|  |
| --- |
| Siren Song  BY [MARGARET ATWOOD](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/margaret-atwood)  This is the one song everyone  would like to learn: the song  that is irresistible:  the song that forces men  to leap overboard in squadrons  even though they see the beached skulls  the song nobody knows  because anyone who has heard it  is dead, and the others can't remember.  Shall I tell you the secret  and if I do, will you get me  out of this bird suit?  I don't enjoy it here  squatting on this island  looking picturesque and mythical  with these two feathery maniacs,  I don't enjoy singing  this trio, fatal and valuable.  I will tell the secret to you,  to you, only to you.  Come closer. This song  is a cry for help: Help me!  Only you, only you can,  you are unique  at last. Alas  it is a boring song  but it works every time.   1. What is the subject of this poem and who is the speaker? How can you tell? What allusion is the poem making? |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Squadron: a group of soldiers  Beached: something that has gotten stuck on a beach | This is the one song everyone  would like to learn: the song  that is irresistible:  the song that forces men  to leap overboard in squadrons  even though they see the beached skulls  the song nobody knows  because anyone who has heard it  is dead, and the others can't remember. | 1. Why do you think the poet broke the line between “squadrons” and “even though”? What other interesting line breaks can you find? 2. Why does is everyone who has heard the song dead? Why can’t other people remember the song? |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Picturesque: beautiful or attractive enough to be in picture  Maniac: crazy person  Trio: a piece of music for three musicians to play  Fatal: deadly | Shall I tell you the secret  and if I do, will you get me  out of this bird suit?  I don't enjoy it here  squatting on this island  looking picturesque and mythical  with these two feathery maniacs,  I don't enjoy singing  this trio, fatal and valuable.  I will tell the secret to you,  to you, only to you.  Come closer. This song  is a cry for help: Help me!  Only you, only you can,  you are unique | 1. Notice that the speaker has started to use “you.” Who is the speaker talking to? Why is the speaker using “you”? 2. What words and phrases does the speaker use to create a negative tone towards her life? Why does she create such a negative tone towards her life? In other words, why is she trying to make her life sound so bad? 3. What does the speaker want from “you”? |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Alas: an old word that means you are sad about something and wish it hadn’t happened. | at last. Alas  it is a boring song  but it works every time | 1. Why does the speaker say “at last”? What has just happened? 2. How has the tone shifted in this last stanza? 3. What is the song the speaker referring to in the last stanza? 4. Why does the song work every time if it is boring? |

1. What do you think the theme of this poem is? What might it be saying about human nature?