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In Greek mythology, Helen was the most beautiful woman from the age of the heroes. She was the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta (one of several Greek kingdoms). After Helen ran away with Paris, prince of Troy, the Greek armies fought a ten year long war against Troy to win her back. The English playwright, Christopher Marlowe, called Helen, "the face that launched a thousand ships."

The Judgement of Paris is the backstory to the Trojan War. When Paris, prince of Troy, is out hunting on the island of Crete, he comes across three goddesses: Aphrodite, goddess of love; Athena, goddess of wisdom; and Hera, the queen of the gods. The goddesses demand that he judges which of them is the most beautiful. When he selects Aphrodite, she promises him the hand of Helen as a reward. Unfortunately Helen is already married to Menelaus, king of Sparta. Later on in the Trojan War, Aphrodite takes the side of the Trojans, while Athena and Hera help the Greeks.

Homer has surprisingly little to say about the Judgment of Paris or the kidnapping of Helen, but he does describe Helen and King Menelaus at home in the Odyssey Book IV. The story of Eris, the Goddess of Strife, is known from the remaining 50 lines of the Kypria, a lost epic of Greek Literature.

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