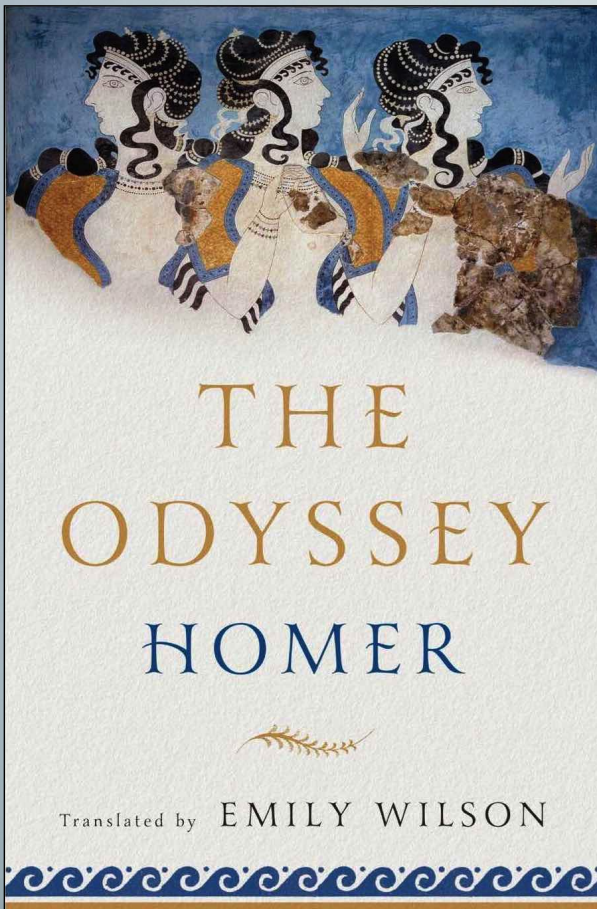


BIG READ

alike Catalog 2019-2020

This catalog contains our recommendations for books that might appeal to readers who enjoyed *The Odyssey*.

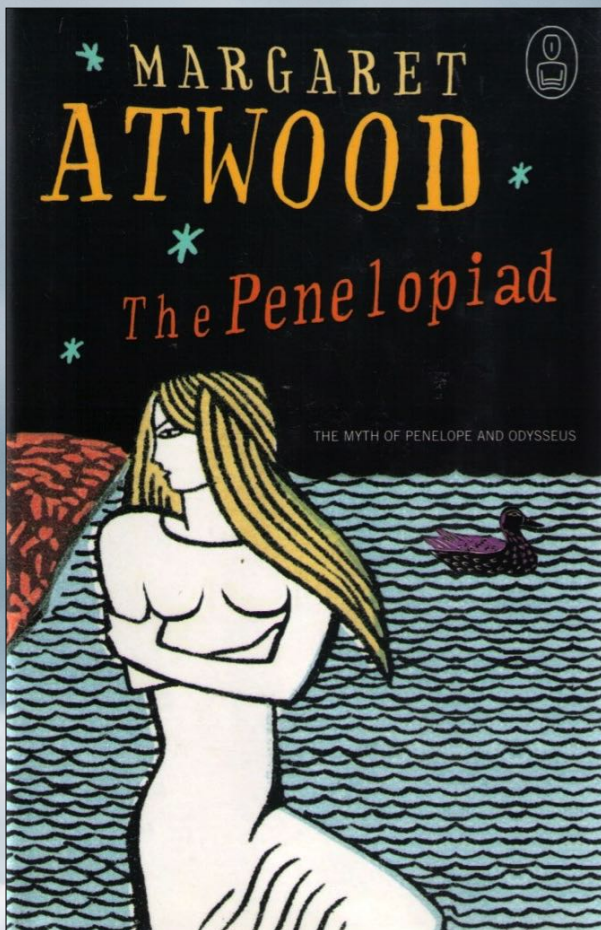


The Odyssey (2017)

translated by Emily Wilson

In this, the first English translation of *The Odyssey* by a woman, Emily Wilson relays what has been described as “the first great adventure story in the Western canon.” Homer’s *The Odyssey* is a poem that explores the ramifications of war and violence, the intricacies of marriage and family, and the magnetism of wealth and power through one hero’s journey and subsequent search for home. Wilson’s translation, which matches the number of lines in the Greek original, conveys this stirring tale of shipwrecks, monsters, and magic in iambic pentameter verse while proving accessible for contemporary audiences. It is a major poetic accomplishment in its own right.

“A revelation. Never have I been so aware at once of the beauty of the poetry, the physicality of Homer’s world, and the moral ambiguity of those who inhabit it. [Wilson’s] decisions to discard flowery conventions, and to limit herself to the number of lines in the original poem, produce a version both fleet and vivid.” —*The New York Times* (12 Dec. 2017)



The Penelopiad (2005)

by Margaret Atwood

"In a splendid contemporary twist to the ancient story, Margaret Atwood has chosen to give the telling of it to Penelope and to her twelve hanged Maids, asking: "What led to the hanging of the maids, and what was Penelope really up to?" In Atwood's dazzling, playful retelling, the story becomes as wise and compassionate as it is haunting, and as wildly entertaining as it is disturbing. With wit and verve, drawing on the storytelling and poetic talent for which she herself is renowned, she gives Penelope new life and reality."

— Penguin Random House

"Atwood's brilliance emerges in the skillful way she's woven her own research on the anthropological underpinnings of Homer's epic into the patterns of her own stylized version of the poem." — *All Things Considered*

"Atwood takes Penelope's part with tremendous verve.... She explores, through the figures of Odysseus and Penelope, the very nature of mythic storytelling." — *The Guardian*

216 pp.

Circe (2018)

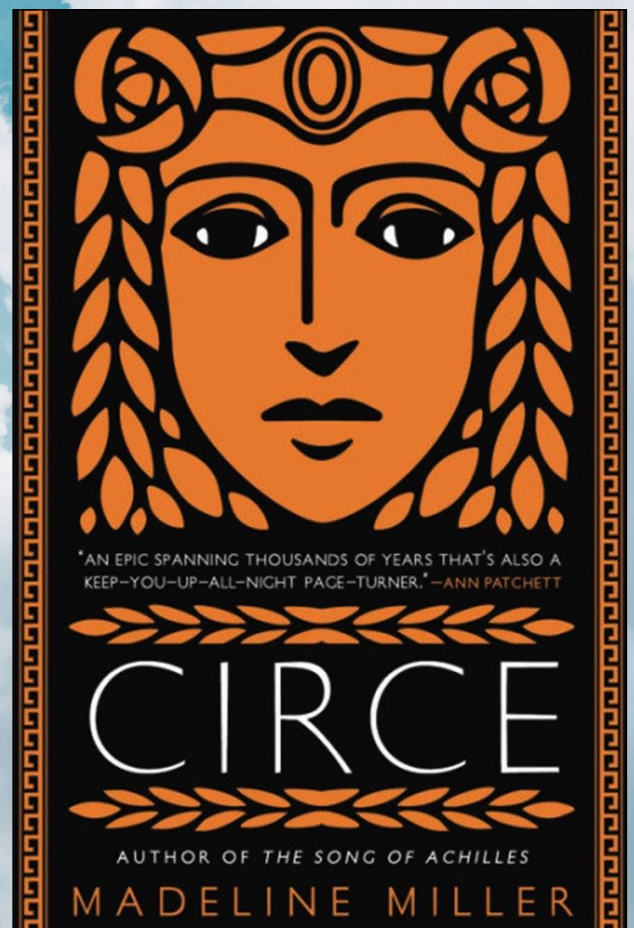
by Madeline Miller

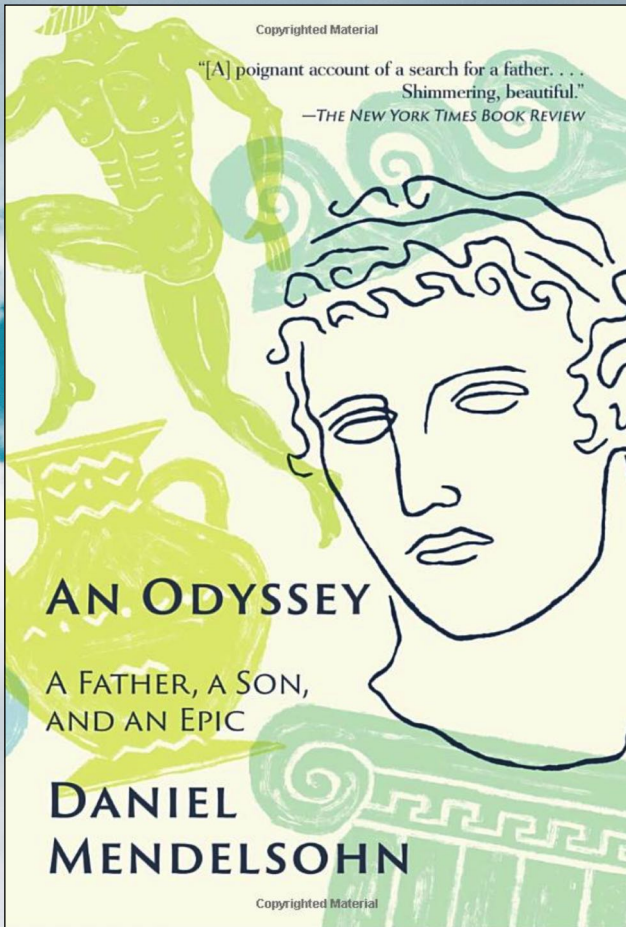
"With unforgettably vivid characters, mesmerizing language and page-turning suspense, *Circe* is a triumph of storytelling, an intoxicating epic of family rivalry, palace intrigue, love and loss, as well as a celebration of indomitable female strength in a man's world." — Little, Brown, & Co.

"A bold and subversive retelling of the goddess's story that manages to be both epic and intimate in its scope, recasting the most infamous female figure from the *Odyssey* as a hero in her own right." — *New York Times*

"In Miller's spellbinding second novel, *Circe*, the golden goddess of the title knows that history will remember her unkindly: 'Humbling women seems to me a chief pastime of poets.'... Miller has created a daring feminist take on a classic narrative; although the setting is a mystical world of gods, monsters, and nymphs, the protagonist at its heart is like any of us." — *Oprah Magazine*

393 pp.





An Odyssey: A Father, a Son, and an Epic (2017)

by Daniel Mendelsohn

"As this intricately woven memoir builds to its wrenching climax, Mendelsohn's narrative comes to echo the *Odyssey* itself, with its timeless themes of deception and recognition, marriage and children, the pleasures of travel and the meaning of home." — Knopf Doubleday

"There have been plenty of gimmicky books about returning to the classics and unearthing the contemporary implications and timeless wisdom therein. This sharply intelligent and deeply felt work operates on an entirely different level—several of them, in fact.... A well-told story that underscores the power of storytelling." — *Kirkus Reviews*

"Memoirs about reading are an interesting hybrid, located somewhere between criticism and personal recollection. *An Odyssey* is a stellar contribution to the genre.... A thoughtful book from which non-classicists will learn a great deal about Homer." — *The Guardian*

302 pp.

The Lost Books of the Odyssey

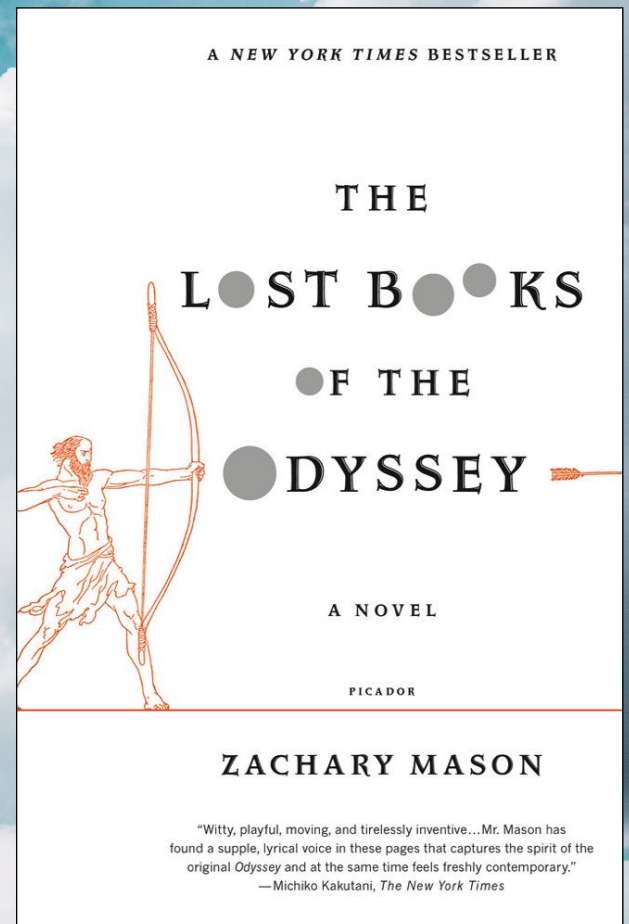
(2010) by Zachary Mason

"With hypnotic prose, terrific imagination, and dazzling literary skill, Mason creates alternative episodes, fragments, and revisions of Homer's original that, taken together, open up this classic Greek myth to endless reverberating interpretations." — Macmillan

"As the tales from 'the lost books' accumulate, the effect is both poignant and unsettling—there is a repetitive fever-dream effect as Odysseus returns home over and over, sometimes greeted by Penelope, sometimes not. The stories' wonderful variety reflects the cunning, resourceful character of Odysseus himself." — *The Wall Street Journal*

"At its best, Mason's novel, with its yearning parade of *nostoi*, or homecomings, reminds us of the indeterminacy of stories, the play between fate and free will, and the enduring power of that cool tactician, that teller of tales, that master of exploits, that long-enduring man, Odysseus." — *The Guardian*

240 pp.



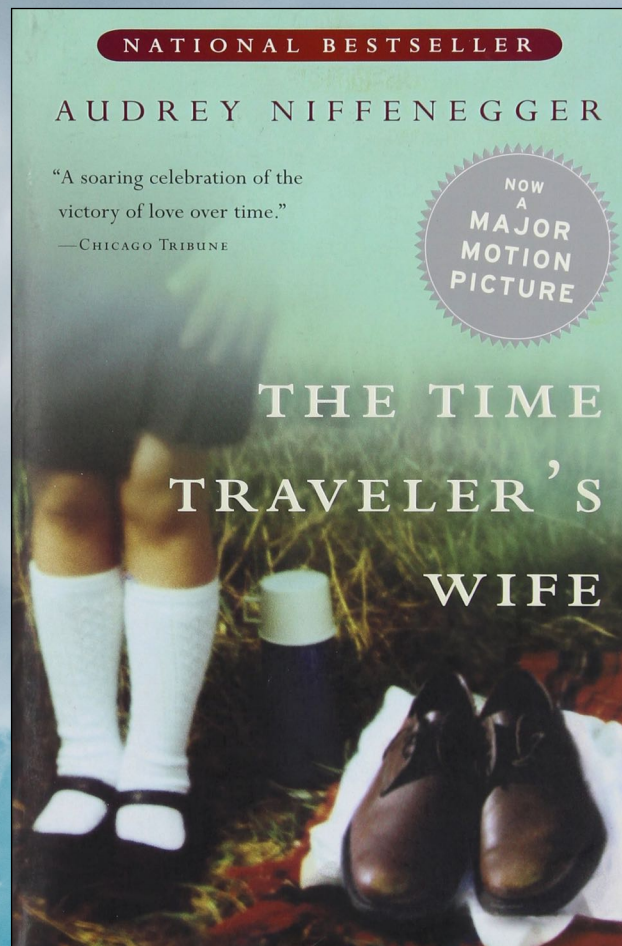
The Time Traveler's Wife (2003)

by Audrey Niffenegger

"Like Penelope, Clare must wait endlessly for her husband, as he suffers from a genetic disease that causes him to travel through time without warning. But unlike Penelope, whose waiting comes to an end, Henry and Clare's separation has no ending. The epigraph to the third section of *The Time Traveler's Wife* is a quotation from *The Odyssey*. It reads in part: 'Now from his breast into his eyes the ache of longing mounted, and he wept at last. His dear wife, clear and faithful, in his arms, longed for as the sun-warmed earth is longed for by a swimmer. Spent in rough water where his ship went down.'" — *EarlyBirdBooks.com*

"Niffenegger has written a soaring love story illuminated by dozens of finely observed details and scenes, and one that skates nimbly around a huge conundrum at the heart of the book.... It is a fair tribute to her skill and sensibility to say that the book leaves a reader with an impression of life's riches and strangeness rather than of easy thrills." — *Publisher's Weekly*

518 pp.



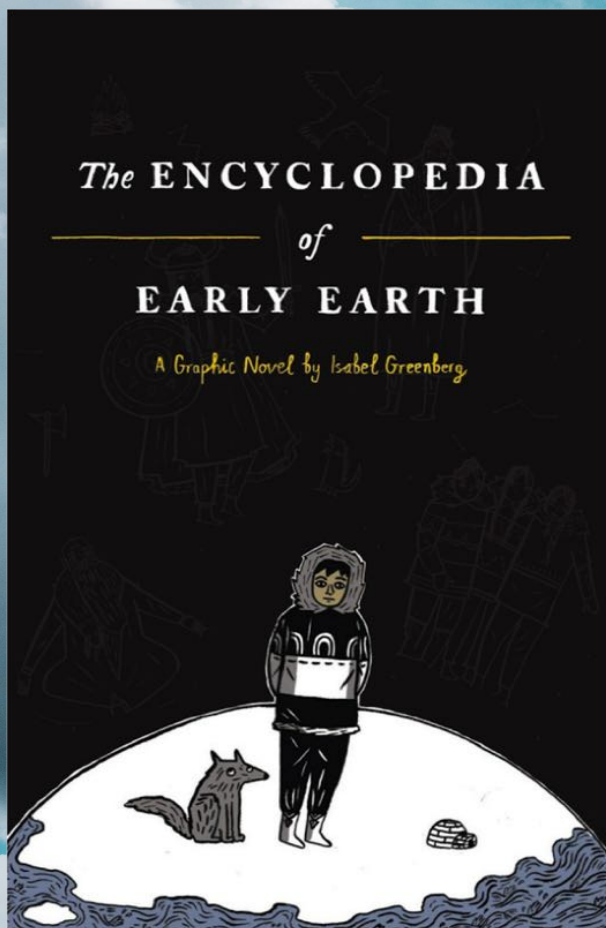
The Encyclopedia of Early Earth (2013) by Isabel Greenberg

"This beautiful comic pulls on stories from cultural and religious traditions—Genesis, Nordic legends, Greek myths—as well as the work of other influential cartoonists to create something unique and timeless.... Greenberg uses our familiarity with archetypes to play with our expectations, bending these layered stories into something strange and delightful." — *Amazon.com*

"A loving homage to storytelling itself, Greenberg's first graphic novel isn't an encyclopedia at all but an intricately crafted mythology told from within a young man's grand adventure.... Just as essentially evocative is her art, which uses simple, childlike illustrations to channel the power of ancient cave paintings and archetypal images from our own imaginations. A unique, compelling stunner from one to watch." — *Booklist*

"From its gods and ghosts and monsters, a rich and palpably human tale emerges — a sad and unshowily beautiful love story that lands with an emotional impact you likely won't see coming." — *NPR*

176 pp.



The Odyssey (2012)

by Gillian Cross; illustrated by Neil Packer

“A bold re-envisioning of *The Odyssey*, told with simplicity and style — perfect for fans of graphic retellings and mythology enthusiasts alike.” — Penguin Random House

“In this stunning, heavily illustrated retelling, Cross gives shivery life to Homer’s saga, keeping the suspense taut and recounting the story’s most disturbing events without flinching.... While Cross’s prose makes Odysseus’s journey not just accessible but thrilling, the book really belongs to Packer.” — *Publisher’s Weekly*

“Most people who read a lot have gotten used to reading on a screen, whether it's a laptop, a tablet or an e-reader But every now and then, a book comes along that just seems to *insist* on being physical—something about it simply can't be transferred to the screen.” — *NPR*

178 pp.



D'Aulaires Book of Greek Myths

(1962) by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaires

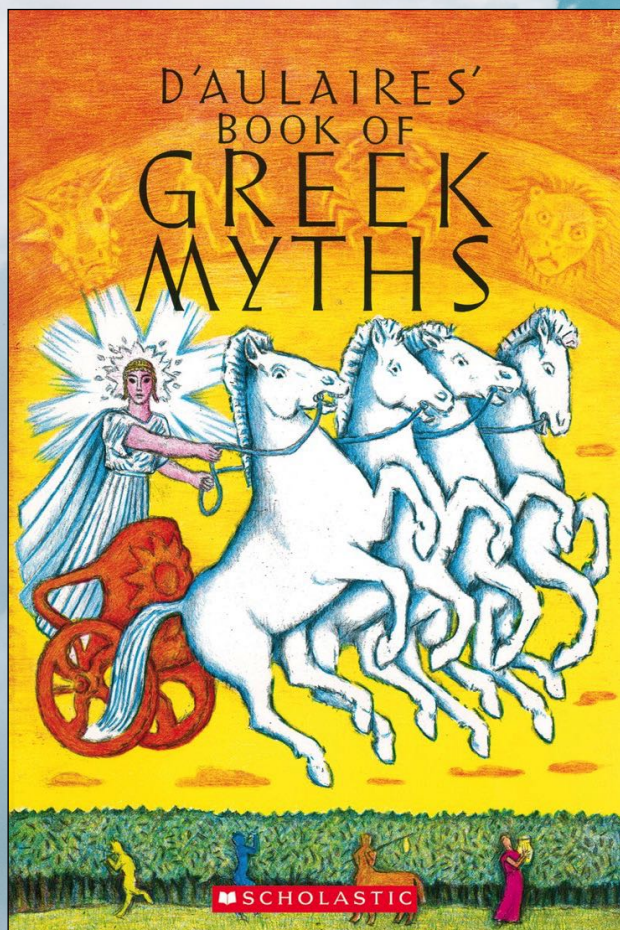
“No other volume of Greek mythology has inspired as many young readers as this timeless classic. Both adults and children alike will find this book a treasure for years to come.” —Penguin Random House

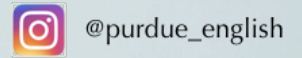
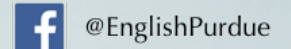
“An illuminating introduction to Greek mythology via the gods and goddesses, this presents all the immortals of Olympus in their natural settings, depicted admirably in sweeping and profuse illustrations.... [It] certainly makes a visually satisfying gift item.” — *Kirkus Reviews*

“The D'Aulaires present this rambunctious bunch with admirable clarity. The stories are filled with delightful nuggets of information, and the illustrations repay study.” — *Common Sense Media*

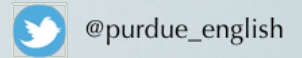
“The drawings.... are excellent and excitingly evocative.” — *The New York Times*.

208 pp.





Department of English

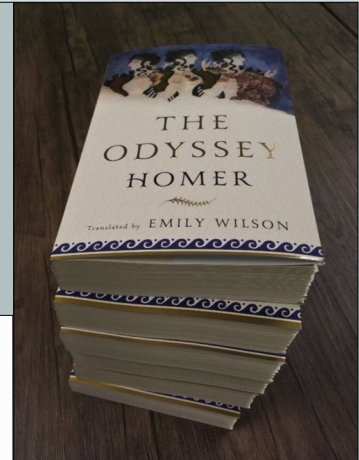


“A revelation. Never have I been so aware at once of the beauty of the poetry, the physicality of Homer’s world, and the moral ambiguity of those who inhabit it. [Wilson’s] decisions to discard flowery conventions, and to limit herself to the number of lines in the original poem, produce a version both fleet and vivid.”

*Susan Chira, “[New & Noteworthy](#),” *The New York Times Book Review* (12 Dec. 2017)*

For information about Wilson’s translation of *The Odyssey*, upcoming Big Read events, and more, visit:

<https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/thebigread/>



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