

**ANNE PEDERSDOTTER;
A DRAMA IN
FOUR ACTS**

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Anne Pedersdotter; a drama in four acts by Hans Wiers-Jenssen & John Masefield

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HANS WIERS-JENSSEN & JOHN MASEFIELD

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A DRAMA IN
FOUR ACTS**



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ANNE PEDERSDOTTER

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ANNE PEDERSDOTTER

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

BY
H. WIERS-JENSSEN

ENGLISH VERSION BY
JOHN MASEFIELD



BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1917

CHARACTERS

ABSOLON PEDERSSON BEYER...	Palace Chaplain, Bergen; 60 years
MARTIN.....	His son by former marriage; 25 years
MERETE BEYER.....	His mother; 80 years
ANNE PEDERSDOTTER.....	His wife; 22-23 years
JENS SCHELOTRUP.....	Bishop
MASTER KLAUS.....	Priest in Manger
MASTER LAURENTIUS.....	Priest in Fjeldberg
MASTER JOHANNES.....	Priest in Fane
MASTER JORGEN.....	Priest in St. Martin's Church, Bergen
DAVID.....	Choirmaster
LEADER OF TOWN GUARDS	
HERLOFS-MARTE	
BENTE }	Maid servants in Absolon Pedersson's house
JORUND }	
SACRISTAN	
PRIESTS, OFFICIALS, GUARDS, CLERKS, MEN, WOMEN, and CHILDREN	

The action takes place in Bergen in the year 1574: the first three Acts in Absolon's house, the last in the choir of the Cathedral.

ANNE PEDERSDOTTER

THE FIRST ACT

SCENE ONE

Bells at start. Garden at the back of Absolon Beyer's house. To the right (for the audience) the house, with porch before it; three or four steps lead up to this porch from the garden. Farther in the background is an outhouse. A narrow passage runs between the house and this outbuilding. To the left, in the foreground, a simple wooden table; behind it a bench, and at each end a chair. Trees. In the background a wall stretches across the stage; in the wall is a large gateway with a single, iron-studded wooden door. The arched gateway, as well as the whole wall, is capped with tiles. A couple of steps lead from the gate down into the garden. Outside the wall are seen the street, a mountain, and the sky. The wall extends to the left, where it can just be seen between the trees.

It is an afternoon in the early spring. Near the close of the first act the twilight falls. As the curtain rises, bells are heard ringing.

Anne Pedersdotter, Merete Beyer, Bente sit at the table to the left, mending clothes. From a large beer-jug they take a draught now and then. Anne sits farthest to the right. Merete and Bente on the bench. In the speeches of the two old women there is an undercurrent of venom far more bitter than the words they utter, and at the same time an anxious cautiousness lest they should venture too far.

MERETE (*holding a shift up to the light*)

This shift of yours is worn very thin, Anne Pedersdotter. It's no use putting in another patch. (*Lays it down. Begins on skirt*)

BENTE (*tentatively*)

Anne Pedersdotter has a fancy for that old shift.

MERETE

Ah? Why?

BENTE (*still working*)

It's one of the two she brought with her when she came here as a bride.

[*Anne bends lower over her work.*]

MERETE (*looks at Anne, and feeling that it is best to draw in her horns, says to Bente*)

Ah, be quiet, Bente. My son's wife came of good stock, though they were poor.

BENTE

Well, well. I say nothing against anybody. No shame in being poor. If only one has one's good name and that. (*Drinks*)

MERETE

If my son's wife were less of a suffering martyr, she'd snap your head off, Bente. You're too bitter with her. You nag her all day long. It's too much, Bente. Leave the girl alone, or you and I'll fall out.

BENTE

Tut, Merete Beyer. We've been friends these fifty years. You and I aren't going to quarrel for Anne Pedersdotter.

ANNE (*lays aside her work, and rising*)

Thank you for standing up for me, Merete. You needn't bother yourself. Bente's words don't concern me in the least.

BENTE

Why should they concern you? I've been used to say what was at the end of my tongue. (*To Merete*)
When I was with your sainted husband — God rest his soul — and (*to Anne*) when the sainted Vibeke was mistress here, what I said wasn't so lightly held. Well, well. They say an old back doesn't fit new harness.

MERETE (*looks at Anne to see if she will retort. But she remains silent*)

That may be, Bente. But nor does a new wife fit an old house. Remember that, Bente.

[*Bente growls. Anne goes to back of S. Bells ring.*]

MERETE

Where are you going? (*Anne does not answer*) Did you hear me?

ANNE

Yes.

MERETE

Where are you going?

ANNE

Nowhere.

MERETE

Have you darned the hose yet?

ANNE

No.

MERETE

I don't leave my work unfinished.

ANNE

I must move about. The air's close. It's stifling.

BENTE

Spring air generally is.