

PENELOPE

A Play in Three Acts

By

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Cast of Characters

(in order of appearance)

- Eurynome a servant
- Penelope. the queen
- Amphinomos. suitor of Penelope
- Telemachos. her son
- Melantho. a slave
- The Sailor

(Reference is also made to four characters who do not appear on-stage:
Eurymachos, a guest, Medon, the household marshall; Eumaeus, the swineherd;
and Eurycleia, Odysseus's old nurse.)

A pronouncing guide

Ailoia (I-o' lia)

Ailos (I-o' lus)

Amphinomos (Am-fin' -o-mos)

Antinioos (An tin' -o-us)

Dulichion (Do-lick' -eon)

Eumaeus (You-may' us)

Eurycleia (You-rey-klay' ia)

Eurynome (You-rin' a-me)

Laertes (La-air' -tes)

Medon (May' don)

Melantho (Me-lan' tho)

Nausicaa (Now-see' a-a)

Odysseys Laertiades (O-di' see-us La-air'-tee-ah' des)

Penelope (Pe-ne' lo-pe)

Telemachos (Te-le'-ma-kos or Tele-ma'kos)

Setting

The setting is ancient Ithaca, at the palace of Penelope.

The action takes place on one complete day.

Act I. Daybreak

Act II. Noon

Act III. Dusk

Act I, Scene 1.

Penelope's bedchamber

As the action begins the stage is black. It is too dark for the audience to see. From afar comes the distant note of a horn. It dies away. All is blackness. Then cautiously a figure enters, cupping a tiny oil lamp. The flickering light is too low to reveal either the setting or the features of the person entering.

The figure crosses the stage, sets down the lamp and moves to one side, where she throws open the shutters of one window. By a weak dawn light we see it is Eurynome. As the shutter opens the room itself is revealed - wide, spacious, and also spare. Three windows are covered by wooden shutters (one now open, as Eurynome ties it back). At one end of the room is a bed covered with sheepskins, in which Penelope sleeps, and in another corner the shadowed suggestion of a long unused and dusty tapestry frame. These ideas are brought out bit by bit as the light increases in the room, and finally the audience notices as well that Penelope is lying in the bed.

EURYNOME

(throwing back the first shutter) Wake up, wake up! It's a beautiful day.

(For the next few minutes she is preoccupied tying back the shutters, opening and airing the room. She is a woman well along in years, heavy with work, but strong.)

PENELOPE

(stretching in bed) Oh, what a dream I had.

EURYNOME

Look, the storm is over, the sun is shining, and the sky as hard and blue as granite. The wind's shifted too.. It's coming from the mountain now.

PENELOPE

(sniffing the air) The smell of winter snow.