

Unit 9: Changing Ideas of Beauty

Helen of Troy: When Beauty Caused a War

Keywords

approve	assess	asset	comparison	guard
investigation	obviously	priority	truly	virtually

Chapter 1: Helen's Father Chooses Menelaus

In many parts of the world, there are old stories called myths. Many myths come from the land of Greece. One of these myths tells us of Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman in the world. People said her beauty was beyond any **comparison**, bright like the sun in the clear sky.

Helen's father, Tyndareus, the king of Sparta, knew her beauty would draw men from far and wide, hoping to marry her. He had to think. He didn't just **approve** the first man who came along. He **assessed** each one. He wanted to make sure Helen would be happy and safe. Tyndareus finally chose Menelaus to be Helen's husband. Menelaus was strong and kind, and Helen went to live with him in Sparta. They were a happy couple, but this didn't last long. A prince named Paris from Troy visited Sparta. Paris saw Helen and fell in love with her.

Menelaus got up one morning to find that Helen was gone. He searched the palace, but Helen was not there. Menelaus began an **investigation**. He called in his staff to search everywhere. Finding Helen was a **priority**. They searched and searched but still, Helen was not found. Then news came that Helen had left with Paris on a ship to Troy, a city across the sea.

Chapter 2: Helen's Husband Begins a War

This changed everything. Menelaus was very angry. He felt that Paris had taken his most precious **asset**. He brought other Greek kings together and started a big war against Troy. This war was the famous Trojan War, and it lasted for ten years. Helen's beauty had indeed started a great war.

During the war, Helen lived in Troy. She often stood on the walls of the city, watching the fighting. She must have felt many emotions, knowing the war was because of her. It was a heavy weight to carry. Helen's life in Troy was not easy. She was **guarded** day and night. The Trojans knew that she was important in this war.

The war went on and on. The Greeks surrounded Troy. **Virtually** no food could arrive, and after years of fighting the people were hungry. Priam, the king of Troy and father of Paris, sent his son Hector to talk with Achilles the head of the Greek army. Hector wanted to end the fighting. Instead, Achilles challenged Hector to a one-on-one fight. Hector fought bravely but was killed by Achilles. That ended any more talk of peace. Hector's brother, Paris, continued to fight bravely in the war, but he was killed, leaving Helen in Troy, surrounded by a war that had cost so many lives, including the man who had brought her there.

Chapter 3: A Horse Made of Wood

After many years of fighting, the Trojan War was coming to an end. The Greeks, led by Menelaus and other kings, had tried many ways to win against Troy but had failed. The city of Troy, with its high walls, seemed **truly** impossible to defeat. Inside these walls, Helen watched, her heart full of sadness for all the suffering caused by the war.

The Greeks had one last plan. They built a huge horse made of wood. This was not just any horse; it was a trick. Some Greeks were waiting inside it. To the Trojans, it was **obviously** a present, a sign that the Greeks had given up and gone home. The Trojans, happy that the long war might be over, brought the horse into the city.

That night, while Troy slept, the Greeks inside the horse came out. They opened the city gates for the rest of the Greek army. The soldiers moved into the city and started attacking. The people of Troy were caught by surprise. The city, which had been safe for so long, fell in just one night. This story of the horse made of wood was something that people would talk about for thousands of years.

Chapter 4: Helen Returns to Sparta

After the fall of Troy, Helen's future was uncertain. She had been the reason for the war, and now that it was over, she had to face the Greeks. Menelaus found her in the broken city. He had to make a decision. Some stories say he was angry, but others say he still loved her. He had to **assess**, what to do with Helen. Was she still the woman he loved? Could he trust her? In the end, Menelaus decided to take Helen back to Sparta. Their return was not easy. Helen had to face the anger and sadness of those who had lost loved ones in the war. She knew that she was not just returning to her old life; she was going into a world that had changed because of her.

Back in Sparta, Helen's life was different. She was no longer the beautiful woman who had started a war. Some say that Helen and Menelaus lived together in peace after their return. Others believe that Helen lived with the memories of the war and its suffering. What **truly** happened to Helen remains a mystery.

Helen's story shows us the power of beauty and how it can affect the world. Her beauty, which had once been seen as an **asset**, or something of worth, became the cause of one of the most famous wars in history. The **comparison** between Helen's life before and after the war is striking. She went from being loved to being a reminder of all the people who died in the war. The Trojan War and its big ending are a key part of history. It shows us that small choices can lead to big things. The tale of the Trojan Horse and Troy's defeat teaches about being clever and making plans.

Chapter 5: Helen and the Modern World

The story of Helen of Troy has been told and retold many times since it was first shared in ancient Greece. Over the years, people have discovered new ways to tell Helen's story, using books, plays, movies, and even online content. These modern views often reflect current ideas about beauty, power, and the role of women in society.

In ancient times, Helen was seen as the most beautiful woman in the world, but her story also warned about the dangers of such beauty. It showed how her appearance caused a great war. By **comparison**, today, people look at Helen's story differently. Some see her as a strong figure who had a big effect on history. Others think about the problems she faced being seen only for her beauty and not for her thoughts or feelings.

Writers and filmmakers often focus on Helen's point of view, which was not always considered in older versions of the story. They imagine what life might have been like for her. Was she happy in Troy? Did she miss her home? How did she feel about the war fought in her name? These questions lead to stories that show Helen as a complex character with her own wishes and fears, not just a beautiful woman.

Beauty standards have also changed since Helen time. Today, beauty is seen in many different ways, not just one “perfect” look. Modern stories about Helen might show that true beauty comes from a person’s actions and character, not just the way they look. This can help readers and viewers think about what we value in ourselves and others.

The role of women in society is another important topic in modern views of Helen’s story. In the past, women often had little power and were seen as belonging to their husbands or fathers. But today, people value independence and respect for women. Stories about Helen can show her making her own choices and standing up for herself.

Seeing Helen act independently can inspire people today to think about women having equal rights as men. Her story shows a strong woman who doesn't let others control her. This can make readers and viewers consider how important it is for women to have the same chances and freedoms that men have. The way we understand ancient stories like Helen's has changed as society's views on women's equality have progressed over centuries. We now appreciate stories about powerful, self-determined women.

The story of Helen of Troy continues to be popular today, but the way we tell her story has changed. By looking at Helen’s life in different ways, modern views give new ideas about beauty, power, and the role of women. These stories help us think about our own values and how we see the world.

Questions

1. What is a myth?
 - A) A true story
 - B) A Greek story
 - C) An old story
 - D) A world story
2. Who was Helen of Troy?
 - A) Queen of Troy
 - B) A goddess
 - C) A warrior
 - D) A beautiful woman
3. Who was Helen’s father?
 - A) Menelaus
 - B) Paris
 - C) Hector
 - D) Tyndareus
4. Who did Helen marry?
 - A) Menelaus
 - B) Paris
 - C) Zeus
 - D) Achilles
5. Who fell in love with Helen in Sparta?
 - A) Menelaus
 - B) Paris
 - C) Zeus
 - D) Hector

6. Why did Menelaus start a war?
 - A) He was bored.
 - B) Paris took Helen.
 - C) He wanted money.
 - D) He lost a game.

7. How long did the Trojan War last?
 - A) 1 year
 - B) 5 years
 - C) 10 years
 - D) 20 years

8. Where was Helen during the Trojan War?
 - A) In Troy
 - B) In Sparta
 - C) In Greece
 - D) In Rome

9. Who was killed in a fight with Achilles?
 - A) Hector
 - B) Paris
 - C) Menelaus
 - D) Zeus

10. What did Menelaus decide about Helen after the war?
 - A) To leave her
 - B) To marry her again
 - C) To punish her
 - D) To take her back to Sparta

Vocabulary Review

approve: to agree with or accept as satisfactory

Example: *He didn't just **approve** the first man who came along.* (Chapter 1)

assess: to evaluate or judge

Example: *He had to **assess**, what to do with Helen.* (Chapter 4)

asset: something valuable

Example: *He felt that Paris had taken his most precious **asset**.* (Chapter 2)

comparison: to examine the similarities or differences

Example: *People said her beauty was beyond any **comparison**, bright like the sun in the clear sky.* (Chapter 1)

guard: to protect or watch over

Example: *She was **guarded** day and night.* (Chapter 2)

investigation: The action of thoroughly examining a situation

Example: *Menelaus began an **investigation**.* (Chapter 1)

obviously: clearly or evidently

Example: *To the Trojans, it was **obviously** a present, a sign that the Greeks had given up and gone home.* (Chapter 3)

priority: something that is very important and must be dealt with before other things

Example: *Finding Helen was a **priority**.* (Chapter 1)

truly: in a truthful way

Example: *The city of Troy, with its high walls, seemed **truly** impossible to defeat.* (Chapter 3)

virtually: almost

Example: ***Virtually** no food could arrive, and after years of fighting the people were hungry.* (Chapter 2)