

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## Oedipus Rex

Oedipus Rex  
(Newman Levy)

List to the story of Oedipus Rex,  
Poor little, misunderstood little Oedipus,  
Victim of sad maladjustment of sex,  
Poor little Oedipus Rex.

When Oedipus was but a babe,  
(So runs the tale historical),  
His doting dad betook the lad  
(A custom that those ancients had)  
To interview the oracle.

Because in Greece,  
In Ancient Greece  
They'd never start a thing or cease,  
Commence a war or make a peace  
Unless they asked the oracle.

The pythoness upon the throne  
Said sadly and oracular,  
"This lad, ha ha! will kill his pa  
And after that he'll wed his ma,  
A sad life, but spectacular."

When Oedipus's dad heard that,  
The Theban King Laius,  
"It's up to me," he said, said he,  
"To circumvent that prophecy  
And find a way to free us.

"I'm off that oracle for life.  
From now," he said, "all bets off.  
She thinks she's slick; I know a trick  
To make that Delphic dame look sick.  
I'll show her where she gets off."

And so he called a servant in,  
A faithful old attendant.  
"I hesitate to flirt with fate,  
So please," he said, "assassinate  
My helpless young descendant."

The servant had a tender heart,  
Considering his station.  
"Although, oh, King, it's hard to bring  
Myself," he said, "to do this thing,  
I'll murder your relation."

Instead he took the babe away,  
A puny undergrown child,  
And gave him to a shepherd who  
Exclaimed, "I'll take that brat from you  
And rear him as my own child."

So Oedipus to man's estate  
Grew up, a rustic peasant.  
No thought of care intruded there,  
For, of his future unaware,  
His life was gay and pleasant.

One day while strolling down a road,  
An unfrequented byway,  
An unknown guy came driving by  
Who socked our hero in the eye  
And shoved him off the highway.

He straightway raised his staff and smote  
The man who'd rudely kicked him,  
Quite unaware that then and there  
Upon that public thoroughfare  
His father was his victim.

Nearby his home there dwelt a sphinx  
Who filled the land with terror;  
Half girl half bird who put absurd  
Conundrums to the passing herd,  
And ate them when in error.

When Oedipus, a puzzle fan,  
Was told the tale distressing  
He said, "Methinks I'll put a jinx  
Upon that riddle-asking sphinx.  
I'm very good at guessing."

So to the sphinx he went and said,  
"I'm fit as any fiddle.  
Go do your stuff. However tough  
I'll solve the question quick enough  
Come on! Let's hear your riddle!"

The sphinx then gave a sphinx-like leer

And murmured "Here's my query-"  
Without a fuss Young Oedipus  
Replied, "The answer's thus and thus.  
That ought to hold you, dearie."

The monster gave a shriek and died  
'Mid widespread jubilation.  
"The sphinx is dead!" the people said,  
"Let's make this bright young lad the head  
Of this here Theban nation."

And thus he rose to royal rank,  
And wed the consort regal,  
But cruel fate, I hate to state,  
Had made the lad his mother's mate,  
A marriage quite illegal.

Now came a dire and dreadful plague  
With devastating quickness,  
And all in Thebes, both Greeks and Heebs  
Were smitten with the Heebie-jeebs,  
A most appalling sickness.

The oracle exclaimed, "Ha, ha!  
I'm sorry for to scold you,  
This plague is sent for punishment.  
You're harboring a guilty gent.  
Don't say I never told you."

And so at last the truth's revealed.  
The luckless monarch cries out,  
"Though Doctor Freud be overjoyed  
I must confess I'm quite annoyed."  
With that he puts his eyes out.

Thus ends the story of Oedipus Rex,  
Poor little, misunderstood little Oedipus,  
Victim of sad maladjustment of sex,  
Poor little Oedipus Rex.

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