

Oedipus *El Rey*
by
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Time: Now

Places:

California State Prison
Highway 99
Calle Broadway, Downtown L.A.
La Casa at Pico-Union, L.A.

Characters:

Oedipus: Young King
Laius / Coro #4 / El Huesero
Old King / Chorus / Bone Healer
Jocasta: Queen
CREON: / CORO #3: / Tecolote #3 / Esfinge #3
Queen's Brother / Chorus / Owl Oracle / Sphinx
Tiresias / Coro #5
Blind Servant / Chorus
CORO #1: / El Sobador / Tecolote #1 / El Mistico / Esfinge #1
Chorus / Healer / Owl Oracle / Mystic / Sphinx
CORO #2: / Tecolote #2 / El Curandero / Esfinge #2
Chorus / Owl Oracle / Shaman / Sphinx

PAGEANT***Look Upon***

The ambient sound of a desolate lonely highway.

Kern County, Central California, off Highway 99.

*An empty stage stripped of decoration – hollow and hallowed.
Its emptiness should feel religious.*

Time, nothing but time.

A violent change.

*Suddenly the highway is interrupted by the loud sound of prison doors slamming shut.
There is a sudden change in the light and tone of our world.*

In the air, we hear the sound of a chifle (a whistle).

It is followed by two more.

A sort of call-and-response of whistling.

Los tres chifles echo as they sing the beginning of the Coro.

The Coro, as inmates, enter and stand facing each other, forming a square. They are followed by Oedipus, a young king with a slight disability in his walk. Oedipus goes to the center of the square, falls to the floor and begins to do push-ups. His ease and grace is impressive. One of the Coro kick him in the stomach as a way of helping him build strength.

From the back of the stage, the loud sound of a prison door opening. In comes Tiresias, wearing cholo cool black shades and led by a blind man's cane. As he moves, the prison door closes behind him. A Coro member nudges Oedipus who looks up and sees him. He goes to him. They stand and face each other. Finally they hug.

Oedipus puts Tiresias hand on his shoulder and leads him out.

The Coro turn and face the audience.

Okay, let's begin.

PROLOGUE: *Let Every Man Consider*

CORO #1: *Oye!*

CORO #2: *Que?*

CORO #1: *Oye!*

CORO #2: & #3 & #4: *Que?*

CORO #1: *Oye!*

CORO #2: & #3 & #4 & #5: *Que?*

CORO #1: *Oye!*

ALL: WHO IS THIS MAN?

CORO #2: Who is this man -

CORO #3: that we should consider -

CORO #4: his story.

CORO #5: *Quien es este hombre* -

CORO #1: this man -

CORO #2: *con su* story.

CORO #3: Who is this man -

CORO #4: who will teach us a lesson.

CORO #5: Teach *us* a lesson?

CORO #1: That's what I said.

CORO #2: Who is this man -

CORO #3: living in prison -

CORO #4: raised in 'the yard'.

CORO #5: Who is this man -

CORO #1: feared by many -

CORO #2: yet one of our own.

CORO #3: Who is this man -

CORO #4: who lives like an orphan -

CORO #5: even with a father at his side.

CORO #1: Who is this man -

CORO #2: who throws the first punch -

CORO #3: and stays for the last kick.

CORO #4: Who is this man -

CORO #5: they call Oedipus -

CORO #1: a.k.a. *Patas Malas*.

CORO #2: Who is this man -

CORO #3: who looks inside.

CORO #4: Inside, bro...

CORO #5: Who is this man -

CORO #1: who makes the prison library -

CORO #2: his territory.

CORO #3: No shit - the prison library?

CORO #4: *Quien es este hombre* -

CORO #5: who gets high -

CORO #1: on thought.

CORO #2: Thought?

CORO #3: That's what I said, *foo!*

CORO #4: *Quien es este hombre* -

CORO #5: a *chamaco* we call -

CORO #1: *El Rey Juvenil*.

[*Beat. Oedipus enters. He looks at the audience.*]

OEDIPUS:: I will be. [*He looks at the Coro threateningly. He walks out.*]

CORO #2: Wants to be a king.

CORO #3: A what?

[They begin to laugh.]

CORO #4: Wants to be noble.

CORO #5: Yes, this *cabron* is noble.

[They all laugh.]

CORO #1: Lots of good it does him in here!

[Beat. It's not so funny...]

CORO #2: Here...

CORO #3: Yes, a man -

CORO #4: who wants to be something more.

CORO #5: More?

CORO #1: *El rey*.

CORO #2: A man of principle.

ALL: *Como no!*

CORO #3: A reputable man.

ALL: *Como no!*

CORO #4: A hard-headed man.

ALL: *Como no!*

CORO #5: A man with no limits.

ALL: *Como no!*

CORO #1: A man who doesn't forget.

ALL: *Como no!*

CORO #2: A man who doesn't forgive.

ALL: *Como no!*

CORO #3: A man with 'issues'.

ALL: *Como no!*

CORO #4: A man destined to be.

ALL: *Como no!*

CORO #5: Destined.

CORO #1: To be.

CORO #2: *El rey*.

ALL: Destined...

[Silence. Coro #5 becomes Tiresias.]

TIRESIAS: *Yo soy.*

[He puts on his cholo shades, pulls a white stick from his back pocket and unfolds it to reveal his blind man cane. He poses with stick in hand, looking like a Loteria card.]

TIRESIAS: I am the father.

CORO #1: *El papa de Oedipus.*

CORO #2: The old man.

CORO #3: *Tiresias.*

CORO #4: Servant to the Gods in all ways.

CORO #1: And even he -

CORO #2: an *alleluia* -

CORO #3: has not escaped their wrath.

CORO #4: He believes.

CORO #1: Believes in the mysterious ways.

CORO #2: A *mistico*.

CORO #3: Always looking -
 CORO #4: for the divine intervention.
 CORO #1: I go to him.
 CORO #2: Me too.
 CORO #3: And he gives me *consejo*.
 CORO #4: Counsels me.
 CORO #1: Like in church.
 CORO #2: Tells me what's coming.
 CORO #3: How I ended up here.
 CORO #4: He knows.
 CORO #1: Oh yes, he knows.
 CORO #2: But I'm angry.
 CORO #3: I don't listen.
 CORO #4: No, I don't.
 CORO #1: I don't listen because he can't see!
 CORO #2: That's messed up, dude...
 CORO #3: How can you be a seer -
 CORO #4: if you can't see?
 CORO #1: Slowly going blind, *el cabron*.
 CORO #2: Everyday gets darker.
 CORO #3: Sunlight toward sunset.
 CORO #4: For the old man...
 CORO #1: Everyday the *ojos* eclipse.
 CORO #2: It's not even funny.
 CORO #3: No, it's sad, *ese*.
 CORO #4: Sits in his cell.
 CORO #1: Waiting for the Gods.
 CORO #2: While his son studies to be *un rey*.
 CORO #3: Been so long.
 CORO #4: What's he in for?
 CORO #1: He won't say.
 CORO #2: *Misticos* don't talk much.
 CORO #3: Silence for the old man!

[*Beat. They bow their heads in deference. Jocasta enters the space.*]

CORO #4: To lose the gift.
 CORO #1: To see beauty.
 CORO #2: So sad.
 CORO #3: He must have done something.
 CORO #4: Something bad.
 CORO #1: Something terrible.
 CORO #2: Worse than what I did.
 CORO #3: To live in silence.
 CORO #4: With permanent night time.
 CORO #1: *Puede ser mal, ese cabron*.
 CORO #2: What he must have done -
 CORO #3: to lose the light.
 CORO #4: To see beauty.

[*TIRESIAS leaves.*]

CORO #1: That's all I got sometimes.
 CORO #2: Sometimes,
 CORO #3: that's all I got.
 CORO #4: A chance to see something beautiful.
 CORO #1: The sky.
 CORO #2: The yard.
 CORO #3: The lady guard with the big ass.
[They laugh recognition. A sigh.]
 CORO #4: Seriously, though, dude.
 CORO #1: Serious, *ese*
 CORO #2: Something beautiful.
 CORO #3: That I can see.
 CORO #4: A woman...

[Silence. JOCASTA: turns and lifts her blouse, exposing a large tattoo of angel wings that cover her back.]

JOCASTA: I am. *[The wings glow.]* That woman.
 CORO #1: Beauty.
 CORO #2: Yes, beauty.
 CORO #3: remember.
 CORO #4: Soft.
 CORO #1: Gentle.
 CORO #2: Skin.
 CORO #3: Smooth.
 CORO #4: Smell.
 CORO #1: Beauty.
 CORO #2: Jean Naté
 CORO #3: Remember...
 CORO #4: But she's taken.
 CORO #1: Damn!
 CORO #2: Yes, taken.
 CORO #3: By a man.
 CORO #4: Not worthy of her.

[JOCASTA: leaves.]

CORO #1: That's always the woman I want.
 CORO #2: I need.
 CORO #3: I could live for.
 CORO #4: The one that's -
 CORO #1: taken.
 CORO #2: A lived-in woman.
 CORO #3: Lived.
 CORO #4: A woman not afraid.
 CORO #1: Not afraid to be yours.
 CORO #2: Taken.
 CORO #3: Taken from you.
 ALL: Taken.

[Silence. Coro #4 becomes Laius.]

LAIUS: I am that man. [*He pulls a chain necklace, with an attached crown link, from his pocket, and places it around his neck.*] A King.

CORO #1: Who has the woman.

CORO #2: Who makes the rules.

CORO #3: Who turns us against each other.

CORO #1: Who others follow.

CORO #2: Who is ruthless.

CORO #3: A politician.

CORO #1: Yes, a *politico*.

CORO #2: Rules with a *firme* hand -

CORO #3: Earns his respect.

CORO #1: Should know better -

CORO #2: but doesn't care.

CORO #3: Never learns lessons -

CORO #1: from the Gods.

[*Laius leaves as CORO #3: becomes Creon tucking in his shirt, and replaces Laius in the same spot.*]

CORO #1: Then there are those...

CORO #2: that try.

CORO #1: Want.

CORO #2: Can't get.

CREON: Shut up! [*Creon looks at the audience, as if to explain.*] I am familia.

[*No response. He leaves unfulfilled.*]

CORO #1: Kinda feel sad -

CORO #2: for the dude.

CORO #1: Always looking for his *chansa*.

CORO #2: His *oportunidad*.

CORO #1: But it never comes.

[*CREON: looks at them, all pissed off, and leaves.*]

CORO #2: *Porque* -

CORO #1: *Pinche* gods -

CORO #2: they made a *Rey* -

CORO #1: who is -

BOTH: destined...

[*A long chifle echoes down a cell block neighborhood.*]

SCENE ONE***Wise In The Ways Of The Gods***

[La casa. An old viejo, El Sobador, a healer who uses touch, is rubbing Jocasta's stomach. He senses something that shocks him and looks up at her. Spooked, she pulls his hands off her. A frustrated Laius stands over them, watching.]

LAIUS: You know something, but you're not saying.

EL SOBADOR: This is the work of the Gods - they speak in poems.

LAIUS: You telling me you don't understand their language?

EL SOBADOR: It's difficult to understand what they mean sometimes.

LAIUS: Try...

[Beat. El Sobador looks at Jocasta, nodding for Laius to leave. She knows better and ignores it. He keeps his eyes on her, and persists.]

EL SOBADOR: Tell him to leave...

[Laius, angry, suddenly grabs him by the throat, taking him down to the floor as he starts to choke him.]

LAIUS: Tell them I am ready to hear what they have to say!

JOCASTA: Laius, don't!

LAIUS: Tell them!

JOCASTA: Stop it, you'll curse the baby!

EL SOBADOR *(struggling for breath)* Senor, por favor...

LAIUS: *(to Jocasta)* Get out. NOW!

[Jocasta reluctantly runs out, as Laius lets go of El Sobador.]

LAIUS: Now, speak, or I'll take that tongue out so that you never translate another word from the Gods again.

[El Sobador, struggling for breath and humiliated, tries to get up.]

LAIUS: Tell me!

[El Sobador composes himself.]

EL SOBADOR: That baby is going to kill you...

LAIUS: What!?

EL SOBADOR: The poem was clear.

LAIUS: What are you talking about?

EL SOBADOR: Cursed to be killed by your only son.

LAIUS: A son...

EL SOBADOR: Who will grow up to be *un rey*. *[As he wipes the blood off his nose...]* And like *todo los reyes*, he will be ruthless.

LAIUS: You're full of shit, old man.

EL SOBADOR: Can I speak the truth, *Senor Bruto*?

LAIUS: You haven't already?

EL SOBADOR: *That* was the Gods.

[Laius, considering him for the first time.]

LAIUS: Speak.

EL SOBADOR: To your son, you will be the only obstacle in this *barrio* and its territories.

LAIUS: Just proves how merciless these Gods are.

EL SOBADOR: *Es* destiny. *Esta* willed and your son must follow it.

LAIUS: *Me va matar...*

EL SOBADOR: At your last breath, he will look you in the eye... and you will know. *Te lo prometo.*

LAIUS: *Como?*

EL SOBADOR: I don't know, *Senor*. It's a poem - it's vague.

LAIUS: When?

EL SOBADOR: I am just interpreting - I am not a calendar.

LAIUS: Enough then.

EL SOBADOR: But there's more...

LAIUS: No more.

EL SOBADOR: But...

LAIUS: *Ya!*

EL SOBADOR: *Pues, entonces...* *[He begins to go.]* The *curandero* will do a *limpia* of your house tomorrow.

Buy a chicken and a broom.

[Laius is terrified. El Sobador notices this and suddenly feels remorse for the king.]

EL SOBADOR: *Lo siento, Senor*. When he is born I will make sure his *huesos* are aligned. You can pay me then.

[El Sobador walks away.]

LAIUS: Maybe... you misunderstood the poem?

EL SOBADOR: *[looks back]* Cash only, no checks...

SCENE TWO

Soliloquy

[A very pregnant Jocasta sits, smoking a cigarette. She looks down and rubs her belly.]

JOSCASTA: You're a pain in the ass you know that? Ay, Stop all that damn kicking! What do you got to be restless about, huh? All you're doing is sitting there, watching *All My Children*.

[Considering her belly.] What are you waiting for? Come on, come out.

I need someone.

To keep me company.

To protect me.

To love me.

[She takes a hit on her cigarette.]

Hurry, *cabron*. You're killing my back.

[Restless, she exhales.]

SCENE THREE***Sound of Lamentation***

[Night. Jocasta goes into labor, breathing in contractions. The Coro sing The Five Satins "In The Still of the Night". She gives birth. Laius takes the baby. She exits, drained and empty.]

CORO::

*So before the light
Hold me again
With all of your might
In the still of the night
In the still of the night*

SCENE FOUR***Life At His Death***

[Laius holds the small bloody bundle. Tiresias runs to him.]

TIRESIAS: At your service, *mi comandante!*

LAIUS: Thank you, *Tiresias*, my *mas* loyal. I have an *orden* for you.

TIRESIAS: Without question, *carnal*.

[Vulnerable for the first time.]

LAIUS:: Don't look badly on me.

[He opens the bloody cloth as Tiresias looks in and gasps.]

TIRESIAS: *Ay bendito!*

LAIUS: I have to kill my son.

TIRESIAS: *Porque?*

LAIUS: He's been cursed to destroy me.

TIRESIAS: *No puede ser.*

LAIUS: The Gods are demanding of those who dare to challenge them.

TIRESIAS: But *Jefe*, I thought you didn't care about the Gods?

LAIUS: That's why they pull shit like this on me!

TIRESIAS: Maybe you should apologize.

LAIUS: *Yo no!* They're grudge-holders. Everyone thinks they're up there thinking good thoughts, but these days *esos cabrones* are sitting on recliners, with their remotes, making my life miserable.

[Tiresias looks at the bundle.]

TIRESIAS: He's just a baby.

LAIUS: Who could be *un rey*.

TIRESIAS: A child.

LAIUS: A murderer! Don't get *sentimental* on me, *compadre*.

TIRESIAS: *Maestro, con todo respeto* - I can't do this.

LAIUS: Yes you can, you've done worse. We have to do it now before it takes to my wife's *chi-chi*.

TIRESIAS: Jocasta.

LAIUS: She doesn't know. I got her so doped up right now, she thinks she's on a *novela*. I'll be honest with her later - I'll tell her it stopped breathing...

TIRESIAS: I've never hurt a child, *compadre*.

LAIUS: It's a tiny death. We'll laugh about it later. [*Handing him the child.*] Here, take it.

[*Taking it, Tiresias holds it awkwardly.*]

TIRESIAS: Why is he bleeding?

LAIUS: I cut the bottoms of his feet. I don't want him chasing me in the afterlife.

TIRESIAS: I thought you didn't believe?

LAIUS: I don't, but just enough...

[*Tiresias looking at the baby's face.*]

TIRESIAS: He doesn't cry.

LAIUS: Even when I cut him.

TIRESIAS: Why wouldn't he cry?

LAIUS: He's the son of a King. [*Resolved.*] Go to Griffith Park and hang him from a tree, like a *chivo*. Let the life drain from him. The *coyotes* will do the rest.

TIRESIAS: Why cause him pain when he hasn't sinned?

LAIUS: *Ya callate* with the *alleluia*! I have to scare the Gods.

TIRESIAS: But how can you kill your son?

LAIUS: I didn't say I was good father. Go!

[*They look at each other and part ways.*]

SCENE FIVE***Eternal Pain***

[Silence. Jocasta enters, realizing she has lost her child, screams and weeps...]

JOCASTA: NOOOOOOOOOOO!

[Looking up at the Gods.]

Por favor!

Mi hijo...

Mi hijo...

[Done with life, she exits.]

SCENE SIX***Time Comes***

[A variation on the tres chifles return. The Coro (1-3) enter as inmates. Oedipus, in prison, begins a series of exercises, each more dangerous and difficult than the last.]

CORO #1: Time comes.

CORO #2: *El tiempo viene.*

CORO #3: A boy becomes a man.

CORO #1: You become the thing you are.

CORO #2: Through a glass darkly.

CORO #3: Try to make it stop.

CORO #1: But it can't be.

CORO #2: Someone is chosen.

CORO #3: Never your choice.

CORO #1: Time comes.

CORO #2: And the world changes.

CORO #3: Passes you by.

CORO #1: No windows.

CORO #2: Just bars.

CORO #3: Concrete.

CORO #1: Time comes.

CORO #2: All your dreams.

CORO #3: Hide from you.

CORO #1: Like time.

CORO #2: *El tiempo.*

CORO #3: *El tiempo.*

CORO #1: *El tiempo.*

CORO #2: Time...

CORO #3: Nothing

CORO #1: And everything

ALL: Change...

[The Coro begins to breathe and puff in rapid succession.]

SCENE SEVEN

A Memory Without Pain

[The breathing continues and bleeds into Oedipus in the yard. Young and tough, he is powerful as he rips through a blazing round with a fixed intensity. He grunts with each rep. The Coro blows a last breath as he stops. Night, right before morning.]

OEDIPUS: I am the one they call *Patas Malas*.

CORO: Oedipus.

OEDIPUS: My old man gave me my name. You know how the Chinese always give their babies beautiful names like

OEDIPUS:/CORO:: ...*Shao wen*

OEDIPUS: and -

OEDIPUS:/CORO:: ...*Yin ha*.

OEDIPUS: They always sound like soft names for different kinds of winds. But underneath, they always mean something else, like -

OEDIPUS:/CORO:: Rotten tree -

OEDIPUS: or -

OEDIPUS:/CORO:: Smelly egg.

OEDIPUS: I have a Chinese name. It means *Swollen Foot*.

CORO:: Oedipus.

OEDIPUS: My father says the day I learned to walk - I ran into an alley. When they found me, the bottoms of my feet were tore up from walking on broken glass. I'm not crippled enough to be crippled. Even though I've been like this since I was a baby.

CORO: Oedipus.

OEDIPUS: The only son of the widowed *Tiresias*.

CORO:: Tiresias.

OEDIPUS: I never knew my mother. She left me to a life of picking pockets, selling pot and juvenile detention. Mothers sometimes do that.

CORO:: Yes they do.

OEDIPUS: I always want to dream her. But I can't.

CORO: Never.

OEDIPUS: It's not good to dream in here.

CORO:: No sir!

OEDIPUS: To wish for things. It makes you soft.

CORO:: Soft.

OEDIPUS: It makes you crazy.

CORO: Crazy.

OEDIPUS: It makes you sad.

CORO: Sad.

OEDIPUS: There's nothing in my night, but sleep. No Tinkerbell or fluffy cloud. Just deaf night.

[Suddenly it is night. The Coro makes the sound of sleep. Only Oedipus is fully awake.]

Tonight an oracle appeared...

[The violent sound of hundreds of rustling feathers. The Coro appear as a parliament of owls. Their tecolote stare is defined by the turns of their heads.]

TECOLOTE #1: What's up, *ese*?

[Oedipus tries to stare them down.]

TECOLOTE #2: Dude, don't try to stare us down,

TECOLOTE #3: that's our nature.

TECOLOTE #1: And your's,

TECOLOTE #2: well, yours...

[They all look at each other with a wisened look.]

TECOLOTE #3: We have some wise old philosophy for you;

TECOLOTE #1: *'Cuando el tecolote canta...*

TECOLOTE #2: When the owl cries...

TECOLOTE #3: *El Indio muere.*

TECOLOTE #1: The Indian dies.

OEDIPUS: I'm gonna die?

TECOLOTE #2: No, your father, *puto*.

OEDIPUS: My father?

TECOLOTE #3: At your hands.

OEDIPUS: Never!

TECOLOTE #1: Don't worry.

TECOLOTE #2: It'll be brief.

TECOLOTE #3: And probably not your fault.

TECOLOTE #1: We won't hold it against you.

TECOLOTE #2: It's your nature.

TECOLOTE #3: Just like this is ours...

[In one synchronized move, they turn their owl heads from side to side.]

ALL: Hoo!

TECOLOTE #1: Count your blessings.

TECOLOTE #2: Your parole is up!

TECOLOTE #3:

Life is a mystery isn't it?

ALL: Hoo! Hoo!

[The knock Oedipus to his knees.]

TECOLOTE #1: Make amends while you can, *joven*.

TECOLOTE #2: For you are,

TECOLOTE #3: the accursed.

[The oracle fly away as quickly as they had appeared. Back to night. Oedipus stands, reaches for a jump rope as he plows through an intense rep.]

OEDIPUS: I am the accursed...

CORO: The accursed.

[Double the speed. He stops and breathes.]

OEDIPUS: That's why I have to leave. Sometimes you do things in here that are not really you.

CORO:: Leave.

OEDIPUS: I wouldn't hurt my dad. Even if it was my destiny.

CORO:: Destiny

OEDIPUS:: *Tiresias Gomez*, my father, the blind *mistico*, who robbed every 7-11 in the Central Valley, just so that he could be in here and raise me. Father's sometimes do that.

CORO:: Yes they do.

OEDIPUS:: But one day he woke and blindness started to become Permanent Evening for him. So he opened his eyes and started to look for the light inside.

CORO:: Inside.

OEDIPUS:: He's got sins that I don't know about. Sins that he has to pay for.

CORO:: Everybody pays.

OEDIPUS:: Everyday, my dad and I, go to the prison library – SECTION 6

OEDIPUS:/CORO:: R-A-Y to R-E-L.

OEDIPUS:: The library is like a church - empty and quiet. That's where my old man and I spend our days –

OEDIPUS:/CORO:: R-A-Y to R-E-L.

OEDIPUS:: And we study-

OEDIPUS:/CORO:: R-E-L-I-G-I-O-N.

[Tiresias appears.]

TIRESIAS: The only thing that needs healing is the soul –

OEDIPUS: ...he says.

TIRESIAS: ...everything else can go to *mierda*. *[Tiresias laughs to himself.]*

OEDIPUS: *Misticos*, they don't really do much. They just want to be in the presence of the Gods.

CORO: Presence.

OEDIPUS: Everyday we read about them.

OEDIPUS:/CORO:: G-O-D-S. *[Oedipus mimes doing Braille.]* He 'Stevie Wonders' it. And I read the old-fashioned way.

[The Coro whisper the Hail Mary as OEDIPUS: speaks.]

CORO:

Hail Mary, full of grace,

the Lord is with thee;

blessed art thou among women,

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,

now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

OEDIPUS: White People God. Chino God. Muslim God. Hindu God. Everybody wants a God. Not me!

[The Coro abruptly stops the prayer at this revelation.]

OEDIPUS: I don't want the Gods. They're like teachers or bosses – wanting you to do everything exactly the way they say or they'll punish you – for the rest of your life! I can do better than the Gods.

CORO: Ssh!

OEDIPUS: Their egos are too big.

CORO: *Callate!*

OEDIPUS: But while I'm here – this is a belief that has to live in the silence of me.

CORO: That's right!

OEDIPUS: For me – up there, there is no heaven – just sky, chunky blue sky.

CORO: Heaven.

OEDIPUS: My father's journey is contemplation. Mine is to be something more...

CORO: Ah...

OEDIPUS: Why not, right?

CORO: Try.

OEDIPUS: My old man, he wants balance -

OEDIPUS:/CORO: *Pingheng*

OEDIPUS: he wants to understand -

OEDIPUS:/CORO: *Jie*

OEDIPUS: and he wants to accept -

OEDIPUS:/CORO: *Jieshou*

OEDIPUS: He must be a *Chino*, because he loves the 'I Ching'.

TIRESIAS: *Ai, chingao!*

[Oedipus laughs an affectionate laugh. It sparks a memory. Sadness.]

SCENE EIGHT***The Land of Running Horses***

[The sanctity of the prison library. Oedipus stands behind Tiresias to one side, slowly moving through a tight ritualized Tai chi chuan set of movements.]

OEDIPUS: They set a date.

TIRESIAS: I know.

OEDIPUS: How you know? What if I don't want to go?

[Tiresias laughs quietly.]

OEDIPUS: You feel?

TIRESIAS: What do you think? Inside, my heart is breaking in half.

[Oedipus loses balance and falls out of the movement. He goes back into it.]

OEDIPUS: That don't make no sense.

TIRESIAS: You'll see. One day. You'll feel it too.

OEDIPUS: Broken in half?

TIRESIAS: In half.

[This unnerves Oedipus. He decides not to pursue it. They move.]

OEDIPUS: Give me a head start, old man.

TIRESIAS: I already have. There's *an hombre* going to be waiting for you in McFarland with a car.

OEDIPUS: Who is he?

TIRESIAS: Just someone I called. It's cheap, but it rides good.

OEDIPUS: *Gracias, papa.* *[Waits.]* What else?

TIRESIAS: What else you want, that's a lot!

OEDIPUS: Come on, *viejo*. Throw me a prophecy.

TIRESIAS: No, no...

OEDIPUS: Don't make it any harder for me than it has to be... I'm scared.

[Just then, Tiresias stops moving. Followed by Oedipus. Tiresias looks up at the sky through the ceiling. A fantastical moment. A conjuring. A light bounces off his cholo shades, muy mistico.]

TIRESIAS: Go south...

OEDIPUS: What's down South?

TIRESIAS: Your destiny.

OEDIPUS: My destiny?

TIRESIAS: A kingdom.

OEDIPUS: For me?

TIRESIAS: For anyone who can take it. But it should be yours.

OEDIPUS: Mine?

TIRESIAS: Listen!

OEDIPUS: Okay, okay.

TIRESIAS: *Pero, cuidate!...*

OEDIPUS: You know I will.

TIRESIAS: It's a weak territory... *Se llama Pico/Union.*

OEDIPUS: Pico/Union? What will I get?

TIRESIAS: Their loyalty.

OEDIPUS: But I want to be a God...

TIRESIAS: First, try being a King.

SCENE NINE***I Wish Some God Would Give You Eyes To See***

[The shadow of bars. Oedipus stands close to Tiresias, facing him. Tiresias reaches for Oedipus and hugs him so hard that it feels like el mundo might split. Oedipus has never seen his father do this. He doesn't know how to respond, so he stays in the hug.]

OEDIPUS: If I could stay...

[He waits, but when it becomes emotionally unbearable, he pulls his father's arms off him slowly. He stands back and takes off his dad's cholo shades. He looks deeply into his eyes and then kisses each one. He tastes.]

Ah, they're sweet! Papa, you always said your tears we're salty. But they're sweet...

[He puts the cholo shades back on the old man. He turns away from him and calms himself. He gathers the courage, turns and looks at Tiresias for the last time. Instinctually they give each other a veterano nod at the exact same time.]

[The Coro form a royal line. Oedipus begins to take off his prison clothes, handing them off as they make their way down the line. When he is down to his boxers a parade of civilian clothes come back the same way. He puts them on. When he is finished dressing, he looks at the Coro who also give a uniform 'later, ese' bow of the head.]

The sound of prison doors opening. Oedipus steps out, like an animal released into the wild, he is both cautious and slightly afraid. The doors close.

The sound of the outside. Not a city, but just outside. A different tone. Oedipus stares out. He takes off running.]

SCENE TEN***Of Sweet Voiced Ministers Had Rendered Still***

[North Kern before the fresh graffiti has dried. A member of the Coro in his cell sings Tower of Power's 'You're Still A Young Man'.]

CORO:

Down on my knees
Oh, heart in hand
I was accused of being too young
But I'm not so young
Can't you understand
That I think like a man...

[A prison bell rings off in the distance.]

SCENE ELEVEN***Until He Find***

[Laius and Jocasta enter as older versions of themselves.]

LAIUS: I'm going.

JOCASTA: Where?

LAIUS: To get back our future.

[Jocasta laughs and nods to herself.]

LAIUS: There's an *hijo de la chingada* who has cursed us.

JOCASTA: Who?

LAIUS: Don't worry about it. But it's time I went and got our past in order. *Esta gente* are not respecting me like they used to. They're taking too much off the top. There is too much *chisme* behind my back. And I know who gave me this bad luck. Damn it, *vieja*, why do I always have to kill my friends?

JOCASTA: Let it go, Laius... it doesn't matter any more.

LAIUS: Oh, yes it does! He's gonna talk to the Gods for me and then I'm gonna get our *negocios* together. We're going to take back this barrio and run it like we used to.

JOCASTA: Maybe this is what it's supposed to be.

LAIUS: Don't be stupid. *[Beat]* And you, you're going to have another baby.

JOCASTA: *[laughs]* Are you kidding?

LAIUS: No, I'm not.

JOCASTA: I'm too old for that.

LAIUS: Naw *vieja*, now you're old enough.

JOCASTA: What do we want a kid for, to pass along your good luck?

[Without warning, Laius reaches over and slaps her across the face, sending her down to the floor. She whimpers. He looks away.]

LAIUS: I'm still the king. Do you hear me? I'M STILL THE KING!

[She stays down on the floor.]

JOCASTA: The king.

LAIUS: If anything happens to me get off your ass and do some work. I leave you all of this. My kingdom. Don't be stupid and give it to that low life brother of yours. And don't worry, I'll be back...

[He leaves without looking at her. She gets up and limps away.]

SCENE TWELVE

Weep No More

[A sudden shift in the world. The sound of a car screeching to a halt. Two headlights face each other, creating a blazing swath of harsh white light that cuts across the center of the stage. It looks like the roar in the middle of a boxing ring. Laius and Oedipus, both angry, step into the center of this cold white space.]

LAIUS: What the fuck is wrong with you!

OEDIPUS: Are you talking to me?

LAIUS: Who do you think I'm talking to, you fucking idiot.

OEDIPUS: Get back in your car, sir.

LAIUS: You see another car coming - you pull over.

OEDIPUS: It's one lane.

LAIUS: Yeah, mine.

OEDIPUS: *You* pull over.

LAIUS: You king of the road, you little bitch?

OEDIPUS: Watch your tongue, old man.

LAIUS: Old man? I can take out a little *mocoso* like you with one hand.

OEDIPUS: Then do it.

LAIUS: This is no place to act *como si eres un rey*. *Mira*, take my advice, little *niña*, I could bury you out here and *nadie* would ever know where to find you. [*Oedipus holds his ground.*] Move *esa* piece of shit *carro* out of the way!

OEDIPUS: You move it.

LAIUS: What did you say?

OEDIPUS: You heard me.

LAIUS: Let me tell you something, asshole, I have a problem with my temper.

OEDIPUS: We have something in common.

LAIUS: I can't control it.

OEDIPUS: Then we are more alike than you realize.

LAIUS: I don't think someone with an 85 Honda Civic should be acting like he owns the road.

OEDIPUS: This close, *viejo*...

[*Beat. They glare at each other. Oedipus doesn't move. Laius notices a tattoo near his hand.*]

LAIUS: When did you get out?

OEDIPUS: (*off his look, hides his hand*) I don't know what you're talking about.

LAIUS: You're so obvious, *pendejo*. North Kern, right? You got convict written all over you, *baboso*. I'm on my way there now. Anybody you want me to say hello to, a boyfriend?

[*Oedipus fumes, suddenly feeling very self-conscious and showing his age.*]

LAIUS: Ah... You don't know the outside, do you? Wow, *ese*, you threw me for a *momento*. I thought you were an *hombre*, but you're just a little boy... [*Laius laughs and relaxes.*] Wouldn't that be crazy if you went right back in? I could do that. Make a call - Highway Patrol - tell them you got some sort of road rage, a *rabia* from being locked in a cage for so long, danger to society, *y todo eso*. Send you back before you got a *taco* - or some pussy. Unless you don't like *tacos*... Or pussy... [*He smiles at Oedipus.*] What's the matter, *gato* got your tongue?

[*Laius laughs to himself as he turns and reaches down for a blade hidden in his pants. Without warning, Oedipus lunges and takes him down. A fight ensues. It is scary and primal. The blade falls away. Oedipus gets on top of Laius and begins to punch him in the face repeatedly, with an absolute savagery and lack of emotion. It's hard and quick, like in a prison yard. With each blow - the Coro begins to chant.*]

CORO: *Asi. Asi. Asi. ASI. ASI. ASI.*

[*With the last of his strength, Laius reaches up and grabs the hand that is pummeling him, stopping him for just a moment. He recognizes the moment that was prophesized so long ago. He yells out to Oedipus, spraying him with blood.*]

LAIUS: My son...

[*It doesn't register to Oedipus, who resumes his assault with a workman-like ferocity. The Coro continue their call, but this time they chant...*]

CORO: *Eso. Eso. Eso. ESO. ESO. ESO.*

[The headlights fade and Oedipus finally stops punching. All we can hear is his heavy breathing. He gets up and walks away like an opponent in a boxing match. After a quiet moment, the dead Laius gets up and ceremoniously takes off the necklace with the crown.

Jocasta enters and he hands it to her. He walks out. She holds the necklace in her hand. She looks at it. Another death, another disappointment. She walks away.

A Coro member goes to Oedipus and trades his shirt with a dried bloody one. The Coro leaves and Oedipus stands there as we hear the screech of a car taking off.]

SCENE THIRTEEN

This Is and Was

[Downtown Los Angeles. Pico-Union. La Casa. Oedipus enters, and although the blood on his shirt is dried and it has been days, he is still out of breath and tentative. He scopes out the house, not realizing that from a far corner, Creon is watching him. Oedipus looks around, then rather than knocking, tries to open a door. Creon surprises him.]

CREON: You shouldn't sneak around - you don't have the feet for it.

OEDIPUS: Creon.

[They look at each other for a moment.]

CREON: I heard you were in town...

OEDIPUS: You did?

CREON: Yeah. *Patas Malas*, why you here?

OEDIPUS: I need a place to crash.

CREON: What do we look like, the Holiday Inn? Don't they give you convicts a voucher for Skid Row?

OEDIPUS: Is that the welcome you going to give me?

CREON: What were you expecting, a parade?

OEDIPUS: *Hermano*...

CREON: *Hermano*? A friend at best, dude.

OEDIPUS: I thought we were closer than that. *[Creon doesn't respond.]* I got nowhere else to go.

CREON: You're peeps?

OEDIPUS: I was hoping that was you...

[This throws off Creon. Tradition gets the best of him and he goes up to Oedipus and extends a hand. Oedipus knows better and leans in, giving him a hug. This disarms Creon, who pulls away.]

CREON: You just get out?

OEDIPUS: Yeah.

CREON: Thought you'd be there forever.

OEDIPUS: Always and forever... *[Oedipus does a little laugh, Creon doesn't.]* You miss it?

CREON: Locked up? *(thinks about it)* I miss the grilled cheese. It's better to be the boss.

OEDIPUS: Oh, you the boss?

CREON: *[he looks at Oedipus, maybe defiant.]* Yeah.

[Oedipus senses a little lie, but lets it pass.]

OEDIPUS: Creon, you saved my life once.

CREON: Yes, I did.

OEDIPUS: And I never forgot that, man. I wouldn't have made it in the *pinche* Youth Authority without you.

Y tus conexiones.

CREON: You're welcome.

OEDIPUS: You're like a brother to me.

CREON: *Pues, hermanito, lo siento*, but we don't got room for visitors.

OEDIPUS: You saved me once, and I need you to save me again. I won't stay long...

CREON: Naw, it's just that, *con todo respeto*, I can't have any problems here.

OEDIPUS: You won't.

CREON: Yeah, what's that? [*He points to Oedipus bloody shirt.*]

OEDIPUS: A past I'm trying to get away from. [*Beat*] I gotta land somewhere. Not forever, just for now. [*Creon turns to leave.*] I'm begging man... I'll do anything you need. Back you up anyway you want.

CREON: [*Inspired, he thinks about it.*] Call me boss.

OEDIPUS: You the boss.

CREON: You can stay a week, tops.

OEDIPUS: Thank you, *hermano*, I appreciate it.

CREON: Don't go snooping around. This is my sister's pad. I live with her.

OEDIPUS: You have a sister? You never told me that.

CREON: Yeah, she takes care of me.

OEDIPUS: What do you do?

CREON: I run the business for my brother-in-law.

OEDIPUS: You live with a family?

CREON: Naw, she's a widow.

OEDIPUS: Hm. Got a job for me?

CREON: Don't be so eager, it makes you look desperate...

OEDIPUS: What kind of business is it?

CREON: It's like a Wal-Mart, if you know what I mean. I sell a lot of different kind of 'merchandise'...

OEDIPUS: Ah... I don't got no money.

CREON: Don't worry about it. We got food and good weed. It's just a week, right?

OEDIPUS: I'm grateful, *hermano*.

CREON: Listen, my sister...

OEDIPUS: What about her?

CREON: She's not doing too good right now. Her husband just died. She keeps to herself.

OEDIPUS: That's cool. We don't have to know each other.

CREON: Just be cool around her. Don't mention her old man, okay?

OEDIPUS: What happened to him?

CREON: That's one of the things you shouldn't talk about. [*He walks right up to Oedipus' face.*] You respect me, right?

OEDIPUS: [*joking, but holding his ground*] Give me a reason not to.

CREON: Just so we're clear...

OEDIPUS: Come right out.

CREON: She's not available.

OEDIPUS: I wouldn't do that.

CREON: She's doing time herself.

OEDIPUS: She been locked up?

CREON: No, she's punishing herself.

OEDIPUS: She an *alleluia*?

CREON: No, but here, we still believe things in this *barrio*. About what happens to us. Our fate. Prophecy. Prediction. Oracles. We're very Old-School here.

OEDIPUS: And you?

CREON: Yeah, me too. You know what they say, 'until you defeat it, it's the thing that rules you.'

OEDIPUS: What?

CREON: What do you mean?

OEDIPUS: What is it you believe?

[*Jocasta speaks from another part of the room.*]

JOCASTA: That we get punished for losing faith.

[They turn, both surprised to see her there. Oedipus doesn't take his eyes off her.]

CREON: Why you sneaking up on me like that!

OEDIPUS: Hey. *[She doesn't answer.]* Is this your sister?

JOCASTA: What do I look like, his mother?

CREON: You been here the whole time?

JOCASTA: Yes, I have... *[To Oedipus]* So, you don't believe in punishment?

OEDIPUS: You talking to me?

JOCASTA: Who the hell do you think I'm talking to?

OEDIPUS: Cause if you are, I didn't say that.

JOCASTA: You didn't have to.

OEDIPUS: But if you want to know... I don't think the Gods punish you unless you want them to.

JOCASTA: You saying we look for pain?

OEDIPUS: *[innocently]* Do you?

[Tense silence. They stare at each other. A standstill.]

CREON: Okay, so, uh...

JOCASTA: What do you mean?

OEDIPUS: I'm just saying that for some people – the Gods are a stick you use to beat yourself up with.

JOCASTA: And how do you know what people think?

OEDIPUS: I don't know what people think.

JOCASTA: That's right, you don't.

OEDIPUS: But I can look at them and tell how beat up they are.

CREON: *[to himself]* Oh oh...

JOCASTA: You think the people in this *barrio* - the elders, the healers, *los hueseros* - beat themselves up with 'God Sticks'?

OEDIPUS: I don't know the people in this *barrio*.

JOCASTA: That's right, you don't!

OEDIPUS: Are they as beat up as you?

JOCASTA: Fuck you, asshole!

CREON: Oedipus, man... Let me just show you your room.

[Oedipus keeps his eyes on Jocasta]

OEDIPUS: I'm sorry.

JOCASTA: You should be, you're arrogant.

CREON: It's over here...

OEDIPUS: Really, I am. I thought I knew what you were feeling.

JOCASTA: What are you, psychic? We're people of faith, shithead.

OEDIPUS: I can tell by the way you talk.

JOCASTA: Don't mess with me, little boy!

CREON: Do you guys know each other---?

OEDIPUS: ---Go ahead, please, believe.

CREON: Whatever, I'm going to work...

JOCASTA: What do you believe?

CREON: [starts to leave.] A week. Don't kill each other!
 OEDIPUS: Sorry about your old man.
 CREON: Dammit!... [He leaves.]
 JOCASTA: Maybe it's what the Gods wanted...
 OEDIPUS: What did you want?
 JOCASTA: Nobody cares what I want.
 OEDIPUS: I'm sure somebody does. [*She doesn't respond.*] Why are you so angry?
 JOCASTA: *Who* are you?
 OEDIPUS: They call me *Patas Malas*.
 JOCASTA: What kind of retarded name is that?
 OEDIPUS: It means...
 JOCASTA: I know what it means. Was it a joke?
 OEDIPUS: My father gave it to me.
 JOCASTA: Why? [*Oedipus walks for her, showing his limp.*] Honestly, I wouldn't be able to tell. It looks like some *Cholo* walk. Why would he name you after something so bad?
 OEDIPUS: If it is who I am, why would it be bad?
 JOCASTA: Hm... [*They look at each other.*] I'm Jocata.
 OEDIPUS: No shit?
 JOCASTA: Shit.
 OEDIPUS: Well, it's a beautiful name.
 JOCASTA: It is?
 OEDIPUS: It has a lot of beautiful letters in it. It sounds like it has a lot of history.
 JOCASTA: Yeah, it's old. I don't know what it means.
 OEDIPUS: It can mean what you want it to. [*She dismisses him, but is amused.*] I would say it means 'beautiful letters'. [*She wants to laugh, but she smiles instead. He looks at her intensely.*]
 How long you been this lonely?
 JOCASTA: Shut up...
 OEDIPUS: You look really sad.
 JOCASTA: Maybe I am, maybe I'm not.
 OEDIPUS: And angry.
 JOCASTA: I have a right!
 OEDIPUS: Yeah, we all do.
 JOCASTA: Not like me.
 OEDIPUS: You don't get to own it - *Jo-cas-ta*. I've been sad too.
 JOCASTA: Don't give me the comfort bullshit, okay?
 OEDIPUS: I'm not, I'm telling you the truth. I can relate.
 JOCASTA: How old are you?
 OEDIPUS: Old enough.
 JOCASTA: Well, that's good. At least we got an adult. How long were you locked up?
 OEDIPUS: Most of my life.

 JOCASTA: Really?
 OEDIPUS: Yeah...
 JOCASTA: You another animal or you got rules?
 OEDIPUS: Yeah, I got rules. I got a lot under my belt.
 JOCASTA: What you got?
 OEDIPUS: I got my G.E.D.
 JOCASTA: [*feigns impression*] Oh...
 OEDIPUS: I didn't cheat. It took me a while, but I got through it. I also got some training in things.
 JOCASTA: Like?
 OEDIPUS: Serving food. Fixing cars. Cooking. Cleaning. Manners. Talking.

JOCASTA: Talking?

OEDIPUS: Yeah. Being a leader.

JOCASTA: Oh? And how you get that?

OEDIPUS: Same way you probably did...

JOCASTA: So what are you running from?

OEDIPUS: Stuff.

JOCASTA: Uh huh, everybody is. What's your stuff?

OEDIPUS: Does it matter?

JOCASTA: It matters if you're some kind of pervert or some shit like that.

OEDIPUS: I'm not.

JOCASTA: Okay. You got dreams?

OEDIPUS: I don't dream.

JOCASTA: Hm, I don't either.

OEDIPUS: See, I knew we'd have something in common.

[She looks at him to see if he was joking, but he looks at her intently.]

JOCASTA: You're very young to be so serious.

OEDIPUS: So are you.

JOCASTA: You don't know me.

OEDIPUS: You don't know me. *[Beat]* Can I?

JOCASTA: Can you what?

OEDIPUS: Can I ask you what happened to your old man?

[She looks at him. This is the first time she's talked about him.]

JOCASTA: He was cursed. He had been dead for a long time before he died. So was I...

OEDIPUS: You were?

JOCASTA: Am.

OEDIPUS: I don't get that.

JOCASTA: Do you know how hard it is to live when you're afraid?

OEDIPUS: No.

JOCASTA: Do you know what it means to live without God?

OEDIPUS: Yeah.

JOCASTA: What are you, some kind of atheist bullshit or something?

OEDIPUS: No.

JOCASTA: You an annoying Jehovahs?

OEDIPUS: No.

JOCASTA: Then what do you believe in?

OEDIPUS: Really?

JOCASTA: Yeah.

OEDIPUS: Me.

JOCASTA: What?

OEDIPUS: I believe in my own power.

JOCASTA: Well you know what, don't run around telling that to the people here. We're border people. We've always been. It's who we are. We're the stuff underneath the cement. Do you get that?

OEDIPUS: I guess.

JOCASTA: This city – it's just borders and beliefs. It's about the old ways here. In this *barrio* – we still lay hands and kill chickens and go to church and do what the *shaman* says. Look at the way we look, like our ancestors. We haven't changed. This ain't downtown – it's the

borderlands. This is the way we live. You might think you have the power to make the world you want to make, but there's someone upstairs pulling your strings.

You think you got here on your own? We all got destiny. We all got a story that was written for us a long time ago. We're just characters in a book. We're already history and we just started living. Our story has already been told. We're fated. *[He smiles.]* Don't laugh at me!

OEDIPUS: I'm not. *[She keeps looking at him. He loses the smile.]* I'm not.

JOCASTA: So, that's your whole religion – that you can kick ass?

OEDIPUS: No, it's that I am going to be more powerful than the Gods.

JOCASTA: Shame on you!

OEDIPUS: You're just saying that because you think you should. *[She doesn't respond.]* One day I am going to be a God. *[She smiles.]* Don't laugh at me.

JOCASTA: I'm not. It's just that, challenging the Gods – it's a little boy thing. When you get older, you're going to beg for them.

OEDIPUS: I won't need their help.

JOCASTA: Not help - comfort. When it's you and the darkness – that's when you're going to want to speak with them. So don't offend them so early in your game.

OEDIPUS: I'm not. I just want them to see me.

JOCASTA: Why?

OEDIPUS: I'm missing something...

JOCASTA: What?

OEDIPUS: A history.

JOCASTA: You got one.

OEDIPUS: I need a new one. *[He looks at her and takes something from inside her.]* Don't you?

JOCASTA: What?

OEDIPUS: You heard me. I know you did. You don't have to be dead no more. *[It hits too close and she tries to turn away.]* Please, don't stop looking at me. Please.

JOCASTA: You can't just invent one.

OEDIPUS: Why not?

JOCASTA: It's not the way it's done.

OEDIPUS: I'm not interested in the way things are done. Neither are you.

JOCASTA: Stop talking to me like you know me.

OEDIPUS: I don't know why I'm saying this, but I feel like I do. I look at you and I feel like a sentence just got finished. It's not a feeling. It's right here. *[He points to his chest.]* Like a heart that's in half, just got completed.

[Silence. This is so intense. They both don't know how to proceed. They look at each other and the moment becomes heat.]

JOCASTA: You ever been with a woman? *[Oedipus nods his head no.]* You're not embarrassed about that?

OEDIPUS: When it happens, I want it to mean so much that it will make me a man.

JOCASTA: You ever cried so hard that everything inside you came floating out like the L.A. River when it rains?

OEDIPUS: Yeah.

JOCASTA: You ever lost something?

OEDIPUS: Yeah.

JOCASTA: Something that destroyed you?

OEDIPUS: I don't know...

JOCASTA: You ever killed a man? *[He doesn't say anything.]* Oh... I should have known. It's all power hungry bullshit.

[She gets up to leave, but he grabs her by the hand. She stops and doesn't pull away. He looks at her and she returns the stare. There is such longing between them, but it's also a gulf. They look at each other too long. He silently caresses her hand. As she stands there, she allows herself to be torn open, but the thought makes her sad.]

JOCASTA: Why, young man, why do you want to be *un Rey*?

OEDIPUS: I want things.

JOCASTA: Things...

OEDIPUS: Anything. That I can hold on to. I want it so bad. *[He puts her hand on his face. He closes his eyes to feel her hand.]* Don't you want something? Other than that sadness?

[He catches her. She starts to cry. He watches her cry for a moment. He reaches out to touch her face. She lets him. He does the only he knows how to do - he kisses each eye. She is surprised. Her tears are as sweet as his father's. He kneels before her.]

OEDIPUS: Teach me.

[He grabs her by the waist and kisses her breast.]

OEDIPUS: Teach me.

[He rests his head on her belly.]

OEDIPUS: Teach me.

[He pulls her down. They begin to make love as the Coro begins to sing The Shirelles, 'Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow'.]

*Tonight you're mine completely
You give your love so sweetly
Tonight the light of love is in your eyes
But will you love me tomorrow?*

SCENE FOURTEEN***Count No Man Happy***

[As Oedipus and Jocasta disrobe and make love, on another part of the stage we see an equally as passionate half-naked Creon in an intense workout.]

CREON: Why!

[He is soon joined by the actors who played the prisoners. They have now become the voices of the barrio, la comunidad.]

ALL: WHY!

CORO #1: Why, oh Gods?

CREON: Does someone else get to be *El Rey*?

CORO #2: Why don't the rich go hungry?

CORO #3: Why don't the greedy ever fill up?

ALL: WHY!

CORO #1: Why does someone else always win the lotto?

CORO #2: Why is it someone else who escapes untouched?

CORO #3: Why is it someone else everyone loves?

CREON: Yeah, why is that?

ALL: WHY!

CORO #1: Why don't the Gods pick me?

CORO #2: So mean these Gods.

CORO #3: They don't listen.

CREON: No they don't.

ALL: WHY!

CREON: Why do the less worthy -

CORO #2: the less loyal -

CORO #3: the undeserving -

CREON: get rewarded with your mercy?

CORO #1: I believe.

CORO #2: I love.

CREON: I try.

CORO #3: I take what's mine.

CORO #1: You also did that.

CORO #2: Don't lie Gods!

CORO #3: I read it.

CREON: Mysterious ways, dude!

CORO #1: So, come on...

CORO #2: man!...

CORO #3: Just...

CREON: tell me.

ALL: WHY!

CORO #1: If it's...

CORO #2: just fate...

CORO #3: then why don't you...

CREON: ...pick me?

ALL: WHY!

[Creon and the Coro leave Oedipus and Jocasta alone in a post-coital state.]

SCENE FIFTEEN

Drowned In A Sea Of...

[Oedipus and JOCASTA: naked. She starts to put on her clothes.]

OEDIPUS: Don't.

JOCASTA: Why?

OEDIPUS: I want to see you. Like you are.

JOCASTA: In a different light - I look better.

OEDIPUS: I like it like that.

JOCASTA: Like how?

OEDIPUS: Like real.

JOCASTA: [laughs] That's because you're young. Real is hot when you're young. Then you get older and you say that word to yourself - 'real' - and it's never a good word again.

OEDIPUS: I wish I had that.

JOCASTA: What, seriousness? You have too much of it.

OEDIPUS: Experience.

JOCASTA: You have more than you think. Why do you need it anyway?

OEDIPUS: Honest?

JOCASTA: What do you think we're being?

OEDIPUS: Are you serious about me?

JOCASTA: Don't you understand? [She kisses him tenderly.] I'm filling up with you. Doesn't that sound strange? Even thinking it makes me feel... All the empty spaces inside of me, it's as if they were always yours. The touch of your skin, your smile, the way you look at me. They complete me. I know I sound like some teenage *puta*, but it's different, I swear to you. When a woman my age says that to a man - it's different.

OEDIPUS: Why?

JOCASTA: Because it means more when you've been through something. Lived. You're a part of me. I don't know why. [She kisses him deeply and looks into his eyes.] What do you want from this?

OEDIPUS: I don't know. What do you mean?

JOCASTA: Do you want this to be real?

OEDIPUS: Of course. I do. It is.

JOCASTA: Do you want it to last?

OEDIPUS: Yes. Yes.

JOCASTA: [She looks towards the door.] I haven't been out of the house since he died.

OEDIPUS: Oh. Are you afraid?

JOCASTA: No. It's the way it's done here. [Beat] Yes, I am.

OEDIPUS: I know what it feels like to be trapped.

JOCASTA: [smiles] Yes, I can imagine you do.

OEDIPUS: We can go out together.

JOCASTA: Not yet.

OEDIPUS: Soon?

JOCASTA: Yes. Soon.

OEDIPUS: I can be your King.

[She looks at him, maybe as a possibility for the first time. She runs a finger over the tattoo on his chest.]

JOCASTA: Who are your people?

OEDIPUS: You mean my father?

JOCASTA: Sure.

OEDIPUS: I'm a Gomez.

JOCASTA: Gomez. There's a lot a Gomez in this damn neighborhood.

OEDIPUS: *Tiresias Gomez.*

JOCASTA: *Tiresias?*

OEDIPUS: You know him?

JOCASTA: Yes, I do.

OEDIPUS: Come on.

JOCASTA: *Tiresias Gomez.* He went blind or something, right?

OEDIPUS: Yeah. How do you know him?

JOCASTA: He used to work for my husband.

OEDIPUS: My dad? Here?

JOCASTA: *Tiresias* and his loyalty. He had very strong beliefs. He loved to read.

OEDIPUS: I know. Are you kidding me about this?

JOCASTA: No.

OEDIPUS: I can't believe it.

JOCASTA: He never told you his life?

OEDIPUS: He didn't.

JOCASTA: What did he say about his past?

OEDIPUS: Nothing.

JOCASTA: You didn't talk about your family, your histories?

OEDIPUS: No. My father, he was... inside. I mean, he raised me, but we never talked about the past.

[This gives her pause, although she doesn't know why. He notices.]

OEDIPUS: What's the matter?

JOCASTA: Nothing... What about your mother?

OEDIPUS: She died when I was a baby.

JOCASTA: But did you know who she was?

OEDIPUS: Yeah. *[She breathes.] Maria Gomez.* She died in the fields. She was a farm worker.

JOCASTA: Do you have a picture?

[He looks at her, reaches for his pants and pulls out his wallet and finds a worn picture. He shows it to her.]

OEDIPUS: I look at it a lot. *[She stares at the picture.]* What?

JOCASTA: Nothing... *[She looks back at him and hands him the picture.]* Wow, *Tiresias*. I used to think about him so much, I don't know why. He always seemed a little bit of a monk to me, you know?

OEDIPUS: That's him.

JOCASTA: I can't believe he had a kid. And he raised you?

OEDIPUS: Tried to. I was mostly in the Youth Authority.

JOCASTA: Ah, Creon...

OEDIPUS: Yup. I didn't know how to live on the outside. So, on my 17th birthday – I robbed a Costco!

JOCASTA: You did?

OEDIPUS: Yeah. I didn't want the money or anything. I didn't even have a gun. I just went outside and waited for the cops. And they put me in the big house. A place I knew.

JOCASTA: Wow...

OEDIPUS: And then my dad, he did something...

JOCASTA: What?

OEDIPUS: He robbed the 7-11 in Bakersfield, Delano, McFarland, Visalia, Tulare. *[She laughs.]* And Fresno! Got himself to North Kern. Just to be with me. That's when he started really raising me. Teaching me. Telling me about the Gods, and the inside of me. And that's when we became something. Something real. Just like us.

JOCASTA: And he's still up there?

OEDIPUS: Yup.

JOCASTA: I can't believe it. *[She stops for a moment and tries to think. Put pieces of puzzles together. It's dizzying.]*

OEDIPUS: And your people?

JOCASTA: Huh? Oh. I don't talk to them.

OEDIPUS: Do you have a picture?

JOCASTA: I don't keep pictures.

OEDIPUS: Why?

JOCASTA: I don't have any good memories, why would I want to look at that?

OEDIPUS: You have Creon.

JOCASTA: That's all I ever had. Left with me. But he's like a baby that needs his tit every few hours.

OEDIPUS: He can't help it.

JOCASTA: I know.

OEDIPUS: He's insecure.

JOCASTA: He always wanted to be something more, *mi hermano*. But that's not his destiny.

OEDIPUS: You never wanted no kids? *[She looks at him. Can she tell him?]* What?

JOCASTA: I had a baby.

OEDIPUS: You did?

JOCASTA: But he died when he was born.

OEDIPUS: I'm sorry... You miss him?

JOCASTA: Sometimes I think I remember him, here, on my chest. The thought of him was killing me, so I had to let him go. In my mind. See, in this *barrio*, they do that to you – the dead – they can get into your head and make you stop living, even from the grave. I think they all hate being over there at Forest Lawn. The sound of the freeway day and night.

OEDIPUS: Is that where he is?

JOCASTA: I don't know. They took him from me.

OEDIPUS: Who did?

JOCASTA: It doesn't matter. It won't bring him back. You choose to live this kind of life you have to accept the rules. You know the rules?

OEDIPUS: Yes, I know the rules.

JOCASTA: Good. I do have a loud sister that lives at Forest Lawn. She's a bitch. *[He laughs.]*

I bring her flowers - she wilts them. I visit her, - it rains. She hates her plot. She hates the view. She complains about everything.

OEDIPUS: Maybe one day we'll find him and you can go see him?

JOCASTA: No, we won't. Listen, we can't talk about him no more.

OEDIPUS: We can't?

JOCASTA: It's too hard.

OEDIPUS: Okay.

JOCASTA: You fill that space.

OEDIPUS: I do?

JOCASTA: You fill the space that was his.

[They lay back down, his head on her chest.]

SCENE SIXTEEN***So, Being Mortal***

[Creion watches as the Coro enter. During this scene Jocasta gets up and exits, leaving Oedipus naked and alone in the space.]

CORO #1: Time passes.
CORO #2: *El tiempo pasa.*
CORO #3: They stay in bed.
CORO #1: Stay *en la cama.*
CORO #2: For three months.
CORO #3: Three months?
CORO #1: Must be good.
CORO #2: Must be...
CORO #3: What do they have...
CORO #1: to stay *en la cama*...
CORO #2: for three months?
CORO #3: Damn!
CORO #1: I wish.
CORO #2: All the time.
CORO #3: Me too.
CORO #1: Could stay *en la cama.*
CORO #2: For three months.
CORO #3: Might fall in love again.
CORO #1: Doubt it.
CORO #2: At least give it a try.
CORO #3: One day they decide...
CORO #1: while they're in bed...
CORO #2: they can be something...
CORO #3: something new.
CORO #1: Something different.
CORO #2: Something for the future.
CORO #3: A new kingdom.
CORO #1: She ain't stupid.
CORO #2: Gotta hold on.
CORO #3: Hold on to her power.
CORO #1: Whose idea was it?
CORO #2: Yeah, whose?
CORO #3: It makes a difference.
CORO #1: It sure does.
CORO #2: Did they shake on it?
CORO #3: They shook something.
CORO #1: Sure did.
CORO #2: Did it right.
CORO #3: Hope so.
CORO #1: For their sake.
CORO #2: Because out here...
CORO #3: we need kings...
CORO #1: and systems...
CORO #2: To operate *under* the system.
CORO #3: He's going out...
CORO #1: while she's sleeping.

CORO #2: Checking out the territory.
CORO #3: Shaking some hands.
CORO #1: Cutting some deals.
CORO #2: Brings back *churros*.
CORO #3: And Twinkies.
CORO #1: Her favorite.
CORO #2: But there's trouble.

[We see Creon enter.]

CORO #3: Trouble to come.
CORO #1: You knew it wasn't easy.
CORO #2: No way.
CORO #3: When there's family.
CORO #1: Family is hard.
CORO #2: Tell me about it.
CORO #3: Because time passes.
CORO #1: *El tiempo pasa*.
CORO #2: And there are deals to be made.
CORO #3: And territories to protect.
CORO #1: And kingdoms to conquer.
ALL: But you don't want to get out of bed...

[By now, Creon stands over a naked Oedipus. Quietly he puts his foot over his neck, trapping him.]

SCENE SEVENTEEN
Envied On His Pedestal

[Creon stands over Oedipus, who wakes up to feel a foot on his neck. He struggles for a moment, but is trapped.]

CREON: You think.

OEDIPUS: Let go!

CREON: You think territories wait for people like you to take them?

OEDIPUS: No!

CREON: Open doors with open legs that give you whatever you want.

OEDIPUS: I'm serious, stop!

CREON: You think that because you were like the Fresh Prince somewhere we should all bow down to your ass?

OEDIPUS: Get off!

[Oedipus pulls Creon's foot off him and starts to dress.]

CREON: Why did you pick up my delivery from *La Curacao*?

OEDIPUS: Your sister asked me to.

CREON: Jocasta asked you to do my work?

OEDIPUS: She didn't say that.

CREON: *El Pinguino* saw you at Lucy's *Tacos* asking the *viejos* about the territory.

OEDIPUS: He's thinking about somebody else.

CREON: Naw, he still goes to Latin Mass, he doesn't lie.

OEDIPUS: So what?

CREON: You're like a politician without a nice suit.

OEDIPUS: It's not CSI, don't speculate so much, dude.

[Jocasta enters.]

CREON: I know what's going on.

JOCASTA: What's going on?

CREON: *[ignores her]* We had an agreement.

OEDIPUS: That wasn't an agreement - that was a request.

[Creon makes a lunge for Oedipus, but misses.]

JOCASTA: Creon, what are you doing?

CREON: This homeless convict doesn't understand the rules.

JOCASTA: He knows the rules.

CREON: Not our rules! He doesn't know our people and the way we live. How can he? A *barrio* is not a prison.

OEDIPUS: You're not that unique, pee-wee.

CREON: This is mine!

JOCASTA:

No, it's not.

OEDIPUS:

It's not.

[Jocasta looks at Oedipus surprised, so does Creon.]

CREON: I am family. I am blood. What are you?

JOCASTA: Creon, *por favor!*

CREON: I am the heir apparent.

OEDIPUS: You don't even know what that is, you moron.

JOCASTA: Oedipus, don't. He gets like this.

CREON: For a reason!

JOCASTA: For a reason...

CREON: You see, here we have real women we marry. We have lineage and *tradiciones* that we have to follow. That's what they expect. Our *gente*. I have not been able to take a wife, because, guess what, dry ducts - we grieve, we mourn our King. We give him the respect that his position requires. We don't lock ourselves in the bedroom and screw ourselves out of our sadness.

JOCASTA: Creon!

CREON: We wait. Out of respect.

[Oedipus goes up to him.]

OEDIPUS: Wait too long, it passes you by.

CREON: *[grabs Oedipus's shirt]* Listen, little boy, I'm not the one lost in that crooked teeth smile. *[Pushing him off, Creon looks at Jocasta]* And you, where's your head? Your husband just died. Act like it.

OEDIPUS: Don't talk to her that way.

JOCASTA: He can't help it, he's talking out of his ass.

CREON: Sister, I know you're grieving, but at least show some *respeto*. For our ways. Don't do this to the kingdom.

[Oedipus laughs] What's so funny? I told him he could stay a week. Three months and now he's on the payroll?

JOCASTA: He's earning his keep.

CREON: We don't need him.

OEDIPUS: More than you realize, King Taco.

CREON: What do you know about him?

JOCASTA: A lot.

CREON: A lot...

JOCASTA: Enough!

CREON: Have you checked up on him? Guess what? Nobody knows him. He keeps to himself. He's got no back up. Come on, man, you're smarter than that!

JOCASTA: Creon, you're being ridiculous. *Mi hermano*, do you think I would abandon you?

[She goes to him and puts his hand on her heart.] You always have a place here.

CREON: *[pulls his hand away]* That room is full.

JOCASTA: There's room for all of us.

CREON: When was the last time you were out there?

JOCASTA: I can't...

CREON: What are you afraid of? You haven't been out since he died.

OEDIPUS: I've been taking care of business for her.

CREON: Yeah, I see that.

OEDIPUS: People ask me for help. Should I not help?

CREON: Help is my business.

OEDIPUS: I'm not trying to take a piece of your pie, so chill out.

CREON: If you're not asking for money then what are you asking for?

OEDIPUS: Loyalty.

CREON: *[laughs]* He thinks I'm an idiot. Don't make a mockery of our kingdom, *puto*. *[Looks at Jocasta]* Enough with the crush and the flirt and your *miedo* of the outside, pay attention to your people!

JOCASTA: Don't worry I'm in charge. And there's enough business for everybody. What you should be doing is helping each other.

CREON: Each other? What's his investment? [*Oedipus and Jocasta look at each other. Creon watches them.*] What?

OEDIPUS: Let's not mess this up for anybody. Let's keep it within the family.

CREON: Family?

JOCASTA: We're getting married.

CREON: Are you kidding me?

JOCASTA: Just simple. In the backyard.

CREON: [*Deeply hurt*] For reals? When were you going to tell me, *familia*? Do you know what they say about him?

OEDIPUS: Nothing!

CREON: Nothing. Right. Have you ever heard these people say *nothing*? How do you think this community survives? Talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. That's how they keep the myths alive. Even the damn blind kid selling Chiclets is talking shit about you!

OEDIPUS: They're liars!

CREON: You're so full of yourself you misjudged their smiles. When they smile, it's because they don't like you. And when they like you, they don't. I'll give you that one for free.

JOCASTA: Creon *por favor*, don't make *pleito*. This is for all of our good and you know it.

These people they need their leaders. That's what we give them. We don't make the rules - we just get around them.

CREON: But that's me.

JOCASTA: *Hermano...*

CREON: Why not just tell them I'm the leader?

JOCASTA: Creon, *con todo mi corazon*, please don't ask me this.

CREON: You're not being honest with me. Are you honest with him?

JOCASTA: It's not your calling, *mi hermano*.

CREON: You don't know that.

OEDIPUS: You know it too, bro.

CREON: How can he be King when he's cursed?!

JOCASTA: What?

CREON: That's what they're saying. If you were out *en la calle*, you would know that - unless you don't believe in tradition anymore?

JOCASTA: Of course I do...

CREON: The healers, they're telling everyone.

JOCASTA: They're ridiculous.

CREON: Maybe, but what they say goes. Unless...

OEDIPUS: Unless what?

JOCASTA: Don't listen to him.

CREON: Should I not tell him?

OEDIPUS: Tell me what?

CREON: A rite of passage.

OEDIPUS: A what?

CREON: *Un rito*.

OEDIPUS: Nobody told me about this.

CREON: Why would they?

JOCASTA: They have to bless you to be King.

OEDIPUS: What if I don't want their blessing?

CREON: See?

JOCASTA: You rule side by side with them.

OEDIPUS: What if I want to rule alone?

CREON: What the hell, man?

JOCASTA: It's not a game, Oedipus.

OEDIPUS: I'm serious.

CREON: Alright then. Your last obstacle is faith. Go to it, Fresh Prince.

JOCASTA: *[Worried for Oedipus]* Be careful. They're holy, but they're tricksters. They become things.

OEDIPUS: Things?

[She kisses him and leaves. Oedipus and Creon glare at each other.]

CREON: *Botanica* Million Dollar. A left on Broadway, another left on First. You'll need change for the meters.

OEDIPUS: I'm gonna take this. I promise you.

CREON: And I promise you I'm going to find out about you. You go pray. I'm gonna go do a little Sherlock Holmes, *homes...* *[laughs as he leaves.]* Don't get thrown by the S sounds...

OEDIPUS: What?

[Oedipus walks out, confused. Almost immediately, the sound of downtown Los Angeles fills the space. Cars, the brakes on a bus, people on the streets, Latino music on bad stereos, vendors hawking their wares in Spanish and Spanglish, honking and honking. This noise gets taken over by the sound of religion and tradition and faith.]

SCENE EIGHTEEN

This Is The King Who Solved The Famous Riddle

[Oedipus enters La Botanica Million Dollar and it feels like we enter another world. Awaiting him is a tribunal of Los Healers – El Mistico, El Huesero and El Curandero.]

OEDIPUS: *Senores.*

LOS HEALERS: Accursed...

OEDIPUS: You knew I was coming.

LOS HEALERS: We've been waiting.

OEDIPUS: I have a question.

LOS HEALERS: Bow to us.

OEDIPUS: What?

LOS HEALERS: Bow, *primero.*

OEDIPUS: *Lo siento*, but I don't bow.

LOS HEALERS: *Que?*

OEDIPUS: *Ustedes son Kings?*

LOS HEALERS: Of course not!

OEDIPUS: Then bow to me.

LOS HEALERS: Arrogant.

[Oedipus circles them which makes Los Healers uneasy.]

OEDIPUS: Jocosta appreciates all that you do.

LOS HEALERS: And you?

OEDIPUS: I don't know what you do.

LOS HEALERS: We heal!

OEDIPUS: That's it?

LOS HEALERS: That's a lot.

OEDIPUS: How do you heal?

EL MISTICO: *Pues*, I see *lo que viene.*

OEDIPUS: You're a seer?

EL MISTICO: Little boy, I don't name it - I just do it.

EL HUESERO: I feel your bones and heal your wounds.

OEDIPUS: You're a chiropractor?

EL HUESERO: Yes, but without the license.

OEDIPUS: *Y tu?*

EL CURANDERO: I can look inside you.

OEDIPUS: So?

EL CURANDERO I see so much...

[El Curandero laughs at him, but Oedipus brushes him off.]

OEDIPUS: So, how can we help each other?

LOS HEALERS: The question is how will we help you?

OEDIPUS: I'm glad you asked, *veteranos.* Can I be *directo?*

LOS HEALERS: Honesty is our business.

OEDIPUS: Good. Each one of you is going to pay a percentage of what you make.

LOS HEALERS: *Que?*

OEDIPUS: There will now be an operating fee for healing in the *barrio.*

LOS HEALERS: That's against our *tradiciones.*

OEDIPUS: The Taco Trucks pay.

LOS HEALERS But we do the work of the Gods!

OEDIPUS: If the Gods want to heal, let them do it themselves!

LOS HEALERS: *Respeto!*

OEDIPUS: Kings are only respectful to other Kings!

LOS HEALERS: You assume too much.

OEDIPUS: Can I help it if people like their leaders youthful these days?

LOS HEALERS: Arrogant and accursed.

OEDIPUS: There can only be one leader in this *barrio*, and that is me!

LOS HEALERS: Fear them, little boy!

OEDIPUS: I don't got no fear! Everyone is going to respect me! Do you hear me?

[A saints statue falls and breaks. Suddenly the metal doors of la botanica come rolling down. El Mundo becomes dark and mysterious. In a quick and violent action, Los Healers contort their bodies and transform into Esfinge, a three-headed Azteca serpent.]

LOS HEALERS: *Ssssssi Sssssenor...*

OEDIPUS:: What the hell!

[Esfinge circles Oedipus and they throw chingazos at the young king, who deflects them in a quicker version of the Tai chi chuan. They hiss and punch with their serpent tail and heads, every once in a while they bite at his chest, holding on with their fangs, leaving an impression that eventually becomes the tatuaje of a crown.]

OEDIPUS: *Quien son?*

ESFINGE: *Esssssfinge.*

OEDIPUS: The Sphinx?

ESFINGE: In the flessssh.

OEDIPUS: And I'm supposed to be the one that's cursed?

ESFINGE #1: *Chingon*

ESFINGE #2: *Cabron*

ESFINGE #3: *Huevon*

ESFINGE: How dare you call us out?

OEDIPUS: I didn't.

ESFINGE: You want to be *el Rey*?

ESFINGE #1: Then you have to get through us.

OEDIPUS: Bring it on.

ESFINGE: We have a riddle.

OEDIPUS: I have an answer.

[As Oedipus tries to get up, Esfinge keeps him down.]

ESFINGE #1: Now tell us...

ESFINGE #2: young homeboy...

ESFINGE #3: How long can you be King?

OEDIPUS: *Por vida.*

ESFINGE: For life!

ESFINGE: What is the motto of a King?

OEDIPUS: Laugh Now, Cry Later.

ESFINGE: *Muy bien.* And what is the mark of a King?

OEDIPUS: Tattoo.

ESFINGE: That you don't have.

OEDIPUS: Because I'm pure.

[This makes them stop in their tracks. It gives Oedipus an opportunity to get up.]

ESFINGE: You think anyone can be a King?

OEDIPUS: Not anyone. Me.

ESFINGE: But you're common.

OEDIPUS:: Raised by a *Mistico*.

ESFINGE: Then you should beg on the street. *[They laugh and hiss.]* But you talk like a King?

OEDIPUS: I have higher aspiration.

ESFINGE #1: Don't use big words around us, criminal...

ESFINGE #2: ...we invented them.

ESFINGE #3: Your father was a King.

OEDIPUS: No.

ESFINGE: That's not a question.

ESFINGE #1: Leave us...

ESFINGE #2: and be happy...

ESFINGE #3: to just have breath.

OEDIPUS: To breathe is not enough for me. My life has not been wasted on growing up, but rather, in.

[They squirm and hiss in approval.]

ESFINGE: It's going to be a pleasure to devour you.

ESFINGE #1: We haven't had a challenge in years.

OEDIPUS: The last King?

ESFINGE #1: He lived under us,

ESFINGE #2: Not over us.

ESFINGE #3: We're very hungry...

OEDIPUS: The question.

[They adjust themselves in a sphinx like ritual, looking like something regal and calm.]

ESFINGE #1: *Senor*, how many legs does a creature of the morning have?

ESFINGE #2: And how many legs does a creature of *la tarde* have?

ESFINGE #3: And how many legs does a creature of *la noche* have?

[Oedipus looks up at ceiling, which in his head, opens up to the sky. That glint that once hit his father's eye, hits him for a brief moment. Suddenly, as if he was resting in the spirit or speaking in tongues, his voice takes on that of un hombre and utters...]

OEDIPUS:: *Cuatro. Dos. Tres.*

[Esfinge immediately goes into an attack pose and hisses at him.]

ESFINGE #1: Lucky guess.

ESFINGE #2: But math is easy.

ESFINGE #3: Do the essay, *puto*.

[They look at him with the confidence que este pendejo would never guess the answer. Oedipus thinks for a moment.]

[Like his papa, Oedipus channels humanity in a moment's time. Jocasta appears holding a baby in her arms. Oedipus can see her, although he doesn't understand why.]

OEDIPUS: *El hombre*, that creature, walks on four legs in the morning of his life...

[Jocasta disappears and then Laius appears with his arms at his side.]

OEDIPUS: Then stands on two legs in the afternoon of his youth...

[Finally, Tiresias appears holding his cane in hand.]

OEDIPUS: And at the end of his evening, he struggles with three legs to balance.

[Tiresias disappears. He comes out of his trance.]

[Esfinge violently trashes, struggling to maintain.]

ESFINGE: What is it *cabron*?

OEDIPUS: A child. A man. A *viejo*. Humanity.

[All three Esfinge heads look at one another in horror.]

ESFINGE: *Hijo de la chingada madre!*

[As quickly as they became Esfinge, Los Healers become mere mortals once again. The last of their S's dissipate as they separate. It takes them a moment to recover and then they look at him with deep resentment.]

EL MISTICO: Prison may have set you free...

EL HUESERO: ...but freedom will imprison you forever...

EL CURANDERO: *Cabron!*

[Feeling victorious, Oedipus approaches them. El Mistico goes to him and hands him his bible.]

EL MISTICO: Welcome young King. Use it wisely.

[Oedipus opens the good book and slowly rips a page out of it. Los Healers gasp in horror. He walks the stage, ripping pages from the bible, throwing them up in the air, like confetti, and littering the floor with them. Page after page after page. When he is done, he looks at Los Healers.]

OEDIPUS: Now eat them.

LOS HEALERS: What?

OEDIPUS: Eat your words.

LOS HEALERS: Never.

OEDIPUS: Eat them or I will kill you.

[Los Healers look at the stage littered with scripture, and back at Oedipus, who seems possessed by the power of Power.]

EL MISTICO: *Por favor...*

OEDIPUS: If you believe it, you will eat it.

[Slowly they walk to the pages and begin to put them in their mouths. The act is shameful and humiliating.]

LOS HEALERS: *[Paper in mouth]* We will pray for you!

OEDIPUS: Don't pray for me. Pray to me!

[Los Healers quickly leave the Biblically littered stage.]

SCENE NINETEEN***This Is No Time For Petty Personal Bickering***

[Oedipus screams out for Jocasta, as if nothing has happened. A youthful innocence in his smile.]

OEDIPUS: *Chula!* I did it!

[Without realizing it, he bows for her. A ritual begins. Oedipus goes to an area on stage where a Coro member is waiting with a white guayabera, which he puts on. He combs his hair and gets ready. Jocasta enters, veil on head, simple wedding dress and holding Lauis' chain in her hands. They Wedding March to each other. She places the King's chain around Oedipus neck. He is beaming with pride. The Coro place a traditional wedding cord over them. They begin a slow dance to a classic old school song, Heat Wave's 'Always and Forever', as a Coro member sings.]

CORO:

*Always and forever
Each moment with you
Is just like a dream to me
That somehow came true.*

*And I know tomorrow
Will still be the same
Cuz we got a life of love
That won't ever change.*

[They exchange rings and kiss. The Coro celebrates]

*Always and forever
Each moment with you
Is just like a dream to me...*

[Jocasta shows Oedipus a dance. He is overjoyed to learn, looking like a little boy at a party. She is quickly becoming light and young. He notices Creon looking at them. He gives him the finger behind Jocasta back and smiles. At the end of the song, he kisses her and leaves.]

SCENE TWENTY

Presume On His Good Fortune

[Jocasta looks at the empty space for the first time. She reaches down and picks up a piece of confetti and realizes what it is--- the ripped up holy scripture. She is shaken. Creon enters.]

CREON: Don't act so surprised.

JOCASTA: What are they saying?

CREON: You have to let him go.

JOCASTA: What?

CREON: Leave him.

JOCASTA: I can't.

CREON: He's a boy.

JOCASTA: Our *Rey*.

CREON: We have to kill him.

JOCASTA: Never!

CREON: If we don't, they will - the old school way. A *chisme* will become a belief - a belief will become a motive - a motive will be justified. You know how they do it. And they won't stop with him. They'll trap you in here, not that you aren't already, and they'll exact their revenge on the both of you. And then they'll move on to me. *La familia*. I ain't gonna die for that idiot.

JOCASTA: They wouldn't dare do that to the King.

CREON: Say what you will, *mi hermana*, but *en el barrio* people love their Kings strong - but as fearful of the Gods as they are. It's our way and our history. This little boy, he dares because he's got no fear - a real convict. If the King loses respect, so do his people. Then they turn on you. There's nothing modern about our *gente* - they still poison your tacos.

JOCASTA: My poor brother, jealousy is suffocating you.

CREON: My poor sister, love has made you blind.

JOCASTA: Please, tell me what you know.

CREON: I don't want to lie to you, but I also don't want to destroy you.

JOCASTA: Please, *mi hermano*.

CREON: I went up to *El Norte*.

[Oedipus quietly steps in.]

OEDIPUS: What did you learn, *chismosa*?

CREON: You should have asked your father while he was alive.

OEDIPUS: My father? What about my father?

CREON: *[looks at Jocasta]* He killed him.

OEDIPUS: *Mi Papa*? What's happened to him?

[Oedipus, startled, maybe scared, starts to move towards Creon, but Jocasta steps in between them.]

JOCASTA: Don't listen to him!

CREON: Killed. By the hand of his son.

JOCASTA: How do you know?

CREON: I saw him...

OEDIPUS: Oh my God...

[Oedipus falls to his knees in grief, searching his mind for a moment, a dream or otherwise, that would confirm this terror.]

JOCASTA: It's a terrible lie he's brought into this house.

CREON: Not a lie. It's the truth.

OEDIPUS: You're a traitor and I don't care that you're family.

CREON: That worries me, as I hear your anger is uncontrollable and the reason for your old man's death.

OEDIPUS: You're a poison, brother-in-law...

CREON: Just trying to save the kingdom, dude.

OEDIPUS: Trying to tear us apart. *[He looks at Jocasta, his desperation turning into immaturity]* Are you in on this with him?

JOCASTA: What? Of course not!

OEDIPUS: How can you stand to be in the same room with this traitor when you know he tells lies against me?

JOCASTA: He's my brother!

OEDIPUS: Only an accomplice would do that.

JOCASTA: Oedipus, *por favor*, calm down.

OEDIPUS: How can I trust you when you choose the loyalty of your brother over our bond?

JOCASTA: What are you talking about? Don't do this. *[She looks at Creon]* Why do you bring such *tristeza* into this house? Did we push so far away?

OEDIPUS: I never took your money.

CREON: Just my family.

[Suddenly Oedipus screams as he rushes for Creon taking him down to the floor where they wrestle and fight.]

JOCASTA: Don't!

CREON: *[fighting Oedipus off]* You can't kill everyone who holds the truth against you!

JOCASTA: Let him go, Oedipus. Please, let him go! *[She tries to pull Oedipus off of Creon, but he is en rabia like a bulldog and won't let go.]* Don't! I couldn't bear another death. Please...

[Oedipus, enraged and out of his head, digs his hands into Creon's neck, choking him. Finally, Jocasta leans over Oedipus, and with her knee, kicks into his ribs. He falls over, grabbing his side. Creon struggles for air. They all stop as their breath fills the space.]

JOCASTA: Why Creon, why destroy us?

CREON: *[regaining his breath, but not his emotions]* It's not me. It's him...

[Creon points toward the door as se hear the clickety-clack of a blind man's cane. Tiresias appears.]

OEDIPUS: Papa! You're alive!

JOCASTA: Tiresias...

SCENE TWENTY-ONE***Most Powerful Of Men***

[Creon and Jocasta pull away, leaving the room. Oedipus goes to hug his most beloved, but Tiresias resists, as Oedipus ushers him in.]

OEDIPUS: When did you get out?

TIRESIAS: A month.

OEDIPUS: Why didn't you come here?

TIRESIAS: I couldn't...

OEDIPUS: Papa, he said I killed you.

TIRESIAS: That's not what I said.

OEDIPUS: I knew it.

TIRESIAS: I told him the truth.

OEDIPUS: I don't understand.

TIRESIAS: If you understood, it would destroy you.

OEDIPUS: I am already being destroyed. They say I'm cursed.

[Tiresias bows his head in shame.]

OEDIPUS: What?

TIRESIAS: The man in the middle of the road...

OEDIPUS: What man in the middle of the road?

TIRESIAS: *El hombre...*

OEDIPUS: Oh! *[realizes]* I had no choice. A King does not bow...

TIRESIAS: *[points to Oedipus' head]* You are still inside, *mi hijo*.

OEDIPUS: *[spooked]* I don't want to hear anymore!

[Oedipus starts to go, Tiresias grabs his arm.]

TIRESIAS: You haven't heard everything I have to say.

OEDIPUS: And what do you have to say that I don't already know, *viejo*?

TIRESIAS: That I once was a man who defied the Gods. And because of that they punished me by taking away the colors. I saved a life. But it was not mine to save. *[Beat]* That life was yours.

OEDIPUS: You gave me my life, *Papa*.

TIRESIAS: But it was not mine to give.

OEDIPUS: I don't understand you.

TIRESIAS: I kept you from your father.

OEDIPUS: My father? Say it. SAY IT!

TIRESIAS: The man in the middle of the road... He was your father.

OEDIPUS: I killed... my father.

TIRESIAS: *Un Rey*.

OEDIPUS: A King...

TIRESIAS: The King of this *barrio*.

OEDIPUS: If he was the King, then she... *[Realizing his curse, Oedipus falls to his knees.]*
Why?

TIRESIAS: Because I wanted you to live. Isn't that what every father wants for his son?

OEDIPUS: You're not my father.

TIRESIAS: You think a father is made of blood? A father is made of sweat – running to keep up in your youth, and praying that you'll survive when you're older. A father is made of bruises – from taking your punches, and then kicking himself for the things he never did. A father is made of breath – from blowing into your lungs the ideas of life, and gasping in fear at what you'll do with them.

OEDIPUS: I never gave my father that chance!

TIRESIAS: He didn't want it!

OEDIPUS: How do you know? You filled me with stories that should have been his to tell. You gave me lessons that were not yours to give. You held me in my fear knowing that the wrong hands were in place. Playing out a power trip with my life. You steal me from my father and then leave me at the mercy of the Gods who loves punishment. You vicious old man!

TIRESIAS: He didn't want you!

OEDIPUS: What were you doing all this time? You didn't learn anything in SECTION 6: R-A-Y to R-E-L. The books don't talk to you because you don't listen. I mistook your silence for meditation. I just want to know if you were laughing at me? Because I'm fucked! I did exactly what they wanted, didn't I? I played out their version. My weakness was their plotting.

[His is a desperate confession.]

OEDIPUS: Can't you see? I wanted to make a new story. Something no one had ever seen. I wanted to tell it my way. And I wanted to be able to control my own destiny. But I never had the chance because all of this was decided way before I got here. Isn't that right? Am I the way the lesson looks? Am I? AM I THE WAY THE LESSON LOOKS?

TIRESIAS: I don't know. I can't see...

[Oedipus, in his anger and rage, lunges at Tiresias and begins to choke him. Tiresias, in true místico form, does not resist. All we can hear is Oedipus struggling against tears and Tiresias choking. Maybe because of the lack of resistance, he finally looks at his father and comes to his senses, quickly letting go. Tiresias struggles for breath. Oedipus realizing that he has hurt his adopted, quickly hugs him. He begins to cry with abandon.]

OEDIPUS: Father. My father. Please. Please...

[It's too much. Too much to take. He runs out. Tiresias stands and talks, as if Oedipus was still there across from him.]

TIRESIAS: I never meant... I just didn't have the heart. The heart to see history play itself out the way the Gods wanted. I made a new story. That story was you. I gave it the best chance I knew how - to make sure it lived. But I'm not a God, I'm not a creator. I'm just a man. A weak man who looks inside now for all of his answers. I cannot see them in the world. So, I look inside. For the answers. The stories. Inside...

[Tiresias clickety-clacks away.]

SCENE TWENTY-TWO*No Mortal Eyes*

[Jocasta enters. They stand a world apart.]

OEDIPUS: I can't see you anymore?

JOCASTA: Why?

[He can't answer her.]

OEDIPUS: Do we have to believe everything they tell us?

JOCASTA: What did he tell you?

OEDIPUS: I killed a man...

JOCASTA: Yes...

OEDIPUS: My heart. Is broken. In half.

[Beat. He still cannot find the words to tell her the truth.]

JOCASTA: You can tell me, Oedipus.

OEDIPUS: I killed my father.

JOCASTA: But Tiresias

OEDIPUS: He was a king.

JOCASTA: What?

OEDIPUS: A King.

JOCASTA: Oh my God. Oedipus. What are you saying?

OEDIPUS: A King. Like me.

JOCASTA: No. Not like you.

OEDIPUS: Yes. Like me.

JOCASTA: It can't be. I believed...

OEDIPUS: He was our King.

JOCASTA: *[breaking down]* My husband.

OEDIPUS: Laius.

JOCASTA: My husband, Oedipus. I should have known.

I am a fool. I should have known!

OEDIPUS: You couldn't have.

JOCASTA: We're all guilty of the lies we live with. The ones we choose to believe. *[She looks at him.]* You filled spaces. Spaces that were yours. I should have known...

OEDIPUS: I won't see you again.

JOCASTA: I know.

OEDIPUS: I can't bear the weight. I cursed you. I cursed myself.

JOCASTA: No. The curses of my life came before you.

OEDIPUS: Take these eyes from me.

JOCASTA: Never.

OEDIPUS: All that I have seen. The darkness and the light. Take them from me.

JOCASTA: I couldn't.

OEDIPUS: I beg of you.

JOCASTA: Please, Oedipus...

OEDIPUS: Let me live in a memory, without pain. You must.

JOCASTA: Never!

OEDIPUS: *Mama*, please... The Gods will forgive you. They will grant you mercy in your violence.

JOCASTA: I can't...

OEDIPUS: I promise. I won't scream. I won't cry. Do it because you love me. You must. You must. You must.

[He kneels in front of her. He pulls her hands to his eyes. He steels himself.]

OEDIPUS: Do it! NOW!

[She reaches in and blinds him.]

JOCASTA: *Mi hijo...*

[He stifles his screams as best he can. She gives him a bloody kiss on each eye. He collects himself.]

OEDIPUS: Now go. Go to your destiny. I am going to mine. Go. To your memories.

[She pulls back, as Oedipus pulls out a small prison-made blade and shanks her with it. At first she resists, for fear, then she stops, and pushes back into his blade, never taking her eyes off him. He turns the blade into her stomach until all her breath is gone. He holds her.]

EPILOGUE
Yet In The End

[We hear tres chifles in the air. The Coro enter.]

CORO:

Oye, gente!
 Look at this *hombre*.
Todos who live here.

This is Oedipus.
 Aka *Patas Malas*.
 The young *vato* who defeated *Esfinge*.
 Who took the crown and swore himself in,
 as *un Rey*.

Oye gente!
 Look upon Oedipus.
Un Rey who could not escape his destiny.

Who found a way.
 To come back.
 To his beginning.

Let him live.
 Roam in his memories.
 However few.

No man is *feliz*,
 until he's six feet under.

Pero for now,
 Let him be.

Free.

[Oedipus lays Jocasta on the floor. He stands and puts on a pair of old cholo shades. He pulls out a blind man's cane and begins to use it as he walks. Tiresias enters with his cane as well. They listen for each other. All we hear is the sound of the clickety-clack of their canes roaming around the stage. They finally find one another. Oedipus puts his hand on his father's shoulder as Tiresias slowly leads him back to prison. We hear the prison doors opening as they enter, and closing as they leave.]

- FIN -