

OEDIPUS REX and **Film Noir**

Oedipus Rex is a centuries-old tale of gods, oracles, and man struggling to avoid his predetermined fate. It takes place in the ancient Greek city of Thebes; a city ravaged by disasters such as the death of their king, a sphinx, and, at the beginning of this story, a plague. In *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus must solve the murder of the previous king. His *hamartia*, or tragic flaw, is his determination to find the truth despite warnings of his downfall. Sophocles invites the audience to reflect on Oedipus's *hamartia* and confront their own. Oedipus finds himself on a dark road dealing with life, love, and guilt.

Film Noir is an early 20th century film style characterized by urban settings, dramatic lighting, and stock characters. It is filled with private detectives, criminals, and seductive women known as “femme fatales,” whose relationships often prove disastrous for the men in their lives. The transition from traditional Greek tragedy to Film Noir is easier than it seems. Oedipus is often considered the first detective, as he searches diligently for the previous king's murderer, and Jocasta a femme fatale, as she is more complex than she first appears. Other characters help and hinder his process, giving mysterious hints and ominous warnings. Our detective is forced to work around these obstacles as he uncovers the gruesome details of his mystery. By creating a modernized, Film Noir adaptation of an ancient tragedy, adaptor/director Ron Zank and the Monmouth College Theatre Department have the creative freedom to explore *Oedipus Rex*'s world of tragedy, intrigue, fate, and painful truth in a different time, a different world, and a similar darkness.

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