

THE SOOTHSAYER

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The soothsayer by Verner von Heidenstam & Karoline M. Knudsen

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VERNER VON HEIDENSTAM & KAROLINE M. KNUDSEN

THE SOOTHSAYER

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BY

VERNER VON HEIDENSTAM

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM THE SWEDISH BY

KAROLINE M. KNUDSEN

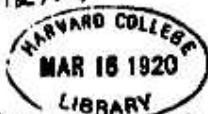


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THE SOOTHSAYER

PERSONS REPRESENTED

APOLLO

As God of Prophecy and as God of Punishment

THE ERINYES

The Fates: many in number

EYRYTUS, *The Soothsayer*

ERIGONE, *his wife*

THEANO, *his mother*

FILEAS, *their servant*

GREY-BEARD, *a herdsman.*

PALE-FACE, *another herdsman*

OTHER HERDSMEN

SCENE

Arcadia, near the north-east border

TIME

Some years before the Persian Invasion

The Battle of Salamis, [B. C. 480]

THE SOOTHSAYER

AN ARCADIAN PLAIN

*[A laurel-grove.
Between the slender
branches, there
appears a hilly green-
sward.*

At the left: a tent.

*At the right: a low
altar, built up of
stones, placed one
upon another.*

*Smoke rises in a
column from the sac-
rificial offering half-
burnt.]*

* * *

*[Eurytus and Eri-
gone, with a basket of
flowers, are kneeling
in front of the altar.*

*Between these two
stands Theano, her
hands upon their
heads.*

*Behind her kneels
Fileas.]*

* * *

THEANO

Eros! Eros!

EURYTUS, ERIGONE, AND FILEAS

Eros!

THEANO

Old am I . . . tottering on the brink of the
grave; but yet have I lips with which to call thy
name, O Eros!

ALL

Eros!

THEANO

My son has taken into his tent a wife; to thee
and to thy care commit I my children and all their
offspring. What more can a mother desire for
her children than their welfare!

EURYTUS

[softly]

What is that, mother? I hear the twanging
of citherns and the tread of dancing feet.

[8]

THEANO

Always thou hearest so much that we others
do never perceive.

FILEAS

Even when Eurytus was so little that I bare
him in my arms, he heard citterns and dance-
steps.

THEANO

Then oughtest thou, as a faithful servant, to
have admonished him against such delusions.

EURYTUS

Mother!

THEANO

[*more loudly*]

Eros! Much can my children and their off-
spring go without—never without thee.

EURYTUS

Mother!

THEANO

Against other gods may they revolt—never
against thee. Stay thou but near them, and their
lowly tent shall be to them more goodly than all
of earth's splendours.

[9]