

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark coat, is walking away from the viewer on a wet, reflective pier. The pier is on the right side of the frame, and the water is on the left. In the background, there are green hills under a cloudy sky. The overall color palette is muted, with a lot of greys and blues. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

*You will wonder who we are.
But that is getting ahead of the story...*

PERDITA

a novel

HILARY SCHARPER

Reading Group Guide

1. How did you find the transition between past and present voices within *Perdita*? Did you find differences in the language and pacing of Garth's narrative in contrast to Marged's journal? Were you interested in both the modern and historical periods, or were you more drawn to one?
2. Clare tells Garth she is attracted to the idea that the "threads" of love are never discarded but always preserved by Perdita. Why does this make Clare an "incorrigible romantic" in Garth's view? What does it mean to be a romantic person in our contemporary society? Do you consider yourself a "romantic"?
3. In Greek mythology, Perdita is the child of Hephaestus and Pandora. She is hidden among the Fates and she keeps a "bundle" of four different kinds of love: *philia* (affection and friendship), *eros* (passion), *agape* (unconditional love), and *biophilia* (the love between humans and nature). If Perdita were to show you "your bundle"—i.e., all the different kinds of love relationships you have experienced in your life—would *biophilia* be present?
4. The notion of threads and "loose ends" runs throughout the novel. Which "threads" or aspects of the story came full circle for you, and which were left open? How do you respond to the

parts of the story that are left open-ended? Do you think Marged is trying to convey something about the nature of love to Garth, as well as the “risks” of being in love?

5. Marged’s last entry in her diary has her drifting out into the Bay’s open waters, “way out beyond the buoys and their markings of safe harbor.” She writes that even the lighthouse has disappeared from her sight. Does she make a choice between her two suitors? Is there anything that occurs in the novel to suggest she does make a choice?
6. When deciding if she can trust Garth, Marged asks him, “What would your trees say about you?” Why does she ask this? What if you were asked the same question? What do you think your trees would say about you?
7. Who was your favorite character and why? What is your favorite scene in the novel and why?
8. How did you respond to Marged’s face and her eyes, especially when she first encounters Garth?
9. What do you think the significance of the great horned owl is? Where does it appear in the novel?
10. Do you have a special place in Nature where you go to collect your thoughts? How does this relate (if at all) to Marged’s relationship with Georgian Bay?