

## Tragic Drama Quotations

### Sophocles

#### *Oedipus Rex*

Tiresias: 'Creon is not your downfall, no, you are your own'(p.181).

Oedipus: 'all those prophecies I feared / ...They're nothing, worthless'(p.214).

Jocasta: 'It's all chance,  
chance rules our lives. Not a man on earth  
can see a day ahead, groping through the dark.  
Better to live at random, best we can.'

Jocasta: 'Many a man before you, / in his dreams, has shared his mother's bed.'(p.215).

Oedipus: 'I must know it all, / must see the truth at last'(p.222).

Chorus: 'You outranged all men!'; 'you rose and saved our land'(p.233).

Messenger: 'The pains / we inflict upon ourselves hurt most of all'(p.235).

Chorus: 'What madness swept over you?'

Chorus: Oedipus is 'godforsaken, cursed by the gods'(p.239).

Oedipus: '[Apollo] ordained my agonies... / But the hand that struck my eyes was mine,  
mine alone - no one else - / I did it all myself'(p.241).

Oedipus: 'It's mine alone, my destiny - I am Oedipus!'(p.242).

Oedipus: 'I have been saved / for something great and terrible, something strange.  
Well let my destiny come and take me on its way!'(p.246).

#### *Oedipus Colonus*

Oedipus: 'Acceptance -that is the great lesson suffering teaches'(p.283).

Antigone: 'the dreadful things he did against his will'.

Antigone: 'you'll never find / a man on earth, if a god leads him on, / who can escape his fate.'

Leader: 'we dread what the gods may do'(p.298).

Oedipus: 'how could you call me guilty, how by nature?

I was attacked - I struck in self-defense.'

'the ones who made me suffer, they knew full well, / they wanted to destroy me'(p.299).

Oedipus: 'Never honor the gods in one breath  
and take the gods for fools the next'(p.299).

Oedipus: 'There is no escape, ever,  
not for a single godless man in all the world'(p.299).

Oedipus: 'I have suffered it all, and all against my will!

Such was the pleasure of the gods, raging,  
perhaps, against our race from ages past.'

Oedipus: 'my unwilling crimes against myself  
and against my own were payment from the gods  
for something criminal deep inside me ... no, look hard,  
you'll find no guilt to accuse me of - I am innocent!'

'if, by an oracle of the gods,  
some doom were hanging over my father's head  
that he should die at the hands of his own son,  
how, with any justice, could you blame *me*?

I wasn't born yet'(p.344).

Oedipus: 'I made her my bride against my will'; 'the gods led me on'(p.345).

Oedipus to Antigone: 'the destined end has come upon your father.

I can turn my face from it no more'(p.371).

Theseus: 'When the gods send such a storm  
the wildest dark forebodings are in order -  
anything can happen'(p.373).

Messenger: 'it was some escort / sent by the gods or the dark world of the dead'  
'if the death of any mortal ever was one, / his departure was a marvel'(p.381).

Chorus: 'we must bear what the gods give us to bear'(p.383).

## ***Antigone***

Chorus: 'do you pay for your father's terrible ordeal?'(p.103).

Tiresias to Creon: 'you are poised, / once more, on the razor-edge of fate'(p.110).

Messenger: 'No prophet on earth / can tell a man his fate'(p.119).

Chorus: 'reerence toward the gods must be safeguarded.

The mighty words of the proud are paid in full

with mighty blows of fate, and at long last

those blows will teach us wisdom'(p.128).

**Chaucer:** definition of tragedy:

'Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie...

Of him that stood in greet prosperitie

And is y-fallen out of heigh degree

Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.'

Prologue to *The Monk's Tale*.

**Shakespeare:**

### ***Macbeth***

Hecate re.Macbeth: 'He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear

His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear'(III,sc.v).

Macbeth to witches: 'Even till destruction sicken, answer me'(IV,sc.i).

2nd Apparition: 'none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth'(IV,sc.i).

3rd Apparition: 'Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until

Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill

Shall come aganst him'(IV,sc.i).

Messenger: 'I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,

The wood began to move'(V,sc.vi).

Macduff: 'Macduff was from his mother's womb

Untimely ripp'd'(V,sc.viii).

Macbeth: 'be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,

That palter with us in a double sense'(V,sc.viii).

Macbeth: 'Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,

And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,

Yet I will try the last'(V,sc.viii).

### ***King Lear***

Edgar: 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,-

They kill us for their sport'(IV,sc.i).

Gloster: 'henceforth I'll bear

Affliction till it do cry out itself,

Enough, enough, and die.(IV,sc.vi).

Edgar: 'Men must endure

Their going hence, even as their coming hither:

Ripeness is all'(V,sc.ii).

Cordelia: 'We are not the first,

Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the

worst'(V,sc.iii).

Edgar: 'The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices

Make instruments to plague us'(V,sc.iii).

Edmund: 'The wheel is come full circle; I am here'(V,sc.iii).

### ***Hamlet***

Hamlet: 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy'(I,sc.v).

Hamlet: 'O cursed spite

That ever I was born to set it right!'(I,sc.v).

Hamlet: 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will'(V,sc.i).

Hamlet: 'If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not  
now, yet it will come. The readiness is all'(V,sc.ii).

Horatio: 'purposes mistook  
Fallen on th'inventors' heads'(V,sc.ii).

Dr Beth Swan

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