



The Theban Plays: King Oedipus; Oedipus at Colonus; Antigone (Penguin Classics)

Sophocles

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'O Light! May I never look on you again,
Revealed as I am, sinful in my begetting,
Sinful in marriage, sinful in shedding of blood!'

The legends surrounding the royal house of Thebes inspired Sophocles (496–406 BC) to create a powerful trilogy of mankind's struggle against fate. **King Oedipus** tells of a man who brings pestilence to Thebes for crimes he does not realise he has committed, and then inflicts a brutal punishment upon himself. With profound insights into the human condition, it is a devastating portrayal of a ruler brought down by his own oath. **Oedipus at Colonus** provides a fitting conclusion to the life of the aged and blinded king, while **Antigone** depicts the fall of the next generation, through the conflict between a young woman ruled by her conscience and a king too confident in his own authority.

E. F. Watling's masterful translation is accompanied by an introduction, which examines the central themes of the plays, the role of the Chorus, and the traditions and staging of Greek tragedy.

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