

# The Last Time I Saw Paris

A Comedy

by

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# **The Last Time I Saw Paris**

## **Cast of characters**

Paul  
Menelaus  
Elsa  
Oracle  
Mona  
Greek Guard 1  
Athena  
Hera  
Aphrodite  
Eris  
Peleus  
Thetis  
Zeus  
Zeus's servants (2)  
Hermes  
Priam  
Priam's Guard/Paris's Second  
Hector  
Hecube  
Paris  
Helen  
Agamemnon  
Achilles  
Odysseus  
Helenus  
Anchises  
Andromache  
Trojan Female Servant  
Clytemnestra  
Calchas  
Ajax  
Patroclus  
Greek Guard 2  
Iphigenia  
Greek Female Servant  
Penelope  
Cassandra  
Greek Soldiers (fighting)  
Greek Soldier 1  
Greek Soldier 2  
Greek Guard 3  
Greek Soldier 3 (non-speaking)  
Menelaus's Second  
Boxing Announcer  
Paulos Mafiosos  
Markos Presentos

Epeius  
Trojan Guards 1 and 2

## **Synopsis**

This play is a parody on The Trojan Wars featuring Helen of Sparta, Paris, Hector, Achilles and a host of other mythical characters complete with two songs and incidental music.

## **Production Notes:**

This play lends itself to simple staging. The author has included suggestions at the beginning of each scene.

The composition of the song 'I belong to Glasgow' and used in this script is out of copyright and the composition and lyrics of 'Stan' Up an' Fight' are also out of copyright and therefore can be used without applying for licences.

## **Characters and Costuming:**

**Paul:** The Narrator. A young man dressed in a white knee length tunic and brown felt sandals.

**Menelaus:** The King of Sparta and Agamemnon's brother, in his early forties, dark, swarthy and bearded. He wears a red knee length tunic and a gold slim crown adorns his head. He also wears soft gold calf length laced boots.

**Elsa:** Helen's handmaiden, in her late teens. She wears a long flowing light blue ankle length tunic. Her head is bare and her hair is in the Grecian style. She also wears soft blue ankle strapped sandals

**Oracle:** A young tall man who is dressed in a black tuxedo, red shirt and a black and white spotted bow tie. On his breast pocket is a large 'O' motif. He also wears black pumps.

**Mona:** In her late teens. She wears a burlesque style short red and black dress and fishnet tights. Her face and eyes are heavily made up, over which she wears stylish large black spectacles.

**Aphrodite:** The young Goddess of Love who wears a red 1920's style short dress with a matching single feathered headband, and shoes.

**Hera:** A young wife of Zeus; poetic licence has allowed her to befriend the other goddesses. She wears a white 1920's style short dress with a matching single feathered headband, and shoes.

**Athena:** The young Goddess of Wisdom who wears a midnight blue 1920's style short dress with a matching single feathered headband, and shoes.

**Peleus:** An aging nobleman, Thetis's new husband and Achilles' father, who has short curly hair and a greying short beard. He wears a blue ankle length tunic and cloak both decorated at the borders with geometrical designs, and gold gilded sandals strapped at the ankles.

**Thetis:** A middle aged noblewoman, Peleus's new wife and Achilles' mother. She wears a white ankle length tunic and salmon pink cloak embroidered with coral designs. She wears her hair in the Grecian style. She also wears soft white coral decorated sandals, strapped at the ankle.

**Eris:** The Goddess of Discord, a few years older than Aphrodite, Hera and Athena, but attractive, tall and formidable. She wears her hair in the Grecian style; a yellow ankle length tunic and yellow and cream cloak, bordered with astronomical symbols. She also wears yellow or gold soft sandals strapped at the ankles.

**Helen:** Menelaus's wife, otherwise known as Helen of Sparta. She is in her late teens, beautiful, honey blonde and wears her hair in the Grecian style and decorated with a band of flowers. She also wears a shimmering cream and gold calf length tunic and cloak, and soft gold ankle strapped sandals.

**Zeus:** The Father of the Gods, even though his costume does not complement the title. He has short unruly hair, seeping from under a red tartan Tam O' Shanter cap, a white sleeveless vest, a red tartan kilt reaching just below the knees, gold and black sporran and soft gold calf length laced boots. His face is reddened by a love for alcohol!

**Hermes:** The Messenger of the Gods, skinny and in his early twenties. He wears a grubby white knee length tunic and peek cap under which his unruly curly unkempt hair seeps. He enters the stage on a battered bicycle and sometimes carries a post satchel.

**Priam:** The aging King of Troy who wears his white hair short and curly over which is a thin silver crown. He also wears a royal blue ankle length tunic and dark blue cloak both edged in a silver geometrical design. His soft silver sandals are strapped at the ankle.

**Hector:** The elder son of Priam, The King of Troy who is in his early twenties, dark, slim and tall. He wears his hair short and curly over which is a multi coloured knitted headband. He also wears a dark blue knee length tunic and white cloak, both decorated with symbols of knitting needles and skeins of wool. His soft blue boots are calf length and laced.

**Hecube:** Priam's long suffering and aging wife. Her hair is in the Grecian style, over which she wears a gold tiara. She is beautifully dressed in a yellow and green ankle length tunic and cloak, embroidered with flowers. Her soft ankle strapped sandals are coloured gold.

**Priam's Guard/Paris's Second:** In his late twenties, dark and tall. He wears a blue knee length tunic and cloak. He wears soft black sandals. In Act Two Scene 7 (The Boxing scene) as Paris's second he is bare footed and does not wear his cloak.

**Paris:** A son of Priam is in his late teens, fair and slim. He wears his hair short in the Grecian style. He wears a terracotta coloured tunic and a cream cloak, decorated with geometric designs. His soft brown boots are calf length and edged with lambs wool at their tops.

**Agamemnon:** The King of Argos. He is tall, middle aged, dark and bearded. He wears a gold ankle length tunic over black calf length laced boots. Hanging from his neck is a ruby disc on a heavy necklace. He also wears a red and gold cloak, embroidered with Hellenic symbols.

**Achilles:** A swarthy Greek warrior and hero. He is in his twenties, dark and has shoulder length hair. He wears a midnight blue knee length tunic and a cloak edged with gold stars. He has soft black calf length laced boots.

**Odysseus:** King of Ithaca, in his twenties, fair, and tall and wears his hair short in the Grecian style. He wears a white knee length tunic and cloak and hanging from his neck is a gold chain. He has soft brown calf length laced boots.

**Anchises:** Priam's cousin and adviser, who is middle aged, dark and bearded. He wears his hair short, but slightly unkempt. He wears a white ankle length tunic and cloak edged with geometric designs. He also wears soft black sandals.

**Helenus:** A son of Priam, fair and in his early twenties. He is naïve and enjoys the company of young women. He wears his hair in the Grecian style and a white knee length tunic and cloak edged in gold geometric designs and soft white sandals.

**Andromache:** Hector's suffering wife. She is in her mid twenties, tall and slim. She wears a light green ankle length tunic and a lemon coloured cloak embroidered with flowers. She also wears soft tan sandals strapped at the ankle.

**Clytemnestra:** Agamemnon's wife. She is in her late thirties, tall, dark and haughty. She wears her hair in the Grecian style and a light blue ankle length tunic and cloak edged in geometric patterns. She also wears dark blue soft sandals strapped at the ankle.

**Calchas:** He is a priest, prophet and adviser to Agamemnon. He is dark, short, middle aged and has greying shoulder length hair. He wears a white ankle length tunic and cloak and around his waist is a black rope belt tipped with a silver tassel. His soft sandals are black.

**Patroclus:** Achilles' tactical adviser and friend. He is in his early twenties, fair and slim. His hair is worn in the Grecian style. He is dressed in a white knee length tunic and cloak. He also wears dark brown calf length laced boots.

**Ajax:** A Grecian warrior, short, dark haired, stocky. He is always ready for battle and therefore wears black armour over a white knee length tunic and cloak. He also wears black calf length laced boots.

**Iphigenia:** Daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. She is a buxom young woman in her early twenties. Her dark hair is curly and hangs in tight ringlets, which is framed by a dark blue jewelled headband. She wears a revealing short sky blue chiffon knee length tunic and dark blue cloak. She also wears soft light blue sandals strapped at the ankles.

**Penelope:** Odysseus's wife in her late twenties. She is an attractive, compassionate blonde. Her hair is worn in the Grecian style. She

wears an ankle length white tunic and a scarlet cloak. She also wears soft scarlet sandals strapped at the ankles.

**Cassandra:** Daughter of Priam and Hecube who is fair, tall, slim and in her mid twenties. She is a god fearing young woman, who is almost a carbon copy of her mother in terms of personality and attitude. She wears a blue ankle length tunic and cloak edged with astronomical symbols. She also wears soft blue sandals strapped at the ankles.

**Menelaus's Second:** Young, dressed in a white knee length tunic and bare feet.

**Boxing Announcer:** He wears a white shirt, black bow tie, black waistcoat and trousers, and black shoes. His hair is gelled flat.

**Titus Mafiosos:** A Boxing Referee who wears a black shirt, white bow tie, black trousers and black shoes.

**Markos Presentos:** TV commentator, in his twenties, who wears a white knee length tunic and cloak and soft brown sandals.

**Epeius:** A Greek aging carpenter, builder of the Wooden Horse. He has grey shoulder length hair and short beard. He wears a tan coloured knee length tunic and soft brown sandals.

**Greek servants, Zeus's servants, and Trojan servants (male and female):** All in white knee length tunics and bare feet.

**Greek Guards and Soldiers:** Armour and skirts over red knee length tunics and brown calf length laced boots.

**Trojan Guards and Soldiers:** Armour and skirts over blue knee length tunics and black calf length laced boots.

**N.B. In Act 2 Scene 7 – Paris and Menelaus are dressed as boxers, and Hector wears a dressing gown – see details in script.**

**In Act 2 Scene 9 – Hector and Achilles wear armoured breastplates, short leather skirts and carry swords.**

**In Act 3 Scenes 1, 5 and 6 the following characters wear armour when and where appropriate:**

## **Agamemnon, Odysseus, Ajax and Achilles, Paris and Helenus.**

Suggested Doubling in the cast:

Thetis/Clytemnestra  
Titus Mafiosos/Epeius  
Mona/Greek female Servant  
Iphigenia/Cassandra  
Patroclus/Markos Presentos  
Peleus/Boxing Announcer  
Greek Soldier 3 (non-speaking)/ Greek Guard 3  
Menelaus's Second/Trojan Guard 1  
There are other combinations, of course!

Suggested parts played by male or female

Oracle  
Helenus  
Patroclus  
Zeus's servants

## ACT ONE

Introduction:

*The stage is empty and unlit. A spot comes up on Paul DC.*

Paul: *(to audience)* Good evening ladies and gentlemen I'm your narrator tonight. Why I should be chosen, I've no idea but one must accept one's fate in this troubled world. *(He sighs heavily)* Many waning moons have passed since the siege of Troy. It seemed that the skies were forever darkened with the wrath and anger of the Gods. Raging winds and thunderbolts were indeed common place and so without further ado we revisit those restless times before the wars with Troy and take you to Sparta, to the Palace of King Menelaus.

*Spot off*

### Scene 1 -The Palace of Menelaus

*Lights up on an empty stage*

*Menelaus enters.*

Menelaus: *(calling)* Elsa! Elsa!

*Elsa enters.*

Where is Helen?

Elsa: In her chamber, my lord, giving thanks to the gods for her days with you.

Menelaus: *(highly flattered)* Really?

Elsa: Of course my lord, she thinks of no one but you.

Menelaus: That is reassuring, she's so beautiful. I have these dreams, no nightmares, of her being taken away from me. Why would I dream such dreams?

Elsa: Too much Retsina my lord?

Menelaus: Don't mock me Elsa. My mind is in turmoil and all you can talk of is an overindulgence of wine!

Elsa: Why not seek the advice of the Oracle?

Menelaus: I would, but I can't afford the time to travel to Delphi. I don't know why he can't come here.

*There is a roll of thunder. Greek Guard 1 enters quickly R.*

Greek Guard 1: My Lord. A stranger is in the ante chamber.

Menelaus: Who is it?

Greek Guard 1: He says he's the Oracle!

*The Oracle enters R*

*The Greek Guard 1 bows and exits R*

Oracle: Good day Menelaus or can I call you Menny? I heard your plea and here I am. Mind, it will cost you - a plague of locusts, perhaps? Looking at this place, I reckon you've had one recently. It's a bit Spartan isn't it?

Menelaus: How did you arrive so quickly?

Oracle: On Cloud Nine, gee there was a lot of turbulence!

Menelaus: What do you have to tell me?

*The Oracle claps his hands and dramatically and Mona enters R carrying a large leather bound book. She curtsies and pouts at audience and generally makes a spectacle of herself.*

Oracle: (*embarrassed for her*) Yes, thank you Mona, concentrate please. We are looking for the prophecies relating to our friend and King of Sparta, Menelaus.

Mona: Oh yes (*consulting book*) Let me see. Manos, Medlin, Menswear – oops (*she giggles*) here we are M-E-N-E-L-A-U-S, Menelaus correct?

*She winks at Menelaus, who smiles uncomfortably*

Oracle: Behave yourself Mona. Please leave us.

*Mona gives Menelaus another wink and approaches him. The Oracle stops her with the following dialogue.*

Oracle: Mona! Push off!

*Mona pouts and slowly exits R, occasionally glancing and smiling at Menelaus and winking at the audience.*

*Suddenly Mona returns in a hurry.*

Mona: Don't you want the lectern?

Oracle: Yes, go and get it! Well done Mona.

*She winks at audience and exits*

Oracle: *(aside to audience)* I don't know what I'd do without her! She'll be the next Oracle so watch the mythology charts. Monocle is her full name. Keep an eye out for her.

Menelaus: Shall we get on with it?

*Mona and Greek Guard 1 enter R with a lectern and again Mona tries to attract the audience's attention. The guard pulls her Off R. She squeals.*

*Oracle places book on lectern and flicks the pages.*

Oracle: Ah, In Dreams!

Menelaus: *(irritably)* I've been having nightmares I tell you!

Oracle: No, no, 'In Dreams', it's a song I wrote. I foresee it being sung in the future by a dark stranger with enormous dark spectacles and playing a very large colourful lute! I think he'll be known as the son of Orb or something like that. Here we are! Oh yes, Helen of Sparta. Oh, she's gorgeous. She's a dream alright, are you sure you want her? I'll give you a free trip to Olympia and Corinth for her, all expenses paid!

Menelaus: Certainly not, but my concern though is that she is so gorgeous.

Oracle: *(amazed)* Really? Oh dear. *(he peers into the page of the book)* Well let's see if we can help you. Ah, ha. I see water, many ships, and a young man *(incredulously)* carrying an apple? *(looks up at Menelaus)* There are darker, ominous incidents. I see a face, a beautiful face, a thousand ships, battles and... abduction! She'll be the cause of all this darkness. *(over dramatically, he raises his arms aloft)* She will anger the Gods!

Menelaus: What should I do?

*The Oracle slams the book shut, which startles Menelaus.*

Oracle: No matter what I say, the fates will determine the future. All you can do is protect your family and your many interests. Be warned and take care for the sake of your kingdom.

Menelaus: Well?

Oracle: *(over dramatically)* I can't go on! The gods won't allow it! I can't help you any more; your dreams and actions are now in the laps of the Gods. I must go! *(aside)* What a dramatic ending. Eat your heart out Thespeus! *(to Menelaus)* Bye!

*Greek guard 1 enters and helps the Oracle exits R in a hurry carrying the lectern. Menelaus follows him to the exit.*

Menelaus: Hey, wait a minute *(calling off)* Come back and tell me more!

*He turns and crosses to DC*

Menelaus: *(dejectedly)* How could anybody as beautiful as Helen anger the gods? *(He exits through centre aisle)* Helen!  
*Paul enters.*

Paul: *(addressing audience)* The Greek Gods and Goddesses can be so fickle.

Eris: *(off)* Speak for yourself mortal!

Paul: *(continues to address audience)* That was Eris, a troublemaker if there ever was one. The other goddesses are just as bad, but in different ways, as you will see in the next scene. Peleus and Thetis, the parents of the Greek hero, Achilles propose to humanise their relationship on Earth through marriage. We now join the wedding reception and hope the newlyweds are accepted favourably.

*Lights Down*

## Scene 2: A Wedding Reception

*There is a white sofa at C, a white decorative chair LC and a small table UL of chair. The lights come up as Hera and Athena enter carrying goblets and having consumed a fair amount of drink. Aphrodite follows them carrying a wine flask. She fills the others goblets and drinks from flask.*

*Hera and Athena collapse on to the sofa and Aphrodite into the chair.*

Aphrodite: A very nice spread. I enjoyed the seafood.

Hera: Thetis's influence of course. She was a sea nymph before Dadda Zeus attempted to make her mortal.

Athena: Really? I didn't know that.

Aphrodite: How will Peleus cope, with a wife who is half a fish?

Hera: She's not a mermaid! I said she was a nymph, a bride of the sea.

Athena: Well I reckon Peleus has found himself a good catch.

Aphrodite: Well, I only hope he doesn't flounder. *(she giggles loudly)*

*Enter Peleus and Thetis R*

Peleus: Good evening dear goddesses. Thetis and I are privileged to have you as our guests.

Hera: So you should be.

Thetis: I think my dear husband has made a mistake by not inviting Eris to the wedding. She will be angry, I'm sure.

Aphrodite: I think he made the right decision, my dear. After all she is the goddess of discord and could cause a great deal of trouble.

Peleus: Thank you Aphrodite, I concur with your view.

Thetis: I hope you are both right.

Peleus: Please, help yourselves to more wine.

Hera: We shall! *(the goddesses giggle)*

*Peleus and Thetis bow and exit.*

Athena: I think she looked a bit green about the gills.

*Aphrodite and Hera choke on their drinks and laugh.*

Athena: What have I said?

*The formidable Eris enters UR and crosses to RC.*

Eris: Having a good time girls?

The girls together: Eris!

Eris: Why wasn't I invited to this...wedding?

Hera: You do have a reputation my dear.

Aphrodite: Like causing the wine to turn into blood at your sister's sacrificial party.

*Eris smiles wickedly*

Hera: And turning the wine into water at your brother's chariot race celebration.

Eris: Well, I was concerned that he was going off the rails, my dear.

*She laughs and takes the goblet from Hera and drinks from it. She tosses the empty goblet to Hera who catches it. Hera takes the other goblet from Athena and places both on the table. Aphrodite takes a final swig from the flask and also places it on the table and crosses unsteadily DL.*

Athena: Yes, you are indeed a troublemaker Eris.

Eris: Alright, alright *(aside to audience, smiling and winking)* I must admit I have been a bit naughty, but I am the goddess of discord. I can't help myself! *(back to the others)* I did so wish to be invited to a wedding feast; I am the only goddess who has been ignored.

*While she has been speaking, Peleus and Thetis enter R*

Thetis: Eris! *(quickly to Peleus)* I told you she would turn up like a bad obulus.

Eris: Ah, the fisherman and his cod have arrived.

Thetis: Really!

Peleus: Why must you be so insulting Eris?

Thetis: We hope you haven't chosen this day of all days to cause trouble.

Eris: No, I wish to offer a challenge. (*She produces a golden apple*) This is for the fairest among your guests.

Hera: Not another one of your games?

Eris: As goddesses, we must keep ourselves active. It's only fitting that this happy occasion should be blessed with a challenge from one of us.

Thetis: I must say I am pleased to know that you consider our wedding to be a happy occasion.

Eris: (*aside to audience*) Did I say that? Oh well.

Aphrodite: Did you say the fairest?

Eris: I did.

Aphrodite: In that case, as the goddess of love, I must surely be considered the fairest.

Athena: No, no, no! My strong form and handsome features make me the favourite for the prize, surely?

Hera: As a great protector and my beautiful motherly nature, firmly secure the gift of an apple for me!

Peleus: Can't you see what is happening? Eris is playing on your vanity. She is attempting to cause discord amongst you.

Aphrodite: Peleus, will you ever understand the whims of the gods?

Hera: We laugh!

Athena: We play!

Eris: We tease!

Aphrodite: (*seductively to audience*) We punish!

Peleus: But on a day such as this, the prize should be granted to the lady of the day, who must surely be the fairest!

Hera: Lady of the day! Who do you mean?

Peleus: My new wife of course!

Goddesses together: What! Thetis?

Hera: She's never the fairest!

Athena: She doesn't deserve the title!

Peleus: She must be deserving of something, surely?

Goddesses together: Yes, Fish bait! *(they laugh)*

Thetis: *(to Eris, who winks at audience and turns to Thetis with hands on hips and smiles)* Every time we meet you have to ruin the occasion.

Eris: I just can't help myself, my dear.

Thetis: You have destroyed my day!

*Somewhat distraught, Thetis exits through centre aisle.*

Peleus: Eris, I must ask you to leave this palace immediately! *(calling, as he exits in pursuit of Thetis)* Thetis my love!

Eris: *(smiling widely)* I am a naughty girl aren't I? Now girls you are going to have to decide who wins the prize.

Hera: How can we do that? My husband Zeus will have to decide surely!

Athena: Of course he must!

Aphrodite: And I'm sure he will decide in my favour.

Eris: He won't like it!

Hera: No, but I might be able to persuade him.

*Lights down on the goddesses as they argue as to who is the fairest.*

### Scene 3: Zeus's Palace.

*The stage is empty apart from a symbolic gold mask of Zeus which is projected onto a gauze curtain on the upstage wall. Alternatively an actual mask could be affixed on the upstage wall.*

*The lights come up as Zeus enters followed by Paul.*

Paul: Who are you supposed to be?

Zeus: What d'yer mean, supposed to be? I'm Zeus, the Dadda of the Gods.

Paul: He wasn't Scottish.

Zeus: What was he then? Tell me that, what was he?

Paul: Well, he was a Greek god, the Father of the Gods!

Zeus: Is that right laddie? Well you show me where it says he was actually born a Greek.

Paul: You only have to read the Classics. One assumes he was!

Zeus: Ne'er assume anything in life, laddie.

Paul: Well he wasn't Celtic, that's for sure.

Zeus: No laddie, Celtic is a Glasgow football team. Celtic (*pronounced with a 'K'*) is the correct pronunciation.

Paul: Well, he certainly didn't come from Glasgow. According to the Oxford Classical Dictionary, he presided over all other gods and mortals at Agora.

Zeus: You are a learned young man, that's for sure. You're dead right laddie! The meeting place. Oh yes, Agora is where I belong ....

*He breaks out into song, to the music from the traditional song 'I belong to Glasgow'*

I belong to Agora that's where I preside  
There's nothing the matter with Agora 'cos it's where I like to hide  
I'm far from being a common old chap as anyone 'ere can see  
And when I getta drink on Saturn's Day  
Agora belongs to me!

Come on then! Join me in this song of a god! (*urging the audience and Paul to join in*) What's the matter with you all?

Paul: There is definitely something the matter with one of the lyrics. You mentioned Saturn's Day, Saturn is Roman.

Zeus: Well what's wrong with that? The Romans nicked a few of our ways and deities so who is to say I canna nick one o' theirs, eh? You're pickin' hairs laddie and you're interruptin' the story.

Paul: Well I don't want you to change its authenticity.

Zeus: What's wrong with yer, have you swallowed a dictionary or something? Look, dinna worry laddie, all will work out well!

*There is a trumpet sound. A throne is carried on from R by two Zeus's servants. Paul exits DR. The servants bow and move backwards to exit R, where they trip over each other and fall into the wings, groaning.*

Zeus: (*shaking his head*) Yer wouldna' credit it would yer?

*He goes to sit on the throne, but the trumpet blares again and startles him. It stops and starts up again.*

*Aphrodite, Hera, Athena and Eris enter.*

The girls together: Dadda!

*They approach and one by one embrace him.*

Zeus: (*to audience*) That's why I accepted this part! (*to girls*) I wish you wouldna' call me Dadda! And as for you Hera, you're supposed to be my wife!

Hera: It's called poetic licence, besides I like to feel ageless. I like to be with the girls.

Zeus: Who doesn't? What are you doing here Eris, you troublemaker.

Eris: I wasna – I mean I wasn't invited to the fishmonger's wedding. Everybody else was. It's not fair, why can't you make me be loved by everyone, Dadda?

Zeus: That's just how things are Eris. It's what you'd expect from life on Earth. It's a bit like tennis.

Hera: Tennis? What's that?

Zeus: As a god, you're really ignorant. It's a game... of the future. The game is a bit like life. It has its challenges and advantages. When all is even, it's Zeus! When things go wrong, you hit the net cord or in your case Eris, the discord!

Hera: In that case I don't think I'd bother playing tennis.

Zeus: Well, don't worry it hasna been invented yet.

Aphrodite: It's all about love isn't it?

The goddesses together: Tennis?

Aphrodite: No, life!

Athena: Please Aphrodite don't get all emotional and silly.

Zeus: What do you girls want of me?

Athena: Eris has challenged us.

Zeus: Not the Golden Apple trick again?

Aphrodite: All because she wasn't invited to the wedding.

Zeus: And now you have a contest?

Athena: Dadda, please – will you decide? Of the three of us, who is the fairest one of all?

Zeus: I couldna' decide. It would be wrong of me to make the choice, I love you all.

Aphrodite: You are such a lovely Dadda!

Zeus: Eris, why don't you make the decision?

Eris: I couldn't possibly do that! It would be unfair! (*suddenly realising the pun and gives an aside to the audience*) Unfair? (*she laughs*). No, it is yours, Dadda.

Zeus: I dunno. I think it would be wrong. All the gods would think I favour only one of you. Just forget the whole affair.

Hera: But we must know. It's our duty as gods to justify our position now that a challenge has been made.

Aphrodite: Am I the fairest?

Hera: (*approaching him and stroking his cheek*) Or me, perhaps dearest?

Zeus: Behave yourself Hera. Remember who you are woman, you'll have me confused. Eris! You have created a calamity! (*calling*) Hermes!

*Hermes enters DR on a bike*

Zeus: Hah Hermes. As quick as Mercury, eh?

Hermes: (*horrified*) What! How could you compare me to that Roman postman?

Zeus: Hermes, we have a problem

Hermes: I know, the girls have explained the situation my Lord.

Zeus: I can't make a decision.

Hermes: I know you can't.

Zeus: (*taken aback*) I beg your pardon?

Hermes: Normally you can, but it is very difficult for you to make a choice in this matter.

Zeus: Thank you Hermes I knew you would understand.

*Hera blows Zeus a kiss.*

(*to Hera*) Will you stop trying to sway me with yer wily ways! I'm your husband.

Hermes: My lord you must choose an impartial mortal to make the decision.

Zeus: What a good idea. Where from?

Aphrodite: Please choose Hector, he's so dishy.

Eris: Who the heck is Hector?

Athena: He's a Trojan isn't he?

Eris: (*sniffs*) Oh, is he?

Hermes: Hector is the son of Priam and Hecube

Aphrodite: He's lovely!

Hera: Aphy, control yourself, Hector is one of fifty sons isn't he?

Athena: The last time I counted there were only forty nine.

Hermes: You are so perceptive my dear.

Athena: Thank you. Say that again, it sounded so nice.

Hermes: You are so percep.....

Zeus: (*interjecting*) Alright, alright Hermes!

Hermes: Please bear in mind the mortal should not possess any fame.

Aphrodite: Well that leaves Hector out!

Hermes: One of the sons, a boy by the name of Paris, was sent into exile by Hecube since she dreamt that he would cause devastation in Troy; something about it being sacked and raised to the ground.

Eris: And so it should be, the shopping there is terrible and so expensive!

Zeus: Where is this Paris living now?

Hermes: Somewhere in Anatolia I believe. I could make some enquiries.

Zeus: You must. If you can find him, I decree that he should be the judge.

*The girls squeal and cheer. They approach Zeus and throw their arms around him.*

Zeus: Off with you now and I shall be interested to know who wins. Eris?

Eris: Yes Dadda?

Zeus: You behave yourself; we've had enough discord for one month.

Eris: Yes Dadda!

Hera (*mockingly*) Yes Dadda dear!

*She blows Zeus a kiss*

Zeus: Will you stop it woman! Your place is with me, here!

Hera: (*pouting*) But I'm enjoying myself.

Zeus: Oh for my sake go!

Hera: Bye my love!

*She and the other girls blow kisses and exit R.*

Zeus: Thank myself they've gone! This Paris, Let's hope he's too dumb to know better than to get involved in this dispute between bickering goddesses.

Hermes: God forbid, my lord.

Zeus: Och Aye!

*They exit centre aisle as the lights go down*

#### Scene 4: King Priam's Palace

*The stage is empty apart from a symbolic Trojan plaque projected on a gauze curtain on the upstage wall or a plaque hanging on the wall.*

*The lights come up as Hermes enters DR on a bike. He still wears the grubby toga, a peaked cap and on this occasion he carries a satchel.*

*Priam and Priam's Guard enter R.*

Priam: (*wearily*) Yes Hermes. I think I have to be honoured by your presence. How may I help you? You could certainly help me; the postal delivery in Troy is terrible. I sent a message to my robe maker the other day, but he tells me he never received it, I don't know.

Hermes: King Priam, I'm looking for your son.

Priam: Which one? I used to know all their names but age has crept up on me. Thank the Gods Hecube, my wife, no longer does so. When people call and ask after one of our sons they refer to Hector (*with disgust*) He's not here. He's at a knitting contest in Naxos.

Hermes: It is your son Paris I'm seeking.

Priam: Paris?

Priam's Guard: Number 48 my lord.

Priam: Not the exiled boy?

Priam's Guard: That's the one my lord, he lives as a shepherd in the hills.

Priam: How do you know all this?

Priam's Guard: I play cards with him every Friday afternoon; he's a successful boxer too.

Priam: Which weight is he?

Priam's Guard: I'm not sure my lord, but he has put on a little weight lately. It's the lamb, my lord.

*Priam groans and shakes his head in disbelief.*

Hermes: (*quickly*) My lord, perhaps your guard could direct me to his home in the hills.

Priam: (*gesturing to Hermes' bike*) On that thing? (*To the Guard*) Go and bring him to me.

Priam's Guard: Now?

Priam: As quickly as you can, using the little intelligence and technology that's available to you.

Priam's Guard: But he's tending his flock.

Priam: Then slay the sheep and bring my boxer son and the carcasses. We need to stock up with meat. I'm getting tired of feta and salad.

Priam's Guard: Yes my lord (*aside*) Bang goes my Friday nights!

*He exits R*

*Hector enters DR. He is knitting with large knitting needles. The article he is knitting is long and shapeless and is multi coloured.*

Hector: (*looking up from his knitting*) Hello father.

Priam: You're back early.

Hector: I was eliminated in the second round, dropped a few stitches. I was so enraged.

Priam: You put my family to shame. You're supposed to be a warrior, not a knitter!  
Hector: I find it totally relaxing; it allows me to wind down after a day of diplomacy and battle practice.

Priam: I've decided to bring er, what's his name? Paris! Yes, Paris back from the wilderness.

Hector: Paris? Why? How could you? Mother won't be pleased.

Hermes: Zeus would be very pleased.

Hector: What has Zeus got to do with this?

Hermes: I'm his messenger.

Hector: (*looking him up and down*) Of course, Hermes. I thought I recognised your postbag.

Hermes: Zeus has decreed that Paris should assist as a judge to decide the fairest of the goddesses.

Priam: Not another golden apple contest.

Hermes: I'm afraid so.

Priam: Who is involved in this one?

Hermes: Eris.

Priam: I might have known. More discord?

Hermes: Alas, yes.

Hector: Why has Zeus chosen Paris?

Hermes: Simply because he's a fool, Paris that is.

Hector: How strange? I would've been a much better judge.

Priam: Yes, and a bigger fool.

Hector: (*taken aback*) I'll have you know I am noted for my bravery, I am a warrior.

Priam: And a knit!

*Enter Hecube.*

Priam: (*aside*) Oh no, it's her, my beloved wife.

Hecube: Hermes, you bring news from the gods?

Hector: He certainly does mother, he's looking for Paris.

Hecube: Paris?

Hermes: Your son, number 48.

Hecube: Paris doesn't live here. I won't have him near the place and I will not have him referred to as my son.

Priam: Whoever he is, he'll be here within the hour.

Hecube: That's typical, you should have consulted me. He has been nothing but trouble since his birth. He will bring disaster. Doom!

Priam: I hope he brings some lamb. The disaster was just part of a bad dream, nothing will happen and if I am correct he was a particularly handsome child.

Hecube: Handsome or not he is a bad omen.

Priam: Well we'll soon find out won't we?

Hector: Father, have you no feeling? Mother is very concerned about his arrival.

Priam: Oh go back to your knitting! I am going to the taverna.

Hecube: And no doubt to get as plastered as Paris will when he paints the town red?

Priam: What are you talking about? He's a shepherd not a painter!

*Priam exits DR*

Hecube: The fool of a man! Hermes, have we displeased the gods?

Hermes: You will if you refuse to allow Paris to return. Zeus demands it, not in so many words but...

Hecube: (*interjecting*) If one can understand his accent! Have I a choice in the matter?

Hermes: I'm afraid not my lady.

Hecube: (*sighing heavily*) Then I suppose I must relent, but I do so reluctantly.

Hector: Oh Mother must you?

Hecube: Oh be quiet Hector.

Hermes: Thank you Hecube, Zeus will be overjoyed.

Hector: Mother, what would you like me to do?

Hecube: Oh, get on with your knitting. You are an embarrassment!

*She exits DR*

Hector: (*pleadingly*) Mama!

*Hector follows her off stage*

Hermes: Good we are making progress.

*Enter Paul*

Hermes: What are you doing here? I haven't finished yet!

Paul: On your bike!

Hermes: And what a bike, have you tried riding one in this costume?

*He exits on his bike with difficulty through centre aisle.*

Paul: (*to audience and gesturing to Hermes*) If your post has been delayed lately you can understand why, can't you? In the meantime the goddesses have arrived in Troy. I do hope their approach is positive.

*Lights Down*

## Scene 5: Priam's Palace Grounds

*The stage is empty.*

*Lights up as Aphrodite, Hera, Athena and Eris enter R*

Hera: You're right Eris, Troy is simply awful. The shopping is boring and there is nowhere to eat.

Eris: I know. I did see some Nike trainers. She'll be pleased her products are selling so well.

Athena: I haven't seen Nike for ages. Where is she these days?

Eris: She's training with a few demi-gods at Olympia, Dadda sent her there.

Aphrodite: Well, she certainly has the footwear for it.

*Hermes, Hecube, Priam, Paris and Priam's Guard enter.*

Aphrodite: Ooh, he's so good looking. I had no idea Paris was so handsome.

Hermes: Goddesses, allow me to introduce Paris, your appointed judge.

Aphrodite: And you're a good judge of character, Hermes. I'm so pleased to meet you Paris. *(she squeals as Hera prods her)*

Paris: I don't normally have that affect on young ladies.

Priam's Guard: I dunno, what about the maids in the mountains?

Paris: What about them? Any hot blooded male would have an effect on them, even you!

Priam's Guard: Charming!

Hecube: Hermes, what news do you have for us?

Hermes: Only that the challenge must commence! I am to announce that in the name of Zeus, the Dadda – the father of the Gods, Paris, son of Priam shall henceforth adjudicate.....

Priam: *(interjecting)* Oh, get on with it!

Hermes: Thank you my lord I hated that speech. Paris, you have to decide which of these women are the fairest of all women.

Paris: That will be very difficult. They are all so beautiful, and I have not seen many women in my short life.

Hecube: A charmer in sheep's clothing! What woman would want him for a lover?

*Paris looks at her hurtfully*

Paris: Do I have to make a decision on the spot?

Eris: You have until sunset to announce your decision.

Paris: Thank you Eris. I'm surprised you are not one of the contestants, since you too are beautiful.

Priam's Guard: *(to audience)* He says that to all the pig maids in the hills. He's terrible.

Eris: Why thank you kind sir, but since I am the organiser I cannot possibly be a contestant.

Hermes: Then we shall retire to allow Paris to consider his decision.

Aphrodite: *(winks)* Bye.

*Paris bows.*

Hera: Until sunset *(she winks and smiles at him)*

Paris: I look forward to the hour *(aside)* She looks remarkably like Zeus's wife.

*Hera exits L*

Athena: Make haste, dear Paris.

Paris: I shall be as swift as I can be.

*Athena exits L*

Eris: Good luck dear boy.

Paris: I hope you will provide it.

*Eris exits L*

*Priam sniffs loudly at him and with Hecube approaches exit DR*

Priam: He smells of sheep

Hermes: Until sunset, Paris.

*Priam, Hecube and Hermes exit DR*

Priam's Guard: Shall I stay? I need to win back the money you took from me on Friday night.

Paris: That can wait, I have another hand to play.

Priam's Guard: As you wish, but mind how you go Paris, I don't trust those Goddesses.

*He exits R*

Paris: What a difficult situation. How did I get caught up in this? I was happier living in the hills.

*Athena enters L.*

Paris: My lady!

Athena: I beg of you Paris, please choose me. I can promise you so much. (*she hands him a pair of old pink trainers*) Here take these Nike trainers, made by the Goddess herself.

Paris: Pink trainers are not really my taste. They're not my size and they appear old and worn.

Athena: Well they fit the times we live in – ancient! They should stretch and you could have them dyed.

Paris: Much as I am honoured by your generosity, I cannot accept.

Athena: I could promise you success against the Greeks in the event of war! Wearing these I could help you to lead Troy to success in the world, since you must know that Nike is the Goddess of Victory.

Paris: I am aware of that, but I cannot foresee any wars with the Greeks, my Lady. You must allow me to make my own decision.

Athena: Yes, of course. I am sure you will make the right one and choose me.

*Paris approaches her, holds her arms and looks into her eyes.*

Athena: (*sourly*) You are not going to sing are you?

Paris: No, of course not (*Athena sighs noisily, relieved*) Even if I do not choose you, I hope one day we shall meet again.

*She gives a squeal of delight, breaks free from him and exits L.*

*Paris watches her exit and turns and crosses DL, bemused. Hera enters L. Paris approaches her C.*

Paris: My lady.

Hera: If you were to choose me, I shall help you to become very rich. I shall promise to make you King of all Asia.

Paris: That's a wild promise. I couldn't possibly....

Hera: (*interrupting*) I am a goddess. I can bring you all the wealth you desire.

Paris: But aren't you married to Zeus?

Hera: A little fun on the side hurts nobody and in any case my marital status has nothing to do with you.

Paris: Forgive me my lady, but I'm a simple boy at heart.

Hera: (*angrily*) And you would indeed be very simple if you do not accept.

Paris: I don't mean to upset you, but I must be free to make my own decision.

Hera: Don't you want to become King of Asia?

Paris: Not particularly – no.

Hera: Then you are a bigger fool than I took you for. You have obviously spent too much time with your sheep!

*She storms off L.*

Paris: (*crossing DR*) Oh dear. Things are not going too well.

*Aphrodite enters L.*

Aphrodite: Are you alone?

*Paris looks about the stage*

Paris: I hope so.

Aphrodite: Are you close to a decision?

Paris: Not yet Aphrodite, I am so confused.

Aphrodite: Call me Aphy.

Paris: As you wish, er, Aphy.

Aphrodite: I am so keen to be known as the fairest, since I have a reputation to consider. After all, I am the goddess of love.

Paris: I understand, of course, you are also so beautiful.

Aphrodite: You must take that into consideration and also since I am a goddess, I am prepared to promise you the most beautiful woman in the world.

Paris: Really? In that case how can I have you?

Aphrodite: You flatter me, of course, but as a goddess I am not prepared to offer myself to you. In any case it would ruin the whole story. No, I offer you the most beautiful woman on Earth.

Paris: I am not interested in power and glory, but the love of a beautiful mortal would be most appealing, but.....

Aphrodite: (*interrupting*) And free tickets to any show you wish!

Paris: Popcorn?

Aphrodite: Oh yes and Spartan Spearmint!

Paris: Done! But you must away and I shall announce the winner.

Aphrodite: Oh thank you so much Paris my dear, you will be very happy with the woman of your dreams!

Paris: Who is the beautiful woman?

Aphrodite: Helen of Sparta.

*Lights down*

## Scene 6: Priam's Palace

*The Trojan symbol of a large gold battle helmet is either projected onto a gauze curtain on the upstage wall or the helmet symbol could hang on the upstage wall if a gauze curtain is unavailable.*

*There is a throne at C.*

*The lights come up on Paris and Priam standing DCR*

Priam: Why Sparta?

Paris: Father, I have spent many years up in the hills. I haven't had a chance to see the world.

Priam: Nor have I!

Paris: Whose fault is that father?

Priam: Don't be cheeky! I can understand your desire to open your mind, but why Sparta?

Paris: The Spartan nation is strong.

Priam: They smell strong – of sheep, like you.

Paris: If we enter into a pact with them it would place us in a far better diplomatic position.

Priam: Quite the reverse. They would love to get their hands on us. However, to some extent you're right; we need to secure a trade deal with a nation like Sparta. Have you been to the shops lately? They're boring and the food is virtually inedible. Tell you what; if you can secure a trade deal you can have your old room back.

Paris: What about mother?

Priam: (*dismissively*) Nobody wants her. (*business like*) Your visit must be brief and well documented. Hector will go with you.

Paris: I am capable of looking after myself, father.

Priam: I insist. Apart from his knitting nonsense, he is a fine warrior and he'll protect you. Go now, make haste. I will arrange for that card playing guard to accompany you to keep you out of mischief.

*Paris bows and exits R*

*Priam sits on the throne and jumps up immediately, retrieving a knitting needle.*

Priam: Not another one. I shall be scarred for life. Is this the pattern of things to come? (*shouting*) Hector!

*He hobbles off to exit DR.*

Priam (*off*) Why don't you be more careful with those things? Look at the wound you've inflicted.

Hector: (*off*) Oh shut up and put your trousers on!

*Hecube enters in haste from DR followed by Priam hobbling and clutching a buttock.*

*She crosses to UL*

Priam: Aren't you going to have a look at the wound?

Hecube: (*turning to him*) Have one of the servants attend to it – a male servant!

*She exits UL*

*Priam turns to audience*

Priam: There was a time when she would've been behind me without hesitation.

*He exits UL*

*Lights Down*

## Scene 7: The Palace of Menelaus

*The stage is empty*

*Lights up on Helen standing DCL with her head bowed, quietly sobbing. Menelaus enters from R and upon seeing her raises his arms in despair and stops C.*

Menelaus: All you've done these past few weeks is weep!

Helen: Then why do you lock me away?

Menelaus: Simply because you are so precious to me. I am afraid I might lose you, as prophesied by the Oracle.

Helen: The Oracle is wrong! Why would I want to leave you? How many times must I tell you my lord?

Menelaus: I am older than you and it would be easy for you to be tempted by the advances of some young courtier.

Helen: (*frustrated*) Then you do not trust me! Why did you ever take me for your wife?

Menelaus: You are the most beautiful thing I possess.

Helen: Thing? Possess? I am just an object, and that's how you treat me!

*Elsa enters and notices the tension. She bows to Menelaus and looks across at Helen.*

Elsa: I'm sorry, have I interrupted something?

*Helen turns away and controls her sobbing. Elsa shakes her head*

Menelaus: What is it Elsa?

Elsa: My lord, visitors have arrived from Troy.

Menelaus: Thank you Elsa. (*to Helen*) I shall provide evidence of my love by proudly showing you off to our visitors. Elsa, ensure that your sister is suitably dressed for the occasion.

Elsa: Certainly my lord.

*Menelaus approaches Helen, who has her back to him, and he is about to take hold of her by her shoulders, but thinks better of it.*

Menelaus: (*finally*) Please make haste with your preparation my love.

*He exits determinedly through centre aisle*

Elsa: I have just seen two of the most handsome men in the world!

Helen: *(looking out front)* I hear that from you every time we have visitors Elsa.

Elsa: As soon as Menelaus sees them he will whisk you away out of sight.

Helen: *(turning to her angrily)* You've obviously enjoyed my plight!

Elsa: *(teasingly)* Oh yes, I've received all the attention. It's been wonderful!

Helen: I mean to put an end to your game sister. I shall flirt as much as I can, whether Menelaus likes it or not!

Elsa: This I must see.

*She gives a short laugh*

*Helen crosses to exit DR*

Helen: Come, help me get ready!

*She exits followed quickly by Elsa.*

*Lights Down*

## Scene 8: A Room in Menelaus's Palace

*The stage is empty apart from a table LC*

*The lights come up on Menelaus, Hector and Paris as they enter DR.*

*They are in very good humour, carrying goblets of wine. Menelaus slaps Hector on the back as Hector takes a mouthful of wine which causes him to choke.*

Hector: *(controlling his choking)* I am impressed with your choice of wine my lord.

Menelaus: Yes it is good isn't it? Sicilian wine is always trustworthy. Shall we talk business later, at the dinner table?

Paris: As you wish my lord.

Menelaus: You must excuse me while I find out where my dear wife might be.

*Paris and Hector bow as Menelaus exits R*

Paris: I hate talking business over dinner; I always end up with indigestion.

Hector: A trade agreement indeed, the shops in Sparta are worse than they are in Troy. I told father that Sparta is famous for its weaponry and not much else. They are hardly going to supply us with arms.

Paris: We'll wait to hear what Menelaus has to say.

*Helen and Elsa enter R. Paris is immediately stunned by Helen's beauty. Elsa is stunned by Hector's presence.*

*Paris crosses to Helen, ignoring Elsa and Helen and Paris reach out and hands. At the same time Elsa crosses L and takes Hector's hands.*

Paris: I've travelled far to share your beauty Helen.

Helen: You know my name?

Paris: The goddess Aphrodite told me all about you. She was right, you are beautiful.

*Hector breaks off from Elsa and moves L*

Hector: Wait a minute; it was not your intention to seek a trade agreement was it?

Paris: *(still entranced)* You are truly the love of my life.

Hector: Oh Zeus!

Zeus: *(off)* I'm not getting' involved I tell yer! You're on your own in this one.

Hector: What was that?

Paris: *(still entranced)* Only a God knows. *(to Helen)* I've never before set eyes upon such beauty.

Hector: You were got at by Aphrodite, weren't you? You have suddenly placed us in a great deal of danger.

Helen: *(who has remained entranced by Hector during the previous dialogue)* Don't worry about them, you have me er, what's your name?

Hector: Hector.

Elsa: Not the Trojan champion?

Hector: That is I...er me... no I. Yes!

Paris: *(breaking away from Helen)* You can hardly enunciate. You are captivated by *(referring to Elsa)* her beauty too.

Hector: No I am not; I had difficulty with the line.

Elsa: This is my lucky day, I have my champion.

Hector: What are you talking about? I'm married.

Elsa: So is she! Now what are we going to do?

Hector: We'll take the next boat home before we place ourselves in more danger.

Paris: That's the second time you have mentioned danger.

Hector: (*most anxiously*) If Menelaus learns of the real reason for your visit, our visit, he will feed us to the dogs. We must make our excuse and leave.

Elsa: How could you do that? He'll smell a rat.

Hector: If we don't, we shall be with the rats awaiting execution. Well Paris?

*Paris turns to Helen and bursts into song unaccompanied by music*

Paris: If ever I would leave you  
It wouldn't be in Springtime.

Hector: (*beside himself*) We haven't time for a song!

Zeus: (*Off*) The song's from Camelot man. Wrong song, wrong show, wrong part of the world, wrong century!

Paris: (*sulkily*) I thought the moment called for a song.

Hector: Come on Paris. We must adjourn to decide our future.

Paris: I cannot leave, unless, Helen, will you come with me?

Hector: What?

Helen: If only I could and if I could I wouldn't wait till springtime.

Elsa: Menelaus will hunt you down. (*To Hector*) I didn't know you were married! You've taken advantage of me.

Hector: No I haven't! Have I? Oh, I am confused.

*He crosses to table and drinks from a goblet.*

Elsa: I'm going to my room! Helen?

Paris: Please don't leave.

Helen: I shall stay a little longer.

*At that moment Menelaus enters R. Elsa remains. Paris and Helen part quickly. Menelaus is at first suspicious, but then relaxes. Hector replaces the goblet almost knocking over the other goblets.*

Menelaus: There you are my dear. (*To both men*) Isn't she beautiful?

*Hector coughs with some embarrassment and Paris smiles broadly*

Helen: These young Trojans have been so courteous, my dear.

Menelaus: Thank you both. Shall we eat and discuss your needs?

Hector: W...What? Oh yes.

Menelaus: Is anything the matter?

Hector: Nothing that cannot be discussed over dinner, my lord.

Menelaus: *(He winks at Helen)* Paris, would you escort my wife. Come Hector, you seem to be the man with the head for business.

Hector: I hope I still have it by the end of the day.

Menelaus: Sorry?

Hector: I said I hope I don't develop a headache, by using it too much.

*Menelaus laughs heartily and slaps Hector on the back.*

*They exit DR*

*Paris and Helen approach and hold hands. Elsa moves DL and sobs quietly.*

Paris: Will you leave with me in the morning, when the tide is right?

Helen: Tomorrow morning?

Paris: To stay here any longer may not be wise. I would need an excuse.

Helen: Then I shall!

Elsa: Helen! How can you possibly do that?

Helen: Ssh! You will say nothing.

Elsa: Then I will come with you.

Helen: No you will not!

Elsa: Stop me!

Helen: You just have to spoil everything don't you?

*Elsa grins wickedly.*

*At that moment Hector enters R quickly and drags Paris off R.*

*Helen and Elsa follow as the lights go down*

Scene 9: In an anti-chamber, at Menelaus's Palace.

*The stage is empty apart from a small table CL.*

*The lights come up on Hector pacing up and down from DL to DR. Paris is packing a canvas bag with items of clothing at the table.*

Hector: You cannot do this Paris; I should disown you and deliver you in chains to our host.

Paris: That would leave you holding the baby. Please calm down Hector, the last time I saw you like this was when your wife gave birth.

Hector: I only hope I shall see her again.

Paris: We can steal away on the early tide. Nobody shall discover us.

Hector: You choose your words unwisely. We are about to steal a wife!

Paris: Now we must sleep, Hector.

*Hector stops and turns to Paris*

Hector: Sleep? How can I sleep? What about the...the trade agreement! What a farce! We supply Sparta with woollen leggings and they supply us with sheep to make the leggings.

Paris: It could've been worse.

Hector: *(beside himself and paces)* We are already inundated with sheep! We shall be completely over run by sheep. The place will stink of them! Father will have a heart attack and Mother will send us both into exile, to look after SHEEP!

Paris: If that's the case I shall live in exile with my Helen.

Hector: I don't know how you can be so calm!

Paris: You'll feel better after a good night's sleep.

Hector: I told you I cannot sleep!

Paris: Well, I shall dream of Helen's fair face.

Hector: Yes, at the moment the axe falls on your neck in the middle of a nightmare.

Paris: It's time for bed or are you going to stay here and continue to pace and fret?

Hector: No, I shall unwind. I shall knit!

Paris; Well at least you'll soon have plenty of wool.

Hector: (*enraged*) Get out!

*Paris gives a short laugh, picks up the bag and exits L*

*Hector rubs his head anxiously and crosses C*

Hector: (*wearily, looking out front*) Tomorrow could be the last time I shall see Paris.

*Lights down slowly*

End of Act One

Act Two

Scene 1: The Palace of Menelaus

*The lights come up on Agamemnon, Menelaus, Peleus, Odysseus and Achilles who are seated at a table C underneath a projected image onto a gauze curtain of a large Spartan red shield on which is an upturned gold coloured V symbol. If a gauze curtain is not available a similar shield could hang on the upstage wall.*

*The table is covered in maps and paper scrolls.*

Agamemnon: Well Menelaus, what have you in mind?

Menelaus: I have sent them sheep and I have received socks. Troy has honoured the trade agreement, but Helen remains abducted.

Agamemnon: She was hardly abducted, Menelaus.

Menelaus: I would like to think that was the case.

Achilles: Agamemnon asked you a question. What is it you want?

Menelaus: Agamemnon, last year you asked me if I would assist you in expanding your Empire by force.

Agamemnon: It has remained my sole intention, but the time has to be right.

Menelaus: I am certain the time has come and I'm ready to join with you in your quest.

Achilles: For the sake of a woman?

Peleus: She is the wife of a ruler, my son. Would you not wage war to secure which was rightfully yours?

Achilles: I would not broadcast such a loss to the world, Father; I would deal with it myself.

Peleus: But not all mortals have been blessed with your skills and immortal spirit.

Menelaus: Achilles, are you suggesting that I am weak?

Achilles: You're looking for an excuse to wage war, no woman is worthy of such a cause at the expense of a nation.

Menelaus: And you're insulting a leader of the Spartans, Achilles! The woman is my wife!

Achilles: Yes and you are a true Spartan, Menelaus. You and your warriors would relish a fight!

Agamemnon: Stop the squabbling! Troy has been a thorn in my side for years and if you continue to be at loggerheads, I shall attack Troy with the help of others. *(sarcastically)* And Menelaus, dear brother, I shall take your Spartan woman for myself.

Menelaus: That won't be necessary, you have my total support, Agamemnon and we shall share the spoils of war, provided it is agreed that I return with Helen.

Agamemnon: *(wearily)* Yes Menelaus, you have my word.

Odysseus: And what of you, Achilles?

Achilles: What of me?

Odysseus: Are you with us?

Achilles: Have you decided to join with them?

Odysseus: Of course, it shall be an appeasement to the gods.

Achilles: The gods are fickle, my friend, don't pin your hopes on them.

Menelaus: Achilles, such talk will anger them!

Peleus: Have no fear my son will fight by your side, Menelaus.

Achilles: *(rising and crossing DR)* I shall make that decision father, not you. I need to consider the situation before making up my mind.

Peleus: Consider? It is not a matter for consideration my son, it is your duty.

Achilles: *(angrily)* You'll not be my mouthpiece in this matter; I am more than able to make my own decisions and to control my own destiny!

Agamemnon: I may as well have stayed at home with my wife. I'm not sure which is worse, your bickering or hers!

Odysseus: *(to Achilles)* You have to decide Achilles, it is Greece or nothing, my friend.

Achilles: What do you mean nothing?

Odysseus: I refer to our friendship. Should you choose Troy, I shall have no alternative but to seek you out.

Achilles: *(scoffs)* Really? Then I have much to consider.

*He exits quickly DR*

Peleus: Achilles! Stop! Listen to me!

*Peleus quickly follows him off.*

Agamemnon: Achilles is a cheap mercenary.

Odysseus: Don't insult a man in his absence, Agamemnon. He's a great warrior, a living legend.

*Agamemnon scoffs.*

Agamemnon: *(rising and crossing slowly DL)* We fight as a united Greek Army, Argos, Sparta and our other allies, with or without Achilles.

Menelaus: I agree!

Agamemnon: *(with a hint of sarcasm)* Thank you dear brother. *(firmly)* We shall assemble at Aulis at the end of the month. Even if it takes ten years or more, I shall maintain the war against Troy.

Menelaus: Ten years? It'll be all over in ten days for those woollen sock makers!

*Agamemnon and Menelaus laugh.*

*Lights down*

## Scene 2: Priam's Palace

*There is a large table C and three chairs. DR is a small marble- like low bench. DL is an armchair which is decorated in gold and blue padding.*

*The lights come up on Hector who is seated on the bench DR knitting. From Hector's needles there is a long line of wool leading upstage to Paris who holds the ball of wool seated at the large table C accompanied by Anchises, Priam and Helenus. Andromache is embroidering and seated DL in the arm chair. Priam is perusing a parchment scroll which has been spread on the table.*

Priam: *(reading from the scroll)* A United front, eh... and there is a final demand to return the woman and the treasure.

Hector: We don't stand a chance; Agamemnon has mustered the largest army in the world.

Anchises: You forget my lords that battles are not always won by numbers. Stealth is what's required.

Helenus: That sounds great coming from someone who has never fought in one. I can assure you that when the numbers are huge in terms of the enemy, the number theory generally succeeds.

Priam: Are you suggesting we submit?

Helenus: Certainly not, I would die for my country.

Priam: Er... what's your name?

Helenus: *(sighing heavily)* Helenus, father.

Priam: Of course, Helenus you have restored some pride in our family. How did I ever forget your name my son?

Helenus: Quite easily father, I am merely one of fifty one of your sons.

Priam: Of course *(sudden realisation)* Fifty one?

*Helenus quickly counts on his fingers*

Priam: How can that be? Do you know something I don't?

Helenus: *(finally)* Fifty!

Priam: What?

Helenus: I'm sorry Father... I am one of fifty of your sons.

Priam: Thank the Gods! I thought so. Now what was I about to say?

Anchises: Something about the impending war my lord?

Priam: Yes, we must be ready for any attack by the Greeks (*sardonically*) I am sure our champion here is bound to place fear into the enemy hearts as he knits! He'll have them in stitches of laughter.

Hector: I have succeeded in battle before father. As I've said, knitting is but a relaxation. Never fear, Hector is here!

Andromache: It's about time you thought of me and your child, instead of gallivanting around the islands, knitting.

Hector: A warrior needs rest and recreation

Andromache: Why can't you go to a taverna, like most of your contemporaries?

Hector: Can you imagine what they might say if I take my knitting? No, I shall knit alone, it is my prime relaxation.

Priam: He knits and his wife sews. Both are occupations of mindless servants, female servants! (*Andromache glares at him*)

Hector: (*firmly*) I am a male warrior who knits, father.

Priam: Well Paris, you realise that with Agamemnon's help, Menelaus will launch a thousand ships for the return of his wife.

Paris: Come father Helen now belongs to Troy, our citizens love her.

Priam: If they can see her, for the number of sheep!

Anchises: My lord, have you again considered returning Helen to Sparta?

Paris: What? Never! In any case it is too late.

Priam: (*to Paris*) He's talking to me, not you. Speak when you're spoken to!

Paris: But...

Anchises: (*interrupting and to Priam*) A great deal of bloodshed would be saved, my lord if you did return her.

Priam: I respect your thinking Anchises, but as Paris emotionally expressed, it is too late now. Even if I returned the young woman Agamemnon and Menelaus would still attack us.

Helenus: You are right, father.

Anchises: Indeed you are right my lord.

Priam: I think it has been established that I am right. Good!

Paris: Thank you father.

Priam: (*rising and moving L and turning on him*) Don't thank me you womaniser! You're the reason we are in this mess and don't you forget it. If you were not my son I'd have you dangling from the city walls by the prominent parts of your anatomy!

Hector: (*startled*) Oops! I should have pearled one instead of knitted one! Oh Silly me!

Priam: (*to Hector*) With you beside him!

Andromache: He's like this every night. He even talks in his sleep about knitting! (*she stands*) He's absolutely lost in his damn knitting!

*Hector stands and is about to remonstrate with her, but she exits DR in a flourish.*

Hector: (*calling after her*) Andromache, please!

Priam: (*raising his arms and looking to the heavens*) What have I done to deserve such useless sons?

*Hector, Paris and Helenus turn to him, shocked.*

Hector, Paris and Helenus together: Father!

*Lights Down*

Scene 3: Priam's Palace - Helen's bedchamber.

*The stage is empty apart from a small table and chair at C. There is a chair R*

*The lights come up on Helen who is sitting at the table, brushing her hair. Elsa stands DL reading a missive (parchment letter). A female servant waits UR.*

Elsa: It's from Helenus, your lover's brother.

Helen: Does he wish to woo you?

*She places brush on table*

Elsa: Of course.

Helen: And what is your intention?

Elsa: I shall Troy with his affections.

*They laugh*

