

Sófocles
Edipo Rey

EDIPO

Bless you for your trouble. May you find
a kinder fate than what has come to me.
Where are you now, my children? Over here:
come to these hands of mine, your brother's hands,
whose offices have made your father's eyes
that were once so bright, to see as they see now.
For the truth is out; your father, stupid, blind,
begot you in the womb where he was born.
Sight have I none, but tears I have for you
when I think of how you will be forced to live
at men's hands in the bitter days to come.
What gathering of the folk will you attend,
what festival that will not send you home
in tears, instead of making holiday?
And when the time has come for you to marry,
show me the man, my children, bold enough
to take upon his own head such disgrace,
the stain that you and your brothers will inherit.
What sorrow is not ours? Your father killed
his father, sowed his seed in her
where he was sown as seed, and did beget you
in the selfsame place where he was once begotten.
That is how men will talk. Then who will marry you?
No-one my children. Marriage is not for you.
You must be barren till your lives are done.
Son of Menoeceus, you are the only father
these girls have left, for we, their parents,
are both of us gone. So do not let them wander
beggared and husbandless. They are you kin.
And do not level them with my misfortunes
but pity them. You see how young they are.
You are the only friend they have in the world.
Touch me. Kind heart, in token of your promise.
Children, if you were old enough to understand,
there is much I could say to help you. As it is,
pray after me—to live with moderation
and better fortune than your father did.