roadside in a fit of temper, suggesting that no deed goes

unpunished. Ultimately, however, Oedipus must pay the price for dismissing Teiresias' judgment and the Oracle's prophecy, as yet another reminder that the Gods are infinitely more powerful than men.

Creon: Oedipus' brother-in-law, and Jocasta's brother. Oedipus accuses Creon of attempting to kill him and take his title. Creon also supported Tiresias, who predicted Oedipus' fate, so Oedipus resents him even more. What Oedipus imagines to be Creon's murderous intentions, however, are discounted when it's revealed that Creon owns a third of Thebes but chooses not to rule (so he's not power-hungry). Creon turns out to be a true friend, as he agrees to take care of Oedipus' daughters when Oedipus goes into exile.

Jocasta: Oedipus' wife and mother. Jocasta was also Creon's sister, and was previously married to Laios. Although she wants Thebes to get better, she does not want Oedipus to pursue the path he has taken in finding out why Thebes is sick, as she is scared that what the oracles predicted when Oedipus was born is true. Jocasta, up to this point, does not believe in the oracles, since she thought that her son had died and could not live to do what the oracles had proclaimed he would do.