



Helen

Written by Euripides
Translated by Emily Wilson
Directed by Paul Lazzari

Synopsis *(from Wikipedia)*

Helen receives word from the exiled Greek Teucer that Menelaus never returned to Greece from Troy, and is presumed dead, putting her in the perilous position of being available for Theoclymenus to marry, and she consults the prophetess Theonoe, sister to Theoclymenus, to find out Menelaus' fate.

Her fears are allayed when a stranger arrives in Egypt and turns out to be Menelaus himself, and the long-separated couple recognize each other. At first, Menelaus does not believe that she is the real Helen, since he has hidden the Helen he won in Troy in a cave. However, the woman he was shipwrecked with was in reality, only a mere phantom of the real Helen. Before the Trojan war even began, a judgement took place, one that Paris was involved in. He gave the Goddess Aphrodite the award of the fairest since she bribed him with Helen as a bride. To take their revenge on Paris, the remaining goddesses, Athena and Hera, replaced the real Helen with a phantom. Menelaus did not know better, but one of his sailors steps in to inform him that the false Helen has disappeared into thin air.






The couple still must figure out how to escape from Egypt, but the rumor that Menelaus has died is still in circulation. Thus, Helen tells Theoclymenus that the stranger who came ashore was a messenger there to tell her that her husband was truly dead. She informs the king that she may marry him as soon as she has performed a ritual burial at sea, thus freeing her symbolically from her first wedding vows. The king agrees to this, and Helen and Menelaus use this opportunity to escape on the boat given to them for the ceremony.

Theoclymenus is furious when he learns of the trick and nearly murders his sister Theonoe for not telling him that Menelaus is still alive. However, he is prevented by the miraculous intervention of the demi-gods Castor and Polydeuces, brothers of Helen and the sons of Zeus and Leda.

TL;DR



Helen awaits rescue in Egypt where she has been for the entire Trojan War. After thinking her husband Menelaus dead, she is surprised when he shows up shipwrecked in Egypt. The two catch each other up (the “Helen” in Troy was a phantom, and the ruler of Egypt is romantically pursuing Helen) and devise a scheme to escape. The lovers trick the Egyptian ruler, and sail away into the sunset.



To satirize the exaggerated performances of gender, orientalism, class, and piety present in the play, I propose a drag staged-reading of *Helen*, set in the American 1950s. Actors of every gender will be considered for every role, with queer-focused crossdressing being an encouraged possibility. Stylized, bold makeup, and dramatic, exaggerated period costumes will be used to inflate the hyper masculinity and femininity of the characters. The reading will remain true to the original text and work primarily as a straight play, but will dip into stylized movement and modern musical motifs for certain moments.



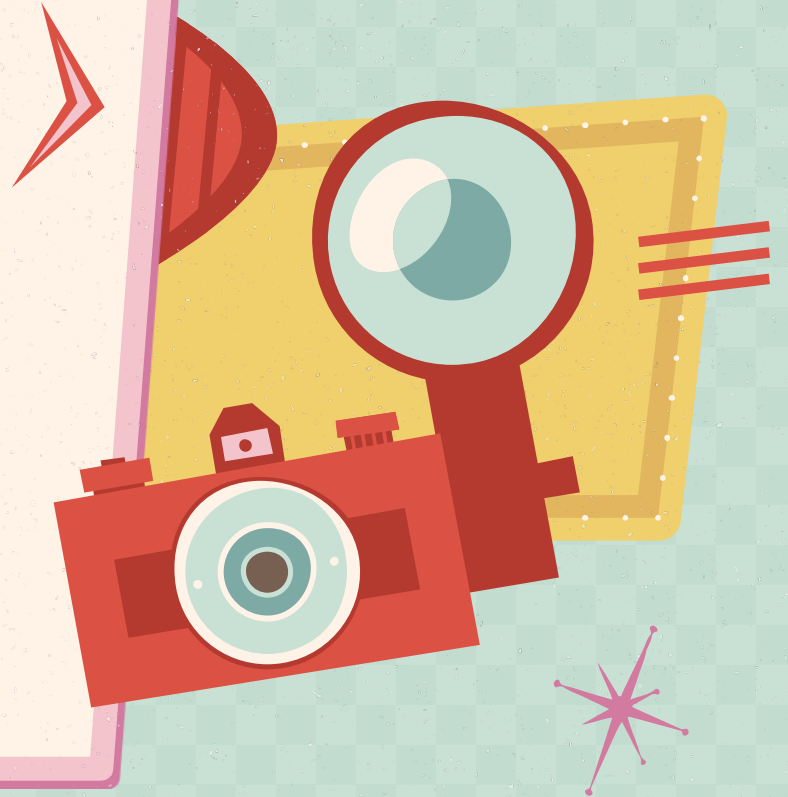
Vision

Full OQ Vision Pitch



Also, it's gonna be a Staged Reading

- Costumes: yes
- Set: minimal
- Blocking: yes
- Memorized Lines: no
- Production Timeline: short
- Lighting: minimal
- Sound: minimal





Script



Characters

Helen	Wife of Menelaus	femme
Teucer	A Greek hero from Salamis	masc
Menelaus	King of Sparta	masc
Old Woman	Servant to the royals of Egypt	femme
Servant	to Menelaus	masc
Theonoë	Priestess, and sister to Theoclymenus	femme
Theoclymenus	Ruler of Egypt	masc
Messenger	Another servant to the royals of Egypt	any
Castor and Pollux	Semi-divine brothers of Helen (aka the Dioscuri)	masc
Chorus	of Greek Maidens	femme

Cast

Jayden

Helen

Anya

Teucer, Theoclymenus

Kaylee

Menelaus

Nations

Old Woman, Servant, Theonoë, Messenger, Castor and Pollux

Samara

Chorus

Cast Size: 5



Technical Elements





- Hyper-gendered 1950s drag
- Some kind of distinction between Greeks and Egyptians
- ~~Helen wears a white dress and then a black dress~~
- Menelaus must be dirty
- Theonoë must serve the most cunt
- Theoclymenus should be a lil silly
- Chorus purple clothes??
- <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nXiJVlcN5qSaQqitczYs7DHR6ah3Df9s?usp=sharing>



Costumes



- DRAG!!!
- Wiggs??
- I'd love to work with costume designer and actors to develop drag looks/ identities for all actors
- <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nXiJVlcN5qSaQqitczYs7DHR6ah3Df9s?usp=sharing>



Hair & Makeup



- ~~As needed for script~~
- None called for in script
- If added for humor or spectacle:
 - 50s themed to match world fo the play; in some way theatricalized
 - Bedazzled?
 - Oversized?
 - Not Realism



Properties



- Castor and Pollux will be puppets controlled by Theonoë
- The puppets will be in drag



Puppets



- “The play takes place in front of the palace of Theoclymenus,” at the grave of Proteus (previous ruler of egypt)
- This location is near the coast
- Minimal
- Probably just rehearsal blocks and a tomb



Set



- Open to anything
 - Could be nothing
 - Could be the biggest flashiest drag show ever
- Probably nothing



Lighting



- For certain moments like entrances and large monologues: bright modern pop music
- Otherwise dramatic diegetic sounds
- Maybe ocean waves throughout (prolly not)



Sound



The graphic features a light pink and white checkerboard background. A large, rounded red shape with vertical stripes is on the left. A yellow semi-circle is at the top center. A light green rounded rectangle with a pink border is in the foreground, containing the text.

Production Calendar

Tentative as hell, could alternatively have shows
week 14




Scene Breakdown

Did it 🕶️



Scene 1: Start to Teucer's Exit (p2-7)



Action: Helen shares the play's background. Teucer enters and informs Helen of recent events (including that Menelaus is probably dead). At Helen's urging, Teucer leaves.

Character/s: Helen, Teucer

Location: Outside the palace of theoclymenus


Time: Dawn

Costumes:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

- 
1. Helen is onstage
 2. Teucer enters from the coast
 3. Teucer exits to the coast



Scene 2: Teucer's Exit to Menelaus' Entrance (p7-14)



Action: Helen, with the Chorus, reflects on Teucer's news and laments her circumstances. Together they go to consult Theonoë.

Character/s: Helen, Chorus

Location: Outside the palace of theoclymenus

Time: Morning

Costumes:

Sound:


Other:

Blocking:

1. Chorus enters from the coast
2. Helen and Chorus Exit to the palace



Scene 3: Menelaus' Entrance to Theonoë's Entrance (p14-28)



Action: Menelaus arrives in Egypt. Helen and Menelaus reunite. They figure out what's happening and plan to escape.

Character/s: Menelaus, Old Woman, Chorus, Helen, Servant

Location: Outside the palace of theoclymenus


Time: midday

Costumes:

Sound: "Everytime we touch"


Other:

Blocking:

- 
1. Menelaus enters from the coast
 2. Old Woman enters from the palace
 3. Old Woman exits to the palace
 4. Chorus and Helen enter from the palace
 5. Servant enters from the coast
 6. Servant exits to the coast



Scene 4: Theonoë's entrance to Helen's Exit (ρ28-35)



Action: Helen and Menelaus beg Theonoë to help them. She agrees. The couple plans their escape.

Character/s: Helen, Menelaus, Theonoë, Chorus

Location: Outside the palace of Theoclymenus


Time: afternoon

Costumes: At scene end Helen removes her wig comically

Sound: Entrance number for Theonoë: "toxic"

Other:

Blocking:

1. Theonoë enters from the palace
 2. Helen and Theonoë exit to the palace
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Scene 5: Helen's exit to Chorus steps out #3 (p35-46)

Action: Theoclymenus comes. Helen and Menelaus play him like a lyre.

Character/s: Chorus, Menelaus, Theoclymenus, Helen

Location: Outside the palace of Theoclymenus

Time: evening

Costumes: Helen is now in black dress; Menelaus changes from rags to swags

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Chorus steps out
2. Enter Theoclymenus from the Coast
3. Enter Helen from the palace
4. Exit Helen, Menelaus, and Theoclymenus to the palace
5. Chorus steps out
6. Enter Helen and Menelaus from the palace
7. Enter Theoclymenus from the palace
8. Helen and Menelaus exit to the coast



Scene 6: Chorus stepping out to end (p46-54)



Action: Theoclymenus learns of Helen's escape. Castor and Pollux set Theoclymenus straight.

Character/s: Chorus, Theoclymenus, Messenger, Castor and Pollux

Location: Outside the palace of Theoclymenus

Time: Sunset

Costumes:

Sound:

Other: Quick-change from Messenger to Castor and Pollux

Blocking:

1. Chorus steps out
2. Enter Messenger from the coast
3. Enter Castor and Pollux from the heavens