Oedipus in a Nut Shell

Although not always the most credible source, I took this from Wikipedia. I hope it clears some things up. I did not include why Oedipus does not find out specifically about his father, and his mother because we learn about that in the play. I wouldn’t want to ruin the “happy” ending.

Oedipus meaning swollen foot was a mythical Greek [king](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarch) of [Thebes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Thebes_(Boeotia)). A [tragic hero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tragic_hero) in [Greek mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_mythology), Oedipus fulfilled a prophecy that said he would kill his father, and thereby bring disaster on his city and family.

The story of Oedipus is the subject of [Sophocles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophocles)'s tragedy [*Oedipus the King*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oedipus_the_King), which was followed by [*Oedipus at Colonus*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oedipus_at_Colonus) and then [*Antigone*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antigone_(Sophocles)). Together, these plays make up Sophocles's [three Theban plays](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophocles#The_Theban_plays). Oedipus represents two enduring themes of Greek myth and drama: the flawed nature of humanity and an individual's role in the course of destiny in a harsh universe.

Oedipus was born to [King Laius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laius) and [Queen Jocasta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jocasta). In the most well-known version of the myth, Laius wished to thwart a prophecy saying that his child would grow up to murder his father and marry his mother. Thus, he fastened the infant's feet together with a large pin and left him to die on a mountainside

The baby was found on [Kithairon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kithairon) by shepherds and raised by [King Polybus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polybus_of_Corinth) and Queen Merope in the city of [Corinth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corinth). Oedipus learned from the [oracle at Delphi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythia) of the prophecy, but believing he was fated to murder Polybus and marry Merope, he left Corinth.

Heading to Thebes, Oedipus met an older man in a chariot coming the other way on a narrow road. The two quarreled over who should give way, which resulted in Oedipus killing the stranger and continuing on to Thebes. He found that the king of the city (Laius) had been recently killed and that the city was at the mercy of [the Sphinx](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sphinx#Greek_traditions). Oedipus answered [the monster's riddle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sphinx#The_Riddle_of_the_Sphinx) correctly, defeating it and winning the throne of the dead king and the hand in marriage of the king's widow, his mother, Jocasta

I have no idea why Laius, the king, was travelling down a narrow road or why they got so upset over who was to give way. I also have no idea why Oedipus or Jocasta made connections regarding their relationship. It’s a Greek play performed in 429 BC, and the point of it is to get across the main themes of the flawed nature of humanity and an individual's role in the course of destiny in a harsh universe.