

PENELOPE, By Marmontel, Music by Piccini

Translated and Adapted by Frank J. Morlock C 2003

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PENELOPE, By Marmontel, Music by Piccini

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Etext by Dagny

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ACT I

The stage represents the vestibule of the Palace of Ulysses, and before it a hall where Penelope's suitors are dining.

SUITORS CHORUS: (at the back)

Let's leave the lovers of glory
To seek death or victory
In the most distant climes.
Amongst games and feasts,
A most sweet passion urges us.
God of love, god of intoxication,
You preside over our destinies.

PENELOPE: (at the front of the stage, hearing them)

What's increasing their barbarous mirth today?
Have they most certain information about my misfortune?

CHORUS OF SUITORS: God of love, god of intoxication,
You preside over our destinies.

PENELOPE: Vile and cowardly tyrants, the opprobrium of Greece!

CHORUS: God of love, etc.

PENELOPE: They ceaselessly swim in joy.

And as for me, in sorrow, I feel myself extinguished.

CHORUS: Among games and feasts

God of love, god of intoxication,
You preside over our destinies.

(Enter The Deputies of the People.)

THE DEPUTIES: (to Penelope) A people, overwhelmed with sadness,
Sighingly extends hands to you.

Do you intend for us to lament forever
Under inhuman oppressors?

PENELOPE: (aside) Enslaved people, it's your weakness
Which makes the ills for which I am pitying myself.

DEPUTIES: Give in to the wishes we addresses to you.
Our destinies depend on you.

PENELOPE: Enslaved people, it's your weakness
Which makes the ills for which I am pitying myself.

SUITORS: God of love, god of intoxication,
You are presiding over our destinies.

(The Suitors withdraw.)

PENELOPE: (to the Deputies)

I know your misfortunes, and my courage shares them.

If I have no further hope, if my spouse is dead,
They want me to entangle myself in a new marriage.
On the return of my son, I will submit to my fate.
Don't ask for more.

(The Deputies withdraw.)

PENELOPE: Just gods, avenging gods, are you abandoning us?

Ah! return to me my son, return my spouse to me.

(Air)

Captive Queen,

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Fearful mother,
Spouse in tears,
To what misfortunes
Heaven is delivering me!
Cease, cruel ones, to pursue me
Or I will succumb to my sorrows.
Return my son, return,
Your perils are mine.
If you perish on the ocean
Who will be my support?
Return to your mother the only blessing
That still remains to her in the world.
Return, my son, return,
Your perils are mine.

(Nesus and his followers enter.)

NESUS: Tremble, Queen, tremble that your wish is accomplished.
The snare of death awaits the son of Ulysses.
If he returns, if he lands, he will perish under the waves.

PENELOPE: Telemachus!

NESUS: Witness the darkest conspiracies.
I didn't want to be an accomplice to it
And I am waiting only for a propitious wind
To sail to Delos.

PENELOPE: You let Telemachus perish.

THEONE: You, the only one of twenty kings who make Ithaca shake,
The only one from whom Penelope expected help!

NESUS: I was going to shorten the course of her calamities.
Everything has changed. Her heart refuses itself to my wishes,
Her delays, her evasions are very well known to me.
I no longer wish to nourish a hope that abuses me.
Of whatever wrong she accuses me of,
Let her accuse her scorn.

THEONE: What love!

NESUS: In a generous and sincere heart,
Deceived love changes into a mortal scorn.
But if it's in me that she hopes
To give to Telemachus a defender, a father,
She has only to wish it: I am waiting for her at the altar.

(He leaves.)

PENELOPE: O crime, o detestable wickedness!
In this shocking peril,
What to decide? To whom to turn?
My son, I am reduced to the inevitable choice
Of betraying my spouse or seeing you perish.

CHORUS OF WOMEN: O unhappy mother!
Your son's going to perish.

PENELOPE: O unhappy mother!
To what god to turn?
Alas! if I delay,
My son, you are going to die.
Must I betray your father?

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Must I see you perish?

CHORUS OF WOMEN: O unhappy mother!

Your son's going to perish.

PENELOPE: O unhappy mother!

To what god to turn?

There remains one hope to me; it's that a favorable wind,

Or rather a favorable god,

Is opposing his return and keeping him away from port.

Alas! to what is fate reducing me!

This return, this moment so desirable to me,

Terrifies me more than death.

(Eumaeus enters.)

THEONE: Eumaeus, what brings you around here?

EUMAEUS: Heaven is touched by our tears,

Telemachus is coming back.

PENELOPE: God!

EUMAEUS: On the moist plain

I have recognized the colors of his pavilions.

PENELOPE: O funereal day!—I am dying. (she falls into the arms of her women)

THEONE: Go, wise and faithful friend,

With a swift ship beg for help,

Keep Telemachus away; they are after his life.

EUMAEUS: His life is threatened!

THEONE: In her mortal terror,

The Queen has only you to turn to.

EUMAEUS: Alas! what can my zeal do for him,

In such a great peril and with time so short!

(Eumaeus leaves.)

PENELOPE: (in fright and distress)

It's over with. Death surrounds him.

Today, Nesus alone could

Save him, defend him, and Nesus is abandoning him!

Ah! if there's still time, go, my darling Theone,

Implore his support,

Let him deliver my son, let him return him to his mother.

That's enough; for the reward of a head so dear

I engage myself, or rather, I abandon myself to him.

(Theone leaves.)

CHORUS: From the breast of the saddest alarms

See beautiful days reborn.

Hymen, escorted by Cherubs,

Will soon have dried your tears.

From the breast of the saddest alarms

See beautiful days reborn.

(During this chorus Penelope remains absorbed in her sorrow.)

PENELOPE: What have I promised? ah! unfortunate woman!

Either my spouse is breathing or his shade hears me

From the breast of dark night,

Between the altar and myself, I see who's awaiting me there.

(air)

Yes, there I see, this wandering shade.

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It's himself; yes I see it.
He's plaintive and shivering.
He's terrible and threatening.
Dear shade, approach, appease yourself.
I swore to you to be forever faithful
And for my eternal constancy
I taken all the gods for witness.
But if I am not criminal
Your son is going to perish before my eyes.
(The Suitors enter.)

PENELOPE: Which of you, which of you, perfidious ones,
Is getting ready to strike me in my breast?
Stained with the blood of my son, of which you are avid,
Who will be the assassin of his mother today?

CHORUS OF SUITORS: Who can impute this guilty plan to us?

PENELOPE: Yes, sacrilegious one that you are,
Yes, you've conceived this odious crime
In the breast of your barbarous feasts,
In the palace of Ulysses, in the face of the gods.

CHORUS: The mortal terror
That reigns in your soul
Can instantly calm itself at the altar.
Between twenty kings,
Enflamed by the same ardor,
Make a choice.

Your wishes will be our law.

PENELOPE: (excitedly)

Let my son be returned to me, let him announce it to me himself,
That Ulysses has descended to the night of the tomb.
Henceforth, to protect him, I renounce my word
And I am going to relight the torch of Hymen.

CHORUS OF SUITORS: No, no, it's a trick.

It's a new subterfuge.

PENELOPE: Alas, yet another day.

CHORUS OF SUITORS: No, no, it's another trick.

PENELOPE: O mortal constraint!

CHORUS OF SUITORS: It's a new subterfuge.

PENELOPE: You are freezing me with fear.

CHORUS OF SUITORS: Surrender, surrender without fear
To this most ardent love.

PENELOPE: You freeze me with fear
And you speak of love.!

CHORUS: Surrender, etc.

PENELOPE: Is it necessary to complete my misery,
To deliver to you my estates, my palace, my treasures;
That a ship instantly distance me from these shores?
I will go to Icarus, my father,
To forget all the treasure you have ravished me of.

Only with me let me take my son.
That's a mother's only treasure.

CHORUS OF SUITORS: Name the spouse that your heart prefers.

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And in an instant your tears are going to dry up.

CHORUS OF WOMEN: O unhappy mother!

Your son is going to perish.

PENELOPE: O unhappy mother!

It's for me die. (A symphonic movement announces the arrival of Telemachus)

God! my son!

(Telemachus enters with Eumaeus and the People. Penelope throws herself into his arms.)

TELEMACHUS: At last, august Queen,

Our misfortunes are going to finish: Ulysses is not far away.

PENELOPE: He is living.

TELEMACHUS: Heaven is just

And it has taken care of the life of a hero itself. (air)

Covered with the immortal shield

He's going to return to his estates.

Insult, injury and cruelty

Are going to see their attempts punished.

In terror and silence

Let all abase themselves before him

Far from us, guilty license.

Reassure yourself, weak innocence,

The gods are returning you support.

CHORUS OF SUITORS: (aside) Imprudent youth, your hope

Will be confounded today.

PENELOPE: Gods, protectors of innocence,

You are declaring yourselves today.

CHORUS OF PEOPLE: To the sweet rays of hope

Our hearts are open today.

TELEMACHUS: Reassure yourself, weak innocence,

The gods are returning you their support.

CHORUS OF SUITORS: Imprudent youth, your hope

Will be confounded today.

CURTAIN

ACT II

The stage represents a hamlet where one makes out the old castle of Laertes and the house of Eumaeus. The sea can be seen in the distance.

EUMAEUS: Cease, venerable Laertes,
Cease to lament for the loss
Of a son so long awaited.
He breathes, he's coming back.

LAERTES: Have I really heard it?
Before leaving the light
I will embrace my son! Then it's enough, great gods.
I will join my ancestors without regret amongst the dead
If the hand of my son shuts my eye.
How many ills his absence has caused hereabouts.
But who has just announced the news of his return
To his faithful spouse?

TELEMACHUS: (entering) I, Lord.

LAERTES: Heaven! what do I see? Shall I believe my own eyes?
Dear Prince, object of my tenderness,
Is it you that I am pressing in my weak arms?
How many perils I see you've escaped! (excitedly)
Do you have confidence of the return of my son?
A very insubstantial hope
Hasn't deceived you?

TELEMACHUS: He's returning. Gods and men
All conspire to assure me of it.

LAERTES: (sad and tender) Let him come without delay.
Alas! in the condition we are in
I no longer have the time to hope (air)
In my languishing old age
I see the torch going out.
I'm touching the edge of my tomb
And for me no long wait.
O death: slow down a bit
Leave me a day so fine.

(A crowd of Shepherds enters.)

LAERTES: (excitedly) Come, herdsmen, come congratulate a father.
I will console myself for twenty years of misfortunes.
Heaven's returning a son to me; it wants what I am hoping for.

A SHEPHERD: The rumor of his return has flown to us.

CHORUS AND TELEMACHUS: Adored Prince, what gaiety
You are pouring into all hearts.
Ulysses was seen in Greece;
And you are awaiting him on these shores!

LAERTES WITH THE CHORUS: To their love, to my tenderness,
To our love, to his tenderness,
Beneficent gods, are returning him to you

(The shepherds express their joy through dances. The music announces the approach of a storm. The stage darkens.)

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EUMAEUS: (to Telemachus) Prince, you can observe from the shore
A boat beaten by the waves
And the terror of sailors
Is announcing a violent storm.

(The music expresses the progress of the storm.)

CHORUS: What uproar in the air!
The waves are replying to it!
The heavens and the seas
Already are confounding themselves.
On the foaming ocean,
Gods! what tortures!
What somber horror!
To the roar of thunder
The winds in fury
Are giving themselves to war.
Heaven is spreading
Terror on earth.

TELEMACHUS: How I pity the fate
Of so many victims.

EUMAEUS: Immense abysses
Are offering them death.

TELEMACHUS: O gods! if my father
Were running this danger!

LAERTES: O god! if your father
Were running this danger!

EUMAEUS: O gods! if his father
Were running this danger.

THE THREE: Neptune in wrath
Is going to submerge them.

CHORUS AND THE THREE: What lamentable screams!
What funereal uproar!
The unconquerable billow
Is breaking them and vanishing.

(All withdraw.)

BLACKOUT

SCENE II

The scene represents the grotto of the sea Nymphs.

ULYSSES: (alone) All perished. On to what shore
Are the furious winds hurling me?
Alone, distracted, unarmed, amongst a savage nation,
Am I going to find death or slavery here?
What do I see? Shall I believe my eyes?
Everything reminds me of Ithaca.

Yes, this beautiful place resembles
That beautiful grotto, where on our shores
The chorus of nymphs assembled
And made the air echo with its divine harmonies.

(Ulysses withdraws at the approach of the Nymphs.)

(Enter the Sea Nymphs.)

CHORUS OF NYMPHS: Day is reborn, the winds are quieting down,
A more serene heaven is smiling upon us.

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The air has calmed, the waves are appeased;
On the shore everything is flourishing.
Timid pleasures, reappear,
That terror has dispersed.
Come, tender love, you who guide them,
Come, revive their hearts like the terror that froze them.
(Ulysses reenters.)

ULYSSES: O Nymphs, reassure my timid presence.
Alas! if I believe in the appearance,
I've burned incense for you here a hundred times

A NYMPH:

And who doesn't know the shores from which you are descending!
The name of Ithaca and its glory
Are borne by victory
Unto the farthest climes.

ULYSSES: Beautiful nymph, is it true? you are not flattering me?
And am I, indeed, in Ithaca?
Laertes, Penelope, and her son Telemachus,
Are they living? Are they peacefully united?

NYMPH: Violence and injustice
Threaten mother and son.

CHORUS OF NYMPHS: Go see them again, prudent Ulysses,
Dissimulate, observe, and punish.

NYMPH: Minerva, has imprinted old age on your face
To deceive the eyes of your court.

CHORUS: Arm yourself with a fearless heart
And, especially, defend yourself against tears of love.

(The Nymphs leave.)

ULYSSES: (alone) What misfortune is again predicted to me?
Haven't I suffered enough?

Penelope, o you that I adore!
And you my son, at your dawn,
Far from me, what abyss has opened beneath your feet?

What misfortune is again predicted to me?
Haven't I suffered enough?

Ithaca! o my sweet homeland!

I've sighed only for you.

I've seen you again, cherished isle,
And I cannot see you without terror!

I escaped the sea in its fury,
Calm is finally reborn in me;

I've seen you again, cherished isle,
And I cannot see you without terror.

What misfortune, etc.

Who's coming to me in this shore?

(Enter Telemachus and Eumaeus.)

TELEMACHUS: Worthy stranger, wasn't it you
That we saw hurled on this shore by a shipwreck?

Ah! It was some god who rescued you
From that horrible danger.

ULYSSES: Yes, young man, yes, this prodigy is the work of the gods;

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And as unfortunate as I am

I experience the blessings as much as I can.

TELEMACHUS: Hasten to calm our mortal fears

In this ship broken by the winds in their wrath.

A hero, the object of our tears,

Ulysses, was he with you?

ULYSSES: I know he was voyaging towards Ithaca.

TELEMACHUS: Did the gods separate him?

ULYSSES: Then it's here that he reigned?

TELEMACHUS: You see his son Telemachus.

You see his faithful friend.

ULYSSES: You, his son!

TELEMACHUS: Ah! speak. Your heart shook.

ULYSSES: Alas! what mortal stain

I bring to your sensitive hearts.

Will your mother survive it?

He is—

TELEMACHUS: Don't finish. I see all our misfortunes.

EUMAEUS: Then it's true! The gods have ended his life.

TELEMACHUS: All hope is ravished from me.

My too weak youth was expecting everything from him;

And amongst the dangers with which it is pursued,

Here I am henceforth without guide and without support!

ULYSSES: (aside) Delightful moment! joy worthy of being envied!

EUMAEUS: Eh! what! the last one of his ships

Which had defied the rage of winds and seas

Has just broken up on this shore

And my unfortunate Master perished under the waves!

ULYSSES: He saw the shipwreck without weakness and without fear

And braved death with an intrepid eye.

But, alas! what can courage do

Against the order of the gods and the decrees of fate.

TELEMACHUS: O my father!

EUMAEUS: O my master!

TELEMACHUS: Cruel fate!

EUMAEUS: Frightful day!

EUMAEUS AND TELEMACHUS: (together)

Who will be happy?

Ulysses couldn't be.

ULYSSES: (aside) Ah! what father, ah! what master

Was ever more lucky!

TELEMACHUS I've lost my model,

I've lost my support.

EUMAEUS: His faithful spouse

Was living only for him.

ULYSSES: What happiness, today

She was expecting him by her!

TELEMACHUS AND EUMAEUS: He no longer exists for her.

She can no longer exist without him.

ULYSSES: He is happy still

If he's living in all hearts.

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TELEMACHUS AND EUMAEUS: If he's living in all hearts!

And you, you still doubt it,

You, seeing our tears?

He's a god one adores.

ULYSSES: (aside) I feel my tears pouring out.

EUMAEUS: How to offer ourselves

To the eyes of the Queen?

TELEMACHUS: O gods! what pain

Her heart is going to suffer!

TOGETHER: Very faithful witness

Of our misfortune,

From pity for her,

Deceive her sorrow.

ULYSSES: (aside) My soul staggers;

A troublesome conqueror

Distracts me and is betraying

The depths of my heart. (end of trio)

Open your eyes, my dear Eumaeus.

EUMAEUS: What am I hearing? My soul was accustomed to that voice.

Telemachus! O beneficent gods!

Why, no, it's not him: this extreme age,

These hairs whitened by the years—

ULYSSES: It's him; it's Ulysses himself.

TELEMACHUS: (struck with astonishment and distracted by joy)

My father!

ULYSSES: In vain, Minerva wanted to hide me

Under all the features of age.

Come, recognize your father in the tender tears

That love and joy are tearing from me.

TELEMACHUS: (in the arms of Ulysses)

Father! Finally, I see the author of my being.

ULYSSES: Let's moderate these distractions, and keep silent

Before announcing my return.

My uneasy vigilance

Intends to observe everything in my court.

EUMAEUS: Ah! beware the violence of our proud tyrants.

ULYSSES: Your tyrants!

EUMAEUS: Oppressed Ithaca laments

Under twenty kings, your unworthy rivals.

Penelope, consumed by troubles and trembling,

Sees them delivered endlessly to a thousand new excesses.

ULYSSES: (aside) Ah! let my hand be armed with my vengeful darts

And I am going to crown my labors with their death.

My son, danger is surrounding me.

What will you do for me?

TELEMACHUS: (excitedly) Command. By your side,

Father, a thousand deaths would not astound me.

I witness the gods and the blood from which I come.

ULYSSES: If we are loved, we will be very strong.

The rumor of my death, that we are going to spread,

These white hairs, these features that Minerva has distorted,

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These kings whose imprudence is easy to surprise,
My son, all answer to me, that we will be avenged. (air)
May vengeance march slowly
Under an impenetrable veil.
You shall perish, execrable troupe
And all my blows will be bloody.
We won't show to your insolent eyes
Anything but a weak and miserable old geezer.
May vengeance march slowly
Under an impenetrable veil.

ULYSSES, TELEMACHUS AND EUMAEUS:

Let vengeance march slowly
Under an impenetrable veil.
You shall perish, execrable troupe,
And all our blows will be bloody.

CURTAIN

ACT III

The stage represents a room in the Palace of Ulysses.

ULYSSES: Is she finally going to appear?

TELEMACHUS: She's coming on my heels.

ULYSSES: I want to be alone with her.

Leave us alone and spread the news

Of my death.

TELEMACHUS: You are going to tear apart her tender, faithful heart.

ULYSSES: Obey, my son, and don't hesitate.

(Telemachus leaves.)

ULYSSES: (alone) What haven't I suffered, to see her in silence

Endure the humiliating ostentation of these kings?

What haven't I suffered, to see their insolence

Insult the misfortune of a suppliant old geezer? (air)

Ah! how painful is prudence

Between wrath and love,

What torment for a heart to choke, turn by turn,

A burning rage, a pitiful sensibility!

Twenty times my eyes covered themselves

As with a cloud of tears.

And twenty times I shook not to have my weapons

To exterminate these perverts.

Don't go forgetting the advice of Minerva,

Ulysses! they're listening to you, they're observing you.

Here's the moment to employ

The great art of dissimulation.

Command your looks, compose your face,

Forbid your tears to shed.

Here she is! What a moment! And what am I going to tell her?

(Enter Penelope and women in her following.)

PENELOPE: Come closer, I respect age and its misfortune.

You see us in sorrow

But our ills are going to end, since Ulysses is breathing.

Then he's left Corcyra?

You saw him?

ULYSSES: I said the simple truth.

PENELOPE: Didn't you learn from his mouth

What interests him and what touches me?

ULYSSES: I know that he suffered harsh adversity;

I know that far from his country,

Cast from peril to peril for a long while

In the horror of battles, on infuriated seas,

Your cherished image

Never left him for a single moment.

PENELOPE: Ah! how guilty I would be,

If, far from him, my heart had been capable

Of a moment of tranquility. (air)

Since the moment of our parting

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I haven't ceased to see Ulysses,
And for my torture, his dangers
Are all present to my eyes.
Wind, water, sword, flame,
All that can threaten a mortal's life,
Bring terror to my heart.

Sometimes I hoped, but always, I was afraid.

ULYSSES: The more painful glory is, the greater its charms.
Sometimes Ulysses enjoyed it.

On the tomb of Achilles, in the midst of twenty kings,
He battled for the arms of Achilles against proud Ajax.

PENELOPE: And as soon as they heard his eloquent voice
He doubtless triumphed.

ULYSSES: He made tears flow
And softened hearts recognized his rights.

PENELOPE: You don't astonish me. My Ulysses possesses
In the art of persuasion a charm that all surrender to.

ULYSSES: Under the walls of Ilion, now covered with ashes,
Companion of heroes, he won their esteem.
But new dangers were awaiting him at sea
He saw the frightful abyss of Sylla and Caribydis.

PENELOPE: O gods!

ULYSSES: The roaring waves bore him on their peaks
Between two open gulfs.

PENELOPE: Ah! his past perils make me shiver once more.

ULYSSES: Circe, who could dim day that
Her father the Sun god caused to bloom,
Saw Ulysses in danger and deigned to welcome him.

PENELOPE: Circe!

ULYSSES: Through a sweet intoxication
The perfidious woman tried to obscure his reason
But Ulysses avoided the poison
Of the enchantress's cup.

PENELOPE: (air) You knew how much my tenderness
Must wish for your return,
My dear Ulysses! and wisdom
Will preserve you less than love.

ULYSSES: More sincere, and more dangerous, Calypso,
In her happy isle,
Invited your spouse to immortality.

PENELOPE: Ah! how to resist the charms of a loving woman
Who proposes such a reward for infidelity!

ULYSSES: A charming Nymph, a bewitching abode,
The fate of gods, Ulysses left them all for you.

PENELOPE: It's my happiness to believe it.
Doubt was too cruel.

No, no, he hasn't lost
The memory of a mutual love.
No, the wisest of mortals
Will not have betrayed the altars,
His faith, my love, and his glory.

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It's my happiness to believe him

The most faithful of mortals.

(Enter the Suitors, Eumaeus, Nesus.)

NESUS: Finally, the funereal fate of Ulysses

Is no longer doubtful; he's descended to the home of the dead.

PENELOPE: What are you daring to say?

SUITOR: He just perished on these shores.

And it's this stranger who attests to it.

PENELOPE: Him!

ULYSSES: (to Nesus) Cruelty! Ah! why dispel her error.

PENELOPE: Ulysses is dead!

ULYSSES: I fled the deplorable remains

Of his ship, broken by the winds in their fury.

PENELOPE: Old Geezer, they've probably enticed you to overwhelm me.

Already, to humor these kings,

Strangers more than once

Have used the same language.

Man, in misfortune, is so weak at your age

And over him fear and hope

Sometimes have too much power!

Intimidated, seduced by these kings, perhaps

Without knowing him, you are conspiring.

Ah! you don't know what heart you are tearing apart.

If it's only a mistake, let me know it.

There is still time, yet. But life, or my death,

Depends on you, don't doubt it.

A word, a single word decides it.

I see you are softening; you seem to me to be hiding from me

The horror that inspires in you a perfidious plot.

You pity it, this heart that they want to snatch from me.

From pity of my life that you are going to shorten,

Speak. Here, where the majesty of gods resides:

You are running no danger under their eyes.

Be sincere in confidence.

Is Ulysses living? My sickly hope,

Should it revive or die?

ULYSSES: (low) O gods! sustain my courage.

(aloud) Queen, you are insulting my humility.

PENELOPE: Good old man, pardon, I am doing you an outrage;

Yet, I admit it, a confused movement

Is obstinately rising against you in my heart.

I am questioning your eyes, your features, your language,

Everything there depicts candor to me. Well, at this moment

I don't know what voice in secret gives you the lie.

For me, perhaps, it's a weak omen!

But alarmed a hundred times, and always in vain,

What proof urges me to believe you today?

ULYSSES: Alas! how vain your suspicions

And how really easy it is to elucidate this cloud!

Queen, on your fidelity, recognize the token

That Ulysses left in my hands.

PENELOPE, By Marmontel, Music by Piccini

PENELOPE: The ring of Ulysses! O gods! o pitiless fate!
I can no longer doubt my misfortune.

ULYSSES Ah! Think how much it cost me
To announce this terrifying misfortune to you.

PENELOPE: (air) He is horrible, he is evil,
He didn't know about my heart.
Who never loved like I love
Cannot conceive my misfortune.
So long as the weakest semblance
Could flatter me in my suffering
Life had appeal for me;
But a misfortune without hope
Is only a long and painful death
He is horrible, etc.

TELEMACHUS: Gods! she's succumbing. My mother! (holding her in his arms and looking at Ulysses)
Is there no more to be hoped?

PENELOPE: What do you want me to hope?
He saw his shipwreck, and you heard him.
No, I no longer have a spouse, no, you no longer have a father.
My son, we've lost everything.
O heaven! This is the share of virtue!
After all the dangers he just ran,
He came to perish on the shores that saw his birth.
Go, Eumaeus, go, search the shore
And among the debris rejected by the waves
Gather on the beach
The sacred remains of a hero.
At least let my sorrow ease itself by honoring him. (Eumaeus leaves)
You, my son, let a tomb be raised to his shade.
It will be drenched every day by my tears.

ULYSSES: Prince, don't forget to hang his arms on it.

PENELOPE: Alas! It's a fine enough trophy for his glory. (to Suitors)
And you who are rejoicing in the misfortune that overwhelms me,
Since, in the end, heaven is implacable,
Forcing me to renounce these fetters so dear to me
At the foot of this tomb that my people are erecting,
It's there that I intend that they hear
What I have promised to announce.

CHORUS OF SUITORS: Queen, fate is commanding you:
There's no longer time to hesitate.
(The Suitors withdraw.)

ULYSSES: What have you decided?

PENELOPE: My death; I am reduced to it,
It's my only hope and I intend to have recourse to it.

CHORUS OF WOMEN: O gods! You're a mother and you intend to die!

PENELOPE: I intend to free myself from a frightful pursuit.

ULYSSES: A son still remains to you: he can aid you.

PENELOPE: Alas! they are threatening him in the arms of his mother.

ULYSSES: They are threatening him!

PENELOPE: And it's for him
That they made me tremble today.

PENELOPE, By Marmontel, Music by Piccini

ULYSSES: (in an imposing tone)
Heaven is at last ridding itself of these no goods
You will see your tyrants fall.

PENELOPE: (astonished) And what god will accomplish this miracle?

ULYSSES: (in an inspired tone)
Ulysses predicted it: trust in this oracle;
The future unveils itself to the eyes of the dying.
Live, Queen, live; he himself orders it.
Yes, I am coming to reveal his supreme will.
It will make your odious tyrants tremble.

PENELOPE: Ah! what unknown trouble you are tossing into my soul!
Under the features of a mortal, are you one of the gods?

ULYSSES: Mortal though I be, I predict that before your eyes,
Like a flaming arrow, the vengeance of heaven
Is soon going to arrive.

PENELOPE: Yes, it's some god who is inspiring him.
I can no longer doubt it.

ULYSSES: Follow me then without hesitation,
And this I dare to predict to you,
Come see it executed.

(They leave together.)

CURTAIN

SCENE II

The stage represents a public square; the tomb of Ulysses in the middle of it. Telemachus is present.

CHORUS OF THE PEOPLE OF ITHACA: Let's weep for the wisest of kings.

The world is full of his glory.
We will no longer live under his laws.
Of his virtues, of his exploits
Let's preserve the memory forever.
We will no longer live under his laws.

(Enter Penelope, Ulysses and the Suitors.)

PENELOPE: Son of Ulysses, and you people, a venerable old man,
Witness to his deplorable fate,
Comes to bring our hearts the most sensitive blows.
He says, he received Ulysses' supreme will
Which he's coming to announce to me before you.
There's nothing under heaven more sacred for us.
But I intend for him to attest to it, with an oath right there
On the tomb of my spouse.

ULYSSES: (after having mounted the steps of the tomb on which he rests his hand)
Yes, I attest to the death of inflexible tyrants,
On the tomb of Ulysses and his terrible armor,
That he was unable without shaking to know you were in danger,
That he pitied your misfortunes,
And that he's coming to avenge them.

PENELOPE, THE SUITORS, THE PEOPLE: Heaven!

ULYSSES: (to the Suitors) Tremble, wretches, recognize Ulysses!

GENERAL CHORUS: Ulysses! o gods!

ULYSSES: (to his son and to the people of Ithaca)
For their death,
Take arms, take arms.

PENELOPE, By Marmontel, Music by Piccini

(He distributes weapons to them.)

CHORUS OF PEOPLE AND SUITORS:

Let's arm ourselves, let's arm ourselves.

(The Suitors distance themselves; Ulysses and his partisans cross the stage and leave the same, following the suitors.)

PENELOPE: Ah! the excess of my joy overcomes my weakness.

CHORUS WITH PENELOPE: It's him! It's Ulysses! great gods!

CHORUS OF PEOPLE OFF STAGE: Fall, audacious tyrants!

PENELOPE: Alas! in what worry he's leaving me!

CHORUS ON STAGE: Protect us, wise goddess,

Ulysses is fighting before your eyes.

CHORUS OFF STAGE: Fall, audacious tyrants.

SUITORS: Let's flee the danger that's rushing on us.

Ulysses has all the gods for him.

CHORUS OFF STAGE: Fall under his vengeful hand,

Fall, audacious tyrants.

CHORUS ON STAGE: Protect us, wise goddess!

Ulysses is fighting under your eyes.

PENELOPE: (rushing to Ulysses who enters with Telemachus, Laertes, Eumaeus, and his followers)

At last I'm pressing you in my arms!

ULYSSES: (to Penelope)

Your wrongs are avenged, your tyrants are punished. (to Laertes)

Nothing will further afflict your august old age,

Father, and beautiful days will still be the reward

Of virtues whose example instructed my youth.

Let's render thanks to the gods who have reunited us.

PENELOPE: Ah, what a moment for my tenderness!

ULYSSES, PENELOPE, TELEMACHUS, LAERTES: (together)

Immortal gods! And you, Minerva, and you,

My tutelary Divinity

His tutelary divinity!

How many prayers! how many altars! how much incense I owe you!

ULYSSES: Penelope!

LAERTES: (to Ulysses) Ulysses!

ULYSSES: (to Telemachus) My son!

PENELOPE: Dear Ulysses!

TELEMACHUS: (to Ulysses) My father!

THE FOUR: I'm finally seeing you again!

Ah! how many charms for me

This day, this fine day which shines on me!

PENELOPE: Ah! what wife! Ah! what mother

Will be happier than me!

ULYSSES: What son, what husband, and what father

Was ever as happy as I!

TELEMACHUS: What son, in the arms of his father,

Was ever as happy as I!

PENELOPE AND LAERTES: (to Ulysses)

What son, what husband, and what father

Was ever as beloved as you!

GENERAL CHORUS: Immortal gods! and you, Minerva, and you,

His tutelary divinity!

PENELOPE, By Marmontel, Music by Piccini

Protect, defend, preserve, this good king.

A general ballet ends the Opera.

CURTAIN