**Story Boards: The Tragedy of Oedipus Rex**

King Laius and Queen Jocasta of the ancient Greek city of Thebes have a baby son, but an oracle (prophet) tells Laius that this son will grow up and murder him some day.

In fear for his life, King Laius orders that his baby son’s feet be pierced and pinned together through the ankles. Queen Jocasta then gives her baby to a servant and tells the servant to leave the baby to die alone on a mountain.

The servant can not leave an innocent baby to die alone on a mountain, so he gives the child to a shepherd who takes him to the court of King Polybus of the city of Corinth.

When Oedipus grows up, he learns from an oracle (prophet) that he is destined to kill his own father and sleep with his own mother.

Oedipus mistakenly assumes that King Polybus is his biological father, so he leaves the city of Corinth to try and avoid fulfilling the prophecy of killing his own father.

On the road to the city of Thebes, Oedipus gets into an argument with a stranger over which man has the right-of-way. Because of his excessive pride, Oedipus kills the man.

Meanwhile, in the city of Thebes, a terrible curse has fallen on the city in the form of a monster called the Sphinx. The curse can only be lifted when someone answers the Sphinx’s question correctly: “What is the creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three in the evening?”

Oedipus correctly answers the Sphinx’s question: “Man.” As a reward for defeating this monster, Oedipus is made King of Thebes and marries Queen Jocasta.

Oedipus and his wife, Jocasta, live happily in Thebes and have four children together: sons Eteocles and Polyneices, and daughters Antigone and Ismene.

Oedipus’ happiness is destroyed when Thebes comes under another curse. The people are dying from a plague. As king, it is Oedipus’ responsibility to discover the reason for the curse and destroy it.

The blind prophet, Tiresias, helps Oedipus to discover that the reason for the plague in Thebes is that the former king, Laius, was murdered and the gods are angry about it.

Oedipus vows to discover who is it that killed former King Laius and have that man exiled forever from Thebes.

The blind prophet, Tiresias, warns Oedipus NOT to pursue finding the real murderer of King Laius. Oedipus becomes angry and accuses Tiresias of being the killer, and conspiring with Queen Jocasta’s brother, Creon, to take over the throne of Thebes.

Through the testimonies of several servants and a witness to the murder of King Laius, Oedipus slowly begins to realize that HE killed King Laius after an argument about who should have the right-of-way on the road. HE is the reason that Thebes is plagued by a curse!

Oedipus then discovers that King Laius was his biological father. Oedipus has killed his own father just as the prophecy predicted! Although many people tried to help him prevent it, Oedipus is NOT able to escape this destiny.

Since King Laius was formerly married to Queen Jocasta, Oedipus realizes that he has been married to his own mother and has fathered FOUR children with her!

When Queen Jocasta sees the scars on Oedipus’ ankles, she has the final proof and realizes that Oedipus is her SON! She hangs herself before Oedipus can stop her.

Oedipus is so upset that Queen Jocasta has killed herself, he takes the brooches off her dress and blinds himself. He states that even though he had vision, he had been blind about the prophecy in his life, so his eyes were useless anyway.

When he was king, Oedipus declared that the murderer of former King Laius would be exiled. Now that Oedipus knows HE is the murderer, he leaves Thebes forever to live in a cave.

Before he is exiled, Oedipus gives his FOUR children to his brother-in-law/uncle, Creon, and predicts that his sons will be at war and there will be no peace in Thebes.