

0. HELEN AND PARIS - Story Preface

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Ancient-Greek artifacts, such as vases, tell the stories of Homer (among other subjects). In this image, painted on an ancient-Greek vase, we see Paris abducting Helen. The figure between the two is Eros, the Greek god of desire. The scene is painted on an Athenian red-figure clay vase created sometime between 500-450 BC. Today the vase is owned and maintained by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, thanks to the Francis Bartlett Fund. Image online via Wikimedia Commons.

Helen, considered to be the most-beautiful woman in the late-bronze-age world, was married to Menelaus, king of Sparta. Her beauty, it is said, was known far and wide.

Not bothered by the queen's marital status, Paris (also known as Alexandros, son of Priam, the elderly King of Troy) fell in love with Helen (during a diplomatic mission to Sparta). Wasting little time, Paris abducted her. (Some accounts say they eloped.)

Menelaus, later in the story, thought he should kill his wife because she had been with a prince of Troy. As he raised his sword to kill her, however, Menelaus stopped himself when he saw Helen's great beauty.

The kidnapping of Helen (if that's what it was) was thus successful. As a result, events leading to a war between the Greeks (then called the Achaeans) and the Trojans (the people of Troy) were set in motion.

Hector (Hektor), son of Priam and the older brother of Paris, sensed the inevitable. A great warrior himself, and the father of a young son, Astyanax, he was prepared to lead his people in battle.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HELEN-AND-PARIS-Troy>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/HELEN-AND-PARIS-Troy>



Helen of Troy - Sculpture by Pierre Puget

Image online, courtesy The Detroit Institute of Arts for educational purposes.

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Alexandros and Helen, with Eros between. From a Greek vase.
Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Francis Bartlett Fund.
Online Source: www.perseus.tufts.edu

Paris and Helen - Scene on a Greek Vase

Image online, courtesy the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, via Tufts University.

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HELEN AND PARIS

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