



Compiled and circulated by: Mr. Milan Mondal

Assistant professor, Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College
Narajole, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal

Oedipus: The King

“Therefore, O Man, beware, and look toward the end /

.....

Ere the full tale be finished and the darkness find him

Without pain.” ... Explain with reference to the context.

Or,

Bring out the significance of the last song of the Chorus in Sophocles’s Oedipus: The King.

The lines under discussion have been culled from the last song of the Chorus in Oedipus: The King by Sophocles. When the apocalypse behind the death of Lias, the former king of Thebes, came into light and King Oedipus discovered that he himself was responsible for the gory deed he blinded himself by the gold pin plucking from the breast of dead Jocasta. The Chorus, then, sang these lines to connect in between the audience and the action of the drama.

These lines bring out the grim reality of the truth of human life. Through the story of Oedipus these lines expose that human beings should not judge their life being haunted by momentary pleasure. They should look forward till the end. They should also remember that the last is yet to come. Joy or pleasure is a momentary matter. On the other hand, sorrow is the only absolute thing in life. Happiness is nothing but the occasional episode in the general drama of pain.

There is a universal message intended in these above quoted lines. Through these lines the drama excels time and space. These lines basically say that even the greatest of men can crumble to ruins; all humans are subject to suffering and pain.

The Chorus leaves us with what was perhaps the quote from the eternal Yogi Berra: “It ain’t over till its over.” Human beings should not become accustomed to good fortune until, at death, they can recall only good memories of life.

ENGLISH (CC); SEM-IV; PAPER-C8T (OEDIPUS: THE KING)



Compiled and circulated by: Mr. Milan Mondal

Assistant professor, Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College
Narajole, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal

“Tis pride that breeds the tyrant; drunken deep

With perilous things is she, ...” Explain with reference to the context.

The lines are a part of the third song of the Chorus after Oedipus being highly irritated to Tiresias and Creon in Sophocles's *magnum opus* Oedipus: The King.

When Tiresias was summoned to the court of Oedipus for the discovery of the murderer of Liaus, the former king of the city of Thebes, Tiresias, despite being unwilling to tell the truth, out of compulsion revealed that Oedipus himself was responsible for the infernal deed. That is to say that he killed the earlier king. Then Oedipus thought that Creon plotted a conspiracy against him with the assistance of Tiresias. Oedipus, then, out of grudge abused both Tiresias and Creon with pride. The Chorus then uttered these lines.

Through these lines a universal truth is revealed. Excessive pride leads a person to the realm of utter darkness or doom. The behaviour of Oedipus, in this context, reveals that he has become brimmed with pride and thus, his fall is knocking at the door. Significantly enough, the fall of Oedipus draws the curtain of the play.

The third song of the Chorus is a meditation upon a serious defect of Oedipus's nature. In his dealing with Tiresias and Creon in the said context, Oedipus has exhibited extreme pride, arrogance and ill-temper. The Chorus indirectly hints at the age old saying 'pride goeth before fall.'