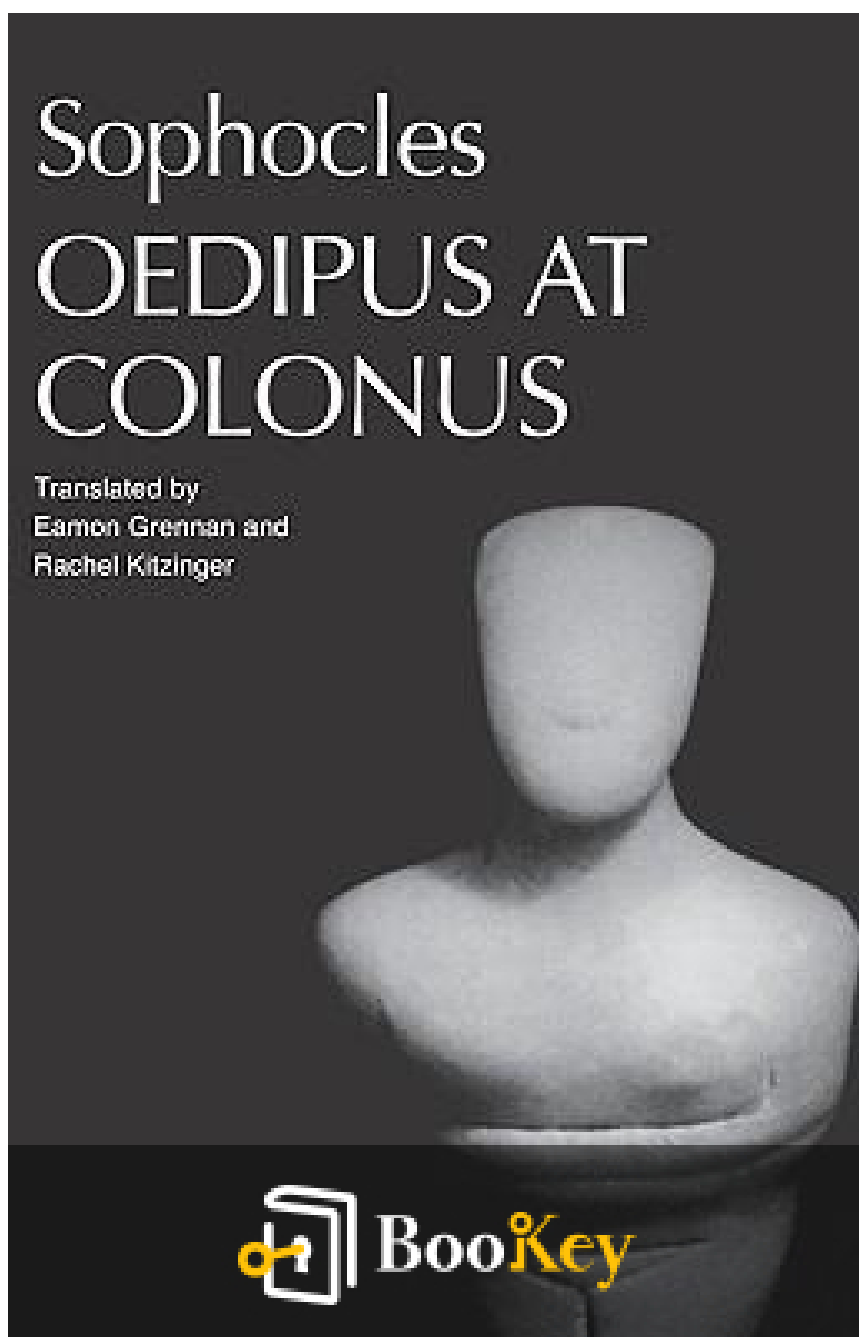


Oedipus At Colonus PDF (Limited Copy)

Sophocles



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Oedipus At Colonus Summary

Redemption and fate at the end of life.

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About the book

In Sophocles' poignant play "Oedipus at Colonus," we delve into the themes of fate, redemption, and the quest for peace as the once-mighty king Oedipus, now a blind outcast, seeks refuge in the sacred ground of Colonus. As he grapples with the weight of his tragic past and the foreboding shadows of the future, Oedipus encounters the complexities of human existence, the intricate ties of family, and the pressing need for forgiveness. This powerful exploration of personal suffering and the search for closure invites readers to reflect on their own lives, making it not just a timeless tale of tragedy but a profound meditation on the nature of compassion and the possibility of hope amidst despair. Join Oedipus on this transformative journey, as he navigates the fragility of fate, leading to a poignant realization of what it truly means to be human.

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About the author

Sophocles, one of the most celebrated playwrights of ancient Greece, was born around 496 BCE in Colonus, a suburb of Athens, and he lived until approximately 406 BCE. He is renowned for his contributions to the development of tragedy, introducing innovations such as the use of painted scenery and a third actor, which significantly enhanced the dramatic complexity of his plays. Sophocles' oeuvre comprises over 120 plays, with only seven surviving in full, including the standout tragedies “Oedipus Rex” and “Antigone,” which together with “Oedipus at Colonus” form a seminal trilogy concerning the fate of the tragic hero Oedipus. His works delve into profound themes of fate, free will, and moral consequence, reflecting the philosophical and societal concerns of his time. Beyond his literary achievements, Sophocles was also a prominent civic leader and participated in Athenian politics, imprinting his legacy not only on the stage but also in the cultural and political life of ancient Greece.

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Chapter 1 Summary: Oedipus the King

Summary of "Oedipus the King"

Background: "Oedipus the King," a tragedy by Sophocles, unfolds in Thebes. It centers around Oedipus, who unwittingly fulfills a prophecy that foretells he will kill his father Laius and marry his mother Jocasta. The story illustrates the themes of fate versus free will, the nature of guilt, and the tragic consequences of human actions.

Plot Summary:

In the prologue, Thebes is under siege from a devastating plague. Oedipus, the city's king, arrives to offer support to his people, who are beseeching the gods for relief. The priest of Zeus informs Oedipus of their plight—crops are failing, and citizens are suffering. In his capacity as their leader, Oedipus vows to discover the reason behind this misfortune. He sends his brother-in-law Creon to divine Apollo's oracle at Delphi for guidance.

When Creon returns, he brings troubling news: the plague afflicts Thebes because it harbors the unpunished murderer of Laius, the former king. Oedipus pledges to find Laius's killer, unaware that he himself is the culprit.



The search for the murderer leads Oedipus to consult the blind seer Teiresias. Initially reluctant, Teiresias eventually reveals that Oedipus is the murderer he seeks, a revelation Oedipus vehemently denies and instead accuses Creon of conspiracy against him.

As tensions rise, Oedipus confronts his past, including his journey from Corinth, where he was raised by King Polybus and Queen Merope, who adopted him. Fearing he would kill his father and marry his mother, he fled Corinth to avoid this fate. This twist illustrates the irony of Oedipus's efforts to outrun his destiny, as his actions lead him back to fulfill it.

Jocasta, Oedipus's wife, tries to comfort him, dismissing prophecies as meaningless since she recounts a prior oracle that predicted Laius would die at the hands of his son. She reveals that Laius was killed at a crossroads, prompting Oedipus to realize he may be linked to that murder as he had indeed killed a man at a similar junction during a confrontation.

Oedipus summons the shepherd who had saved him as a baby, and the horrid truth unfolds: Jocasta is his mother, and he has killed his father, Laius. Overcome with horror, Jocasta takes her own life, and Oedipus blinds himself, unable to bear the weight of his actions. He chooses to exile himself from Thebes, acknowledging that he is the source of their suffering.

The tragedy concludes with Oedipus expressing deep anguish over his



children's future, as they will bear the stigma of his cursed fate. Creon takes on the responsibility of caring for Oedipus's daughters, Ismene and Antigone, while Oedipus resigns himself to his fate, leaving behind a lament for the life he has ruined. The chorus reflects on the ephemeral nature of happiness and the unpredictable tides of fortune, solidifying the play's tragic themes.

In this haunting tale, Sophocles illustrates how knowledge, fate, and human fallibility intertwine, leading to irreversible consequences and the tragic downfall of a once-great king.

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Chapter 2 Summary: Oedipus at Colonus

Summary of "Oedipus at Colonus"

Setting the Scene:

"Oedipus at Colonus" unfolds in the sacred grove of the Furies near Athens, where the blind and exiled King Oedipus arrives, led by his devoted daughter Antigone. Oedipus, long during his sufferings, seeks solace in this new land, believing it to be his final resting place as foretold by an oracle. The grove is dedicated to the goddesses known as the Eumenides (Furies), who protect the delinquents and banished.

Strangers and the Chorus:

As Oedipus rests, a local stranger warns him that he must leave, as the area is sacred. Oedipus refuses, raising concerns about his rights to seek refuge. The Chorus, comprised of the citizens of Colonus, initially shows pity but recoils when they learn Oedipus's identity as the infamous miscreant from Thebes. Nevertheless, they decide to heed the judgment of Theseus, the just king of Athens.

Theseus' Arrival:

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Upon Theseus's arrival, Oedipus implores for protection and asks for a place to be buried in Athens, suggesting that this request will benefit the city.

Theseus grants his request, assuring Oedipus that he will not be harmed by Creon, the current ruler of Thebes and Oedipus's brother-in-law, who seeks to reclaim Oedipus for political leverage.

Creon's Threat:

However, Creon arrives with armed guards, seizing Antigone and Ismene (Oedipus's other daughter), intending to bring them back to Thebes. A confrontation ensues, but Theseus intervenes, chastising Creon for his impudence and expressing support for Oedipus and his daughters. He returns the sisters to Oedipus's side, showcasing the strength and values of Athenian justice.

Polyneices' Plea:

Soon after, Polyneices, Oedipus's eldest son, arrives as a suppliant to ask for his father's blessing to fight for the throne of Thebes, having raised an army in Argos against his brother Eteocles. Oedipus, however, refuses, condemning Polyneices for abandoning him in his time of need and invoking a curse upon both brothers, predicting death and ruin through their fraternal discord.



Oedipus' Departure:

As thunder signals the end of his fate, Oedipus prepares to depart to his destined burial site, acknowledging the passage of time and the inevitability of death. He bids farewell to his daughters with touching affection, showing gratitude for their loyalty. Theseus accompanies Oedipus to his final resting place, emphasizing his commitment to protect Oedipus and honor him in death.

Conclusion:

In a final exchange, Oedipus reveals to Theseus secrets about his burial location, ensuring that it will protect Athens from future calamities, as the oracle foretold that his death would bring blessings to the land. Ultimately, Oedipus vanishes from the mortal realm in an extraordinary manner, leaving his daughters behind. A messenger recounts Oedipus's heroic departure, serving as a poignant reminder of the tragedy and nobility of Oedipus's life, leading Antigone and Ismene to contemplate their own bleak future as orphans in a cruel world. In the end, the Chorus reflects on the tumult of life and the values of respect and dread for the divine, leaving the audience with a sense of closure mixed with lingering sorrow.

This concluding segment highlights themes of fate, the quest for redemption,



and the enduring bond of family amidst irreversible tragedy.

Section	Summary
Setting the Scene	Oedipus, blind and exiled, arrives at a sacred grove near Athens with his daughter Antigone, seeking solace and a final resting place as foretold by an oracle.
Strangers and the Chorus	A local stranger warns Oedipus of the sacredness of the area. The Chorus initially feels pity but recoils upon learning his identity, ultimately deferring to Theseus, the just king of Athens.
Theseus' Arrival	Theseus arrives, Oedipus requests protection and burial in Athens, which Theseus grants, ensuring Oedipus is safe from Creon.
Creon's Threat	Creon arrives with guards to seize Oedipus's daughters. Theseus intervenes, displaying Athenian justice, returning the sisters to Oedipus.
Polyneices' Plea	Polyneices seeks his father's blessing to fight for the throne of Thebes. Oedipus refuses, cursing both sons for their discord.
Oedipus' Departure	As fate signals his end, Oedipus prepares for burial, saying farewell to his daughters. Theseus pledges to escort him to his resting place.
Conclusion	Oedipus shares burial secrets with Theseus, ensuring blessings for Athens. He departs heroically, leaving his daughters to face uncertainty, while the Chorus reflects on life's turmoil.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of compassion and loyalty in the face of adversity

Critical Interpretation: As you reflect on the plight of Oedipus and his steadfast daughter Antigone, consider how compassion and loyalty shape our relationships and influence our choices. In times of hardship, when you feel lost or marginalized, remember the steadfast support of loved ones who stand by you, just as Antigone did for her father. This bond nurtures resilience and provides solace, emphasizing that even in the darkest circumstances, it is the ties of love and integrity that guide us toward redemption and hope for a brighter future.



Chapter 3 Summary: Antigone

Summary of *Antigone*

Argument Overview:

Antigone tells the tragic story of its titular character, the daughter of Oedipus, who defies King Creon's edict forbidding the burial of her brother Polyneices. She believes in the divine law requiring her to honor the dead, which puts her at odds with the law of the state. Her act of rebellion leads to a series of tragic events, culminating in the deaths of both Antigone and Haemon, Creon's son.

Key Characters:

- **Antigone:** A devoted sister committed to upholding divine law and familial loyalty.
- **Creon:** The newly appointed King of Thebes who prioritizes state laws over familial ties.
- **Haemon:** Creon's son, betrothed to Antigone, who attempts to mediate between his father and Antigone.
- **Teiresias:** A blind prophet who warns Creon of the consequences of his actions.



- **Eurydice:** Creon's wife, who ultimately succumbs to grief over her son's fate.

Plot Summary:

The play opens with Antigone lamenting the deaths of her brothers, Polyneices and Eteocles, who killed each other in a battle for control of Thebes. Creon honors Eteocles with a proper burial while declaring Polyneices a traitor, condemning his body to be left unburied. This decree is enforced with the threat of death for anyone who disobeys.

Determined to give her brother a proper burial, Antigone persuades her sister Ismene to assist her. Ismene is fearful and refuses to join her. Antigone acts alone, believing divine law supersedes human law. She is caught by guards after performing the burial rights and brought before Creon, who is furious at her defiance.

Antigone boldly admits to her crime, asserting that the laws of the gods take precedence over Creon's edicts. Creon, unwavering in his authority, condemns her to death. Haemon begs his father to reconsider, arguing that the people of Thebes support Antigone's actions. Creon remains resolute, asserting the importance of law and order.

Teiresias warns Creon that the gods are angered by his refusal to honor the



dead, predicting disaster for Thebes if he does not rectify his mistakes. Reluctantly, Creon decides to free Antigone and bury Polyneices, but he is too late; he finds Antigone has hanged herself in her tomb, and Haemon, devastated by her death, takes his life as well. The tragedy culminates with Eurydice's suicide in despair over the loss of her son, leaving Creon alone, faced with the destruction his decisions have wrought.

Themes:

The play explores the conflict between individual duty to family and loyalty to the state, the nature of law and justice, the consequences of pride, and the inevitability of fate. The tragic fallout from Creon's rigid adherence to law juxtaposed with Antigone's unwavering moral convictions ultimately leads to ruin for both.

Through the characters' struggles and the choices they make, *Antigone* highlights the complexities of human emotion and the societal structures that govern their actions, underscoring a classic tragedy that resonates through generations.

