

The Old Shepherd in Oedipus

Who ever really thinks about the Old Shepherd in this play?

At first it seems as if he does not play much a role in the story but he is absolutely vital to all the actions described in the play. For instance:

- He took the three-day old baby from Jocasta, who had told him to kill it.
- He claimed he couldn't bear to kill it, and gave it instead to his fellow shepherd from Corinth, from the other side of Mount Cithaeron
- He was one of King Laius's escorts when he went on his fateful visit to the oracle at Delphi. During this visit he witnessed the killing of his master by Oedipus.
- He spread the story that King Laius was killed by a gang of thieves (and not by Oedipus).
- He realized that the new king of Thebes was the killer of the previous one and asked Jocasta if he could be sent away from the palace.
- When forced to, he confessed to Oedipus that he had failed to kill him as a baby, and given him to the Corinthian King Polybus instead.

* Hold onto this paper as it may be helpful for future assignments.