

**TROY WOMEN by Karen Hartman**

<https://www.playscripts.com/play/1574>

*Helen has just learned that Menelaus, her estranged husband, means to execute her. She appeals to him.*

HELEN

You have decided I'm the enemy  
so you probably won't respond.  
But I can guess how you'll accuse me  
plus I have my own points to make.  
I will balance the views.  
You feel nothing, so let's use reason.  
First, who caused this war?  
Helen? Or Hecuba  
who gave birth to Paris  
the greedy guest?  
Second, Priam sealed the doom of Troy  
and me  
when he refused to kill that son at birth  
even though the prophets spelled out  
this exact disaster.  
And next?  
Don't remember? I do.  
Lucky Paris got to judge a beauty contest of goddesses.  
They all tried to bribe him:  
Hera said he could be king of Asia and Europe;  
Athena promised triumph over Greece;  
Aphrodite offered me.  
Exquisite, she said,  
unearthly,  
complete.  
Aphrodite won.  
Who profited? Greece.  
Unconquered.  
While I became property.  
Now you hate me  
when you should crown me.  
For I did more to keep Greece safe

than all the armies.  
I gave my body  
to keep Greece safe.  
Look at me.  
I know what you're thinking.  
That's not the point.  
Why did I go  
Secretly, in night, with him?  
Paris—did you name him, Queen Hecuba?  
Paris came with the goddess to take me.  
And you were gone, my one.  
You were gone.  
How could you?  
How could you?  
I must ask myself one private question:  
What happened to my heart  
to ever  
ever  
make me leave you,  
my one?  
Rage at Aphrodite  
of infinite power  
but forgive me.  
Forgive me.  
Look?  
You might go on.  
Once Paris died and no god cared for me  
why didn't I come home?  
You know what?  
I tried.  
I would climb the city walls  
wind a rope around my body, tight,  
tie this rope to a jutting stone  
and lower myself—  
bare toes searching out holds  
rough rocks scraping my breasts—  
towards the Greek camp.  
The guards could tell you.  
They caught me again and again.

Then there was a man who took what Troy didn't want.  
Kept me in his house.  
Raped me again and again.  
Please look, Menelaus.  
Yes.  
Lover.  
I have been stolen like a prize  
kept like a beast.  
I am human.  
I know it isn't that kind of time but meeting your eyes I have to  
smile. Your face shows the rest of my life. I am starting to tremble,  
and you know me as a woman who often but not always keeps control.  
The gods made me  
and the war.  
Do you hate them too?  
You're smarter than that.  
I know you.  
I know you.

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*You are welcome to perform this monologue for free! It would mean a lot to me if you would [buy this play](#), and it's a good idea for your performance too.*

*You may CUT but you may not CHANGE the words. Please introduce the monologue with title of play and author's name (this is a monologue from Leah's Train by Karen Hartman).*

*Feel free to send a video link to yourself performing the monologue through the Contact page, and let me know if I may share! Thanks and be well, KH*

[www.karenhartman.org](http://www.karenhartman.org)