



# The Penelopiad

*Margaret Atwood*

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As portrayed in Homer's *Odyssey*, Penelope - wife of Odysseus and cousin of the beautiful Helen of Troy - has become a symbol of wifely duty and devotion, enduring twenty years of waiting when her husband goes to fight in the Trojan War. As she fends off the attentions of a hundred greedy suitors, travelling minstrels regale her with news of Odysseus' epic adventures around the Mediterranean - slaying monsters and grappling with amorous goddesses. When Odysseus finally comes home, he kills her suitors and then, in an act that served as little more than a footnote in Homer's original story, inexplicably hangs Penelope's twelve maids.

Now, Penelope and her chorus of wronged maids tell their side of the story in a new stage version by Margaret Atwood, adapted from her own wry, witty and wise novel.

*The Penelopiad* premiered with the Royal Shakespeare Company in association with Canada's National Arts Centre at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, in July 2007.

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