Discussion Questions for *Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood
(Some questions taken or adapted from [http://www.randomhouse.ca](http://www.randomhouse.ca).)

**Discussion Questions**

1. Consider the personalities of the women in *The Penelopiad*, especially Penelope, Helen, and Penelope’s mother. How are they different? What do they tell us about women’s roles, within the poem and without?

2. Is Penelope a reliable narrator? Do you believe her version of events?

3. What do the various poetic and musical forms Margaret Atwood uses to tell the maids’ story bring to the telling? Why do you think she chose to write *The Penelopiad* in this way?

4. “Down here everyone arrives with a sack, like that sacks used to keep the winds in, but each of these sacks is full of words — words you’ve spoken, words you’ve heard, words that have been said about you.” Discuss gossip and rumor / truth and lies in *The Penelopiad*.

5. “The heart is both key and lock.” How would you describe the marriage of Odysseus and Penelope?

6. How do the childhood experiences of the maids compare to those reported by Penelope?

7. Can anyone compare *The Penelopiad* to *The Odyssey*?

8. Does this book relate to current society? If so, how?

9. Would you recommend this novel to a friend?

10. Are there any questions you would like to ask?