

rather than be forced to sleep. On the other hand, it is also observable that Penelope's situation changes each time after she wakes from her sleep. In this instance for example, Athena is putting her to sleep in order to give her the opportunity to outwit her suitors and aid Athena's revenge plan by endowing her with knowledge of fair handiwork, an understanding heart, and stratagems. In other words, Athena uses Penelope as a tool to bring peace to Ithaca along with Odysseus. This is an example of how Homer himself treated the female characters of the epic, as he has used such a powerful character to help the plot move along, potentially giving them the power to let the story unfold, women clearly are a necessary asset to the epic.

By keeping the suitors at bay thanks to Athena's plan for justice and peace, Penelope is shown to be powerful as she manipulates her suitors.

Look here, for three years now, getting on to four,
she's played it fast and loose with all our hearts,
building each man's hopes-
dangling promises, dropping hints to each-
but all the while with something else in mind. (II, 95-100)

Here Antinous acknowledges the fact that Penelope is a manipulative character, but this is in her favor and is not mistreated for that in any way, in fact what appears to happen is quite the opposite. She is providing food and shelter to her 'guests', which makes her an ideal hostess as she follows the customs of her society. As readers we are aware that she cannot defeat the suitors on her own as she doesn't have enough knowledge of violence, therefore her only option of