



Helen, Queen of Sparta

John H. Pollard

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A pretext for war across the sea. . . threats to trade. . . mistreatment of prisoners. . . abuse of the dead. . . upheaval back at home. . . Familiar? This is not today. It's 3,200 years ago, and the 'threat' is Troy - muscling in on Greek shipping coming through the Dardanelles. For the Spartans, and other Greeks, it's enough to merit intervention; and a woman called Helen is the key. John H Pollard's brilliant take on the Helen of Troy saga (rightly called Helen of Sparta, for she was married to King Menelaus) transports us effortlessly through the Trojan War and its aftermath. Our guide is the uniquely placed Eteoneus, Menelaus' Chief Steward, a shrewd, courageous and surprisingly passionate story-teller. Eteoneus' tale is cloak-and-dagger stuff involving mayhem, deceit, bride substitution, divine jealousy and ritual death. But it's also a glorious picture of life and travel and adventure all those years ago, and shows us a fierce, superstitious yet proud people. They had a long history ahead of them, and only a short while here on their fabled earth. In these pages they live again.

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