Oedipus emerges from his palace at Thebes. Outside are a priest and a crowd of children. Oedipus is the King, in case you didn’t get that from the title. Everyone else is, in short, "suppliant."

Oedipus has heard rumors that a curse is afflicting Thebes. After briefly congratulating his own greatness, he asks the priest what’s up.

The priest responds that basically everything that could be wrong in the city is wrong: crops are dying, cattle are dying, people are dying, and there's generally low morale.

Because Oedipus is the boss man, the priest asks him to please take care of this mess.

We learn that Oedipus has saved the city once before by lifting a curse put on it by the Sphinx.

Oedipus reveals he already knew that the city was in a bad state, so he sent his brother-in-law, Creon, to Apollo (or at least to Apollo’s oracle) to get more information.

In the midst of this conversation, Creon returns with news from Apollo.

Creon tells Oedipus that Apollo told *him* that in order to lift the curse on the city, the men that murdered the city’s former king, Laius, must be banished or killed.

Well, where was the criminal investigation unit when the murder went down? Turns out the Sphinx had previously warned against inquiring into the murder. Talk about mixed signals. So thus far, no one’s busted out the cavalry to hunt the murderers down.

Oedipus repeatedly congratulates himself and promises to deal with the murderers and save the city.

Everyone exits except the Chorus, an ever-present group of wise and gossip-prone observers. They, unfortunately, do not sing.

The Chorus then recounts the multiple problems the city faces including infertility, plague, famine and no one’s Xboxes are working. The lamentation is split into two voices, the "Strophe" and the "Antistrophe." This is a Greek tool where the Chorus is made up of two halves so it can sort of converse with itself. Like a duet made of lots of people. Anyway, the Chorus begs for help.

Oedipus reenters and demands that anyone with information about the former king's murder speak up. He curses the murderer.

The Chorus responds that they know nothing and suggest Oedipus ask the blind prophet, Teiresias (which we think is a major case of irony) for his knowledge.

Oedipus, ever-prepared, informs the Chorus that, quite conveniently, Teiresias is already on his way.

Teiresias shows up immediately.

Oedipus briefly explains to him the city’s situation and Apollo’s advice. Then Oedipus asks for help.

Teiresias says with great foreboding (and foreshadowing), "You do NOT want to hear what I have to say." Roughly speaking, anyway. Teiresias continues to insist that it is better for him to leave rather than speak.

Oedipus, however, demands that Teiresias tell him what he knows.

Oedipus works himself into an angry rage and then busts out an insult we think you should add to your personal repertoire: "You would provoke a stone!." Oh, diss.

Teiresias grumbles "fine" and reveals that Oedipus himself was the one who killed the former king.

Then Oedipus says, "What? I didn’t hear you."

Teiresias tells him for the second time.

Most mysterious of all, according to Teiresias, Oedipus is committing "the worst of sins" with the people "he loves the most." More foreshadowing. Teiresias tells Oedipus that he is a threat to himself, in the "stop asking questions" kind of way.

Oedipus responds that he thinks Teiresias and Creon are simply framing him in order to seize the throne. He then taunts Teiresias about his blindness, which is not only politically incorrect but makes him out to be a total jerk.

The Chorus freaks out and tells the men they aren’t solving anything by arguing. Let’s just call them "reality-check Chorus."

Teiresias tells Oedipus he’s majorly, grossly cursed and will end up blinded, poor, and alone. This is the worst psychic reading ever. He then casually mentions Oedipus’s parents and informs Oedipus that he "shall learn the secret" of his marriage.

Then, right before he leaves, he says (in cryptic language) that Oedipus is married to his mother. Well, he says that Oedipus is "a son and husband both," which maybe isn’t so cryptic after all, unless you’re Oedipus.

The Chorus talks about the fight between Oedipus and Creon. The Strophe says whoever he is, the murderer needs to get out of Thebes, and fast. The Antistrophe which, don’t forget, is made up of the city’s citizens, declares that it can’t believe Oedipus is at fault until they see the glove on his hand, so to speak. Both halves of the Chorus agree that they have no idea whether or not to believe Teiresias.

Creon arrives, having overheard that Oedipus accused him of conspiring to steal the throne. Rumor, apparently, travels almost as fast in Thebes as in high school.

Oedipus enters again and accuses Creon to his face. Creon wants the opportunity to respond, but Oedipus won’t shut up.

Finally, Creon gets a word in. He explains that, as Oedipus’s brother-in-law, he has everything he could want without any of the stress of being in charge. Basically, no one wants to shoot the Vice President. In ancient Greece.

Oedipus continues to make accusations and says he’ll have Creon killed.

Jocasta, Oedipus’s wife and Creon’s sister, comes in. She is horrified at her husband and brother’s fighting, and also at the death threat.

Jocasta and the Chorus urge Oedipus to listen to Creon’s honest appeals and spare his life.

Creon storms off.

Jocasta asks Oedipus what’s going on. He explains he’s been accused of killing Laius. He leaves out the "you might be my Mom" part.

Jocasta responds that such prophecies are ridiculous. As an example, Jocasta says that her son by Laius was prophesized to kill his father, but that they killed the child as a baby to prevent it. Plus, Laius was killed by foreign highway robbers, none of which could possibly have been his son.

Oedipus, hearing the story, flips out. Suddenly, he worries that he might be the murderer after all. He asks Jocasta lots of questions about the murder’s whereabouts and other details.

Confused, Jocasta reveals that one of Laius’s servants survived the incident at the crossroads.

Oedipus insists that the servant be summoned for questioning.

Oedipus tells Jocasta that as a child, a man once told him that his mother and father were not his real parents. It was also prophesized that he would kill his father and sleep with his mother.

The plot is thickening considerably.

Oedipus also reveals that he killed several men in a small incident at a crossroads. Oops. He hopes to find out from the servant whether the King’s murderers were many or just one man. Oedipus utters the incredibly wise statement, "One man can not be many." Well, now we know why *this* guy is king. In other words, he’s saying if it was a sole murderer, that will confirm his guilt. (You know, in case the repeated prophecies, overwhelming evidence, and sinking stomach feeling were not enough).

Jocasta reminds Oedipus that even if he did kill Laius, he is not Laius’s son, since their only child was killed.

The Chorus pleads with the gods for mercy.

Jocasta, completely frazzled, makes an offering to the gods and prays for Oedipus to keep his temper and wits.

The Chorus asks a lot of questions, mostly revolving around the one big question of "what is going on?"

Conveniently, a messenger shows up from Corinth and informs Jocasta and Oedipus that Oedipus’s father, the King of Corinth, has died of natural causes. Jocasta interprets the King’s natural death as proof that the prophecy about Oedipus killing his father was false. Phew.

Jocasta pulls an, "I was right and you were wrong," and Oedipus is all, "Yeah, yeah, I know."

Oedipus, however, is still worried about the sleeping with his mother part of the prophecy. Jocasta tells Oedipus that if he just stops thinking about it, it will go away. We wish this still worked today.

The messenger questions Oedipus about the prophecy and his fears. The messenger tells Oedipus that the King of Corinth (Polybus) and his wife, Merope, were not Oedipus’s real parents. Unable to have a child themselves, they adopted Oedipus. Yet another "uh-oh" moment.

Turns out, Oedipus (as an infant) was given to the messenger with his feet pierced and tied. This is apparently why he is named "Oedipus," which means "screwed-up foot" in Greek (roughly speaking).

The messenger got the infant Oedipus from a shepherd who, conveniently, is still alive and within bellowing distance of the rest of our cast.

Jocasta urges quite energetically that Oedipus drop the issue before he discovers more than he bargained for.

Oedipus says, "No," and insists on his talking to the shepherd.

Jocasta makes reference to seeing Oedipus for the last time and runs off wailing.

Oedipus assumes she’s ashamed of his low birth (since as an infant he was found in some rather raggedy swaddling clothes) and vows to set things right.

The old shepherd shows up.

Oedipus questions the old shepherd. Like Teiresias, this guy refuses to speak. Oedipus has his servants twist the old man’s arms to try to force him to talk.

The man folds like a bad poker hand, revealing that Jocasta was the mother of the child that he discovered and gave to the messenger. Jocasta wanted the child taken away because it had been prophesized that the boy would kill his father and sleep with his mother.

FINALLY, Oedipus pieces things together and realizes that Jocasta is his mother. As predicted by the prophecy, he has slept with his mother and killed his father.

Oedipus runs out, saying, quite eloquently, "O, O, O."

The Chorus, expectedly, laments the tragedy.

Another messenger arrives and announces that Jocasta, disgusted with herself for sleeping with her own son, has hung herself. She’s dead.

Oedipus finds that he has lost both his wife and mother. He very dramatically rushes to her dead body, tears the broaches from her dress (which have sharp, phallic pins on them) and gouges out his eyes.

Oedipus staggers outside all bloody and gross.

The Chorus is startled (understatement of the year) and feels bad for him (understatement of the century).

Oedipus explains that he gouged his eyes out because there was no longer anything pleasant for him to see. We’re just amazed that the man can manage to stand around and explain things at this point.

Oedipus asks the Chorus to help send him out of Thebes or kill him. He wishes he had died as a child.

Creon enters and Oedipus asks to be sent away. Oedipus feels it is his fate to stay alive so that he can suffer.

Oedipus asks Creon to take care of his daughters, but not his sons because they can take care of themselves.

Creon leads Oedipus out of the room while Oedipus continues to beg for his exile.