

Script Sample

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Helen of Troy: A Triptych

Before the War

(Helen and Menelaus)

HELEN

How much do you love me?

MENELAUS

I'd sink a thousand ships for you.

HELEN

A thousand ships sinking under the sea...

MENELAUS

White sails intertwined with seaweed...

HELEN

And corpses manning the ships.

(pause)

Are you scared of anything?

MENELAUS

A man...

He's obviously moving but seems to be standing still.

He's coming to take you away.

Sometimes I think I've found the connection

and then the connection breaks.

Sometimes I think I've found the answer

but the answer fades away.

I know I love you.

HELEN

But how much do you love me?

MENELAUS

More than myself.

HELEN

Is that much?

MENELAUS

I'd cut out my eyes for you.

HELEN

But then you couldn't see me. Would you still love me if you couldn't see me?

MENELAUS

Yes.

HELEN

Or touch me?

MENELAUS

Yes.

HELEN

Or taste me?

MENELAUS

Yes.

HELEN

Or smell me?

MENELAUS

Yes.

HELEN

Or hear me?

MENELAUS

(Pause)

Yes.

HELEN

Then what is it you love about me?

MENELAUS

I wish I could say. We've been together a long time. And now what I love about you is the me that's inside of you and the you that's inside of me. I can't tell what it looks like or feels like or smells like. But it's a connection I know is there. An answer.

HELEN

You want to die with me.

MENELAUS

When we're old.

HELEN

I don't want to die.

But if I love you too much I think I *will* die.

I'll get old with you

rot with you.

Then it will be me

who's under the sea

A skeleton

Fish eating at my flesh.

MENELAUS

You'll never get old. Because the only one who will ever see you will be me. And I'll always see you as you were. Young and beautiful.

HELEN

You'll live in a haze. You'll cast a spell on yourself so that you'll see me as beautiful even when your sleeping next to a shriveled old witch.

MENELAUS

I'll be a kind of witch myself.

HELEN

But who's to say the spell won't break? Who's to say you won't wake up one day and say, "Something is rotting next to me in my bed. Something that must be thrown out and replaced with something new."

MENELAUS

Spells can't be broken.

HELEN

You believe in me don't you?

MENELAUS

I love you.

HELEN

What is it you love about me?

MENELAUS

Why do you want to know so much?

HELEN

Because whatever it is, I want to keep it.

(Pause)

HELEN

This is a feather. I want you to have it.

MENELAUS

Why?

HELEN

Keep it safe for me.
I want to always know you have it.
I love you too
I want to die with you
I don't want to go away
I want to look at you forever
touch you forever
taste smell and hear you forever
I'll never go away
I'll never die

MENELAUS

If I listen carefully
I can hear your breathing even when you aren't here.

HELEN

It's a dead calm. In a dead clam nothing can happen, no one can move.

MENELAUS

I'm starting to think like you and talk like you.
Yesterday I had a memory that wasn't mine.

HELEN

I'll never go away.
I'll never die.

How much do you love me?

MENELAUS

I'd sink a thousand ships for you.

Rape

(In a small, square room with no furniture and a lock on the door, HELEN sits on the blue floor surrounded by paper swans she has made. PARIS stands apart by the door. At some points of the scene, the battle can be heard; at others, it is silent.)

PARIS

Why do you spend all your time making those swans?

HELEN

Because I dream of the day I can fly away from you.

PARIS

You don't love me do you?

(pause)

You're the kind of woman who break men's hearts. You'll break mine one day.

(pause)

I love you.

HELEN

You love the idea of me.

PARIS

Yes...you're right...I don't love you. I'm caught by you, that's all.

HELEN

Caught!

PARIS

I'll leave you.

(Takes out keys to lock the door)

HELEN

Where are you going?

PARIS

To the battlefield. To fight.

HELEN

To kill people.

PARIS

That's right...to kill people...for you.

HELEN

No...for you. To prove to yourself that you're a man. To prove to yourself that you're not that scared little boy anymore. That's why you kill people. That's why you keep me here.

PARIS

I keep you here because I love you.

(pause)

HELEN

What's it like to kill someone?

(pause)

PARIS

I take a spear, like this...I come up slow...dig the point into his eye, it spurts, then I hit bone...I wrench the shaft...pierce the skull and the brain splits open...his face lies crushed on the ground never to have another thought till the end of time.

(pause)

HELEN

I'd like to kill someone.

(She looks at him)

You know what I think?

PARIS

What?

HELEN

I think you still are that scared little boy.

(pause)

PARIS

It's you wants to scare me. You want me to go away. But I'm not going to go away. You know why?

HELEN
Why?

PARIS
Because I think you're worth it.

HELEN
You have no idea what I'm worth.

PARIS
We'll see about that.

(pause)

I want to know you better... Tell me about these swans.

HELEN
I'll never tell anyone about my swans.

(pause)

How do you know I want you to go away? Maybe I want you to stay. Perhaps I find you amusing.

PARIS
Oh yeah?

HELEN
Maybe I've got you just where I want you. Maybe I'm hypnotizing you with these swans.

PARIS (envisioning)
the swans...

HELEN
Maybe I'm trying to have you see a host of swans gliding on a cool lake... They cut the water...like skates on ice, not making the tiniest splash.

PARIS
splash...

HELEN
And I'm lying on the grass watching you wade in deeper and deeper.

PARIS
I have to go.

(pause)

What if I locked the door and threw away the key. You'd never see me again. We'd all forget about you. And you'd rot in here with your swans.

HELEN

You'd find another woman to lock away?

PARIS

Of course, we'd have to.

HELEN

Another woman to brawl for?

PARIS

That too.

HELEN

I'm...replaceable.

PARIS

That you are. That you are... Replaceable.

HELEN

Are you scared of me?

PARIS

What?

HELEN

Are you scared of me?

PARIS

Of course not.

HELEN

And you're sure of that?

PARIS

I'm sure.

HELEN

You've looked deep down into your soul and are sure you're not scared of me.

(pause)

Or have you *not* looked deep down into your soul...

Maybe *that's* what you're scared of.

(pause)

If I'm replaceable then why's it so important to keep me here?

PARIS

Because I love you.

HELEN

Ah, so I'm not replaceable...to you.

PARIS

No...not...to me.

HELEN

Because you love me.

PARIS

Yes.

HELEN

But I don't believe you love me.

PARIS

You don't?

HELEN

It's not love that keeps me here.

PARIS

No?

HELEN

No. It's hate...it's hate that's wrenched us together.

PARIS

I don't hate you.

End of Script Sample

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