

University of Birmingham

Mphil (B) Playwriting Studies

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*“A documentation and critical reflection of my original script, “With New Eyes”, from original concept to its submitted form”*

## **Introduction**

Jocasta stands as one of literatures most seminal and infamous female characters yet her own story is obscure, overshadowed by the stories of her children. She poses many questions; who is she? How did she become part of such a grotesque story? And what is her legacy?

My initial inspiration for my play came from glancing through J.A Coleman's *The Dictionary of Mythology* (2007). I found she had been allocated twelve lines in the one thousand, one hundred and thirty five page dictionary, listing only her husbands and children. It surprised me that this mythological figure was so neglected. When reading theatrical versions of the myth, such as Jean Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine* (1962), Jocasta is under developed as a theatrical character too, serving only to comment on Oedipus' discoveries. The desire to rewrite the Oedipus myth and its back-story was formed through personal, creative interest in Jocasta. George Steiner's *Antigone* (1984) was a beneficial source as his study of Antigone in various cultures and art forms showed me the legacy of Greek myth and the important impact it has had on the artistic conscious and subconscious of society. He states that "whenever, wherever, in the western legacy...we have found ourselves turning to words, images, sinews or argument, synecdotes, tropes, metaphors, out of the grammar of Antigone and of Creon" (p. 138). The impact of Greek myth is ubiquitous, secured within our cultural subconscious, affecting our view of politics, women, family and death. Alongside Antigone, Jocasta stands as one of the first female characters in Western culture and in the theatre. That she had not been explored thoroughly made my creative process indignant and determined. My aim was to re-examine the character, making her role in theatre and in the cultural subconscious a contemporary subject of debate.

## Process

### 1.0 Initial Pitch and Workshop

#### 1.1 Concept

For my initial pitch I presented my play as a Jacobean tragedy, a world more tangible than a Greek setting where the details of the narrative would fit. If the Greek setting was retained nothing new or compelling would be available, a new setting was necessary to make new discoveries within the myth. Jacobean drama serves this purpose fairly well as Jocasta's story of an aristocratic woman whose doomed marriage led to her death could easily be compared with Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613)

In Sophocles' *Oedipus The King*, the line has always troubled me; "Why should the thought of marrying your mother make you so afraid? Many men have slept with their mothers in their dreams. Why worry?" (1978, p. 66). I wanted to explore why Jocasta might be so casual about incest, given her knowledge of the prophecy. The genre of Jacobean revenge drama is suitable for the theme of incest, which I highlighted through the relationship between Jocasta and Creon. In both Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613) and Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1629) the threat or occurrence of incest between a brother and sister is the catalyst for tragedy.

Despite the Jacobean setting, this theme still had relevance to modern society, as incest remains a prominent issue. Johann Hari's article, *Forbidden Love* for guardian.co.uk explores the growing acceptance for incest, as "now there are chat rooms and websites that are de facto support groups for people engaged in incest" (2002). However there is ambiguity in the difference between incest and sexual abuse

as Hari writes, “the exponents of incest...were very keen to draw a distinction between “consensual incest” on the one hand and abuse, rape and pedophilia on the other” (2002) These subtle complexities needed to be dramatized sensitively and deftly.

## 1.2 Character

In *Oedipus The King*, Jocasta's plead to Oedipus, "No more questions. For god's sake, for the sake of your own life!" (1978, p.71) implies that Jocasta is complicit with their incestuous marriage. This creates the possibility for a psychologically rich character, an individual willing to live with the possibility of incest. This theme offers a different dynamic to Jocasta and Creon's relationship, adding to the complexity of Jocasta's character. Through imagining an incestuous, abusive relationship between them it makes Jocasta's happiness in her marriage with Oedipus ultimately more tragic, while in contrast posing the question of whether she knows that Oedipus is her son.

The Jacobean setting was fitting for re-writing the character of the Oracle, as this period in theatre was preoccupied with the dangers of the occult. I also thought this would be a useful way to show the possible age gap between Jocasta and Laius, with Jocasta as cynical towards the prophesy and the idea of fate. This clash of generations would cause conflict in the scenes leading up to Oedipus being abandoned as a baby, making these scenes, showing an unseen relationship, intriguing.

The unseen character of the Sphinx could also be resolved through the occult approach, appearing as a mystical threat, although I was not sure how to pursue this.

### 1.3 Assessment

On November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010 in a workshop led by Caroline Jester (Dramaturg at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre) at the George Cadbury Hall, actors read the scene between Jocasta and Laius, in which he reveals his plan to kill their unborn child. Through this workshop I learnt that my initial approach did not achieve the response I wanted. Hearing the scene aloud, I realised that the characters were fixed in conventional gender roles. Jocasta was submissive and overtly maternal stating, “All I want is to be your wife and mother to our son” (2009, p.11), while Laius was an overbearing misogynist. This did not add anything new to the story or the perception of that relationship. It made the scene, which should have felt revelatory, seem routine, with Jocasta as a rather uninteresting victim. I wanted to make her character three dimensional, not just simply sympathetic or likeable. I also wanted to prevent Laius from being seen a tyrannical villain who the audience should hate unreservedly, with two-dimensional lines such as “YOU WILL STAY HERE. You will do your duty as Lady of this estate. As my wife.” (2009, p. 10). Instead I wanted his decision about the baby to be one of inner conflict and paranoia. Otherwise my retelling would feel crude and juvenile.

The Jacobean setting and the Greek names limited the parameters of the play dramatically and in terms of emotional accessibility. The heightened language made the actors more mannered in their portrayal of the characters. This was something I wanted to avoid, as this would leave Jocasta rooted in the unfamiliar past, with the rewrite having seemingly little significance.

The feedback I received focused on the dialogue and the flow of the scene however I wanted the play to be an affront to the audience’s view of the myth, providing a

different perspective. From this the working title, *With New Eyes* (2009) emerged. I explored other attempts at fusing classical past and present theatricality such as Steven Berkoff's *Greek* (1994), Timberlake Wertenbaker's *The Love of the Nightingale* (1996) and Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love* (2002).

Berkoff and Kane's plays showed a brutal, visceral approach, using provocative language and violence, unafraid to alter the narrative of the myths to fit their creative desires. In contrast Wertenbaker's play removes the violence from the Tereus myth and writes with a feminist consideration, using the subject matter to discuss public and private autocratic systems. These plays showed me I had been writing in a hesitant manner and should push myself to be bolder in my writing, to utilize the Oedipus myth to write about my own themes. This enabled a varied view of how I could approach my play, which came into use in the first full draft.

## 2.0 First draft

### 2.1 Concept

After the workshop I started experimenting with setting. This draft was written under the setting “somewhere at sometime” (2009, p.1), with no character names, in an attempt to make Jocasta a symbolic and ubiquitous woman. I hoped that this would make the story relate to all times and locations, preventing contextual limitations, instead pulling the focus onto the themes and the characters. Jocasta was renamed as ‘Woman’ with the other characters labeled in terms of their relevance to her (for example Laius was now called ‘Husband’), highlighting that this is her story and without names, the characters are not committed to one location, time or culture.



## 2.2 Character

In the first draft, Jocasta's character became one of constant change, each state influenced by the men in her life. Starting with the days leading to her marriage to Laius, this version showed a young woman in a patriarchal vice. Her relationship with her brother mirrors that between Duchess and Ferdinand in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613), where the brother feels incestuous longings but repulses his sister. In this draft there is an explicit scene with Creon attempting to rape Jocasta, revealing he has abused her in the past. This scene was written to make the audience realize they could not rely on their prior knowledge of the myth and to reveal why Jocasta did not resist her marriage to Laius, as it was her only way to be free of Creon. In this scene Jocasta reacts with strength and violence but without killing Creon showing that she is an assertive woman who maintains her morality despite her surroundings.

In Berkoff's *Greek* the Oedipus character, Eddy, talks of his mother/wife with adoration and lust, stating, "I just love and love and love her" (1994, p.120). This led me to develop Jocasta and Oedipus' relationship into a tender one, based on physical attraction – something that Jocasta has been previously denied. In Jocasta and Oedipus' first scene together I used the evident dramatic irony, making the audience witness a tangible but misplaced affinity between them. I wrote Oedipus in this scene as charmingly arrogant, telling Jocasta, flirtatiously "I would be more than happy, my lady, to demonstrate quite clearly that I am no boy" (2009, p. 16), making him livelier and wittier than the other men Jocasta has met. Their scenes portray two people captivated with each other that, if it were not for the audience's prior knowledge, would be enjoyable to watch.

I presented the Oracle as a genuine mystic based on research into Pagan rites and history such as, Jason Karl's *The Secret World of Witchcraft* (2008). I wanted to

portray this aspect accurately to ensure the Oracle was believable and not unintentionally comical. The aim being that if the Oracle seemed genuine then Laius' conviction in wanting his unborn son killed would be more justified.

When depicting the character Antigone I read Sophocles', *Antigone* (442 BC), where her dispute with Creon's leads to her death. I admired this text for the emotional complexity and determination of Antigone as a female character, who has the detail and characterization that I believe Jocasta deserves.

### 2.3 Symbolism

Steve Water's writes in *The Secret Life of Plays*, that "forcing the pace of symbols can make them appear flimsy and forced; in the end the images that endure are organic ones, which arise ineluctably from the story being told." (2010, p. 148) I allowed symbols to emerge organically and as the play developed symbolic motifs began to form. I used these to serve the play, communicating meaning to the audience. The flowers in Jocasta's bouquet are a symbol of the youth and innocence that is to be lost when Jocasta leaves her home and her emotional roots, just as cut flowers will wither and die when they leave their literal roots. In final scene the dying tree behind Oedipus and Antigone with parasitic flowers growing on it is also a symbol of their exiled status. The flowers, despite their beauty are rejected as parasites, just as the characters have been rejected by society. The idea of birds was one that I quickly realised would be effective, with Antigone describing a bird in the distance to the blind Oedipus. Antigone's tells Oedipus, "It's hopping over the ground instead of flying." (2009, p. 27) The bird and its ability to fly is a symbol of freedom, of hope for the future and this is something I wanted to project on the character of Antigone. The bird hopping mirrors how she is trapped, forced into exile. Gazing at it in the distance, the bird's freedom is what she is going to strive for, for freedom from the past, the last line of the play "The sun is rising" (2009, p. 29), encapsulating this. As this is the closing of the play these symbols have a lasting effect that Water's describes as "a kind of after-image on the retina" (2010, p. 147)

Nature was also symbolic structurally in this draft as the script contained only three scenes set outside, on each occasion holding a different significance for Jocasta. The first of these scenes, of the Oracle and Laius on a hill during the divination scene, presents the outdoors as a threat to Jocasta's future. The second of these scenes,

Jocasta and Oedipus sat together by a tranquil river, shows the outdoors as freedom from the physical and emotional confinement Jocasta had suffered. And finally, the end scene, of Antigone and Oedipus alone, shows the outside as a prison, where they have been exiled. In its rough form I believe this experiment with nature imagery and the outside worked with some success and this was something I wished to pursue further in future drafts.

These symbols helped to create a larger world than shown in the play, giving a physical presence to its themes, allowing them to resonate emotionally.

## 2.4 Structure

Jocasta's story in this draft was a journey into tragedy, being shown in chronological order. I made this choice after the session with Anthony Weigh who described his play, *2000 Feet Away* (2008) as a 'panorama play', taking a sweeping, unbroken view of the play. This structure would show the full arch of Jocasta's story and how her experiences slowly impact on whom she is.

An issue that has always concerned me is the length of my writing, mistaking length for quality, letting this rule my creative process. However, after studying Mamet's *Edmond* (2003) with its brief scenes, and hearing Weigh's advice that a scene dictates its own length, I decided to write short scenes and see how they were received. In the style of an Expressionist, 'Stationendrama' play, I composed snapshots of different moments in a family's history, a theatrical flashlight being shone on the instances that build to tragedy.

## 2.5 Assessment

On the January 19<sup>th</sup> 2010 my class members read through my play. From hearing their feedback I re-examined my text and realised that my ideas had not had the intended outcome. The lack of location, instead of leaving a blank canvas, caused confusion as they searched for clues as to where and when they are, rather than focusing on the journey of the characters. Organic colloquialism and dialects seeped through into the play without my intention. There were also words like 'estate' and 'oracle' in the play that could have different connotations in different settings. 'Estate', for example, could mean an 18th century aristocratic home or a contemporary working class urban one. The working class setting was one I did not want to pursue as this is already explored well in Berkoff's *Greek* (1994). Members of the group stated that the idea of the Sphinx was something I needed to clarify, choosing the name of its equivalent carefully, was the sphinx a mythical monster or could it be a contemporary threat such as a terrorist? At this point I was still unsure. The Oracle was also in need of development with a desire for more ritual scenes, building up Laius' paranoia even further.

The characterisation was bold but clumsy with Jocasta appearing as too much of a victim to be sympathised with. Through attempting to generalise her, I had instead made her blank and difficult to relate to. Lecturer, Steve Waters, suggested Jocasta needed to be 'feistier' and have some of the wit found in my own personality. He stated that I should use my own relationships and experiences to shape my characters, in particular my relationship with my father to build the character of Menocenes further. Creon's character was too extreme in this draft. The explicit nature of the

rape/incest subplot meant he was received as a two-dimensional villain rather than the confused character that I wanted the audience to feel conflicted sympathy for. The maid was unclear as a character and appeared only a functional narrative tool, which did not fit within the psychologically rich aesthetic I was attempting. This character's appearance and importance in the play was something I needed to reconsider for my next draft.

While advice from Weigh and examples from Mamet illustrated that short scenes can be effective, this seemed to have had an adverse effect, making me lazy, assuming that each scene can be the length I wanted it to be. The short scenes were at times too short, resulting in a play that the audience was not drawn into. However, it was stated that the selectiveness of the scenes prevented melodrama. This was encouraging and from this I decided that I should extend the scenes in the right places to find the correct balance.

The chronological order in this draft dragged as the briefness detached and confused. There were inconsistencies in terms of characterisation and dialogue that needed to be addressed to make this world fully realised for an audience to be immersed in.

During a tutorial in November 2009 with supervisor Stephanie Dale she suggested finding a balance between establishing the world of the play and the sparse style of my writing. This is something I decided to work upon, making small changes to stage directions, suggesting what characters are doing. I needed to be more specific, to describe the length of the scenes in more detail as this heavily affected the flow of the play in performance.

### 3.0 Second draft

#### 3.1 Concept

For my next attempt I decided to use a more radical approach. I widened my research and found the 1967 film, *Edipo Re* by Pier Paolo Pasolini especially interesting. The film re-tells the Oedipus myth, cutting from World War Two Fascist Italy to Ancient Corinth and finally the present day of the film. From this I formed a new strategy for my play. This involved changing the play conceptually, challenging my writing abilities. Instead of denying location and historical context I chose three different settings. Each act takes place in a different specific historical time and geographical location, thereby committing the story to a context without limiting it to just one. This conveyed the questions I wanted to ask about relationships, if they have grown in sophistication and civility since the Ancient Greeks or if humans, despite technological advancement and the growing assertion for equal rights, are still brutal and damaging towards one another. These questions then became the focus of the play using the myth as a basis to inspire debate.

When choosing three settings I had to find places and times that could fit with the plot points of the original myth that I felt I could write confidently. Act one in this draft took place in Victorian Yorkshire, a setting I felt secure within due to the creative influence of the Bronte sisters' work, especially Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) in my writing. This setting was consistent with the arranged marriage Jocasta is subjected to at the start of her life and the enclosed, claustrophobic feeling I wanted to create. This act encompasses her relationship with Creon, beginning with their childhood days, showing Creon's influence over Jocasta and, given the confined Victorian world they live in, how she is unable to escape this until her marriage. This



act became about her need to leave her childhood with Creon and also her fear to do so, going into a loveless marriage.

Act Two was then moved to 1940's suburban America, as this was a world I felt familiar with through film, notably David Lean's *Brief Encounter* (1945) and Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (1944). This setting embodies the ideals of domestic bliss in a nuclear family and the view of women as submissive but as in the above-mentioned films, the growing fear of the transgressive woman. In this world Jocasta could essentially move from one prison to another, frustrated and isolated, eventually yielding to her husband's insistence to give up their child. I wanted this act to focus on Laius' paranoia, having multiple scenes with the Oracle, who is now renamed as Fortune Teller, a name more fitting to this setting. These scenes built up tension in the play, given the audience's knowledge of the impending fate Laius will be imparted with. The historical setting adds to Laius' paranoia as during this time McCarthyism and the Anti-Communist Network began to form and grow into prominence. Ellen Schrecker describes the movement in *The Age of McCarthyism* as a "national obsession" (2002, p.25), that "projecting their own fears and insecurities onto a demonized "Other", many Americans found convenient scape-goats among the powerless...in their midst" (2002, p. 23). This context makes Laius' paranoia seem more credible and accelerated.

Berkoff states that *Greek* (1994) emerged "via Sophocles. Trickling its way down the millennia until it reached the unimaginable wastelands of Tufnell Park." (1994, p.97). The harsh nature of this setting led me to believe that for the final act I needed to find a contemporary world where women are equally submissive as the previous two settings, where Menocenes and Jocasta's suicides and the blinding of Oedipus would

correspond. As Berkoff uses the myth to satirise Thatcherism, linking the modern with the ancient, I wanted to pick a setting that was topical and for me, the potent setting would be modern Afghanistan. This seemed an obvious cultural arena to discuss the repression of women. After a great deal of research I chose 2009 as the historical setting. My research included Sarah Waldron's documentary *Women, Weddings, War and Me* (2010). This documentary showed an Afghan teenage girl; raised in the United Kingdom, return to Afghanistan to experience female life there. This was useful for me as it was informal in style and gave a young, emotive and accessible perspective while refusing to spare the viewer any of the horror of the country's climate, for example, showing a fifteen year old girl's burnt away legs. This had occurred when the girl had set herself alight with petrol; unable to live with the beatings she had received for years at the hands of her husband's family. This confirmed Afghanistan as a relevant setting for the third act's self-harm and suicide. I backed this up with formal, statistical research, including the landscape and wildlife of Afghanistan, the religious and cultural traditions as well as texts on its violent history such as John C. Griffiths' *Afghanistan: Land of Conflict and Beauty* (2009). Griffiths confirms "the emphasis on the...role of women as mothers and home-makers, and draconian punishment for crime" (2009, p. 228) presented in the documentary but also added useful cultural details such as "the imposition of strict purdah, literally a veil...shielding woman from sexual harassment" (2009, p. 228) that helped to build the believability of this world.

The three settings are fused together by a monologue that is repeated in each act, that has different connotations in each setting.

### 3.2 Character

Through the changing contexts, Jocasta's characterisation is developed much further, showing the transition from impressionable girl, to a bitter but strong woman and eventually a broken individual. The incestuous feelings Creon has towards Jocasta are more implicit with the implication in one scene that Jocasta is confused by this feelings herself, instead of purely rejecting them as she does in the first draft. Her relationship with Creon is now more multifaceted with affection, stubbornness and anger, giving Jocasta a 'feistier' side. This side of her matures within her marriage to Laius and, although prevalent at key moments, is suppressed through fear of abuse and the pressure to comply with society's expectations. Upon meeting Oedipus she appears as a hardened character with a cynical view of the world. However, she allows Oedipus to soften her and take on a maternal side, showing a warmth and sexuality that has been suppressed for the majority of Jocasta's life. At the end of Jocasta's journey she is a woman who cannot cope with further distress, pushing her to commit suicide. I believe Jocasta began to become the tragic heroine I want her to be.

Creon's development makes him a subtler character who, rather than being a predatory abuser, is a confused young man who does not know where to place his affection for his sister. This inner conflict brings out petulance and jealousy, mixed with deep affection creating a more conflicting character for an audience.

Laius' role in the play is developed greatly, with Act Two presented from his perspective. He is a man that cannot trust anyone, motivated by fear and doubt, pushing him to take desperate measures. He sees the roles of husband and wife in a traditional, misogynist way and mistrusts Jocasta for her inability to fit within that

role. He reads the innocent inconsistencies that occur in habits and conversation and assumes the worse. In this draft I believe Laius was not a likeable character but his modus operandi could be understood with the detail added to his journey, to the accumulation that leads to his rejection of his child.

In this draft Oedipus progresses into more of a well-rounded character. Due to the setting of Afghanistan I had written him as a NATO officer. I believed his role had to be active within the conflict to present him as a physically dynamic man. I wanted Jocasta's attraction to him to be based on how different he is from Creon and Laius. Creon and Laius are men who over-think and use psychology and emotions to manipulate. Oedipus contrasts this with a strong physical presence and youth. He is presented to as a man of action with morals. He contrasts with Creon and Laius' personalities, as, instead of Creon's petulance and Laius' paranoia, Oedipus is self-assured. In this draft it is Jocasta's strength, something that Creon and Laius tried to suppress, that draws Oedipus to Jocasta. Her strong will and cynical view of the world, unusual for a woman in Afghanistan of her age, would be refreshing and attractive to Oedipus. Their relationship is a sexual one, releasing the frustration Jocasta has previously felt. Oedipus physicality and his NATO position also corresponded with the idea that he may have killed Laius, during the conflict as described in the myth. To follow the basis of the myth I have made Oedipus an Afghanistan born man whose adoptive parents moved to Canada when he was a baby, Canadian NATO officers taking a large part in the Afghanistan war. Within this setting the Sphinx takes on the form of Pashtun guerrilla and Oedipus' limp explained with a rogue bullet, this used only as reference to the myth.

Menocenes is more prevalent in the second draft. Appearing at first to be a mediator between Creon and Jocasta, trying to keep the peace and to guarantee a successful

marriage for his daughter. He subtly confronts Creon about his feelings for his sister, firmly putting a stop to his visits to see Jocasta without appearing as a tyrannical patriarch. Before this scene Menocenes has said nothing about the unhealthy relationship between his children out of denial, he does not want to admit that incest is a possibility. In act two he again turns a blind eye to the unhappiness Jocasta suffers in her marriage to Laius and encourages her to persevere. In the final act he is a man haunted by the cruel murder of his wife, tormented by the on going conflict, describing symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder, such as nightmares and agoraphobia. This growing fragility and knowledge of Jocasta's relation to Oedipus drives Menocenes to suicide, rather than blaming himself for the Sphinx as he does in the myth.

For this draft I made the decision to expand the Maid's story and attempt to make her a full character. While Antigone and Jocasta represent different forms of strong, intelligent, feisty females, I decided to juxtapose this with a submissive woman who allows herself to be mistreated. The maid spends many years being used by Creon sexually, in the vain hope that he might marry her eventually. Her character is used to realise the setting of act three, where the audience hears how, after years of abuse, she has set her self on fire. The maid also helps to develop Antigone's character as she acts as advisor to both the maid and Menocenes. This character's ability to understand complicated adult problems projects that she has an inherent awareness of the world, foreshadowing the intelligent character later seen in Sophocles' *Antigone* (442 BC). Antigone's relationship with her parents was more apparent in this draft. There is playfulness evident between them, as both parents tease their daughter. This idyllic family image in a designated family park shows a peace away from the conflict that the audience know will be lost, heightening the sense of impending tragedy further.

Within the end scenes the relationship becomes more delicate with Antigone struggling to be the point of stability for her parents. In one scene we see her trying to help her mother commit suicide without allowing her own feelings to intervene. This strength is balanced with a cry of, 'Mummy, please,' (2010, p. 61) reminding us that she is essentially a child facing a horrifying situation. The final scene, with her now blind father, shows Antigone with a steelier edge, hardened by her experiences. She has become a woman of resilience with acute insight.

### 3.3 Structure

I changed the structure further by dismissing chronology and having each act focus on one of the three romantic relationships that form Jocasta; Creon, Laius and Oedipus.

This made the play more centered on each issue at a time, each act becoming an individual microcosm.

### 3.4 Symbolism

The symbolism became more prevalent as the script developed. The end scene in the first draft of Antigone describing a bird to Oedipus was now mirrored in the opening scene with Jocasta describing a bird in a similar manner to Creon. Although the types of bird and the description of the landscape differ due to the different geographical settings, the scenes parallel each other well, symbolising that we have come full circle. Antigone symbolises the women of the future and, given her future in the myth, asks if society will make the same mistakes, if history will repeat itself.

The symbol of flowers as youth and innocence is continued in this draft and used to fuse the acts together. In each act there is a scene in Jocasta and Laius' home with a vase of flowers on the table, symbolising that Jocasta's youth is now contained. As her relationship with Laius worsens we see the flowers begin to wilt but see a fresh arrangement when she meets Oedipus, symbolising the new fresh start Jocasta has been presented with. Another device I have used to connect scenes is the use of corresponding windows in each act. These also show the exterior of each location and establish the setting more successfully, combined with more detailed descriptions of each location in the stage directions.



### 3.5 Assessment

Following feedback from Steve Waters on April 30<sup>th</sup> 2010, the problems within this draft arise from a lack of commitment and bravery in the writing, such as a lack of research into language and dialect. Therefore the change in location and era are unconvincing and attempted in a tepid and diffident manner. To progress further it became clear that further research and conviction in my writing were both required. The ideas and choices I had previously made had to be changed or pushed forward into fruition for them to be successful.

## 4.0 Third draft

### 4.1 Concept

The first alteration made in this draft was to add the Greek names back into the script. The lack of these names had made certain parts of the dialogue stunted and confusing and, given the clear lack of naturalism now in the play, the names jarring with the setting was no longer a concern. In fact these names linked the acts together and cemented the concept. This boldness was something I wanted to push throughout the play. The three acts were now not only different in historical and geographical settings but also differing in genre and style. Act one was written with the intention of mirroring a naturalistic theatrical form, Act Two was written as a film noir and Act Three attempted in an In-Yer-Face theatre style. The choice of the genres was due to the parallels in their conventions to the section of the story I wanted to apply them to. Naturalism is an ideal style for the psychological manipulation in act one and the conventions of emotional truth and the figurative fourth wall were applied. Act One was rewritten in Victorian Wales, as this setting was more insular and one where my own upbringing in North Wales would be useful. Film noir's conventions present the audience with the untrustworthy female being a man's downfall, linking it to Laius' paranoia. This was written following many hours watching films such as those aforementioned, adding misquotes of film noir films and observing the style of language, the short scenes and the fast speed in which the plot moves. Act three needed a genre that could project the harsh, violent world of Afghanistan and the final details of the story. Following a return to Kane's *Phaedra's Love* (2002), In-Yer-Face theatre became an attractive possibility. Aleks Sierz describes the play as "a study in extreme emotion...the fragility of the characters and their tenderness are drowned out by the confusion of untamed emotions." (2001, pp. 107-112) Sierz writes that with In-

Yer-Face “the intention is to make the experience unforgettable” (2001, p.5) and I wanted this raw quality, to leave a definable mark on an audience’s memory, to stand out from other translations and re-examinations of Greek myth. In-Yer-Face’s insistence to confront its audience seemed to fit this requirement and therefore the sexual, violent nature of the act was portrayed as unflinchingly as I could summon. The play had more cultural references, in particular songs and language, with a welsh hymn and prayers in welsh, a forties blues song and traditional Pashtun folk music. This made the three worlds more convincing and rich.

## 4.2 Character

The different genres affect the character of Jocasta making her a different archetypical woman in each act - virgin, temptress and mother. While the opening scene in Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* (2005) uses different women from different eras to give multiple perspectives about feminism and female repression, I instead wanted to fuse this into one central character. This makes the themes in the play correspond to all forms of theatre and to all kind of women, making Jocasta the universal female figure I wanted originally. However, she is still a singular relatable character as each archetype shows her in different stages of womanhood.

Other changes in character involved cutting the majority of the maid's scenes and accepting her as a device instead of forcing a full character unnecessarily. The Fortune Teller also changed, making only one appearance and, rather than a naturalistic pagan, perceived as the mystical turban-wearing stereotype appropriate with the forties setting

## 5.0 Workshop

The workshop provided me with a great deal of insight into what was working within the play and what was not. The relationship between Jocasta and Creon was effective and had the emotional tension I had desired. The changing from one genre to the next seemed to work relatively seamlessly with the feedback from the audience being one of curiosity instead of confusion. One thing that became apparent was that Act One did not flow well and during feedback there was a concern that too much history of the story was being shown. This was also evident when within the rehearsal process a large part of a scene was cut. This was juxtaposed by the sense that the scenes were in places too short and the audience could not be fully involved before being taken to another part of the myth.

## 5.1 Structure

My following tutorial with Steve Waters confirmed these concerns and also suggested that the genres for Act One and Act Three needed alterations or improvements, suggesting changes in language and idioms that would make the settings more plausible. Act Three especially needed revision as the In-Yer-Face genre seemed forced and the conventions of this genre, in particular swearing did not fit with the repressed female that Jocasta would be in the Afghanistan setting.

## 5.2 Character

In terms of character, Meneocenes needed to be more patriarchal as in this draft. He was too reassuring and casual about the potential incest in his household. By making him more of an oppressive figure it builds up the tension between Jocasta and Creon and creates the threat of the kiss they share. I needed to make it clearer that Jocasta reciprocates Creon's feelings for her, stopping act one from being repetitive. In Act Two Laius' paranoia needed to be heightened, conveyed further to the audience to create a realistic escalation to the end of the act, making him a relatable, pitiable character.

In Act Three, I removed the details about Oedipus being a NATO officer as I felt this asked too many questions about the reaction of the Pashtuns to his marriage to Jocasta and delved into political debate that I felt unequipped to handle correctly. Instead Oedipus has moved back to Afghanistan to be with his family, following the death of his adoptive parents in Canada. This was revealed in a new scene, showing his wedding night with Jocasta, much like in Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine* (1962). This scene helps to establish the cultural background of the setting, establishing his character better. His upbringing in Western culture was something I wanted to convey through the language in Act Three with Jocasta and Meneocenes speaking in more formal, heightened language and, in contrast, Oedipus using more a colloquial Western dialect. Antigone therefore speaks in an amalgamation of both, showing the blending of cultures, though primarily dominated by her Afghan environment.

## 6.0 Presented script

### 6.1 Concept

The script that has been submitted has received the aforementioned changes and several others. Act one has taken on the form of a ballad in a Welsh Mabinogion style. The Mabinogion uses many folktale motifs, such as enchantment, romance and devices such as the narrator and using Celtic landscape. This style is pertinent as it fits the Welsh setting while the story of Jocasta and Creon can be related to one of the Mabinogion stories. In Jeffrey Gantz's collection of the stories, I found the tale of *Branwen Daughter of Llyr*. In this story, Branwen's brother is outraged that she is to be married, claiming "They could not have hit upon a greater jealousy" (2003, p.69) His jealousy lead me to draw comparisons with my play and inspired me to use this style. I have utilized a narrator who sings part of the welsh hymn or tells a section of the story of Jocasta and Creon at the start of each scene. This gives the audience an awareness of the non-naturalistic nature of the play and, through applying a genre that is rarely used in contemporary theatre it sets the precedence for the unusual use of genre within the play. Suggesting the change in genre is continued in each act using the music in the play. The speech that is repeated in all three acts is now intercut with a line of music from the following act or, in the case of Act Three, the music from Act One, bringing the play into a full circle, conveying the theme of history repeating itself.



## 6.2 Structure

The structure of the play has been tightened with the time scale of each act shorter and more precise. Scenes have been joined together to make longer scenes that an audience can become more involved in with less history and plot points to follow. Act Two is now more concise with less locations and clearer description of how staging would work. Laius' soliloquies are now longer and more frequent building his paranoia while maintaining the flimsy nature and fast pace of film noir.

Act three is no longer forced into the In-Yer-Face genre but is instead an Avant Garde theatrical hybrid, such as the works of Weigh, Wertebaker and Berkoff, consisting of In-Yer-Face violence, Brechtian projection and heightened emotional scenes.

## **Conclusion**

My aim is that this play is a bold piece of theatre that experiments with conventions and well-established myth. I want it to show the myth in a new light and transform it from a classical piece of literature into a more accessible and relatable work, broadening the appeal of the characters and the story. The play should keep the audience engaged and use their prior knowledge about the Oedipus story to re-examine the evolution of male and female relationships.

On reflection the presented text still needs work. The problems in the play would benefit if the play were longer, giving the relationships room to grow in complexity and believability.

I believe that this play has helped me to develop as a writer, to know my strengths and flaws and is ultimately a project I can return to and develop further.

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## “With New Eyes”

by

Grace Tanswell

Act one is set in Mid-Victorian Wales, during the weeks leading to Jocasta's wedding to Laius.

Act two is set in 1940's Chicago, during the first year of Jocasta and Laius' marriage.

Act three is set in Afghanistan in 1994 and 2009, during the start and end of her marriage to Oedipus.

Characters are to be played by the same actors throughout.

Characters:

Jocasta

Creon (Jocasta's brother)

Menocenes (Jocasta and Creon's father)

Laius (Jocasta's first husband)

Oedipus (Jocasta and Laius' son, later Jocasta's husband)

Antigone (Jocasta and Oedipus' daughter)

Storyteller

Fortune teller

Maid

Singer

Band

Young Woman

Angry men

Women

Translations:

*Brawd* – Brother

*Pam* – Why

*Gwyrdd* – Green

*Eisteddwch* – Sit

*Fi'n addo i ti* – I promise

*Cariad* - Darling

*Fi'n caru ti* – I love you

*Cymru* – Wales

*Henffych well, Fair, gyflawn o ras y mae'r Arglwydd gyda thi; bendigedig wyt ti ymhlith  
marched, a bendigedig yw ffrwyth dy groth di, Iesu -*

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and  
blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

*Tad* – Father

*Dim* – Nothing

*Araul* – Serene



*Paid* – Stop

*Ni gallwch* – You can't

*Os gwelch yn dda* – Please

*Ydi* – Yes

Welsh Hymn lyrics translation:

I don't ask for a luxurious life,  
the world's gold or its fine pearls,  
I ask for a happy heart,  
an honest heart, a pure heart.

A pure heart full of goodness,  
It is more beautiful than the lovely lily,  
None but a pure heart can sing,  
Sing in the day, sing in the night.

If I asked for worldly wealth,  
It would swiftly go to seed;  
The riches of a virtuous, pure heart  
Will bear eternal profit.

A pure heart full of goodness,

It is more beautiful than the lovely lily,

None but a pure heart can sing,

Sing in the day, sing in the night

*Allah Akbar* – Allah is the greatest

*Mahram* – A woman's chaperone, normally their father or husband

*Perahan Tunban* – Everyday shirt and trousers for Afghan woman

*Chador* – A headscarf

*Shami* – An Afghan dress worn with trousers underneath

*Payraan Tumbaan* – An Afghan men's outfit consisting of a loose shirt, trousers and cloth belt.

*Salwar Kameez* – An Afghan men's outfit consisting of a loose shirt and trousers.

*Haftwa-wa-lagan* – A jug of water and bowl use to wash hands before eating.

*Disterkha* – A blanket or matt to place food upon.

Act One – Brother

Mid-Victorian Wales. 1.

1. STORYTELLER

Let me tell you a story. The tale of Jocasta and Creon.  
Jocasta, daughter of Menocenes was a free spirited child,  
with fire in her heart, who dreamt of being one with the  
rivers and trees. But her father knew of the dangers of the  
world and, out of fear for his daughter, made her stay  
inside always, with her older brother Creon.

THE FAMILY LIVING ROOM. JOCASTA STANDS. THERE IS A SMALL ROUND  
WINDOW THAT SHE IS LOOKING OUT OF. THE LANDSCAPE OUTSIDE IS OF  
MOSSY GREENS AND BROWNS. IT IS RAINING, GREY CLOUDS IN THE SKY.  
CREON SITS READING. SHE IS 8 YEARS OLD. HE IS 12 YEARS OLD. SHE HAS A  
WELSH ACCENT; HE IS TRYING TO HIDE HIS WITH RECEIVED  
PRONOUNCIATION. BOTH WEARING VICTORIAN CLOTHES.

JOCASTA

Look. It is raining again.

CREON

It is always raining. Come away from the window.

JOCASTA

Why?

CREON

It is miserable.

JOCASTA

I like it.

CREON

It will only depress you, Jocasta.

JOCASTA

I think it is pretty, *brawd*.

CREON

Call me brother.

JOCASTA

There is a bird over by the largest tree. Look. It is not flying. It is hopping over the ground. Why is it not flying?

CREON

Some birds prefer to hop.

JOCASTA

*Pam?* When you can fly? I do not understand.

CREON

What does it look like?

JOCASTA

Pardon?

CREON

The bird. What does it look like?

JOCASTA

The one that is hopping?

CREON

The one that is hopping.

JOCASTA

Its feathers are black and white. And when the sunlight hits the black feathers it looks *gwyrdd*, like they have an emerald sheen.

CREON

It is a magpie.

JOCASTA

There is a large puddle next to it. It is full of mud and dead leaves. (beat) Are you listening to me?

CREON

Do you know it is bad luck to see one on it's own?

JOCASTA

It is?

CREON

Yes. I told you to come away from the window!

JOCASTA

I do not believe you.

CREON

I am telling you the truth.

JOCASTA

No.

CREON

Something bad will happen to you now.

JOCASTA

Really?

CREON

You can ask father.

JOCASTA

I will not.

CREON

I think it is morbid to be staring at such a landscape.

JOCASTA

Morbid?

CREON

Morbid, you fool.

*HE STANDS UP AND WALKS OVER TO THE WINDOW*

It means it is sad. Gloomy. Portentous!

*SHE LOOKS UP AT HIM, HE LAUGHS*

JOCASTA

Be quiet.

CREON

Just because you do not know what it means.

JOCASTA

Only because you are older than me. You've read more books than me.

CREON

It is because you are stupid. It is because you are a girl.

JOCASTA

No.

CREON

Girls are stupid.

JOCASTA

NO.

CREON

Everyone knows that. Even father thinks so.

JOCASTA

Father loves me.

CREON

That does not mean you are clever. Now come away from the window and sit with me.

JOCASTA

I do not want to.

*HE TAKES HER HAND*

CREON

Come and sit.

JOCASTA

No. You never play with me anymore.

CREON

I am too old for playing. Sit down. (beat) *Eisteddwch.*

*SHE SITS*

JOCASTA

You said it in Welsh.



CREON

It's the only way to get you to listen sometimes.

JOCASTA

You told me you would never say another Welsh word.

CREON

If it will allow me to read my book without disturbance I will  
make an exception

JOCASTA

Why are you always busy?

CREON

I am older than you.

*SHE LOOKS AT THE FLOOR*

You really are very irritating.

I cannot lavish you with attention and flattery all the time.

I asked you to sit with me. You said you wanted to be with me  
and here you are. So why are you pouting?

JOCASTA

I am not.

CREON

You are.

JOCASTA

I am not. And I want to play, I said. Have some pleasure.

Not just sit.

CREON

If you want to spend time with me you have to do grown up things.

JOCASTA

I will try.

CREON

Promise?

JOCASTA

*Fi'n addo i ti.* (beat) Creon, could you read to me?

*HE SMILES AT HER AND NODS. SHE PLACES HER HEAD ON HIS LAP.*

CREON

*(reading from his book)* "If you want to eat black bread and sleep on a bed of hay then keep calling out, "long live the Welsh language"; but if you want to eat white bread and eat roasted beef then learn to speak English".

JOCASTA

Father will be angry if he hears you say that.

CREON

Are you going to spend the rest of your life doing only what you are told?

JOCASTA

I want to be a respectable girl.

CREON

That is not your true nature. I can see the wildness in you. You are like that bird, choosing to hop instead of flying.

JOCASTA

You want me to be wicked.

CREON

I want you to be free.

JOCASTA

No more talking. I want to play. Can I get my Noah's Ark?

CREON

Very well.

*HE PLACES HIS BOOK DOWN. JOCASTA RUNS OFF STAGE EXCITEDLY, CREON GAZES AFTER HER, SMILING.*

2. STORYTELLER

(singing)

*Nid wy'n gofyn bywyd moethus,*

*Aur y byd na'i berlau mân:*

*Gofyn 'rwyf am galon hapus,*

*Calon onest, calon lân.*

*Calon lân yn llawn daioni,*

*Tecach yw na'r lili dlos:*

*Dim ond calon lân all ganu*

*Canu'r dydd a chanu'r nos.*

THE LIVING ROOM. THE VIEW FROM THE WINDOW IS THE SAME BUT WITH SNOW ON THE GROUND, NO LEAVES ON THE TREES. MENOCENES AND JOCASTA SIT QUIETLY. MENOCENES IS READING THE BIBLE, JOCASTA DOING NEEDLEPOINT. HE IS IN HIS FORTIES, SHE IS NOW TWELVE YEARS OLD.

*SHE GAZES OUT OF THE WINDOW. MENOCENES LOOKS UP FROM HIS BIBLE.*

MEOCENES

Is something troubling you, daughter?

JOCASTA

It is cold.

MENOCENES

The snow has settled but it will hopefully improve soon. Spring will be on its way.

*HE LOOKS DOWN AGAIN AT HIS BIBLE.*

JOCASTA

I do not like the snow. I hate the crunching noise when you step on it.

*HE LOOKS UP SHARPLY.*

MENOCENES

I beg your pardon?

JOCASTA

It makes a crunchy, squeaky noise when you walk on it.

MENOCENES

Where have you been walking?

JOCASTA

I –

MENOCENES

Where have you been walking?

JOCASTA

I wanted to make a snowman.

MENOCENES

Have you lost your senses?

JOCASTA

It makes me happy. Reminds me of when Creon and I built one when we were younger.

*HE PLACES THE BIBLE DOWN AND STANDS UP.*

MENOCENES

It is dangerous outside. You know this.

JOCASTA

But father I cannot just stay inside all the time. I feel trapped here.

MENOCENES

My dear girl, please. You know how dangerous it can be, especially for a lady.

JOCASTA

I need clean air, to hear the birds, touch the trees.

MENOCENES

Do not mistake me; your brother is a smart young man who makes me very proud, he is accomplished at his studies.

But he is unruly. I feel him pulling away from us more every day. (beat) However, I have you. You make my heart glad whenever I see you smile, *cariad*.

JOCASTA

*Fi'n caru ti.*

MENOCENES

And I love you. I must look after my beautiful daughter.

JOCASTA

But -

MENOCENES

Jocasta, do not question me on this any further.

JOCASTA

But perhaps if I went outside with Creon –

MENOCENES

Has your brother been encouraging you?

*SHE DOESN'T RESPOND.*

Your brother is smart, perhaps a little too smart. Can you not see how easy it is for him to manipulate you?

JOCASTA

I enjoy his company.

MENOCENES

You are too old to be spending so much time with him. You are not children anymore. Soon you will be a woman.

JOCASTA

I wish I could stay here, as I am now.

*Tad*, I am worried. I do not know what my future will be. I do trust you but -

MENOCENES

Your future will become clear soon enough

When you are troubled you should come to the church.

I'm sure God can answer your questions.

*HE TURNS TO SIT BACK DOWN.*

JOCASTA

I am not sure he listens.

*HE TURNS SHARPLY TO FACE HER.*

MENOCENES

Of course he does.



JOCASTA

I am -

MENOCENES

But like me he wonders if all the inhabitants of *Cymru* can be brought back to religion.

JOCASTA

I am sorry.

MENOCENES

Your brother has been filling your head with nonsense. Pay little heed to it.

JOCASTA

Please forgive me.

MENOCENES

It was not me you insulted. You need to ask the Lord for forgiveness.

JOCASTA

What penance will you give me?

MENOCENES

A Hail Mary. I shall leave you alone with God.

JOCASTA

Thank you.

MENOCENES

Please clear your mind of this nonsense.

*HE EXITS. SHE KNEELS DOWN AND PRAYS.*

JOCASTA

*Henffych well, Fair, gyflawn o ras y mae'r Arglwydd gyda  
thi; bendigedig wyt ti ymhlith marchod, a bendigedig yw  
ffrwyth dy groth di, Iesu.*

*CREON ENTERS.*

CREON

Get up.

JOCASTA

I need to finish my penance.

CREON

Penance? What do you have to atone for?

JOCASTA

We all have deeds to be forgiven.

CREON

So Father tells you.

JOCASTA

Creon, let me pray.

CREON

Come outside with me.

JOCASTA

I am not to go outside.

CREON

You will be safe with me.

JOCASTA

But *Tad* said –

CREON

Father is a foolish old man!

*HE HOLDS HIS HAND OUT TO HER. SHE CONSIDERS IT FOR A MOMENT, THEN GRABS IT  
WHILE STANDING UP. THEY RUN OFF STAGE HAND IN HAND.*

3.

STORYTELLER

When Jocasta was old enough, Menocenes gave her hand in marriage to Laius, a rich landowner. When Creon discovered this he flew into a rage; "They have given such a maiden, my sister no less, in marriage without my consent? They could have offered no greater insult to me than this!", said he.

CREON AND MENOCENES IN THE LIVING ROOM. CREON IS IN HIS LATE TEENS.

THEY HAVE BEEN DRINKING AND PLAYING CHESS. IT IS THE END OF THE NIGHT.

CREON IS ON HIS FEET, AGGITATED. MENOCENES SITS.

MENOCENES

My main concern is that Jocasta has a good life with a husband who will provide for her. And she will have that.

CREON

When will you tell her? (beat) When?

MENOCENES

Soon. When I sense the time is right. Calm yourself.

CREON

I do not trust him. And I do not trust you.

MENOCENES

Creon –

CREON

You know so little about this man.

MENOCENES

Are you questioning my decision?

CREON

Yes. (beat) I only care for her, *tad*.

MENOCENES

And you doubt that I do? I have chosen a good husband for her.

CREON

You have chosen him for his money.

MENOCENES

He is a well-respected man. Do you want your sister to live a life of poverty?

CREON

You know I –

MENOCENES

Must you interfere always? Your opinion is irrelevant here.

CREON

She is my sister. I want her to be happy.

MENOCENES

You want her for yourself.

CREON

What do you mean?

MENOCENES

You want her to stay here and fawn over you.

It is your vanity that wants to keep her here,  
not affection or concern.

CREON

I want to keep my family. (beat)

She reminds me of mother. She has her eyes.

MENOCENES

She is a beautiful girl.

CREON

And a smart one.

MENOCENES

Do you think I'm a fool?

CREON

Why would I think that?

MENOCENES

Do I think I will allow you to ruin my daughter?

Why do you think marriage was arranged?

CREON

To keep Jocasta away from me?

MENOCENES

You are together constantly. It is not acceptable.

She idolizes you and with you come your foolish ambitions.

You say you want to keep your family. So why do you want to remove yourself from your country?

You wish to reject the Welsh people, our language, our religion?

That is your choice, no matter how foolish it might be, but do not drag your sister down with you or I will be forced to act unsparingly.

*PAUSE*

CREON

What do you want me to do?

MENOCENES

Nothing.

CREON

Nothing?

MENOCENES

Exactly. Nothing. Continue with your studies and stay away



from your sister. I do not want to see you two alone.

CREON

I see.

MENOCENES

Yes. Yes, you do.

4. STORYTELLER

(singing)

*Pe dymunwn olud bydol,*

*Hedyn buan ganddo sydd;*

*Golud calon lân, rinweddol,*

*Yn dwyn bythol elw fydd.*

*Calon lân yn llawn daioni,*

*Tecach yw na'r lili dlos:*

*Dim ond calon lân all ganu*

*Canu'r dydd a chanu'r nos.*

A FEW DAYS LATER. THE WELSH UPLANDS. JOCASTA IS NOW IN HER EARLY TEENS AND STILL UNAWARE OF HER IMPENDING MARRIAGE. SHE STAND , CREON SITS A FEW FEET AWAY. AUTUMN COLOURS, LUSCIOUS TEXTURES AND A GREY SKY SURROUND THEM. IT IS STILL.

JOCASTA

Can you hear that? . *Dim.* Just crisp silence, ringing in your ears. When we were younger I thought it was beautiful. (beat)

Now it is different. I can sense that something is coming.

And it makes my breathing short. (pause) There is no silence

anymore. Its almost as if the trees are talking to me, making me

ache. I do not know what I'm aching for but something is calling me. Something I belong to. There is more to experience. (beat) I must sound rather odd to you. There was a time when that would have troubled me but if I cannot be myself then what else can I be? (pause) I want to believe that there can be nothing again. That all the world can be quiet, still, *araul*. That the aching will leave and I will feel full. I want there to be silence and I want it to be beautiful.

CREON

Come and sit.

JOCASTA

Why do I feel like everything is about to change?

CREON

Jocasta, come and sit with me.

*IN THE BACKGROUND WE CAN JUST HEAR WHAT SOUNDS LIKE A 1940'S SONG BEING SUNG.*

SINGER

(singing from offstage)

In the dark, it's just you and I

There's not a sound and there's not one sigh

Just the beat of my poor heart

In the dark

5.

STORYTELLER

And so Creon wandered the uplands, in mourning, knowing his sister would be taken from him.

He watched as the wind moved through the Welsh poppies and cried, the cold silence mocking his sobs.

He knew that if he did not act quickly it would be too late.

A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING. THE LIVING ROOM AGAIN.

*CREON ENTERS, UPSET. JOCASTA FOLLOWS AFTER HIM.*

JOCASTA

I do not understand.

CREON

Just leave me alone.

*SHE GRABS HIS ARM AND TURNS HIM ROUND TO FACE HER.*

JOCASTA

What are you so upset about?

CREON

This is the end.

JOCASTA

You will always be my brother. You will not lose me because I am married.

CREON

Father wants us to be apart. He does not want you to be free.

JOCASTA

We will not be apart

*SHE HOLDS HIS FACE IN HER HANDS AND PRESSES HER FOREHEAD TO HIS.*

I swear to you, we will see each other as often as we wish.

*HE IS PLACATED FOR A MOMENT BUT REMEMBERS AND PUSHES HER OFF.*

CREON

That will be your husband's decision not yours. (beat)

You are being forced to leave your home. How can you be so calm?

JOCASTA

I want to do what is best. For everyone.

CREON

I will not be separated from you. I will not allow it. (beat)

I cannot bear it.

JOCASTA

It is not in our control. You know that.

CREON

I am scared for you.

JOCASTA

*Paid.*

CREON

Stop what?

*MENOCENES ENTERS WITH THE INTENTION OF WALKING THROUGH. HE STOPS.*

JOCASTA

(To Creon) Pretending to be the caring brother.

MENOCENES

What are you two doing in here?

CREON

(To Jocasta) I do care.

JOCASTA

That is not why you are upset.

MENOCENES

Jocasta.

JOCASTA

(To Creon, smiling knowingly at him) You are jealous.

MENOCENES

Creon, I think it would be wise for you to leave.

CREON

(To Menocenes) *Tad -*

MENOCENES

Leave.

*CREON GLARES AT MENOCENES AND EXITS.*

You deliberately disobeyed me. (pause) This stops NOW.

You both need to realize that things have changed. You are going to be married. Your relationship with your brother cannot remain like this.

JOCASTA

*Pam?*

MENOCENES

It is so hard to accept that you are no longer our little girl?

You are a woman.

JOCASTA

Can I not be both?

MENOCENES



*Ni gallwch.* That part of your life has to end now.

You cannot continue to be torn like this. It is degrading us all.

JOCASTA

Then I have to choose?

MENOCENES

That choice has been already been made. Learn to accept it.

*HE EXITS. JOCASTA STANDS ALONE. AFTER A MOMENT CREON ENTERS CAUTIOUSLY.*

JOCASTA

He has gone. You can come in.

*CREON WALKS TOWARDS JOCASTA*

I am frightened also.

*PAUSE*

CREON

Laius does not know how lucky he is, to have you.

Many men would exchange a thousand lifetimes for what he has.

*JOCASTA TAKES HIS HANDS IN HERS*

JOCASTA

The last few months, you have avoided me.

CREON

I know, I regret it a great deal.

JOCASTA

I understand why. But please do not run away from this anymore.

This marriage is going to happen.

CREON

Jocasta, I-

JOCASTA

I felt very alone without you. Promise me you will not leave me again.

CREON

I promise.

JOCASTA

Even if we have to lie.

CREON

I will be here. I swear.

JOCASTA

I need you. (pause) *Fi'n caru ti.*

*HE KISSES HER. IT LASTS FOR A MOMENT TOO LONG. SHE TAKES A STEP AWAY FROM HIM.*

*THEY STAND IN SILENCE, LOOKING AT ONE ANOTHER. CREON LEAVES.*

*JOCASTA SITS DOWN AND CRIES.*

6. STORYTELLER

(singing)

*Hwyr a bore fy nymuniad*

*Gwyd i'r nef ar adain cân*

*Ar i Dduw, er mwyn fy Ngheidwad,*

*Roddi i mi galon lân.*

*Calon lân yn llawn daioni,*

*Tecach yw na'r lili dlos:*

*Dim ond calon lân all ganu*

*Canu'r dydd a chanu'r nos.*

THE DAY OF THE WEDDING. JOCASTA'S BEDROOM. IT IS RAINING HEAVILY OUTSIDE.

GIGGLING IS HEARD OFFSTAGE.

*CREON ENTERS WITH A HOUSEHOLD MAID, THEY ARE HOLDING HANDS.*

*THEY KISS EACH OTHER.*

MAID

In here? Again?

CREON

Why not?

MAID

Are you mad?

CREON

It has been said.

*HE PULLS HER TOWARDS THE BED*

MAID

There are people running around everywhere.

*HE KISSES HER*

Someone will walk in.

CREON

And do what? I am the bride's brother.

*THEY LAUGH, HE STARTS KISSING HER NECK*

MAID

Your room is not far! I think we should go there.

CREON

You are not employed to think.

MAID

I have so much to do! So much is being prepared.

Can you not wait?

CREON

This wedding is a farce. It can wait.

MAID

Your sister deserves a beautiful wedding.

*Os gwelwch yn dda?*

CREON

We are staying here!

*JOCASTA ENTERS WITH FLOWERS IN HER HAND.*

MAID

I should go.

*SHE EXITS*

JOCASTA

Could you leave please?

CREON

Are you not going to scold me?

JOCASTA

I am not interested in what you do with the maid.

CREON

Even in your room?

JOCASTA

It will not be my room for much longer.

CREON

Where are those flowers from?

JOCASTA

They are for the bouquet. Could you please leave?

CREON

You have never even spoken to him.

JOCASTA

Father says he is very pleasant.

CREON

You do not love him. And he cannot possibly love you for anything other than your pretty face.

JOCASTA

And what do you love me for?

*PAUSE*

CREON

Why can you not stay here?

JOCASTA

With you?

CREON

Yes.

JOCASTA

You gave the impression of being busy.

CREON

What, her? (pointing to where the Maid exited from)

I am just having some pleasure. You are making a mistake.

JOCASTA

I need to -

CREON

(interrupting her)

He will make you miserable. You have a choice.

JOCASTA

You are wrong. I wish you were right. I am not free as you are.

I cannot have pleasure, I cannot pick who ever I want.

CREON

I need you here.

JOCASTA

Do you not understand? I am not yours to need. Not anymore.

I need to get dressed.

CREON

Now?

JOCASTA

I need to put on my wedding dress, *brawd*.

CREON

Is it really that time already?

JOCASTA

*Ydi*. So please can you leave?

CREON

I am sure you will look very beautiful.

JOCASTA

I need to get dressed now.

CREON

Come away with me.

JOCASTA

Away?

CREON

We could run away from all of this. Go to London.



JOCASTA

Together?

CREON

Yes.

*PAUSE*

Well?

*SHE TAKES HIS HANDS IN HERS.*

JOCASTA

You know I cannot.

CREON

Either come with me now or I wash my hands of you.

*PAUSE. SHE CRIES.*

So be it. You bring it upon yourself.

*HE EXITS, SLOWLY AND COLDLY.*

## STORYTELLER

From that moment onward the siblings never looked each other in the eye, never smiled at one another, never sang together. Only themselves and the trees knew what they had lost. They never cried for their loss or cursed with anger, instead the wind howled at their windows at night, through the cold glow of the moon.

Act Two – Husband

1940's Chicago

1. A DARK STREET AT NIGHT. THE LIGHT FROM A STREET LAMP. UNDERNEATH IT STANDS LAIUS. HE IS WEARING A TRILBY AND TRENCHCOAT AND IS SMOKING A CIGERETTE. INFRONT OF HIM IS A DEAD BODY, FACE DOWN, DRESSED EXACTLY AS HE IS.

LAIUS (TO AUDIENCE)

(Indicating the dead body) You see that poor dope there?

That's me. Dead as a doornail. How did I get there? Well that's quite a story.

*HE WALKS FORWARD OVER THE BODY*

It was a hot, sticky evening when I first met her. The smell of cherry blossom followed me as I walked to the bar. How could I have known then that betrayal smelt like cherry blossom? I needed a drink. I'd run from pillar to post. Pillar wasn't home and Post had gone to church. Look, I'm not going to whitewash myself. Not one bit. Yes, I fought it, tried not to suspect her but I guess I didn't fight hard enough. But I'm gonna be honest with you and I don't mind it if you don't like me. I don't like me much, myself. I grieve over it

on long winter evenings. Father Menocenes had told me about his daughter. I never thought I'd see her in a bar but there she was.

*FROM BEHIND HIM A BAR AND A FEW STOOLS JOIN THE ALLEYWAY TO MAKE A BAR. A BARTENDER, A BAND AND A SINGER ENTER. LAIUS SITS ON A STOOL BY THE BAR, DRINKING A BOURBON. BEHIND THE BAR THE BARTENDER WIPES DOWN THE BAR. THE BAND PLAYS.*

SINGER (SINGS)

In the dark, it's just you and I

There's not a sound and there's not one sigh

Just the beat of my poor heart

In the dark

Now, in the dark I get such a thrill

Well, well, when he places his fingertips upon my lips

And he begs me, "Please be still

In the dark"

But soon this dance will be ending

And you're gonna, you're gonna be missed

Gee, but I'm not pretending

'Cause I swear it's fun, it's fun to be kissed

In the dark, in the dark

*JOCASTA ENTERS IN A RED DRESS. SHE STANDS AT THE EDGE OF THE BAR.*

Now we will find

Oh, what the rest, what the rest have left behind

Just let them dance 'cause we're gonna find romance

In the dark

*LAIUS GETS OFF HIS STOOL AND WALKS OVER TO JOCASTA. HE TAKES OUT A CIGARETTE CASE AND OPENS IT.*

LAIUS (TO JOCASTA)

Cigarette?

JOCASTA

Sure.

*LAIUS PLACES A CIGARETTE BETWEEN JOCASTA'S RED PAINTED LIPS AND LIGHTS IT. HE WALKS TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE AND SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE.*

LAIUS (TO AUDIENCE)

She was worth a stare. She was trouble. As soon as she walked into this bar I was in love with the broad. Of all the bars in Chicago she had to come into mine. That fiery hair, those red lips. She was blind to every eye that followed her.

But I couldn't take my eyes off her. The dress. Her nails.  
That body. Her eyes were like emeralds, coldly gazing at me  
through the smoke of her cigarette.

*HE RETURNS TO THE BAR.*

(to Jocasta) Are you going to tell me your name or leave me  
guessing?

JOCASTA

Suppose I leave you guessing.

LAIUS

Suppose I buy you bourbon.

JOCASTA

Suppose I don't want a drink.

LAIUS

Suppose I buy it for you anyway.

JOCASTA

Suppose I throw it in your face.

LAIUS

Well that tears it.

JOCASTA

My name is Jocasta.

LAIUS

I know who you are. You're Father Menocenes' daughter.

My name is Laius. I wonder what a priest's daughter is doing in a bar?

JOCASTA

I wonder why you want to talk to me?

LAIUS

I wonder if you wonder. How about that drink?

JOCASTA

You don't quit, do you?

LAIUS

I try to be consistent.

JOCASTA

I hate to ruin your record but it'd be a waste of your money.

LAIUS

How'd you figure that?

JOCASTA

I'm leaving tomorrow. I'm going to Europe for a year with my brother.

Have I upset you?

LAIUS

I'm breaking my heart.

JOCASTA

I hope you recover soon.

*SHE PUTS HER CIGARETTE OUT AND EXITS. LAIUS FINISHES HIS DRINK AND WALKS AWAY FROM THE BAR.*

LAIUS (TO AUDIENCE)

But it did break my heart. I couldn't get the broad out of my mind. She liked me. I could feel that. The way you feel when the cards are falling right for you. Only I wasn't playing her. She was playing me. I knew I had to have her.

*THE BAR, STOOLS, BARTENDER, BAND AND SINGER EXIT. WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF A TRAIN STATION AS A SIGN WITH PLATFORM NUMBERS APPEARS FROM ABOVE. LAIUS STANDS WAITING.*



*JOCASTA ENTERS. SHE WALKS DOWN THE PLATFORM WITH A SUITCASE IN EACH HAND.*

JOCASTA

You sure are consistent. What are you doing here?

LAIUS

I'm here to stop you getting on that train.

JOCASTA

Determined to buy me that drink?

LAIUS

Sure. Maybe we could discuss you marrying me.

JOCASTA

Big joke. What do you want, Laius, my life's story? Here it is in four words: large ideas, small results.

LAIUS

You're more than ideas. You're dreams.

JOCASTA

And what if I'm a nightmare.

LAIUS

Nightmares don't look like you.

JOCASTA

I don't always like the way I look, but I never met a man since I was fourteen that didn't want to argue with me about it.

LAIUS

Argue? I'll give you the fight of your life.

JOCASTA

Say I fight back?

LAIUS

Look, doll, if that train leaves with you on it, we both know you'll regret. Maybe not today, maybe not the day after, but soon and for the rest of your life.

JOCASTA

Go on. Lay it on me. Talk me out of it. I'm getting on this train.

*WE HEAR A WHISTLE BLOW.*

LAIUS

Jocasta, will you marry me?

JOCASTA

Not even a little bit.

*LAIUS SLAPS HER ACROSS THE FACE. THEN GRABS HER AND KISSES HER  
FORCEFULLY. WE HEAR THE TRAIN LEAVING THE TRACKS. SHE STRUGGLES AND  
THEN SURRENDERS, KISSING HIM BACK PASSIONATELY.*

You fool. You damned fool.

*HE KISSES HER AGAIN. BLACK OUT.*

2. THE EMPTY ALLEYWAY. LAIUS STANDS ALONE.

LAIUS

(to audience)

And so we got married and I was pretty damn smug. Yet somehow, on the day of our wedding I felt uneasy.

Something in the pit of my stomach told me that it wasn't right. I just couldn't put my finger on it. But I pushed it to the back of my mind. Then, what d'ya know, Jocasta gets pregnant, quick as flash. Her brother Creon didn't like it one bit and I never liked the guy. He kept ranting at Jocasta and upsetting her. So I banned him from my house. No one upsets my wife like that but me.

And that's when it hit me – I had a wife. Did I even know this dame? Had I made a mistake?

And was it too late anyhow?

*BLACKOUT*

3. JOCASTA IN HER AND LAIUS' KITCHEN. SHE IS THREE MONTHS PREGNANT AND SITS AT THE KITCHEN TABLE, OBVIOUSLY PERTURBED. THERE ARE DIRTY DISHES IN THE SINK. FLOWERS IN A VASE ON THE TABLE. THE SHADOWS FROM THE VENETIAN BLINDS COVER THE KITCHEN FLOOR. LAIUS ENTERS.

LAIUS

(taking off his hat and coat) Hey there, sweetheart.

JOCASTA

Can I fix you a drink?

LAIUS

A bottle of beer if there's one that's broken.

Say now, what's wrong?

JOCASTA

What's wrong? I'll tell you what's wrong; I shouldn't have put mascara on today. You'd think a girl would learn. Men only upset you.

LAIUS

Men? You don't mean me?

JOCASTA

I mean my brother.

LAIUS

Creon? How is he mixed up in this?

JOCASTA

He just upset me. You know how he is.

LAIUS

He was here? What did I tell you about him coming into this house?

*HE WALKS TOWARDS HER SLOWLY, ANGRILY. JOCASTA PANICS FOR A SECOND -*

JOCASTA

Hold on now. I never said I let him in.

LAIUS

Then what are you saying?

JOCASTA

He- He burst in here.

LAIUS

That jerk. I always knew he was yellow. Coming in here,  
upsetting a broad.

*JOCASTA STANDS UP.*

JOCASTA

So what are you going to do about it?

LAIUS

What do you want me to do about it?

Give him the hard goodbye?

JOCASTA

No.

*HE GRABS HER SHOULDERS.*

LAIUS

Look, doll. You can't hide it. You want me to knock him off.

JOCASTA

I never said any such thing. Just talk to him.

LAIUS

I'll talk to him all right. I'll give him all the goddamn words  
he can take.



4. THE ALLEYWAY. LAIUS STANDS, IN HIS TRENCHCOAT AND TRILBY, THE LIGHT FROM A STREETLAMP CREEPING UP TO HIS FEET. HE HAS A HAND HIDDEN INSIDE HIS COAT. CREON WALKS TOWARDS THE ALLEYWAY, A CIGARETTE IN HIS MOUTH. AS CREON ENTERS THE ALLEYWAY LAIUS TAKES OUT A REVOLVER. CREON SEES HIM AND STOPS IN HIS TRACKS.

LAIUS

Hey there, junior. You and I need to have a chat.

CREON

And who am I talking to? You? Or that cannon you're carrying?

LAIUS

Am I suppose to laugh now, or wait 'til it gets funny?

CREON

Just what it is you want?

*WITH HIS FREE HAND, LAIUS GRABS CREON BY THE COLLAR AND PUSHES HIM AGAINST THE ALLEYWAY WALL.*

LAIUS

You listen here. I've had all I can stand of your baloney.  
You're a nothing. A nobody. And I want you to stay away  
from my wife.

CREON

You mean my sister? Suppose I want to see her. I'm going to  
be a swell uncle.

LAIUS

You'll be nothing of the sort, you hear? If I come home to my  
wife crying one more time, you and my friend here (he nods  
towards the gun) will be getting real friendly.

CREON

And suppose she wants to see me?

LAIUS

Why would she want to see you? You're losing your touch.  
Bursting into my house and upsetting her like that.

CREON

I burst in? Is that what she told you?

*HE LAUGHS*

She always was a tricky dame. She invited me. Made me

lunch. Did you see the dirty dishes in the sink?

*LAIUS LETS GO OF HIS COLLAR AND TAKES A STEP BACK. HE DROPS HIS GUN TO HIS SIDE.*

She sure fooled you. You're getting soft, Laius. She might be a smart broad but she's a broad nonetheless. And she's got you wrapped around her finger.

*LAIUS STEPS FORWARD.*

LAIUS (TO AUDIENCE)

Right there I wanted to slug him one. But maybe he was right. Had Jocasta lied? Could I not trust my wife?

*CREON EXITS*

I wandered the streets, wondering what I should do, what to think. I needed to know the truth about Jocasta. I shouldn't have worried because the truth found me.

*THE FORTUNE TELLER ENTERS. SHE IS WEARING A TURBAN AND A PURPLE FLOWING CLOAK. SHE WALKS OVER TO LAIUS. SHE HAS AN ECLECTIC ACCENT.*

FORTUNE TELLER

Laius, I need to speak to you.

LAIUS

And what are you suppose to be? And how do you know my name?

FORTUNE TELLER

I'm a mystic. I can help you.

LAIUS

Is this some sort of joke?  
Did Creon set you up to this?

FORTUNE TELLER

Creon's a good for nothing scumbag. We both know that.

LAIUS

So what are you going to do? Tell my future for me?

FORTUNE TELLER

You haven't got any.

LAIUS

What do you mean?

FORTUNE TELLER

Your future is all used up.

LAIUS

Are you foolin'?

FORTUNE TELLER

You don't know if you can trust your wife.

I can show you the answer.

LAIUS

And why would you do that?

FORTUNE TELLER

I've got my reasons.

LAIUS

Say I come with you, what is it gonna cost me?

FORTUNE TELLER

Some time (beat) and twenty bucks.

LAIUS

I knew there'd be a catch.

FORTUNE TELLER

Do you want the answers or not?

*THE FORTUNE TELLER TAKES LAIUS' HAND. THEY GO AND SIT IN A DARK CORNER OF THE ALLEY. SHE TAKES OUT A DECK OF TAROT CARDS AND A CRYSTAL BALL.*

FORTUNE TELLER

Hecate, patron of those who believe in magic, help me to see into the future of Laius and his unborn child so I may guide him on his path. (she reaches for the tarot cards and turns three over) The tower, the ten of swords, the queen of wands.

LAIUS

What does that mean?

FORTUNE TELLER

Someone close to you cannot be trusted. A woman.

LAIUS

Is it Jocasta?

FORTUNE TELLER

It would appear so.

*SHE GRABS THE CRYSTAL BALL AND GAZES INTO IT.*

The child. You must get rid of the child.

LAIUS

Why? What are you getting at?

FORTUNE TELLER

It's fate is black. It - (she gasps). No. No. It can't be.

LAIUS

What is it?

FORTUNE TELLER

There is no mistake. I am sorry.

LAIUS

What do you mean sorry? What the heck is wrong with my kid?

FORTUNE TELLER

He will be your undoing. His relationship with his mother will be (beat) unnatural.

LAIUS

What?

FORTUNE TELLER

It is his destiny.

LAIUS

His? It'll be a boy?

FORTUNE TELLER

A boy. A boy with blue eyes.

LAIUS

Are you crazy?

FORTUNE TELLER

I wish I could say that I am mistaken. But all the sign point to the same thing,; your ruin and your wife's violation.

LAIUS

This isn't funny.

FORTUNE TELLER

It is no joke, Laius. You must get rid of the child.

LAIUS

How am I supposed to believe you?

FORTUNE TELLER

He will be a boy. He will have blue eyes and be left-handed. You'll see.

*LAIUS STANDS AND THROWS THE MONEY AT HER. SHE EXITS WITH THE MONEY.*

*HE WALKS TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE.*

LAIUS (TO AUDIENCE)

What did this mean? I've never been the superstitious type.



How could I know? I'd have to wait 'til the baby was born. In the mean time I had to put it out of my mind. I won't lie to you, it nearly drove me crazy. I woke up in the night a few times. I was confused. And I had to wait for six months before I knew the truth.

5. THAT EVENING. JOCASTA AND LAIUS IN BOTTOM OF THEIR GARDEN. LAIUS SITS ON THEIR ARBOUR. JOCASTA, PREGNANT , STANDS. THERE ARE CHERRY TREES.

JOCASTA

Can ya' hear that? The silence. That sorta crisp nothing, ringing in your ears. (beat) When I was a kid I thought it was beautiful. (pause) But I don't think there is silence anymore, not really. It sounds silly but it's almost as if the trees are talking to me, making me ache. Its like something is calling me. Something I belong to. (beat) Its like there's more to experience, you know? I guess I sound kinda dumb to you. In the past I would've cared about that, but if I can't be myself then what else can I be, baby? I want to believe that there can be nothing again. That all the world can be quiet and still. That the aching will leave and I'll feel full. I want there to be silence and I want it to be beautiful.

LAIUS

Could you please come and sit?

JOCASTA

Sure, sweetie. (She sits)

LAIUS

I've had a rough day; can we just sit and relax without you talking nonsense?

JOCASTA

Sorry, baby.

*IN THE BACKGROUND WE CAN JUST HEAR WHAT SOUNDS LIKE AFGHAN FOLK  
MUSIC BEING PLAYED.*

6. LAIUS AND JOCASTA'S KITCHEN. THE VENETIAN BLINDS CAST DARKER SHADOWS NOW. THE FLOWERS IN THE VASE ARE WILTING ON THE TABLE. LAIUS STANDS ALONG, SOLEMNLY.

LAIUS (TO AUDIENCE)

A boy. A baby boy. And what d'ya know, he has blue eyes.

I thought maybe it was coincidence.

He was my little boy and he was beautiful.

But those eyes, gazing up at me.

Were they shifty looking, or was it my mind playing tricks on me?

But then his little hand reached out and grabbed my finger.

His left hand.

*JOCASTA ENTERS, SHE IS PUSHING A PRAM.*

JOCASTA

Hey, baby! Are you alright?

LAIUS

Sure, sure.

JOCASTA

Have you been drinking?

LAIUS

Drinking? Christ!

You walk through the door and you start throwing accusations  
at me?

JOCASTA

Hey! Hey! I'm not accusing you of anything.

It's just I can smell it.

LAIUS

Oh.

JOCASTA

So it was an obvious thing to ask.

Do you think it's really a good idea to be drinking?

LAIUS

It's only a few drinks.

JOCASTA

You just seem anxious.

LAIUS

I'm fine.

*PAUSE*

JOCASTA

What is it?

LAIUS

I told you, I'm fine.

JOCASTA

Well, you quite clearly aren't fine!

*PAUSE*

Jesus, what the hell is the wrong?

LAIUS

I'm sick of you. All right? I'm sick to death of you.

Trees talking to you. Do you know how stupid you sound?

You sound like a goddamn fool. Who the heck do you think you are? You're my wife.

JOCASTA

I know.

LAIUS

Then why don't you act like one! I've come home and you're not here, there's no dinner waiting for me and then when you do come home you interrogate me.

JOCASTA

I didn't interrogate you.

LAIUS

Yes you did.

JOCASTA

I did not. We went for a stroll for a few blocks. I'm so very sorry that I'm not the perfect housewife while I'm looking after our son.

LAIUS

I can't do this.

JOCASTA

Do what?

LAIUS

This marriage. The whole thing.

JOCASTA

I think you need to cool down and go sleep it off.

LAIUS

I'M NOT DRUNK, DO YOU HEAR?

*THE BABY STARTS TO CRY. JOCASTA GETS HIM OUT OF THE PRAM AND TRIES TO COMFORT HIM.*

JOCASTA

Look what you've done now. You've upset the baby.

LAIUS

To hell with the baby.

JOCASTA

What?

LAIUS

I don't want it, ok? I don't want the goddamn thing.

JOCASTA

Well you haven't got much choice, have you?

LAIUS

You really don't know anything about it, do you?

JOCASTA

About what?

LAIUS

We've got to get rid of the baby.

JOCASTA

Big joke. This isn't funny.

LAIUS

I'm not joking around. I found out some things that you ain't gonna like.

JOCASTA

What is it?



LAIUS

It's (beat) a fortuneteller.

JOCASTA

A fortuneteller?

LAIUS

Now, you can be as cynical as you like but I'm telling you this woman is genuine. She knew things -

JOCASTA

This is ridiculous.

LAIUS

I don't give a damn what you think.

*HE LIGHTS A CIGARETTE*

She said we've got to get rid of the baby.

JOCASTA

Have you lost your mind? I cannot believe you. That you would -

LAIUS

Listen. She said if we don't the baby would kill me.

JOCASTA

Well, we'll keep him away from sharp objects then.

What the hell do you -

LAIUS

SHUT UP. You don't understand.

He's going to kill me...and sleep with you.

JOCASTA

That tops it.

*SHE PLACES THE BABY IN THE PRAM, HE IS STILL CRYING*

You've gone way, way too far.

LAIUS

I think we should look into adoption.

JOCASTA

You can get lost.

LAIUS

Look, this is happening so just deal with it.

JOCASTA

I'm not going to give up my baby.

*LAIUS GRABS HER BY THE SHOULDERS AND THROWS HER VIOLENTLY ON THE FLOOR*

LAIUS

Don't make me hit you.

## 7. THE DARK ALLEYWAY, AS BEFORE.

LAIUS

So the years passed. Jocasta hated me but not as much as I hated myself. But what else was I suppose to do? She stopped wearing red, she threw the lipstick away. We never spoke of it but it was always there, haunting our lives. I tried to console myself, believing he'd gone to a good family, to a better life than we could've given him. I thought I'd avoided my death. I thought I was smarter than fate or destiny. I was wrong. And despite all the signs, I never saw it coming. In the end I reckon I had a lucky escape. The next part of this story makes me uneasy. I'm glad I wasn't alive to see it happen. Glad I'd died, glad I'd been fooled. Glad I'd smelt the Cherry Blossom.

Act Three – Son

Afghanistan

1. 1994. WE SEE A PROJECTION; A YOUNG AFGHAN WOMAN RUNS. SHE IS WEARING BRIGHTLY COLOURED CLOTHES, HER FACE AND ANKLES ARE NOT COVERED, SHE HAS PAINTED FINGERNAILS. A GROUP OF ANGRY MEN FOLLOW HER. THEY CIRCLE HER AND BEGIN TO KICK HER AND BEAT HER WITH STICKS. THEY SPIT AT HER.

THE SAME AFGHAN FOLK MUSIC FROM ACT TWO PLAYS.

JOCASTA ENTERS WITH A GROUP OF WOMEN. SHE IS WEARING A TRADITIONAL, THREE PIECE WEDDING DRESS. SHE SITS AND THEY BEGIN TO PREPARE HER FOR HER WEDDING TO OEDIPUS, THEY BEGIN TO APPLY HER MAKE UP AND HENNA. JOCASTA SITS, HAPPY AND EXCITED.

THE MUSIC STOPS. IT BECOMES THE EVENING.ON A SEPARATE SIDE OF THE STAGE IS OEDIPUS AND JOCASTA'S WEDDING BED, JOCASTA'S NIGHT SUIT LYING UPON IT. THE WOMEN WALK JOCASTA TO THE BED AND DRESS HER IN THE NIGHT SUIT. THEY EXIT. JOCASTA STANDS NEXT TO THE BED, NERVOUSLY. OEDIPUS ENTERS, WEARING A SALWAR KAMEEZ AND HOLDING A DECORATIVE CUP, FULL OF MILK. . OEDIPUS IS AFGHAN BUT HAS A CANADIAN ACCENT. HE WALKS TO JOCASTA.

JOCASTA

Oedipus, I –

*BEFORE SHE CAN SAY ANYMORE HE OFFERS HER THE CUP. SHE DRINKS. HE LAYS HIS HAND ON HER HEAD, SMILING.*

OEDIPUS

Allah, I ask You for the good in her and the good in which  
You have created her, and I seek refuge in You from the evil  
in her and the evil which You have created her.

*HE TAKES THE GLASS FROM HER HAND AND PLACES IT ON THE FLOOR. HE HOLDS BOTH HER HANDS IN HIS.*

I love you, (beat) my wife.

*HE KISSES HER. GENTLY AT FIRST BUT BECOMING MORE PASSIONATE.*

*BLACK OUT.*

2. 2009. MENOCENES BEDROOM. JUST BEFORE DAWN. THE WALLS ARE MADE OF MUDBRICK. A BOWL OF WATER LIES NEXT TO A PRAYING MAT ON THE FLOOR. MENOCENES LIES IN HIS BED, ASLEEP. HE TOSSES AND TURNS FROM NIGHTMARES. HE AWAKENS WITH A START AND BEGINS TO CRY. HE GETS OUT FROM UNDER HIS BEDSHEETS AND SITS ON THE SIDE OF HIS BED, COMPOSING HIMSELF. HE REACHES UNDER HIS BED AND RETRIEVES LOOSE FITTING GARMENTS. HE PUT THEM ON. HE KNEELS DOWN ON THE MAT AND WASHES HIMSELF WITH THE BOWL OF WATER THREE TIMES IN THIS EXACT ORDER – HANDS, MOUTH, NOSE, ARMS, FACE, HAIR, EARS AND FEET. THIS IS A PREPARATION FOR PRAYER. HE STAND AND RAISES HIS ARMS UP.

MENOCENES

Allah Akbar. Allah Akbar. Allah Akbar.

*ANTIGONE, THIRTEEN, ENTERS, VISIBLY UPSET. SHE IS WEARING A PERAHAN TUNBAM AND A CHADOR. MENOCENES STOPS HIS PRAYER, OBVIOUSLY IRRATED BY THE INTERRUPTION. THIS CHANGES WHEN HE SEES HOW UPSET HIS GRANDDAUGHTER IS.*

ANTIGONE

Oh. I'm so sorry.

MENOCENES

Don't worry, Antigone. It was an innocent mistake.

What is troubling you?

ANTIGONE

I've just been to the hospital with father.

MENOCENES

Its ok, darling. It must have been hard to see that.

ANTIGONE

She is my best friend, granddad.

*SHE RUNS INTO HIS ARMS. HE HUGS HER.*

MENOCENES

I know. I'm sorry.

ANTIGONE

Why would someone do that to themselves?

MENOCENES

I honestly don't know, she was very unhappy, like you said.

ANTIGONE

But why set yourself on fire? She's in so much pain.

MENOCENES

Sometimes the pain inside has to come out.

ANTIGONE

They beat her with sticks.

MENOCENES

She went out without her *mahram*.

ANTIGONE

But no one stopped them.

MENOCENES

We weren't there we don't know what happened.

*SHE MOVES OUT OF THE EMBRACE AND BEGINS TO MOVE AROUND THE ROOM,  
ANGRILY.*

ANTIGONE

If they had, she wouldn't have done this, she would be able to walk, she wouldn't smell like she does, like beef fat left burning in the pan.

MENOCENES

The important thing is to avoid a situation like this. You know how to keep safe.

ANTIGONE

I feel trapped, grandfather. I need clean air, to hear the birds, touch the trees.

MENOCENES

There's always the family park.



ANTIGONE

I suppose.

*PAUSE*

MENOCENES

Did I ever tell you what happened to your grandmother?

ANTIGONE

No, mother doesn't talk about it. It upsets her.

MENOCENES

Your grandmother married me without her father's permission.

ANTIGONE

Really?

MENOCENES

Yes. We ran away, we thought no one would find us. But her father showed people her photo, people with very shortsighted views on women.

ANTIGONE

Did they find you?

MENOCENES

They found her while I was working. I came home and they'd

cut off her hands. And they hung her up. They brought people to watch before they cut her throat.

ANTIGONE

I- I don't know what to say. I'm sorry.

MENOCENES

A "mercy killing". People like that, they shouldn't be classed as humans.

ANTIGONE

I'm so sorry.

MENOCENES

I made a mistake with your mother. I made her marry a man she didn't really love. I thought she'd be secure, that he'd look after her. But he treated her like cattle.

ANTIGONE

She never mentions him either.

MENOCENES

Your father has showed me that you have to allow children to find their own way. Your daughter is your child and is bonded to your soul, just as much as a son. And when you're

older, if a man proposes and he has the same way of thinking  
as you -

ANTIGONE

I want to work.

MENOCENES

Work?

ANTIGONE

I want to teach.

MENOCENES

That's wonderful.

ANTIGONE

Not many men like women working.

MENOCENES

Things are improving, my child. And if someone wants to  
marry you and they're so small minded that they're against  
you teaching then I'm sure your father will-

ANTIGONE

Tell them to get lost!

MENOCENES

(he laughs) Your father can politely decline their offer.

It makes me laugh when you say something like that.

It is your father's Western upbringing surfacing.

*PAUSE*

ANTIGONE

Do you miss her? Your wife?

*HE SITS*

MENOCENES

There isn't a day when I don't relive what happened over  
and over in my mind.

*HE STARTS TO GET UPSET*

ANTIGONE

Please don't cry.

*SHE SITS*

MENOCENES

I'm just relieved you and your mother have a strong man to  
protect you. This war brings so many bad memories back.

ANTIGONE

Are you having nightmares again?

*MENOCENES LOOKS CONFUSED*

I sometimes hear you at night, shouting.

MENOCENES

I use to be scared to open the door.

*JOCASTA ENTERS WEARING A SHAMI AND A CHADOR.*

ANTIGONE

Hello, mother. Are you well?

JOCASTA

Yes, my love. There's someone to see your grandfather.

MENOCENES

Who is it?

*SHE INDICATES FOR HIM TO STAND WITH HER. HE STANDS UP AND THEY MOVE OUT OF EARSHOT OF ANTIGONE.*

JOCASTA

I don't know who he is. He says he worked for Laius.

MENOCENES

And he wants to speak to me?

JOCASTA

Just you.

MENOCENES

Very well. I'm coming.

*MENOCENES GETS UP AND EXITS WITH JOCASTA, LEAVING ANTIGONE ALONE ON HIS BED. SHE SITS ALONE, REFLECTING ON WHAT SHE'S HEARD. SHE REACHES INTO HER POCKET AND TAKES OUT SOME BRIGHTLY COLOURED NAIL VARNISH. SHE GAZES AT IT.*

3. JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS IN A FAMILY PARK. A BRIGHT BLUE SKY AND LIGHT SOIL. THE SOUND OF A RIVER. SHE STANDS, HE SITS. HE WEARS A PAYRAAN TUMBAAN. BEFORE THEM IS FOOD SUCH AS HOMEMADE PICKLES AND CHUTNEYS AND PICKLES AND FRESH AFGHAN NAAN BREAD IN DISHES ON A DISTERKHAN. THERE IS NO CUTLERY. THERE IS ALSO A HAFTAWA-WA-LAGAN ON THE DISTERKHAN.

JOCASTA

Can you hear that? The silence. The crisp nothing ringing in your ears. When I was a child I thought it was beautiful. Now it is different. I can sense that something is coming. And my breathing becomes short. I do not think there is real silence anymore. The trees are talking to me, making me ache. I do not know what for. But something is calling me. Something I belong to. It is like there is more to experience. I must sound rather odd to you. There was a time was I would have been troubled by that but if I cannot be myself then what else can I be. I want to believe that there can be nothing again. That all the world can be quiet and still. That the aching will leave and I will feel full. I want there to be silence and I want it to be beautiful.

*IN THE DISTANCE WE CAN JUST HEAR THE WELSH HYMN FROM ACT ONE BEING SUNG.*

STORYTELLER (FROM OFFSTAGE)

(singing)

*Calon lân yn llawn daioni,*

*Tecach yw na'r lili dlos:*

*Dim ond calon lân all ganu*

*Canu'r dydd a chanu'r nos.*

OEDIPUS

Darling, come and sit.

*SHE SITS*

JOCASTA

Do you think I'm odd?

OEDIPUS

I know you're odd! (They smile) But its what I love about you.

JOCASTA

My mother told me when I was a girl, that when someone really loves you, they love the bits that you don't like about yourself more than anything else.



OEDIPUS

It's true.

*JOCASTA STARTS TO BECOME UPSET*

Baby, what's wrong?

JOCASTA

There's something I've never told you. I didn't know how.

OEDIPUS

Jocasta, what is it?

JOCASTA

I had a child once. With Laius. A little boy. I, I –

(pause) I lost him.

*HE HUGS HER. SHE CRIES.*

OEDIPUS

It's ok. You have me now. It's ok. And you have our little girl.

JOCASTA

She is such a precocious child. (beat)

I wonder where she gets it from.

*THEY SMILE AT EACH OTHER AND THEN KISS.*

*OEDIPUS LIES WITH HIS HEAD IN HER LAP.*

JOCASTA

Do you not miss Canada?

OEDIPUS

No. This is my home now.

JOCASTA

But you grew up there. Spent your childhood there.

Became a man there.

OEDIPUS

Yes but in a way this has always been my real home.

I'm where I belong.

*SILENCE*

OEDIPUS

I keep having the same dream.

JOCASTA

Really?

OEDIPUS

Yeah. It's about you.

JOCASTA

What happens?

OEDIPUS

You take off your head.

JOCASTA

I take off my head?

OEDIPUS

And try on different heads. But none of them fit. What do you think it means?

JOCASTA

I don't know, my love.

*SHE KISSES HIM ON THE FOREHEAD.*

*MENOCENES ENTERS BEHIND THEM AND WATCHES THE SERENE COUPLE.*

*AFTER A MOMENT ANTIGONE ENTERS TO JOIN HER PARENTS.*

*SHE SEES HER GRANDFATHER AND STOPS.*

ANTIGONE

Grandfather?

*HE LOOKS AT HER. HE EXITS, UPSET AND RESOLVED. ANTIGONE GOES AND SITS WITH HER PARENTS.*

OEDIPUS

What's wrong?

ANTIGONE

Nothing, I'm fine. Grandfather just looked a bit -

OEDIPUS

Where is he?

*HE GLANCES BEHIND HIM.*

ANTIGONE

He's gone now. He seemed a bit upset.

JOCASTA

He'll be fine, don't worry. Do you want some food?

ANTIGONE

Yes, thank you.

*ANTIGONE WASHES HER HANDS USING THE HAFTAWA-WA-LAGAN. AND SHE  
BEGINS TO EAT WITH HER RIGHT HAND ONLY. THE FAMILY SIT IN THE SUNSHINE,  
CONTENTLY.*

4. JOCASTA'S BEDROOM. A FEW DAYS LATER. JOCASTA IS SAT ON THE FLOOR,  
ANTIGONE STANDS NEAR HER. BOTH ARE STUNNED. THEY'VE DISCOVERED THE  
TRUTH.

ANTIGONE

What should I do?

JOCASTA

Nothing. No. Nothing.

*ANTIGONE KNEELS DOWN AND OUTS HER ARMS AROUND HER.*

No. Please. Don't touch me. Please.

*ANTIGONE LETS GO OF HER.*

I'm sorry. I love you. I love you so much.

*SILENCE*

ANTIGONE

Mother?

JOCASTA

I didn't know. I didn't know.

ANTIGONE

Of course you didn't. How could you?

JOCASTA

I didn't know they'd taken him to another country. It never occurred to me that they might. I use to see little boys holding their mother's hand in the street and wonder, "is it you? Are you my child?" And when he stood there in front of me, I didn't recognize him. In my head he was still a little boy. This whole thing is just -

ANTIGONE

It's not your fault.

JOCASTA

And now, my father. My father's dead. (She cries) Why?

Why would he do that?

ANTIGONE

I think he knew.

JOCASTA

Why? What makes you say that?

ANTIGONE

He'd been acting strangely since he had that visitor.

JOCASTA

Visitor?

ANTIGONE

Yes, a man came to talk to him? Perhaps it was the same man who told father?

JOCASTA

Perhaps. I don't know.

ANTIGONE

Well, grandfather kept staring at us all. Remember?

JOCASTA

No, no I don't. Why didn't I see this? He knew and he couldn't tell me? So he does this? He leaves me all alone?

ANTIGONE

Sometimes the pain inside has to come out. And you're not alone.

JOCASTA

What have I done? There must be something wrong with me.

ANTIGONE

You love him very much, don't you? Father?

*JOCASTA NODS AND CRIES*

JOCASTA

All my life, I was waiting for a time when everything would be still. When I would be happy. How naive and foolish.

ANTIGONE

But you were happy, weren't you?

JOCASTA

Yes. Yes but it was a lie. They lied to me.

ANTIGONE

Who did?

JOCASTA

The trees. The trees. I thought they were calling me. But they weren't. They were laughing. They were laughing at me.

ANTIGONE

What are you talking about?

*SILENCE*

JOCASTA

I need you to help me.

ANTIGONE

Of course, how?

JOCASTA

I need you to get me some petrol.

ANTIGONE

Petrol? Why?



JOCASTA

And I need you to do it without your father seeing you.

ANTIGONE

Why?

JOCASTA

Do you understand what I'm saying to you?

ANTIGONE

Mother, please. (she cries)

JOCASTA

Will you help me do this?

*ANTIGONE NODS*

Thank you.

*JOCASTA KISSES ANTIGONE, ANTIGONE SOBS.*

5. THE EXTERIOR OF JOCASTA'S BEDROOM. A LARGE DOOR. OEDIPUS RUNS TO IT AND TRIES TO OPEN IT. IT IS LOCKED. HE REPEATEDLY BANGS ON THE DOOR AND TRIES TO BREAK IT DOWN.

OEDIPUS

Jocasta? Jocasta, I know you're in there. Open the door. Open this door NOW! I know what you're thinking but please don't. Open the fucking door. PLEASE. My love, open the door. Open the door. Please don't leave me. Please. Please open the door.  
OPEN THE DOOR!

*THE DOOR OPENS. ANTIGONE EXITS.*

Where is she?

*ANTIGONE EXITS BACK THROUGH THE DOOR AND BRING OUT JOCASTA'S BODY.*

*IT IS CHARRED, BLACK AND PINK. OEDIPUS FALLS TO HIS KNEES. THEY STARE AT THE BODY FOR A MOMENT. ANTIGONE GAGS AND RUNS OFF STAGE.*

*OEDIPUS STARTS TO HIT HIS HEAD AND PULL AT HIS FACE, CRYING AND SCREAMING.*

6. THREE MONTHS LATER, A DESERT LANDSCAPE. ANTIGONE AND OEDIPUS SIT UNDERNEATH A DEAD TREE WITH PARASITIC FLOWERS GROWING ON IT. THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY SAND. OEDIPUS IS BLIND. IT IS BEFORE SUNRISE.

ANTIGONE

(looking in the distance)

There's a bird over by the largest tree. Its feathers are black.

And when the sunlight hits the black feathers they have an emerald sheen.

OEDIPUS

Green.

ANTIGONE

I think it's a raven.

OEDIPUS

Yes. And what else?

ANTIGONE

Nothing. There's nothing else. Just sand and the navy sky.

OEDIPUS

Are the trees in bloom?

ANTIGONE

No.

*PAUSE*

OEDIPUS

Do you think your mother would have liked it here?

ANTIGONE

She would've hated it.

OEDIPUS

Yes, there's no green. She wouldn't be able to breathe here.

ANTIGONE

How much longer do we have to stay here?

OEDIPUS

I'm not leaving this spot.

ANTIGONE

What makes you think I can breathe here?

OEDIPUS

You know I can't go back there.

ANTIGONE

(indicating his eyes) You've already done this to yourself –

OEDIPUS

My eyes?

ANTIGONE

Yes, your eyes

OEDIPUS

They were mine to blind.

ANTIGONE

And now you ask me to see for you. When here there is nothing to see. Lets go home, please. Why hurt yourself anymore?

OEDIPUS

You can go if you want.

ANTIGONE

I must've told you a hundred times that I won't leave you here alone. (beat) I've been thinking anyway.

OEDIPUS

Of what?

ANTIGONE

My uncle.

OEDIPUS

What about him?

ANTIGONE

He let us go. He didn't try to stop us. I wonder why.

OEDIPUS

He was upset.

ANTIGONE

Of course but it's been months now and he hasn't sent anyone to find us.

OEDIPUS

I think seeing us would be difficult for him. He loved your mother a lot.

ANTIGONE

He told me once that I look like her.

OEDIPUS

She was very beautiful.

ANTIGONE

He always looked at me strangely.

OEDIPUS

I'd imagine you confuse him.

ANTIGONE

Why? Because I remind him of her? (pause) Perhaps now

I make him sad.

OEDIPUS

Perhaps. (pause) You see, it's probably for the best you  
avoid Creon.

*SILENCE AND THEN –*

ANTIGONE

Perhaps we could go somewhere else.

OEDIPUS

Where?

ANTIGONE

Somewhere new. A fresh start. (pause)  
It's not so cold now.

OEDIPUS

No.

ANTIGONE

The sun's rising.

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What is Critical Reflection? Definition of Critical Reflection: Critical reflection is an activity during which we challenge the validity and appropriateness of our assumptions and beliefs within our present context ( Mezirow, 1990 ). According to Brookfield (1990) AU29: The in-text citation "Brookfield (1990)" is not in the reference list. Please correct the citation, add the reference to the list, or delete the citation. critical reflection requires three phases of activity While critical reflection is typically considered the most sophisticated form of reflection, other forms of reflective thinking provide the appropriate scaffolding for the transformative thinking of critical reflection to occur. As Brookfield (1995 from 7) suggested, just because reflection is not critical does not mean it is unimportant or unnecessary (pp. 79). (Taken from journal entries written while serving on a mission trip in Haiti). One of my kindergarten students is always angry and misbehaving.