

JOCASTA

AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

1958-2008

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES

THIS IS NOT TO BE DONE AS AN HISTORICAL FILM. IT IS A MYTH, A DREAM, ANCIENT AND MODERN. IT SHOULD HAVE A QUALITY OF STARK REALITY AND, AT THE SAME TIME, A DREAM STRANGENESS. THE SETTINGS AND COSTUMES SHOULD SUGGEST ANTIQUITY, BUT NOT BE BOUND BY IT. ANACHRONISMS ARE FREELY EMPLOYED. "JOCASTA" MIGHT TAKE PLACE IN ANCIENT THEBES IN EGYPT, THEBES IN GREECE, IN SOPHOCLES' TIME, FREUD'S TIME -- OR IN OUR OWN TIME.

THE PALACE OF THEBES FACES SLIGHTLY SOUTH OF WEST WITH THE MAIN CONCENTRATION OF THEBES BEFORE IT. IT IS BUILT OF ROUGH-HEWN STONE: HUGE, CRUDE, BARBARIC. IT GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF AN ENORMOUS STONE CAGE, BUT SHOULD BE NEITHER SQUARE NOR SYMMETRICAL. IT APPEARS TO HAVE WEATHERED CENTURIES -- PARTS OF IT HAVE BEEN RUINED AND HAVE NEVER BEEN RESTORED. A CONTINUOUS BALCONY ENCIRCLES IT AT THE LEVEL OF THE SECOND FLOOR. ALL THE WALLS, FLOORS, STAIRWAYS ARE OF STONE. THE CENTRAL HALL, WHICH IS THE FULL HEIGHT OF THE BUILDING, AND THE HALL TO THE THRONE ROOM ARE WIDE, ALL OTHERS ARE NARROW AND DARK. EXCEPT IN A FEW ROOMS, THE ATMOSPHERE, EVEN AT MIDDAY, IS SHADOWED, DARK, COLD. ALL THE ROOMS OF THE PALACE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF OEDIPUS' ROOMS (FORMERLY CREON'S) ARE FURNISHED WITH EXTREME SIMPLICITY.

JOCASTA'S APARTMENT IN THE PALACE IS COMPOSED OF THREE ROOMS. THE FIRST IS A VERY LARGE FORMAL RECEPTION ROOM; THE SECOND IS A PRIVATE SITTING ROOM; THE THIRD IS HER BEDROOM. BESIDE HER BED IS A CRADLE. IT IS DRAPED IN BLACK AND SERVES AS A SHRINE.

THE EMERALD CROWN IS WROUGHT OF GOLD SERPENTS WHICH WRITHE UP AND OUT FROM A CIRCLE. EMERALDS ARE SUSPENDED BY LINKS FROM THEIR MOUTHS. WITH THE MOVEMENT OF THE HEAD, THE EMERALDS MOVE, CATCHING AND REFLECTING THE LIGHT.

CAST

JOCASTA, 35, the Queen

HAEMON, 26, Jocasta's Nephew

APHRON, Jocasta's Maid

KUPIA, 13, Aphron's Daughter

CREON, 37, Jocasta's Brother

TEIRESIAS, a Seer

BOY, Teiresias' Guide

OEDIPUS, 20, the Hero

ACMON, an Officer of the Palace Guards

CAPTAIN TYRUS, an Office of the Queen's Guard

POLYPHONTES, a soldier in the Queen's Guard

LORD DYMAS

BRANCHUS

PAGE

SHEPHERD

THE SPHINX

A CAT

PEOPLE OF THEBES

THE QUEEN'S GUARD, THE PALACE GUARDS, CREON'S GUARDS

SOLDIERS

SERVANTS

PRIESTS

ETC.

NIGHT: BY THE LIGHT OF TWO SMALL TORCHES WE SEE WE ARE IN THE LARGE, IRREGULAR MAIN SQUARE OF THEBES. WHITEWASHED HOUSES CROWD CLOSELY AROUND THE SQUARE. A FEW NARROW STREETS RUN BETWEEN THEM. THE WIDE MAIN ROAD LEADS FROM THE SQUARE TO THE WEST GATE.

IN THE SHADOWS NEAR THE HOUSES GROUPS OF PEOPLE, MOSTLY WOMEN, STAND SILENTLY.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SQUARE IS A FUNERAL PYRE. THE FUEL IS CEILING BEAMS, DOOR POSTS, FURNITURE, ETC. CORPSES LIE ON THE PYRE. BESIDE IT A **PRIEST** STANDS. AT HIS FEET, ON A CRUDE LITTER, LIES ANOTHER CORPSE.

AS THE **PRIEST** LIFTS BACK THE CLOTH, WE SEE THE DEAD MAN'S EMACIATED FACE. HE DIED OF STARVATION. THE **PRIEST** SPRINKLES WATER OVER THE BODY AND INTONES THE PRAYER FOR THE DEAD. **TWO MEN** GENTLY LIFT THE BODY AND PLACE IT ON THE PYRE. ANOTHER **MAN** STEPS FORWARD TO IGNITE THE PYRE. HE HEARS A DISTURBANCE, TURNS.

THE BODY OF A CHILD IS BROUGHT IN ON A STRETCHER. THE **MOTHER**, CARRYING A JUG OF MILK, FOLLOWS, MOURNING. THE BODY IS LOWERED. THE **MOTHER** KNEELS. THE **PRIEST** KNEELS BESIDE HER AND LIFTS BACK THE CLOTH. THE CHILD IS A **BOY** ABOUT SIX YEARS OLD. THE **MOTHER**, TOUCHING HER DEAD CHILD, BEGINS, SILENTLY, TO CRY.

MOTHER: He wouldn't drink the milk. Give it to someone.

THE **PRIEST** TAKES THE JUG OF MILK, HOLDS IT UP. FROM THE SIDE OF THE SQUARE, A **WOMAN** STEPS FORWARD. SHE KISSES BOTH THE **PRIEST'S** AND **MOTHER'S HANDS**, THEN HURRIES AWAY. THE **PRIEST** BEGINS AGAIN THE PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

THE CAMERA MOVES AMONG THE **PEOPLE**, STUDYING THEIR FACES. AN OLD MAN (**TEIRESIAS**), STANDING NEAR THE PYRE, LEANS ON A STAFF. HIS OTHER HAND RESTS ON THE SHOULDER OF A **BOY**.

THE CHILD'S BODY IS PLACED ON THE PYRE LIT BY A TORCH, THE PYRE FLAMES UP QUICKLY. **TEIRESIAS** TAKES A STEP BACKWARD FROM THE HEAT. THE **MOTHER** CRIES ALOUD.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE FLAMES OF ANOTHER FIRE. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SHOW TWO BOWLS OF MILK WARMING OVER THE TINY FLAMES IN A BRAZIER. A HAND DIPS A DECORATED STICK INTO A BOWL BESIDE THE BRAZIER. THE HAND, APHRON'S, LIFTS THE STICK LOADED WITH HONEY AND, BRUSHING AWAY A FLY, PUTS IT IN ONE OF THE BOWLS OF MILK.

JOCASTA'S VOICE: Give it to me, Aphron. I'll stir the honey in myself.

AS APHRON HANDS HER THE BOWL, THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO INCLUDE JOCASTA RECLINING ON A CUSHIONED BENCH NEAR OPEN DOORS THAT LEAD TO THE BALCONY. A CAT SITS AT HER FEET. BEYOND HAEMON, WHO STANDS AT THE DOORS LOOKING OUT, WE CAN SEE THE LIGHT OF THE FUNERAL PYRE. HAEMON TURNS AS APHRON HANDS HIM THE OTHER BOWL.

APHRON: It's Hymetus honey.

HAEMON: AMUSED

The nectar of the Gods.

APHRON, TAKING THE SERVING TRAY, EXITS.

JOCASTA: You don't have to drink it. It helps me sleep.

SHE LICKS THE HONEY FROM THE STICK. A FLY BUZZES AROUND HER FACE; SHE BRUSHES IT AWAY.

Close the doors, Haemon.

HAEMON: You'll be too warm.

JOCASTA: The world smells of death. There's nothing out there but emptiness and carrion birds.

HAEMON: Someone will solve the riddle.

JOCASTA: They tear down houses to burn the dead.

HAEMON GIVES HER A QUESTIONING LOOK.

Yes. I went out last night

HAEMON: It's not safe.

JOCASTA: Do they want nothing more than death?

HAEMON: You used to give me honey and milk when I was young, when I had a fever.

JOCASTA: I, too, am ready to die.

SHE SETS HER BOWL ON A TABLE, AND STEPS OUT ONTO THE BALCONY. SHE STANDS FOR A LONG TIME STARING INTO THE NIGHT. HAEMON REMAINS SEATED, DESPONDENT. JOCASTA REENTERS.

JOCASTA: WITH FORCED GAIETY

You'd think this was the only land that ever had a Sphinx. They've been known before -- and worshipped. We'll ride out tomorrow, we'll take her some honey.

HAEMON: Please, Jocasta.

JOCASTA: There are six other gates to Thebes. Let her sit!

HAEMON: Someone will solve the riddle.

JOCASTA: And Creon will invent a new monster. We must get rid of the need to fear monsters.

Maybe that's the answer.

SOUNDING OVER AND AFTER HER LAST WORDS WE HEAR TRUMPETS IN THE DISTANCE (FROM THE INNER COURTYARD). JOCASTA IS STARTLED.

HAEMON: Father is drilling the soldiers.

JOCASTA: Why?

HAEMON: He's planning something for tomorrow.

JOCASTA: Is he going to send an army against the creature? Each brave soldier can bring back a feather. Perhaps she'll have a riddle for each: "Oh good soldier, you who would triumph for Creon..."

SUDDENLY SHE INTERRUPTS HERSELF, HER TONE CHANGES, SHE SPEAKS SOFTLY:

Tomorrow?...is the anniversary of my son's death.

HAEMON: He doesn't remember that.

JOCASTA: He must! I ordered mourning for the court.

HAEMON: It has been forbidden.

JOCASTA CRIES OUT.

HAEMON TRIES GENTLY TO CALM HER.

JOCASTA: I can't even have that, Haemon. Your father is cruel, my brother is very cruel. He once loved me.

SHE MOVES TO THE BALCONY DOORS AGAIN, THERE IS ONLY A FAINT GLOW FROM THE PYRE NOW.

Twenty years, twenty years of death.

Where is the moon?

HAEMON COMES TO STAND BEHIND HER.

HAEMON: It rises very late, near morning. You'll see it tomorrow with the sun.

JOCASTA: What is he planning?

HAEMON: I don't know.

JOCASTA GOES TOWARD THE BEDROOM. HAEMON FOLLOWS HER.

JOCASTA: There is nothing else to think of in this place, but the Sphinx and death -- and Creon. Each day I rise and the sun shines clear and beautiful. I hear Kupia singing. Aphron brings me fruit. The sun warms my skin and the world grows colder and colder and colder. He loved me once, Haemon, my brother loved me once. If the Sphinx were my minion, I would have her tear out his heart.

HAEMON: You must sleep.

JOCASTA SITS AT HER DRESSING TABLE.

JOCASTA: Yes, I will sleep.

HAEMON: Someone will solve the riddle.

JOCASTA: He will be Creon's slave.

HAEMON: A King will not be Creon's slave.

FOCUS ON THEIR IMAGES REFLECTED IN THE MIRROR. HAEMON KISSES JOCASTA ON THE FOREHEAD, THEN LEAVES. JOCASTA SITS ALONE, LOOKING DOWN INTO A ROUND HAND MIRROR. TEARS FALL FROM HER OPEN STARING EYES ONTO THE MIRROR; THEY GATHER AND OBSCURE HER IMAGE.

SUDDENLY, SUCH BRIGHTNESS -- AS IF SUNLIGHT WERE FLASHING ON THE MIRROR. WE ARE LOOKING DOWN AT A PANORAMA OF SAND GLARING IN THE NOONDAY HEAT.

ON THIS BACKGROUND, THE TITLES APPEAR, "JOCASTA" ETC., IN BLACK, ELONGATED LETTERS. THE TITLES ARE TO BE DONE VERY SIMPLY AS THE CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY TOWARD THE SAND. AS THE TITLES END, WE ARE CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE A FEW ABANDONED OBJECTS HALF BURIED IN THE SAND.

A PANORAMIC VIEW ACROSS THE DESERT. IT IS MIDDAY. THE SUN GLARES,

SCORCHING THE LAND. THERE ARE NO SHADOWS, THERE IS NO VEGETATION, NO WATER, NO MOVEMENT, ONLY DUST AND DESOLATION. *(IN THE 21ST CENTURY, WE CAN SAY IT LOOKS LIKE APOLLO XVII FOOTAGE FROM THE MOON.)* FROM HIGH UP, WE SEE ROCKS, ABANDON FIELDS, THE REMAINS OF AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM, WHIRLING DUST. FAR IN THE BACKGROUND ARE HIGH, ROCKY CLIFFS. THERE IS NO SOUND.

THE CAMERA COMES TO A BREAK IN THE CLIFFS. WE DISCERN TWO TINY FIGURES: ONE STANDS IN THE ROAD LOOKING UP AT THE SECOND STANDING ON A JUTTING ROCK AT THE TOP OF THE HIGHEST CLIFF. THE CAMERA DOES NOT STOP TO EXAMINE THESE FIGURES.

ON THE ROAD, RIDING TOWARD THE CLIFFS ARE **FOUR FIGURES ON HORSEBACK**. ONE RIDES SLIGHTLY IN ADVANCE OF THE OTHERS.

THERE IS A SCREAM, A VIOLENT SCREAM, SOUNDING ALMOST LIKE AN EXPLOSION. IT ECHOES AND ECHOES IN THE SILENT DESOLATION. THE CAMERA SWEEPS TO THE SKY. WE SEE A FIGURE IMPLoding, LIKE A GUT-SHOT BIRD, TWISTING AND FALLING, FALLING. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHAT IT IS BUT, FOR A BIRD, IT IS HUGE. ITS GROTESQUE MASS HITS THE EARTH. BROKEN BONES, BROKEN WINGS, BLOOD, A FEW FEATHERS DRIFT DOWN. NEAR THIS DESTROYED BODY WE SEE A YOUNG MAN'S **FEET**, WEARING SANDALS. ONE FOOT IS SLIGHTLY TWISTED.

WHEN THE **FOUR HORSEMEN** HEAR THE SCREAM, THEY STOP AND REMAIN STILL FOR SOME TIME, LISTENING. A HURRIED CONSULTATION FOLLOWS. WE ARE TOO FAR AWAY TO HEAR IT. **ONE MAN** DISMOUNTS AND STARTS, ON FOOT, BACK TOWARD THEBES. THE OTHER **THREE**, TAKING THE **FOURTH HORSE**, CONTINUE TOWARD THE CLIFFS WHERE THE SOUND CAME FROM. THEY BREAK INTO A SLOW TROT.

WE STAY WITH THE **FOURTH FIGURE**, NOW WALKING TOWARD THE CITY. BUT SOON THE CAMERA, THOUGH MOVING SLOWLY, LEAVES HIM BEHIND.

THE ROAD RUNS PAST A SMALL SPARSE WOODS OF WITHERED TREES. AMONG THEM STANDS **KUPIA**, A YOUNG GIRL, WITH BOW AND ARROW, DRESSED FOR HUNTING. HAVING HEARD THE SCREAM, SHE IS LOOKING TOWARD THE CLIFFS.

THE ROAD COMES TO THE GREAT IRON GATES OF THE CITY.

INSIDE THE GATES GUARDS, IN THE UNIFORM OF CREON'S SOLDIERS, ARE SETTLING DOWN TO SIT OR LIE AGAINST THE PILLARS OF THE GATE. IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME SINCE THEY OPENED THE GATES TO LET THE FOUR HORSEMEN OUT. THEY HAVE NOT HEARD THE SCREAM.

THE CAMERA CONTINUES ALONG THE EMPTY MAIN ROAD THROUGH THEBES. ALL THE SIDE STREETS, BETWEEN THE WHITE-WASHED-GLARING-IN-THE-SUN HOUSES SEEM, AT FIRST, DESERTED.

IN THE SQUARE OF THE FUNERAL PYRE. SEVERAL WOMEN ARE CLEANING UP THE ASHES AND SCRUBBING THE FLAGSTONES. SEVERAL MEN CARRY IN WOOD FOR A NEW PYRE.

OCCASIONALLY WE GLIMPSE FIGURES, ALWAYS DRESSED IN BLACK, SITTING IN A DOORWAY, CROUCHING AGAINST A WALL, HALF HIDDEN BEHIND A WINDOW. AN ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR AND APATHY PREVAILS. BRIEFLY WE VISIT AN INTERIOR WHERE EIGHT OR TEN FIGURES ARE TALKING IN HUSHED VOICES. WE HEAR SUCH PHRASES AS:

My mother died yesterday. We will all be dead. Down with the house of Laius. The Queen is mad. The Sphinx obeys the mad Queen. Depose the Queen.

ALL TURN TO LOOK AT THE SPEAKER OF THIS LAST PHRASE; SEVERAL NOD IN SILENT AGREEMENT.

AT THE END OF THE STREET, WE GET OUR FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE PALACE. IT SITS LIKE A PRIMITIVE STONE CAGE ON A SLIGHT RISE ABOVE THE TOWN.

PASSING SOME HALF-CLOSED SHUTTERS, WE AGAIN HEAR HUSHED VOICES, CATCH OVERLAPPING PHRASES:

She will marry the Hero. The proclamation says nothing about marriage. The Queen offered her hand. The proclamation offers gold.

WE CONTINUE ALONG THE STREET. BY NOW THERE IS CONSTANT MURMURING. PHRASES, SLOGANS, CRIES, EMPHASIZE A MOOD OF FRUSTRATION AND INCIPIENT REBELLION AMONG THE THEBANS.

WE SEE **HAEMON** STANDING BY A WINDOW LISTENING. HE IS NOT DRESSED IN BLACK, NOR DOES HE SHARE THE GENERAL MOOD OF RESTLESS ANGRY. HE MOVES ON AS WE PASS HIM AND CONTINUE UP THE STREET TOWARD THE GREAT ROUGHHEWN STONE PALACE.

AS THE CAMERA EMERGES FROM BETWEEN BUILDINGS, WE ENCOUNTER THE FIRST OF THE PALACE GATES. THEY ARE OPEN. **GUARDS** STAND ON EITHER SIDE. THE REMAINS OF SOME TORN-DOWN BUILDINGS SHOW THAT THE BARRIER CLOSEST TO THE TOWN IS RECENTLY CONSTRUCTED.

THE SECOND SET OF GATES ALSO STANDS OPEN, FLANKED BY ANOTHER **PAIR OF GUARDS**. BOTH SETS OF GUARDS, DRESSED IN THE UNIFORM OF **CREON'S SOLDIERS**, ARE STANDING, BUT THEY ARE APATHETIC, WEARY, PERHAPS LEANING ON THEIR SWORDS.

THE CAMERA HOLDS ON A VIEW OF THE PALACE THROUGH A THIRD SET OF GATES, BARRED AND MORE HEAVILY GUARDED

WE SEE A GREAT FLIGHT OF STEPS LEADING UP TO THE PALACE ITSELF: DARK, CRUDE, AUSTERE. BESIDE IT IS THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO. THOUGH STILL OF HEWN STONE, IT IS A LIGHTER, MORE GRACEFUL BUILDING. INSIDE THE THIRD SET OF GATES, ARE MORE **GUARDS AND SOLDIERS**. OUTSIDE ARE A FEW **TOWNSPEOPLE**. THEY MIGHT BE STATUES OF THE SAME STONE AS THE PALACE, DARK, STILL, IN ATTITUDES OF ENDLESS WAITING.

CLOSE UP OF A **GUARD'S FACE** AS HE LOOKS UP TO TELL THE TIME BY THE SUN. THOUGH YOUNG, HIS FACE IS WEARY, DISILLUSIONED. HE LOWERS HIS EYES AND GLANCES TOWARD THE PALACE.

WE SEE THE VIEW THE GUARD SEES OF THE PALACE. THE GREAT DOORS SWING OPEN, SLOWLY -- AS IF OF THEIR OWN VOLITION.

AFTER THE SUNSHINE GLARE OF THE ALMOST DESERTED COURTYARD, THE INTERIOR OF THE PALACE SEEMS OMINOUSLY DARK. THE CHANT OF A FUNERAL MARCH BEGINS SOFTLY AND INCREASES IN VOLUME THROUGH THE FOLLOWING SCENE.

THE **TWO SOLDIERS**, WHO OPENED THE DOORS, WEAR THE UNIFORM OF

JOCASTA'S GUARDS. THEY NOW STAND TO EITHER SIDE. MORE GUARDS STAND ALONG THE CORRIDOR. THEY HAVE BEEN LOUNGING AND HAVE ONLY JUST COME TO ATTENTION. THEIR BEARING DOES NOT SUCCEED IN BEING MILITARY. THEY HAVE THE UNCERTAIN LOOK OF NOT KNOWING IF THEY SHOULD BE DOING WHAT THEY ARE DOING. SOME WEAR EXPRESSIONS OF MOCKERY -- ONE SUPPRESSES A GIGGLE AS THE CAMERA MOVES TOWARD THE ADVANCING FIGURE OF JOCASTA.

SHE CARRIES A ROUND MIRROR, FACING THE CAMERA. SHE WALKS SLOWLY, CEREMONIOUSLY AS IF IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION. APHRON FOLLOWS. SHE WANTS TO STOP JOCASTA, BUT IS AFRAID TO TOUCH HER.

JOCASTA REACHES THE DOORS AND WALKS ONTO THE PORCH. WE NOW SEE HER THROUGH THE PILLARS AND INNER GATES FROM BEYOND THE BACKS OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE. THEY DO NOT MOVE, BUT CONTINUE TO STARE AS THEY HAVE BEEN STARING. THEY HAVE SEEN THE "MAD" QUEEN BEFORE. ONE ASKS OF ANOTHER:

What's she holding?

THE MIRROR FLASHES IN THE SUN. THE MUSIC STOPS. JOCASTA STANDS STILL WHEN SHE SPEAKS IT IS IN A QUASI-LITURGICAL TONE, THE VOICE OF A PRIESTESS ADDRESSING A LARGE CROWD.

JOCASTA: People of Thebes, people of Thebes, gather together, the sun is at the zenith, your Queen is in mourning. I wear the black of the dead. I wear the black of those who mourn. Gather together, hear my sorrow. I do not mourn the dead King, dead at the crossroads, dead of corruption. I mourn for you. I mourn for your life, I mourn for my life. I mourn for all who yet lives in this land of the dead.

FROM TIME TO TIME, APHRON, STANDING BEHIND JOCASTA, TRIES TO INTERRUPT. SHE BEGS HER TO COME BACK INTO THE PALACE.

THE SCANDALIZED TOWNSPEOPLE AT THE GATES SHOUT CONTEMPTUOUS REMARKS. THE GUARDS IN THE COURTYARD PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE TOWNSPEOPLE AND VERY LITTLE TO JOCASTA.

LOST IN HER OWN SORROW, HER OWN "MADNESS," JOCASTA DOES

**NOT HEAR WHAT IS SAID. HER CHANT GOES ON AS SHE SLOWLY
ADVANCES TOWARD THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO.**

**IN THE ENTRANCE TO THE PALACE, HER GUARDS HAVE GATHERED TO WATCH
HER -- FOR AMUSEMENT.**

Our heads bowed in sorrow, our bodies bent in pain, we live with a curse upon the land. The Gods speak to certain men, and those men have brought us to destruction. I do not mourn the dead King. I mourn for you and for myself. I weep for the first murder. The dead King killed the living King, and I weep. I weep and I remember. Twenty years ago today my son was killed -- my son, the Queen's son, your Prince. He was a child and he was killed. The Gods ordered it, the King obeyed. On the altar of Apollo I shall offer this sacrifice...

**WITH A SWIFT MOVEMENT, SHE LIFTS THE MIRROR HIGH OVER
HER HEAD. IT CATCHES THE SUN. THE TOWNSPEOPLE SHOUT,
SHOCKED AND ANGRY.**

...a mirror in which Apollo may see himself, may see the likeness of the one whom he ordered for slaughter, may see and weep. My son, had he lived, would rival Apollo's beauty, incarnate the God, usurp the worship of stone. I will make the villainous idol look upon the image of the one he has killed and cry for shame.

THROUGH HER VEIL, WE SEE TEARS ON JOCASTA'S FACE.

**FAR AWAY AND INDISTINCT, WE BEGIN TO HEAR VOICES -- A CROWD IS
GATHERING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CITY. VOICES SHOUT:**

The riddle is solved. The sphinx is dead.

**WE DO NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND THE WORDS UNTIL THE PEOPLE AT THE
GATES PICK UP THESE CRIES AND REPEAT THEM.**

JOCASTA: Weep, Apollo, weep. Your tears will unGod you, and crack this mirror wherein your image is. Let my people cry, "Apollo is dead!" Let those who speak for the Gods tremble and fear. Let them no more murder the innocent. My innocent son was sacrificed. You, People of Thebes, are

sacrificed/murdered daily to appease the Gods. But, I, the Queen, decree that no more blood shall flow in the name of any God. Apollo is dead.

THE SINGLE HORSEMAN FROM THE DESERT PUSHES HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD, REACHES THE GATES. HE SHOUTS TO THE GUARDS. THEY OPEN THE GATES, LET HIM IN, AND QUICKLY RE-CLOSE THE GATES.

A LARGE CROWD IS GATHERING, THERE IS MUCH SHOUTING. AFTER A MOMENT, UNDERSTANDING THE NEWS THE HORSEMAN HAS BROUGHT, THEY BEGIN TO CHANT:

The riddle is solved. The Sphinx is dead.

THEY SHOUT AT THE QUEEN. JOCASTA HEARS THE WORDS. STARTLED, TERRIFIED, SHE DROPS THE MIRROR. IT SHATTERS.

CLOSE UP OF THE SHATTERED MIRROR.

JOCASTA STARES AT THE MIRROR, THEN LIFTS HER EYES TO LOOK OUT OVER THE CITY.

WE HEAR MORE AND MORE SHOUTING. PEOPLE ARE COMING OUT OF THE HOUSES. THE PEOPLE AT THE GATES TURN AND RUN DOWN THE STREET -- AWAY FROM THE PALACE.

BEFORE THE CAMERA LEAVES THE PALACE, SOLDIERS BEGIN TO POUR FROM THE LOWER REGIONS OF THE PALACE INTO THE COURTYARD. THE GUARDS, WHO HAVE BEEN AT THE OPEN GREAT DOORS, RUN DOWN THE STEPS, PAST JOCASTA.

THE CAMERA RACES BACK THROUGH THE CITY VIA THE STREET WE CAME UP EARLIER. PEOPLE NEAR THE PALACE NOW BEGIN TO RUN TOWARD THE CITY GATES. IN THE MIDDLE OF TOWN, PEOPLE, POURING IN FROM SIDE STREETS, DO NOT KNOW WHICH WAY TO GO. IN THE CONFUSION AND EXCITEMENT, WE HEAR CRIES AND QUESTIONS. EVERYONE IS ASKING WHO SOLVED THE RIDDLE.

OEDIPUS, ACCOMPANIED BY ACMON, RIDES IN THROUGH THE OPEN CITY GATES. THE JOSTLING, NOISY CROWD SHOUTS AT THEM AND AT EACH OTHER. LORD ACMON IS KNOWN BY SOME OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE. WE HEAR HIS NAME SHOUTED. MANY THINK IT IS HE WHO HAS SOLVED THE RIDDLE.

OEDIPUS LOOKS ON THE SCENE, BEWILDERED, ASTONISHED, A LITTLE AFRAID OF THE FRENZIED CROWD. ACOMON WATCHES SILENTLY, BUT WITH PLEASURE. THE GATE GUARDS CLEAR SOME SPACE AROUND ACOMON AND OEDIPUS. ACOMON DISMOUNTS.

THE GUARD SALUTES. ACOMON RETURNS THE SALUTE. THE NOISE OF THE CROWD IS SUCH THAT WE CANNOT HEAR WHAT THEY SAY. IN A MOMENT, ACOMON TURNS AND RAISES HIS HAND TOWARD OEDIPUS. AT THIS GESTURE, THE CROWD SURGES AROUND OEDIPUS. WE HEAR SHOUTS FROM THE PEOPLE CALLING HIM:

Savior! Hero! Riddle solver! Etc.

THE GATE GUARDS STAND BACK, SILENT, NOT PLEASED. ACOMON SHOUTS AN ORDER AND THE CROWD IS HELD BACK FROM OEDIPUS.

IN DISMOUNTING, OEDIPUS LOSES HIS BALANCE. ACOMON CATCHES HIM, STEADIES HIM. OEDIPUS SMILES AND SHRUGS TO APOLOGIZE FOR HIS CLUMSINESS. HE LIMPS VERY SLIGHTLY WHEN HE WALKS.

ACMON: SHOUTING TO THE CROWD

This man has solved the Sphinx's riddle. The Sphinx is dead. Thebes is freed!

ACMON EMBRACES OEDIPUS. THE CROWD CHEERS. SOME KNEEL AT OEDIPUS' FEET.

DURING THIS, KUPIA SLIPS IN AT THE GATES. SHE COMES CLOSE TO OEDIPUS AND TOUCHES HIM -- AS DO MANY OTHERS. SHE THEN SLIPS QUIETLY THROUGH THE CROWD AND, WHEN HER WAY IS CLEAR, BEGINS TO RUN TOWARD THE PALACE.

THE PALACE PRECINCT IS FULL OF CHAOTIC MOVEMENT. SOLDIERS COME FROM THE PALACE, TALKING TO EACH OTHER, SHOUTING, EMBRACING. THE ONLY STILL FIGURE IS JOCASTA, WHO SUDDENLY TURNS AND STARTS RUNNING UP THE STEPS.

COMMANDS ARE GIVEN TO THE SOLDIERS. THEY ASSEMBLE AND MARCH OUT

THROUGH THE GATES. MANY TOWNSPEOPLE GO WITH THE **SOLDIERS**.

IN THE BACKGROUND WE SEE **JOCASTA** REACH THE TOP OF THE STAIRWAY. A FIGURE STANDS INSIDE THE GREAT DOORS.

CREON, UNIFORMED LIKE HIS **SOLDIERS**, STANDS IN THE CENTER OF THE OPEN DOORWAY. **JOCASTA** TRIES TO DODGE PAST HIM. HE CATCHES HER. SHE STRUGGLES, TWISTS FREE, AND RUNS INTO THE PALACE. **APHRON** FOLLOWS HER.

CREON: Calm her!

APHRON: Yes, my lord.

AS **APHRON** HURRIES AFTER **JOCASTA**, **CREON** TURNS TO WATCH THE ACTIVITY IN THE COURTYARD. IT IS ALMOST DESERTED NOW. THE VAST STONE PILLARS AND IRON GATES ARE BARELY BEGINNING TO CAST SHADOWS.

CREON ENTERS THE PALACE. THE DOORS ARE CLOSED BEHIND HIM.

THE CITY GATES. THE **CROWD** AROUND **OEDIPUS** IS LARGER. SOME ARE ON THEIR KNEES WORSHIPPING HIM, KISSING THE GROUND. **OEDIPUS** IS EMBARRASSED, PUZZLED. HE TRIES TO LIFT AN **OLD MAN** FROM HIS KNEES. THE **OLD MAN** CLINGS TO HIM IN ABJECT ADORATION. A **GATE GUARD** STRIKES THE **OLD MAN** AND FORCES HIM BACK INTO THE **CROWD**. **OEDIPUS** IS SHOCKED, BUT **ACMON**, SHAKING HIS HEAD, RESTRAINS HIM FROM INTERFERING.

AS THE **PROCESSION** MOVES THROUGH THE CITY, AMONG THE CONTINUALLY REITERATED SHOUTS, WE HEAR:

Marry the Queen! King! The mad Queen... Save Thebes!

JOCASTA, ENTERING HER APARTMENT, RUNS THROUGH THE FIRST ROOM AND INTO THE SECOND. SHE COLLAPSES, SOBBING. IN A MOMENT, **APHRON** ENTERS, CLOSES THE DOOR. SHE KNEELS BEFORE **JOCASTA**, PUTS HER ARMS AROUND HER, AND MURMURS GENTLY.

APHRON: Jocasta, my lady. My child. Hush, my child.

JOCASTA: WITH AN ANGRY CRY, PUSHES **APHRON** AWAY.

It must be stopped! Call Captain Tyrus! Who gave orders for the guards to march?

Call Captain Tyrus!

APHRON REMAINS STILL, HER HEAD BOWED.

Will you obey me? Call the Captain!

APHRON: My child, it will do no good. Soon you will be mistress in this house again!

JOCASTA: Be silent!

APHRON GOES TO ONE OF THE GREAT CARVED CHESTS AND TAKES OUT A HEAVY, ELABORATELY EMBROIDERED, JEWELLED GARMENT.

APHRON: Let me dress you.

JOCASTA: For a riddle solver!

APHRON: For your King.

JOCASTA: No! I will not have it. Call my Captain! I want the streets emptied.

APHRON: Madame.

JOCASTA: Call Captain Tyrus!

APHRON STILL DOES NOT MOVE. JOCASTA THREATENS TO STRIKE HER.

Call him!

AS APHRON TURNS, THE DOOR IS OPENED. CREON ENTERS. THERE IS A MOMENT OF STILLNESS. THEN APHRON, NOT DARING TO LOOK AT CREON, GOES OUT. HE STEPS INTO THE ROOM, SHUTS THE DOOR AND STANDS SMILING AT JOCASTA. SHE RETURNS HIS LOOK WITH SOBER DEFIANCE.

CREON: I expected to find you dressing.

JOCASTA: You expect a lot of things, Creon.

CREON: Difficulties with the Queen are a commonplace.

HE WALKS TO THE BALCONY DOORS AND OPENS THEM. WE HEAR THE SHOUTING IN THE DISTANCE.

Listen.

Shall I send soldiers to dress you?

JOCASTA: Am I needed? Will I add to your festive occasion?

CREON: You've made yourself indispensable.

JOCASTA STARES AT HIM. HER COURAGE BEGINNING TO FAIL, SHE TURNS ABRUPTLY AND GOES INTO HER BEDROOM. CREON CLOSSES THE BALCONY DOORS AND FOLLOWS HER.

Will Captain Tyrus protect you? From whom? From yourself? I didn't offer you as a prize for riddle solving.

JOCASTA: Who is the riddle solver?

CREON: WITH AMUSED INNOCENCE

I have not seen him. You didn't qualify your offer as to shape and manner. Is that what you want to do now? Shall we call the Council?

JOCASTA: Don't make me marry. You can prevent it.

CREON: A Queen lives by her decrees.

JOCASTA: Please, Creon, whomever you've chosen, don't make me marry.

CREON: I try to imagine what you were thinking of. The good men of the Council were as astonished as I. Did you think the Gods would send you -- what?

JOCASTA: I thought it might help to save Thebes.

CREON STEPS TO THE CRADLE-SHRINE AND IN ONE MOTION RIPS THE DRAPERIES AND BEDCLOTHES FROM IT.

CREON: Is this to save Thebes, as well!

JOCASTA LUNGES AT CREON GRABBING THE CLOTH FROM HIS HANDS. HE STEPS QUICKLY ASIDE AND THROWS HIMSELF ON HER BED, LAUGHING.

JOCASTA TRIES TO RE-DRAPE THE SHRINE, REMAKE THE SMALL BED.

Save it! Save it! Your new husband might give you some use for it.

JOCASTA SINKS TO THE FLOOR CRYING, HER HEAD AGAINST THE CRADLE.

Control yourself. Gods, you're grotesque!

HE PULLS THE BLACK VEIL FROM HER HEAD.

Keeping a shrine for a son twenty years dead! Ranting at the Gods! -- I try to pretend it's for Laius.

JOCASTA: Why don't you kill me, too. It would be so easy.

CREON: I don't know how to deal with your imaginings, Jocasta.

JOCASTA: Don't make me marry.

CREON: Your offer has been stricken from the Council records.

JOCASTA TURNS TO LOOK AT HIM, TAKEN ABACK.

The day you made it.

Come, get up, Jocasta.

CREON HELPS HER TO HER FEET.

We are not interested in someone unsuitable sharing the crown. But you must receive the Hero, treat him with honor. Give us a chance to applaud your generosity.

JOCASTA: I am not mad, Creon. I do know the truth.

CREON: The official reward is gold.

JOCASTA: But I will behave as you please today. If you protect me this once, be assured, I will give in to your wishes.

CREON: Would that I were not your brother -- and had solved the riddle.

JOCASTA: Yes.

CREON: You would marry me, wouldn't you?

JOCASTA: Yes, Creon.

CREON: I, too, could rant against the Gods.

JOCASTA: **WITHDRAWING FROM HIM.**

But you sold me to Laius. And if you found it expedient, you'd sell me again. You don't love anyone, least of all me.

CREON: You'll not be forced to marry. Trust me.

JOCASTA: Trust a murderer?

CREON: I would like to see you well and happy again. The official reward is gold, a hundred weight in gold. Thebes can ill afford it, Jocasta.

JOCASTA: If I could believe you...

CREON: Whatever I do is for you and for Thebes.

JOCASTA: The Sphinx -- was that real, Creon?

KNOCKING IS HEARD AT THE DOOR OF THE OUTER ROOM. CREON LIFTS JOCASTA'S HAND AND KISSES IT. THE KNOCKING IS HEARD AGAIN. CREON MOVES TO THE OUTER ROOM.

CREON: Enter!

JOCASTA, THOUGHTFUL, PENSIVE, WALKS TO THE BALCONY DOORS, LOOKS OUT, THEN DRAWS THE CURTAINS.

CAPTAIN TYRUS OPENS THE DOOR. SEEING CREON, HE HESITATES, THEN SPEAKS CAUTIOUSLY.

TYRUS: The Queen sent for me.

CREON: And will be pleased to see you. Have you seen the Hero?

TYRUS: No, my Lord.

CREON: Do you know his identity?

TYRUS: No, my Lord.

JOCASTA, ENTERING THE ROOM, STANDS FOR A MOMENT IN THE BACKGROUND.

JOCASTA: Have you prepared the reception?

TYRUS: We are awaiting order.

CREON: The Palace Guards...

JOCASTA: I will give the orders!

CREON: **MAKES A MOCK BOW AND STEPS ASIDE.**

As you wish.

TYRUS: My Queen.

JOCASTA: The Palace Guards are to assemble in the courtyard, out there, below my balcony.

CREON: They have their orders.

JOCASTA: They will stand in the courtyard!

JOCASTA MOVES ABOUT THE RECEPTION ROOM. CAPTAIN TYRUS FOLLOWS HER.

My own guards will stand outside the door, on the balcony, along those walls. I shall receive the riddle solver here. Only members of the Council shall be admitted. And you, Captain Tyrus, bring the Hero in yourself.

TYRUS: Yes, your Majesty.

JOCASTA: Open the gates. Let the people into the courtyard.

TYRUS: It shall be done.

JOCASTA: You are to bring him in.

TYRUS: Yes, your Majesty.

JOCASTA: Have Lord Haemon sent here. And. Have the guards armed. Have my guards fully armed.

TYRUS LOOKS QUESTIONINGLY AT HER, ABOUT TO SPEAK.

That is my wish. You may go.

JOCASTA WALKS AWAY.

Send soldiers to drape the balcony. We will use only the flag of Thebes.

TYRUS: Yes, your Majesty.

AS HE TURNS TO LEAVE, **CREON** STOPS HIM.

CREON: Wait for me here.

CREON SHUTS THE DOOR BETWEEN HIMSELF AND **TYRUS**,
THEN TO **JOCASTA**.

The throne room would be more suitable.

JOCASTA: No.

CREON: Your chambers are rather intimate.

JOCASTA: Intimate? My life is in here. I will receive him here.

CREON: I would advise you to change your mind.

JOCASTA: I will receive him here.

AS **CREON** GOES OUT, SHE SAYS:

Send in Aphron. I must dress.

ENTERING THE HALL, **CREON** NODS FOR **CAPTAIN TYRUS** TO FOLLOW HIM.
APHRON GOES IN TO **JOCASTA**.

THE CITY GATES: THE **SOLDIERS** FROM THE PALACE HAVE ARRIVED. A
PROCESSION IS FORMED AND STARTS TOWARD THE PALACE. **OEDIPUS** WALKS
WITH **ACMON**. THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY **GUARDS** WHO MARCH IN A SQUARE
FORMATION, SIX TO A SIDE. MANY **SOLDIERS** PRECEDE AND FOLLOW THEM.

THE **CROWD** TRIES TO PRESS THROUGH THE **GUARDS** TO TOUCH **OEDIPUS**, TO
TALK TO HIM, TO WARN HIM. **CREON'S GUARDS**, BRUTALLY REPEL THEM. ONE
WOMAN, BREAKING THROUGH THE **GUARDS**, LEERS AND SAY:

The mad Queen will like you.

SHE IS ROUGHLY PULLED AWAY. SOME OF THE **CROWD** CRAWLS ON THEIR KNEES.

OEDIPUS IS SHOCKED AND REPELLED TO SEE BOTH HOW ABJECT AND HOW VIOLENT THESE PEOPLE ARE. SOME OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE CARRY CLUBS OR STICKS, IMPLEMENTS THAT COULD BE USED AS WEAPONS.

THE PROCESSION PASSES THROUGH THE SQUARE OF THE PUBLIC PYRE. THE MEN AND WOMEN, WHO HAVE BEEN CLEANING THE SQUARE AND BUILDING THE NEW PYRE, LEAVE THEIR WORK TO JOIN THE PROCESSION. OEDIPUS GLANCES AROUND THE SQUARE PUZZLED, INTERESTED. HE LOOKS TO ACOMON QUESTIONINGLY, BUT ACOMON IS NOT LOOKING AT HIM.

OEDIPUS: TO ACOMON. HE HAS TO SHOUT:

Who governs this land?

A VOICE IN THE CROWD SCREAMS:

A Sphinx!

ACMON: You will meet her soon.

OEDIPUS: Why do they worship me?

ACMON: You have brought deliverance.

CREON AND CAPTAIN TYRUS WALK DOWN THE CORRIDOR IN THE PALACE. CAPTAIN TYRUS IS NERVOUS. CREON STROLLS, PASSING THE TIME OF DAY.

CREON: It's a wonderful day for a celebration, you can feel the intoxication in the air. Lucky man, whoever he is. Did you ever attempt to answer the riddle?

TYRUS: I applied, but...

CREON: Of course. Well, we have a Hero. Thebes was in need of a Hero.

TYRUS: Your Highness, I must hurry.

CREON: Yes?

You are expected in the throne room. Lord Branchus will give you

instructions.

TYRUS: The Queen...

CREON: I will send soldiers to escort the Queen.

FURTHER DOWN THE HALL, POLYPHONTES HAS COME OUT OF A SIDE PASSAGE AND IS HURRYING AHEAD OF CREON AND CAPTAIN TYRUS.

Polyphontes!

POLYPHONTES STOPS, TURNS, WALKS BACK TO CREON.

What have you there? The Captain will help you with those.

CREON EXAMINES EACH AS HE LIFTS THE GREAT FLAGS AND BUNTING FROM POLYPHONTES ARMS AND GIVES THEM, ONE BY ONE, TO CAPTAIN TYRUS.

Thebes. The Imperial bunting. It's worn. Mine.

HE SMILES AT CAPTAIN TYRUS.

The throne room. You may go.

CREON CONTINUES TO EXAMINE EACH OF THE OTHER FLAGS THAT POLYPHONTES STILL HOLDS. CAPTAIN TYRUS WALKS ON DOWN THE HALL.

IN THE BACKGROUND, DURING THE FOLLOWING, WE SEE ANOTHER SOLDIER APPROACH TYRUS AND TAKE THE FLAGS FROM HIM. THEN THEY BOTH GO UP THE STEPS TO THE THRONE ROOM.

So, the Sphinx is dead. Long live the Hero.

POLYPHONTES: Yes, my Lord.

CREON: Thebes rejoices.

POLYPHONTES: Yes, indeed, my Lord.

CREON: Will the Queen marry the riddle solver?

POLYPHONTES: The people talk of nothing else.

CREON: What do you, you soldiers, think of such a marriage?

UNCOMFORTABLE, POLYPHONTES HESITATES. THEY PASS THE STAIRWAY TO THE THRONE ROOM. POLYPHONTES STOPS, BUT CREON WALKS ON -- AND POLYPHONTES MUST FOLLOW HIM.

POLYPHONTES: We will abide by... the Queen's wishes.

CREON: If he were a stranger... from another land, that would be unfortunate, wouldn't it? Or, again, he might be one of our own people, familiar with our customs and our laws. A friend of the Queen, possibly, or of myself.

POLYPHONTES: Very likely, my Lord.

CREON: Very likely?

POLYPHONTES: I mean, we would wish for such a person to be King.

CREON: If the hero were such a man perhaps a demonstration....

THEY HAVE REACHED THE GREAT FRONT DOORS. AS CREON OPENS ONE OF THEM, WE SEE TEIRESIAS COMING UP THE VAST CEREMONIAL STEPS, LED BY THE BOY.

...a spontaneous demonstration by the Queen's own soldiers.

POLYPHONTES: I understand, my lord.

CREON: Acmon was going to attempt an answer today.

POLYPHONTES: Yes, my Lord.

CREON DISMISSES HIM. POLYPHONTES HURRIES BACK INSIDE. DURING THE FOLLOWING, WE SEE POLYPHONTES AND OTHER SOLDIERS DRAPING THE BALCONY OUTSIDE THE THRONE ROOM WITH THE ROYAL BUNTING AND FLAGS.

CREON MOVES TO THE EDGE OF THE PORCH, AND STANDS BETWEEN THE PILLARS WATCHING THE PROCESSION IN THE DISTANCE, ADVANCING SLOWLY, AND TEIRESIAS IN THE FOREGROUND, MOUNTING THE STEPS. THEN HE STRIDES CHEERFULLY DOWN THE STEPS.

CREON: Teiresias, welcome!

CREON WAVES THE BOY AWAY AND TAKES TEIRESIAS BY THE ARM, HELPING HIM UP A STEP OR TWO. THE BOY LEANS AGAINST THE NEAREST PILLAR. WE SEE HIM IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE FOLLOWING SCENE. HE WATCHES CREON RATHER SULLENLY AND, FROM TIME TO TIME, GLANCES OUT AND UP THE ROAD.

 If you come to announce our good fortune, you are late.

TEIRESIAS: I come, not as a messenger of happiness, but in sadness and in fear.

CREON STOPS AND STOPS TEIRESIAS.

CREON: Sadness? Today? Why, blind Teiresias, if you had eyes you would see the world rejoicing. Listen.

TEIRESIAS: I have come to see the Queen.

CREON: The Sphinx is conquered, the Queen rejoices.

TEIRESIAS: The Sphinx dies, but her death makes fertile the ground for new devastation.

CREON: Is that a new riddle?

TEIRESIAS: We have feared evil, now we must fear love.

CREON: Love?

TEIRESIAS: Where is Jocasta? I must warn her.

BOY: JUMPING FORWARD.

Watch out!

TEIRESIAS HAS STEPPED CLOSE TO THE FRAGMENTS OF THE BROKEN MIRROR. CREON ANGRILY WAVES THE BOY ASIDE AND LEADS TEIRESIAS A FEW STEPS FROM THE GLASS.

TEIRESIAS: What is it?

CREON: There is broken glass on the steps.

TEIRESIAS: What manner of glass?

CREON: A mirror.

TEIRESIAS: What person shall meet death without a soul?

CREON: Is that your warning?

TEIRESIAS: Whose image lies shattered?

CREON: IMPATIENTLY.

Mine, if I look in the fragments.

TEIRESIAS' HEAD JERKS UP. IF HE COULD SEE HE WOULD BE STARING SEARCHINGLY AT CREON. CREON DOES NOT NOTICE THIS. HE IS STANDING ABOVE TEIRESIAS, AND IS LOOKING OUT TOWARD THE CITY. HIS ATTENTION RETURNS TO TEIRESIAS.

What do you want to tell Jocasta?

TEIRESIAS: A man comes into the land preceded by evil omens.

CREON: What man?

TEIRESIAS: Omens that foretell danger for Thebes, tragedy for the Queen, sorrow for the House of Laius.

HAEMON APPEARS AT THE PALACE GATES. THEY ARE OPENED. THE GUARDS SALUTE HAEMON, AND HE STARTS UP THE STEPS.

CREON: The House of Laius is no more, Teiresias. Today the world starts anew.

TEIRESIAS: Time reverses in its course, we must detain the present.

CREON SALUTES HAEMON, AND HE RETURNS THE SALUTE.

CREON: Wonderful day, Haemon!

HAEMON: Indeed it is, Father. Teiresias, we are fortunate.

CREON: Have you been to the west gate?

HAEMON: No.

CREON: Acmon is a courageous man.

HAEMON: Acmon?

HAEMON STUDIES CREON FOR A MOMENT.

Yes.

HAEMON BOWS HIS HEAD SLIGHTLY, THEN CONTINUES UP THE STEPS. THE CAMERA PIVOTS, KEEPING TEIRESIAS AND CREON IN THE FOREGROUND, FOLLOWING HAEMON IN THE BACKGROUND.

HAEMON LOOKS UP, NOTICES THE BALCONY BEING DRAPED. WHEN HE REACHES THE DOOR, HE STOPS, TURNS, WATCHES CREON AND TEIRESIAS FOR A MOMENT. CREON'S BACK IS TO HAEMON. HAEMON CANNOT HEAR THE WORDS OF THE FOLLOWING SCENE, BUT HE SEES CREON'S ANGER.

CREON: Is Acmon the Hero?

TEIRESIAS: Apollo has selected the Hero.

CREON: Of course. If you were to speak in plain words, is it the Hero Jocasta must fear?

TEIRESIAS: This man brings doom to the Queen. Thebes must...

CREON: INTERRUPTING.

Ah, you can speak plainly. Wise Teiresias, you once told me I would inherit the crown.

TEIRESIAS: The present weds with the past; inheritance debars the future.

CREON: Do these omens confirm your prediction?

TEIRESIAS: The days to come lie in darkness.

CREON: Look up there, Teiresias, you can't see the sun. But feel its warmth, feel it.

TEIRESIAS: Your passion to be King of the Thebans will consume itself. It will flame again only in ashes that glow for the dead. The Queen is in danger, I must warn her.

CREON: She doesn't believe in omens!

TEIRESIAS: The Queen is a wise woman, she does not doubt the Gods.

CREON: She curses the Gods. "They've killed my son," she cries. She'll never listen to you.

TEIRESIAS: As her Councilor, and Councilor of her father...

CREON: She calls you a blind fool.

THE TRUMPETS FROM THE PROCESSION SOUND. HAEMON GOES INTO THE PALACE.

Let me give her your warning, Teiresias. She will listen to me. Though you are wise, you lack diplomacy. There is time. But now we must

celebrate.

HE MOTIONS TO THE BOY.

TEIRESIAS: Time runs out, Prince Creon.

CREON: Silence!

CREON WHISPERS TO THE BOY, THEN OFFERS HIM COINS. THE BOY REFUSES AT FIRST, THEN TAKES THEM. CREON ACCOMPANIES TEIRESIAS AND THE BOY DOWN THE STEP. HE MOTIONS FOR GUARDS TO LEAD THEM OUT THROUGH THE GATE. THEN CREON HURRIES UP THE STEPS AND INTO THE PALACE.

THE OUTER ROOM OF JOCASTA'S APARTMENT, KUPIA ENTERS, PAUSES, GOES TO THE CLOSED DOOR OF THE SECOND ROOM, HESITATES.

IN JOCASTA'S BEDROOM THE DOOR BETWEEN THE BEDROOM AND THE SECOND ROOM IS OPEN. APHRON IS HELPING JOCASTA TO DRESS.

APHRON: Lovely, lovely.

JOCASTA: I need a veil.

A KNOCK IS HEARD AT THE DOOR OF THE SECOND ROOM. JOCASTA, ALERT, PAUSES FOR A MOMENT, THEN MOTIONS FOR APHRON TO ANSWER THE DOOR. THE CAMERA MOVES WITH APHRON. SHE OPENS THE DOOR, LETS KUPIA IN, AND QUICKLY SHUTS IT AGAIN.

APHRON: LOOKING AT KUPIA'S CLOTHES. ANGRY.

Where have you been?

KUPIA: Walking in the woods by the west gate.

APHRON: Kupia, that's...

KUPIA: Motherrrrr!

KUPIA IS FORTHRIGHT, INTELLIGENT, FULL OF GAIETY, IMPATIENT WITH

PALACE INTRIGUE AND YOUNG ENOUGH, SHE KNOWS, TO GET AWAY WITH IT.

JOCASTA, STANDING IN THE DOORWAY, IS PUTTING ON PERFUME.

JOCASTA: What were you doing out there?

KUPIA: Hunting.

APHRON: It's against the law to go outside the gates.

KUPIA: TO JOCASTA, SMILING.

I like to hunt. That's not against the law, is it?

APHRON: It ought to be.

JOCASTA: How do you get out?

KUPIA: Oh, I have secret ways. Not even Creon knows.

JOCASTA: AMUSED

Should the Queen chastise you?

KUPIA: PRETTILY

If you don't, I'll give you one of my magic arrows.

SHE OFFERS JOCASTA AN ARROW.

JOCASTA: MUCH AMUSED, ACCEPTS THE ARROW.

Thank you. What is their magic?

KUPIA: Why -- to please a Queen!

JOCASTA LAUGHS, LOOKS AT THE ARROW, THEN TURNS AWAY TO LAY IT ON A TABLE.

JOCASTA: What did you see at the west gate?

KUPIA: I saw the Hero.

JOCASTA MOVES TOWARD HER BEDROOM, KUPIA FOLLOWS HER.

I slipped in at the gates with him. He passed so close I could have touched him -- with an arrow.

TO APHRON SHE WHISPERS:

I did touch him -- for luck.

JOCASTA IS NOW IN HER BEDROOM, THE CAMERA SEES HER FACE IN CLOSE UP.

JOCASTA: What is he like? -- this Hero.

APHRON HOLDS KUPIA BACK, SHE WHISPERS:

APHRON: Be careful what you say. The Queen...

KUPIA: The Queen, Mother? I wish I were the Queen!

SHE PULLS AWAY FROM APHRON AND DARTS INTO JOCASTA'S BEDROOM. WHERE JOCASTA IS SEATED AT HER DRESSING TABLE.

THOUGH KUPIA PAUSES BETWEEN HER LINES DURING THE FOLLOWING, JOCASTA DOES NOT ANSWER NOR LOOK AT HER.

KUPIA: He's young, my Queen. He's not from Thebes.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA'S FACE REFLECTED IN HER DRESSING TABLE MIRROR.

He may be frightened. They're yelling at him. Everyone is shouting.

People are kissing his feet. His clothes are dirty.

JOCASTA: Describe him.

WE SEE JOCASTA, WITH KUPIA BEHIND HER, APHRON IN THE BACKGROUND. KUPIA SMILES.

KUPIA: His hair is pretty -- black -- like yours.

SHE TOUCHES JOCASTA'S HAIR. APHRON IS SHOCKED AND MOVES TO TAKE KUPIA'S HAND AWAY, BUT KUPIA SKIPS OFF.

And curly.

AGAIN, SHE LAUGHS.

His eyes are dark, very dark.

CLOSE UP OF JOCASTA'S DARK EYES WATCHING KUPIA.

And...

JOCASTA AND KUPIA CLOSE UP

...he's handsome. He's tall.

SHE MEASURE HIS HEIGHT WITH HER HANDS.

He might be a soldier.

SHE ADDS SOFTLY.

He limps.

LIGHTHEARTEDLY KUPIA IMITATES OEDIPUS' LIMP

JOCASTA: HAS BEEN LISTENING INTENTLY. NOW, BREAKING HER MOOD, SHE SAY ACIDLY.

The stones of Thebes are very sharp.

KUPIA: THOUGHTFULLY, JOCASTA'S TONE HAS HURT HER.

The Sphinx might have hurt him.

JOCASTA: You may go, Kupia.

Change your clothes.

KUPIA: He's as beautiful as Apollo, Queen Jocasta.

APHRON: Enough!

SHE TRIES TO HURRY KUPIA FROM THE ROOM. BUT KUPIA RESISTS, TAKING HER TIME AND, AGAIN, TRIES TO IMITATE OEDIPUS' WALK.

Hurry.

THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM INTO THE OUTER ROOM KUPIA STOPS TO PICK UP HER BOW.

Hide that! The Queen could have been very angry.

KUPIA: Not today.

SHE RUNS TO THE DOOR, THEN SAYS BEFORE SHE EXITS.

I found some laurel leaves for a crown.

APHRON: Never mind that!

WE RETURN TO JOCASTA AT HER DRESSING TABLE. APHRON RE-ENTERS. SHE PICKS UP A VEIL AND FIXES IT ON JOCASTA'S HEAD.

JOCASTA: She's a sweet child.

APHRON: The Hero's beauty will complement your Majesty's.

JOCASTA: Don't talk to me like a gossiping fool!

APHRON: Forgive me.

JOCASTA: I'm sorry, Aphron, I...

APHRON: My child, I pray only for your happiness.

HAEMON'S VOICE: The Queen is happy, isn't she?

HAEMON ENTERS.

JOCASTA: Haemon.

SMILING, SHE GOES TO HIM. THEY EMBRACE. HE KISSES HER CHEEK.

HAEMON: My aunt is the most beautiful woman in Thebes.

JOCASTA: You are late.

HAEMON: Did you send for me.

JOCASTA: Are my guards coming?

HAEMON: I didn't see them.

JOCASTA: My crown!

SHE LAUGHS NERVOUSLY.

I have forgotten my crown. Get it for me, Haemon, the -- emerald crown.

APHRON: Oh, your Majesty!

JOCASTA: It's in the chest.

HAEMON: HE HOLDS UP A PLAIN CIRCLET OF GOLD.

The imperial crown?

JOCASTA: The emerald crown.

HAEMON LIFTS THE EMERALD CROWN. IT IS EXTRAORDINARILY BEAUTIFUL. HE TURNS IT, ADMIRING IT. THE EMERALDS CATCH THE LIGHT, CASTING A GREEN SHIMMER OVER THE ROOM. FOLLOW IN CLOSE UP AS HAEMON MOVES TO STAND BEHIND JOCASTA. AS HE RAISES THE CROWN WE HEAR THE SOUND OF MARCHING. IN THE BACKGROUND, SOLDIERS APPEAR IN THE DOORWAY. THE FIRST OFFICER STEPS INTO THE ROOM.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA. SHE LIFTS HER HEAD DEFIANTLY.

CAMERA MOVES TO FIRST OFFICER:

OFFICER: Your Majesty.

JOCASTA: My crown, Haemon

HAEMON AND JOCASTA, AS HAEMON PLACES THE CROWN ON HER HEAD.

JOCASTA: Thank you, Lord Haemon.

THEN SHE REMAINS SILENT, FACING THE SOLDIERS.

LONG SHOT, INCLUDING SOLDIERS AND JOCASTA.

OFFICER: We have orders to escort you to the throne room.

JOCASTA: Whose orders?

OFFICER: Prince Creon's

ANGRILY, HAEMON STARTS TOWARD THE SOLDIERS. JOCASTA RESTRAINS HIM.

JOCASTA: Never mind, the Prince will have his way.

JOCASTA WALKS TOWARD THE GUARDS AND OUT OF THE ROOM. THEY SURROUND HER IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE GUARDS SURROUNDED OEDIPUS. THE SIMILARITY SHOULD BE STRIKING. WE WATCH THEM GO DOWN THE CORRIDOR.

HAEMON PUSHES PAST THE GUARDS AND HURRIES DOWN THE HALL.

VIEW FROM THE PALACE PORCH. THE INNER GATES ARE OPENED TO ADMIT OEDIPUS AND THE PROCESSION. FOCUS ON OEDIPUS AS HE ADVANCES TOWARD THE STEPS.

IN THE BACKGROUND THE GATE GUARDS BATTLE TO KEEP THE TOWNSPEOPLE OUT AND RE-CLOSE THE GATES.

OEDIPUS PAUSES, TURNS. HE IS SHOCKED TO SEE THE FIGHTING. HE DESCENDS A STEP OR TWO, BUT THE SOLDIERS BLOCK HIS WAY. HE LOOKS TO ACOMON, WHO SHRUGS HIS HELPLESSNESS. OEDIPUS LOOKS TOWARD THE PALACE.

THE PALACE. THE GREAT DOORS OPEN, AND THE HONOR GUARDS IN ELABORATE COSTUME COME OUT AND DOWN THE STEPS. HAEMON, TOO, APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY, SEARCHING FOR CREON.

HAEMON SEES ACOMON DIRECTING THE HONOR GUARD TO STAND AROUND OEDIPUS. SURPRISED, HE STUDIES OEDIPUS. AFTER WATCHING THE SCENE QUITE CAREFULLY TO BE SURE HE UNDERSTANDS THE SITUATION, HAEMON TURNS AND GOES BACK INTO THE PALACE.

FOCUS ON OEDIPUS SURROUNDED BY THE GUARD OF HONOR. HE ADVANCES A FEW STEPS. THEN HE TURNS ONCE AGAIN TO LOOK AT THE CROWD. THE BATTLE IS OVER, AND THE GATES ARE RE-CLOSED. THE CROWD KNEELS -- FIRST A FEW, THEN MORE AND MORE. OEDIPUS LOOKS QUESTIONINGLY AT ACOMON.

ACMON: To their King.

OEDIPUS IS MOVED AND FRIGHTENED. AFTER A MOMENT, ACOMON TOUCHES HIS ARM, AND THEY PROCEED SLOWLY UP THE STEPS

WE SEE HAEMON AS HE REACHES THE TOP OF THE INSIDE STAIRWAY. HE RUNS DOWN THE CORRIDOR THAT LEADS TO THE THRONE ROOM. HE REACHES THE CLOSED DOORS AND LEANS AGAINST THEM TO CATCH HIS BREATH. THEN HE THROWS THEM OPEN

HAEMON: Father!

INSIDE THE ALREADY CROWDED THRONE ROOM, PREPARATIONS ARE STILL GOING ON. **CREON** IS QUITE A DISTANCE FROM THE DOORWAY, TALKING WITH A GROUP OF **NOBLES**. HE TURNS AT THE SOUND OF **HAEMON'S** VOICE. DISPLEASED, HE MOTIONS TO **HAEMON** BOTH TO BE QUIET AND TO STAY WHERE HE IS. **HAEMON** PUSHES HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD TOWARD **CREON**.

HAEMON: Father!

SHOUTING

Prince Creon!

THE ROOM QUIETS. ALL WATCH **HAEMON** AND **CREON**. **CREON** POINTEDLY LINGERS WITH THE GROUP HE HAS BEEN TALKING TO. BUT LEAVES IN TIME TO MEET **HAEMON** NEAR THE CENTER OF THE ROOM -- OUT OF EARSHOT OF THE OTHERS.

CREON: SMILING, DETERMINED NOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE **HAEMON'S** ANGER

Yes, Haemon, I'm glad to see you. Have you been running?

HE LAUGHS

I feel breathless myself.

HAEMON: HE SPEAKS DISTINCTLY AND VERY LOUDLY.

Jocasta is not a prisoner in this house!

CREON: GESTURES FOR **HAEMON** TO LOWER HIS VOICE, BUT SPEAKS PLEASANTLY.

That is true enough.

HAEMON: Why is she being forced to come here under armed guard?

CREON: WRYLY

Forced? Did she resist?

HAEMON: You think you can...

CREON: INTERRUPTING. A COMMAND, BUT STILL IN A QUIET VOICE.

Calm yourself. Your voice is quite unpleasant when...

HAEMON: By the Gods, I'll...

CREON: You'll stop screeching like a peacock!

THESE ARE THE FIRST WORDS **CREON** HAS SAID LOUD ENOUGH TO BE OVERHEARD. THE **NOBLES** PRETEND TO STOP LISTENING. TURNING TO EACH OTHER, A MURMUR OF TALK BEGINS.

HAEMON: IN A QUIETER, BUT MORE THREATENING TONE.

You may regret your tyranny.

CREON SNORTS CONTEMPTUOUSLY AT HIS THREAT.

Have you seen the Hero?

CREON STUDIES **HAEMON**.

Your scheme hasn't worked, Father.

CREON: Who is he?

HAEMON: I don't know.

CREON: And Acmon?

HAEMON: He is with the Hero.

CREON TURNS ABRUPTLY FROM **HAEMON**, MOTIONS TO A **SOLDER** STANDING NEAR THE DOOR, AND ADVANCES TO MEET HIM.

CREON: Do you know Lord Acmon?

SOLDIER: PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO GIVE THIS ANSWER.

Very well, your Highness.

CREON: He is with the procession. You are to take four men and arrest him -- in the name of the Queen. Take him to prison.

THE SOLDIER IS SURPRISED AND DISMAYED.

HAEMON: LOUDLY. BRINGING THE ATTENTION OF MANY OF THE NOBLES

What is his crime?

CREON: See that he is well guarded.

HAEMON: You are a monster.

IN THE BACKGROUND, JOCASTA AND THOSE GUARDING HER HAVE ENTERED. SHE PAUSES AT THE DOOR, WATCHING. A FEW OF THE NOBLES MAKE PERFUNCTORY ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE QUEEN'S PRESENCE.

CREON: He must speak to no one; he is a traitor to the crown.

SOLDIER: HE HAS NOT SEEN JOCASTA ENTER THE ROOM, BUT, NOT WANTING TO CARRY OUT THE ORDER, HE SAYS:

I must have the Queen's word.

JOCASTA BEGINS TO WALK SLOWLY ACROSS THE ROOM, BUT NOT TOWARD THE SOLDIER AND CREON. CREON SEES HER, BUT NEITHER HIS TONE NOR HIS MANNER CHANGE. HE TAKES HIS DAGGER FROM ITS SHEATH AND OFFERS IT TO THE SOLDIER.

CREON: Give this to the warden.

SOLDIER: HE SEES THE QUEEN.

The Queen must...

CREON: HE REVERSES THE OFFERED DAGGER FROM HILT TO BLADE OUT AND SAYS QUIETLY:

You might find cause to use this on yourself.

HE THEN OFFERS THE HILT AGAIN. THE **SOLDIER** TAKES IT, SIGNALS TO **FOUR OTHER SOLDIERS** AND TOGETHER THEY ALL EXIT.

HAEMON: You are a butcher!

HE TURNS FROM **CREON** AND STARTS TOWARD **JOCASTA**. **CREON** DETAINS HIM.

CREON: If he lived, he might be indiscreet.

HAEMON: Would you kill me, too? Father.

If you could kill Jocasta's son, I don't suppose your own would be very different.

HAEMON WALKS AWAY.

CREON: Haemon!

HAEMON: FACING **CREON** AGAIN

Our new king may challenge your decrees.

CREON: Be silent.

CREON TURNS AWAY FROM **HAEMON**.

FOCUS ON **JOCASTA**, WHO HAS CROSSED THE THRONE ROOM AND NOW STANDS ON THE STEPS LEADING TO THE BALCONY.

JOCASTA: TO A NOBLE

Whose death has Creon commanded?

NOBLE: IN MOCK ASTONISHMENT.

Madame?

JOCASTA: The Prince gave his dagger to that soldier.

NOBLE: I think you are mistaken.

HE MOVES AWAY.

LORD DYMAS, WHO HAS BEEN STANDING NEARBY, MOVES TO THE QUEEN AND SAYS SOFTLY.

DYMAS: Acmon, my Lady.

JOCASTA: GENUINELY SURPRISED.

Why? He's Creon's friend.

DYMAS: My Queen, challenge the order, demand the reason.

JOCASTA: Are you my friend?

DYMAS: You are my Queen.

JOCASTA: LAUGHING SOFTLY, BITTERLY:

The Queen does not dare to challenge her brother.

HAEMON COMES UP TO JOCASTA, TAKES HER HAND.

HAEMON: Challenge him.

JOCASTA: Show me which of these men would back me if I did

TO LORD DYMAS

If your advice is well meant, and you are my friend, I think you are the

only one among my Nobles.

CREON, FROM SOME DISTANCE AWAY BECKONS TO LORD DYMAS.

CREON: Lord Dymas.

JOCASTA SMILES AT LORD DYMAS, AND NODS. SHE AND HAEMON GO UP THE STEPS AND STAND BY THE BALCONY DOORS, LOOKING OUT. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS DYMAS.

DYMAS: Your Highness?

CREON: You will stand at the door to announce the Hero.

DYMAS: Very well, your Highness.

HE WALKS TOWARD THE DOOR. CREON TURNS TO ANOTHER NOBLE.

CREON: Stand with him. If there is any trouble...

HE NODS TOWARD AN OFFICER OF THE GUARD.

Menieus is at your command.

CREON MOVES TOWARD THE BALCONY.

FOCUS ON JOCASTA AND HAEMON.

HAEMON: He sent Acmon to answer the riddle.

JOCASTA: But it is a stranger.

CREON HAS COME UP TO THEM.

CREON: INDICATING THE CROWN AND JOCASTA'S GARMENTS

What's this? And this? Are you Aphrodite's priestess today? The state robes would have been more suitable.

HAEMON: INTERRUPTING

Where's Teiresias?

CREON: Teiresias? He was ill, I sent him home.

JOCASTA: I thought the Gods granted him not only wisdom, but perpetual health.

CREON: He's a very old man.

JOCASTA: And a kind one. I wish he were here.

A FANFARE OF TRUMPETS IS HEARD FROM OUTSIDE. **OEDIPUS** IS ABOUT TO ENTER THE PALACE.

CREON: No doubt he will recover.

HE TURNS FROM **JOCASTA** AND **HAEMON**, AND STARTS DOWN THE STEPS.

THE FRONT OF THE PALACE FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE **CROWD** AT THE GATES. THE WHOLE **PROCESSION** IS READY ON THE STEPS. THE TRUMPETS CONTINUE TO SOUND. THE DOORS OPEN. ABOVE, ON THE BALCONY, BUT UNNOTICED BY THE CROWD, STANDS **JOCASTA**, **HAEMON** BEHIND HER, BOTH ALL BUT OBSCURED BY THE BALCONY BALUSTRADE. **OEDIPUS** DOES NOT SEE THEM. THE PROCESSION STARTS TO MOVE.

FOCUS ON **OEDIPUS** ENTERING THE PALACE. HE LOOKS AROUND. **ACMON** IS AMUSED AND PLEASED THAT **OEDIPUS** IS IMPRESSED.

OEDIPUS: IN A HUSHED VOICE.

It's rather awful... frightening.

HE SMILES UNCERTAINLY AT **ACMON**. **ACMON** RETURNS THE SMILE.

And cold.

ACMON'S GRUNT OF LAUGHTER SHOWS HE GRIMLY AGREES.

Were your architects hired from Hades?

ACMON LAUGHS ALOUD. HE AND OEDIPUS WALK OUT OF CAMERA RANGE. WE LINGER FOR A MOMENT ON THE PROCESSION PASSING BY.

DISSOLVE TO THE TOP OF THE INSIDE STAIRWAY. THE FRONT OF THE PROCESSION IS ASCENDING. A LINE OF GUARDS MARCHES UP EITHER SIDE OF THE STAIRWAY, IN THE MIDDLE: ACMON AND OEDIPUS.

ACMON: When you come into the Queen's presence, you must kneel.

OEDIPUS: LIGHTLY.

One knee? Two knees? My heart may stop before I need to know.

ACMON: LAUGHING. HE'S ALREADY FOND OF OEDIPUS AND HUMOR IS RARE IN THE PALACE.

On your right knee. She'll ask you to rise.

OEDIPUS: Which only a God would be capable of doing.

ACMON: You say, "I kneel to the Sovereign Queen of all Thebes." She'll ask you to rise again. Then...

THE SOLDIERS TO ARREST ACMON STAND BLOCKING THE TOP OF THE STEPS, FORCING ACMON AND OEDIPUS TO STOP.

Yes?

ACMON IS ANNOYED. THEN, SUDDENLY, A NOTE OF FEAR IS MIXED WITH HIS ANGER.

What is it? Stand aside.

SOLDIER: You are under arrest -- by order of the Queen.

ACMON: For what?

SOLDIER: You are not to speak.

OEDIPUS: Arrest?

HE TRIES TO STEP BETWEEN THE SOLDIERS AND ACOMON, BUT ONE OF THE HONOR GUARD LOWERS A LANCE IN FRONT OF HIM.

CLOSE UP OF ACOMON -- THEN FOLLOWING HIS GLANCE:

CLOSE UP OF THE DAGGER IN THE SOLDIER'S HAND.

ACMON'S VOICE:

I have seen that before...

CLOSE UP OF THE SOLDIER'S FACE, HE LOWERS HIS EYES -- GUILTILY.

...in the hands of a dead man's guard.

CLOSE UP ACOMON, RESIGNED, DEFEATED.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS. HORRIFIED

OEDIPUS: The Queen...

ONE OF THE GUARDS LEANS INTO THE FRAME CLOSE TO OEDIPUS AND WHISPERS:

GUARD: ...eats up little riddle solvers like you.

OEDIPUS' HEAD JERKS ROUND TO STARE AT THE GUARD.

CLOSE UP ACOMON AND OEDIPUS.

ACMON DOES NOT HEAR THE GUARD. HIS WORDS TO OEDIPUS, IN A DESPERATE WHISPER, ARE ALMOST SIMULTANEOUS WITH THE GUARD'S

ACMON Not the Queen! Creon. Creon.

OEDIPUS TURNS TO ACOMON, CONFUSED, AFRAID.

SOLDIER: TO ACOMON

You must be silent.

IT IS A COMMAND. BUT HIS SYMPATHY IS WITH ACOMON. THE SOLDIERS LEAD ACOMON BACK DOWN THE STEPS. HE DOES NOT RESIST. OEDIPUS WATCHES THEM GO. THE PROCESSION PARTS TO MAKE WAY. THE EXPRESSIONS OF GOOD HUMOR THAT HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO THE GUARDS' FACES BY ACOMON'S AND OEDIPUS' LAUGHTER CHANGE TO FEAR -- BOTH OF AND FOR ACOMON.

A GUARD TOUCHES OEDIPUS' SHOULDER. OEDIPUS TURNS, BUT DOES NOT PROCEED.

OEDIPUS: Why?

OEDIPUS LOOKS FROM FACE TO FACE, BUT NO ONE MEETS HIS GLANCE. HE LOOKS AT THE GREAT DOORS AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR

OFFICER OF THE HONOR GUARD:

We must proceed.

AS THE GUARDS START TO MOVE, WE PULL OUT TO INCLUDE OEDIPUS. HE WALKS VERY SLOWLY, TROUBLED, RELUCTANT.

OEDIPUS' POV. AS THE PROCESSION REACHES THE DOORS, THE CAMERA MOVES IN TO CONCENTRATE ON THE CLOSED DOORS. THEY ARE CARVED WITH A SERPENT DESIGN. THE CAMERA ANGLE POINTS UP THE SINISTER, PRIMITIVE QUALITY OF THE DESIGN. THOUGH WE HAVE SEEN THESE DOORS SEVERAL TIMES, NOW IT IS THROUGH OEDIPUS' EYES WE STUDY THEM. THEY SWING OPEN VERY SLOWLY. OEDIPUS ENTERS THE THRONE ROOM AND STOPS JUST INSIDE THE DOORWAY. DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF HIM, ACROSS THE ROOM, IS THE THRONE, UNOCCUPIED. CREON STANDS BESIDE IT, FACING OEDIPUS. THE QUEEN IS STILL IN THE BALCONY DOORWAY, HER BACK TO THE ROOM. HAEMON TURNS AT THIS MOMENT AND SEES OEDIPUS.

THE **NOBLES** STAND AT EITHER SIDE OF THE ROOM. THERE ARE **SOLDIERS** LINING THE WALLS IN A DOUBLE ROW. THOSE IN **CREON'S** UNIFORM IN FRONT, THOSE IN **JOCASTA'S** BEHIND. **LORD DYMAS** STANDS TO THE RIGHT NEAR THE DOORS.

DYMAS: ANNOUNCING.

The Hero of Thebes. He whom the Gods have sent to solve the riddle of the Sphinx. He whom the Gods have sent to save our land.

AS HE MAKES THE ANNOUNCEMENT, HE LOOKS FROM **OEDIPUS** TO THE **QUEEN**.

CREON TAKES A STEP FORWARD.

JOCASTA IS AT CENTER TOP OF SCREEN, ON THE LANDING OF THE STEPS. **HAEMON** IS TO HER LEFT, SEVERAL STEPS DOWN. THE THRONE IS TO THE RIGHT OF **JOCASTA**, AND **CREON** TO THE RIGHT OF THE THRONE.

OEDIPUS' HEAD AND SHOULDERS ARE IN THE LOWER LEFT OF THE SCREEN. **LORD DYMAS** IN THE RIGHT FOREGROUND, FURTHER BACK THAN **OEDIPUS**.

THE WHOLE SCENE IS FRAMED BY THE OPEN THRONE ROOM DOORS. **JOCASTA**, **HAEMON** AND **CREON** ARE FRAMED BY THE BALCONY DOORS. EVERYONE IS MOTIONLESS.

THEN **JOCASTA** TURNS SLOWLY, PAUSES A MOMENT, STANDS STILL, LOOKING AT **OEDIPUS**.

SHE BEGINS TO DESCEND THE STEPS.

CLOSE UP OF **OEDIPUS**, SURPRISED AND WONDERING, HE WATCHES HER INTENTLY.

JOCASTA AND **OEDIPUS**. **JOCASTA** MOTIONS FOR HIM TO ADVANCE. THEY MOVE SLOWLY TOWARD EACH OTHER

CLOSE UP **OEDIPUS**. IT'S AS IF HE WERE HYPNOTIZED BY HER. HIS LIPS PART.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA. SHE SPEAKS SOFTLY.

JOCASTA: The Hero?

BOTH HAVE STOPPED MOVING. THEY STAND SEVERAL YARDS APART. THERE IS SILENCE THROUGHOUT THE THRONE ROOM.

OEDIPUS KNEELS, WITHOUT TAKING HIS EYES FROM HER. THEN HE BOWS HIS HEAD.

OEDIPUS: Your Majesty.

JOCASTA: GENTLY

You are very young.

PAUSE. OEDIPUS LOOKS UP AT HER.

You have outwitted the Sphinx.

And killed it. Is that true?

FROM BEHIND AND ABOVE JOCASTA, WE SEE THE BACK OF HER CROWNED HEAD AS SHE LOOKS DOWN AT OEDIPUS' UPTURNED FACE. THE EMERALDS OF THE SERPENT CROWN MOVE SLIGHTLY WITH EACH OF HER MOVEMENTS, CAUSING REFLECTED POINTS OF GREEN LIGHT TO DANCE ACROSS OEDIPUS' FACE DURING THE FOLLOWING.

OEDIPUS LOOKS DIRECTLY AT JOCASTA AND SPEAKS VERY QUIETLY, A LITTLE PUZZLED, WONDERINGLY. HIS WORDS ARE NOT HESITANT, BUT ARE SLOWED DOWN TO A DREAM LIKE PACE.

HE IS AS HYPNOTIZED BY JOCASTA AS HE WAS BY THE SPHINX. HOWEVER, THIS SUGGESTION OF A RE-ENACTMENT OF HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE SPHINX MUST REMAIN SUBTLE.

OEDIPUS: A winged creature, with the head of a woman, threatened my life. She said she would kill me if I did not solve her riddle. I solved it. And she.... She... She acknowledged it with a terrible laugh and then, screaming, she flung

herself from the high rock on which she stood and died at my feet. If that was the Sphinx, then the Sphinx is dead

JOCASTA: Were you....

Frightened?

OEDIPUS: Frightened?

I don't know, your Majesty.

I don't think I was.

CLOSE UP OF JOCASTA. THIS SEEMS TO PLEASE HER. SHE SMILES.

JOCASTA: Indeed?

Perhaps our fear has exaggerated this monster.

A TWO SHOT OF JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS.

JOCASTA: GESTURES

Rise.

OEDIPUS STANDS UP.

What is your name?

OEDIPUS: Oedipus.

JOCASTA: AMUSED, SMILING, ALMOST LAUGHING.

Oedipus? That's a peculiar name, isn't it?

THE INTENSITY BETWEEN THEM IS BROKEN FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO INCLUDE MORE OF THE ROOM. IN THE BACKGROUND WE SEE A FEW OF THE NOBLES ARE ALSO AMUSED.

OEDIPUS: SERIOUSLY.

It doesn't seem strange to me.

JOCASTA: SOBERED.

Of course.

What was the answer?

OEDIPUS: PUZZLED, AS IF JUST WAKING.

Forgive me, your Majesty. What answer?

JOCASTA: The riddle of the Sphinx. What was the answer?

OEDIPUS: Man.

JOCASTA: Man? I see. That wasn't very difficult, was it?

OEDIPUS: No.

JOCASTA: But it's charming.

CREON STEPS FORWARD. HIS WORDS SHATTER THE SPELL THAT HAS ISOLATED JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS.

CREON: A rather simple answer. No doubt, to a simple riddle.

OEDIPUS: Is it? -- for men not free to live as men?

THE PEOPLE IN THE ROOM ARE STARTLED BY OEDIPUS' CHALLENGE.

CREON: I do not understand your meaning.

OEDIPUS: Are you Creon?

CREON: I am.

OEDIPUS: Then you know what I mean.

JOCASTA TAKES A STEP FORWARD, FRIGHTENED.

JOCASTA: Clever Oedipus. I'm not surprised that the Sphinx fell dead at your feet.

Tell me the riddle -- that brought death to so many.

OEDIPUS: Don't you know the riddle, my Queen?

JOCASTA: Only those who've spoken with the Sphinx know the riddle -- and they are dead.

OEDIPUS: TO CREON

Perhaps you know the riddle.

CREON: If you wish to play games, the time is ill chosen.

OEDIPUS: In Thebes, is death a game? Answer the riddle of one man's death: Lord Acmon.

A CURRENT OF SHOCK RUNS THROUGH THE ROOM.

Why do you want him killed?

CREON: You are a presumptuous boy.

OEDIPUS: LOUDER

I would like an answer.

CREON: I advise you to curb your curiosity.

OEDIPUS: I want to understand your Theban justice.

CREON: The functioning of our law does not require your sanction, nor your understanding.

OEDIPUS: He was sent to answer the riddle, but I had already answered it. Of what is he guilty? Of being late? Is that a capital crime in Thebes?

HAEMON: STEPS FORWARD, CAUTIONING.

Crimes abound in Thebes.

OEDIPUS: GLANCES AT **HAEMON**, BUT TURNS AGAIN TO **CREON**.

Creon...

CREON: I am Prince of this House.

OEDIPUS: Your Highness...

CLOSE UP JOCASTA. HER VOICE IS NOT LOUD, BUT IN THE QUIET, TENSE ATMOSPHERE IT SOUNDS LIKE A SCREAM.

JOCASTA: Oedipus!

LONG SHOT. CREON TURNS TOWARD JOCASTA, ANGRY. SHE DRAWS BACK IN FRIGHT. CREON LOOKS AGAIN AT OEDIPUS, SMILING.

CREON: The decrees of the Queen are not for you to question.

OEDIPUS: TO **JOCASTA**.

Was it your decree?

JOCASTA STARES AT HIM, SHAKING HER HEAD A LITTLE, MORE IN FEAR OF HIS RECKLESSNESS THAN IN DENIAL OF HIS QUESTION.

CREON: Jocasta!

Was it your decree?

Does not the Queen hold the power of life and death in this house.

HE TURNS FROM JOCASTA. ONE HAND RESTS ON HIS SWORD. HE

IS ABOUT TO SIGNAL TO THE GUARD.

HAEMON: IN A FIERCE WHISPER.

No! Father...!

JOCASTA: WATCHING CREON, SHE BEGINS TO SPEAK IN A QUIET, DEAD VOICE. SHE TURNS TO OEDIPUS AS SHE SPEAKS.

It was an unfortunate introduction to our court. I beg you to let it pass without further comment.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS, STARING AT THE QUEEN, SURPRISED.

OEDIPUS: Your Majesty...

CLOSE UP CREON

CREON: Enough! Your impudence is astonishing.

A FALTERING ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE TRUMPETS COMES IN OVER CREON'S WORDS. HIS HEAD JERKS UP TO STARE PAST OEDIPUS TOWARD THE DOOR.

A LONG SHOT, TOWARD THE TRUMPETERS WHO STAND BY THE THRONE ROOM DOOR. KUPIA HAS PERSUADED ONE OF THEM TO MAKE THIS SALUTE. BUT THE TRUMPETER, A YOUNG LAD, NERVOUS WITH HIS OWN COURAGE, MAKES ONLY A SHY, OFF KEY SOUND, AND BREAKS OFF AS EVERYONE TURNS TO STARE AT HIM -- AND AT KUPIA, WHO STANDS IN THE DOORWAY BEARING A LAUREL WREATH ON A PILLOW. THE TENSION IN THE ROOM IS BROKEN. SOME LAUGH.

KUPIA IS IN COMPLETE COMMAND OF HERSELF. POISED, INNOCENT, SMILING, SHE WALKS STRAIGHT TO JOCASTA AND KNEELS. SHE EXTENDS THE PILLOW WITH THE WREATH ON IT. JOCASTA LOOKS AT KUPIA IN DUMB AMAZEMENT.

KUPIA: BRIGHT-EYED AND MISCHIEVOUS, WHISPERS

The Laurels of Victory, for the Hero.

JOCASTA, REGAINING HER COMPOSURE, TAKES UP THE WREATH. SHE TURNS TO OEDIPUS. KUPIA STEPS ASIDE. JOCASTA RAISES HER HANDS, MOVES TO OEDIPUS, AND PLACES THE WREATH ON HIS HEAD. SHE SLOWLY LOWERS HER HANDS, THEN STEPS BACK. AGAIN THEY ARE ISOLATED IN THE SPELL OF THEIR MUTUAL ATTRACTION.

JOCASTA: We Thebans... present... the Laurel Crown... to you. To...

SHE BREAKS OFF, HESITATES, LOOKS BACK TO EITHER SIDE. HAEMON AND CREON STAND TOGETHER TO HER RIGHT. SHE CONTINUES.

Thank him, thank him for me. Reward him. I... Please.

SHE GOES QUICKLY OUT ONTO THE BALCONY. WE HEAR A CHEER FORM THE CROWD. CREON RESTRAINS HAEMON, WHO TRIES TO STEP FORWARD.

CREON: In the name of the city of Thebes, in the name of the Theban Council, in my name, and in that of Queen Jocasta, Sovereign of all this Land, I offer you our gratitude and gold, as was promised, a hundred weight in gold, for answering the riddle of the Sphinx.

HE MOTIONS TO A PAGE WHO HAS BEEN STANDING NEARBY HOLDING A TRAY HEAPED WITH GOLD COINS.

This is but a token, the rest is held for your demand in our treasury.

THE PAGE STEPS FORWARD AND KNEELS. OEDIPUS LOOKS AT THE GOLD, AND SMILES. HE TURNS FROM LOOKING AT THE GOLD TO LOOK AT CREON AGAIN.

OEDIPUS: Thank you, your Highness.

HE PICKS UP SOME OF THE COINS AND LETS THEM DROP THROUGH HIS FINGERS.

I had heard of a fabulous reward, as I walked through your streets.

CLOSE UP CREON, TENSELY WATCHING OEDIPUS.

You are most generous.

CREON GIVES A CURT NOD, THEN TURNS AND GOES OUT ONTO THE BALCONY TO JOIN JOCASTA.

A MEDIUM SHOT FROM BEHIND OEDIPUS. HE MOTIONS FOR THE PAGE TO STEP BACK. HE IS ABOUT TO FOLLOW CREON, BUT HAEMON STEPS FORWARD. JOCASTA AND CREON CAN BE SEEN ARGUING IN THE BACKGROUND.

HAEMON: I, as head of the Theban Council, wish to add my thanksgiving to that of Prince Creon. We owe you more than gold...

CUT TO A REVERSE SHOT OF JOCASTA AND CREON ON THE BALCONY. BEHIND THEM, HAEMON'S BACK, AND BEYOND HIM, OEDIPUS, WATCHING JOCASTA. HAEMON'S SPEECH CONTINUES.

...for delivering us from the Sphinx. You have brought freedom, salvation and hope. We bid you welcome...

CREON: ...insolent puppy, foolish and dangerous. You will bring this quickly to an end.

JOCASTA: Are you afraid of him, Creon?

SHE LAUGHS RATHER HYSTERICALLY.

FOCUS ON HAEMON AND OEDIPUS.

HAEMON: CONTINUES:

...and beg you to remain in our city. Consider the gold but partial payment. If there is anything more you desire, ask, and if it is within our power, it will be our pleasure to grant your wish.

AGAIN WE HEAR JOCASTA'S LAUGHTER.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS. HE CONTINUES TO WATCH JOCASTA, SPEAKS ABSENTLY.

OEDIPUS: Thank you, my Lord. I have been traveling for a long time.

THEN, DIRECTLY TO HAEMON:

I am grateful for your kindness. I humbly accept your offer of hospitality.

AGAIN HIS ATTENTION IS ATTRACTED TO THE BALCONY.

JOCASTA AND CREON. SHE MOVES AWAY FROM CREON AND COMES TO THE BALCONY DOORWAY.

JOCASTA: Come here, handsome Oedipus. Show yourself to the people.

LONG SHOT, INCLUDING JOCASTA, HAEMON, OEDIPUS AND CREON, WHO HAS ENTERED FROM THE BALCONY. OEDIPUS HESITATES.

JOCASTA ADDS GENTLY:

Come, don't be afraid. You can stand here, beside me.

SHE OFFERS HER HAND. OEDIPUS STILL HESITATES

HAEMON: Take her hand.

OEDIPUS TAKES THE QUEEN'S HAND AND THEY GO OUT ONTO THE BALCONY. WE HEAR A GREAT SHOUT, REVERBERATING APPLAUSE FROM THE CROWD. THE CAMERA REMAINS FOCUSED ON HAEMON. CREON COMES UP TO HIM.

CREON: That was foolish.

HAEMON: Listen to the people, Father.

The Queen will marry Oedipus.

CREON GIVES A SHORT CONTEMPTUOUS LAUGH AND WALKS AWAY FROM HAEMON.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE CROWD CHEERING.

LONG SHOT OF JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS ON THE BALCONY, THE CROWD IN THE FOREGROUND.

JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS LOOKING AT EACH OTHER. THEN JOCASTA LOOKS OUT AT THE PEOPLE; OEDIPUS CONTINUES TO WATCH HER.

JOCASTA: They're in love with you.

OEDIPUS: A riddle solver?

JOCASTA: A Hero. Who knows?

SHE SMILES, TURNING TO HIM.

Perhaps a God.

OEDIPUS: RETURNING HER SMILE.

No. A man.

A SHOT FROM ABOVE AND BEHIND OEDIPUS. JOCASTA IS LOOKING DOWN TOWARD THE CHEERING CROWD. AMONG THE SHOUTS WE HEAR AGAIN AND AGAIN:

“Long Live The King!”

TWO SHOT OF JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS,

OEDIPUS: Why did you assume Creon's guilt?

JOCASTA: It belongs to all our House.

OEDIPUS: Acmon was kind to me.

HAEMON COMES TO STAND AT THE DOOR OF THE BALCONY. A LIGHT WIND BLOWS JOCASTA'S VEIL ACROSS HER FACE. OEDIPUS LIFTS IT BACK. SHE SMILES AT HIM. OEDIPUS LETS HIS HAND REST ON HER SHOULDER. HAEMON WATCHES THEM.

OEDIPUS NODS TOWARD CREON

Who is he?

JOCASTA: Prince Creon?

My brother.

OEDIPUS WITHDRAWS HIS HAND. HAEMON COMES FORWARD TO STAND BESIDE JOCASTA. HAEMON SMILES AT HER, BUT SHE DOES NOT RETURN HIS SMILE.

HAEMON: TO **OEDIPUS:**

The Laurels of Victory suit you.

OEDIPUS: Any man is pleased to receive them.

HAEMON: TO **JOCASTA:**

Did you tell Kupia to bring it?

JOCASTA: No.

HAEMON AND JOCASTA LAUGH. OEDIPUS IS OFFENDED AND IS ABOUT TO TAKE OFF THE WREATH. HAEMON STEPS IN FRONT OF JOCASTA TO STOP HIM.

HAEMON: Those leaves saved your life. You must be cautious.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SHOW THAT MANY OF THE NOBLES HAVE COME ONTO THE BALCONY. OEDIPUS LOOKS FROM HAEMON TO JOCASTA, TO THOSE SURROUNDING HIM, AND SAYS NOTHING.

CREON WALKING ACROSS THE THRONE ROOM, HE PAUSES BY KUPIA.

CREON: Who told you to bring that thing?

KUPIA: The good God Apollo and by good sense.

CREON: You are a little serpent.

HE PINCHES HER CHEEK. WITH A GRIMACE OF DISTASTE, SHE BACKS AWAY.

CREON WALKS ON. SHE CALLS AFTER HIM.

KUPIA: I had a hard time finding them.

CREON SHRUGS AND WALKS ON. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM AS HE APPROACHES A GROUP OF NOBLES. THEY STOP TALKING. CREON LOOKS AT THEM. THEN HE TURNS SO THAT THEY ALL STAND FACING THE BALCONY.

A SHOT FROM BEHIND CREON'S GROUP TOWARD THE BALCONY.

CREON: Do you know him?

NO ONE DOES.

A hero?

CREON TURNS TO A NOBLE.

Have the rooms in the north wing readied.

THE NOBLE NODS AND EXITS.

A TIGHT SHOT OF THE GROUP AS CREON TURNS TO ANOTHER NOBLE.

CREON: Well, Branchus, what do you think of him.

BRANCHUS: Young... arrogant...

THERE IS A LOUD SHOUT FROM THE CROWD. BOTH BRANCHUS AND CREON LOOK TOWARD THE BALCONY FOR A MOMENT.

...potentially a threat, but...

CREON NODS.

CREON: Teiresias has already denounced him. But his mumblings won't convince everyone. We'll need...

THERE IS ANOTHER SHOUT.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA AND HAEMON ENTERING FROM THE BALCONY. THEY ARE ALL LAUGHING.

JOCASTA: To hear such joy! Haemon, we ought ot have an annual riddle contest!

OEDIPUS: With the answer always the same.

JOCASTA: Yes. Or woman.

OEDIPUS' FACE SOBERS. HE LOOKS AT SOMEONE ACROSS THE ROOM.

OEDIPUS POV. HE IS LOOKING AT POLYPHONTES, WHO IS HALF TURNED AWAY, TALKING TO A SOLDIER.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS, FROWNING, HE LOOKS INTENTLY AT OTHER FACES IN THE ROOM.

JOCASTA'S VOICE:

Did you come from far away to save our city?

OEDIPUS: I didn't come to rescue Thebes.

HIS GLANCE RETURNS TO POLYPHONTES

I didn't even know I had until I met Lord Acmon.

THEN HE LOOKS AT JOCASTA.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA

JOCASTA: You might have turned back and gone another way.

OEDIPUS: Yes. I wonder.

JOCASTA: We always act in darkness.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS.

We act as we can. It is only in reflection, that a man is called a hero, or...

OEDIPUS: Or?

CLOSE UP JOCASTA.

JOCASTA: I don't know.

SHE SMILES.

WIDE VIEW OF THE THRONE ROOM, CREON AND NOBLES IN THE FOREGROUND.

NOBLE: Your offer is enticing.

CREON: See that my generosity is taxed.

BRANCHUS: Yes, my Lord.

CREON STARTS TOWARD OEDIPUS AND JOCASTA.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA AND HAEMON.

JOCASTA: **CLAPS HER HANDS:**

Lord Dymas, prepare quarters for our Hero.

CREON: I will show the Hero to his rooms.

JOCASTA: As you wish. Make him comfortable.

LOOKING AT OEDIPUS.

Oedipus will be our guest for as long as he wishes.

OEDIPUS: I humbly thank you, most gracious of Queens.

JOCASTA: You may go.

OEDIPUS MAKES A SLIGHT BOW AND STEPS AWAY FROM HER. CREON WALKS WITH HIM TOWARD THE DOOR. WANTING TO DETAIN HIM, SHE ASKS:

You are limping. Are the stones of Thebes so cruel?

OEDIPUS: No, my Lady.

JOCASTA: Did the Sphinx hurt you?

OEDIPUS: SMILING.

No.

JOCASTA: Do you always limp?

OEDIPUS: It's the reason for my peculiar name.

JOCASTA: Oh.

OEDIPUS: I was injured in an accident long ago.

JOCASTA: Did you have a different name before that?

OEDIPUS: I don't remember.

HAEMON: Perhaps one of our Theban doctors can correct the misfortune.

OEDIPUS: I wish it were possible.

LONG SHOT INCLUDING OEDIPUS, CREON AND JOCASTA.

JOCASTA: All things are possible.

CREON: Come.

CREON TAKES OEDIPUS' ARM. OEDIPUS PULLS AWAY, BUT JOCASTA NODS. OEDIPUS THEN TURNS, GOES WITH CREON. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK BEFORE THEM. CREON SIGNALS TO A GROUP OF GUARDS TO FOLLOW THEM AS THEY LEAVE THE THRONE ROOM. THEY TURN LEFT, OUT OF CAMERA RANGE.

THE CAMERA REMAINS AT THE DOOR OF THE THRONE ROOM, LOOKING TOWARD JOCASTA.

JOCASTA: All of you, you may go.

HAEMON: Since the court is gathered...

JOCASTA: No.

You may go.

THE NOBLES BEGIN TO DISPERSE.

OEDIPUS AND CREON WALK DOWN THE WIDE HALL. THEY ARE FOLLOWED BY SIX GUARDS: TWO OF CREON'S SOLDIERS, FOUR OF JOCASTA'S -- ONE OF WHOM IS POLYPHONTES.

IN THE BACKGROUND, NOBLES, SOLDIERS, ETC. COME OUT OF THE THRONE ROOM AND GO IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. SOME FOLLOW OEDIPUS AND CREON AT A DISTANCE, BEFORE TURNING OFF INTO SIDE CORRIDORS.

CREON: I hope you're not in pain.

OEDIPUS: I'm quite used to it.

CREON: Where are you from?

OEDIPUS: Another land.

CREON: SMILING:

I could wish for a more specific answer.

OEDIPUS: I cannot give you a more specific answer.

CREON: Have you been traveling alone?

OEDIPUS: Alone.

CREON: And unarmed?

OEDIPUS: Unarmed.

CREON: That's perhaps foolish in this barren land. There are bandits on the highways.

Do you always travel that way?

OEDIPUS: Your Highness?

CREON: Alone and unarmed.

OEDIPUS: I have no cause to carry weapons.

CREON: Of course. Thebes is a land of peace.

OEDIPUS: But not prosperous.

CREON: You are very outspoken.

OEDIPUS: I saw people in rags.

CREON: Any state has its beggars.

THEY TURN A CORNER, WALK DOWN ANOTHER CORRIDOR.

OEDIPUS: Would a prosperous land offer its Queen as a prize for riddle solving?

CREON: I have heard such a rumor myself.

OEDIPUS: Your people seem to welcome the idea.

CREON: They talk of many things.

AFTER A MOMENT, CREON CONTINUES GOOD-NATUREDLY.

A hundred weight in gold is not a small sum. Kingdoms have been

purchased for less.

OEDIPUS LOOKS AT HIM, BUT DOES NOT SPEAK. CREON SMILES.

You're an intractable lad.

THEY HAVE REACHED THE ROOMS IN THE NORTH WING.

We'll find time to become better acquainted.

FOCUS ON THE DOOR, AS ONE OF THE GUARDS OPENS IT. THE CAMERA MOVES INTO THE ROOM

I hope you will be comfortable.

OEDIPUS ENTERS THE ROOM AND LOOKS AROUND. THESE ROOMS ARE MORE SUMPTUOUSLY FURNISHED THAN THE OTHER ROOMS OF THE PALACE. BUT ELABORATE AND COMFORTABLE FURNISHING ONLY PARTIALLY CONCEAL THE FACT THAT THE ROOMS SERVE AS A PRISON. OEDIPUS OPENS A DOOR INTO A SECOND ROOM WHERE THERE ARE NO WINDOWS. THE CAMERA STUDIES THE ROOMS, AS CREON CONTINUES:

There are games for your amusement, manuscripts if you read, some works of our craftsmen -- though they say our art is less than when my father was alive.

OEDIPUS TURNS TO LOOK AT CREON.

CLOSE UP CREON. HE HAS REMAINED AT THE HALL DOOR, HE CONTINUES:

He ruled this land before King Laius. There was prosperity in the land in those days -- for awhile. He was a wise man, and unhappy. He killed himself to appease the Gods. Out there, near the east gate of Thebes...

CREON CROSSES TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT.

...he jumped from the battlements.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS. HE IS PUZZLED BY THIS INFORMATION, AND WARY.

CLOSE UP CREON AS HE STANDS BEFORE THE BARRED WINDOW.

These were the rooms King Laius gave me as a boy. Jocasta's rooms were across the hall. As you can see, we lacked for nothing. We were very happy children.

And now...

SMILING

You have killed the Sphinx.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS -- WATCHING CREON.

It is predicted in our ancient annals, that when her curse is lifted, out of the barren land will come prosperity.

CLOSE UP CREON

Perhaps you noticed as you came through the cliffs: two great roads hewn into the rock.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS: An amazing accomplishment.

TWO SHOT OF CREON AND OEDIPUS

CREON: From them channels branch out, cleave through the rocks, form an endless grid. They catch water and collect it until it reaches bedrock, below the basalt. There it gushes forth and -- is scattered -- without use. In my father's time, there was a project to capture that water. He had partially succeeded. Water began to feed the land. And then...

My engineers are ready to work again on that project. One day, the desert *will* bloom, not only as my father saw it, but to the horizon -- from each of Thebes' seven gates.

OEDIPUS: It is a magnificent vision.

CREON: King Laius, my father's brother, was killed recently.

IT TAKES AWHILE FOR CREON TO MAKE THE DECISION TO GO ON.

He lived in splendor, a splendor inconceivable within our... poverty -- like a Pharaoh. He traveled from land to land demanding sustenance from our treasury, from the people, from the land. Until there was no more. It is empty, Oedipus. The land is as you have seen. The work is endless, dangerous. But perhaps you will remain with us to witness a golden age in Thebes.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS: I would like to rest.

CLOSE UP CREON.

CREON: Forgive my dreaming. You cannot love this land as I do.

TWO SHOT. THEIR SIMILARITY IS STRIKING.

OEDIPUS: I am very tired.

CREON: If you need anything, there will be soldiers outside your door to attend to your wishes.

OEDIPUS: My humble thanks.

CREON: Food will be sent.

OEDIPUS: The weary traveler appreciates your generosity, Prince Creon.

CREON: A pleasant rest.

AS CREON WALKS OUT, HE CLOSSES THE DOOR. THE CAMERA HOLDS ON OEDIPUS.

HE SITS DOWN, TAKES OFF THE LAUREL CROWN, LOOKS AT IT FOR A MOMENT, THEN LOOKS FOR SOME PLACE TO PUT IT. HE NOTICES, ON A TABLE, A SMALL FIGURINE OF A WOMAN, A STATUETTE OF THE **CRETAN SNAKE GODDESS**. HE PUTS THE WREATH DOWN SO THAT IT ENCIRCLES THE FIGURE. HE TOUCHES THE FIGURE, INTERESTED, CURIOUS. THEN HE BEGINS TO EXAMINE OTHER OBJECTS IN THE ROOM.

CUT TO **CREON** TALKING WITH THE **GUARDS** OUTSIDE THE DOOR.

CREON: Admit no one. Inform me of anyone who comes.

GUARD: Yes, my Lord.

CREON: I could be persuaded of a year's pay to know who he is.

HE DISMISSES THREE OF THE **GUARDS**.

Return to your quarters. Order refreshments for our guest.

GUARD: From the soldier's kitchen.

CREON: Our Hero has no doubt been a soldier.

CREON STARTS DOWN THE HALL IN THE DIRECTION OF THE THRONE ROOM. THE **THREE GUARDS** GO IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. **POLYPHONTES** IS ONE OF THE REMAINING **THREE GUARDS**.

THE THRONE ROOM. ALL THE **NOBLES, SOLDIERS, ATTENDANTS** HAVE GONE. THE ROOM IS SILENT. **JOCASTA** STANDS IN THE DOORWAY TO THE BALCONY, LOOKING OUT. **HAEMON**, ACROSS THE ROOM, CLOSES THE GREAT DOORS SOUNDLESSLY. FOR A WHILE THEY STAND THUS, ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ENORMOUS EMPTY ROOM. THEN **HAEMON** WALKS SLOWLY TO **JOCASTA**, HIS STEPS ECHO IN THE SILENCE. **JOCASTA** TURNS, SEES HIM, THEN TURNS AWAY AGAIN. FROM AN EXTREME LONG SHOT, THE CAMERA MOVES IN WITH **HAEMON** UNTIL IT FRAMES JUST THE TWO OF THEM. STILL LOOKING OUT OVER THE CITY, **JOCASTA** SPEAKS:

JOCASTA: I have been Queen of the Thebans for twenty two years.

A PANORAMIC SHOT OF THE RELATIVELY SILENT CROWD THAT LINGERS BEYOND THE GATES AND WALLS.

I have not ruled wisely or well.

A MINOR SCUFFLE BREAKS OUT BETWEEN A FEW OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE AND TWO OF THE SOLDIERS. IT IS QUICKLY BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL, AND THERE IS SOME LAUGHTER.

JOCASTA'S VOICE CONTINUES OVER THIS SCENE.

I have not ruled. I have sat beside my husband, now I sit beside my brother, and I do nothing. I have done nothing.

HAEMON'S VOICE:

Announce your marriage.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA. SHE SHAKES HER HEAD.

JOCASTA: I have blamed Creon for my misfortune. I offered my hand to defy him.

Oedipus is younger than you are.

CLOSE UP HAEMON.

HAEMON: Does that matter?

CLOSE UP JOCASTA. SHE IS SILENT FOR A LONG TIME.

HAEMON'S VOICE:

You need an ally. He has challenged Creon.

JOCASTA: I must find peace with myself.

WE HEAR SHOUTING FROM THE CROWD.

HAEMON'S VOICE:

They will not wait long, they will fight.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA, TEARS COME INTO HER EYES.

JOCASTA: Creon has a vision of this land. He would make the raging sun bring forth fruit. There were orchards when we were children; apples, persimmons, oranges, figs.

I have seen your father beat a man to death with his naked hands. He and Laius used to match soldiers together like cocks. “Now one of you will survive,” Laius would say. Blood would splash about while Laius laughed. Creon would laugh, too, and drink his wine and bet against Laius. You were too young to come to our festivities.

And yet, I have seen my brother kiss the earth. He has held me in his arms to comfort me from terror. He has walked naked in the rain and wept for its bounty. Your father is a man whom only a God could control. But there are no Gods. Would that I had the power to temporize his nature.

HAEMON’S VOICE:

Perhaps Oedipus can.

JOCASTA: And more blood will be shed.

MORE SHOUTING IS HEARD.

CLOSE UP HAEMON.

HAEMON: Creon will send out the soldiers.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA.

JOCASTA: Is there no alternative, Haemon?

THE RESTLESS CROWD.

HAEMON’S VOICE:

The people are hungry. They will be slaughtered like animals.

“Down with the House of Laius” -- can you hear them?

CLOSE UP HAEMON.

They would give their loyalty to Oedipus, to you. You would be free.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA. SHE TURNS INTO THE THRONE ROOM. SHE TAKES THE CROWN FROM HER HEAD. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO INCLUDE HAEMON. JOCASTA WALKS SLOWLY DOWN THE STEPS, PAUSING BESIDE THE DOUBLE THRONE.

Marry Oedipus.

JOCASTA: I'm tired, Haemon. Take me to my room.

HAEMON LIFTS HER HAND THAT HOLDS THE EMERALD CROWN.

HAEMON: Put it on your head.

TOGETHER THEY REPLACE THE CROWN ON HER HEAD. THEN HAEMON EMBRACES HER. FOR A MOMENT SHE ALLOWS HERSELF TO RELAX IN THE SECURITY OF HIS ARMS. THEN SHE STEPS BACK.

JOCASTA: I want to go to my room.

SHE STARTS DOWN THE STEPS. HAEMON PUTS HIS ARM AROUND HER. THEY WALK SILENTLY ACROSS THE THRONE ROOM.

A TRACKING SHOT ALONG THE CROWD AT THE PALACE GATES. THE ANGLE OF THE AFTERNOON SUN BEGINS TO CAST THE SHADOWS OF THE PEOPLE ACROSS THE INNER COURTYARD. SOLDIERS STAND ALONG THE INSIDE OF THE FENCE AT ABOUT EIGHT FOOT INTERVALS. WE HEAR OCCASIONAL SHOUTS, SNATCHES OF SONG, SOME CHEERING.

A WIDE VIEW TOWARD THE PALACE. THE CAMERA TILTS UP TO INCLUDE THE TOP OF THE PALACE STEPS. AT THE TOP OF THE STEPS WE SEE CREON TALKING TO A

SOLIDER, THEN HE GOES INTO THE PALACE. THE SOLDIER COMES DOWN INTO THE COURTYARD.

A WIDE SHOT TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE CROWD. IN A MOMENT AN ORDER ECHOES DOWN THE LINE OF SOLDIERS, OVER CLOSE UPS OF THEIR FACES.

SOLDIERS: Clear the courtyard. Clear the palace courts. Clear the palace courts, etc.

THE CROWD FALLS SILENT, BUT NO ONE LEAVES. THE ORDER IS REPEATED AND ECHOED DOWN THE LINE AGAIN. THE CROWD REMAINS SILENT AND STILL. IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD FROM THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOLDIERS AND THE CROWD THAT “Clear the palace courts,” IS A TRADITIONAL AND SOMEWHAT RHETORICAL ORDER WHICH THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY NECESSITY TO ENFORCE.

IN THE SECOND ROOM OF JOCASTA’S APARTMENT, KUPIA IS LYING IN THE SUN ON THE FLOOR NEAR THE BALCONY DOORS, READING. APHRON IS SETTING OUT FOOD ON A SMALL TABLE. AS KUPIA HEARS THE SOLDIERS ORDERING THE COURTYARDS TO BE CLEARED, SHE GETS UP AND GOES TO LOOK OVER THE BALUSTRADE.

APHRON: Come in from there!

KUPIA: Will the Queen ride today?

APHRON SHRUGS

May I ride without her.

APHRON: Certainly not.

KUPIA: What’s going to happen, Mother?

APHRON: I’m not a prophet. Ask Teiresias.

KUPIA: Did you see the hero?

KUPIA HAS TAKEN SOME GRAPES AND A FIG FROM THE TABLE.

APHRON: Kupia! You must not eat the Queen's fruit.

KUPIA: There isn't any other.

Will she marry the hero?

APHRON: Pick up your manuscripts. You take advantage of the Queen's generosity.

KUPIA: I wonder if he can read as well as I can?

APHRON: What nonsense.

KUPIA: When will I marry, mother.

APHRON: I pray the Gods you'll remain a virgin.

KUPIA: Didn't you like being married, mother?

APHRON: Enough. Enough. Get your things.

KUPIA: I have never seen the Queen look so beautiful. I would like to be in love.

APHRON: You fill your head with foolishness.

SHE INDICATES THE MANUSCRIPTS WHICH KUPIA IS ROLLING UP.

The Queen will marry because it is her duty.

KUPIA: The Prince would kill him.

APHRON: Hush!

KUPIA: I was in the throne room, Mother. I could feel the Queen's heart beating. And Oedipus, he heard it, too. If I were the Queen, I would have married him then. Do you know where they've taken him? To the north rooms.

JOCASTA AND HAEMON ENTER AT THIS MOMENT. HAVING OVERHEARD THE LAST OF KUPIA'S WORDS, JOCASTA SMILES.

JOCASTA: You're better than a whole system of spies.

APHRON: MOTIONING FOR **KUPIA** TO LEAVE THE ROOM

If you teach a girl to read and write, she's beyond control.

JOCASTA: She's a huntress, Aphron -- and very brave.

TO KUPIA

You saved the Hero's life. He's not afraid of Creon, neither are you, Is it because you are young?

KUPIA: He can't hurt me. Only those you love -- hurt you.

JOCASTA TURNS AWAY.

APHRON: Go to your room. You must not speak foolishness to the Queen.

JOCASTA: Give her the fruit, Aphron.

KUPIA LAUGHS WITH DELIGHT.

APHRON: I thought your Majesty might be hungry.

JOCASTA: Give it to her. We will ride later, Kupia, you and I. In all of Thebes, you're the only one young enough to laugh, and happy enough to tell the truth.

KUPIA TAKES THE BOWL OF FRUIT.

KUPIA: One other?

JOCASTA: Perhaps.

KUPIA LEAVES THE ROOM.

We'll ride out across the desert. On and on and on through the fire and the sand.

HAEMON: You must rest.

APHRON: Your Majesty should eat. I'll get more for Lord Haemon.

JOCASTA: Never mind, please go.

HAEMON HELPS HER TO TAKE OFF HER VEIL AND THE CROWN.

Wait. Take food to Oedipus. And he must have clothes. See to that Aphron.

HAEMON: Take my things for him -- whatever you wish. My man will get them for you.

JOCASTA: Thank you, Haemon.

APHRON STARTS OUT.

HAEMON: And, Aphron...

HE OPENS A DRAWER IN A CHEST, TAKES OUT A GOLD DAGGER.

Take this to him.

HE WRAPS THE DAGGER IN JOCASTA'S VEIL AND HANDS IT TO APHRON.

Conceal it. Say it's a present from the Queen.

HE LOOKS AT JOCASTA.

APHRON TAKES THE DAGGER AND, WITH A SLIGHT BOW, LEAVES THE ROOM.

JOCASTA: Do you think he's in danger.

HAEMON: A prisoner is always in danger.

JOCASTA: What can I do?

HAEMON: Fight Creon.

JOCASTA: With my hands.

HAEMON: With Oedipus. Marry him.

JOCASTA: And Oedipus? Would he choose to marry me? Why would he risk his life against Creon? For a few moments he was angry, that's all. He's not a Theban.

HAEMON: For you, he would risk his life.

JOCASTA MOVES TO THE BALCONY DOORS, HAEMON FOLLOWS HER.

Do you think Creon will pack up his gold and wish him a happy journey?

They call you the Mad Queen.

JOCASTA: Am I mad? I was not trained to rule.

HAEMON: Let Creon rule.

JOCASTA: No.

HAEMON: Would you be less than a Queen?

JOCASTA: No.

HAEMON: Perhaps you are mad.

JOCASTA: I would not kill Creon to become a ruler. I would not force Oedipus to choose our land. I try to conceive a land without fear, without force, without coercion, without evil. Is that madness? Perhaps it is. Perhaps I am only weak.

HAEMON: You are not realistic, Jocasta.

JOCASTA: I would conquer my fear, Haemon, I would conquer my ignorance. My

plans against Creon's? -- we have the same dreams: to see caravans go in and out as they did in our father's day, riches, abundance; to suck water from those cliffs, yes, to divert Asopus' source to feed our southern boundary. There were once buildings out there, beyond the walls. Food, commerce, yes, Haemon, I understand these things, but that does not make me wise.

Murder, coercion, fear -- is that how it's done, Haemon? Is that what I must learn? -- learn to be evil, to cut down my brother? To rule, I must be stronger, not wiser? To live, I must agree to my son's death? Death and more death. Even you, that's the first thing you think of. If he's in danger, send him a weapon. Kill or be killed. Will we never get beyond this?

HAEMON: You can't philosophize with a murderer.

JOCASTA: But we must!

CREON'S VOICE:

Haemon!

JOCASTA: More death. More death.

AS CREON ENTERS THE ROOM, SHE TURNS AND WALKS TOWARD HER BEDROOM.

What is the source of life?

SHE TURNS WITH A CHALLENGING SMILE TOWARD CREON.

What is the source of life, Creon? Can you answer that riddle?

CREON: I'm pleased to see you in such high spirits.

JOCASTA: Can you answer the riddle?

CREON: Whose life?

JOCASTA: All life. All that grows and flowers, that lives, finds happiness.

CREON EATS FROM THE FOOD ON THE TABLE THROUGH THE FOLLOWING SCENE.

CREON: It's a pity our garden no longer grows. We could walk in the shade, discuss the ideas of our tutor.

JOCASTA: If death is the answer to each of nature's questions, what is the source of life?

CREON: Death is death. It brings an end.

JOCASTA: Without malice and without horror, it just happens. What about murder?

CREON: Life begins in the earth's womb. It grows in the sun, in the rain -- and it dies.

Life begins -- in the mother's womb.

JOCASTA: Yes.

CREON: And it dies. Is your riddle answered?

JOCASTA: No.

CREON: The Sphinx killed her unlucky victims.

JOCASTA: Maybe because there was an answer.

CREON: Haemon, can you answer our Queen's riddle? She does not know the answer. I do not know the answer.

HAEMON: Oedipus has been sent by the Gods to rule Thebes.

CREON: Ah! Is that the answer, Jocasta? No? Yes?

TO HAEMON

Do you think, Haemon, Prince Haemon, that solving a riddle qualifies a man to become King?

HAEMON: If it had been another man...

CREON: It is not another man!

TO JOCASTA

But he is handsome -- and young. No doubt he would make a delightful husband -- after Laius.

HAEMON: Father!

CREON: Come now, Haemon. Jocasta's human. Worlds have been won and lost for the color of a young man's eyes. Of course, you know nothing of that.

I think it is time to unlock the Seven Gates of Thebes. Would you see to that?

HAEMON DOES NOT MOVE. CREON CONTINUES IRONICALLY.

I beg leave to speak with the Queen.

HAEMON STILL DOES NOT MOVE. CREON SHOUTS.

Leave us!

**HAEMON TURNS AND STARTS OUT. SHOUTING IS HEARD FROM THE CROWD.
HAEMON TURNS BACK TO CREON.**

HAEMON: Father, Thebes is in danger. If anything should happen to Oedipus...

CREON: Why, what would happen to Oedipus? I am not a magician. I am with the Queen. And then I will have my supper. Perhaps if you have seen to the gates, you will join me for supper.

HAEMON: If the Queen does not marry Oedipus...

CREON: Very likely she will marry someone else!

JOCASTA: GENTLY

Haemon. Please go.

Please.

WHEN HAEMON IS ALMOST TO THE DOOR.

I left my veil in the throne room. Would you get it for me?

HAEMON HESITATES FOR A SINGLE STEP, BUT DOES NOT TURN. HE EXITS.

CREON: I don't think Haemon understands you. Your veil! The emerald crown!

HE HOLDS HER FACE TOWARD THE LIGHT.

I think you've painted your lips, too. Yes, Jocasta, you are beautiful. No one can mistake the scent of musk. You wonder what the source of life is? The bitch knows and the mare and the she-cat. Why have you lived like a virgin all these years? Why?

HE KISSES HER ON THE LIPS. SHE NEITHER STEPS AWAY NOR RESPONDS. SHE CLOSES HER EYES.

Look at me. I'm your brother. Are you afraid? No.

SHE DOES NOT MOVE OR SPEAK.

Oedipus is young enough to be your son.

SHE STARES AT HIM. HE CRIES IN A SUDDEN RAGE.

By the Gods, we are blessed that your son is dead!

JOCASTA: QUIETLY

There's blood on your hands.

QUITE INVOLUNTARILY CREON LOOKS AT HIS HANDS.

My blood. Your own blood, too.

CREON: Would you defy the Gods?

JOCASTA: The Gods? You speak with the Gods, don't you? Lip to lip with the Gods. How did you make Laius believe it? If the Gods did speak, it is you who defied them.

CREON: You would have reveled in the fulfillment of that prophesy.

JOCASTA: Laius is dead and my son didn't kill him. Did you make him think he was immortal?

CREON: Who did kill Laius?

JOCASTA: **STARTLED, SHE STARES AT HIM.**

What do you mean?

CREON: Do you mourn him? -- your husband and your King.

JOCASTA: He was killed by bandits.

CREON: A King? I should think bandits would have ransomed a King. Unless they had... their reasons... One hears rumors. Of course, rumors disappear if one finds out the truth. If one found bandits...

HE SMILES AT JOCASTA. SHE WATCHES HIM WITHOUT SPEAKING. CREON SHRUGS.

If one feels free to travel unarmed through the desert, on strange highways... It's dangerous out there, a King was killed. One might have strange friends...

JOCASTA TAKES THE KNIFE FROM THE TABLE AND STRIKES AT CREON.

JOCASTA: You won't murder him!

CREON CATCHES HER WRIST, SQUEEZES IT. THE KNIFE DROPS TO THE FLOOR.

CREON: It is only speculation, Jocasta. Idle speculation.

JOCASTA: I would kill you if I could.

CREON: For a boy out of the desert? You tempt him with a crown. Will he accept?
Oh yes, Jocasta, he would accept anything to have it.

HE TURNS HER TO FACE A MIRROR ON THE WALL.

Look at yourself. And think of him.

**HE RELEASES HER ARM, AND AT THE SAME TIME PUSHES HER
SO THAT SHE STUMBLES AGAINST THE MIRROR.**

The lust of a Queen is as blind as the lust of the Gods.

HE STRIDES FROM THE ROOM.

**THE CAMERA HOLDS ON JOCASTA AND PULLS SLOWLY BACK. SHE MOVES AWAY
FROM THE MIRROR AND TURNS TOWARD THE BEDROOM UNFASTENING HER
GOWN.**

**DISSOLVE TO THE COURTYARD AT THE BACK OF THE PALACE, EMPTY EXCEPT FOR
TWO GUARDS AT THE GATE AND A SOLDIER STANDING NEAR THE DOOR TO THE
PALACE. THE GUARDS OPEN THE GATE AND THE TWO SOLDIERS, WHO WERE
WITH ACMON IN THE BEGINNING, ENTER. THEY CARRY A LITTER ON WHICH THE
SPHINX LIES. HER BODY IS COVERED WITH A CLOTH, THE TIP OF A BROKEN WING
PROTRUDES. .**

**CUT TO THE BALCONY ABOVE THIS PART OF THE COURTYARD. KUPIA STAND
WATCHING THE SOLDIERS WITH THEIR BURDEN.**

SOLDIER'S VOICE:

Take it to the inner court.

KUPIA MOVES OFF TO THE RIGHT.

CUT TO THE THREE GUARDS OUTSIDE OF OEDIPUS' DOOR. THEY ARE RELAXED AND CHATTING.

2ND GUARD: A year's pay?

POLYPHONTES: Maybe.

2ND GUARD: You know what I'd do?

3RD GUARD: Get out of Thebes.

POLYPHONTES: If Creon would let you.

2ND GUARD: Ah, the gates'll be unlocked now.

POLYPHONTES: I wouldn't be too sure.

2ND GUARD LOOKS QUESTIONINGLY AT POLYPHONTES.

CUT TO APHRON COMING ALONG THE CORRIDOR TOWARD THE GUARDS. SHE HAS SEVERAL GARMENTS DRAPED OVER HER ARMS. SHE STOPS IN FRONT OF THE GUARDS.

APHRON: Is this where the Hero is?

3RD GUARD: Yes, Ma'am

APHRON: I have some clothes for him.

2ND GUARD: We can't let you in.

APHRON: They're sent by the Queen.

Does Creon want him to go naked?

2ND GUARD SHRUGS, LOOKS AT 3RD GUARD, THEY LAUGH, SUGGESTIVELY.

2ND GUARD: He ain't naked -- Apollo save you if he was.

POLYPHONTES: STEPPING TOWARD **APHRON**.

I'll take them in for you.

APHRON: I was told to give them to him myself.

POLYPHONTES: I'll give them to him...

WHISPERING.

...for the Queen.

APHRON HESITATES, THEN SHE HANDS HIM THE GARMENTS AND THE VEIL-WRAPPED DAGGER.

APHRON: This is a present from the Queen. Will you say that to him?

POLYPHONTES: Yes.

APHRON STARTS TO WALK AWAY, TURNS BACK

APHRON: I'll be sending him some food. I hope you'll let him eat.

2ND AND 3RD GUARDS LAUGH.

POLYPHONTES OPENS THE DOOR TO OEDIPUS' ROOM. HE STEPS IN AND SHUTS THE DOOR. HE LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM, BUT DOES NOT SEE OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS STANDS IN AN ALCOVE, STUDYING A MAP OF THEBES THAT HANGS ON A WALL. HE HEARS POLYPHONTES ENTER, BUT REMAINS CONCEALED.

POLYPHONTES DROPS THE CLOTHES ON A BENCH, BUT RETAINS THE DAGGER, AND DRAWS HIS SWORD.

OEDIPUS STEPS FORWARD. HE LOOKS AT POLYPHONTES, RECOGNIZING HIM NOW. HE LOOKS AT THE DRAWN SWORD.

OEDIPUS: Will you kill me now? I have no weapons, nor had I before.

POLYPHONTES: SHEATHES HIS SWORD

The Queen has sent you a present.

HE HANDS OEDIPUS THE VEIL-WRAPPED DAGGER. OEDIPUS CAN FEEL IT THROUGH THE CLOTH. HE STARTS TO UNWRAP IT.

Don't unwrap it now.

OEDIPUS: Why not?

POLYPHONTES: I'd rather not know what it is.

OEDIPUS: You *already* know what it is.

HE FINISHES UNWRAPPING THE DAGGER.

From the Queen?

POLYPHONTES: GLANCES AT THE DOOR.

Hide it. You're not safe.

Who was the man you killed at noon on the highway?

OEDIPUS: I killed no one.

POLYPHONTES: In Phocis?

OEDIPUS: I killed no one.

POLYPHONTES: I saw.

OEDIPUS: What did you see? Do you want me to buy your silence? Speak if you want to. I killed no one.

POLYPHONTES STUDIES OEDIPUS FOR A MOMENT, THEN TURNS TO LEAVE.

Take me to the Queen.

POLYPHONTES: I can't help you.

OEDIPUS LOOKS AT THE DAGGER IN HIS HAND.

You'll never get by the other guards.

POLYPHONTES EXITS. OEDIPUS STANDS A MOMENT LOOKING AT THE DAGGER, THEN THROWS IT ON THE BED.

CUT TO POLYPHONTES, WHO HAS JUST CLOSED THE DOOR. HE STANDS AGAINST IT, FRAMED BY THE TWO GUARDS AS THEY LOUNGE ON EITHER SIDE OF THE DOORWAY.

CUT TO TWO GUARDS RIGIDLY AT ATTENTION IN THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT OF THE INNER COURTYARD. THE CAMERA LOWERS TO INCLUDE THE DEAD SPHINX LYING ON THE LITTER, STILL COVERED.

CUT TO THE DOOR TO THE INNER COURT OPENING. JOCASTA AND KUPIA COME INTO THE COURTYARD. THEY ARE DRESSED IN RIDING COSTUMES. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO INCLUDE THE GUARDS AND THE SPHINX.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA AS HER EYES ADJUST TO THE LIGHT.

KUPIA WALKS TOWARD THE SPHINX. SHE LIFTS THE CLOTH. THE CAMERA MOVES IN TO CONCENTRATE ON THE SPHINX. IT LOOKS LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN A SLEEPING ANGEL AND A DEAD CAT -- OF HUMAN SIZE. THE BODY IS VERY STIFF, LIKE A STATUE OF A SITTING CAT KNOCKED ON ITS SIDE. IT IS BROKEN IN SEVERAL PLACES. THE WINGS AND HEAD ARE LIKE THOSE OF A RENAISSANCE ANGEL. THE HEAD IS TURNED THREE-QUARTERS AWAY SO THAT WE SEE ONLY THE ANGLE OF THE BROW AND THE CURVE OF THE CHEEK.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA LOOKING AT THE SPHINX. SHE REGARDS IT WITH A FRIENDLY, INTERESTED, QUESTIONING EXPRESSION. THE CAMERA PULLS OUT TO INCLUDE KUPIA.

AFTER A BRIEF GLANCE AT THE SPHINX, KUPIA LOOKS AT JOCASTA, THEN A BIT BORED, HER ATTENTION WANDERS ABOUT THE COURTYARD. AFTER AWHILE,

AGAIN LOOKING AT THE **SPHINX**, SHE SAYS:

KUPIA: She's sweet.

JOCASTA LAUGHS SILENTLY.

No wonder Creon doesn't want the people to see her.

AFTER A MOMENT, **JOCASTA** TURNS FROM THE **SPHINX** AND STARTS BACK TOWARD THE DOOR. THE CAMERA REMAINS ON THE **GUARDS** AND THE **SPHINX** AND **KUPIA**. **KUPIA** PULLS A **FEATHER** FROM THE **SPHINX'S** WING, THEN FOLLOWS **JOCASTA**. THE **GUARDS** LAY THE CLOTH BACK OVER THE BODY.

JOCASTA AND **KUPIA** RE-ENTER THE CORRIDOR. THEY TURN LEFT AND WALK IN SILENCE DOWN THE DARK STONE PASSAGEWAY. THEN A SMILE FORMS ON **JOCASTA'S** LIPS. SHE SAYS, ALMOST IN A WHISPER, TO HERSELF:

JOCASTA: I think I shall marry the Hero.

KUPIA: LAUGHS WITH DELIGHT.

Yes, your Majesty.

SHE HANDS THE **FEATHER** TO **JOCASTA**.

Here.

JOCASTA: What is it?

KUPIA: A present.

JOCASTA TAKES IT, PUZZLED.

From the Sphinx

JOCASTA: HARSHLY

Sometimes your antics show a want of good sense!

JOCASTA, HOWEVER, KEEPS THE FEATHER AND TWISTS IT WITH HER FINGERS, SLOWLY BACK AND FORTH, AS SHE WALKS.

I want to see Teiresias. Go for him, please.

Now. Can you get in at the East Gate?

KUPIA NODS.

I will be at the stables. You will have your ride.

KUPIA TURNS BACK DOWN THE HALL. SHE BREAKS INTO A SKIPPING RUN. JOCASTA CONTINUES ALONG THE HALL, HUMMING, AS SHE LOOKS AT THE FEATHER.

CUT TO HAEMON WALKING DOWN THE HALL IN THE NORTH WING. HE STOPS IN FRONT OF THE GUARDS AT OEDIPUS' DOOR. THE GUARDS SALUTE.

HAEMON: Return to your quarters.

2ND GUARD: Our orders...

HAEMON: All of you.

THEY HESITATE.

If you are questioned, I bear the responsibility.

THE GUARDS MOVE OFF. HAEMON WATCHES THEM GO. THEN, AS HE ENTERS THE ROOM, THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM. HE SHUTS THE DOOR. OEDIPUS IS LYING ON THE COUCH -- ASLEEP. A TRAY OF FOOD IS BESIDE HIM ON A TABLE. HAEMON STANDS LOOKING AT OEDIPUS.

CUT TO THE GUARDS ON THEIR WAY TO THEIR QUARTERS.

2ND GUARD: We shouldn't have left.

POLYPHONTES: He'll lock you up as quickly as Creon.

3RD GUARD: TO POLYPHONTES.

You were a fool to come back.

CUT TO THE SOLDIERS QUARTERS. THE CAMERA MOVES AROUND THE ROOM. THERE ARE MANY SOLDIERS HERE, BUT IT IS FAIRLY QUIET. THE CAMERA COMES TO REST ON A GROUP OF SOLDIERS GATHERED AROUND CREON. HE IS TALKING TO ONE OF THE OFFICERS.

CREON: I suspect he's more than an ordinary traveler. It shouldn't be difficult to find out where he's from.

OFFICER: I'll do my best.

CREON STARTS TO LEAVE, THEN TURNS BACK TO THE OFFICER AND DRAWS HIM ASIDE.

CREON: I want a pyre built in the inner court. Use as few men as possible, trusted men.

THE OFFICER NODS. CREON LEAVES THE ROOM.

CUT TO THE CORRIDOR. AS CREON COMES OUT, THE THREE GUARDS FROM OEDIPUS' DOOR DUCK INTO A SIDE HALLWAY, HIDING UNTIL CREON HAS PASSED. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, ASHAMED OF THEIR FEAR. THEN THEY ENTER THE SOLDIERS QUARTERS.

CUT TO SOLDIERS QUARTERS.

OFFICER: SEEING THE GUARDS

What's this?

2ND GUARD: Haemon's orders.

THE OFFICER STUDIES THEM, THEN HE SHRUGS AND TURNS AWAY.

CUT TO OEDIPUS' ROOM. THE ROOM IS QUITE DARK. HAEMON STANDS AT THE WINDOW LOOKING OUT. HE GLANCES AT OEDIPUS, THEN LOOKS OUT THE

WINDOW AGAIN.

FROM HAEMON'S POV, WE SEE THE MANY WALLS AND ANGLES OF THE PALACE TOWARD THE EAST. HEAVY SHADOWS ARE CAST BY THE LATE AFTERNOON SUN.

HAEMON GLANCES AT OEDIPUS AGAIN, AND SPEAKS SOFTLY.

HAEMON: Oedipus...

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS. HIS EYES OPEN, BUT HE REMAINS STILL. ONE HAND IS UNDER A PILLOW -- HOLDING THE QUEEN'S DAGGER.

HAEMON'S VOICE CONTINUES:

I wish I could let you sleep.

Have you eaten?

OEDIPUS NODS. THE CAMERA PULLS OUT TO INCLUDE HAEMON.

May I pour you some wine?

HAEMON POURS SOME WINE. OEDIPUS SITS UP, BUT DOES NOT TAKE THE WINE. HIS HAND REMAINS UNDER THE PILLOW WITH THE DAGGER.

Will you come with me?

OEDIPUS GLANCES AT THE CLOSED DOOR.

They're gone.

OEDIPUS: Creon's order?

HAEMON: Mine.

HAEMON OPENS THE DOOR. HE SEES A SERVANT SOME DISTANCE DOWN THE HALL LIGHTING TORCHES. HE CALLS TO HIM.

Give us some light.

THE SERVANT COMES IN AND LIGHTS SEVERAL LAMPS.

OEDIPUS: Is it night?

HAEMON: The sun has not yet set. It's always dark in the palace.

THE SERVANT LEAVES THE ROOM, LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN.

OEDIPUS: It's cold as a tomb.

HAEMON: Take my cloak.

**HAEMON TAKES OFF HIS CLOAK, OFFERS IT TO OEDIPUS.
OEDIPUS MAKES NO MOVE TO TAKE IT.**

Take it.

**HAEMON STEPS TOWARD OEDIPUS TO PUT THE CLOAK
AROUND HIS SHOULDERS. OEDIPUS BRINGS THE DAGGER
FROM UNDER THE PILLOW.**

OEDIPUS: The Queen sent me a present.

HAEMON: I sent it to you.

OEDIPUS: Your generosity is overwhelming.

HAEMON: Your life is in danger.

OEDIPUS GOES TO THE OPEN DOOR.

You're free to leave if you want to.

OEDIPUS: Is that the Queen's wish?

HAEMON: The Queen has asked to see you.

OEDIPUS: Take me to her.

HAEMON: Yes.

OEDIPUS: You hesitate. Are you as devious as your father, Prince Haemon?

HAEMON: Trust me.

OEDIPUS: Where is the Queen?

HAEMON: I have put my trust in you.

OEDIPUS: I'm honored.

HAEMON: I have no choice.

OEDIPUS: Honored and flattered. But I have no doubt that if I were to walk through the palace alone I'd be killed.

HAEMON: The Queen...

OEDIPUS: Yes?

HAEMON: ...offered her hand to whoever would solve the riddle.

OEDIPUS: To me?

HAEMON: To you.

OEDIPUS: Would you prevent it?

HAEMON: I've come to persuade you.

OEDIPUS: WRYLY

Your arguments are not very strong.

Come now, would the Queen's messenger persuade me with silence?

HE THREATENS HAEMON WITH THE DAGGER.

HAEMON: Don't threaten me, Oedipus. I would welcome the silence of death. But I love the Queen, and I will help you as long as I live.

OEDIPUS IS A LITTLE PUZZLED, NONPLUSSED BY HAEMON'S SOLEMN INTENSITY.

Here.

HAEMON GIVES HIS OWN DAGGER TO OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS: The Theban legal system: persuasive, impartial, final. Have you no other justice, no other laws?

HAEMON: Look at them.

OEDIPUS: Yes. I see they're identical -- writhing serpents.

HAEMON: It's the symbol of our House. We're descendants of the Spartoi.

OEDIPUS: I've heard the legend: men sown from the dragon's teeth. Is this a dragon?

HAEMON: Whichever. In ancient times it roamed the land killing and devouring. Cadmus slew it and scattered the teeth. We're descendants from that monster.

OEDIPUS: Sons of a monster?

HAEMON: Every man has blood on his hands.

OEDIPUS: Even you?

HAEMON: In my heart.

HAEMON POINTS TO OEDIPUS' DAGGER.

On that one the serpent wears a crown. Do you see it? It was to be a present for the Queen's son.

- OEDIPUS:** Her son?
- HAEMON:** I had them made for us. Or rather, my father granted my wish to have them made. He liked me to play with weapons. He was proud of his son. At six I asked for two golden daggers -- manly toys. I was six when the Queen's son was born. We were going to be brothers, allies against my father and the King. But the King killed his son, my father killed him -- righteously, legally, I don't know how. I never saw the boy.
- OEDIPUS:** His own son?
- HAEMON:** With the blessing of the Gods.
- OEDIPUS:** I have heard another legend of your land. Agave, Queen of ancient Thebes, killed her son and devoured him.
- HAEMON:** Queen Jocasta would see an end to butchery in this land. She was only fifteen when her son was killed. She has walked through Hades for twenty years. We used to play games with those daggers. We'd kill the King and find the boy. But now the King is dead.
- OEDIPUS:** Did you play at killing Creon?
- HAEMON:** He protected us from the King.
- OEDIPUS:** I'm not for hire as a murderer.
- HAEMON:** No, I didn't mean that.
- OEDIPUS:** If the crown were his, it would one day be yours.
- HAEMON:** Yes.
- OEDIPUS:** But you don't want it.
- HAEMON:** No.
- OEDIPUS:** Why not?

Would you kill your father?

OEDIPUS WALKS TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM. HOLDING OVER HIS SHOULDER WE SEE, BEYOND THE ANGLES OF THE BUILDING, A NARROW SECTION OF THE EAST COURTYARD, WHERE THE QUEEN IS RIDING. HER FIGURE PASSES ACROSS THIS NARROW SPACE FROM TIME TO TIME.

Have you ever killed a man? -- seen a dead man at your feet?

HAEMON'S VOICE:

In battle.

OEDIPUS: Do you want your father dead?

CLOSE UP HAEMON. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS

No. At some point the desire for inheritance stops. One cries for something to change, for the pattern to end. I don't want your crown.

HAEMON'S VOICE:

Bring peace to Thebes.

OEDIPUS: I have not the means.

HAEMON'S VOICE:

Jocasta.

OEDIPUS: Jocasta.

OEDIPUS TURNS TOWARD HAEMON.

CLOSE UP HAEMON.

HAEMON: The Queen waits for you. The Queen is kind.

TWO SHOT, HAEMON AND OEDIPUS:

Come, I will take you to her.

OEDIPUS AND HAEMON LEAVE THE ROOM. THE CAMERA HOLDS ON THE WINDOW AND MOVES IN CLOSER. WE SEE JOCASTA PASS IN THE DISTANCE.

CUT TO A STREET NEAR THE BACK OF THE PALACE. TEIRESIAS, THE BOY AND KUPIA ARE WALKING TOWARD THE PALACE. THE FEW PEOPLE THAT ARE HERE STAND ASIDE SILENTLY AND RESPECTFULLY AS TEIRESIAS PASSES. KUPIA KNOCKS AT A SMALL GATE. A GUARD LOOKS OUT. SHE SMILES AT HIM AND MAKES A SIGN WITH HER HANDS. THE GUARD OPENS THE GATE. TEIRESIAS, THE BOY AND KUPIA ENTER, GO DOWN A SHORT TUNNEL-LIKE HALL AND OUT INTO THE EAST COURTYARD.

JOCASTA IS RIDING AROUND THE BARE ENCLOSED COURTYARD, SHE RIDES VERY FAST. WHEN SHE SEES TEIRESIAS SHE REINS IN AND COMES UP TO HIM CALLING HAPPILY.

JOCASTA: Teiresias, my wise Teiresias, I'm glad to see you.

THE GUARD HELPS HER TO DISMOUNT, AND STARTS TO LEAD THE HORSE AWAY.

Let Kupia ride.

IN THE BACKGROUND DURING THE FOLLOWING SCENE, WE SEE KUPIA AS SHE IS HELPED ON TO THE QUEEN'S HORSE BY THE GUARD. KUPIA PERSUADES THE GUARD TO SEAT THE BOY BEHIND HER.

TO TEIRESIAS

I'm sorry you were ill.

TEIRESIAS: Ill?

JOCASTA: Creon said you were ill?

TEIRESIAS: At times, your brother arranges the truth.

JOCASTA: LAUGHS

I need your advice. You must help me.

SHE TAKES HIS ARM AND LEADS HIM TOWARD A SHELTERED BENCH.

CUT TO HAEMON AND OEDIPUS WALKING DOWN A DARK CORRIDOR AT THE FRONT OF THE PALACE, TOWARD AN OPEN ARCHWAY. HAEMON CARRIES A TORCH. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM.

OEDIPUS: Would he have let Acmon marry the Queen?

HAEMON: Conditionally. Since Acmon is a commoner, Creon could have had any children debarred from the throne and himself declared heir.

OEDIPUS: Did Acmon agree to that?

HAEMON: He would have.

OEDIPUS: That would be signing his own death warrant.

HAEMON: And if he disobeyed Creon...

OEDIPUS: I see.

HAEMON: He might propose the same thing to you.

OEDIPUS LAUGHS.

Don't underestimate Creon.

THEY HAVE REACHED THE OPEN ARCHWAY. HAEMON REACHES UP TO PUT HIS TORCH IN A WALK BRACKET.

CUT TO OEDIPUS FROM HAEMON'S POV. THE WAY OEDIPUS STANDS, THE WAY THE LIGHT STRIKES HIM MAKES HIM APPEAR

SUDDENLY DOMINANT AND FRIGHTENING. HAEMON WHISPERS -- ALMOST IN AWE.

Who are you?

OEDIPUS: Oedipus, Prince Haemon. I have no home and no father.

HAEMON: Where are you from?

OEDIPUS: The desert. The desolation of the desert.

HAEMON AND OEDIPUS STEP FROM THE HALLWAY ONTO THE BALCONY. THEY COME OUT AT A POINT OVERLOOKING THE FRONT COURTYARD, NORTH FROM THE MAIN GATES.

THE CROWD FROM THEIR POV. THE CROWD IS LARGER NOW, NOISY AND QUARRELSOME. THE LATE AFTERNOON SUN CASTS THE ELONGATED SHADOWS OF THE PEOPLE ACROSS THE COURTYARD AND ONTO THE GREAT STAIRWAY.

HAEMON'S VOICE:

They think you are a God.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS.

CLOSE UP HAEMON.

If you want the crown of Thebes, you can take it.

CLOSE UP OEDIPUS

You don't have to marry the Queen.

Just raise your hand.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK AS OEDIPUS TAKES A STEP FORWARD. HAEMON'S HAND QUICKLY RESTRAINS HIM.

OEDIPUS: You're a torn man, Haemon. Why didn't you answer the riddle?

HAEMON: I didn't try.

OEDIPUS: What if you had answered it?

HAEMON: I did not.

OEDIPUS: What if you had?

Do you love her very much?

HAEMON LETS HIS HAND DROP FROM OEDIPUS' ARM. THE NOISE AND SHOUTING OF THE CROWD INCREASES, AND SURGES FROM TIME TO TIME.

HAEMON: "Down with the House of Laius" -- can you hear them? I would not mind dying.

OEDIPUS: Your father's sister.

HAEMON: When you walk through darkness for years...

OEDIPUS: And she?

HAEMON: Come. She has asked for you.

CUT TO JOCASTA AND TEIRESIAS IN THE COURTYARD.

JOCASTA: I want to marry him. Will you give me your blessing?

TEIRESIAS: You have described a courageous man, my child. Yet the omen... Could I have misinterpreted the omens? I give you my blessing. May you be happy, may you be fruitful.

JOCASTA: Teiresias, you are kind. Come, you must talk to him.

JOCASTA RISES, AND HELPS TEIRESIAS TO HIS FEET. SHE SIGNALS TO KUPIA. THE GUARD HELPS KUPIA AND THE BOY FROM THE HORSE. THROUGH THE FOLLOWING SCENE KUPIA AND THE BOY FOLLOW JOCASTA AND TEIRESIAS AS THEY ENTER THE DARK HALLWAYS OF THE PALACE. THE NARROW GLOOMY

HALLS SEEM TO GO ON FOREVER.

Oedipus will be a good and a just King.

TEIRESIAS: Oedipus?

JOCASTA: King Oedipus.

TEIRESIAS: He who walks with pain.

JOCASTA: Yes, he limps. His foot was injured in an accident.

TEIRESIAS: A lame bird was caught today. There was no feed in him.

JOCASTA: Is that an omen, Teiresias? How silly.

TEIRESIAS: A man called foreigner brings evil and darkness into the land.

JOCASTA: Has Creon bribed you to say that?

TEIRESIAS: The Gods cannot be bribed.

JOCASTA: You have given me your blessing.

TEIRESIAS: Perhaps in haste, my child.

JOCASTA: Why do you help Creon and not me?

TEIRESIAS: I offer you my counsel. There are many men, wait for another.

JOCASTA: INTERRUPTING.

Let me ask you this. Your prophetic gifts will help you. Will Creon ever wear the crown of Thebes?

Speak. Answer me

TEIRESIAS: Many things will come to pass in the future. Though they be what you would not wish, their cause will perhaps be very different.

JOCASTA: Laius' death was part of a scheme, wasn't it.

Tell me. I'm glad he's dead.

TEIRESIAS: Laius was killed far away where three ways meet.

JOCASTA: Who killed him?

TEIRESIAS: No one knows his murderer.

JOCASTA: It was not my son. Your Gods are often wrong.

TEIRESIAS: The prophesies of the Gods must be looked to and feared.

JOCASTA: Is Creon plotting to kill me, too?

TEIRESIAS: You look not where the danger is.

JOCASTA: I shall marry the hero. The people worship Oedipus.

TEIRESIAS: Worship is the prerogative of the Gods.

JOCASTA: He is as wise as the Gods.

TEIRESIAS: Is the solving of riddles wisdom?

JOCASTA: Yes, wisdom greater than a God's. A God can ask a riddle, but cannot or dare not or will not answer it. I saw your Sphinx.

SHE HOLDS UP THE FEATHER, LAUGHING.

TEIRESIAS: You laugh at her body, Madame, but can you account for her spirit?

JOCASTA: What was her riddle?

TEIRESIAS: Why do you ask, Madame? It is of the past.

JOCASTA: No.

If you speak with the Gods, you should know the riddle. If you know it, tell me.

TEIRESIAS: Ask the one who answered it.

JOCASTA: You don't know!

TEIRESIAS: Patience, Madame, I know many things.

JOCASTA: You're blind and you know nothing.

TEIRESIAS: Taunt my blindness, but respect an inner vision that sees beyond the limits of the eye.

JOCASTA: What was the riddle?

TEIRESIAS: What creature, in one life, crawls on four feet in the morning, walks on two at noon, and three in the evening.

JOCASTA: And the answer is man! You didn't know that, did you, Teiresias? Did you? Why didn't you answer the riddle?

TEIRESIAS: It was not God's will.

JOCASTA: God's will! God's will! What if humans should use their reason?

TEIRESIAS: God's ways are mysterious.

JOCASTA: Only because you make them so with cryptic sayings and meaningless prophecies. It is you who decide their will. You have the Gods beguiled, dancing in the palm of your hand. You and Creon.

TEIRESIAS: Madame knows that her speech is false and blasphemous.

JOCASTA: I know that the will of the Gods is strangely compatible with corruption, the degradation of men.

TEIRESIAS: Madame...!

JOCASTA: Don't think I can't see, Teiresias. You talk about your inner vision, but I have eyes! God's will is murder and fear. Your consolation is to say it is mysterious -- to accept ignorance and dumbly obey. Well, by the Gods, I shall find my own way, by my own will! If I create my own sorrow, I will accept that. I will not prate against the Gods.

TEIRESIAS: Forbear! They will scourge you.

THEY HAVE ENTERED JOCASTA'S APARTMENT.

JOCASTA: How? With death? We all die. With sorrow? Have I known anything else? Hunger? My people go hungry! You put your faith in silly omens. Omens that are wrong from Gods that are stupid. You are blind! Blind and a fool!

TEIRESIAS: Those with eyes are often blind, but there will come a time in your house when the blind shall see.

JOCASTA: You talk in meaningless riddles. You think you are the Sphinx. You are a fool!

JOCASTA PLACES THE FEATHER FROM THE SPHINX ON THE TABLE BESIDE THE ARROW KUPIA HAS GIVEN HER EARLIER.

TEIRESIAS: Madame will one day know who is the fool and who is blind.

SHOUTING FROM THE CROWD BECOMES LOUDER. JOCASTA MOVES TO THE BALCONY.

JOCASTA: Why are they shouting?

TEIRESIAS STARTS TO FOLLOW. HE STUMBLES. THE BOY LEAVES KUPIA TO COME FORWARD TO HELP HIM.

A PANORAMIC VIEW FROM BEHIND THE CROWD, TOWARD THE PALACE. BEYOND THE PEOPLE WE SEE THE GATES TOWARD SCREEN RIGHT. WE SEE HAEMON AND OEDIPUS COMING FROM SCREEN LEFT, AS THEY WALK ALONG THE BALCONY APPROACHING THE FRONT OF THE PALACE.

STANDING BELOW, ON THE PALACE PORCH, IN FRONT OF THE GREAT DOORS, IS **CREON**. THE SHADOWS OF THE **CROWD** REACH THE PORCH NOW.

AT FAR SCREEN RIGHT, WE SEE **JOCASTA** COME ONTO THE BALCONY. **TEIRESIAS** APPEARS A MOMENT LATER. EVEN WITH THE SHOUTING, WE HEAR HIS VOICE CLEARLY.

TEIRESIAS: Beware of the voices of man, they tempt you to destruction.

CLOSE UP OF JOCASTA

They will bring you to doom.

TWO SHOT, TEIRESIAS AND JOCASTA.

JOCASTA: BACKING AWAY FROM **TEIRESIAS**, **JOCASTA** SCREAMS:

Stop it! Stop it!

TEIRESIAS: The Gods are angry!

JOCASTA: Leave me alone!

TEIRESIAS: Your fate is hounding you.

JOCASTA: Stop!

AS **JOCASTA** TURNS FROM HIM, SHE SEES **HAEMON** AND **OEDIPUS** COMING ALONG THE BALCONY. **JOCASTA** RUNS INTO HER ROOM, AND ON INTO THE BEDROOM.

HAEMON AND **OEDIPUS** APPROACH **TEIRESIAS** AND THE **BOY**.

TEIRESIAS: Avoid it if you can. If not, woe to you and to Thebes, woe to the House of Laius. Oedipus will destroy this House.

HAEMON: Silence, old man!

HE SIGNALS TO THE **BOY** TO LEAD **TEIRESIAS** AWAY.

TEIRESIAS: Haemon? Is it Haemon?

HAEMON: You must go.

TEIRESIAS: If you love the Queen...

HAEMON: Silence! Take him home!

THE BOY LEADS TEIRESIAS AWAY.

OEDIPUS: Who is he?

HAEMON: Teiresias.

OEDIPUS: Why does he speak against me?

HAEMON: Forget it. Wait here.

HAEMON ENTERS JOCASTA'S BEDROOM.

JOCASTA IS STANDING MOTIONLESS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM. HAEMON STOPS SHORT. THERE IS A LONG SILENCE.

HAEMON: I have brought Oedipus.

THEIR EYES MEET FOR A MOMENT. JOCASTA LOOKS DOWN. HAEMON STANDS LOOKING AT HER, WANTING TO SAY SOMETHING MORE. THEN, AFTER A MOMENT, QUIETLY TURNS TO LEAVE.

HAEMON RETURNS TO THE RECEPTION ROOM, GENTLY CLOSING THE DOOR.

She will be here in a moment. Be gentle with her.

OEDIPUS: Who is the old man?

HAEMON: Teiresias is a seer.

OEDIPUS: Does she listen to him?

HAEMON: WITH SUDDEN ANGER.

What is your fear?

OEDIPUS DOES NOT ANSWER. HAEMON LEAVES THE ROOM.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK AND UP, UNTIL WE SEE **OEDIPUS** AS A SMALL FIGURE IN THE BIG ROOM. HE STANDS MOTIONLESS FOR A LONG TIME. THEN SLOWLY HE BEGINS TO EXAMINE THE ROOM. HE IS CURIOUS, NERVOUS, INTERESTED.

CUT TO A CLOSE SHOT AS HE PICKS UP **THE EMERALD CROWN**. HE EXAMINES IT SLOWLY AND IN DETAIL. THEN HE LIFTS IT TO TRY IT ON.

JOCASTA, STANDS IN THE DOORWAY, WATCHING **OEDIPUS**. HIS BACK IS TO HER. SHE SPEAKS SOFTLY, BUT DISTINCTLY. HER VOICE IS CALM.

JOCASTA: It's a beautiful crown, isn't it?

OEDIPUS, STARTLED, WHIRLS AROUND. HE LOOKS AT **JOCASTA**, LOOKS AT THE **CROWN**, SETS IT DOWN, THEN KNEELS.

TWO SHOT OF JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS.

Rise, young Oedipus. Don't play the fool.

INDICATING THE CROWN

Bring it to me.

HE BRINGS HER THE **CROWN**. SHE TAKES IT, TURNING IT TO SHOW IT OFF. THE LIGHT CATCHES AND REFLECTS IN THE EMERALDS.

It's made of the gold and emeralds of our ancestress Europa. Jewels, so they say, given to her by Zeus. In payment for rape. Put it on.

SHE EXTENDS THE **CROWN** TOWARD HIM. HE DOES NOT MOVE OR SPEAK.

Put it on. It carries no evil spell. The legend says that it confers irresistible beauty upon the one who wears it.

OEDIPUS: SMILING.

Is that a command?

HE TAKES THE CROWN FROM HER AND PUTS IT ON. SHE TURNS AWAY

I think you have captured all its magic.

HE TAKES THE CROWN FROM HIS HEAD AND DROPS IT ON A BENCH.

JOCASTA: How casually you toss away the gift of a God. Are you so rich?

OEDIPUS: Yes.

Who offered the Queen of Thebes to a riddle solver?

You?

Your brother?

Your nephew?

JOCASTA: Thebes needs a King.

OEDIPUS: I don't need a Kingdom.

JOCASTA: I'll abdicate and name you my heir.

OEDIPUS: If I wanted Thebes, I could have it.

HE GRABS THE AIR, MAKING A FIST.

JOCASTA: You are arrogant -- little tramp of the desert.

OEDIPUS: My birth is as good as yours.

JOCASTA: Indeed? Are you a King? King of what? King of riddles.

OEDIPUS: In my land, I am a Prince.

JOCASTA: Where is your land?

Why did you leave it?

Did they try to give you a crown?

OEDIPUS: I ran away.

JOCASTA: From what?

OEDIPUS: Fear. Fear of a prediction, a prophecy.

JOCASTA: Oh the Gods! The Gods are the excuse for every man's dilemma. I, too, receive predictions and prophecies. Teiresias says you bring me doom.

OEDIPUS: I don't think you believe him.

JOCASTA: He is an ancient seer, a prophet

OEDIPUS: He is wrong.

JOCASTA: How old are you?

OEDIPUS: Twenty, almost twenty.

JOCASTA: Though a Queen -- do you want to marry a woman old enough to be your mother?

OEDIPUS IS SHOCKED, SILENCED. HE BECOMES ANGRY AS JOCASTA BEGINS TO LAUGH.

OEDIPUS: Don't ever say that!

JOCASTA: Oh Gods, how funny!

OEDIPUS: Stop it!

HE GRABS HER IN A ROUGH, BRUTAL EMBRACE, KISSES HER UNTIL SHE STOPS LAUGHING, UNTIL SHE RESPONDS. WHEN HE RELEASES HER:

I don't want your crown, Jocasta, I want...

JOCASTA: Can I believe you?

OEDIPUS: Yes.

...your love.

OEDIPUS KISSES JOCASTA AGAIN, TENDERLY.

CUT TO THE BARRACKS AND THE NOISE OF MANY SOLDIERS CROWDED TOGETHER. TO ONE SIDE, AN OFFICER TURNS AWAY FROM CREON TO BAWL AN ORDER:

OFFICER: Quiet! you men! I want every one of you armed and ready.

IN THE BACKGROUND, THE MEN NOISILY PREPARE THEMSELVES, AS THE CAMERA FOCUSES ON HAEMON AND CREON. HAEMON TURNS CREON TO FACE HIM.

HAEMON: Father, you can't send armed men out there!

CREON: I want the court cleared.

HAEMON: You're ordering a massacre.

Let me talk to them.

I'll persuade them to go peacefully.

They're fifty to one against the soldiers. You might not win.

Let me try.

CREON: As you wish.

HAEMON EXITS. CREON SPEAKS TO THE OFFICER.

Keep the men ready. Wait for my order

OFFICER: All right, you men, relax. Take a breather.

NOISY CONVERSATION STARTS UP AGAIN. THE CAMERA FOCUSES ON A GROUP THAT INCLUDES THE GUARDS FROM OEDIPUS' ROOM. THEY HAVE OVERHEARD THE WORDS BETWEEN CREON AND HAEMON.

1st SOLDIER: Going to sweet talk them, is he?

POLYPHONTES: He's right.

2nd SOLDIER: Well, it's fight now or long live King Oedipus

3rd SOLDIER: He might be a good King.

4th SOLDIER: Shhhhh... You want to get...?

HE DRAWS HIS FINGER ACROSS HIS THROAT.

2ND GUARD: Who is he?

3rd SOLDIER: Oedipus?

POLYPHONTES: You would sell your brother, wouldn't you?

2ND GUARD: You're pretty friendly with him What'd you talk about in there?

You know him.

POLYPHONTES: I don't know what you mean.

THE 2ND GUARD BEGINS TO BACK AWAY

YOUNG SOLDIER: Do you know him?

POLYPHONTES: I've never seen him before.

POLYPHONTES NOTICES THE 2ND GUARD JUST GOING OUT THE DOOR. HE STANDS UP, LOOKS AROUND, FEAR GROWING IN HIM. HE LEAVES THE ROOM.

A SHOT FROM THE BARRACKS ROOM DOOR. 2ND GUARD IS FAR DOWN ONE HALL. POLYPHONTES HURRIES OFF IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION.

CUT TO THE CROWD AT THE GATES. IN CONTRAST TO THE GOOD-NATURED NOISE OF THE BARRACKS ROOMS, THE CROWD'S NOISE SOUNDS HOSTILE, VERGING ON VIOLENCE.

THE SUN HAS SET.

CUT TO HAEMON STANDING AT THE TOP OF THE GREAT FRONT STAIRWAY, HE CALLS TO A GUARD:

HAEMON: Get some light. They can't see me.

GUARD: They can see well enough. They want to fight.

HAEMON: Get light!

THE GUARD TURNS TO GO INTO THE PALACE.

CUT TO THE MURKY TWILIGHT IN THE INNER COURT WHERE THE SPHINX'S BODY LIES. TWO SOLDIERS STAND HOLDING TORCHES. THREE OTHER SOLDIERS ARE IN THE COURTYARD. TWO OF THEM SITTING ON THE LOGS AT THE EDGE OF THE PYRE. THE THIRD IS THE YOUNG SOLDIER. NO ONE TALKS.

CREON ENTERS THE COURTYARD. THE DOOR IS CLOSED AFTER HIM BY THE GUARD.

CREON: Is everything ready?

ONE SOLDIER NODS.

No one has seen the body.

ANOTHER SOLDIER SHAKES HIS HEAD.

3RD SOLDIER: The Queen, Sir.

CREON: The Queen? When?

3RD SOLDIER: Some time ago.

CREON SIGNALS FOR THE SPHINX'S BODY TO BE PLACED ON THE PYRE. TWO SOLDIERS LIFT BACK THE CLOTH.

CREON: Wait.

CREON LOOKS A LONG TIME AT THE DEAD SPHINX. PERHAPS HE SENSES HIS OWN DOWNFALL. INTO THE FRAME, AS THOUGH HE HAD SNEAKED UP, COMES THE FACE OF THE YOUNG SOLDIER, WHICH SLIGHTLY RESEMBLES OEDIPUS. HIS FACE IS FILLED WITH AWE.

YOUNG SOLDIER: Dare you burn her, my Lord?

CREON LOOKS AT HIM STARTLED AND MOMENTARILY FRIGHTENED, THEN IRRITATED:

Nonsense!

HE SIGNALS AGAIN FOR THE BODY TO BE PLACED ON THE PYRE. AS THE CAMERA PULLS BACK, THE YOUNG SOLDIER IS SEEN STANDING RESPECTFULLY NEXT TO CREON. THE SOLDIERS LIFT THE SPHINX ON ITS STRETCHER AND DUMP IT UNCEREMONIOUSLY ONTO THE PYRE.

SOLDIER: Should we send for Teiresias?

CREON: Be still!

Light it!

THE SOLDIERS TOUCH THEIR TORCHES TO THE PYRE. THE FIRE IS SLOW TO START.

Fan the flames!

TO THE YOUNG SOLDIER.

You there, you help.

THE YOUNG SOLDIER'S POV. THE SPHINX FROM THIS ANGLE, WITH THE FLAMES CREEPING NEAR IT, LOOKS TERRIFYING.

TWO SHOT: CREON AND THE YOUNG SOLDIER. THE YOUNG SOLDIER, AFRAID, DOES NOT MOVE. ANGRILY, CREON STARTS TOWARD HIM.

THE COURTYARD DOOR OPENS. CREON TURNS TO SEE WHO IT IS. THE GUARD FROM THE DOOR ENTERS AND CROSSES THE COURTYARD TO CREON.

GUARD: One of the Palace Guards wants to talk to you.

CREON: Not now!

GUARD: About the Hero.

CREON LEAVES THE COURTYARD WITH THE GUARD. THE CAMERA LINGERS FOR A MOMENT ON THE BURNING SPHINX.

CUT TO THE HALLWAY AS CREON AND THE GUARD ENTER. THE GUARD CLOSES THE DOOR. THE 2ND GUARD IS STANDING THERE AT ATTENTION. CREON STUDIES HIM FOR A MOMENT.

CREON: Yes.

2ND GUARD: Prince Creon.

CREON: What is it?

2ND GUARD: I know the man you're looking for.

CREON: Looking for?

2ND GUARD: He has information... about...

CREON TAKES THE 2ND GUARD'S ARM AND WALKS HIM A FEW STEPS DOWN THE HALL.

CREON: Who is it?

THE 2ND GUARD SMILES INGRATIATINGLY.

You'll get your reward.

2ND GUARD: Do you know Polyphontes?

CREON: SURPRISED.

Polyphontes?

Why didn't he come?

THEY START DOWN THE HALL TOWARD THE BARRACKS.

2ND GUARD: He seems to have fallen under the spell of our savior.

CUT TO A SERVANT LIGHTING ONE OF THE TALL METAL CANDELABRA WHICH FLANK THE DOORS TO THE BALCONY IN JOCASTA'S RECEPTION ROOM. THE BALCONY DOORS ARE CLOSED AND CURTAINS DRAWN. STILL, THE SHOUTING OF THE CROWD CAN BE FAINTLY HEARD. AS THE SERVANT MOVES TO LIGHT THE OTHER CANDELABRA, THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM, THEN PULLS BACK TO REVEAL JOCASTA SITTING IN A CHAIR WITH OEDIPUS SITTING ON THE FLOOR. BESIDE HER. A STEMMED METAL WINE GOBLET IS NEAR HIS HAND. AT ONE SIDE OF THE SCREEN, A CAT SITS UNOBTRUSIVELY ON A CHEST. WE HEAR ITS PURRING BEFORE WE SEE IT.

THE SERVANT FINISHES HIS WORK AND LEAVES. THE CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSER TO OEDIPUS AND JOCASTA. JOCASTA IS HUMMING. THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE CANDLELIT ROOM IS SERENE AND PEACEFUL.

OEDIPUS DRINKS FROM THE GOBLET AND HANDS IT TO JOCASTA. SHE TAKES A SIP AND GIVES IT BACK TO HIM. HE SETS IT ON THE FLOOR. THEIR CONVERSATION IS SLOW, ALMOST DREAMLIKE.

OEDIPUS: Did Creon invent the Sphinx?

JOCASTA: He used it.

OEDIPUS: What was she?

JOCASTA: You solved the riddle.

OEDIPUS: She seemed like a creature in a dream.

JOCASTA: I saw the body.

OEDIPUS: You saw it?

I thought I might have imagined it. In the heat... The sun was dazzling.
The moon was in the sky... I'm glad you saw it.

JOCASTA: The terror started with a kind of sickness. No one knew what it was. Then Laius was killed. There had to be something to blame. She might have been an innocent creature until... Who can resist the intoxication of being feared?

Creon was pleased to have the people think it was the "mad Queen's" soul sitting out there devouring Thebes.

A LOUD BANGING ON THE DOOR. BOTH JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS JUMP UP. JOCASTA KNOCKS OVER THE WINE GOBLET. WINE STAINS THE HEM OF HER DRESS.

CUT TO THE DOOR BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND ROOM. IT IS THROWN OPEN AND POLYPHONTES RUSHES IN. HE STOPS, DISTRAUGHT, THEN KNEELS.

POLYPHONTES: My Queen, forgive me.

JOCASTA: What is it?

POLYPHONTES: Oedipus...

OEDIPUS STARES DEFIANTLY AT POLYPHONTES.

JOCASTA: Well?

POLYPHONTES: I must tell you.

OEDIPUS WALKS BEHIND POLYPHONTES AND CLOSES THE DOOR.

JOCASTA: Tell me. Get up.

POLYPHONTES RISES. HE LOOKS AT JOCASTA, LOOKS AT OEDIPUS, WHO IS STANDING BEHIND HIM AND TO ONE SIDE. THEN BOWING HIS HEAD, HE SAYS:

POLYPHONTES: Oedipus... killed... a man.

JOCASTA: What are you talking about?

TO OEDIPUS

Is it true?

POLYPHONTES: If Creon finds out...

JOCASTA: Creon?

TO POLYPHONTES:

Who was it?

POLYPHONTES DOESN'T ANSWER. TO OEDIPUS:

Who was it?

OEDIPUS: I don't know.

POLYPHONTES: Your Majesty...

JOCASTA: You killed a man?

OEDIPUS: It was an accident.

I tried to... It was a pitiful accident.

JOCASTA: Tell me how it happened.

OEDIPUS: In my traveling...

JOCASTA: Is this why you left your home?

OEDIPUS: Afterward. A long time after. I was alone, walking along a road. I always traveled alone...

WATCHING JOCASTA INTENTLY

....and unarmed.

**OEDIPUS SPEAKS SLOWLY. IT IS A PAINFUL MEMORY FOR HIM
AND HE IS BOTHERED BY THE QUESTION OF GUILT.**

**POLYPHONTES' EXPRESSION SUGGESTS THAT THIS MAY NOT BE AN ABSOLUTELY
ACCURATE VERSION OF THE STORY.**

It was in the mountains where three roads met. There was a man in a carriage, and... and...

JOCASTA: Polyphontes?

OEDIPUS: Yes.

I was coming from Delphi. I didn't know where the roads led, so I asked directions. He struck me with a sword. I don't think he meant to kill me. The old man in the carriage had ordered him to. The old man kept shouting.

POLYPHONTES: “Make way for your betters.”

OEDIPUS: Yes. “I know no betters than my sire and the Gods.”

TO JOCASTA:

I fought with this man and knocked him down. I think he was unconscious.

CLOSE UP OF POLYPHONTES. HIS FACE IMPASSIVE. PULL BACK TO INCLUDE OEDIPUS AND JOCASTA AGAIN.

I remember wondering if I had killed him. The old man attacked me from behind. I turned around, I remember. I wanted to say something, I wanted to stop him, but he struck me. I pushed him back and he fell. His feet were tangled in the horses’ reins. The horses were frightened. As he fell, they started to... to run. I tried to stop them. I ran after them, but...

They dragged him down the road... over the stones. When they stopped, he was dead.

HIS VOICE IS ALMOST INAUDIBLE AS HE FINISHES. THERE IS A LONG PAUSE.

TO POLYPHONTES:

Who was he?

JOCASTA: QUICKLY, TOUCHING OEDIPUS.

It was an accident.

LOOKING AT POLYPHONTES.

Only the Gods can be held responsible for an accident.

BEHIND POLYPHONTES, THE DOORS ARE FLUNG OPEN. IN THE DOORWAY STAND CREON, 2ND GUARD, AN OFFICER AND FIVE SOLDIERS. BEHIND THEM, THREE NOBLES, INCLUDING LORD DYMAS.

CREON: TO SOLDIERS, INDICATING POLYPHONTES.

Seize him!

OEDIPUS: STEPPING IN FRONT OF POLYPHONTES.

You're not to touch this man.

THE SOLDIERS STOP, STARTLED.

CREON: Both of them.

THE SOLDIERS STILL HESITATE. OEDIPUS STARES LEVELLY AT CREON. HE WAITS A MOMENT SO THAT THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE SOLDIERS' HESITATION CAN BE FELT. THEN, ALMOST SMILING, STILL LOOKING DIRECTLY AT CREON:

OEDIPUS: Arrest Prince Creon.

THERE IS ABSOLUTE SILENCE. OEDIPUS REPEATS VERY SOFTLY.

Arrest the Prince.

AFTER A BRIEF PAUSE, JOCASTA NODS, WITH QUIET AUTHORITY:

JOCASTA: Obey the King.

STILL NO ONE MOVES. CREON DRAWS HIS SWORD. LORD DYMAS WRENCHES IT FROM HIS HAND. CREON TURNS. THE SOLDIERS MOVE TO LAY HANDS ON HIM. HE BREAKS FROM THEM AND ATTACKS OEDIPUS. A QUIET, INTENSE AND BRUTAL FIGHT FOLLOWS. THE OTHERS STAND STILL AND SILENT, WATCHING.

THE TWO MEN ARE EVENLY MATCHED. CREON, THOUGH LARGER AND STRONGER, IS IN HIS FORTIES; OEDIPUS IS YOUNGER, LIGHTER, QUICKER. EVEN SO, AT THE MOMENT HAEMON ENTERS, OEDIPUS IS BEING SLOWLY OVERCOME. HAEMON ENTERS BY THE BALCONY DOORS. THE NOISE FROM THE CROWD, LOUD AND THREATENING, INVADES THE ROOM.

HAEMON: Jocasta, the gates are breaking!

HAEMON'S ENTRANCE AND THE NOISE OF THE CROWD DISTRACT CREON. HE TURNS TO THE OFFICER TO GIVE AN ORDER.

CREON: Call out the Guards! For the sake of Thebes, call the Guards!

OFFICER AND SEVERAL OF THE SOLDIERS, EXIT RUNNING.

OEDIPUS NEITHER SEES HAEMON NOR HEARS THE NOISE OF THE CROWD. HE TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO GIVE CREON A SAVAGE BLOW. CREON SLIPS ON THE WINE THAT WAS SPILLED EARLIER, AND FALLS TO HIS KNEES. OEDIPUS GRABS THE ARROW WHICH IS LYING ON THE TABLE. AS HE DOES SO, THE SPHINX'S FEATHER FLUTTERS TO THE FLOOR. IT IS A STRONG WOODEN ARROW WITH A SHARP METAL TIP. OEDIPUS HOLDS CREON WITH ONE HAND AND, USING THE ARROW, LASHES HIM BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE FACE WITH EXTREME BRUTALITY. CREON, DAZED FROM THE BLOW, NOW TRIES ONLY TO PROTECT HIS FACE. THE ARROW TIP CUTS INTO BOTH HIS HANDS AND HIS FACE. OEDIPUS IS "INSANE" WITH RAGE AND, ALTHOUGH CREON IS QUITE HELPLESS, OEDIPUS GOES ON AND ON. HORROR BEGINS TO SHOW ON THE FACES OF THE PEOPLE WATCHING.

THOUGH MOST OF THEM SIDE WITH OEDIPUS, THE BRUTALITY OF THIS BEATING IS NOT QUITE HUMAN.

HAEMON TRIES TO PULL OEDIPUS AWAY FROM HIS FATHER.

HAEMON: Oedipus! By the Gods! Oedipus!

OEDIPUS, BEYOND KNOWING WHAT HE IS DOING, STRUGGLES WITH HAEMON. HAEMON GIVES OEDIPUS A VERY HARD, SHARP SLAP ACROSS THE FACE. OEDIPUS IS SUDDENLY QUIET, HIS HYSTERIA SPENT. JOCASTA COMES TO HIM AND HELPS HIM TO SIT DOWN.

CREON IS TWISTED ROUND IN GREAT PAIN, HIS HEAD ALMOST BOWED TO THE FLOOR, HIS HANDS TO HIS FACE, BLOOD COMING FROM THE CUTS. TWO SOLDIERS STEP FORWARD TO LIFT HIM. HAEMON KEEPS THEM AWAY WITH A GESTURE AND KNEELS BESIDE CREON.

Father?

HAEMON IS MOVED BY THE SIGHT OF HIS FATHER SO BEATEN. HE REACHES OUT TO TOUCH HIM, TO HELP HIM. CREON THROWS OFF HIS HANDS AND GETS TO HIS FEET. HAEMON REMAINS AT HIS SIDE.

THE ALARM BELL BEGINS TO TOLL, CALLING OUT THE SOLDIERS.

JOCASTA: TO HAEMON:

Take him to prison.

HAEMON TURNS TO LOOK AT HER BESEECHINGLY.

And get him a physician.

HAEMON AND CREON, THE SOLDIERS AND THE NOBLES FILE OUT THE BALCONY DOORS. POLYPHONTES STARTS, HESITANTLY, TO FOLLOW THEM.

Polyphontes.

POLYPHONTES REMAINS. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THE OTHERS ALONG THE BALCONY.

CUT TO THE CROWD AND THE COURTYARD. MANY SOLDIERS POUR INTO THE COURTYARD. WE HEAR THE OFFICER SHOUTING ORDERS. THE CROWD IS TRYING TO FORCE THE GATES. A FEW PEOPLE TRY TO CLIMB THE FENCE AND ARE REPULSED BY SOLDIERS.

CUT TO CREON, HAEMON AND THE OTHERS WALKING ALONG THE BALCONY.

AS THEY REACH THE FRONT SECTION OF THE PALACE, CUT TO THE CROWD WHO SUCCEED IN OPENING THE GATES. BUT THEY ARE IMMEDIATELY HELD IN CHECK BY THE CLOSED RANKS OF THE SOLDIERS.

ON THE BALCONY, CREON STOPS TO OBSERVE THE SCENE IN THE COURTYARD.

CREON: Guard the Temple Gate!

HAEMON NODS TO A SOLDIER, WHO HURRIES OFF TO GIVE THIS ORDER. (THIS IS

CREON'S LAST ORDER -- AND THE COMMAND THAT SAVES THEBES FROM CIVIL STRIFE.)

FOR A FEW MOMENTS WE CONTINUE TO VIEW THE FIGHTING IN THE CROWD FROM THE BALCONY. THE CROWD IS GRADUALLY SUBDUED. AND THE GATES ARE RE-CLOSED.

HAEMON WATCHES HIS FATHER CLOSELY. WHEN A CERTAIN MEASURE OF ORDER IS RESTORED, HE SIGNALS FOR THE SOLDIER TO TAKE CREON AWAY. THE NOBLES REMAIN ON THE BALCONY. HAEMON RAISES HIS ARMS AND SHOUTS:

HAEMON: People of Thebes! People of Thebes. Listen to me! People of Thebes, you have won a great victory today....

(NOTE: THE BALCONY/CROWD SEQUENCE IS LIT BY TORCH LIGHT: TORCHES ARE ENSCONCED ON THE FACADE OF THE PALACE, IN THE HANDS OF SOME OF THE SOLDIERS, AND DOTTED HERE AND THERE AMONG THE PEOPLE.

CUT TO JOCASTA'S ROOM AS WE LEFT IT. HAEMON'S VOICE AND THE NOISE OF THE CROWD ARE HEARD FAINTLY. JOCASTA IS STILL SITTING BESIDE OEDIPUS. POLYPHONTES BRINGS HER A BASIN OF WATER. SHE KNEELS IN FRONT OF OEDIPUS AND WIPES HIS FACE WITH A CLOTH DIPPED IN THE WATER.

OEDIPUS: Is he dead? Is he...?

JOCASTA SHAKES HER HEAD GENTLY.

I didn't kill him. I swear it.

JOCASTA: No, my love.

OEDIPUS: I hate him.

JOCASTA: Creon will be all right.

OEDIPUS: Creon?

OEDIPUS SLUMPS AGAINST JOCASTA, ALMOST FAINTING.

JOCASTA: TO **POLYPHONTES:**

Help me.

TOGETHER THEY TAKE OEDIPUS INTO THE BEDROOM AND HELP HIM TO LIE DOWN ON JOCASTA'S BED. JOCASTA TAKES OFF HIS SANDALS. SHE NOTES THE SCARS ON HIS ANKLES AS SHE COVERS HIM. SHE STANDS, WATCHING HIM. POLYPHONTES LEAVES THE ROOM.

OEDIPUS' EYES ARE CLOSED. JOCASTA BENDS OVER HIM AND KISSES HIS FOREHEAD. HE OPENS HIS EYES FOR A MOMENT, SMILES A LITTLE, THEN FALLS ASLEEP.

JOCASTA RETURNS TO THE RECEPTION ROOM, LEAVING THE DOOR TO THE BEDROOM OPEN. SHE WALKS PAST POLYPHONTES, OPENS THE DOORS AND GOES OUT ONTO THE BALCONY, BUT STAYS CLOSE TO THE BUILDING, WHERE THE CROWD, WHICH IS QUIET NOW, DOES NOT SEE HER. HAEMON'S VOICE CAN BE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.

JOCASTA STANDS FOR A LONG TIME, LOOKING OUT OVER THE CITY. HER BACK IS TO POLYPHONTES AND SHE DOES NOT TURN AS SHE SAYS QUIETLY:

JOCASTA: It was Laius.

At Phocis.

POLYPHONTES: Yes, my Queen.

JOCASTA: Before, you told a different story of his death.

POLYPHONTES: I was afraid.

JOCASTA: You said bandits attacked you. Five? Six?

POLYPHONTES: I was afraid to say the King was killed by a boy.

JOCASTA: Polyphontes, what was Laius like

POLYPHONTES: He was the King.

JOCASTA: Tell me what you thought of him. You served him for many years. Was he kind to you?

POLYPHONTES DOES NOT LOOK AT HER.

I have seen him beat you.

He was a murderer, a tyrant, a thief. He condemned his people to poverty and ignorance. He set himself up as a judge, a God of Thebes. Whatever a person created, he took. Because it was not that person's work, but a gift from the Gods.

Oh holidays he scattered gold in the street, and daily taxed people beyond endurance. They did not have bread, but he killed them. He did not give them food to eat, or useful work to do. He gave them wars. Glory! Do you know that term, Polyphontes? Glory! He killed my son. Many people's sons. God's will be done. Yes, he was a God! I do not know any man who more closely resembled the Gods.

Was he a good man, Polyphontes?

Answer me.

SLOWLY POLYPHONTES SHAKES HIS HEAD. SHE TURNS AWAY.

Creon is like him.

POLYPHONTES LOOKS THOUGHTFULLY TOWARD THE OPEN DOOR OF THE BEDROOM.

JOCASTA TURNS, NOTICES THE DIRECTION OF HIS GAZE.

I have reason to believe Oedipus will be a good King. -- a better King than Laius.

POLYPHONTES, BROUGHT OUT OF HIS THOUGHTS, STUDIES JOCASTA FOR A LONG MOMENT, QUESTIONINGLY. DOES HE BELIEVE HER? DOES SHE BELIEVE

HERSELF? THEN HE BOWS HIS HEAD.

POLYPHONTES: Yes, my Queen

JOCASTA COMES IN FROM THE BALCONY.

JOCASTA: Does anyone else know the story of Laius' death?

POLYPHONTES: No, my Queen.

JOCASTA: Will you keep silent?

POLYPHONTES: Yes, my Queen.

JOCASTA WALKS TO THE BEDROOM DOOR.

CUT TO CLOSE UP: OEDIPUS ASLEEP. CUT TO JOCASTA.

JOCASTA: I would not choose to build my world on death. But perhaps there is no choice, perhaps we can only agree -- to the birth of love from death...

POLYPHONTES: I will be silent.

HAEMON ENTERS AT THE BALCONY DOORS, THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO INCLUDE HIM.

HAEMON: Jocasta!

JOCASTA: There's blood on your face.

HAEMON: I have announced your marriage. The people are calmed, but they will not disperse. You must come and confirm the announcement.

And Oedipus.

JOCASTA: He's asleep.

TO POLYPHONTES:

Stay, look after him.

SHE AND HAEMON EXIT THROUGH THE BALCONY DOORS. WE FOLLOW THEM AS THEY WALK ALONG THE BALCONY.

How is Creon?

HAEMON: I sent him to prison. I will go down.

ANGUISHED.

Why did he keep beating him?

JOCASTA: I don't think he knew what he was doing.

HAEMON: Jocasta...

BUT HE SAYS NO MORE.

THEY WALK ON IN SILENCE. JOCASTA TAKES HIS HAND. THEY STOP. SHE RAISES HIS HAND TO HER LIPS AND KISSES IT.

JOCASTA: I love him, Haemon.

JOCASTA SEARCHES HIS FACE FOR UNDERSTANDING. HAEMON BOWS HIS HEAD.

JOCASTA: We have a chance to start anew -- I have a chance to be Queen, a good and merciful Queen. I never had that chance before. I was trained in love and sold as a slave. You know something about slavery... and something about love. Oedipus speaks to my heart. There are wells of tenderness here, untapped, unimagined by Laius, unseen by Creon. I have lain awake for twenty years dreaming of what it could have been like to train the future King. And, in so doing, have trained myself. Now I am Queen.

I see strength in Oedipus -- and terrible passion. But even more -- an apt pupil. He speaks of our desolate land with love, with hope. Let him occupy the throne, let him reverse the long years of Laius' corruption. With my knowledge, your knowledge of Thebes, and his young energy, we can

do much.

THEY WALK ON, JOCASTA STILL HOLDS HAEMON'S HAND.

He loves me.

THEY REACH THE FRONT OF THE PALACE. THE NOBLES ARE STILL WAITING. JOCASTA AND THE NOBLES GREET EACH OTHER IN RESPECTFUL SILENCE.

JOCASTA AND HAEMON STEP TO THE BALUSTRADE. A SHOUT GOES UP FROM THE CROWD AS SOON AS THEY SEE JOCASTA. SHE HOLD HER HANDS UP FOR SILENCE. WHEN IT IS SILENT SHE BEGINS TO SPEAK.

JOCASTA: People of Thebes. My people. Haemon has told you already, and I have come to confirm it. I shall be married...

A GREAT SHOUT AND CHEERING FROM THE CROWD.

...tomorrow!

CHEERING

To our hero, Oedipus!

CHEERING

He will share my throne and be your King.

CHEERING

Thebes will prosper again!

CHEERING

Throw off your garments of death and mourning. Rejoice! Come to my wedding -- tomorrow, when the sun is high! We shall celebrate!

THE CROWD CHEERS ON AND ON. AMONG THEIR SHOUTS WE HEAR:

FROM INDIVIDUALS IN THE CROWD:

Long live the Queen!

Long live King Oedipus!

USE MANY CUTS OF THEIR JOYOUS FACES. THEY DANCE, EMBRACE, CHEER, SHOUT, SOME CRY FOR JOY.

CUT TO JOCASTA AND HAEMON AS THEY STEP BACK FROM THE BALUSTRADE. JOCASTA TURNS TO HAEMON.

JOCASTA: Will you see to the preparations. There must be a wedding feast, a great feast for all the city. Find enough, find it someplace. Tomorrow the gates will be unlocked, they will never be locked again.

HAEMON: As you wish, my Queen.

HIS ANSWER IS MORE FORMAL THAN SHE HAD EXPECTED. SHE HOLDS OUT HER HAND TO HIM. HE TAKES IT AND KNEELS. SHE IS AGAIN SURPRISED.

THE NOBLES KNEEL

THERE IS A MOMENT OF SILENCE IN WHICH SHE REALIZES AND ACKNOWLEDGES THIS NEW RESPECT.

JOCASTA: Please rise.

SHE TURNS TO GO IN BY THE THRONE ROOMS DOORS. LORD DYMAS OPENS THEM FOR HER. SHE SILENTLY GIVES HIM HER HAND. THEN SHE GOES ON INTO THE THRONE ROOM.

THE CAMERA STAYS ON HAEMON. HE DOES NOT RISE UNTIL AFTER JOCASTA HAS LEFT THE BALCONY.

CUT TO JOCASTA. SHE HAS ALMOST CROSSED THE THRONE ROOM. THE ROOM IS SILENT AND DARK, THE ONLY LIGHT COMES FROM THE FLICKERING TORCHES OUTSIDE. SHE TURNS AS SHE REACHES THE DOOR.

CUT TO JOCASTA'S POV OF THE DOUBLE THRONE OF THEBES.

CUT TO JOCASTA AS SHE OPENS THE DOOR AND GOES INTO THE HALL. SHE WALKS SLOWLY FOR A FEW MINUTES, HER HEAD BOWED, THINKING. THEN SHE RAISES HER HEAD, HER FACE UNTROUBLED, SHE SMILES. SHE QUICKENS HER PACE UNTIL SHE IS ALMOST RUNNING.

CUT TO OEDIPUS IN JOCASTA'S BED, ASLEEP. HIS FACE IS CALM, UNTROUBLED, INNOCENT. WE PULL BACK TO SEE POLYPHONTES STANDING BESIDE THE BED WATCHING OEDIPUS. HIS EXPRESSION IS TROUBLED AND THREATENING, HE HAS HIS SWORD PARTIALLY DRAWN.

CUT TO JOCASTA ENTERING THE FIRST ROOM OF HER APARTMENT. SHE WALKS VERY QUICKLY, STILL SMILING. THE ROOM IS DARK. SUDDENLY SOMEONE STEPS TOWARD HER. SHE IS MOMENTARILY FRIGHTENED. THEN WE SEE THAT THE PERSON WHO HAS STEPPED TOWARD HER IS AN OLD MAN (THE SHEPHERD). THE CAMERA PULLS BACK ENOUGH TO INCLUDE APHRON, WHO STANDS NEAR THE SHEPHERD.

JOCASTA RECOVERS FROM HER MOMENTARY FRIGHT AND PEERS CLOSELY AT THE SHEPHERD -- PARTLY TO SEE HIM IN THE DIM LIGHT; PARTLY AS IF SHE THOUGHT SHE RECOGNIZED HIM. BUT SHE DOES NOT.

SHEPHERD: Your Majesty, may I speak to you?

JOCASTA: Not now.

SHE WALKS PAST HIM.

APHRON: He says...

JOCASTA: Not now.

SHE GOES INTO THE THE SECOND, RECEPTION, ROOM, SHUTTING THE DOOR.

CUT TO: THE BEDROOM. POLYPHONTES HEARS THE DOOR SHUT, SHEATHES HIS SWORD, AND LEAVES OEDIPUS' BEDSIDE.

CUT TO: RECEPTION ROOM. JOCASTA WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM. POLYPHONTES

ENTERS.

JOCASTA: You may go. You will be safe now.

POLYPHONTES: Yes, your Majesty.

AS HE PASSES HER, SHE TOUCHES HIS ARM.

JOCASTA: Remember your promise.

POLYPHONTES: I will not forget it.

HE GOES OUT.

CUT TO JOCASTA AS SHE ENTERS THE BEDROOM. SHE CLOSES THE DOOR. SHE GOES TO THE BED AND, LEANING CLOSE TO OEDIPUS, SHE GENTLY CALLS HIS NAME.

JOCASTA: Oedipus. Oedipus.

HE OPENS HIS EYES AND LOOKS AT HER SMILING. SHE SITS BESIDE HIM ON THE BED.

JOCASTA: Did you sleep?

OEDIPUS: I dreamt of you.

HE PULLS HER TO HIM AND KISSES HER.

You kept me safe from all the terrors of the world.

JOCASTA: LAUGHS GENTLY.

What terrors?

SHE MOVES TO THE BALCONY DOORS AND OPENS THEM. SHE IS BATHED IN MOONLIGHT. OEDIPUS COMES TO HER, EMBRACES HER WITH URGENT PASSION. JOCASTA, AFTER A MOMENT, DRAWS BACK A LITTLE, PROTESTING.

JOCASTA: Tomorrow. Tomorrow we will be married.

OEDIPUS IGNORES HER PROTEST, AND KISSES HER UNTIL SHE RESPONDS TO HIS PASSION WITH HER OWN PASSION.

THE CAMERA MOVES FROM THEM AT THE BALCONY DOORS TO THE TORCHES OF THE PEOPLE LEAVING THE GATES, THEN TO THE MOON NEAR THE HORIZON

DISSOLVE TO: A MONTAGE OF JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS MAKING LOVE. THEIR IMAGES ARE SUPERIMPOSED OVER AND DISSOLVED IN AND OUT OF THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCES:

SEQUENCE A: TORCHES BEING LIT IN THE THRONE ROOM. PREPARATIONS BEGINNING.

SEQUENCE B: HAEMON, WITH A SERVANT CARRYING A TORCH. THEY ARE IN ONE OF THE STOREROOMS IN THE LOWER AREAS OF THE PALACE. THEY WALK BETWEEN ROWS OF WINE JUGS. HAEMON EXAMINES THEM.

HAEMON: This and the next room -- take all the wine into the city tomorrow.

SEQUENCE C: PREPARATIONS GOING ON IN THE KITCHENS. PEOPLE WORKING, CHOPPING, KNEADING, STIRRING, ETC. THERE ARE MANY OPEN FIRES FOR COOKING.

SEQUENCE D: AT THE BACK OF THE PALACE, ANIMALS BEING SLAUGHTERED FOR THE FEAST. THE MOONLIGHT CASTS THE SHADOW OF THE PALACE OVER THE TORCH LIT SCENE.

THE IMAGES OF THE LOVE SCENE DISSOLVE OUT.

DISSOLVE TO: A VIEW FROM THE PALACE STEPS LOOKING TOWARD THE TOWN THROUGH THE GATES. THE LAST OF THE CROWD HAS DEPARTED. THE COURTYARD IS ALMOST DESERTED EXCEPT FOR A FEW SOLDIERS WHO ARE LEAVING NOW, AND GUARDS AT THE GATES WHO WILL REMAIN. A FEW TORCHES FLICKER IN THE TOWN IN THE DISTANCE.

DISSOLVE TO: A SMALL ROOM IN THE PALACE. APHRON, HOLDING A LAMP,

LEADS THE SHEPHERD IN.

APHRON: I suppose you can stay here.

THE SHEPHERD BOWS.

SHEPHERD: Thank you, ma'am

HE SITS DOWN ON A BENCH. APHRON PLACES THE LAMP ON THE TABLE, TAKES OUT BLANKETS FROM A CHEST, AND LEAVES. THE SHEPHERD STRETCHES OUT ON THE BENCH AND GETS AS COMFORTABLE AS HE CAN.

DISSOLVE TO: HAEMON AS HE APPROACHES THE DOOR TO THE INNER COURT. IT IS NO LONGER GUARDED. HE OPENS THE DOOR AND GOES INTO THE COURTYARD.

CUT TO THE INNER COURT. THE SPHINX'S PYRE HAS ALMOST BURNT OUT. HAEMON STANDS WATCHING IT FOR AWHILE. ONE OF THE THREE SOLDIERS REMAINING IN THE THE COURTYARD COMES UP TO HIM.

HAEMON: The Sphinx?

SOLDIER: Yes, my Lord.

HAEMON: What was it like?

SOLDIER: It's hard to describe.

HAEMON: NODS

Clear the courtyard and clean it.

HE STARTS OUT, THEN TURNS.

The Queen is to be married tomorrow.

THE SOLDIERS ARE SURPRISED AND PLEASED. HAEMON EXITS.

CUT TO THE CURTAINS IN JOCASTA'S BEDROOM. THE CAMERA MOVES TO INCLUDE JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS. OEDIPUS' HEAD IS ON JOCASTA'S BREAST.

THEIR EYES ARE CLOSED, BUT THEY ARE AWAKE.

OEDIPUS: Are you hungry?

JOCASTA: LAUGHING SOFTLY.

No. Are you?

OEDIPUS: Yes.

HE REACHES ACROSS HER TO GET THE BOWL OF FRUIT THAT IS ON THE TABLE BESIDE THE BED. THE CRADLE IS ALSO NEAR THE BED ON THAT SIDE. OEDIPUS GLANCES AT IT, PERHAPS WONDERING ABOUT IT FOR A MOMENT. HE SETS THE BOWL OF FRUIT ON THE BED, TAKES SOME GRAPES. AS JOCASTA GETS OUT OF BED, THE CAMERA COMES IN TO CLOSE UP ON OEDIPUS

I'm always hungry. My mother used to worry about me.

JOCASTA'S VOICE: When did you leave your home?

OEDIPUS: A year ago? I don't remember.

JOCASTA'S VOICE: Do they know where you are?

OEDIPUS: Who?

JOCASTA'S VOICE: Your mother, your father.

OEDIPUS: No.

HE SETS THE BOWL OF FRUIT ASIDE. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO INCLUDE JOCASTA. SHE IS DRESSED IN A LOOSE DARK ROBE. SHE WALKS AROUND THE BED AND SITS BESIDE OEDIPUS.

JOCASTA: Don't you think they worry?

OEDIPUS SHRUGS. HE ROLLS OVER TO LIE ON HIS STOMACH. JOCASTA STROKES HIS BACK. JOCASTA SPEAKS SOFTLY.

Where is it?

OEDIPUS: SLEEPY AND CONTENT, HE FORGETS HIS CAUTION.

What?

JOCASTA: Your home.

OEDIPUS: Corinth.

JOCASTA: Prince of Corinth?

OEDIPUS: My father is King Polybus.

JOCASTA KISSES HIM.

Does that make you happy?

JOCASTA: Why did you leave?

HE PULLS AWAY FROM HER. SHE SAYS TENDERLY.

Tell me.

OEDIPUS: I hated him.

JOCASTA: Who?

OEDIPUS: My father.

JOCASTA: Enough to leave -- to wander alone in the desert?

OEDIPUS: He was always preaching about duty and good -- good and evil. Oh Gods, how he used to rant about evil! evil! evil! I felt guilty of the world's sins before I was old enough to think. Slimy with guilt. I wanted to kill him.

JOCASTA: And your mother?

OEDIPUS: My mother loved my father.

JOCASTA: And did you love her?

OEDIPUS: Very much.

JOCASTA: You said before that you ran away from a prophecy.

OEDIPUS: ANGRILY SHAKING OFF HER HAND; THEN GENTLY APOLOGIZES.

I'm sorry.

HE TAKES HER HAND.

JOCASTA: What was the prophecy?

OEDIPUS: That I would, in fact, kill my father...

And...

JOCASTA: And?

OEDIPUS: SPEAKS ANGRILY, BUT HIS ANGER IS NOT DIRECTED AT HER.

And perhaps the priest was right! I hated him, Jocasta. I wanted to kill him. I used to dream about it. How I wished him dead. Him and the world he had made.

JOCASTA: Is that all there was to the prophecy?

OEDIPUS: No.

JOCASTA: What was the rest?

OEDIPUS: It was absurd.

Do you believe what the priests say?

JOCASTA: Not very often.

OEDIPUS: HE MOVES AWAY FROM HER.

He said I would marry my mother.

ABRUPTLY HE TURNS TO FACE HER.

Does that disgust you?

JOCASTA: No.

AFTER A MOMENT SHE GETS UP, GOES TO THE BALCONY DOORS, SHUTS THEM, AND CLOSES THE SHUTTERS.

OEDIPUS: I'm sorry, I shouldn't have told you.

I'll never go back to Corinth.

JOCASTA: RETURNS TO OEDIPUS.

No, you'll never go back

OEDIPUS: I love you.

JOCASTA LEANS OVER TO KISS HIM.

DISSOLVE TO A MONTAGE OF SHOTS INDICATING THE TIME LAPSE THROUGH THE NIGHT.

HAEMON STANDING ALONE ON THE BALCONY OUTSIDE THE THRONE ROOM, LOOKING OUT OVER THE DARK CITY, WHILE PREPARATIONS CONTINUE IN THE THRONE ROOM.

CREON SITTING ON HIS BED IN PRISON. HIS WOUNDS HAVE BEEN ATTENDED TO.

THE SHEPHERD PEACEFULLY ASLEEP

EARLY DAWN, THE INNER COURTYARD BEING CLEANED. SEVERAL SOLDIERS ARE SWEEPING AWAY THE ASHES OF THE SPHINX'S PYRE AND SCRUBBING THE FLAGSTONES.

HAEMON WALKING DOWN THE HALL. HE COMES TO THE DOOR OF OEDIPUS' ROOM. IT IS OPEN. HE STOPS, LOOKS IN, ENTERS. HE STANDS LOOKING AT THE EMPTY ROOM. THE FIRST RAYS OF THE MORNING SUN COME IN THROUGH THE BARRED WINDOWS. HAEMON GOES TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT.

CUT TO THE SUN RISING.

CUT TO THE RECEPTION ROOM IN JOCASTA'S APARTMENT. OUTSIDE THE MORNING SUNLIGHT IS CLEAR, BRIGHT, PURE. THE DOORS TO THE BALCONY ARE OPEN.

JOCASTA IS STANDING ON THE BALCONY WEARING A WHITE ROBE. HER BACK IS TO THE CAMERA. WHEN SHE TURNS WE SEE THAT SHE IS HOLDING A CAT. SHE COMES INTO THE ROOM, GOES TO THE DOOR OF THE BEDROOM AND SHUTS IT. SHE IS HAPPY, BUT ALSO TROUBLED. THE CAT JUMPS FROM HER ARMS. SHE KNEELS ON THE FLOOR, TALKING TO THE CAT AND PLAYING WITH IT.

JOCASTA: What do you think of prophecies? Prophecies, prophecies, prophecies. They're all the same. Prince of Corinth!

SHE PICKS UP THE CAT AND HUGS IT TO HER. APHRON ENTERS FROM THE FIRST ROOM. JOCASTA LOOKS UP. THE CAT JUMPS OUT OF HER ARMS. APHRON IS SMILING, HAPPY IN JOCASTA'S PLAYFULNESS.

APHRON: Good morning, your Majesty.

JOCASTA: I'm going to be married today.

Aphron, I'm going to be married.

APHRON: The Gods have blessed you.

JOCASTA: They have died in the night. They are dead of jealousy. No God could know my happiness.

Are my robes and my gown ready? Is the feast prepared? Find Haemon.

And Oedipus -- have the King's robes for him. Take them to his rooms. He

will be there soon.

The north rooms -- we will close off that wing. Somehow we'll have light in the palace!

APHRON: Yes, your Majesty, yes.

JOCASTA: Have someone there to help him dress. Hurry!

SHE TAKES KEYS FROM A DRAWER, GIVES THEM TO APHRON AND URGES HER TO THE DOOR.

APHRON: There's a shepherd to see you.

JOCASTA: So early?

APHRON: He's waited all night.

JOCASTA: A shepherd? Why?

APHRON: He has something to tell you, some wonderful news, he said.

JOCASTA: Let him come in.

APHRON EXITS. JOCASTA, STILL EXUBERANT, WHIRLS AROUND THE CAT IS FRIGHTENED, AND RUNS OUT ONTO THE BALCONY. JOCASTA STARTS AFTER IT AS THE SHEPHERD ENTERS. SHE STOPS, TURNS TO HIM, SMILING.

So, Shepherd, Aphron says you have good news for me. Welcome.

THROUGH THE SCENE OF THE SHEPHERD'S REVELATION THE QUALITY OF THE PURE MORNING LIGHT CHANGES TO BECOME A HARSH GLARE.

SHEPHERD: Yes, your Majesty. It will make you happy.

JOCASTA: LAUGHING

I'm too happy already.

You've waited all night. Where did you sleep?

SHEPHERD: In a little room.

JOCASTA: Where is your home?

SHEPHERD: In the hills. I only came to town to beg feed for my sheep. In the drought...

JOCASTA: They have been dying. I know.

And the people -- the land... But... The Sphinx is dead! Everything will be different now. We will send to Aulis, to Hyria, to Thespieae. We will get food. They will not refuse us. I'm to be married today.

SHEPHERD: I heard the announcement.

JOCASTA: Did you want to wish me well, kind Shepherd.

SHEPHERD: With all my heart, my Queen.

I have a gift.

JOCASTA: A gift?

SHEPHERD: A secret. I could not tell you while King Laius lived.

JOCASTA: Laius?

What is it?

SHE LOOKS SHARPLY AT HIM, TRYING TO REMEMBER HIS FACE.

SHEPHERD: Many years ago...

JOCASTA: **SHE STARES AT HIM NOW, ALMOST IN TERROR.**

What is it?

SHEPHERD: I'm the shepherd who took your son.

JOCASTA: Why do you come to me? Why now? Leave me alone!

SHEPHERD: QUIETLY, ALMOST A WHISPER, BUT AN ARRESTING WHISPER THAT HALTS JOCASTA'S HYSTERIA.

He's not dead.

JOCASTA: CLOSE UP

My son?

THE CAMERA MOVES TO INCLUDE THE **SHEPHERD**.

SHEPHERD: I didn't kill him.

JOCASTA: ALMOST AFRAID TO SAY IT.

Not dead?

SHEPHERD: He's alive.

JOCASTA: Where?

SHEPHERD: Let me tell you the story.

JOCASTA: Yes, tell me! Tell me quickly. He's alive?

SHEPHERD: Yes, your Majesty.

JOCASTA: Why haven't you come before? Why didn't you take pity on me before?

SHEPHERD: Until King Laius died, I was a traitor -- outside the law.

JOCASTA: Where is he?

SHEPHERD: When the King ordered the child to be killed, they sent for me. There were tears in your eyes. You were so young. I thought my heart would break for you. Prince Creon spoke. He said: "Take this boy far away and kill him. It

is the King's command." You held the infant in your arms, crying. You could not part from him.

JOCASTA: Please, Shepherd, don't...

SHEPHERD: Prince Creon took him from you and gave him to me. And I took him because it was the King's command. I took him to Mount Cithaeron, but I could not kill him. His ankles were pierced and bound. I left him in the wilderness.

JOCASTA: Alone?

SHEPHERD: Early the next morning I went back. But he was gone. I searched for him, but I couldn't find him.

JOCASTA: You didn't find him?

SHEPHERD: SMILING

Later on I met a shepherd. He had found the child and given it to his childless master.

JOCASTA: And you saw him safe?

SHEPHERD: Not since I left him on Mount Cithaeron, but I have talked with the Corinthian shepherd since then.

JOCASTA: Corinth?

SHEPHERD: Your son has been brought up as Prince of Corinth.

That is my secret, your Majesty. My gift for your wedding.

A LONG SHOT OF JOCASTA FROM SHEPHERD'S POV

JOCASTA: SHE WHISPERS IN QUIET WONDER,

Corinth?

SHE IS NOT ABLE TO REALIZE, ALL AT ONCE, WHAT THIS MEANS.

THROUGH THE FOLLOWING WE SEE, OR SENSE, A MOVING RANGE OF EMOTION CROSS **JOCASTA'S** FACE: JOY THAT HER SON IS ALIVE, SORROW FOR THE MANY UNHAPPY YEARS THINKING HIM DEAD. PLEASED THAT HE IS WITH HER NOW, REALIZING THAT IT IS HIM SHE IS ABOUT TO MARRY, REMEMBRANCE OF THE NIGHT JUST PAST OF EXQUISITE LOVE AND TENDERNESS WITH THE HANDSOME, PASSIONATE, CLEVER. AMUSING, YOUNG **OEDIPUS** WHO LOVES HER.

HER DILEMMA OPENS BEFORE HER. PERHAPS IT IS NOW SHE DECIDES TO GO THROUGH WITH THE MARRIAGE. PERHAPS IT IS LATER. THESE MOMENTS PREVIEW THE FOLLOWING SCENES.

HOW MUCH DOES SHE GUESS? HOW MUCH DOES SHE KNOW?

Corinth? Did you say Corinth?

SHEPHERD: Yes, your Majesty. He has been brought up as King Polybus' son.

THE CAMERA INCLUDES THE **SHEPHERD** NOW. HE STARES AT **JOCASTA**, WHO HAS TURNED PALE, CONCERNED AND AFRAID.

Your Majesty?

HE STEPS TOWARD HER.

Your Majesty?

JOCASTA: No.

What is his name?

SHEPHERD: His name? I don't know, your Majesty.

JOCASTA: Does the house of Corinth have more than one son?

SHEPHERD: No. He's their only son and heir.

THERE IS A LONG PAUSE. JOCASTA TRIES TO SMILE.

JOCASTA: Thank you... for telling me... that my son... is alive.

SHEPHERD: Your Majesty!

JOCASTA: RAISES HER HAND FOR SILENCE.

Thank you...

SHE CANNOT GO ON FOR A MOMENT. THEN:

Kind Shepherd.

You must not speak of this to anyone.

SHEPHERD: COMPLIANT, BUT DISAPPOINTED.

If you wish, your Majesty. But...

JOCASTA: Silence! You must swear by your life to tell no one. For twenty years you have carried this knowledge. Carry it to your grave. Will you swear to that?

SHEPHERD: I swear it, my Queen, by all the Gods.

JOCASTA: Good! Good! By the Gods, yes!

SHE KISSES HIS CHEEK.

Thank you, Shepherd.

SHEPHERD: HE IS MUCH SURPRISED, BUT ALSO EMBOLDENED TO ASK A FAVOR.

May I come to your wedding?

JOCASTA: My wedding? Of course. Of course. I'm to be married today.

TEARS STREAM DOWN HER FACE.

Yes, come. Come.

SHEPHERD: Thank you, my Queen.

HE EDGES TOWARD THE DOOR.

JOCASTA: Remember your oath.

SHEPHERD: Forever, my Queen.

SHE MOTIONS FOR HIM TO LEAVE. HE BOWS AND GOES OUT.

JOCASTA STANDS STILL AND ALONE IN THE HARSH GLARE OF THE SUN. THE CAT COMES TO HER AND BRUSHES AGAINST HER LEGS. SHE LOOKS DOWN, BUT DOES NOT PICK IT UP. SHE MOVES TO THE DOOR OF THE BEDROOM, STANDS FOR A MOMENT, THEN OPENS IT.

INSIDE THE SHUTTER BEDROOM, A PATTERN OF LIGHT AND SHADOW FROM THE VERTICAL SHUTTERS FALLS ACROSS THE BED. **OEDIPUS IS STILL ASLEEP. THE CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES IN ON OEDIPUS' FACE: BEAUTIFUL, YOUNG, CONTENTEDLY SLEEPING. THE CAT MEOWS AND JUMPS ONTO THE BED.**

JOCASTA WATCHES THE CAT AS IT LICKS OEDIPUS' FACE. OEDIPUS WAKES AND PETS THE CAT.

CLOSE UP **JOCASTA**, SHE SMILES. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK AS **JOCASTA MOVES TO THE BED. SHE STANDS BY THE SIDE OF THE BED FOR A MOMENT, LOOKING DOWN. THEN SHE KNEELS AND TOUCHES HER LIPS TO OEDIPUS' HAND.**

OEDIPUS: SAYS QUIETLY, TENDERLY:

Good morning, my love.

JOCASTA BURIES HER FACE AGAINST THE COVERS. HE PUTS HIS HAND ON HERS. HE SENSE THAT SHE IS CRYING.

Jocasta?

HE TRIES TO RAISE HER HAND.

Jocasta?

SHE RISES ABRUPTLY, KEEPING HER FACE TURNED AWAY FROM HIM. SHE WALKS TOWARD THE WINDOWS. THE CAMERA MOVES TO INCLUDE THE STANDING MIRROR.

Jocasta, are you crying?

JOCASTA: No.

OEDIPUS: What is it? Why?

HE SITS UP, THE COVERS FALL BACK TO REVEAL HIS NAKED TORSO. SHE SEES HIS IMAGE IN THE MIRROR.

JOCASTA: Don't get up!

SHE STARTS TO OPEN THE SHUTTERS, BUT CLOSES THEM AGAIN.

I'm being... being...

OEDIPUS: You're acting like a silly girl. No! I don't mean that, Jocasta.

JOCASTA: CLOSE UP.

Hush!

CUT TO LONG SHOT INCLUDING BOTH **OEDIPUS** AND **JOCASTA**. HE IS SITTING QUIETLY IN BED, IDLY PETTING THE **CAT**. HE WATCHES **JOCASTA**. HER BACK IS TO HIM.

JOCASTA: Oedipus?

HE DOES NOT ANSWER.

Oedipus?

OEDIPUS: Say you love me.

JOCASTA: I do.

OEDIPUS: Do you? Then why are you crying?

JOCASTA: SHE GOES TO HER DRESSING TABLE AND BEGINS TO CLEAN HER FACE. THE CAMERA CONCENTRATES ON HER AND HER IMAGE IN THE MIRROR.

Do you find it unbecoming in a woman my age?

OEDIPUS: PLAYFULLY EXASPERATED, IN AN OLD MAN'S VOICE.

Is this going to set a precedent, Jocasta? Am I going to wake up every morning to this?

Because if I am... we shall have separate rooms. You will only be allowed to see me when you are feeling kittenish. I shall come to you only when I am feeling ancient.

HE HAS PUT ON THE WHITE ROBE JOCASTA WORE IN THE NIGHT AND TIED A WHITE SCARF ON HIS HEAD TO LOOK LIKE A WHITE WIG AND NOW, ASSUMING THE EXPRESSION AND GAIT OF AN OLD MAN, COMES UP BEHIND HER AND EMBRACES HER. HIS VOICE QUAVERING.

I am old. I am old Father Time.

JOCASTA: SCREAMS AS SHE FEELS HIS TOUCH AND SEES HIS ANTICS IN THE MIRROR.

Oedipus! Stop it! Please!

OEDIPUS IS IMMEDIATELY SOBERED.

Please.

OEDIPUS: TAKES OFF THE SCARF.

I'm sorry.

HE TOUCHES HER HAIR GENTLY, AND HER FACE.

I thought my love gave me the privilege of understanding you. But I see that I'm hurting you in some way that I don't understand. Forgive me.

HE TURNS FROM HER AND GOES TO SIT ON THE BED.

JOCASTA: Are you from Corinth?

OEDIPUS: Did I tell you that?

JOCASTA: Yes. You told me many things last night. Are they true?

OEDIPUS: RAISES HIS HEAD, RELIEVED.

I thought I dreamt it. Maybe that's why I feel so lighthearted this morning. It's wonderful to be rid of my secrets. Is that what has upset you?

I shouldn't have told you. Why should you hear my confessions. Forget it. Please forget all of it. I'm from the sky. The sun was my father, the moon, my mother -- and I was born to love you.

JOCASTA: What if the prophecy came true?

OEDIPUS: I'll never go back! Don't condemn me for that!

JOCASTA: But if... if it had?

OEDIPUS: WITH INTENSE REVULSION, IN A HARD AND LEVEL VOICE WHICH ALLOWS FOR NO FURTHER QUESTIONING. (THIS MUST CONVEY THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT HE WOULD KILL HIMSELF, IF THE PROPHECY CAME TRUE.)

I would kill myself.

JOCASTA: A CRY OF LOVE, LONGING, DESIRE -- FROM LOVER AND MOTHER.

Oedipus! Oedipus

OEDIPUS: Did you think that what I told you as a prophecy had happened? Did you think I had lied to you?

JOCASTA: SHE GOES TO HIM.

No. Oh, no.

THEY EMBRACE. KISS.

OEDIPUS: If I live to be as old as the seer, maybe I shall understand you.

HE KISSES HER AGAIN.

THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. **JOCASTA** BREAKS GUILTILY FROM THE EMBRACE AND WHIRLS AROUND TO FACE THE DOOR. **OEDIPUS** IS GENTLY AMUSED AT THIS REACTION.

JOCASTA: Who is it?

KUPIA ENTERS.

KUPIA: Mother says the crown is not with the other things.

KUPIA STARES IN FRANK ADMIRATION AT **OEDIPUS** AND GIGGLES AT HIS COSTUME. HE LAUGHS IN RETURN.

JOCASTA: TO **OEDIPUS**

Dress now. You must go and get ready for the... ceremony.

JOCASTA MAKES **KUPIA** GO BEFORE HER FROM THE BEDROOM, AND SHUTS THE DOOR. SHE MOVES A FEW STEPS INTO THE SECOND ROOM, THEN STOPS AS IF SHE HAD FORGOTTEN WHAT SHE WAS GOING TO DO.

KUPIA: WHISPERS EXUBERANTLY.

You will be so happy

IN AN EXCESS OF HIGH SPIRITS SHE HUGS **JOCASTA**.

JOCASTA: GENTLY EXTRICATING HERSELF.

You're a sweet child.

JOCASTA TAKES A FEW AIMLESS STEPS, THEN REMEMBERS THE CROWN. SHE GETS A KEY FROM A DRAWER AND UNLOCKS A CHEST. SHE TAKES OUT THE ROYAL CROWN (NOT SO ELABORATE AS THE EMERALD CROWN), LOOKS AT IT A MOMENT, THEN HANDS IT TO **KUPIA**.

KUPIA: How beautiful!

KUPIA TAKES THE CROWN REVERENTLY. **OEDIPUS** OPENS THE DOOR OF THE BEDROOM. THEY TURN TO HIM. **KUPIA** MAKES A GRANDIOSE GESTURE AND KNEELS, HOLDING OUT THE CROWN.

King of Thebes!

OEDIPUS IS DELIGHTED.

HAEMON HAS ENTERED FROM THE FIRST ROOM JUST AS **KUPIA** KNEELS. HE WATCHES

JOCASTA: STERNLY, BUT GENTLY.

Get up, Kupia. Go along now.

TO **OEDIPUS**:

Go with her.

OEDIPUS KISSES **JOCASTA**. THEN HE AND **KUPIA** WALK TOWARD THE DOOR. HE SMILES AT **HAEMON** AS HE PASSES. **HAEMON** NODS, MAKING AN EFFORT TO SMILE.

KUPIA AND OEDIPUS EXIT. THE CAMERA LINGERS WITH JOCASTA AND HAEMON. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THEIR LIVES, THEY ARE UNCOMFORTABLE IN EACH OTHER'S PRESENCE. THEN HAEMON STARTS TOWARD HER, SHE EXTENDS HER HANDS.

CUT TO KUPIA AND OEDIPUS GOING DOWN THE HALL. KUPIA TURNS THE CROWN ROUND AND ROUND IN HER HANDS.

KUPIA: Isn't it beautiful. It's yours, you know.

SHE EXTENDS IT, WITHDRAWS IT, BREAKS INTO A RUN. HE RUNS AFTER HER. LAUGHTER AS THEY RUN DOWN THE HALL. HE CATCHES HER AND TAKES THE CROWN. THEY CONTINUE WALKING.

 Give it back.

OEDIPUS: It's mine.

KUPIA: Give it back!

SHE GRABS FOR THE CROWN, BUT HE HOLD IT OUT OF REACH.

CUT TO JOCASTA AND HAEMON STANDING IN THE DOORWAY TO THE BALCONY, LOOKING OUT. THEY SPEAK HESITANTLY, SLOWLY AS IF THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO EACH OTHER.

HAEMON: The gates are unlocked.

JOCASTA: I used to think one could go out the other six gates, that the Sphinx didn't matter.

HAEMON: They've burned her body.

JOCASTA: Yes. The riddle is solved and we're free. Quite free.

 I'll abdicate.

HAEMON: Abdicate?

JOCASTA: Let Oedipus rule alone.

HAEMON IS SHOCKED.

I can't marry him.

He'll rule wisely.

HAEMON: Without mercy.

JOCASTA: He's a just man.

HAEMON: And violent and savage.

JOCASTA: He loves me.

HAEMON: Power loves only itself. If you put Thebes in his hands... He's only a boy!
You must accept him -- if you want to or not.

JOCASTA: It's myself I must accept.

**THEN SUDDENLY, CRYING OUT IN PAIN, SHE PUTS HER ARMS
AROUND HAEMON, SOBBING.**

I love him, Haemon. I do love him. All the love in my life turns to pain. I
do love him.

HE HOLDS HER, STROKES HER HAIR. HER CRYING SUBSIDES.

When could I have...? When? I didn't know who he was.

HAEMON: Who is he?

JOCASTA: STILL TO HERSELF

Perhaps I did know.

THEN QUIETLY, TO HAEMON.

A Prince. Prince of Corinth.

SHE TURNS ABRUPTLY AND WALKS INTO THE BEDROOM AFTER A MOMENT, HAEMON FOLLOWS HER.

HAEMON: An alliance of Thebes and Corinth. But that is a gift from the Gods!

JOCASTA SHAKES HER HEAD. THEN, WITH SUDDEN VIOLENT ENERGY, SHE STRIDES TO THE SHUTTERS AND YANKS THEM OPEN.

JOCASTA: I know why we live in darkness. No one can bear the light.

IN RAGE, SHE TURNS TO HAEMON.

Enough of murder and horror of things as they are. We have invented the Gods and put our words in their mouths. Nature does not judge by our rules. She says yes! Always, she says Yes! We have built civilizations and torn them down according to the whims of our power. Nature says, "Let everything live! Yes. Let everything live."

I love him, Haemon.

Is everything prepared for the wedding.

HAEMON: Yes, I'll send the guards to escort you.

HE BOWS AND TURNS TO LEAVE.

JOCASTA: Bring Creon to the throne room.

HAEMON NODS, HIS BACK TO HER.

How is he?

HAEMON: In pain.

HE TURNS.

What sentence will you give him?

JOCASTA: Exile.

CLOSE UP OF HAEMON. HE NODS, THEN EXITS.

JOCASTA TURNS TO LOOK OUT THE BALCONY DOORS. THE CAMERA MOVES PAST HER TO SHOW A FEW **PEOPLE** BEGINNING TO GATHER IN THE COURTYARD. THEY ARE DRESSED IN LIGHT-COLORED CLOTHES AND HAPPILY SMILE AND TALK WITH EACH OTHER. THE CAMERA MOVES TO INCLUDE THE TEMPLE OF **APOLLO** AT SCREEN LEFT.

SEVERAL **PRIESTS** AND **ATTENDANTS** MOUNT THE TEMPLE STEPS AND GO INTO THE TEMPLE. FOLLOWING THEM, **TWO WHITE LAMBS** ARE LED IN. AS THEY CROSS THE THRESHOLD OF THE TEMPLE, THE DEEP SHADOW FROM WITHIN MAKES THEM APPEAR TO TURN BLACK.

JOCASTA TURNS AWAY FROM THE DOORS. THE CAMERA MOVES WITH HER AS SHE CROSSES THE ROOM TO THE **CRADLE**. SHE BEGINS TO METHODICALLY FOLD UP THE DRAPERIES AND BEDCLOTHES.

CUT TO **APHRON** ENTERING THE ROOM. SHE CARRIES ROBES, ETC. SHE IS SURPRISED AT WHAT **JOCASTA** IS DOING.

APHRON: Your Majesty?

THE CAMERA MOVES TO INCLUDE **JOCASTA**. SHE CONTINUES FOLDING THE BEDCLOTHES.

What are you doing? You must dress.

APHRON LAYS THE ROBES ON THE BED AND GOES TO GET A GOWN FROM ONE OF THE CHESTS.

JOCASTA CONTINUES WITHOUT ANSWERING, WITHOUT HURRYING, UNTIL SHE HAS FINISHED. SHE LAYS THE FOLDED THINGS IN THE CRADLE.

JOCASTA: Take this away.

APHRON: But, your Majesty, the time...

JOCASTA: Take it away.

APHRON PICKS UP THE CRADLE AND TAKES IT OUT. THE CAMERA STAYS WITH JOCASTA. SHE IS VERY QUIET, VERY CALM. SHE LOOKS AT THE BED, TOUCHES THE ROBES. APHRON RETURNS.

APHRON: Your Majesty...

JOCASTA: I will dress now.

SHE BEGINS TO DRESS, WITH APHRON'S HELP.

CUT TO OEDIPUS IN HIS ROOM SEVERAL PEOPLE ARE HELPING HIM TO PUT ON THE HEAVY PURPLE ROBES OF STATE HE IS SILENT, PENSIVE, SERIOUS. NO ONE SPEAKS. TO ONE SIDE STANDS A PAGE, HOLDING THE IMPERIAL CROWN ON A PILLOW. WHEN HE IS READY, OEDIPUS WALKS TO THE DOOR. THE PAGE FOLLOWS HIM.

CUT TO THE GUARDS IN THE HALLWAY. AS OEDIPUS COMES OUT, THEY FORM IN RANKS BEHIND HIM, AND ALL MOVE TOWARD THE THRONE ROOM. THERE IS A STRIKING DIFFERENCE IN THE BEARING OF THE GUARDS: ORDER HAS COME TO THE PALACE.

CUT TO THE THRONE ROOM WHICH IS NOW FORMALLY AND ELABORATELY DECORATED. TO ONE SIDE, ALONE, NEAR THE WALL, STANDS THE SHEPHERD. HE IS ENTHRALLED BY THE SURROUNDINGS. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THE MOVEMENT OF HIS GAZE FROM PLACE TO PLACE IN THE ROOM. THE NOBLES ARE ASSEMBLED. THEY TALK AMONG THEMSELVES. THEIR ROBES ARE A LIGHTER COLOR THAN BEFORE.

CUT TO THE HALL OUTSIDE THE THRONE ROOM. HAEMON STANDS NEAR THE DOORS. OEDIPUS AND HIS GUARDS APPROACH. HAEMON STOPS THEM.

HAEMON: We must wait for the Queen.

HAEMON STUDIES OEDIPUS, THEN ADDS ALMOST INAUDIBLY.

Prince Oedipus.

OEDIPUS SILENTLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE TITLE. EVERYONE IN THE HALL STANDS SILENTLY, WAITING. CHEERING IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.

CUT TO TEIRESIAS ENTERING THE FRONT DOORS OF THE PALACE. THE CHEERING COMES FROM THE PEOPLE IN THE COURTYARD. POLYPHONTES STEPS FORWARD AND DISMISSES THE BOY WHO IS LEADING TEIRESIAS. HE TAKES TEIRESIAS' ARM. TEIRESIAS TOUCHES HIS HAND.

TEIRESIAS: Whose hands are these that tremble?

POLYPHONTES: Polyphontes.

TEIRESIAS: Polyphontes.

You know words that could stop this marriage.

POLYPHONTES: I will not speak.

TEIRESIAS: Your silence will destroy this house.

POLYPHONTES: My Queen has asked for my silence.

CLOSE UP TEIRESIAS.

TEIRESIAS: The Queen?

POLYPHONTES' VOICE:

Yes.

THE CAMERA HOLDS ON TEIRESIAS.

CUT TO A LONG SHOT OF THE HALLWAY WHICH INCLUDES TEIRESIAS AND POLYPHONTES ENTERING THE PALACE AND, COMING FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION, JOCASTA AND HER GUARDS. THEY MEET BY THE STAIRWAY.

JOCASTA AND TEIRESIAS ASCEND THE STAIRWAY TOGETHER. SHE HELPS HIM.

JOCASTA: Welcome, Teiresias.

TEIRESIAS: My child, my child. The Gods are against this union.

JOCASTA: On the contrary, the Gods have predicated it.

TEIRESIAS: Madame, you are blind, you do not see where you go.

JOCASTA: My eyes are open. They see more than yours. I follow my fate of my free will.

TEIRESIAS: And Oedipus?

JOCASTA: I will protect the one I love.

TEIRESIAS: The Gods...

JOCASTA: You conciliate the Gods. I do not thank them for my happiness and I will not blame them if time brings misery.

TEIRESIAS: The fates weave on the loom of time. Perhaps for a score of years you will know happiness...

JOCASTA: So much?

TEIRESIAS: And then from the heights...

JOCASTA: AS SHE MOVES AWAY FROM **TEIRESIAS**, HER WORDS OVERRIDE HIS.

I had not hoped for so much.

SHE SIGNALS TO POLYPHONTES TO HELP TEIRESIAS, AND WALKS AHEAD TO JOIN OEDIPUS. TEIRESIAS AND POLYPHONTES ENTER THE THRONE ROOM.

JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS STAND FACING EACH OTHER. HE KISSES HER CHEEK. THEY WALK THE REMAINING SHORT DISTANCE TO THE THRONE ROOM. A

FLOURISH FROM THE TRUMPETS. THEY ENTER. ALL THOSE GATHERED IN THE ROOM KNEEL. JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS WALK SLOWLY TO THE THRONE, THE PAGE WITH THE CROWN FOLLOWS.

May I call you by your title?

OEDIPUS NODS. WHEN THEY REACH THE THRONE, JOCASTA TURNS TO FACE THE ROOM OEDIPUS KNEELS IN FRONT OF HER; THE PAGE KNEELS TO ONE SIDE.

Nobles of Thebes, my citizens. You know Oedipus as the Hero of Thebes, but I shall call him by his rightful title. Prince of Corinth...

THE NOBLES, ASTONISHED, LOOK TO EACH OTHER, PLEASED MURMURING.

CUT TO CLOSE UP SHEPHERD. HE STARTS FORWARD.

LONG SHOT, INCLUDING JOCASTA. THE SHEPHERD MOVES TOWARD THE THRONE.

Our hero is a Prince who has come, all unknowing, to save our city.

CUT TO SHEPHERD. HE IS FRIGHTENED BY HIS OWN AUDACITY, BUT FORCES HIMSELF TO SPEAK.

SHEPHERD: Your Majesty.

CLOSE UP JOCASTA

JOCASTA: This man will confirm my words.

SHEPHERD: Your Majesty...

JOCASTA: Yes, kind Shepherd. By your oath... Does King Polybus rule Corinth?

SHEPHERD: Yes, your Majesty.

JOCASTA: Does he have but one son?

SHEPHERD: Only one, your Majesty.

JOCASTA: This is he, Prince of Corinth, called Oedipus.

SHEPHERD: DESPERATELY.

Because of the wounds he bears in his ankles.

JOCASTA: Thank you, gentle Shepherd.

SHE TURNS FROM HIM. THE CAMERA MOVES IN ON THE SHEPHERD. DAZED, HE SLOWLY LOWERS HIS HEAD AND KNEELS.

JOCASTA'S VOICE:

This man I have chosen to be my husband.

CUT TO JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS

But, by custom the Queen of Thebes can marry only the King of Thebes.
You kneel to me as Prince of Corinth, but by our Royal Decree and solemn will, you shall rise as King of Thebes.

SHE TAKES THE CROWN FROM THE PAGE.

You have worn the laurels.

SHE PLACES THE CROWN ON HIS HEAD.

Now, you wear the diadem of Thebes.

SHE GIVES HIM HER HAND.

Rise, King Oedipus, equal in sovereignty.

A NOBLE: Long live King Oedipus. Joy and happiness to the Majesty of Thebes.

MANY VOICES ECHO:

Long live King Oedipus.

OEDIPUS: Rise, my people.

THE PEOPLE RISE. JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS SEAT THEMSELVES ON THE DOUBLE THRONE.

CUT TO THE OPEN DOORS OF THE THRONE ROOM -- WHERE CREON NOW STANDS, PROUD AND STILL. HE IS GUARDED BY TWO OF THE QUEEN'S SOLDIERS.

A LONG SHOT WHICH INCLUDES BOTH JOCASTA AND CREON. THE PEOPLE IN THE ROOM TURN TO LOOK AT HIM. THE ROOM IS SILENT.

JOCASTA: Come forward. My brother.

CREON COMES SLOWLY FORWARD

CUT TO JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS. TO OEDIPUS:

You will banish him from Thebes.

OEDIPUS: TURNS FROM LOOKING AT CREON, TO JOCASTA.

Not exile.

JOCASTA: STARES AT HIM, SURPRISED.

Yes.

OEDIPUS: If the Queen will permit me to disagree...

JOCASTA: Yes?

BUT OEDIPUS TURNS TO CREON, WHO IS WATCHING HIM DEFIANTLY. JOCASTA TOUCHES OEDIPUS' ARM, ABOUT TO SPEAK, AFRAID THAT HE WILL PRONOUNCE A SENTENCE OF DEATH. OEDIPUS DOES NOT RESPOND TO HER TOUCH. HE SPEAKS TO CREON IN A CALM, IRONIC TONE.

OEDIPUS: Shall I enumerate your crimes, Prince Creon?

No. That would take 'til sundown, and I am impatient to be married.

HE GLANCES AT JOCASTA, THEN AROUND THE ROOM. SOME OF THE NOBLES SMILE, BUT THE ATMOSPHERE REMAINS TENSE.

But I will charge you with treason, with the deliberate intention to bring Thebes to ruin so that you might force the true Queen from her throne. For that, for plotting against her and my life, I deprive you of all rank, title, privilege and voice in the government of Thebes. You are no longer Prince Creon, but the least of our citizens.

The Queen would pronounce exile for you. But with her gracious permission, I alter your fate.

THE LAST WORDS ARE SPOKEN AS A THREAT. PAUSE.

CUT TO CLOSE UP OF HAEMON, INTENT, ALARMED.

CLOSE UP CREON. HIS FACE REMAINS IMPASSIVE.

CUT TO OEDIPUS, AS HE BEGINS TO SPEAK AGAIN.

If we sent you into exile, it would be but a matter of time until we must expect your return, with an army of mercenaries. And that I fear, because you know Thebes, its factions, its weaknesses, its strengths. You know Thebes as one who has ruled it, as one who has loved it. No doubt, even in your downfall, you have your loyal adherents. I have much to learn of Thebes, and I fear that in war you would have an advantage which, win or lose, could only bring further ruin upon our land.

No, I will not exile you. I will put your knowledge and your friends to work.

We need your help in rebuilding Thebes.

PAUSE.

I give you the opportunity to swear an oath of allegiance to Queen Jocasta

and to myself, Oedipus, King of Thebes.

CREON: I would rather be imprisoned.

OEDIPUS: You will not be imprisoned! You will be killed. Now! -- or at any time hereafter that you break your oath. Instantly and cruelly.

Which shall it be, Creon, my brother? Death... or advisor to the Crown?

CREON: I admire your cleverness.

OEDIPUS: I respect your ability.

CREON: I think you are a dangerous man to work for.

OEDIPUS: I leave the choice to you.

AFTER A LONG PAUSE, CREON KNEELS.

AMONG THE NOBLES IN THE BACKGROUND THERE IS A GENERAL RELAXATION OF TENSION. SOME ARE SURPRISED.

CREON: BOWS HIS HEAD

I swear my allegiance to Queen Jocasta and to you, King of Thebes...

(LOOKING UP INTENTLY AT OEDIPUS. IT MIGHT BE AT THIS MOMENT THAT CREON, MAY REALIZE THAT OEDIPUS MIGHT BE HIS OWN SON.)

By my life, I swear...

By my life, I will not break the oath.

OEDIPUS: STANDS UP.

Rise then, Creon, accepting the title of Prince from my hand.

OEDIPUS EXTENDS HIS HAND. CREON RISES, CLASPS

OEDIPUS' HAND.

You will be First Minister of Thebes.

JOCASTA HAS RISEN TO STAND BESIDE OEDIPUS.

Our land -- and yours. A land that shall prosper in peace.

CREON STEPS BACK INTO THE CROWD OF NOBLES. JOCASTA TURNS TO OEDIPUS, SMILING.

JOCASTA: Come.

My love cries haste. I want thee for a husband.

THE NOBLES KNEEL. OEDIPUS AND JOCASTA IN A GREAT SWEEP OF PAGEANTRY, LEAVE THE THRONE ROOM.

THE NOBLES, TALKING AMONG THEMSELVES, FILE OUT TO FORM A PROCESSION BEHIND THE KING AND QUEEN.

TO ONE SIDE, THE SHEPHERD DETAINS TEIRESIAS. WHEN THE ROOM IS ALMOST EMPTY, THE CAMERA MOVES IN ON SHEPHERD AND TEIRESIAS.

SHEPHERD: IN A FRIGHTENED WHISPER.

Teiresias, the Prince of Corinth is...

TEIRESIAS: Silence, foolish Shepherd.

SHEPHERD: The Gods will punish her.

TEIRESIAS: With death, even as you and I.

CUT TO JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS IN THE DARK FRONT HALL. THE PROCESSION IS BEHIND THEM. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK AS THEY ADVANCE, CONTINUING TO PULL BACK THROUGH THE OPEN FRONT DOORS.

CUT TO THE CROWD, NOISY AND REJOICING. THE INNER COURTYARD IS FILLED

WITH PEOPLE. SOME EVEN STAND ON THE PALACE STEPS. A GREAT SHOUT FROM THE CROWD.

CUT TO JOCASTA AND OEDIPUS CROSSING THE THRESHOLD FROM THE DARKNESS INTO THE SUNLIGHT. A PILLAR PARTIALLY SHADOWS OEDIPUS.

FROM THE SUNLIGHT ON THEIR RADIANT BUT UNSMILING FACES, THE CAMERA PANS UP TO FOCUS DIRECTLY ON THE SUN THE SCREEN IS FLOODED WITH LIGHT.

end

EPILOGUE

FROM THE JOCASTA POEMS

#15 -- BLINDNESS

After twenty years of peace and
prosperity, happiness,
procreation, Oedipus found

out what Jocasta already knew,
and put out his eyes. Thus
began western civilization.