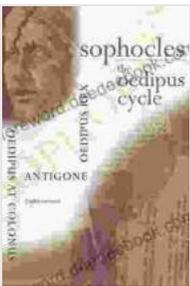


Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, and Antigone: A Comprehensive Guide to Sophocles' Theban Plays

Sophocles' Theban plays are a trilogy of tragedies that tell the story of Oedipus, a mythical king of Thebes. The plays are Oedipus Rex (c. 429 BC), Oedipus at Colonus (c. 406 BC), and Antigone (c. 442 BC). They are considered some of the greatest works of Greek literature and have been performed and studied for centuries.



Sophocles, The Oedipus Cycle: Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone (Annotated) by Sophocles

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1343 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 50 pages
Lending	: Enabled



The Theban plays are based on the myth of Oedipus, which is one of the most famous and enduring stories in Western literature. The myth tells the story of a man who is destined to kill his father and marry his mother. Oedipus unknowingly fulfills this prophecy, and his tragic downfall is a cautionary tale about the dangers of pride and ignorance.

Oedipus Rex

Oedipus Rex is the first play in the Theban trilogy. It tells the story of Oedipus's rise to power and his eventual downfall. The play begins with Oedipus as the king of Thebes. He is a wise and just ruler, and the people of Thebes love him. However, Oedipus has a secret past that he is unaware of. He was adopted as a baby, and he does not know who his real parents are.

When a plague strikes Thebes, Oedipus consults the oracle at Delphi to learn how to stop it. The oracle tells Oedipus that the plague will only end when the murderer of the previous king is found and punished. Oedipus sets out to find the murderer, and he eventually learns that he is the one who killed his father.

Horrified by this revelation, Oedipus blinds himself and goes into exile. He is accompanied by his daughter Antigone, who is the only one who remains loyal to him.

Oedipus at Colonus

Oedipus at Colonus is the second play in the Theban trilogy. It tells the story of Oedipus's exile and death. The play begins with Oedipus and Antigone arriving at Colonus, a village near Athens. Oedipus is old and blind, and he is dying. He asks the people of Colonus for help, and they agree to let him stay.

However, Oedipus's past catches up with him. His sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, come to Colonus to try to force him to return to Thebes. Oedipus refuses, and he curses his sons. The play ends with Oedipus's death and his ascension to the gods.

Antigone

Antigone is the third play in the Theban trilogy. It tells the story of Antigone's defiance of Creon, the new king of Thebes. The play begins with Creon's decree that anyone who buries the body of Polyneices, who was killed in battle against Eteocles, will be put to death.

Antigone, who is Polyneices' sister, defies Creon's decree and buries her brother's body. She is caught and brought before Creon, who sentences her to death. Antigone refuses to beg for mercy, and she is taken away to be executed.

Antigone's death is a tragedy, but it is also a victory. She defies the tyranny of Creon, and she shows that even in the face of death, there is hope.

Themes of the Theban Plays

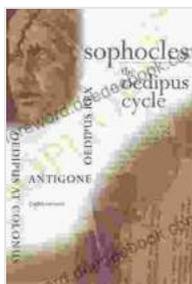
The Theban plays explore a number of important themes, including:

- **Fate and free will:** The plays raise questions about the role of fate in human life. Are we destined to fulfill our destinies, or do we have free will to choose our own paths?
- **Pride and ignorance:** The plays show how pride and ignorance can lead to tragedy. Oedipus is a proud man, and he refuses to believe that he is the one who killed his father. His ignorance leads to his downfall.
- **The importance of family:** The plays explore the importance of family. Oedipus's love for his daughter Antigone is one of the few things that redeems him. Antigone's love for her brother Polyneices leads her to defy Creon's decree.

Relevance of the Theban Plays

The Theban plays are still relevant today because they explore themes that are universal to human experience. The plays raise questions about the nature of fate, the dangers of pride and ignorance, and the importance of family. They are a powerful reminder that even in the face of tragedy, there is hope.

Sophocles' Theban plays are a masterpiece of Greek literature. They are a powerful and moving exploration of the human condition. The plays are still relevant today, and they continue to be performed and studied by people all over the world.



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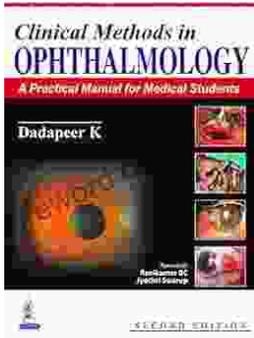
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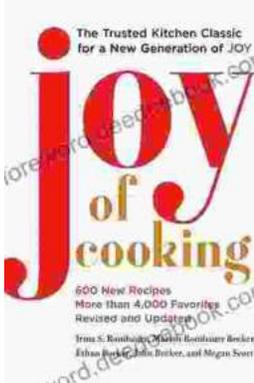
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