

# LA BELLE HELENE

•Music by Jacques Offenbach •Dialog by Richard Swain •Lyrics by Thomas Petiet

## ABOUT THE SHOW

If you want to feature a gifted lyric soprano or mezzo. *La Belle Helene* is the perfect vehicle. Helen is a fabulous role, and is paired with Paris, a role which any romantic tenor would die for. Based on the legend of Helen of Troy, this Parisian masterpiece is loaded with sexual innuendo and romantic situations. Both singers have standout arias. In addition, it is also a satire of mythological characters who represent modern types. Agamemnon is a pompous ass and the rest of the kings are ineffectual, especially Helen's husband Menelaus. Orestes is a pant role for a spunky soprano; Calchas is a bass struggling with celibacy; and Bacchis, hand maiden to Helen, is the voice of reason unheeded. There are a several other supporting roles for chorus soloists, and a not-so-graceful ballerina. Even the orchestra joins in on the humor.

## CAST REQUIREMENTS

HELEN —LEAD SOPRANO OR MEZZO	PARIS —LEAD TENOR
ORESTES —LEAD SOPRANO	CALCHAS —LEAD BARITONE/BASS
BACCHIS — ACTRESS	AGAMEMNON — LEAD BARITONE
THETIS— CHORUS SOPRANO SOLOIST	MENELAUS —COMEDIAN
LEONA— ACTRESS/DANCER	ACHILLES — CHORUS SOLOIST
PARHOENIS —ACTRESS/DANCER	AJAX 1 AND AJAX 2— CHORUS SOLOISTS
A DOVE— DANCER	PHILOCOME — ACTOR
CHORUS of SPARTAN CITIZENS	

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

- OVERTURE — Orchestra
1. OPENING— Two girls and Chorus, then Helen Aria
  2. MOTHER DIVINE — Helen Aria
  3. YOUNG ORESTES – Orestes Aria, with Calchas and Chorus
  4. MELODRAMA— Dove
  5. MELODRAMA — With Calchas speaking
  6. LEGEND OF PARIS —Paris Aria
  7. MARCH AND COUPLETS OF THE KINGS — Chorus, Ajax 1 & 2, Achilles, Menelaus, Agamemnon
  8. FINALE ACT 1— Ensemble
  9. O QUEEN, UPON THIS DAY — Womens' Chorus, Helen
  10. O VENUS, WHY SEND THIS TEMPTATION — Helen Aria
  11. ROYAL APPETITES INCREASED — Kings and chorus
  12. AND NOW, BON APPETIT — Kings and Chorus
  13. LET US LIVE FOR THE JOY AT HAND — Orestes and Chorus
  14. YOU'RE DREAM — Helen, Paris Duet
  15. FINALE, ACT 2 — Ensemble
  16. LET'S DRINK! — Chorus
  17. VENUS WAS ANNOYED — Orestes Aria and Chorus
  18. EXIT MUSIC
  19. SO YOU CONTINUE TO ABUSE ME — Helen Aria
  20. PATIOTIC TRIO — Agamemnon, Menelaus, Calchas
  - 21a. OVER THE FOAM — Chorus    21b. TYROLIENNE — Paris and Chorus
  22. FINALE — Ensemble

## ORCHESTRATION

Full orchestration available for rent

# 1

## # 1 OPENING CHORUS

*Before your altar, mighty Jupiter we pray  
We know you hear all that we say;  
An answer we would like to have today.  
We ask your Lordship to accept our sacrifice,  
For that is how we hope your favor to entice.  
We'd rather pray than slave away  
And so we say...*

*O grant our humble pleas  
We beg you from our knees---*

*O mighty Jupiter, altho' you've shown no signs,  
We know that mystery amuses the divine.  
We all believe the party line*

*1<sup>ST</sup> GIRL Accept my lovely flow'r as I implore your aid.  
I know it is your custom to help a pretty maid.*

*2<sup>ND</sup> GIRL O lord, ignore her vain plea.  
She is naught compared to me.  
If only one may catch your eye,  
None is lovelier than I.*

*BOTH That's such a wicked lie;  
The most deserving I!*

*ALL O mighty Jupiter, I know I have your ear;  
I'm more deserving than most anybody here.*

*WOMEN He is profane!*

*MEN She is so vain!*

*WOMEN I am the worthy one, I'm sure that is clear,*

*MEN I am the one, that's clear.*

*ALL O mighty Jupiter, we hope we don't offend.  
But on a little bounty does our faith depend.  
If you are great,  
Don't hesitate,  
To your flock some fortune send.*

## 2

*Accept this sacrifice as our unselfish deed.  
We'd gladly pay the price to have the things we need!  
O hear our pious call, and know that one and all  
Are subjects tried and true.  
So all we ask from time to time is that you  
Show us what it's worth to you!*

---

*(At end of chorus, Philome bangs the gong and rushes in with the scroll. He unrolls it before Calchas.)*

*Calchas begins- "Good people of Sparta..." but is muffled by the flowers. Philome realizes this--dumps off enough flowers so Calchas' head appears. Philome holds up scroll.)*

Calchas: *(reading from scroll- -each sentence starts out slowly and rushes at "etcetera" Philome has difficulty unrolling it fast enough.)*  
Good People of Sparta, I thank you in the name of Jupiter Stator, god of gods, god of men--and especially women--master of Mount Olympus, husband of Juno, father of Minerva, Apollo, Artemis, Bacchus, Hercules, etcetera, etcetera. And Variously appearing as a bull, a swan, a shower of gold, and eagle, a dark cloud, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. May you be happy, may you prosper, and may you not bring so many flowers next time.

### ***Chorus -Reprise from page 12 French score, and Exeunt***

*(After chorus has left, Calchas staggers under the weight of the flowers and finally drops them, sinks onto the steps.)*

### **Scene 1: Calchas, Philome**

Calchas: *(to Philome)* Look at all these flowers! There can't be a whole rosebush left in Sparta. What a waste! *(going through the offerings)* Look at this! Just look at this! *(lifting cover on birdcage)* Two preoccupied turtledoves, an amphora of *(tastes, spits out)* milk, three tiny cheeses, feta, feta, feta *(tosses over shoulder on each)*, a couple of dried-up' passion fruits, and all these ridiculous flowers! We're drowning in them. Remember the good old days, Philome? On a good day at least 7 bulls and a goat or two~ And what do we get today? Cans of Spam! *(sighs)* Those days are gone, Philome. Nobody cares about the gods any more.

Philome: Except for Venus.

### 3

Calchas: Ah Venus! Yes, she does hang on (*pulls out tabloid*). Have you seen this month's sacrifice quotation in the Venus Voice? it is enormous!

Philo: The high priest of Venus must be doing well.

Calchas: (*dreamy*)- Oh-to be the high priest of Venus now that spring is here! But poor Jupiter- god of gods- has hit an all time low. What does he get? A flower show! Has the thunder come yet?

Philo: Not yet. But it should be here any minute now.

Calchas: And that's another thing. Services are so bad these days. We'll never get through the day without thunder. What's on the schedule?

Phil: (*pulls out slate*) Let's see- the kings of Greece promised to drop by.

Calchas: They don't need any thunder. They make enough noise without it. What else?

Philo: And it's the day of the queen's weekly offering to love.

Calchas: Oh, dear, and King Menelaus has just returned from Crete. I hope there won't be any trouble this time. When is she going to sacrifice?

Philo: She's pencilled in for two o'clock.

Calchas: Oh no, and here we are with no thunder and I feel an oracle coming on. What good is an oracle without thunder? Well- it's too late now. We'll just have to make do. I'll bet there is no "make do" at the temple of Venus!

**Scene 2: Bacchis and Helen enter across the stage. Philo come exits.**  
**Calchas.**

**#1 bis      CHORUS OF MOURNERS**

*CHOR      To the altar come the queen  
              And her anguish can be seen  
              Endless torment does she feel  
              She is aching for love  
              So to Venus she must appeal.*

## 4

*HELEN* O goddess Venus as your counterpart on earth  
I live in misery and boredom  
I long for love  
I have a husband... what I need is love.

*CHOR* For love... she only asks for love.

### #2 **SOLO, HELEN**

*HELEN* 1.  
Mother divine, goddess of beauty,  
You well understand my tale of woe  
Features so fine become a duty;  
A valued prize for men to vie

I was courted by ev'ry great lord of the nation  
And was won by a king whose offer was a throne  
So my beauty was sold  
To a man of position,  
But my loveless condition  
Has never been told.

*CHOR* So her beauty was sold  
To a man of position,

*HELEN* And my loveless condition  
Has never been told.

True love you found in fair Adonis  
Who melted your heart in his embrace.  
Your husband and mine were thrust upon us,  
And so a passion we were long denied.

Give me one to adore, even just for a moment  
My Adonis will find me no Spartan in love.  
It is surely my turn  
For a royal flirtation  
Tho' it threaten the nation,  
That's not my concern.

*CHOR* It is surely her turn  
For a royal flirtation

*HELEN* Tho' it threaten the nation,  
That's not my concern.

## 5

Bacchis: Your majesty?

Helen: You must sacrifice for me today. I'm much too depressed.

Bacchis: But your Majesty...

Helen: Please, Bacchis, do this for me.

Bacchis: If you say so, your majesty.

Helen: Thank you, Bacchis, thank you.

*(Bacchis goes up steps. Runs into Calchas coming out of the temple.)*

Bacchis: Calchas!

Calchas: Bacchis!

Bacchis: How nice to see you again.

Calchas: It is?

Bacchis: It always is.

Calchas: Why, Bacchis- I didn't know---

Bacchis: *(to herself)* No, they never do.

Calchas: Bacchis, I have wonderful news....

Bacchis: *(eagerly)* You do?

Calchas: For the Queen.

Bacchis: Oh.

Calchas: I must tell her

Bacchis: And I must go in. *(starts to enter temple)*

Calchas: Oh Bacchis- I really didn't know.

Bacchis: Today I'm going to sacrifice for myself!

*(Calchas looks after her-- then remembers his errand and his excitement. Rushes down stairs to Helen)*

Calchas: Your highness, your highness.

## 6

Helen: *(without looking)* Ah Calchas-- alas. All is over. Love is dying, love is dead.

Calchas: Your majesty, I bring you good news!

Helen: Calchas, don't be tasteless. Let me enjoy my moment of classic despair...

Calchas: But this will cheer you up.

Helen: The love-child of Leda and the Swan, left to languish in the provinces...

Calchas: But here, in the Venus Voice! A bulletin from Mount Ida---  
*(reads)* "Today the 'Most Beautiful Goddess' contest was judged by, of all humans, a shepherd named Paris."

Helen: I'm not interested.

Calchas: "The three contenders sought to bribe the judge..."

Helen: The usual celestial hanky-panky, but I'm still not interested.

Calchas: You will be. "Juno promised power. Minerva promised knowledge. But Venus promised the shepherd the love of the most beautiful girl in the world."

Helen: The most beautiful girl in the world?

Calchas: The most beautiful girl in the world...

Helen: But...

Calchas: Is you, your highness.

Helen: Oh no, no , no, no.

Calchas: But your highness...

Helen: Oh Calchas, you are too kind! "The love of the most beautiful girl in the world?" *(excited)*

Calchas: That's what it says.

Helen: Oh joy!

## 7

Calchas: Oh joy!

Helen: And... oh, misery! *(suddenly)* There it is again!

Calchas: What? Where?

Helen: The Hand of Fate! All I wanted was to be the simple sweetheart of some simple Greek shipping magnate... sitting quietly on my own island, *(full of innuendo)* going about my own business. But what has fate dealt me? MENELAUS!

Calchas: A good and excellent king, my queen.

Helen: Good and excellent and old and empty. And here I am- - young and full and much too good. Calchas, I'm in my prime. If we couldn't pack him off to Crete every month or so, I don't know what I'd do! *(pause)* A handsome shepherd did you say?

Calchas: It doesn't say that he's handsome.

Helen: Don't be silly! He must be. This is a myth isn't it? A handsome shepherd comes to claim his prize, to fill my lonely hours, my empty arms, to comfort me in my old age.

*(# 2 bis begins offstage)*

Helen: What's that?

Calchas: It's probably the young prince Orestes.

Helen: My delinquent nephew? And his consorts?

Calchas: Who else? *Exit Helen into temple, in love with love)*

***Music #2 bis for entrance***

***#3 COUPLETS ORESTES AND FOLLOWERS***

ORESTES

1.

*Young Orestes acquiesced he's  
Spending his time in wanton sin.  
Nevertheless he's ready to stress these  
Gorgeous guests he's ushered in.  
Here's Parthoenis and Leona,*



## 8

*and they would like to know you better*

*Calchas: I can't allow such liberty...  
Priests must be proper to the letter.*

*Orestes See Parthoenis and Leona...*

*Chor: See Parthoenis and Leona...*

*Calchas I see them both, but dare not touch;  
My reputation means too much.*

*Orestes Tzing la la! Tzing la la!  
Sing of Parthoenis and sing of lovely Leona.  
Tzing la la! Tzing la la!  
Have a little spree and you will go too far!*

*Chor Tzing la la! Tzing la la!  
Sing of Parthoenis and sing of lovely Leona.  
Tzing la la! Tzing la la!  
Have a little spree and you will go too far!*

### 2.

*Orestes Since Leona from the throne of  
Macedonia ran away  
On her own she's overthrown more  
Rulers than anyone can say.*

*She's upper-class and will surpass  
All of the maidens you can vestalize.*

*Calchas She's quite a dish, oh, how I wish  
My reputation I could compromise.*

*Orestes See Parthoenis and Leona...*

*Chor: See Parthoenis and Leona...*

*Calchas I see them both, but dare not touch;  
My reputation means too much.*

*Orestes Tzing la la! Tzing la la!  
Sing of Parthoenis and sing of lovely Leona.  
Tzing la la! Tzing la la!*

## 9

*Have a little spree and you will go too far!*

*Chor*     *Tzing la la! Tzing la la!*  
*Sing of Parthoenis and sing of lovely Leona*  
*Tzing la la! Tzing la la!*  
*Have a little spree and you will go too far!*

3.  
*Orestes*     *This one is sultry, skilled in adult'ry*  
*Come and consult with Parthoenis*  
*Loves her profession, you'll want a session*  
*Your indiscretion won't be free.*

*I can attest, she is the best;*  
*Worth ev'ry penny father's paying.*

*Calchas*     *Son of a king your voice keep low,*  
*Profligate pastimes you're betraying.*

*Orestes*     *See Parthoenis and Leona...*

*Chor>*     *See Parthoenis and Leona...*

*Calchas*     *I see them both, but dare not touch;*  
*My reputation means too much.*

*Orestes*     *Tzing la la! Tzing la la!*  
*Sing of Parthoenis and sing of lovely Leona*  
*Tzing la la! Tzing la la!*  
*Have a little spree and you will go too far!*

*Chor*     *Tzing la la! Tzing la la!*  
*Sing of Parthoenis and sing of lovely Leona*  
*Tzing la la! Tzing la la!*  
*Have a little spree and you will go too far!*

## 10

### Scene 5 Calchas, then Orestes, Parthenis, Leoena, flute players, dancers, friends of Orestes.

Orestes and Chorus: Ohe- Calchas- Ohe!

Calchas: And to think that this is the son of the great Agamemnon!

Parthenis: Orestes, who is that marvelous looking old man?

Leoena: Yes, who is he?

Orestes: Why, that's Calchas. The High Priest of Jupiter.

Leoena: Come introduce us.

Orestes: Your wish is my command. Ohe-Calchas-Ohe. These lovely ladies want to meet you.

Girls: Oh yes, yes!

Calchas: Oh no, no, no. I'm much too busy (*starts up stairs*)

Orestes: These ladies want to meet the Great Calchas.

Calchas: (*stops*) The Great Calchas? Well, in that case--- (*Calchas finds himself prisoner in the middle of the women*)

Orestes: Well, girls, here, he is! On demand. Calchas, the high priest of Jupiter. Calchas, the official oracle. Calchas, the confidant of Papa. Well, Parthoenis, do you like him?

Parthenis: Do I.

Leoena: Do we.

Calchas: Dear ladies, you are too kind. But I must rush off -- a pressing sacrifice...

Orestes: Read any good entrails lately?

Leoena: A sacrifice today?

Parthenis: To whom?

**11**

Calchas: To Venus.

Orestes: To Venus?

Leoena: Well then, it is our professional duty to attend.

Calchas: I'm sorry, it's a private sacrifice.

Leoena: Regrets only?

Orestes: For whom?

Calchas: The queen!

Orestes: Aunty Helen is sacrificing to Venus? Now that's a tidbit.

Calchas: Orestes!

Orestes: Never mind, girls, it's bound to be a gloomy affair.  
Music, maestro! (music, #3 bis) Goodbye, Calchas.  
Regards to Aunty Helen.

***(music #3 bis. Chorus reprise and exeunt)***

Calchas: *(disgusted)* "Tsing la la, Tsing la la," And to think that this is the son of Agamemnon, the son of my king. Cavorting with these... ladies of love. Such madness, such frivolity, *(changing)* such gaiety, such fun! I must see to that transfer. Ah Venus. Ah Bacchis! "Tsing la la, tsing la la..."

## 12

### ***Scene 6***

***(enter Paris; Calchas is singing and dancing)***

Paris: Excuse me-- - but could you tell me where I would find the High Priest of Jupiter?

Calchas: *(still dancing)* Right here.

Paris: Where?

Calchas: Right here.

Paris: Are you the high priest of Jupiter?

Calchas: Actually, I'm feeling rather deliciously low at the moment.

Paris: But I must speak with you.

Calchas: Must? Must? There is no "must" for a high priest of Jupiter.

Paris: Testy, aren't you?

Calchas: I'm not accustomed to chatting with every odd shepherd who comes along.

Paris: But I need you.

Calchas: Odd shepherd, I have other things on my mind. If you want your fortune told, I can recommend any number of part-time fortune tellers who specialize in shepherds. I oracle only for a very exclusive clientele.

Paris: You didn't receive a letter from Venus?

Calchas: What are you talking about?

Paris: That is odd... the dove left long before me.

Calchas: The dove?

Paris: It must have run into some pigeon.

Calchas: A pigeon?

## 13

Paris: You can't trust those doves--they run into a pigeon and go all to pieces.

Calchas: Young man, what are you babbling about?

Paris: Ah, there it is now (*points up*)

Calchas: What? (*looking up and following Paris as he points*)

### #4 MELODRAMA

Paris: It's the dove--with my letter.

Calchas: (*aside*) Shepherds spend too much time alone.

Paris: (*to dove*) Over here! Over here!

(*dove flies in. a girl in swan lake costume; dances around clumsily for what seems to be forever*)

Paris: Take the letter, It's for you.

Calchas: (*finally grabs letter from dove's mouth, ripping it in the process*)  
Well, that's air mail for you.

(*dove flaps wings in wild manner*) Help, it's having a fit!

Paris: It just wants to know if there is an answer.

Calchas: How did you know that?

Paris: Listen, when you've spent as much time in the field as I have you get to know these things. (*to bird*) No, no reply, (*bird flies off*) Venus is quite a correspondent.

Calchas: Venus? Did you say Venus?

Paris: I did.

Calchas: (*looking at letter*) It's the stamp of Venus, all right. (*tears off stamp*)

Paris: What are you doing?

Calchas: My little Nephew, Philatelas, has a stamp collection.

## 14

Paris: I see.

Calchas: May I read it?

Paris: It's addressed to you, isn't it?

Calchas: So it is. Let's see now... "Calchas, High Priest of Jupiter, Minister of the Gods, etc. etc. (*music begins*) Ahem!

### **MELODRAMA #5**

"This note will serve to introduce  
A friend of Venus and of Zeus  
A shepherd, young and fair to see  
Who had the sense to favor me  
And judge me true Miss Universe  
That wisdom now I reimburse."

(*music stops. Calchas to Paris*)

A rather bad piece of doggerel, don't you think?

Paris: That's not particularly what Venus is noted for, you know.  
Read on!

### **MELODRAMA #5 continues**

Calchas: "Pursuant, therefore, to my aims,  
The Goddess Venus now proclaims  
This man, who walks in shepherd's guise  
Has won himself a special prize:  
The world's most lovely woman is  
Fair Helen, Queen, and she is HIS!"

A shepherd? Venus? The most beautiful girl in the world? The divine  
Helen. Then you must be... (*looking into the Venus Voice*)

Paris: Paris, the son of King Priam.

Calchas: Then you're a prince, not a shepherd!

Paris: Disguise.

Calchas: And you pronounced the famous judgment? You awarded Venus  
the Golden Apple?

Paris: I did.

Calchas: And you saw Venus herself?

## 15

Paris: Some of her?

Calchas: How much?

Paris: Enough.

Calchas: You young devil. *(slaps him on back)* Oh excuse me, prince.

Paris: Oh that's all right. I understand.

Calchas: You do?! Then, if it wouldn't be too much trouble, would you--  
could you- - -

Paris: What?

Calchas: Tell me what you saw?

Paris: You old devil! *(slaps him on back)* Oh excuse me, priest.

Calchas: Oh, that's all right. Well?

### ***(music)* # 6 begins**

Paris: It takes some time. You want all the details?

Calchas: Especially the details.

### **#6 THE LEGEND OF PARIS**

*Paris: Not long ago, upon Mount Ida  
Such a quarrel did unfold,  
As to which goddess deserved an apple  
Forged of gleaming gold.*

*Evohe! There were Minerva, Juno, Venus all on hand!  
Evohe! Each of them claimed the prize inscribed to she  
Whose face was fairest in the land.*

*I just happened to be passing, when to me a god appeared.  
He said "Youth, we have a problem in which gods can't interfere.  
Ah-----  
All we ask is that you tell us which of those three beauties there  
Is the one whose face and form you judge to be without compare."*



*Evohe! It was a sight that might have struck a mortal blind  
Evohe! They stood before me, radiant visions;  
My decision could endanger all mankind.*

*First to speak was fair Minerva  
"I've no doubt that you'll choose me.  
I am absolutely stunning  
And I have a PhD.  
No one else can match my cunning,  
I'm the smartest of the three!"*

*Next was Juno, with a glower at Minerva's humble claim.  
"If you choose me, you'll have power, riches and immortal fame!"  
What could any other goddess,  
Short of then untying her bodice,  
Do to win in such a game?*

*From the third no word was spoken.  
All she did was cast a glance.  
And with what she did evoke in me,  
The others had no chance!  
Evohe! She was the one I chose. I was her helpless slave!  
Evohe! I bore the wrath of those immortals, even knowing  
There would be some hell to pay!*

- Paris: By the way- - where is the most beautiful girl in the world? I was just told she would be here in Sparta.
- Calchas: In the palace... Queen Helen.
- Paris: The queen of Sparta? The wife of King Menelaus ?
- Calchas: The very one.
- Paris: But she's a married woman!
- Calchas: Yes, but marriage hasn't wrinkled her yet. No kids...
- Paris: I hadn't counted on this. It could be tricky. You will have to help me.
- Calchas: *(aside)* Aha, a chance to get in with Venus... *(aloud)* Venus commands and I obey.
- Paris: She'll surely reward you.
- Calchas: *(aside)* My transfer's in the bag!

17

Paris: When can I see this Helen?

Calchas: Presently.

Paris: Perfect. 'But don't tell her who I am. I want to remain incognito until the last possible moment. One must calculate one's effects.

Calchas: Ah, a showman after my own heart!

**Scene 7 Paris, Calchas, Helen, Bacchis, maidens.**

**#6bis MELODRAMA** (*music, the doors of the temple open. Enter the maidens who descend the stairs sadly and exit. Helen entering last stops when she sees Paris. Paris reacts to the sight of Helen*)

Calchas- (*to Paris*) Verse:

"This is my will, so must it be,  
Let no one thwart my stern decree  
Please be advised the pantheon  
Regards this daughter of the swan  
And Leda, who was Helen's mother,  
As now the shepherd's, and no one's other."

Yours very truly, Venus. (*maidens exit*)

**Scene 8 Helen, Paris, Calchas**

Helen: Calchas! I have sacrificed to Venus.

Calchas: Your highness!

Helen: My heart is now in the hands of fate.

Calchas: My queen!

Helen: What will be.... will be.

Calchas: Your majesty!!

Helen: Calchas, who is that extremely beautiful young man?

Calchas: Ah... a stranger

## 18

Helen- (*in verse*):

What beauty spreads across his brow!  
Such genius in his eyes is seen,  
More handsome in the flesh, I vow,  
Than in the dreams of Helen, Queen.

Calchas: Rhyming, your highness?

Helen: Oh, was I? I didn't even notice. Beauty does that to me.  
Who is he?

Calchas: A... shepherd.

Helen: A shepherd?

Calchas: That's what he said.

Helen: But is it really true?

Calchas: Ah, I don't know. Why not ask him yourself?

Helen: If I only dared.

Calchas: You're the queen. (*exit*)

Helen: That's right! I dare.

### **Scene 9 Helen, Paris, then Calchas**

Helen: (*aside*) Why am I so nervous?

Paris: (*aside*) Why am I so excited? I've seen pretty women before...  
(*looks up*) Oh thank you, Venus, you do things so well!

Helen: Beautiful young man- - -

Paris: Yes?

Helen: Are you really mortal? The gods often amuse themselves by  
masquerading as beautiful young men.

Paris: (*modestly*) I am only mortal.

Helen: I find that hard to believe.

## 19

Paris: No disguise, I assure you. I am what I am.

Helen: Besides being beautiful... what are you?

Paris: A simple shepherd.

Helen: A shepherd? How fascinating. But where are your sheep?

Paris: In storage.

Helen: I see. But why have you left them? And what brings you to Sparta?

Paris: I heard there was going to be a contest and I thought I would enter it.

Helen: A beauty contest?

Paris: No, a brain contest. Unusual for this area.

Helen: Ah yes. But don't forget your beauty.

Paris- I won't... I can't.

Helen: Of course I wouldn't say such things to you if you were anyone but a lowly shepherd. But since you are, I feel perfectly free to say that--I think you are absolutely gorgeous!

Paris: *(aside)* Oh, Venus! *(to Helen)* Oh, Highness!

Helen: You know who I am?

Paris: La Belle Helene... "the most beautiful girl in the world."

Helen: But how did you recognize me? *(primping)*

Paris-: Calchas pointed you out.

Helen: *(disappointed)* Oh. But let's have another look at you. Let's see your profile. Now three-quarters. Now... *(Paris turns his back to her)* How naive! He's perfect! *(to Paris)* No, silly boy, three-quarters this way. *(Paris turns)* Raise your head a little. *(Paris opens his mouth to say something)* No--don't open your mouth. There! Admirable!

Paris: *(aside)* Oh, Venus!

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Helen: Now that is a beautiful shepherd. (*Paris tries to speak, Helen puts finger to his lips*) No... don't speak. Don't spoil it.

*(long silent mutual contemplation. Helen snaps out of it first)*

Helen: Ah, yes, well, but I forget myself. Oh, shepherd what time do you have?

Paris: *(looking up in the sky)* 3:25...

Helen: *(Looking in the sky the other way)* That's funny, I have 2:40

Paris: You're slow.

Helen: Why, if it's 3:25, then the contest is about to begin, and I must preside over it. A queen can't take out five minutes to admire a simple shepherd when- -pfffft- -duty calls and separates them.

Paris: But we will see each other soon.

Helen: I shall present the prize to the winner of the contest.

Paris: *(double meaning)* And I shall be there to claim my prize.

*(They stare at each other and start towards each other, hypnotized)*

### **#6 ter- -Music- - The March of the Kings**

Calchas: *(rushing out of the temple with his transfer application)* Your highness, the Kings of Greece are here!

Helen: *(to Paris)* We must part, but I hope we shall meet again.

Paris: *(to Helen)* We will, we will. Till then... *(kisses her hand)* La Belle Helene.

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### Scene 10

Calchas, Orestes, Parthenis, Leoena, the kings, guards, musicians, people, later Helen, then Paris.

*(Crowd invades the scene and Paris disappears into it. Orestes enters with Parthoenis and Leona)*

Orestes: Calchas, the cortege of Papa! *(joins Calchas)*

### **#7 -MARCH OF THE KINGS**

Chor: *The noble kings of Greece appear  
So raise a rousing cheer.  
Hoorah! Hoorah!  
Try to make it sound sincere.*

*It's quite a burden to remember all their names.  
Each day a new one his title proclaims.  
Sing to them, bring to them praise unaffected,  
Expected by the kings of Greece.  
If tribute helps to keep the peace,  
Hoorah! Hoorah!  
Now may all their squabbles cease.  
Before the noble kings we reverently bow.  
Praise the kings, the noble kings, the kings of Greece!*

### **#7b -COUPLETS OF THE KINGS**

1.

AJAX I: *Now when we two come before you, two come before you, two come before you  
Ajax A and B...*

Chor: *They're Ajax A and B.*

Ajax II *Precisely who is before you, who is before you, who is before you,  
May confusing be.*

Chor: *It's sure confusing me.*

Both: *And when mythic history is written, years from now,  
How can they put it together, put it together, put it together  
When our name's the same, it's a catastrophe!*

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*Chor: How can they put it together with some certainty?  
How can they put it together, put it together, which one can it be?*

2.

*Achilles From the great boot of Achilles, boot of Achilles, boot of Achilles  
Many men have run.*

*Chor: Away from him they've run...*

*Achilles Of war he's had his fill, he's had his fill, he's had his fill, he's  
King of Myrmidon!*

*Chor: He's King of Myrmidon!*

*Achilles If not for my tender heel, I'd sack most ev'ry town.  
I hope the boot of Achilles, boot of Achilles, boot of Achilles,  
When the battle rages, does not let me down!*

*Chor: We know the boot of Achilles, boot of Achilles, boot of Achilles,  
If he sacks a town,  
That's when the boot of Achilles, boot of Achilles, boot of Achilles,  
Just might not let him down!*

3.

*Menelaus I wed the beautiful Helen, beautiful Helen, beautiful Helen,  
Menelaus I.*

*Chor: King Menelaus he!*

*Mene: I stick like glue to my Helen, glue to my Helen, glue to my Helen,  
I don't trust my bride.*

*Chor: He dogs her constantly.*

*Mene: Because I'm a little older, I've lost all my pride.  
Will she be true to me ever, true to me ever, true to me ever,  
Or will I be one more case of regicide?*

*Chor: Will she be true to him ever, true to him ever,  
Seated by his side?  
Or will she pull on a lever, pull on a lever,  
Make him go bye-bye?*

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4.

Agamem. *You must include Agamemnon, shrewd Agamemnon,  
rude Agamemnon  
King of Mycenae,*

Chor: *A pompous king is he.*

Aga: *Altho' I'm brooding and biting, good in the fighting,  
crude in my writing,  
I have majesty.*

Chor: *Majestic, that is he!*

Aga: *My name carries so much weight, a burden it can be  
For if they booed Agamemnon, booed Agamemnon,  
booed Agamemnon,  
Nothing less than death would serve my vanity.*

Chor: *We'd like to boo Agamemnon, boo Agamemnon,  
That we all agree.  
But if we booed Agamemnon, booed Agamemnon,  
Then we'd have to flee!*

*Aga, Aga, Agamemnon!*

---

Calchas: *(to Orestes)* Why have you brought these women?

Orestes: We're here to claue for Papa.

*(Bacchis waves to Calchas)*

Agamem: Well, Calchas *(Calchas waves back to Bacchis)* are we all here?  
Calchas?

Calchas: Yes, kings of kings.

Agamem: *(standing)* In that case, let the contest begin.

Orestes: Bravo, papa!

Agamem: Not yet, not yet *(standing and staring them down)* Kings and people of Greece, today is a very special day. Today it is not a question of fighting, of throwing the discus or driving the



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chariot in the arena. No... this day is especially dedicated to matters of the mind. Of strong men, we have plenty... the fiery Achilles is strong, the two Ajaxes are strong, and I am still relatively fit.

Orestes: Bravo, Pa... *(cut off by Agamemnon)*

Agamem: What we don't appear to have are men of wit!

People: That's true. That's true!

Agamem: So, as required by the non-profit Temple of Minerva, we must hold at least one intelligence contest. By the immortal gods, there must be some brains around here somewhere! Anyone may enter the competition... Kings, poets, shepherds...

Helen: *(standing)* Shepherds! Where?

Agamem: Your highness?

Helen: Oh, nothing.

Agamem: Then do sit down, dear child. *(she sits)* Kings, Poets, shepherds, all are equally welcome to compete for the prize. The winner will receive from the hands of our great and good queen this crown of pine needles. I had at first considered a crown of gold, But no, I said to myself, for men of wit, pine needles are good enough.

Orestes: *(to the girls)* And I will get the gold.

Agamem: *(staring Orestes down)* And now, young scholars, throw yourselves into the arena of wit, dispute for this modest but glorious crown and may the best brain win. I thank you.  
*(to Orestes)* Now! NOW! *(stage whisper)*

Orestes: Sound the trumpets for the eloquence of the King of Kings.  
Music Maestro.

### **Music #7bis**

Agamem: Nice music *(to Menelaus)* Your own?

Menelaus: No, German. I imported the band specially for the occasion.

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Agamem: Very appropriate, let's not waste another minute. People of Greece... The Game of Rhymes!

Philo: *(at top of steps with gong)* People of Greece- - the Game of Rhymes! *(bangs gong)*

Agamem: King Menelaus will read the rhymes.

Philo: *(shouts as before)* King Menelaus will read the rhymes *(gong)*

*(Agamemnon looks at Philo, then hands scroll to Menelaus)*

Menelaus: What?

Agamem: Open it.

Mene: *(breaks the seal)* Now what?

Agamem: *(smiling through teeth)* Read it.

Mene: Yes, sir. *(trouble unrolling scroll)* The rhymes are...  
The rhymes are...

Agamem: Yes?

Mene: Very strange.

People: Read them!

Mene: All right, all right. THE RHYMES!

*(Philo bangs gong. Menelaus jumps)*

ONE\_\_DONE\_\_RUN\_\_FUN\_\_

Agamem: *(verifying)* ONE\_\_DONE\_\_RUN\_\_FUN\_\_

Mene: *(repeating)* one... done... run... fun...

Agamem: *(to crowd)* one... done... run... fun...

People: one... done... run... fun...

Achilles: I've got it, I've got it!

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Leoena: If he does, that's the only thing he's got.

Agamem: The fiery Achilles says, he's got it.

Philo: (*shouts to crowd*) The fiery Achilles says, he's got it (*gong*).

Achilles: (*acting it out*)

When the enemy approaches I am one

Hero who-when all is said and done

Would rather bash a head or two and make him run

For there's nothing I can think of that would be so much fun.

(*Silence*)

Agamem: Well, now--that was very interesting, fiery Achilles.  
But it doesn't exactly scan.

Leona: I kind of liked it.

Agamem: Well, let's try again.

(*the 2 Ajaxes raise their hands*)

Agamem: Ah... the two Ajaxes.

Orestes: Have they got a brain between them?

Ajaxes: We have a quatrain.

Agamem: Why, of course you do.

Ajax I: All for one  
What's done is done

Ajax II I've got to run  
And fun is fun.

(*silence*)

Agamem: (*to Menelaus*) Did you understand that?

Mene: Not a word of it, but it is catchy...

Agamem: This is depressing.

Orestes: Papa is depressed. Bravo, papa, Bravo. Fanfare!

Agamem: Oh shut up!

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**(music 7 ter)**

Agamem: No takers?

Paris: Yes, one.

Agamem: Who?

Paris: I!

Helen: *(standing)* It is he!

Agamem: My queen?

Helen: That shepherd there.

All: A shepherd? *(general laughter)*

Agamem: Now, now, people. It is possible that shepherds are capable of rhyme. Come forward shepherd. Can you rhyme?

Paris: *(comes forward)* I can.

Agamem: And who are you'?

Paris: A mere shepherd.

Parthenis: Now that is a gorgeous shepherd.

Leoena: Sister, we must look to the hills.

Orestes: A fanfare for the mysterious shepherd.

**(music #7 quat. fanfare)**

Agamem: I don't like that band one bit. Well, young man, go ahead.

Helen: *(excited)* Yes, yes, go ahead.

Paris: I address myself to King Menelaus.

Mene: *(standing)* You do? Well isn't that nice.

Helen: *(standing and going to Paris)* Speak, speak.

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*(everyone surrounds the group down center )*

Paris: And here is my rhyme:

In marriage two become as one  
At least that's how it's often done.  
But when that show has had its run  
A threesome can be much more fun.

Helen: It's delicious! Delicious!

All *(save kings)*: Bravo, Bravo!

Agamem: What do you think, Menelaus'?

Mene: *(repeating)* "A threesome can be much more fun." Somehow that last bit makes me uncomfortable. But I must admit that it is well done.

Agamem: Young shepherd, the people have spoken. I give to you the pine needles!

Paris: Thank you. *(aside)* And in return I'll give the needle to you.

### **MUSIC- FINALE #8**

Chor: *Gloria! Gloria!*  
*Hail to the man who won the prize.*  
*He is a hero in our eyes.*  
*We are taken by surprise, by surprise.*

Achilles *Undone! By such as he.*

Agamem: *Such as he? Who is he?*

Paris: *I am Paris the fair.*  
*King Priam's son and heir*

Chor: *It's Paris!*

Helen: *The man, the man, the man who gave out the apple.*  
*The golden apple!*

Paris *The golden apple!*

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*Chor: T'was he gave the golden apple to Venus  
He favored the goddess of love.*

*Helen: Man who gave the apple, etc.*

*Chor: La, la, etc.*

*Mene: So you're a prince and not a shepherd?  
I have to say, that's so much better,  
The wreath of victory could only be worn  
By someone, we have found,  
Who wears a royal crown.  
Or at least, is nobly born.*

*With laurel wreath bestow him!*

*Helen: Yes, I'll get to know him!*

*Chor: Glory to Paris' victory.  
He has beat them handily.  
Vanquished are the noble kings.  
Hail, Prince of Troy!*

*Mene: Now you must join my lovely wife and me  
At seven to dine at the palace.  
A feast for kings, I guarantee.*

*Helen: You must come to us at seven.  
We always dine precisely at seven.*

*Mene: Daughter of Leda, indeed I'll not forget.  
No, no, no, no, that surely I'd regret.*

*Helen: It is the hand of fate!  
I'm in a helpless state.*

*Calchas: (to Paris) I see you got your way.*

*Paris: I'd be much happier if, later on today,  
You'd ask great Jupiter, when next you go to pray,  
To intercede and send King Menelaus somewhere far away.*

*Calchas: I'll give it one good try.*

### 30

*Paris: This is a useful guy.*

*Calchas: Philo come! Thundersheet!*

*Peals of thunder rend the air,  
Which must mean that Jupiter's there.  
Sending me  
His decree  
Now what does he say?*

*Chor: Peals of thunder rend the air,  
Which must mean that Jupiter's there.  
What can be  
His decree  
Tell us, what does he say?*

*Calchas: I hear a sound... it's getting clearer.  
Silence! It is Jupiter's voice.  
Where's my slate? I'll take down what he says.*

*Chor: What does he say?*

*Calchas: The god has spoken. Hear now his word divine.  
(to Menelaus) It's for you, my king.  
You must go away again,  
As our ambassador,  
To Crete's distant shore,  
Or else likely there may be a war.*

*Mene: They have no army... how can that be true?*

*Calchas: The god knows best. There's nothing you can do.*

*Paris To go to Crete you must prepare.*

*Mene: But Crete again? I just got back from there.*

*Achilles Once again to Crete he's going.*

*Aga: Once a month he's to and froing.*

*Paris You must away!*

*Helen Away! Away!*

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All *(variously) To Crete he is going!*

Helen & Orestes: *Do not delay. Away! Away! No more delay!*

Meme: *Can't I just stay for another day?*

All: *Away! Away! No more delay!*

Helen: *Go, my darling, dear.  
Stay perhaps a year.  
And now you must be  
Off on a journey, off on a journey, off on a journey,  
It's your destiny!*

Chor: *And fate's not always fair.*

Helen: *Don't give a thought to returning, thought to returning, thought to returning,  
Without telling me.*

Chor: *For that she must prepare.*

Helen: *For me it will seem so long, and I'll be all alone  
But now be off on a journey, off on a journey, off on a journey,  
I will keep a watchful eye upon the throne.*

Chor: *You must be off on a journey, off on a journey,  
Why? It's quite unknown.  
Don't be distraught on returning, -traught on returning,  
If she's not alone.  
Away! Away! Do not delay!*

*Time for departing, Time for departing, etc.*

Paris *Time for departing, time for departing, time for departing, on your way.  
Time for departing, time for departing on your holiday.*

Chor: *So go away!*

Paris *It's time for departing, time for departing, time for departing,  
I will stay,  
Time for departing, time for departing, those who go away pay!*



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*Prin. exc. Time for departing, time for departing, time for departing,*

*Mene: Right away!*

*Time for departing, time for departing, time for departing*

*On your holiday.*

*Although it's time for departing, time for departing, time for departing*

*He will stay*

*When you're departing, when you're departing,*

*Those who go away pay.*

*Chor: Altho' it's time for departing, he will stay.*

*You'll be smarting, those who go away pay!*

*All: When it's time for departing, time for departing, time for departing,*

*We hope you will have good weather on your trip.*

*Excuse us all for imparting, all for imparting, all for imparting*

*Tales of squalls and storms, they are not the norm.*

*We are sure you're safe on a Spartan ship.*

*So don't have a care, Neptune speeds you there.*

*If you start to quail, keep a stiff upper lip.*

*But if, in fact, your ship is sinking,*

*And you are lost at sea*

*Your wife will be all right, we're thinking,*

*She'll have good company.*

*If there's a tragedy*

*We all can guarantee*

*A happy queen!*

## LA BELLE HELENE ACT II

Scene 1 Helen, Bacchis, Hand Maidens

## #9 CHORUS

*O queen, upon this day, won't you try  
To wear your finest gown for this state affair?  
To impress your guests, that is why.  
The Spartan crown alone you bear.  
And they will notice everything you wear.*

BACCHIS *They'll love this, it is so revealing...*

HELEN *Why should I care, when boredom I am feeling?  
Why must I dress for them? I care for only one.  
For him I would wear all my fine array.  
Or maybe I'd just wear my lingerie.  
All other duties give me endless pain.  
My only care is that we'll meet again.*

BACC *This rendezvous I will not question,  
And yet my duty is this suggestion:  
You must try.*

HEL *Try.*

CHOR *O queen, upon this day, won't you try  
To wear your finest gown for this state affair?  
To impress your guests, that is why.  
The Spartan crown alone you bear.  
And they will notice everything you wear.  
O queen, it is the duty of the fair  
Uncommon loveliness to share.*

Scene 2 Helen and Bacchis, later a Servant

Bacchis: Madame, I don't understand. The kings of Greece are coming to dinner.

Helen: I know.

Bacchis: And you always dress down at least- to there (*indicating*) when they come.

Helen: I know, I know.

Bacchis: The poor dears- they'll be so disappointed. You're their favorite natural wonder.

Helen: Just a bunch of muscle-bound lecherous old boys out for a thrill. And all I get is a chest cold.

Bacchis- (*grandly*) Your highness- They are the Kings of Greece.

Helen: That's no excuse. And who invited them anyway?

Bacchis- You did.

Helen: I did?

Bacchis: You said that (*melodramatic imitation*) they would console you in your terrible hours of epic loneliness.

Helen: I said that? (*pacing desperately... wringing her hands*) Oh, Bacchis- I don't know what I mean anymore.

Bacchis: I do. It's Paris, isn't it?

Helen: Of course it's Paris. (*pacing, throwing up her hands*) I haven't had a sensible or even a semi-sensible thought in my head since he came to town.

Bacchis: He's been by every day for a month now.

Helen: I know, I know.

Bacchis: A very determined young man.

Helen: And... he is gorgeous!

Bacchis: Then why don't you submit to your fate--

Helen: (*melodramatic*) Ah- the hand of fate.

Bacchis- Which conveniently coincides with your desires.

Helen: I would, I would- but I can't... I mustn't... I shouldn't.

(*Servant enters*)

Servant: Madame?

Helen: Oh what. is it? (*impatient*)

Servant: Prince Paris is back again

Helen: Just as I feared.

Bacchis: And wanted.

Helen: I won't receive him.

Bacchis: Then tell him to go home.

Helen: Did you forget already? He's gorgeous.

Bacchis: Well, you've got to make up your mind one way or another. You can't have him hanging around here forever.

Helen: All right (*to servant*) I shall see him.

Servant- Yes, madame.

Helen: (*sees picture*) Wait, I must consult with my mother first. I'll call you.

Servant: Yes, Madame. (*exits*)

Bacchis: How long?

Helen: (*looking at picture*) Hmm?

Bacchis: How long will you consult with your mother?

Helen: How do I know how long? It's so hard to get a straight answer from one's mother, Bacchis, you know that as well as I do.

Bacchis: Actually, I haven't consulted my mother in years.

Helen: And it's so much more complicated when your mother is a playgirl and your father is a swan!

Bacchis: My father was a wolf, but I suppose that doesn't count.

Helen: Now go away, Bacchis.

Bacchis: Yes, madame. *(exits)*

**Scene 3 Helen**

Helen: *(very grandly)* I love to collect my thoughts before this intimate family portrait. My father---my mother--- there they are, both of them-- -together. Oh my father, turn towards your lovechild a favorable beak! And you, Venus----why couldn't you have found the shepherd a less troublesome prize? Why, oh why, oh why, goddess, have you always chosen our family for your experiments?

**#10 SOLO, HELEN**

1.

*O Venus, why send this temptation?  
Why lead me into sure disgrace?  
It's hard to save one's reputation  
When one has such a perfect face.*

*Throughout my life all men were trying  
To have me for their very own.  
How often did they leave me crying?*

*When on they'd drone,  
I'd often moan,  
Why don't you just leave me alone?*

*Oh, Venus, say...  
Is it ever your way  
To see that womanly virtue is taken away?  
If yesterday  
I could tell them all nay,  
Why when I'm married is Paris right there on display?*

2.

*When I was born to mother Leda  
They say I was a gorgeous child.  
But where is mother when I need her  
To save me from my passions wild?*

*But she herself was caught denying  
The fate to which she would be drawn.  
For Jupiter to earth was flying.*

*They carried on,  
Her virtue gone,  
And now she'll never trust a swan.*

*Oh, Venus, say...  
Is it ever your way  
To see that womanly virtue is taken away?  
If yesterday Mother acted this way,  
How can her daughter avoid a short romp in he hay?*

3  
*But then perhaps I shouldn't question  
What Goddess Venus thinks is good.  
And take her obvious suggestion  
To let things happen as they should.*

*For Paris a handsome fellow  
And Menelaus is at sea.  
So I won't have to hear him bellow:  
"Sit on my knee  
And promise me  
You'll love me when I'm eighty three."*

*Oh, Venus, say...  
Is it ever your way  
To see that womanly virtue is taken away?  
If yesterday 'twas the king I'd obey,  
Now it's today and the goddess has told me to play.*

**Scene 4 Helen, Bacchis, then Paris**

Helen-      There, Now I feel much better. I am strong, I am calm---

Bacchis     *(entering)* The Prince of Troy!

Helen:      Ahhh... *(suddenly nervous)*

*(enter Bacchis with Paris. She places a chair for him)*

Helen:      *(to Bacchis)* Bacchis, what shall I do *(wringing her hands)*?

Bacchis:    *(indicating portrait)* Mother knows best. *(Bacchis exits, Helen starts after her, stops, steels herself and turns to Paris)*

Helen:      Good evening, prince.

Paris: Good evening, madame.

Helen: *(looking away- nervously determined)* Uh, Prince Paris, I have something very important to say to you today...

Paris: You do?

Helen: Yes, and it can't wait any longer.

Paris: Good... I've waited long enough.

Helen: Prince Paris- *(turns to him)*--Prince Paris- *(weakens)* Paris, um...

Paris: Yes?

Helen: Do you like my dress?

Paris: It's very interesting...

Helen: Are you enjoying your stay in Sparta?

Paris: Not very much.

Helen: And why not?

Paris: I find Sparta so... well... so Spartan.

Helen: Oh, I see. Then why don't you leave?

Paris: I have business here.

Helen: Indeed? *(question mark falls in the air- Silence)*

Helen: You are not very amusing this evening.

Paris: You don't think so?

Helen: Are you angry with me?

Paris: Angry? Why should I be?

Helen: Because I made you wait.

Paris: Oh-I'm getting used to it.

Helen: Are you sure?

Paris: Quite sure. *(Silence)*

Together: Helen: Prince, we can't go on like---  
Paris: Madame, we simply can't go on like--

Helen: Oh excuse me.

Paris: No- please excuse me.

*(Silence)*

Paris: Tell me, madame, have you ever been faced by a man of absolute determination?

Helen: You frighten me.

Paris: Madame- There is something I must say.

Helen: Yes?

*(They sit)*

Paris: Now, Venus promised me "the love of the most beautiful girl in the world," did she not?

Helen: We agreed not to talk about that any more. *(starts to get up)*

Paris: *(stops her)* And when I saw you, naturally I thought that she was you.

Helen: Naturally.

Paris: But you have resisted me and that has caused me to doubt.

Helen: To doubt what, may I ask?

Paris: I say to myself- Well- perhaps La Belle Helene isn't the most beautiful girl in the world after all.

Helen: And just who would be then? Not that shameless Parthoenis who throws herself at just everyone?

Paris: No.



Helen: Not that sour-faced Penelope who's weaving herself blind?

Paris: No.

Helen: No? Then who is the most beautiful girl in the world?

Paris: Well, so far I've locked in on you. Maybe if I look around a bit...

Helen: (*indignant*) Sir?

Paris: Madam- it's been a month now that we've been bantering like this. Now I can imagine an ordinary man bantering, but I, madam, I who judged the three goddesses deserves better than banter!

Helen: But my reputation...

Paris: Madam, there are three ways of capturing the heart of a woman.

Helen: Only three?

Paris: First- there is love. Do you love me?

Helen: (*confused*)- No! Yes? No!?

Paris: NO? In that case we pass on to the second way- violence.

Helen: Violence? You wouldn't dare!

Paris: Wouldn't I?

Helen: (*aside*) Oh how he loves me!

Paris- Helen! (*attacks*)

Helen: Bacchis! Bacchis! (*running away from Paris-bumps into Bacchis who enters*)

Bacchis: Your highness?

Helen: Oh-uh-Bacchis. Yes-uh-it's nothing... I just wanted to see if you were there.

Bacchis: Your mere mortal is always near.

Helen: (*to Paris*) And the third?

- Paris: The third way, madame, is --well-- you'll see. (*exits*)
- Helen: You'll see? I'll see? What will I see? Oh Bacchis, what will become of me?
- Bacchis: (*aside*) Helen of Troy, I'd say.
- Helen: What is that music (*beginning of chorus #11*)?
- Servant: (*enters*) Your highness, the Kings of Greece are here for supper.

**Scene 5**

**Helen, Bacchis, then cortege of Agamemnon, Ajaxes, Orestes, Calchas, guards, servants, Achilles.**

**#11 MARCH AND CHORUS**

*Kings*      *Royal appetites increased,  
Come the kings to join the feast.  
Say the word if you're a priest  
Slice the bread and slay the beast.*

*Pass the plates, pour the wine!  
We can't wait! Start to dine!  
When the kings you're entertaining,  
There will be no food remaining.*

*Royal appetites increased,  
Come the kings to join the feast.  
Say the word if you're a priest  
Slice the bread and slay the beast.*

*(repeat 2 x)*

*Raise a glass to the best Kings of Greece.*

***(music continues in the orchestra)***

- Bacchis: (*calling*) Calchas!
- Calchas: Bacchis!
- Helen: (*calling*) Calchas!

Calchas: *(thinking it is Bacchis)* Yes, my sweetness *(sees it is Helen)*  
Your Highness!

Helen: Calchas, I must speak with you later-- alone. *(indicating Bacchis)*

Calchas: Oh, of course. *(waves Bacchis away)*

***Music Chorus reprise***

Agamem: Madame, behold, the kings of Greece are here to dine.

Helen: You are most welcome, king of kings and others.

Agamem: After an arduous day of governing our people, and bashing the heads of our enemies, it is a sweet thing to set aside one's crown and to sit down with a few old friends.

Orestes: Bravo, Papa, bravo. *(Agamemnon covers his ears, but there is no music. He slowly brings his hands down.)*

Calchas: *(aside to Helen)* Where is the Prince, Paris?

Helen: Far, far away I hope.

Calchas: *(aside)* I don't.

Agamem: Glory fulfills the outer man, 'tis true, but the inner man craves more. It feeds on friendship and it feeds on...

Ajaxes: Meat! Let's eat!

Agamem: Fraternity!

Calchas: *(aside to Helen)* Any news from Menelaus?

Helen: Menelaus?

Calchas: Your husband. Any news?

Helen: Oh---no.

Calchas: Well, no news is good news.

Helen: With him even good news is no news!

Ajax I: Madame- we are delighted that you invited us-

Ajax II: Us one or Us two...

Ajax-I: ...invited us to dine with you this evening.

Ajax II: Although there may be some question as to how many bodies...

Ajax I: And how many names...

Ajax II: You see before you...

Ajax I: You may be sure that the number of appetites involved...

Ajax II: Is considerably more than one...

Ajax I: Or two...

Ajax II: Or even three...

Ajax I-: Or more...

Helen *(to Bacchis-and looking ill)* Bacchis, tell the cook to put on another cow.

*(A squeaking noise is heard off)*

Orestes: What was that?

*(Enter Achilles- he announces himself by singing the entry chorus a capella- and he rushes to take his place- squeaking every step)*

Agamem: Fiery Achilles? You're late.

Achilles: My excuses, king of kings, Madame of Madames, and others. I had some urgent business. *(He goes to Helen to kiss her hand, squeaking all the way)*

Agamem: What was that?

Achilles: What was what?

Agamem: That horrible squeaking sound.

Achilles: I didn't hear anything.

- Ajax I : You made a noise when you walked.
- Achilles: No, I didn't!
- Ajax II: Walk a little more.
- Achilles: *(walks away squeaking)* I won't!
- Helen: There it is again!
- Calchas: The Hand of Fate?
- Helen: No, the squeaking sound.
- Calchas: *(bursts out laughing)*
- Achilles: What's so funny?
- Calchas: I know what it is.
- Achilles: *(threatening)* Calchas...
- Calchas: It's his corrective boot.
- (general laughter)*
- Achilles: All right- it is! I've got a bad heel, all right?
- Agamem: And yet, as I was saying, when we say the kings of Greece are here, we find ourselves on the very verge of hyperbole. For in truth, there is one of our number, and a most beloved one indeed, who is absented from this convivial congregation of conglomerate comradeship...
- Ajax I: How come I can never understand him?
- Ajax II: He comes from a different part of Greece.
- Agamem: And that one is none other than my dearest brother in family, our dearest brother in arms, and your *(to Helen)* dearest husband... uh... in bed.
- Helen: Bacchis, I don't feel well...
- Agamem: Madame?

Helen: *(mock)* Oh, my poor Menelaus!

Agamem: Yes, your poor Menelaus, called to Crete where he is, no doubt at this very moment bewailing the lack of our company as we here are bewailing the lack of his.

Ajax I: I don't miss him at all.

Ajax II: Did he go somewhere?

Agamem: And so, Madame, as we said above, the Kings of Greece are here to dine and to console you in your terrible hours of epic loneliness. But first, let us all pause a moment and muse in memoriam upon our missing member.

### **#12 ENSEMBLE Kings and Chorus**

Calchas: *And now, bon appetit!*

All: *Hurrah!*

Calchas: *It's very sad that one of us could not be here now.*

Aga: *My brother is a blockhead,  
Sent off again to Crete.*

Calchas: *Dare we mention his faults?*

Aga: *How could he be so damn naïve?*

Achilles: *He hasn't got the keenest mind.*

2 Ajaxes: *To speak of it would be unkind.*

Helen: *He may be king, but his passion's dead.*

Orestes: *For when he climbs in bed  
He'll read a scroll instead.*

Calchas: *He is a Spartan to the core.*

All: *And so his faults we will ignore.*

Calchas: *Tho' common sense he well may lack,*

*All: Let no one talk behind his back.*

*Calchas: Such etiquette we do not lack.  
Now that you mention, I admit  
That he is something of a twit.*

*All: Bit of a twit, bit of a twit, bit of a twit, bit of a twit!*

*Calchas: He is a presence on the throne:  
That of a doddering old drone.*

*All: Dumb as a stone, dumb as a stone, dumb as a stone, dumb as a  
stone.  
In spite of this, he is the king.*

*Calchas: He has the crown, he has the ring.*

*All: If he were here, our words would sting.*

*Calchas: But since he's not, more mud we'll sling.*

*2 Ajaxes: There's not a king within this band  
With whom we'd rather shake the hand.  
For rulers with too big a brain  
Advantage of we cannot gain.*

*All: And that's how things should best remain.*

*Calchas: Tho' he's the brunt of ridicule  
That is a good thing, as a rule.*

*All: Oh what a fool, Oh what a fool, Oh what a fool, Oh what a fool.*

*Calchas: Still, when he's right outside the door,  
None in the land could praise him more.*

*All: Oh what a chore, Oh what a chore, Oh what a chore, Oh what a  
chore.*

*Tho' it's hard to sing his praises,  
Each of us his voice upraises,  
If up top he had much more  
I'd be afraid he might start a war,  
Might start a war,  
So drink to Menelaus  
Our beloved king!*

*(after the number, exeunt all in to dinner, except Helen, Calchas and Bacchis)*

**Scene 6 Helen, Bacchis then Calchas**

Helen: Ah, Calchas. I'm so upset.

Calchas: Well, they're not the most pleasant company...

Helen: Oh, I'm used to that. No- it's something much worse.

Bacchis: Madame, the dinner--

Helen: Go along in, Bacchis.

Bacchis; But what should I tell the kings?

Helen- What? Oh- tell them that--oh-- make up something- anything.

Bacchis- Yes, Madame. *(leaving)* Come along, Calchas.

Helen- Calchas will stay.

Bacchis- But...

Helen- Calchas will stay!

Bacchis- Calchas my treasure--

Calchas- Yes, Bacchis, my sweet?

Bacchis- *(sweetly)* Watch it! *(exits)*

**Scene 7 - Helen, Calchas, later Paris**

*(Night falls gradually during this scene)*

Helen: *(pacing, distraught)* Oh Calchas- how I suffer! What tortures! What heartache! Calchas- he was just here, before the kings. he sat right there where you are. *(Calchas jumps up)*

Calchas: Who?

Helen: Paris, of course. And that's why I can't dine with the kings. He might be in there right now. One glass of wine and who knows what might happen?



Calchas: *(pouring glass of wine)* Yes- who knows?

Helen: No- I shall stay right here and try to sleep. Fetch me some wine.

Calchas- Of course. *(handing glass to her- Helen does slight take on immediacy of request response)*

Helen: Thank you. And now I shall rest.

*(A guard appears at the window behind. Paris hits him on the head. There is a noise)*

Helen: *(jumps)* What was that?

Calchas: Just the guard on the terrace. Now relax- my queen- and sleep.

Helen: Oh, if only I could sleep and dream of him.

Calchas: The king?

Helen: The King!? Calchas, I want a dream, not a nightmare.

Calchas: Of course.

Helen: If not in real life, then I must see him in my dreams, this Paris whom I flee, this Paris whom I adore! *(dropping off)* I must have this dream, Calchas. Promise it to me!

Calchas; *(faking)* A difficult order, my queen.

Helen: Not for you.

Calchas; Well, I'll see what I can do. *(sees Paris)*

Helen: This dream, Calchas, this dream. Promise me... *(asleep)*

Calchas: *(seeing Paris at the window)* Yes, my queen, I think I can absolutely guarantee it.

Paris: Is she asleep?

Calchas: She wanted to dream about you.

Paris: That's sweet, but I had something else in mind. *(exit Calchas)*

**Scene 8, Paris and Helen**

*( Paris comes forward, music in the orchestra. Paris contemplates the sleeping queen)*

Paris: The goddess has kept her promise, the queen and the shepherd are face to face at last. Does she love me? Will she love me? She must, the hour of the shepherd is at hand. we are alone, it is night, Menelaus is in Crete and Venus is on my side.

***music chorus offstage #13***

Paris: What's that? *(looks off)* Ah, the kings are in their cups... and I...

**#13 ENSEMBLE Orestes Couplet**

*(Offstage)*

Orestes: *Let us live for the joy at hand  
Worries abandon at my command  
Then we'll play 'til the day is done  
Duty we shun, eve'rything's fun.  
For in times like these, our lives are short.  
We all may meet the sword.  
So debauch, my dears, for fear  
Today may be our last reward.*

Chor: *la, la, etc.*

*(Paris approaches Helen and kneels)*

***music ends***

Helen: *(awakes)* What? Who's there? Paris!

Paris: Yes, Paris!

Helen: My dream come true.

Paris: Your dream?

Helen: Thank you, Calchas.

Paris: I'm a dream come true. I've often thought so.  
Thank you Calchas..

*(Helen gets up, Paris approaches her, takes her hand, and leads her to the front)*

**#14 DUET, Paris and Helen**

*Helen: You're a dream,  
Tho' you seem  
Oh, so real to the touch.  
Venus, thank you so much  
For this dream, lovely dream.  
Now my conscience is free.  
I can do as I please.*

*Here is a vision*

*Paris: Moment Elysian*

*Helen: Of love.*

*Paris: Of love.*

*Helen: Of love. Ah...*

*Paris: Come, let me kiss you.*

*Helen: I will permit you,*

*Both: For my lonely heart is aching.*

*Paris: Dreams are so fleeting.*

*Helen: That our fond meeting*

*Both: Ends with my / your waking.*

*Helen: Then with the dawn*

*Paris: I will be gone.*

*Both: And fragile memory is fading.*

*Helen: Till then,*

*Paris: Till then,*

*Helen: We'll savor our senses cascading,  
Oh, prince, tell me, and speak true,*

*Paris: I'll tell you what you want me to.*

*Helen: In dreams what can we have to fear?*

*Paris: Yes, things are not as they appear.*

*Helen: If I should let you...*

*Paris: If you should let me*

*Both: Pull me / you toward you / me and gently embrace me / you.*

*Paris: It's an illusion,*

*Helen: Only delusion,*

*Both: Innocent pleasure inside my / your head.*

*Helen: Can I just ask you, please,  
If you would be so kind,  
There is something I must know.  
It's just been on my mind.*

*Paris: Ask away! Whatever you ask, I'm happy to say.*

*Helen: When Venus you beheld,  
That day,  
And you were overcome...*

*Paris: Ah, yes...*

*Helen: How does her beauty compare with mine?*

*Paris: Darling...*

*Helen: And does her figure assume this classic line?*

*Paris: My darling...  
That's really a difficult question.  
Of you there is but a suggestion,  
Venus wore so much less, so much less,  
You understand?*

*Helen: I understand.*

*Paris: I saw...*

*Helen: What did you see?*

*Paris: Her shoulders her hair was not hiding,  
And downward from there, I'm confiding,  
I fear I cannot make a judgment call.  
When you've a robe to wear,  
And she had none at all.*

*Helen: Would you unveil my virtue?*

*Paris: Dreaming can hardly hurt you.*

*Helen: From Venus I'll divert you.*

*Paris: My eyes are waiting...*

*Helen: I'm hesitating...*

*Both: What you / I might behold may well be blinding.*

*Paris: I'll take my chances...*

*Helen: Rapturous glances*

*Both: You / I will be finding.*

*Helen: My worth I'll prove.*

*Paris: And you'll remove*

*Both: Any last doubts that are remaining.*

*Helen: So then,*

*Paris: So then,*

*Helen: So then,*

*Paris: So then,*

*Helen: Let nothing our souls be restraining.*

*Disrobing then, is all a dream?*

*Paris: Improper though it surely must seem.*

*Helen: The things we do when we're asleep*

*Paris: Are secrets that we always may keep.*

*Helen: Soon I will wake...*

*Paris: Morning will break...*

*Both: So we'll begin what our hearts have demanded.*

*Paris: Only pretending,*

*Helen: Ere it is ending,*

*Both: Venus this reverie did command.  
In passion we sigh,  
And sleep will supply  
Us with the perfect alibi!*

**Scene 9 Helen, Paris, Menelaus**

Menelaus: Ah ha!

Helen: *(cries out and falls into Paris arms)* My husband! If that was a dream, then this is a nightmare.

Menelaus: Ah ha!

Paris: Is that all you can say. Ah ha!

Menelaus: Ah ha! What's going on here? My wife with a slave.

Helen: Uh- -uh- - did you have a pleasant trip, my darling?

*(Stands in front of Paris)*

Menelaus: *(trying to see Paris)* What? Yes, yes, but this slave looks like- - -

Helen: Is Crete a beautiful country, my dearest?

Menelaus: Yes, yes, but this is----

Helen: Lots of mountains, my sweetest? Did you hunt?

Menelaus: (*forcing Paris to turn around*) Why, it's Prince Paris!

Helen: Did you have a rough crossing, my heart's delight?

Menelaus: What? Rough? Well actually, it was... Ah ha! What is Prince Paris doing alone in my bedroom with my wife?

Paris: What would you do?

Menelaus: What?

Paris: Never mind.

Menelaus: (*crying out*) Help! Help!

Paris: Oh, do be quiet.

Menelaus: What?

Paris: (*shouts*) Be quiet!

Menelaus: I will not be quiet!

Paris: Oh, you're just another husband.

Menelaus: I am not just another husband. I am an Epic Husband.

Paris: Then you're supposed to understand these things.

Menelaus- Sirrah, an ordinary husband might understand these things, but I am a King of Greece and I don't!

Paris: (*shrugs his shoulders*)

Helen: Keep your voice down.

Menelaus: (*shouting*) 3000 years from now they will still be talking of this betrayal!!!

Paris: 3000 years from now they will still be able to hear you.

Helen: *(pointing off)* Please, my darling, the kings are in the next room.

Menelaus- They are?

Paris: If you don't keep quiet, they'll be in here in a minute.

Menelaus: Then let them come!

**Scene 10, Helen, Paris, Menelaus, Bacchis, Calchas, Kings et al.**

**ENSEMBLE FINALE #15a**

*Menelaus: Come here! Come to my aid! Come here!*

*Helen: What can we do now? He'll make a scandal.*

*Parisd: Silence alone this case will handle.*

*Helen: The hand of fate! The hand of fate! The hand...*

*Paris: Just wait!*

*Menelaus Come to my aid!  
Upon this night has Menelaus been betrayed!*

*(Orestes and the carefree throng enter)*

*Orestes: Then we'll play 'til the day is done,  
Duty we shun...*

*Chor: Ev'rything's fun!*

*Orests: For in times like these, our lives are short;  
We all may meet the sword.  
So debauch, my dears, for fear  
Today may be our last reward.*

*Chor: la, la, etc.*

*Aga: Ah! He is back.*

*Chor: The King!*



*Mene:*        *Yes, 'tis I! Yes, 'tis I!*  
*I left Helen alone and she's had an affair.*  
*What will you do to save my honor?*  
*I left Helen alone. She should have been in your care.*  
*To justify she will not try.*  
*My honor's compromised and so am I!*

*CHOR*        *He left Helen alone. She should have been in our care.*  
*To justify she will not try.*

*Aga:*        *You? Your honor?*

*Ajaxes*       *What? His honor?*  
*Calchas*

*Chor:*       *Damn his honor!*

*Mene:*       *Honor is a thing*  
*That snaps like a string*

*Hel., Bacc.,* *When somebody plays Rossini on the violin.*  
*Orestes*

*Paris:*       *Ah! (imitating a violin)*

*Aga.,*        *Bim, bim etc. (imitating a cello)*  
*Achilles*

*Ajax 1,*       *Ta, ra, ra, ta, ta, etc. (imitating a trumpet)*  
*Orestes,*  
*Bacchis*

*Ajax 2*       *Boom, boom, boom etc. (imitating a bass drum)*

*Prins.:*      *Tsching, tsching, etc., boom goes your honor!*

*Mene:*       *Goes my honor!*

*Chor:*       *Goes your honor!*

*Ten./Bass:* *We don't know why you're making such a fuss.*  
*The fault is yours, so don't blame us.*

*Menelaus:* *What? It's my fault?*

Orestes: Yes, it's your fault!

Chor. Yes, it's your fault!

Mene: My fault!

### COUPLETS #15b

Helen: A husband who is out to sea  
Should have the common courtesy  
To come back at some time instead  
Of when his wife might be in bed.  
And he who does this rule disdain  
Has no good reason to complain.

He really ought to knock before  
He opens up the bedroom door,  
Good manners he should not ignore.

Chor: A husband who is out to sea, etc.

Helen: A husband who refuses to  
Inform his wife when he is due  
Should have the sense to realize  
He could be in for some surprise.  
When he's away, he shouldn't mind  
If some small comfort she should find.

He won't disrupt his whole routine  
And life again can be serene.  
No reason for an ugly scene.

Chor: A husband who refuses to etc.

Mene: That just won't do! I have the right,  
In my plight,  
To demand some satisfaction.

Aga: He is right!  
He wants a fight!  
Satisfaction! Satisfaction!

Paris: If you think I'll be clashing swords with you.  
Then you don't know that's not my way.  
I'd rather kidnap her some day.

*This old man I will not slay... today!*

*Prins: He won't draw his sword  
How thoroughly bizarre.  
We now see you for  
The coward that you are!*

*Helen: Go now, my love, for my love goes with you.  
It's not always best when a dream comes true.*

*A dream such as you  
Must not end in combat gory.  
If fate tells us true,  
There is much more to our story.*

*All: A prince such as you  
Ought to die in combat gory.  
And this much is true:  
That's the ending to this story.*

*Paris: Helen takes my side.  
The gods do so too.  
You can scream and yell until you turn blue.  
Menelaus cries about his good name...  
Easy does it, there...  
Hold your huffy air,  
Venus assures me that I'll win the game!*

*All: Go away! Go away!*

*Paris: Why all this commotion?*

*All: Go away! Go away!*

*Paris: It is ordained.*

*All: Away! Away! Away! Away! Ah!  
A prince such as you  
Ought to die in combat gory.  
And this much is true:  
If fate tells us true  
That the end of this story will have come.*

*Helen: A dream such as you  
Must not end in combat gory.*

*If fate tells us true,  
There is much major history to come.*

*Aga: I could kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a,  
kill a, kill a, kill a guy like you.*

*Chor: Kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a,  
kill a, kill a, kill a guy like...  
Kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a, kill a,  
kill a, kill a, kill a guy like you.*

*Helen: Go now! Go now! Etc.  
See, my love, how they turn.*

*Paris: First you praise, then you hate me and  
Vili-, Vili-, Vili-, Vilify me.  
To my fond mission I  
Will a-, will a, will a, will apply me.*

*Chor: First did we praise, then we  
Vili-, vili-, vili-, vilify you.  
But to the sword now we  
Will a-, will a, will a, will apply you.*

*Women: Kill a, kill a, etc.*

*Men: One such as you etc.*

*Helen: A dream such as you etc.*

*Or., Bacc: Kill a, kill a, etc... kill a guy like you.  
Kings*

*Paris Vili, vili, etc... vilify me if you want to do.*

*Chor: Paris dies, Paris dies!  
Now we hate him and despise  
He dies.  
Away you go  
Or else we know  
Our deadly punishment you earn!  
You will earn at our hand!*

*Par., Hel: Away I / you go, for well I know  
That soon again you will return.*

*I'll / You'll return for your / my hand.*

*Others:   Away you go, or else we know  
              Our deadly punishment you earn!  
              You will earn at our hand!*

END OF ACT 2

## ACT III- LA BELLE HELENE

ENTR'ACTE**Scene 1 The Beach**

*(Enter Agamemnon and Calchas in beach robes, ala Grecque, Orestes, Parthenis, Leona, Ajax 1 & 2 are in conversation. Chorus lovers are scattered about)*

**#16 CHORUS**

*Let's drink!  
Let's dance!  
Let's sing!  
Let's kiss!  
And find romance!*

*Here, in this Sybaritic splendor  
Beside the sea  
We're forced to ply a subject tender  
Compulsively.  
We don't obey the chaste Minerva  
She's far too dull.  
We revel in unbridled fervor  
Our hands are full.*

*Here Venus holds us in her thrall.  
While Bacchus tells us that our sins we won't recall.*

*Let's sing!  
Let's dance!  
Let's find romance!*

*Hail to Goddess Venus and her son.  
Winged Cupid, source of so much fun.  
Hedonistic rapture we enjoy  
Using ev'ry means we can employ.  
Living for love, living for love, living for love...  
Pleasure brings us closer to the gods above!*

**#17 RONDO, Orestes**

*Orestes: Venus was annoyed by the king's compulsion  
To demand expulsion*

*Chor: Of the Trojan prince.*

Orestes: *She laid a curse on the citizens of Sparta  
That no lovers may be faithful until Paris is restored.  
So until then we live in wanton accord.*

1.  
*In ev'ry heart a fire is burning  
And nothing can douse the flame*

Or / Chor *There is an unrequited yearning  
More wicked than we can name.*

Orestes: *Each is longing for another  
Sister or brother, who can tell?  
Sons make passes at their mothers,  
Making sure they'll go to hell!*

Or / Chor *Ah!*

Orestes: *It's appalling, each is falling  
For whomever they should meet.  
Even I have never seen a loss  
Of conscience so complete.*

Or / Chor *It's appalling, each is falling  
For whomever they should meet.  
At the end of day there's none remaining  
Standing on his feet.*

2.  
*King Agamemnon, my dear father,  
Won't weaken before the curse.*

Or / Chor *He never cared with love to bother  
His passion was for the purse.*

Orestes: *He rebukes us for our weakness  
That our morals now we shirk.  
Once the people did respect him,  
Now they think he's just a jerk.*

Or / Chor *Ah!*

Orestes: *When a ruler tries to cool a  
Population's taste for fun,*

*Even tho' he's right, he might  
Come to regret what he has done.*

*Chor: When a ruler tries to cool a  
Population's taste for fun  
Even tho' he's right, he might  
Come to regret the thing that he has done.*

Agamemnon: *(aside to Calchas)* Come along, Calchas. Let us intermingle with the inhabitants, overhear their intercourse, and evaluate their audacities.

Calchas: *(shivering)* C-c-c-can't we ge-ge-get dressed first? I'm freezing.

Agamemnon: What? And reveal our rank? Not so soon... there are things to know.

Orestes: My dearest Leona- what's new on the beach?

Leona: A good many husbands have left their wives.

Parthenis: And a good many wives have left their husbands.

Agamemnon: You hear that?

Leona: The usual thing.

Parthenis: Only more so.

Orestes: Parthenis has taken three lovers from Leona.

Ajax II: And Leona has taken four from Parthenis.

Parthenis: *(to Leona)* Then, my dear, you owe me one.

Leona: And one you shall have.

Agamemnon: Such bawdy badinage I find decidedly disgusting

Bacchis: Oh, Calchas...

Calchas: *(to Agamemnon)* Let's go, let's go...



- Bacchis: Ah, there you are. *(She embraces him, he is embarrassed)*
- Agamemnon: *(to Calchas)* Not you, too? Calchas- this is too much. Endless indiscriminate infidelities.
- Calchas: It is the vengeance of Venus.
- Bacchis: It's Venus with a vengeance.
- Agamemnon: We must put a stop to this Panhellenic promiscuousness. We must talk to Menelaus. The signs indicate that the goddess appears to be angry with him. Come... *(to Bacchis)* not you, young lady. This costume totally lacks that touch of royalty to which I am accustomed. Tomorrow I shall bathe with my crown on.

*(Calchas and Agamemnon exit up boardwalk stairs)*

- Leona: Why has the queen brought the retinue to the beach?
- Bacchis: She's trying to pull herself together after last weekend's unpleasantness.
- Ajax II: Sparta was no fun after Paris left.
- Achilles: Oh- I'm glad he's gone. Just looking at that fellow makes my heel ache.

***(Exeunt, #18)***

**Scene 2 Menelaus and Helen**

*(Helen rushes on as if trying to lose Menelaus)*

- Menelaus: *(puffing)* My queen, my wife, my dearest Helen. Wait for me! I'm not as young as I used to be.
- Helen: *(impatient)* You never were!
- Menelaus: Please- you must tell me what you were doing alone with Paris last week?
- Helen: You don't know?
- Menelaus: No.

Helen: You can't guess?

Menelaus: Well, I could... but then I'd only be guessing...

Helen: *(aside)* That's why I was alone with Paris.

*(Enter Agamemnon and Calchas on boardwalk upstage)*

**Scene 3 Helen, Menelaus, Agamemnon, Calchas**

Agamemnon: Your Highness!

Calchas: Your Highness! Is something wrong?

Menelaus: My wife won't tell me what she was doing with Paris.

Helen: Your majesty, you don't know how impossible he is. You just couldn't know. I appeal to you...

Agamemnon: Do you indeed? Well, I'm in agreement with my brother here. Answer his question.

Helen: So- All of you virtuous gentlemen suspect me of an infidelity?

All: We do!

Helen: And, my dear, you really want an explanation?

Menelaus: I do... Don't I?

Agamemnon: He does.

Helen: Then you shall have it!

**#19 SOLO, HELEN** *(Helen stomps off after the song)*

*Helen:*

1.  
*So you continue to abuse me,  
 You insult and hound me night and day.  
 King of Kings, you really must excuse me,  
 I'll defend myself, if I may.  
 Tho' a handsome prince pursues me  
 Against my will, I hold him a bay.*

*If I dream, you cannot accuse me.  
 Just a dream you cannot refuse me.  
 If it were really true,  
 My god, what would you say?  
 If it were really true,  
 My god, what would you say?  
 What would you say, what would you say?  
 What would you say if it were really true?*

*You'd complain, You'd complain, You'd complain!*

*2.  
 I have fought against my inclinations  
 I've been strong, yet I'll swear an oath.  
 If you insist on cross examinations  
 Have a care, gentlemen both.  
 You could find the power of suggestion  
 Yet may make my dream come true.*

*Dearest spouse, I'll ask you a question:  
 Does my dream upset your digestion?  
 Well, I will make it real  
 And then what will you do?  
 I wonder what you'll feel  
 If it should all come true.  
 What will you feel when it is real?  
 What would you feel if it should all come true?*

*Such a pain, such a pain, such a pain!*

**Scene 4 Agamemnon, Calchas, Menelaus**

Menelaus: And I waited a week for this explanation??!!

Agamemnon: (*patronizing and pompous*) My dear brother- I find it hard to believe that you would allow your people to suffer such agonies of passion for a woman who treats you so badly.

Calchas: What a way to suffer!

Agamemnon: And whatever happened between Paris and Helen, the fact is that Venus has filled the air with an aura of erotic abandonment that threatens to destroy the country.

- Calchas-           What a wonderful way to go.
- Agamemnon-      It is obvious that Venus is angry with you. She wants you to donate your wife to Paris.
- Menelaus-         Where do you get this?
- Agamemnon-      The signs are obvious.
- Menelaus-         Well, I won't do it!
- Agamemnon-      Look around you! You see what your selfishness has done to your people! It is a general catastrophe!

**#20 PATRIOTIC TRIO Agamemnon, Menelaus, Calchas**

*Agamemnon:*

*Amid the shattered remains of our morals,  
Beneath the bale of Venus' frown,  
You seem content to rest upon your laurels.  
How can you let your country down?*

*Calchas: We lie beneath the curse of Venus.*

*Aga: A curse on marriage and virtue.*

*Cal: Yet you sail upon your way,  
As we sink in moral decay.*

*Mene: I think your accusations are heinous,  
Your accusations are heinous.*

*Aga, Cal: Amid the shattered remains of our morals,  
Beneath the bale of Venus' frown,  
You seem content to rest upon your laurels.  
You've let your country down.  
How could you let your country down?  
You've let her down.*

*Mene: I seem content to rest upon my laurels.  
I've let my country down.  
How could I let my country down?  
I've let her down.*

*Cal: And as a result of this curse,  
The future can only get worse.*

*Aga: I see ahead an infinite procession  
Of Menelaus still to come.  
By hundreds, thousands in succession...  
In arithmetical progression...  
I can't begin to count the sum  
Of men beneath a woman's thumb.*

*Don't leave things to their own devices.  
This is no ordinary crisis.*

*Aga: 1.  
All of our noble, old traditions  
Venus has shattered with a glance.  
All of our proper inhibitions  
Lost in a bacchanalian dance.  
Our subjects don't care what they do.  
Whatever are we coming to?  
(dances)  
Don't you see? Don't you see?  
We just can't allow these things to be?*

*2.  
Once all our dances were quite proper,  
Modeled upon a classic line.  
Now even these have come a-cropper,  
All of the arts are in decline.  
The steps today are quite obscene,  
I'll try to show you what I mean.  
(Dances)  
Did you see? Did you see  
That example of grotesquerie?*

*All 3: I agree, I agree.  
That looked thoroughly grotesque to me.*

*Cal, Aga: And so, it's up to you.*

*Cal: I think you know what you must do.*

*Aga, Cal: We think we know what you must do.  
Do your duty!  
Your country is calling.*

*Mene: Appalling!*

*Cal: You duty demands it, you must obey!  
Your country has called with a clarion cry.  
Your martyrdom surely will save the day  
For husbands to come bye and bye.*

*Mene: You can't make me do it , I won't obey.  
I'll just keep ignoring your clarion cry.*

*Cal, Aga: Go!*

*Mene: Let somebody else go and save the day  
For husbands to come bye and bye.*

*Cal, Aga: Your martyrdom surely will save the day  
For husbands to come bye and bye.*

*Mene: It isn't fair, it isn't moral.  
I object. I disagree.  
If Venus wants to pick a quarrel,  
Why did she have to pick on me?  
I really can't believe you're serious...*

*Cal, Aga: He is raving, he is delirious.  
Ah!*

*Mene: You can't make me do it, I won't obey.  
I'll just keep ignoring your clarion cry.  
Let somebody else go and save the day  
For husbands to come bye and bye.*

*In vain your call. I won't obey.  
Let somebody else go and save the day!*

*Cal, Aga: You duty demands it, you must obey!  
Your country has called with a clarion cry.  
Your martyrdom surely will save the day  
For husbands to come bye and bye.*

*Your duty calls, you must obey!  
King Menelaus will save the day!*

- Menelaus: *(to Agamemnon)* You're very generous with other men's wives, aren't you? But what if the goddess had demanded Clytemnestra from you?
- Agamemnon: MY wife?
- Menelaus: Yes- your wife.
- Agamemnon: If only it were possible...
- Calchas: *(shocked)* Your highness!
- Agamemnon: *(pitifully)* If you only knew---
- Menelaus: If there were only some other way of appeasing the goddess.
- Agamemnon: But the first way is so simple! You have a wife....
- Menelaus: But-
- Agamemnon: The goddess demands her....
- Menelaus: But-
- Agamemnon: And you give her up.
- Menelaus: But-
- Calchas: *(to audience)* And I get my transfer.
- Menelaus: *(impatient)* But-- *(expects to be interrupted, isn't, and goes on)* But listen to me!
- Agamemnon: A waste of time, but go ahead.
- Menelaus: Well then- while you have been deciding that I should simply deliver up my wife, I *(proudly)* have taken a step of my own. *(to Agamemnon)* I don't quite know how to say it. Calchas will Have a fit.
- Calchas: And why would I have a fit?
- Menelaus: I have written to Cythera.
- Calchas: You what?

Agamemnon: (*astonished*) You're joking.

Menelaus: No I'm not. I have written to Cythera. (*to Agamemnon*) Now watch- I just know he's going to have a fit. (*to both*) And I have asked the High Priest of Venus to come here.

Calchas: (*indignantly*) The High Priest of Venus! (*indignantly*)  
MY RIVAL! HERE?

Menelaus: (*to Agamemnon*) A fit?

Agamemnon: A fit. (*to Calchas*) When you have finished your fitting, Calchas, you will become tranquil and realize that there's something to be said for my brother's plan. And when will the High Priest of Venus arrive?

Menelaus: If the winds are favorable, he should be here any minute now. What time is it?

Agamemnon: (*looking in the sky*) 10:35.

Menelaus: Hmmm. He's late. He should have been here 3 degrees ago.

**Scene 5 Agamemnon, Calchas, Menelaus, Achilles, Orestes, Ajaxes, Parthenis, Leona, Bacchis, and People**

Orestes: This way! This way! It will land over here!

Parthenis: There it is! There it is!

Calchas: The Hand of Fate?

Ajax I: No, a marvelous galley!

Ajax II: With rose-colored sails!

Menelaus: It brings the high priest of Venus- and you are all going to implore the pardon of the goddess at his feet!

**#21a WELCOME THE PRIEST OF VENUS- Chorus**

*Chor:* Over the foam come galleys in convoy  
Cythera's envoy to our land.  
He has come of curses to clean us  
Undoing Venus' strict command.



*We must be on our best behavior  
Lest our savior we offend.  
If we are dutifully pious,  
He will try this spell to mend.*

*Let us endeavor ever to please  
And Venus appease,  
Make sure he's set at ease.  
Let us receive him on our knees.*

**#21B TYROLIENNE Paris and Chorus**

*Chorus: O, Priest who speaks directly to Venus  
How much longer will she thus demean us?  
Say thou some verse,  
That will reverse  
Our social curse.  
Lift Venus' curse! Lift thou her curse!*

*Paris: 1.  
High in the reaches of my mountain height,  
The Goddess called me late last Thursday night.  
And bade me take my ships to see your plight,  
To see what I might do to set the matter right.*

*There's anger in her eyes  
The king here plans defies.*

*Chor: We know that he offends.  
How may we make amends?*

*Paris: Ah, for a start, looking glum's not the way to behave.*

*Chor: We will try to be cheerful and try to be brave,*

*Paris: There's a lot to be said for the spell that she gave.*

*Chor: But you can't do your work when to sex you're a slave.*

*Paris: (yodeling) La, la-i-tou, la-la-la-la etc.  
Praise the goddess by joining me now in a song.  
That's the way that I pray for a king in the wrong.*

*Chor: Praise the goddess, praise the goddess. Tra, la-la, etc.  
Praise the goddess by joining him now in a song.  
That's the way that we pray for a king in the wrong.*

2.  
*Now, Menelaus made the goddess rage,  
 And that begins to make her show her age.  
 The only way her anger to assuage  
 Is follow my advice so absolutely sage.*

*I'll tell you what to do.  
 Your troubles will be through.*

*Chor: Just tell us what to do  
 So we may see it through.*

*Paris: Ah, when a goddess commands that you give it your all,*

*Chor: Even tho' her demands seem a bit off the wall?*

*Paris: You must not disobey or a plague will befall.*

*Chor: We are happy to say we will answer her call.*

*Paris: (yodeling) La, la-i-tou, la-la-la-la etc.  
 Praise the goddess by joining me now in a song.  
 That's the way that I pray for a king in the wrong.*

*Chor: Praise the goddess, praise the goddess. Tra, la-la, etc.  
 Praise the goddess by joining him now in a song.  
 That's the way that we pray for a king in the wrong.*

*Calchas: What a ridiculous way for a high priest to behave!*

*Paris: You were saying, colleague? (pulls beard down)*

*Calchas: (switching) I was saying, what a splendid way for a high priest  
 to behave!*

*Paris: (saluting) King of Kings, fiery Achilles, the two Ajaxes,  
 Orestes, (to Menelaus) And even you, little fellow. Greetings to  
 you all. But the Queen! I do not see the Queen!*

*Bacchis: She's sulking.*

*Calchas: (double meaning) But she'll come around.*

*Paris: (Double Meaning) I have no doubt of it! (saluting Parthenis  
 and Leona) Ah, beautiful Parthenis and lovely Leona!*

*Parthenis: You know our names?*

- Paris: A good general always knows his best soldiers!
- Agamemnon: What a jolly fellow you are, High Priest.
- Paris: I come from the land of love and laughter, so be calm, my children! Venus is a good goddess. She WILL pardon you.
- ALL: Long live the good goddess Venus!
- Paris: On the condition that King Meneleus do exactly as I say.
- Menelaus: Now wait a minute, I am the king, you know...
- Paris: Don't be afraid. The goddess will not ask anything very unreasonable of you. The Queen will only be obliged to take a little trip, that's all... and make a little sacrifice.
- Parthenis: A trip?
- Agamemnon: A trip?
- Ajax I: A trip?
- Achilles: A trip?
- Leona: A trip?
- Calchas: A trip?
- Ajax I & II: A trip?
- Menelaus: A trip?
- Paris: A trip!
- Menelaus: (*relieved*) A trip! That's all! A trip! Not me this time? Why, that's fine. Just fine! When I'm asked to be reasonable--and the request is reasonable--than I AM reasonable! If such a little thing will make the goddess happy, then by all means, let us make her happy! After all, what could it require? A little trip to Cythera! The sacrifice of a few hundred white heifers! How much more reasonable could the goddess be?
- Paris: (*hesitantly*) Well... actually, the sacrifice is a bit more than that...
- Menelaus: No matter! My subjects will pay for everything!
- Agamemnon: This is all very nice, but the Queen must consent.

- Paris: She will, she will... for so commands the High Priest of Venus!
- Calchas: *(to Bacchis)* Notice the authority he commands? That's what comes of being the High Priest of Venus. And that's the job for me!
- Bacchis: *(angry)* The High Priest of Venus? With all those virgins around all the time? No you don't!
- Calchas: I don't?
- Bacchis: No! And I'll tell you why. *(pulls him off to one side by the ear)*
- Orestes: But what if the Queen refuses to go?
- Paris: She will not refuse. Trust me. But where is the Queen?
- Ajax I: *(looking right)* Here she comes now!  
*(Helen enters during the chorus)*

## #22 FINALE

- All: *See the Queen, our Helen,  
On the earth none so fair,  
And yet is our Helen  
Beset with despair.*
- She has come, our Helen,  
To beseech of the priest,  
And kindly compel him  
The spell to release.*
- Helen: *That voice! That voice! How does my heart rejoice!  
Where have I heard that voice?*
- Menelaus: *It's no one that you know, my dear.  
For the voice that you hear  
Is the answer to our prayers.  
And he has come to ask you  
A pilgrimage to make.*
- Kings,  
Cal: *Go with him for our sake!*

*Helen: Why should I? It's your fault.  
You're the one to go.*

*Paris: Just let me have a word.*

*Orestes: What can he say to make her obey?*

*Aga, Cal: What can this priest convey...*

*Kings: To make the Queen obey?*

*Paris: Don't fall into dismay;  
She'll soon see things my way.  
(to Helen)  
Queen of my heart, do you remember  
Who entered into your dream?*

*Helen: It's Paris!*

*Paris: Sail away with me, my darling,  
It's as easy as it seems.*

*Helen: You tempt me, but my duty's binding.*

*Mene: Go on, dear. It's for the State.*

*Aga, Cal: And that is us, it bears reminding.*

*Helen: In that case, it's the Hand of Fate.*

*All: The will of Olympus! The will of Olympus!  
Be off! Be off! Be off! Be off!*

*Mene: So off to Cythera sailing, Cythera sailing, Cythera sailing,  
It's for me you go.*

*All: So do it for the King.*

*Orestes: Let's hope the winds are prevailing, winds are prevailing, winds are  
prevailing...*

*Cal: It can't be helped, you know...*

*All: Good fortune it will bring.*

*Aga: Disaster we'll be preventing with this sacrifice.*

*Par, Hel: Some day you may be repenting, may be repenting, may be  
repenting,  
And upon that day, you'll surely pay the price.*

*Paris: Over the ocean, over the ocean, over the ocean,  
On the tide,  
Over the ocean, over the ocean, over the ocean,  
Helen's by my side.*

*All: Take her away!*

*Paris Over the ocean, over the ocean, over the ocean  
With my bride.  
Over the ocean, over the ocean, over the ocean,  
Tho' it woe betide, -tide!*

*All: Over the ocean, over the ocean, over the ocean,  
On the tide,  
Over the ocean, over the ocean,  
Helen's by his side.  
When they are  
Over the ocean, over the ocean, over the ocean,  
On that side,  
Over the ocean, over the ocean,  
He'll be satisfied, -fied!*

*Paris: And when you find who stole her from your land,  
That one took Helen at your command.  
At your command!*

*All: Take her  
Over the ocean, over the ocean, over the ocean,  
Then our lives will once again be as they were.  
Whatever ritual she faces,  
Our Helen will succeed.  
We're back again in Venus' graces,  
Our future's guaranteed.*

*Farewell, serene and loyal Queen,  
In Sparta there is joy indeed!*

END OF THE OPERA