THE MAN WITH THE TWISTED FOOT By Zoe Fox '14

CAST:

Chorus 1 — Brittani Ivan
Chorus 2 — Elaine Holehan,
Chorus 3 - Giulietta Schoenfeld,
Chorus 4 — Airen McClure,
Niki Barker
Chorus 5 — Jordan Schwartz,
Wanhong Zou

Chorus 6 — Julie Benton,
Oedipus — Zoe Fox
Creon — Vanessa Felso
Jocasta — Marianne Wald
Tiresias — Tabatha Barton
Messenger — Airen McClure
Shepherd — Alison Robins
Laius — Jordan Schwartz

SCENE 1

CHORUS walks in., Odds from L, evens from R, looking sad and dejected

C1: I'm SO hungry.

C2: Me too, and I'm so cold.

C3: I had to sell my himation for some food!

C4: Well I had to sell my *house*. Now I'm living like Diogenes. It's awful.

C1: This is the worst plague Thebes has ever seen. I hate this.

OEDIPUS enters.

OEDIPUS [falsely cheery]: Ah, Thebes, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Greek Empire are irresistibly drained. And how are my favorite Thebans today?

[CHORUS all groan, making miserable noises and faces]

OEDIPUS: Oh come on guys, it's not so bad!

C5: All my cattle are dead, and I haven't eaten in a week.

OEDIPUS: ... Okay, it is so bad.

C6: And what's more, *you* were supposed to save us all! But noooo, here we are, about to die from a plague.

[CHORUS members mutter amongst themselves]

C1: Yeah, can't you do something?

OEDIPUS: I know your pain, for I suffer even more than you when I look out at all of your sad, starving faces. Seriously, you guys are such wet blankets. But good news! I've sent my brotherin-law, Creon, to ask the Oracle how to save us all from this plague. I'm sure he'll have an answer.

[CREON enters from L, looking baffled as to how he got there]

OEDIPUS: Creon, my good man! I was just talking about you. What did the Oracle say?

CREON: Psh, what DIDN'T the Oracle say? I wish they'd just speak clearly for once. Ahem. [clears throat, speaks grandly] I come bearing news from Apollo.

C3: Well?? What is it?

CREON [still grandly]: There was a murder most foul, and the one who committed it remains among us all. We must find this murderer, and punish him through banishment, or... death.

C4: ... What?

C5: Yeah, translation please.

C2: Preferably a modern prose translation.

C6: None of this epic meter stuff- give it to us in straight dactyls.

CREON: Okay fine. Remember when Laius was shockingly and tragically murdered on his way to Delphi?

C1: Oh woe, woe! [starts crying]

CREON: ...Yeah. Basically, we dropped the ball on that murder investigation. I mean, *really* dropped it. So we need to find out who did it, stat.

OEDIPUS: So you're saying that the murderer is among us, and we must find him?! [reaches into tunica and pulls out a deerstalker] The game is afoot!

CREON: Oh, you think you can find him?

OEDIPUS: I know I can. I might not have told you this before, but back in Corinth, I was what you might call a "consulting detective". My full name is Oedipus Holmes, as a matter of fact.

[CHORUS gasps and looks excited]

C1: You're Oedipus Holmes?! You're my favorite consulting detective!

C4: Shut up, he's the *only* consulting detective. He invented the job.

C5: I'm your biggest fan, Oedipus! [pulls out deerstalker] Sign my deerstalker!

OEDIPUS: Yes, thank you for your input. I'm on the case. But first, I need data. It's dangerous to theorize without all the facts. Tell me about this murder.

C3: Well, he was on his way to Delphi to consult the Oracle.

C5: He died on the very day that YOU arrived!

C6: Everyone died except one of his attendants- he's a reclusive shepherd now.

OEDIPUS: How curious. And people say there's no such thing as coincidence... What did this shepherd say?

C2: He said that a single man killed him.

C4: But how? That's not physically possible.

OEDIPUS: I don't know. It's time to investigate. Chorus, you are now officially members of the Theban Street Irregulars. You'll be my eyes and ears all over the city. Tell me if you notice anything suspicious. Come along, my dear Creon. [they exit C]

[CHORUS all mutter amongst themselves excitedly]

C6: WOW, Oedipus Holmes himself is on the case! He'll solve it in no time.

C2: I know, how amazing is this?? He's like... a celebrity.

SONG: CHORUS, WRECKING BALL

What walks, with four, with two, with three Was asked, never could reply.
We tried, we fell under its spell.
A plague no one could remove.

Don't you ever say he was not the one to defeat the Sphinx We can live again, thanks to one great man we will always love him

He came here unexpectedly
He limped his way into our hearts
All we wanted was to be plague-free
And the riddle he did breeeeak it
Yeah breeak it

He sits up high in the king's seat And we, we were doing well He reigns with her, she loves him too And they, they rule Thebes smoothly

Don't you ever say he won't solve this too He will solve the murder He won't let it go, justice will be served Thebes will always love him

he came here unexpectedly he limped his way into our hearts all we wanted was to be plague-free and the riddle he did breeeeak it yeah breeak it

[all exit R]

SCENE 2

[OEDIPUS enters C, smoking pipe and pacing]

OEDIPUS: So far, I have deduced very little. We know the murderer is among us. We know he killed Laius. But who?

[Chorus & TIRESIAS enter R, T being led by a member of the Chorus.]

OEDIPUS: Ah Tiresias, just who I wanted to see [chuckles]. You must know who killed Laius, right?

TIRESIAS [tries to turn around and run away, walks into a column]: No, no way. I did NOT want to come here. No.

OEDIPUS: Come on, you're Tiresias. You're as prophetic as it gets. You must know.

TIRESIAS: What, you think I just have the knowledge of who killed Laius tucked away somewhere?

OEDIPUS: Well... yes!

TIRESIAS [pauses, looks worried]: ... Oh woe, woe is me! I can't say. It's too awful.

OEDIPUS: So you *do* know! Come on, tell us. We're all friends here. [throws his arm around Tiresias' shoulders]

TIRESIAS [gingerly takes Oedipus' arm off his shoulders]: We're not friends. I don't have friends.

OEDIPUS [shocked gasp]: That stings. You're so annoying, you would even anger a rock. Tell us who did it, NOW.

TIRESIAS: Noooooo. It's too bad. Let me leave, please. [walks into another column]

OEDIPUS: Too late. I deduce from your himation that you know the answer. Also, that you had too much wine last night, and your slave is sleeping with your wife. Now tell us.

TIRESIAS: I don't have a wife! And I'll NEVER tell you. Never ever.

OEDIPUS: I hate you! You're just a prophet who never gets anything right. I bet you're the one plotting to overthrow me.

TIRESIAS: What?! You're crazy. You're the worst king EVER. You want your prophecy? Here's your prophecy!

SONG: TIRESIAS, WANNABE

Yo, I'll tell you 'bout your fate, if you really really want Yeah tell you 'bout your fate, if you really really want But let me tell you now, yeah you really really don't I'll tell you who killed Laius, but really you should stop You wanna, you wanna, you wanna, you wanna Really really really wanna give this up now

If you want my wisdom, forget your rage
If you wanna know the truth, better shut your mouth
Now don't go wasting my precious time
I don't need your drama I could be just fine

Yo, I'll tell you 'bout your fate, if you really really want Yeah tell you 'bout your fate, if you really really want But you wanna, you wanna, you wanna, you wanna, you wanna Really really really wanna give this up now

If you wanna be my ruler, you gotta leave me alone Let me leave forever, though the plague goes on If you wanna be my ruler, you have got to chill Tyranny's too easy, but that's the way it is What do you think about that now you know how I feel Say you can handle my omens since they're for real I won't be staying, won't give you a try You really bug me so now I'll say goodbye

Yo, I'll tell you 'bout your fate, if you really really want Yeah tell you 'bout your fate, if you really really want But ou wanna, you wanna, you wanna, you wanna Really really really wanna give this up now

If you wanna be my ruler, you gotta leave me alone Let me leave forever, though the plague goes on If you wanna be my ruler, you have got to chill Tyranny's too easy, but that's the way it is

TIRESIAS: But one last thing. The man who killed Laius... He's among us now. He lives in the royal household. His name rhymes with... Shmedipus. In fact... he looks just. like. you.

Oedipus: Um... no one matches that description in the royal household, but thanks anyway. Useless prophet.

TIRESIAS exits, led by a member of the chorus.

OEDIPUS [fuming]: Tiresias. No one stands up to him. No one even dares. I'll show him. [EXITS]

SCENE 3

CHORUS comes back center stage, chatting.

C1: Well that was one tense stichomythia.

C3: Very. Let's keep working on the task Oedipus set for us.

C4: Ooooh, this is so exciting. I always wanted to be a Theban Street Irregular!

C5: Calm down. Okay, let's think about what we've got so far. One: The murder occurred the day that Oedipus arrived.

C6: Two: The murderer lives in the royal household.

C1: Three: His name rhymes with Shmedipus.

C4: Four: He looks just like Oedipus...

[CHORUS all trail off, looking nervously at each other.]

C6: No. It can't be.

C1: It IS! It's...

CHORUS [all]: CREON!

[OEDIPUS enters]

OEDIPUS: Hello, Theban Street Irregulars. I have just deduced something from that stupid prophet's ramblings. The only member of the royal household who fits all those descriptions is... Creon. That jerk.

C5 [excitedly]: We know!!! We just reached the same conclusion.

OEDIPUS: Good. You're smarter than you look.

C3: Please, it was elementary.

[ALL groan loudly at the dumb line]

C3: Sorry, couldn't resist.

OEDIPUS: Ugh. Well, let's go find him and banish the backstabbing, dog-faced barbarian!

[CHORUS gets up, but then CREON wanders in from R, still looking confused. Poor guy]

CREON: What's all this, then?

OEDIPUS [pretending to be casual]: Ah, Creon. Here we are again. [stops pretending] Murderer! Chorus, get him!

[two CHORUS members grab his arms]

CREON: What?! I didn't murder Laius! What are you talking about?!

OEDIPUS: Talk all you want, Creon, but we know you did. You just want to be king, don't you?? I've deduced it from the twitching in your left pinky finger.

CREON: Um, no. I would NEVER want to be king. I'm too lazy and I have no ambition.

OEDIPUS: Well THAT'S true, at least. All you do is sit around in your stupid Diogenes Club. Anyway, CONFESS! I know you did it. I'm Oedipus Holmes, I'm always right.

SONG: CREON AND CHORUS, ROYALS

I've never seen a crown on my head
I prefer to walk and socialize with the layman
I am proud of my address in the town of Thebes
No post code envy

Everyone's like Scepter gold crown red wine by the krater Gold coins peacocks drinking on the Andron I don't care, I'm driving chariots in my dreams

Cause I don't wanna be royal [CHORUS: royal]
Even though it run in my blood
That kind of Lux just ain't for me
I crave a different kind of seat
You don't want me as your ruler
[CHORUS: ruler]
You don't wanna call me king
Cause baby I'll fail, I'll fail, I'll fail
Let me live behind the scenes

Cuz I prefer to walk and talk and know the common Theban Show up give help listen to their problems I'm the guy, that they turn to for advice

Everyone's like Scepter gold crown red wine by the krater Gold coins peacocks drinking on the Andron I don't care, I'm driving chariots in my dreams

So even though I'm royal
[CHORUS: royal]
I don't care for the throne
That kind of scene just ain't for me
I crave to wander on my own
So even though I'm royal
[CHORUS: royal]
I don't wanna be king
Cause Thebans, to rule, to rule, to rule
Isn't my real fantasy

[CREON is dragged off by chorus 2 & 6 to be exiled]

SCENE 4

IOCASTA: Wow, what a symposium that was last night... I really overslept. I've missed like half the play. What's up, guys?

C1: Oh, my queen! It's so awful!

C4: Oedipus has discovered the murderer of Laius, and it's Creon!

C3 [stage whispers]: I still think it's Tiresias, personally.

[other CHORUS members shush them]

IOCASTA: What?! That's ridiculous. I'll talk some sense to him. He always gets like this when he's on a case. I mean, last week he thought that Agave had killed her own son Pentheus in some Bacchic frenzy. Where DOES he come up with these theories?

CHORUS: [nervous laughter]

[OEDIPUS enters]

OEDIPUS: Ah, my dear wife, where have you been all day? It's been so exciting. I have found the murderer of Laius. I also made several citizens' arrests and found my missing krater in the agora... No idea how it got there.

IOCASTA: I was sleeping. Your 7% wine solution was a bit too much for me. Anyway, you're crazy- Creon didn't murder Laius!

OEDIPUS: No, you're wrong. It's the only possible solution. Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.

IOCASTA: Stop that babbling and listen to me. A long time ago, when I gave birth, we received a prophecy that our child would kill Laius. So naturally, we stabbed our newborn son in the foot and left him to die on a mountain. [shrugs]

OEDIPUS: That's barbaric. As someone who, totally coincidentally, also suffered a foot stabbing as a newborn child, I am offended.

IOCASTA: Eh, it happens. And Laius was killed by a robber where three paths meet, not his son, and not Creon, so it's all good.

OEDIPUS [panicking]: Oh god. Oh no. By Zeus, it can't be.

IOCASTA: What's wrong, dear?

OEDIPUS: Tell me, what did Laius look like?

IOCASTA: Ha, you know, a lot like you. In fact, you look like you could be his son or something. I guess I have a type.

OEDIPUS: I have a confession to make. I never told you why I left Corinth. Well, I too received a prophecy. Apollo said that I would kill my father and marry my mother. In order to escape this fate, I left Corinth.

IOCASTA: How horrible. But what does that have to do with anything?

OEDIPUS: Well, um... On my way from Corinth, at a point where three roads meet, I kind of... [mutters] murdered-a-guy-and-I-think-maybe-it-was-Laius. [laughs nervously]

IOCASTA: Sorry? I didn't catch that.

OEDIPUS [yells]: I MURDERED A MAN AND I THINK IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN LAIUS. There, Apollo, are you happy? I'm cursed! If I go home, I'll kill my father, Polybus, but if I stay here, I have to face the truth that I killed my totally not-father, Laius. Woe is me!

IOCASTA: Okay, don't panic. I'll call for the shepherd who survived the incident. Maybe he can clarify everything.

[OEDIPUS exits hurriedly L]

IOCASTA [calling after him]: But at least we know that you didn't marry your mother, right? Or kill your father, Polybus. He's alive and well in Corinth.

Continues into SCENE 5

CORINTHIAN MESSENGER [runs in from the back]: POLYBUS IS DEAD!!!!!! MAYDAY, MAYDAY! [hehe.] I REPEAT, POLYBUS IS DEAD!

ALL: WHAT?!

IOCASTA: Oh come on, this day just keeps getting worse. I should have stayed in bed.

C1: No! This can't be! Polybus?! Dead?!

C3: It's like something out of a Greek tragedy!

C4 [to C3]: Ooooh, meta. Nice one.

C3: Thanks. I've been saving it for the right moment. The kairos, if you will.

IOCASTA: Wait, this is actually fantastic news! This means that Oedipus' prophecy won't come true!

[OEDIPUS enters L]

OEDIPUS: What's all the shouting about? You're disrupting my identity crisis.

IOCASTA: Oh Oedipus, this messenger brings great news. Go on, tell him!

MESSENGER [jazz hands]: Your dad's dead!

OEDIPUS: Oh, by the gods! Polybus is dead? My dear father! Oh woe, woe is me... WAIT. That means that *I* didn't kill him! I'm free of the prophecy!

IOCASTA: See, I told you that you didn't kill your father.

OEDIPUS: But... I had a dream that I killed him and married my mother once. Surely that means something, right?

IOCASTA: Oh please, every son dreams about marrying his mother once in a while. No big deal.

C3 [mutters]: And thus a thousand Freudian dissertations were born.

[other CHORUS members shush them]

IOCASTA: In any case, now you can go to the funeral happily, knowing that you didn't kill your father.

OEDIPUS: No, I can't! I might still sleep with my mother while I'm there!

MESSENGER: Who, Merope? Dude... You know that you're adopted, right?

[ALL turn dramatically towards messenger]

ALL: *WHAT?!?!?!?!*

MESSENGER: Oh, um... haha, yeah... I didn't mention that before? Actually, funny coincidence... I was the one who gave you to Polybus. You're welcome?

OEDIPUS: Wait. My identity crisis has just gotten a million times worse. Who am I? What am I? Tell me everything!

MESSENGER: Well, my friend the shepherd found you exposed on a mountain, and someone had stabbed your foot too, which I thought was a bit overkill. Anyway, I really wasn't in the right place in my life to become a single parent, so I gave you to Polybus.

OEDIPUS: And who was this shepherd?

MESSENGER: Actually, I think Iocasta just sent for him! Man, so many coincidences.

[IOCASTA starts to look calculating, counting on her fingers and stuff. Suddenly, she realizes.]

IOCASTA: Eureka!

C5 [mutters]: 1st person singular perfect indicative active of heurisko.

IOCASTA: Ssshh. Oh, Oedipus. Stop this now! Please, drop the case. Let this one mystery remain unsolved.

OEDIPUS: What?! No! I'm so close to solving this! I have to know who I am, and I need to stop the plague!

IOCASTA: No, please no.

SONG: IOCASTA, LET IT GO

All the marble glows white in Thebes tonight No symposium to be seen A kingdom of plague and death, And it looks like you're the king.

But you can't solve this without hurting us some more Knowing about your parents won't save us all

Don't solve the case, just let it be Be the ruler that all of Thebes needs Forget, don't solve, don't learn the truth Who needs the truth?

Let it go, let it go
Don't investigate anymore
Let it go, let it go
Drop the case and slam the door

You don't know How bad the truth will sting Let the mystery go Your past never bothered me anyway

It's funny how some questions
Are best when left alone
And the past that once controlled you
Can't get to you at all

It's time to leave this all behind To put it a-way and lead Thebes No case, no past, no curse for you You're free

Let it go, let it go Don't investigate anymore Let it go, let it go
Drop the case and slam the door

You don't know How bad the truth will sting Let the mystery go Your past never bothered me anyway

OEDIPUS: That was moving, but I'm still going to solve it.

IOCASTA: Oh, by the gods! [EXITS C]

SCENE 6

[SHEPHERD enters L, looking apprehensive]

OEDIPUS: Ah, perfect. The shepherd. Please tell us everything you know.

MESSENGER: Hey, buddy! Man, I haven't seen you in ages! You've put on 7 pounds since I last saw you.

SHEPHERD: [mutters] 4 pounds. I mean- [very unconvincingly] Huh? And who are you? Never seen you before.

MESSENGER: What?? Buddy, it's me! Remember? We used to hang out all the time in the mountains! We had matching friendship bracelets! [shows his bracelet on his wrist]

SHEPHERD [hiding his own wrist]: Um, nope. Noooope. Don't know you. Okay, bye! [tries to leave]

MESSENGER: Aw, come on. Tell the king here about that time we saved him from certain death on the mountain! How you gave him to me, and then I gave him to Polybus!

SHEPHERD [through his teeth]: Shut up, shut up!

OEDIPUS: Shepherd, tell me the truth. Who are my parents? I know you know.

SHEPHERD: Don't make me say it.

MESSENGER [excitedly]: I'll tell you! You come from the royal household of Thebes.

OEDIPUS: No. Tell me it isn't true.

SHEPHERD. Oh, by Hercules, yes. It's true. Your parents are Iocasta and Laius. I'm sorry. This is why I exiled myself.

OEDIPUS: NOOOOOOOOOO! Iocasta, where are you?! [exits C, the same way as Iocasta]

[CHORUS 2 & 6 enter]

C2: Sorry, we stopped for snacks on the way back from banishing Creon. What'd we miss?

MESSENGER: Oedipus is the son of Laius and Iocasta! Gross, eh?

[general chaos, CHORUS lamenting]

SONG: CHORUS, MAMMA MIA

We were cheated to think all our troubles were done. But we figured it out, he is Laius' son. He's not our king, he's a murderer. We don't know how but he managed to enter Thebes. That's a moment we now regret.

Oedipus is wreaking havoc today

Oepidus is making everyone say: w-o-o-oh

Murder! Incest!
This cannot be real
How could Laius be his father?
Murder! Incest!
How did he not know
That Jo-casta was his mother?

Yes, this is unexpected.
Gods, help us to bypass it
Thebes can't have this reputation.
Murder! Incest!
This is really gross
My my he should not have been our king!

Now we're pulling our hair about letting him rule. He should pack up his things and get ready to run Cuz he should go, we don't want him here Where is the seer? He was right about Oedipus We should listen to him next time

Oedipus is wreaking havoc today Oepidus is making everyone say: w-o-o-o-oh

Murder! Incest!
This cannot be real
How could Laius be his father?
Murder! Incest!
How did he not know
That Jo-casta was his mother?

Yes, this is unexpected. Gods, help us to bypass it Thebes can't have this reputation.

Murder! Incest!

This is really gross

My my he should not have been our king!

SCENE 7

[IOCASTA runs in from C, carrying a sheet of paper]

IOCASTA: WAIT! Stop everything!

[CHORUS quiets]

[OEDIPUS comes out from C, wearing those eyeball glasses]

OEDIPUS: Oh, my dear wife-- mother-- whatever! What news could you possibly have for us?

IOCASTA: You are not my son!

OEDIPUS: And how could you possibly know that?! All the evidence suggests otherwise.

IOCASTA: Well, I was on my way to commit suicide, horrified at my own incestuous actions, when I decided to check first. So I took a Delta-Nu-Alpha test. You're not my son! The messenger must have been lying! [turns to look at him]

MESSENGER: Um... got you! I was just pranking you. A bit unfair, I admit, but in my defense, it was very funny.

[ALL glare at him]

OEDIPUS: Chorus, seize him!

[CHORUS grabs him]

IOCASTA: Although this doesn't really solve the whole "killing Laius" thing.

[SUDDENLY, LAIUS, one of the chorus members puts on a moustache and pops up.]

LAIUS: Interesting thing, a tunica. It lends distinction to friends and anonymity to chorus members.

IOCASTA: Laius?!?! My dear husband?!?!

LAIUS: Yes, um, short version: not dead.

C4: I KNEW IT!

C6: No you didn't!

C3: He faked his death?!

C1: But how?

C2: And *why?!*

OEDIPUS: What is happening? Laius, explain yourself!

LAIUS: Well, I needed to fake my own death to escape some of my enemies. I was on my way to the Oracle at Reichenbach Falls when I ran into you, and it seemed like the perfect opportunity. As we fought, I employed a special technique of Spartan wrestling, and although I appeared to die, I managed to avoid it. I've spent the past few years hunting down all of the enemies of Thebes, and making you all mourn my death needlessly and pointlessly. Surprise!

C5: How could you?!

C4: That's actually kind of awesome.

[CHORUS members all agree]

C2: Laius, the Reichenbach Hero!

IOCASTA: While I'm totally pissed at you for lying, I'm really happy you're not dead.

OEDIPUS: And I'm really happy that I didn't kill you, and that I'm not your son. That was a close call. I almost carved my eyes out! [takes off glasses] Good thing I decided to do a trial run with these first. [throws them aside]

LAIUS: Yes, now there's only one problem. Iocasta, you have two husbands.

IOCASTA: Huh. Well, better two husbands than none at all, right?

[CREON suddenly enters, still looking confused]

CREON: So, what have I missed?

FINAL SONG: EVERYONE, DECEMBER 1963

OEDIPUS:

Oh, what a fate Late four hundred twenty nine BC What a very tragic time for me As I remember, what a fate

Oh, what a fate You know, I didn't even know my dad But I was never gonna make him glad With my mother, what a fate

CHORUS:

Oh, we

We got a funny feeling when you walked into our town Hey, my As we recall, you ruled us much too soon

ALL:

Oh, what a fate Hypnotizing, mesmerizing us Thebes was everything we dreamed she'd be Sweet Olympus, what a night

OEDIPUS:

And I felt a rush like a rolling bolt of thunder Spinning my head around and taking my body under Oh, what a fate

CHORUS:

Oh, we

Got a funny feeling when you walked into our town Hey, my As we recall, you ruled us much too soon

LEADS:

Oh, what a fate CHORUS:

Do do do do do do do do do

REPEAT AS WE ENTER INTO THE AUDIENCE

NB: Oedipus looks around for someone to dance with... Tiresias is dancing with Jocasta.

THE END