

Name _____

Read and annotate these passages for the assessment. Remember to read closely, pushing past comprehension and into analysis. Notice individual words, images, details, figurative language, tone, structure, characterization, etc.

OEDIPUS:

You – here? You have the gall
To show your face before the palace gates?
You, plotting to kill me, kill the king –
I see it all, the marauding thief himself (25)
scheming to steal my crown and power! Tell me,
in god’s name, what did you take me for,
coward or fool, when you spun out your plot?
Your treachery – you think I’d never detect it
creeping against me in the dark? Or sensing it, (30)
not defend myself? Aren’t you the fool,
you and your high adventure. Lacking numbers,
powerful friends, out for the big game of empire –
you need riches, armies to bring that quarry down!

OEDIPUS:

O god—
all come true, all burst to light!
O light—now let me look my last on you!
I stand revealed at last— (95)
cursed in my birth, cursed in marriage,
cursed in the lives I cut down with these hands!

JOCASTA

Lords of the realm, it occurred to me, (426)
just now, to visit the temples of the gods,
so I have my branch in hand and incense too.
Oedipus is beside himself. Racked with anguish,
no longer a man of sense, he won’t admit (430)
the latest prophecies are hollow as the old --
he’s at the mercy of every passing voice
if the voice tells of terror.
I urge him gently, nothing seems to help,
so I turn to you, Apollo, you are nearest. (435)

I come with prayers and offerings . . . I beg you,
cleanse us, set us free of defilement!
Look at us, passengers in the grip of fear,
watching the pilot of the vessel go to pieces.

CHORUS:

O the generations of men
the dying generations—adding the total
of all your lives I find they come to nothing... (100)
does there exist, is there a man on earth
who seizes more joy than just a dream, a vision?

... You are my great example, you, your life
your destiny, Oedipus, man of misery—
I count no man blest.

You outranged all men!
Bending your bow to the breaking-point
you captured priceless glory, O dear god,
and the Sphinx came crashing down,
the virgin, claws hooked
like a bird of omen singing, shrieking death—
like a fortress reared in the face of death
you rose and saved our land. (115)

CHORUS:

O Oedipus, name for the ages --
one and the same wide harbor served you son and father both
son and father came to rest in the same bridal chamber.
How, how could the furrows your father plowed (125)
bear you, your agony, harrowing on
in silence O so long? But now for all your power
Time, all-seeing Time has dragged you to the light,
judged your marriage monstrous from the start --
the son and the father tangling, both one -- (130)
O child of Laius, would to god I'd never seen you, never never!
Now I weep like a man who wails the dead
and the dirge comes pouring forth with all my heart!