I'm not a bot

The Handmaid's Tale wrapped its sixth and final season on a triumphant, if melancholic, note. The ending saw a proper rebellion in a world where the totalitarian, patriarchal government of Gilead is wounded, but not destroyed. Hulu's Emmy-winning series is an adaptation of Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel, though it elaborates upon its source material. The story began with Elisabeth Moss' June as an imprisoned handmaid for a Gilead commander in a dystopian vision of the United States. Across six seasons, she's fought to reclaim her identity and her womanhood, all while building community among her fellow captives and trying to reconnect with the family she had before the war. The Handmaid's Tale's final season saw a revolution come to Gilead, with the abused women of this dystopia rising up to slaughter the patriarchal class and take back the U.S. The penultimate episode saw the tides turning for the rebels, with Joseph Lawrence (Bradley Whitford) sacrificing himself by detonating a bomb on a plane filled with Boston's Gilead commanders. That, tragically, included Nick (Max Minghella), the father of June's second child. So, where does that leave the show's heroes? Is June able to reunite with her daughters? And can she forgive her former oppressors? Below, we answer those questions and more in our Handmaid's Tale ending explainer. You can also hear from creator Bruce Miller, who penned the finale, in a postmortem interview conducted with Entertainment Weekly. Alexis Bledel as Emily and Elisabeth Moss as June in 'The Handmaid's Tale' series finale. In Boston? Yes. Gilead is no longer occupying the city after the rebels rose up and Lawrence took out the commanding officers. Boston, as June declares, is now part of America again. But Gilead is still intact throughout the rest of the country and strategizing to maintain power. In the final episode, the rebel forces are mobilizing to try and take the country back. Elisabeth Moss as June holds baby Nichole next to Cherry Jones' Holly. June reunites with Nichole, her daughter with Nick, when her mother, Holly (Cherry Jones), joins the rebels in Boston. As the series comes to a close, she's on a mission to find Hannah (Jordana Blake), her daughter with Luke (O-T Fagbenle). Now living under the name Agnes McKenzie, Hannah has been living with a commander and his wife in Colorado. In the finale, Tuello (Sam Jaeger) tells June that Hannah's foster father was promoted and will be moving with his family to Washington, D.C., much closer to June's location in Boston. "I know that isn't enough," says Tuello, "but it's a kind of progress." Luke tells June to be patient, believing that "The way we get Hannah back is we take down Gilead one piece at a time." But June is anxious to not just find Hannah, but to save all the young girls held captive in Gilead. Speaking with Holly, she declares, "They're never going to stop coming for us. And even when we're gone, they're gonna come for our children and our grandchildren. Fighting may not get us everything, but we may not have a choice. Because fighting is what got us Gilead in the first place. Gilead does not need to be beaten, it has to be broken." We imagine more answers will come in The Testaments, an upcoming sequel series based on Atwood's own 2019 Handmaid's Tale follow-up novel. Set 15 years after the events of The Handmaid's Tale, its narrative centers on Hannah and Nichole. Elisabeth Moss' June hugs Alexis Bledel's Emily in 'The Handmaid's Tale' series finale. Yes. Alexis Bledel who won an Emmy for her turn on the series before departing between seasons 4 and 5 reprised Emily during The Handmaid's Tale finale. Emily approaches June as the rebels work to build a home in Boston following last week's battle, revealing that she's been in Bridgeport, a "hotspot of rebellion." While working as a Martha, she was still able to communicate with her family. As they admire a wall of graffiti celebrating the rebels' win, they marvel at how far they've come. Still, June laments that the forces of Gilead "stole my life," and mourns the impossibility of things ever returning to the way they once were. "We're both alive to see this," Emily says, gesturing towards the graffiti. "I'm thinking of adjusting my concept of the impossible." Shadowy figures drop off Madeline Brewer's Janine in Boston in 'The Handmaid's Tale' series finale. One character whose fate remained up in the air following last week's episode was Janine (Madeline Brewer), who was still trapped in Gilead along with several other allies. Thankfully, after all she's been through across six seasons, the one-eyed woman was saved and reunited with her daughter, Charlotte, by an unlikely pair. June is brought out to the new Gilead border by Tuello, where they see shadowy figures drop off Janine. She's wounded, but alive. She's also relieved when two of the series' most vicious players, Aunt Lydia (Ann Dowd) and Naomi (Ever Carradine), hand over Charlotte. Madeline Brewer's Janine holds her baby in 'The Handmaid's Tale' series finale. "Take good care of our Janine, please," says Lydia, who, despite her role as a Gilead enforcer, grew fond of Janine. June, who has no love lost for Lydia, thanks her. "Blessed is the woman who does not walk in stride with the wicked," she offers. Serena holds her baby in 'The Handmaid's Tale' series finale. As with Lydia, June is able to reconcile somewhat with Serena (Yvonne Strahovski), who tormented her as the wife of Fred Waterford (Joseph Fiennes), June's first master. By the end of the series, Serena finds herself without a home, but is nevertheless comforted to know she can freely mother her son, Noah. Speaking with Tuello, Serena acknowledges that she can never return to Gilead, while Canada and the E.U. won't give her a passport. "I guess I'm just a nobody," she says. Serena is put on a train to a U.N. refugee camp, with Tuello telling her that he'll bring her passports that can help her escape. Before she leaves, Serena offers a tearful apology to June. "When I recall some of the things that were done to you, the things that I did, that I forced you to do, I'm ashamed," she admits. "You should be," June retorts. Still, she forgives her former foe. "That was very generous of you," says Tuello, to which June replies, "You have to start somewhere, right?" At the refugee center, Serena accepts her uncertain future as she hugs her son, cooing, "You're all I need. You're all I ever wanted." O-T Fagbenle's Luke and Elisabeth Moss' June in 'The Handmaid's Tale' series finale. No, June and Luke amicably part ways, each acknowledging how much they've changed in the years they've been separated. "We don't know each other like we did before," he says, revealing that he plans to help rebel forces in New York. He encourages her to write her "escape story" down. "It wasn't all horrors, was it? You had people who helped you. Janine, Emily, Lawrence, Nick. People who loved you. People you loved. They're all worth remembering." Speaking of Nick, the man she grew to love in the post-war years, June acknowledges that he "reaped what he sowed" and that he "lived a violent and dishonest life." Still, Serena tells her, "If he ever thought he had a real choice, he would've chosen you." Elisabeth Moss' June climbs the steps of the bombed-out Waterford house on 'The Handmaid's Tale'. Luke isn't the only one telling June to turn her experience into a story. Holly, too, believes it's worth her time. "It's a story to inspire people," says Holly, one for those "who may never find their babies... who will never ever give up trying." She adds, "Write it for your daughters, June. Tell them who their mother was." The series ends with June returning to the Waterford house, where we first met her in the show's first episode. There, walking through the bombed-out remains, she pulls out a tape recorder and speaks some of the first lines we heard her say. "A chair, a table, a lamp. And a window with white curtains. And the glass is shatterproof. But it isn't running away they're afraid of. A handmaid wouldn't get far. It's those other escapes, the ones you can open in yourself, given a cutting edge. Or a twisted sheet and a chandelier. I try not to think about those escapes. It's harder on ceremony days, but thinking can hurt your chances." She looks directly into the frame. "My name is Offred." Elisabeth Moss' June with Hannah in 'The Handmaid's Tale' series finale. The Handmaid's Tale is streaming in its entirety on Hulu. Sign up forEntertainment Weekly's free daily newsletterto get breaking TV news, exclusive first looks, recaps, reviews, interviews with your favorite stars, and more.Jennifer Keishin ArmstrongFeatures correspondentRebecca HendinMargaret Atwoods 1985 novel drew on real-life politics but has never been more prescient, writes Jennifer Keishin Armstrong.A white, wide-brimmed bonnet and a red cloak have come to mean one thing: womens oppression. Margaret Atwoods 1985 novel The Handmaids Tale seared this image into our souls with its depiction of a near-future dystopia in which women are forced into reproductive slavery to bear the children of the elite and wear this uniform to underline their subservience. For more than three decades, the image has shown up on the covers of the book around the world, on posters from the 1990 film, in ads for the 2017 TV series, and even on real women at demonstrations for reproductive rights.-The fiction that changed history-How Harry Potter became a rallying cry-Why tyrants love to write poetryThe handmaid were presumably seeing in most of these images, though we often dont know for sure, is Offred, the tales narrator. As a handmaid in the Republic of Gilead, she must routinely submit to ritualistic sex with her commander, Fred. (Her name derives from the term of Fred.) Shes one of the still-fertile women rounded up for the job of reproduction after many women in the ruling class were rendered infertile by environmental toxins. Before a coup toppled the US government to form the new theocratic state Gilead, she was married to a man named Luke and had a young daughter.McClelland and StewartThe Handmaids Tale was published in 1985 to instant acclaim and success it was shortlisted for the Man Booker prize and the Nebula Award (Credit: McClellan and Stewart)Atwood conceived the novel as speculative fiction, a work that imagines a future that could conceivably happen without any advances in technology from the present. In other words, she said, Science fiction has monsters and spaceships; speculative fiction could really happen. Every aspect of the book was inspired by social and political events of the early 1980s, when she wrote it.AlamyMargaret Atwood, aged 78, won the Man Booker prize in 2000 for The Blind Assassin other works of hers have been adapted for TV and film, such as Alias Grace (Credit: Alamy)Because of this, Atwoods novel has an eerie way of always feeling of the moment, as it turns out, from its first publication through every other iteration that has followed. When it debuted in 1985, Atwood even took newspaper clips to her interviews about the book to show her plot points real-life antecedents. The book mirrored the United States embrace of conservatism, as evidenced by the election of Ronald Reagan as president, as well as the increasing power of the Christian right and its powerful lobbying organisations the Moral Majority, Focus on the Family and the Christian Coalition not to mention the rise of televangelism. The character of Serena Joy in The Handmaids Tale is a former televangelist who articulates theocratic policy suggestions that have now forced her, like all women, into a life solely at home: Atwood writes of Serena Joy, She doesnt make speeches anymore. She has become speechless. She stays in her home, but it doesnt seem to agree with her. How furious she must be, now that shes been taken at her word. Atwood writes in The Handmaid’s Tale that African-Americans have been resettled to “National Homelands” in the MidwestThough Atwood is Canadian and writing about a later time Joyce Carol Oates, writing in The New York Review of Books, speculated the book was set around 2005 she has said the commentary was aimed squarely at the United States of the 1980s, including the rising political power of Christian fundamentalists, environmental concerns, and attacks on womens reproductive rights. The backlash against abortion in the US at the time included a widely distributed propaganda video called The Silent Scream, a rash of abortion clinic bombings and arson cases and a proposed law that would give foetuses civil rights protections. The Reagan administration also broke with longstanding policy and declared that the US government would fund only international women's health groups that promoted natural family planning that is, abstinence in underdeveloped countries. As English professor SC Neuman wrote in a 2006 paper published in the University of Toronto Quarterly, Offred, in short, is a fictional product of 1970s feminism, and she finds herself in a situation that is a fictional realisation of the backlash against women's rights that gathered force during the early 1980s.HuluHulus TV adaptation of The Handmaids Tale was the streaming services biggest hit to date and the series won best drama at the Emmy Awards in 2017 (Credit: Hulu)Not everyone in the US government at the time even opposed apartheid in South Africa: future vice president Dick Cheney was against the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, while Senator John McCain voted not to divest from the South African government. Recalling the Bantustans of apartheid-era South Africa, Atwood writes in The Handmaids Tale that African-Americans have been resettled to National Homelands in the Midwest.Puritanism and public policyThe Handmaids Tale is always discussed as a feminist warning of sorts, and has also been interpreted as a commentary on sexism in the book of Genesis. But some of what Atwood describes wasnt merely speculation about the end result of the religious right taking power in the US but was based on what was happening elsewhere. Atwood says she was inspired in part by Nicolai Ceausescus preoccupation with boosting female birth rates in Romania, which led to the policing of pregnant women and the banning of abortion and birth control, not to mention the murders of dissidents by the Ferdinand Marcos regime in the Philippines. The idea of giving the offspring of lower classes to the ruling class came from Argentina, where a military junta seized power in 1976, subsequently disappearing up to 500 children and placing them with selected leaders.HuluElisabeth Moss plays Offred, the main character in Atwoods story the TV series now goes beyond the events of the novel, with its writers inventing new material (Credit: Hulu)But American Puritanism is undoubtedly the central reference point in Atwoods text and she drew connections between what was happening in the US in the 1980s and the original Puritan colonists in 17th Century New England. Nations never build apparently radical forms of government on foundations that aren't there already, Atwood wrote in The Guardian in 2012. Thus the USSR replaced the dreaded imperial secret police with an even more dreaded secret police, and so forth. The deep foundation of the US so went my thinking was not the comparatively recent 18th-Century Enlightenment structures of the republic, with their talk of equality and their separation of church and state, but the heavy-handed theocracy of 17th-Century Puritan New England, with its marked bias against women, which would need only the opportunity of a period of social chaos to reassert itself. Reagan himself referred to his dream of the US being a shining city on a hill, coopting the term the Puritans had for their Massachusetts Bay colony.Atwoods book was a hit with critics and readers, but the film adaptation four years later was a dud. The productions own difficulties showed how relevant it was: most studios wouldnt consider putting out a movie that was so heavily female, and many major actresses were afraid of the radical material. The 1990 film version is a sometimes serious, sometimes sexed-up version that squandered the talents of stars Natasha Richardson and Faye Dunaway. German director Volker Schlndorff envisioned it as a sexual thriller, an obvious misinterpretation of the original material. Richardson as Offred, was not only stripped of her agency the script avoided voiceover, losing the urgency of the book she seemed more objectified than ever. Reviews were mostly dismissive, and the film failed at the box office, too, making back only $5m of its $13m budget.Old DutchAtwood, who is from Canada, took inspiration from the logo of the Canadian laundry and cleaning products company Old Dutch for the handmaids bonnets (Credit: Old Dutch)Since then, The Handmaids Tale has inspired a number of lower-profile adaptations and related works. Stage adaptations have been produced in the United States at Tufts University and for a UK tour. An opera by Poul Ruders premiered in Copenhagen in 2000, and was performed by the English National Opera in London in 2003 and by the Canadian Opera Company in 2004-05. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet offered up its interpretation of the story in 2013.Jo Ingles/Ohio Public Radio/TV Statehouse NewsIn June 2017 women wore outfits inspired by the TV series to protest restrictive new abortion bill in Ohio (Credit: Jo Ingles/Ohio Public Radio/TV Statehouse News)It wasnt until last year, when The Handmaids Tale premiered on Hulu as a television series adaptation, that the work got its pop cultural due. The shows producers changed details to bring the series into the present day, including modern touchstones like Uber, Tinder, cappuccinos, and Craigslist in flashbacks to Offreds pre-handmaid life. But the series felt all the more chilling because of the massive shift in US politics with the election of Donald Trump, who was inaugurated just three months before the series premiered. Suddenly, the book and series major flashpoints felt more possible than ever: a government declaring martial law after an attack by Islamic extremists, a regime that systematically eliminates gay people, a society that prioritises procreation (and subjugation of women) above all else. [H]ow eerily prescient that the Republic of Gilead was established by a coup when Christian fundamentalists, revulsed by an overly liberal, godless, and promiscuous society, assassinated the president, machine-gunned Congress, declared a national state of emergency, and laid blame to Islamic fanatics, Joyce Carol Oates wrote in a Handmaid retrospective in 2006. As in Orwells 1984, the Republic consolidates its strength by maintaining continual wars against demonised enemies.BBC NewsManx protestors donned Handmaids Tale inspired outfits in July 2017 to protest womens lack of access to abortion providers in the Isle of Man (Credit: BBC News)This all dovetailed with fears of Trumps authoritarian tendencies and his vice presidents anti-gay and anti-abortion beliefs. Handmaid costumes even became common at protests of laws intended to limit womens reproductive freedom. The Womens March inspired by Trumps inauguration mirrored the TV series flashback scenes of women in the streets protesting the stripping of their rights.AlamyThe 1990 film version starring Natasha Richardson had the tagline A haunting tale of sexuality in a country gone wrong, suggesting it was more an erotic thriller (Credit: Alamy)As The Handmaids Tale returns for its second season, it feels more vital than ever, even though the cultural landscape has once again shifted in a major way for women. Since the last series, the #metoo movement has taken hold, and Offreds story is shifting with it. Without giving too much away about the second-season premiere, which goes, in some fashion, beyond the narrative in Atwoods novel, Offred is now finding methods to take back her own power in the oppressive regime and seizing those moments in satisfying ways not unlike women finding power in telling their own stories via #metoo and #timesup. Of course, this isnt a coincidence; the producers of The Handmaids Tale series were aware of the changing womens movement as they constructed this season.Since the books release, The Handmaids Tales most quoted phrase has been the one scratched, presumably by Offreds handmaid predecessor, in the wall of her rooms cupboard: Nolite te bastardes carborundorum.Dont let the bastards grind you down. It has become such a feminist rallying cry that many women have the phrase tattooed on their bodies. Revellers dress up as Handmaids on Hallowe'en and also for protest marches these two uses of its costumes mirroring its doubleness, Atwood wrote for the Guardian. Is it entertainment or dire political prophecy? Can it be both? I did not anticipate any of this when I was writing the book.The Handmaids Tales messages and iconography feel more applicable than ever today. But we always seem to be saying that about Atwoods story. Will we be doing the same if yet another adaptation appears, three decades from now?BBC Cultures Stories that shaped the world series looks at epic poems, plays and novels from around the globe that have influenced history and changed mindsets. A poll of writers and critics, 100 stories that shaped the world, will be announced in May and discussed live on stage at the Hay Festival 2018.Facebookpage or message us onTwitter.And if you liked this story,sign up for the weekly bbc.com features newsletter, called If You Only Read 6 Things This Week. A handpicked selection of stories from BBC Future, Earth, Culture, Capital and Travel, delivered to your inbox every Friday.The Handmaids Tale is one of the most successful television programs of the last decade. It is based on the bestselling 1985 book by Margaret Atwood and set in a dystopian universe in which women are subservient to men. What can we learn about The Handmaids Tale plot structure and The Handmaids Tale characters and how can we apply this to our own writing?Lets break down the plot of the first episode according to Dan Harmons Story Circle.What is The Handmaids Tale all about?The Handmaids Tale is set in a post-civil war version of America. Fertility rates have dropped and a religiously conservative government - known as the Gilead - has taken over control.There are new social classes and women are brought under strict control.Women who divorce and remarry, who are homosexuals (in the show these are called gender traitors), and those who have left the Christian faith.Women who are fertile are brutally enslaved to be raped and give birth to children to their male masters. These are known as the handmaids.It tells the story of Offred, our protagonist, a handmaid tasked with bearing children for the elite of Gilead, a totalitarian society that took over the United States following a military coup. The novel is set in the near future and includes flashbacks to Offred's life before Gilead was established.The Handmaid's Tale has been adapted into a TV show on Hulu starring Elisabeth Moss (who also played Peggy Olson in Mad Men). The show follows its source material closely, but adds more detail and backstory to make it more accessible to viewers who haven't read the book.What are the main themes in The Handmaids Tale?The main themes in The Handmaid's Tale TV show include feminism, oppression, violence against women, and the power of motherhood. One of the most important themes is that of women's rightsin this world, those who are born with the ability to reproduce are given no choice about whether or not they become handmaids (the name given to fertile women who can be used as breeders).Instead, they are forced into servitude by their government. They are kept as prisoners until they die from exhaustion or disease. This is an example of how oppressive governments use violence against women as a means of control.Offred walks the streets of the U.S after a new dark regime takes power. Other important themes include religious fanaticism and environmental degradation. In this reality, religion has become increasingly important in people's livesand it has been co-opted by those in power who want to use it as justification for their actions. The environment has also suffered greatly due to human activity; this leads us back again to our original point: that humankind cannot continue down this path if we want our species.Who are the main characters in The Handmaids Tale?The Handmaid's Tale TV series has a large cast of characters. There are also many new characters in The Handmaid's Tale introduced in each new season. However, the main characters are the following:Offred (June)Played by Elizabeth Moss, June is the narrator of the story, and she is also known as Offred. She is a handmaid who has been assigned to Commander Fred Waterford, which means she must bear children for him and his wife, Serena Joy. She was once married to Luke, but he and his family have been sent away to Canada for being subversive.Serena JoyShe is the Commander's wife, who had previously been a singer on television shows before Gilead came into power. She seems to be more conservative than most women in Gilead society and often expresses her opinions on how they should be treated by men.NickNick is one of the Commander's servants at home; he also works at Jezebels (a brothel) as an Eye (someone who spies on people). He becomes involved with Offred after he offers her money in exchange for sex; however, it turns out that he has feelings for her later on in their relationship.The Commander, Fred Waterford, is played by Joseph Fiennes.Breaking down The Handmaids Tale according to Dan Harmons Story CircleDan Harmons Story Circle is a great way of dividing up most plots into 8 easily digestible segments. It makes story building easy.If you want a good primer on who Dan Harmon is and how and why he invented this technique then be sure to read our in-depth blog post about it.Lets dive into the breakdown.1. The character is in a comfort zoneOffred is at home, wearing the new clothes of a handmaid as dictated by the new religiously conservative regime that has staged a successful coup against the U.S government and replaced Congress and the President with a military dictatorship.2. Your character desires somethingOffred - which means - Off Fred, her master, wants to escape the horrible life she has to endure under this new regime. She is not happy. Free speech is banned and there are spies everywhere policing what people say in private.June or Offred dressed in the uniform of a handmaid, obligatory under the new regime. We see images of a past life under the previous government of our timeline highlighting her desire to overthrow this regime.3. Your character enters an unfamiliar situationOffred is forced into having sex with her master in order that she might convince a child. Failure to do so will result in her being banished to clean up toxic waste and a slow death over a number of years.4. Your character adapts to the situationOffred uses her time in the bath before the monthly rapes to dream off a better life, living in her head. She is also very angry.5. Your characters ultimately get what they wantIn this first episode, Offred doesnt get to bring down the regime but she does gets to vent her rage against men.She is allowed to do what she wants when a convicted rapist - he has had sex with a handmaid without permission -is brought before the courts and kicks him to the ground.6. They pay a heavy price for itWhen the whistle blows for a second time indicating Offred now has free will to attack the man we see that he has died.While there is no punishment from the state for this there is an internal self- punishment in which Offred has been driven to murder because she is so repressed by the state.7. They return to their familiar situationOffred returns home yet she has committed murder. In some ways, she has been broken by the new government.8. They have changed as a result of the journeyThe episode ends with You Dont Own Me by Lesley Gore. According to The Guardian, this anthem of womans defiance is the perfect, if obvious, choice to play out the episode.The song suggests Offred has changed, is not ready to submit to the new government and is willing to do her part to bring it down and reclaim autonomy over her own life.What can we learn from The Handmaids Tale?The Handmaids Tale episode one sets us up perfectly for the rest of the series. It also has enough conflict in it for it works as an episode within its own right.Were introduced to the dystopian world and understand how America has come to be in this predicament.Were also led to believe theres hope in Offred; she might be the person to fight the dictatorship and bring about lasting change.If you need professional screenwriting software to see you through from the first draft to pitching to Netflix be sure to check out Arc Studio today.With Arc Studio pro, you stay focused while writing your screenplay, craft better stories, and collaborate with ease. 2Nolite te bastardes carborundorum (don't let the bastards grind you down) is a message written by the previous Handmaid of Commander Fred's household. The phrase in Latin is carved inside the Handmaid closet in her bedroom, almost impossible to find. This message gives June, the protagonist of this difficult dystopian tale (that feels too close to home to be an easy watch), and the audience a much-needed ounce of hope. Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel The Handmaid's Tale could have been published in 2022 due to how relevant the issues presented in the book remain today. In 2019, she released the much-anticipated continuation, The Testaments, which continues the story of one of the most iconic characters in dystopian novels. Atwood's smart narrative takes the reader into a journey of our potential future, providing there isn't any change regarding women's rights. The author has stated that nothing in this narrative hasn't happened somewhere in the world at some point in time. Driving from the need to expose horrible acts of violence against women, she wrote a fantastic book that was adapted for television in 2017 as a Hulu original. Atwood's message gets so powerfully delivered through the screen, that the pages of her books began to influence women all over the world to protest soon after the show adapted them. Women's marches, especially regarding the laws about the female body, started to have something in common: protesters dressed as Handmaids. This is only one example of how powerful this story is and how much it exposes what it means to be a woman in the 21st century. The Handmaid's Tale tells the story of the United States government overthrown by an extremist cult religious group, the Sons of Jacob, that wants to control society and its norms (something not unheard of). After stating that most women can't get pregnant, they use the Bible (modified to support their ideals) to justify their decisions. The main one? The women who are still fertile will give their bodies to the regime. That way, wealthy families can bear children. Offred (Elisabeth Moss) is the protagonist of this story, who ends season one claiming various things Gilead took from her, including her real name. Handmaid, Wife, or Martha Hulu In Gilead's society, a woman should present herself in a role imposed by the government. The main ones: Handmaid, Wife, and Martha. If she came from a wealthy family, she became a Wife of a Commander and spent her days inside her household, not allowed to do anything besides take care of the house. If she was poor, she would be a Martha and have no family, living only to serve the Wife's commands. Or, if she could bear children, she would become a Handmaid, and be given to different families. If the Handmaid didn't get pregnant after visiting three families, she was sent to the Colonies, a certain death. Was there a way to defy these orders? That would lead to being hanged, alongside everyone who was a treat to the regime, on the Wall. Atwood placed women into categories to represent society's perception of what roles a woman should have. If she didn't want to be any of these options or couldn't conform to these roles/expectations, then she became an Unwoman. The author placed these characters in different colored clothing to highlight how much their contribution to society (and, therefore, their worth) revolves around these activities, in a feminist nod to class consciousness. Taking care of the house, bearing children, and being a good wife are the most important things women should be and do according to this society. The Handmaid's Tale also shows how these roles become more important than the individual who fills them, thus they are called/named after the position they occupy, not their actual names. The clothes should help completely erase their identities even though the show has a problematic majority of white actresses, it was meant for all ethnicities. The main character's name is never mentioned in the book: the fans decided that was her name because it is the only one she mentioned that is never given to another character. Because of that, in the television show, she is officially named June. Hulu There isn't much dialogue in the show, especially regarding the Handmaids. That also happens in the book, where Offred tells the story directly to the reader. This translates to television in the form of voice-overs. They enhance the idea that the audience is always inside her head, following the story while listening to her thoughts. This choice brings the viewer closer to the character, as they feel attached to her. Atwood's has a clear message regarding when society wants women to speak their minds, and when it's best to stay silent. June is trying not to forget who she was and what happened to her. Due to the amount of trauma she experienced that is a hard thing to do. Her memories are not only not important, but dangerous for the regime. The government stripped her of her name, her identity. People shouldn't be able to see her face due to her clothing and tried (using various forms of torture) to make her memory disappear. June's constant defiance to not forget her daughter and her husband, as well as people from her past, is hazardous. In her silent stand, she remains what Gilead (and arguably today's society) fears the most: herself. The Handmaids are also not allowed to talk to each other besides greetings and trivial topics. All conversations are done under heavy surveillance. They are taught that each other, especially the ones performing the same societal role, are enemies. This has been extensively discussed nowadays: girls are taught from a young age that they are competing with one another; enhancing the isolation they feel. This confirms the fear the regime has of them coming together and rebelling. That is why they are so isolated from one another - which enhances the silence around these characters. June's story starts to change once she defies the regime and communicates with other Handmaids. Hulu What makes The Handmaid's Tale almost unbearable to watch is how much it portrays a woman's greatest fears. The amount of explicit violence in the show recently received backlash from various people, claiming it was unnecessary to get their point across. In the dystopian world, women have no right to their lives and bodies. They don't own themselves, and that is why Handmaids names are the names of their 'owner': Of + their name. Commander Fred owns June, so, therefore, her name becomes Offred, and in later seasons Ofjoseph. The handmaids are tortured, raped, and stripped of their selves until they become a vessel to give birth. The red-colored clothes and white hat are symbols: becoming something less than human, only flesh, but also a reminder that this woman can give birth, therefore she menstruates, something viewed as impure by the regime. This narrative is not only painful for the characters, but for anyone watching the show. The series almost provokes the viewer to stop watching, enticing them how unbearable it is to live in a society where women are less than nothing. The Handmaid's Tale shows the deepest fears that sometimes are too dark to be said out loud. The story exposes the trauma and how society ignores these problems and, sometimes, would rather see women as vessels that are necessary to the human race, but that are not worth basic human rights. It is a difficult story to follow but a necessary one. Welcome to the fascinating world of The Handmaids Tale by Margaret Atwood! Published in 1985, this novel plunges us into the dystopian world of Gilead, a totalitarian society in what used to be the United States. Margaret Atwood, a Canadian author renowned for her remarkable storytelling and inventive narratives, explores themes of power, gender, and resistance in this gripping tale. The Handmaids Tale falls under the genre of speculative fiction, offering a chilling look at the potential consequences of political and environmental degradation through the eyes of its protagonist, Offred. Atwoods masterpiece has not only captivated readers but also sparked discussions on its relevance to contemporary issues. The novel has been adapted into a critically acclaimed television series, further cementing its place in popular culture. Whether youre a long-time fan or new to Atwoods work, The Handmaids Tale promises a thought-provoking journey into a world that mirrors our own in uncanny ways. Lets dive into the heart of this literary marvel! The Handmaids Tale intricately weaves a tale of dystopia, focusing on the life of Offred, a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead a totalitarian regime that has taken over the United States. The novel is structured around Offreds experiences and memories, painting a vivid picture of a society plagued by environmental disasters and a plummeting birth rate. Exposition Offred introduces us to the Republic of Gilead, where women are stripped of their rights and reduced to their reproductive functions. The Handmaids, like Offred, are forced to live with Commanders and their wives in hopes of bearing children. Rising Action As Offred navigates the oppressive rules of Gilead, she recalls her past life, including her husband, Luke, and their daughter, both of whom she was separated from when Gilead came to power. She also forms complex relationships with other characters: the Commander, his wife Serena Joy, and fellow Handmaids. Secret meetings with the Commander reveal the cracks in Gileads faade. Climax The tension peaks when Offred begins a risky affair with Nick, the Commanders chauffeur, urged by Serena Joy in exchange for information about her daughter. This affair, both a form of resistance and a grasp at fleeting moments of personal freedom, represents Offreds rebellion against the system. Falling Action The discovery of a secret resistance movement, Mayday, offers a glimmer of hope. However, the precarious nature of Offreds existence becomes ever more apparent as she witnesses the fate of those who defy Gileads laws, including her friend, Moira, and the tragic outcomes for other Handmaids. Resolution The novel concludes ambiguously. Offred is taken away by individuals in a van, which could either be her arrest by the oppressive regime or her rescue by the Mayday resistance. Atwood leaves Offreds fate open to interpretation, reflecting on the power of hope and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of tyranny. This plot summary encapsulates the main events and the structured progression of The Handmaids Tale, highlighting Offreds journey through a repressive regime and her pursuit of autonomy and hope amidst despair. In The Handmaids Tale, Margaret Atwood crafts characters that embody the complexities of the human condition within the oppressive regime of Gilead. Heres a closer look at the main characters: Offred The protagonist, Offred, is a Handmaid assigned to a Commander and his wife, Serena Joy. Her primary role is to bear a child for them. Offreds internal monologue reveals a woman of resilience, nostalgia, and quiet rebellion. Her memories of the time before Gilead keep her hope alive, and her relationships with other characters showcase her adaptability and strength in the face of oppression. The Commander Assigned to Offred, the Commander is a high-ranking official in Gilead. Despite his authoritative position, he reveals vulnerabilities in his clandestine interactions with Offred, seeking intimacy and companionship. His character highlights the hypocrisies within Gileads leadership and the complexities of power dynamics. Serena Joy The Commanders wife, Serena Joy, is a former televangelist and advocate for traditional values that led to the rise of Gilead. Despite her position, she is rendered powerless by the states policies, especially regarding reproduction. Her interactions with Offred range from hostile to manipulative, reflecting her desperation and complex feelings about her role in Gileads society. Nick Nick is the Commanders chauffeur and part of the Mayday resistance. His relationship with Offred offers her a semblance of emotional and physical escape from her oppressive existence. Nicks character serves as a connection to the outside world and the possibility of rebellion against the regime. Moira Offreds best friend from before Gilead, Moira is a symbol of resistance. Her escape attempts and ultimate fate as a Jezebel (a woman forced into prostitution for the elite) demonstrate the risks of defiance and the oppressive nature of Gilead, but also her unyielding spirit and refusal to fully conform. CharacterPersonalityMotivationDevelopmentOffredResilient, nostalgic, observantSurvival, hope for a reunion with her daughterGrows in courage and determinationThe CommanderComplex, authoritative, longingSeeks intimacy, controlReveals vulnerabilities, remains enigmaticSerena JoyBitter, desperate, manipulativeDesires a child, power within her householdMoves from antagonistic to complex allyNickMysterious, sympathetic, rebelliousProtection of Offred, resistance against GileadDeepens as a character through his actionsMoiraDefiant, bold, resilientFreedom, resistanceEmbodies the spirit of rebellion, yet shows the cost of defiance This analysis provides insight into the motivations and developments of the key characters in The Handmaids Tale, showcasing their struggles, adaptations, and roles in the broader narrative of resistance and survival within a dystopian regime. The Handmaids Tale by Margaret Atwood is rich with themes and symbols that contribute to its haunting exploration of power, gender, and resistance. Lets delve into the major ones: Themes Power and Control Gilead is a society built on the foundational principles of power and control, particularly over womens bodies and freedoms. This theme is central to understanding the mechanisms through which the regime maintains its grip on the population, using religious and political indoctrination to justify its oppressive policies. Gender Roles The strict delineation of gender roles underpins the social structure of Gilead, where women are categorically divided into roles such as Wives, Handmaids, Marthas, and Aunts, each with specific duties. This theme explores the reduction of women to their biological and domestic functions, critiquing the extreme patriarchal system. Resistance and Hope Despite the overwhelming oppression, the theme of resistance runs through the narrative. Offreds memories of her past life, her internal defiance, and the existence of the Mayday movement highlight the human spirits resilience and the glimmer of hope for a different future. Symbols The Color Red The Handmaids red attire symbolizes fertility, drawing a direct line to their role as child-bearers. It also serves as a visual marker of their status and the danger they embody in Gileads sterile environment. The Eye The symbol of the Eye, representing Gileads secret police, embodies the states surveillance and the omnipresent threat of being watched. It underscores the loss of privacy and the constant fear under which the characters live. Flowers Throughout the novel, flowers symbolize fertility and femininity but also the natural worlds subjugation, mirroring the womens experiences in Gilead. Serena Joys garden, carefully tended and controlled, reflects her own situation a semblance of power within a confined space. The Bible The selective use and interpretation of the Bible in Gilead serves as a powerful tool for justification and control. It symbolizes the manipulation of religion to enforce the states ideology and suppress dissent. By weaving these themes and symbols into the fabric of the narrative, Atwood not only crafts a deeply engaging story but also invites readers to reflect on the implications of power dynamics, societal roles, and the human capacity for resilience in the face of oppression. Margaret Atwoods The Handmaids Tale is renowned for its distinctive writing style and tone, which play pivotal roles in shaping the mood and atmosphere of the novel. Lets explore how Atwoods choices in these areas contribute to the overall impact of the story: Writing Style First-Person Narrative The story is told from Offreds perspective, providing an intimate and immersive experience. This perspective allows readers to connect deeply with her thoughts, feelings, and observations, making the oppressive reality of Gilead palpably felt. Non-linear Storytelling Atwood employs flashbacks and memories to weave together the past and the present. This technique not only builds a rich backstory but also reflects the fragmented nature of Offreds life and mind under the regimes pressure. Symbolic Language The use of symbols, such as the color red and flowers, adds layers of meaning to the narrative. Atwoods language is rich in imagery, drawing parallels between the characters experiences and broader themes of fertility, control, and resistance. Economical and Precise Atwoods writing is marked by its clarity and precision. Each word is carefully chosen, contributing to a style that is both economical and evocative, perfectly suited to the constrained and surveilled world of Gilead. Tone Reflective and Melancholic Much of the novel is introspective, with Offred reflecting on her past and present. The tone is often melancholic, infused with longing for the freedoms and relationships lost to the regime. Understated Irony and Satire Atwood subtly incorporates irony and satire, particularly in her depiction of Gileads official policies and propaganda. This not only critiques the regime but also highlights the absurdity and cruelty underlying its facade of righteousness. Tension and Fear A pervasive tone of tension and fear mirrors the characters constant surveillance and the threat of punishment. This atmosphere is a testament to Atwoods skill in creating a believable and oppressive dystopian world. Hope and Resilience Despite the oppressive environment, the tone is not without hope. Offreds acts of defiance, memories of her past, and the existence of the Mayday resistance offer glimmers of hope and resilience. Through her distinctive style and tone, Margaret Atwood crafts a complex and immersive narrative in The Handmaids Tale. The novels atmosphere is charged with emotion and meaning, inviting readers to contemplate the storys themes and the real-world issues it reflects. Margaret Atwoods The Handmaids Tale employs a range of literary devices that enrich the narrative and deepen the readers engagement with the text. Lets explore the top 10 devices used: Symbolism Atwood uses symbols extensively to add layers of meaning to the narrative. For instance, the color red, worn by the Handmaids, symbolizes both fertility and danger, while flowers represent femininity and the control over womens bodies. Irony There is a pervasive use of irony, particularly situational irony, where the society of Gilead, which claims to protect women, actually oppresses them. This irony highlights the hypocrisy of the regime. Metaphor Gilead itself can be seen as a metaphor for totalitarian regimes and patriarchal societies, representing the potential consequences of extreme ideological beliefs imposed upon a population. Foreshadowing Atwood subtly foreshadows events, such as the fate of Offreds friend, Moira, and the presence of the resistance, hinting at the underlying currents of defiance and the eventual unraveling of Gileads control. Allusion The novel is replete with biblical allusions, which Gilead uses to justify its laws and practices. These references to biblical passages about fertility and submission are twisted to legitimize the oppression of women. Imagery Vivid imagery is used to create a palpable sense of the world of Gilead, from the starkness of the Handmaids red garments to the oppressive architecture of the Commanders house, evoking a visceral response from the reader. Personification Atwood personifies elements of nature and objects within Gilead, imbuing them with emotional weight. For example, the flowers in Serena Joys garden are described in a way that reflects the characters emotional states and desires. Simile The use of simile, such as comparing the Handmaids to nuns (in their isolation and dedication to a single purpose), highlights the absurdity and tragedy of their situation, emphasizing their lack of agency. Juxtaposition Atwood juxtaposes the past and present lives of her characters, particularly Offreds, to highlight the stark differences and loss of freedom. This contrast deepens the sense of loss and nostalgia for a world that no longer exists. Stream of Consciousness The narrative technique of stream of consciousness allows readers to experience Offreds thoughts and feelings directly. This approach reflects the complexity of her internal struggle, blending memories, observations, and emotions in a way that mirrors the chaos and repression of Gilead. By integrating these literary devices, Atwood not only constructs a compelling narrative but also invites readers to reflect on the themes of power, identity, and resistance within The Handmaids Tale. Lets examine examples and explanations for each of the top 10 literary devices used in The Handmaids Tale by Margaret Atwood. ExampleExplanationRed clothing of the HandmaidsRepresents fertility and blood, linking the Handmaids directly to their reproductive functions and the danger surrounding their role.Flowers in Serena Joys gardenSymbolize both the beauty and the control of femininity within Gilead, reflecting the restricted roles of women.The EyeSymbolizes the oppressive surveillance state of Gilead, creating an atmosphere of fear and paranoia. ExampleExplanationGileads claim to protect womenIronically, the regimes restrictive laws subject women to severe oppression and exploitation, highlighting the hypocrisy of its foundational principles.Ceremonys biblical justificationThe use of religious texts to justify the sexual exploitation of Handmaids underlines the irony of Gileads moral corruption masquerading as religious piety. ExampleExplanationGilead as a dystopian societyServes as a metaphor for the dangers of extreme political and religious ideologies, cautioning against the erosion of personal freedoms and rights. ExampleExplanationOffreds early encounters with MaydaySubtly hints at the existence of a resistance movement, suggesting the possibility of rebellion against the regimes oppressive rule. ExampleExplanationBiblical references to fertilityAllusions to biblical figures and stories justify the subjugation of women, critiquing the manipulation of religion to serve political ends. ExampleExplanationDescription of the Handmaids red attire against the backdrop of GileadEvokes a strong visual contrast that highlights their role and the starkness of the regimes control over their bodies. ExampleExplanationThe way nature is described as reacting to Gileads regimeNature often mirrors the characters feelings of oppression and resistance, creating a sense of empathy and connection with the environment. ExampleExplanationComparing the Handmaids to nunsHighlights their forced piety and isolation, emphasizing the perversion of their roles in society. ExampleExplanationOffreds memories of her past life with her present situationSharpens the sense of loss and the dramatic change in society, emphasizing what has been taken from her and others in Gilead. ExampleExplanationOffreds inner monologueOffers a direct insight into her thoughts and feelings, blending past and present to reflect the turmoil of living under Gileads regime. These examples illustrate how Margaret Atwood skillfully uses literary devices to deepen the thematic complexity of The Handmaids Tale, enhancing the readers understanding and engagement with the novel. What is the setting of The Handmaids Tale?The novel is set in the Republic of Gilead, a dystopian version of the United States, where a totalitarian regime has overthrown the government. The story takes place in the near future, depicting a society structured around the subjugation of women and enforced through religious and militaristic laws. Who is the protagonist of The Handmaids Tale?The protagonist of the novel is a woman known as Offred. Offred is a Handmaid, a role in Gilead society where women are forced into sexual servitude in an effort to combat the declining birth rates. The narrative follows her life, struggles, and inner thoughts as she navigates this oppressive world. What are the main themes in The Handmaids Tale?Major themes include the misuse of power, gender dynamics, the suppression of individual rights, resistance to oppression, and the distortion of religion for political purposes. The novel explores how these themes affect society and the individuals within it, particularly focusing on womens experiences. How does Margaret Atwood use symbolism in The Handmaids Tale?Atwood uses symbolism extensively throughout the novel to deepen the narratives meaning. Key symbols include the color red, representing fertility and danger; flowers, symbolizing femininity and control; and the Eye, reflecting the states surveillance and oppression. Is The Handmaids Tale a feminist novel?Yes, The Handmaids Tale is widely regarded as a feminist novel. It critiques patriarchal societies and explores the extremes of gender inequality, focusing on womens experiences of subjugation and their struggles for autonomy and dignity within a totalitarian regime. How does The Handmaids Tale end?The novel ends ambiguously. Offred is taken away by a van from the secret police of Gilead, known as the Eyes, or possibly by members of the Mayday resistance. It is left unclear whether her removal is for her arrest or rescue. The novel concludes with a historical note, suggesting that Gilead eventually falls, providing a broader perspective on the events Offred narrates. Has The Handmaids Tale been adapted into other media?Yes, The Handmaids Tale has been adapted into several forms, including a critically acclaimed television series that expands upon the narrative and characters of the book. There have also been film adaptations, operas, and stage plays, demonstrating the storys wide-reaching impact and relevance. QuestionABCDCorrect AnswerWhat is the primary role of a Handmaid in Gilead?To serve as domestic workersTo participate in governmentTo bear children for elite couplesTo teach the doctrines of GileadCWho is the Commander in The Handmaids Tale?Offreds husband before GileadThe head of the secret policeThe man to whom Offred is assignedA leader of the Mayday resistanceCWhat symbolizes fertility and danger in The Handmaids Tale?The color blueThe color redFlowersThe EyeBWhich character represents the spirit of rebellion?Serena JoyAunt LydiaMoiraThe CommanderCHow does Gilead justify its treatment of women?Through scientific reasoningBy economic necessityWith biblical allusionsCiting historical precedentsCWhat is the fate of Offred at the end of the novel?She escapes to CanadaShe is executed by GileadIt is left ambiguousShe becomes an AuntCWhat does the Eye symbolize?Hope and resistanceGileads surveillance and controlThe fertility of HandmaidsThe protection of womenB This quiz is designed to test comprehension of The Handmaids Tale by Margaret Atwood, focusing on key aspects such as the roles within Gilead, symbolism, and major plot points. Identify the Literary Devices Used in This Paragraph from The Handmaids Tale: In the room, the light is as hazy as a dream. The Commanders wife, Serena Joy, sits in the dimness, surrounded by the shadows of the past, her knitting needles clicking like the tick of a clock, marking time that seems to have stopped. Outside, the world continues, indifferent to the dramas that unfold within these walls. Answers: Metaphor: The comparison of the light to a dream suggests an unreal or surreal quality to the setting, emphasizing the disconnection from reality experienced by the characters. Personification: The description of the world as indifferent personifies it, suggesting it has emotions or awareness, which contrasts the intense personal dramas inside the house. Simile: The knitting needles clicking like the tick of a clock uses a simile to compare the sound to that of a clock, emphasizing the passage of time and possibly the stagnation or the waiting inherent in Serena Joys life. Imagery: The overall vivid description of Serena Joy sitting in dimness, surrounded by shadows and the sound of knitting needles, creates a vivid image that engages the readers senses, painting a picture of the scene. Symbolism: The knitting needles and the ticking clock symbolize the passage of time and Serena Joys attempts to fill her time within the confines of her role and the oppressive society.(Also looking closer into Offreds and the Commander s relationship.) The Handmaid in the title is referring to Offred, the main character. This is clearly revealed as the story is told in Offreds perspective. However it is more complicated than you think. The story is told from when Offred is living the actual scene but she also narrates it as if it were told from third person. I noticed how there were parts in the book when characters were speaking, their dialogue was not in quotation marks and other parts were. When there was dialogue without quotation marks, Margaret Atwood, the author, would write I said. or He said. The dialogue that had quotation marks Atwood would write I say. or He says. This technique used by Atwood allows the reader to picture the scene when there was dialogue without quotation marks but with quotations, Atwood wanted the reader to feel like they were in that scene. To feel what Offred felt. When I googled the definition of Tale it defined it as a story, especially one that might be invented or difficult to believe. On page 39 Offred said, I would like to believe this is a story Im telling. I need to believe it. I must believe it It isnt a story Im telling. Its also a story Im telling, in my head, as I go along. She is letting us know this book is her tale, not everything is true. Chapter 38 basically summarizes Moiras whole journey after she escaped the Center, it was a long long long journey. Not many would have made it out as sane as Moira did. There was a point where she wanted to end her life. On page 249 it stuck out to me that some dialogue, that had quotation marks, were questions and yet they still ended it with I say. What about the others? I say. This observation sparked the question Why is it I say. even when it is a question? With the help of my peer, Leticia Desouza we were able to discuss and come up with an explanation. Even though this scene was told in present tense, it is still a tale that she is telling the readers. As Offred mentioned on page 243, Moira told her all about her journey but she could not remember everything. She said, Ive filled it out for her as much as I can Once again letting the reader know that not everything said is exactly true. Moiras character is the life/adventurous element of this whole book. Every time Moira is mentioned something to keep the book interesting happens. When she was at the Center she managed to escape but to escape she tricked Aunt Elizabeth into helping her unclog a toilet Moira purposely clogged. She then threatened Aunt Elizabeth, tied her up and swapped clothes with her to make her escape easier. At the end of chapter 38 Offred seemed like she did not really like the content of Moiras journey. She said, Id like to tell a story about how Moira escaped for good this time. Or if I couldnt tell that, Id like to say she blew up Jezebels, with fifty Commanders inside it. Id like her to end with something daring and spectacular, some outrage, something that would befit her.(250) Offred sees in Moira the courage she does not have. She depends on Moira to feel safe or become free. Before the new government took over Gilead, Moira was already expecting it. Moira already had ties with the Underground Femaleroad. Unlike Moira, Offred was not prepared. Everything to her was all of the sudden that is why she depends on Moira to become free. That is also why she wanted to tell a story of how Moira blew up Jezebels with fifty Commanders inside. She herself would not do anything to fight or protest and become free. In chapter 39 it is illustrated an uncomfortable scene between Offred and the Commander. The Commander took Offred to Jezebels, where she saw Moira and explained her whole journey after escaping the center. After that the Commander took Offred to a hotel room at Jezebels to sleep with her. Although he acknowledged that the Ceremony was the next day, he still goes on to say, I thought we could jump the gun. He starts to caress Offreds body however the way she worded it shows that she is uncomfortable. the left leg. He stops at the foot, his fingers encircling the ankle.(254) Instead of calling her body my she references them as the because in this moment she is an object to the Commander. An object for him to get his pleasure out of. Even as this was all happening she continues to defend the Commander though not to someone, she is mentally defending him. I remind myself that he is not an unkind man; that, under other circumstances, I even like him. Offred holds onto this idea that the Commander is a good guy because she could end up like the last handmaid, killing herself to end her suffering. Share copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. The Handmaids Tale, a dystopian novel by Margaret Atwood, published in 1985, has resonated deeply with readers for decades, sparking countless discussions and adaptations, including a popular television series. At its core, the novel is a chilling exploration of totalitarianism, the subjugation of women, and the importance of resistance. To truly grasp the meaning behind The Handmaids Tale, we must delve into its complex themes, symbols, and historical context. The Core Themes of Oppression and ControlThe novel paints a terrifying picture of Gilead, a theocratic dictatorship that has overthrown the United States government. Several key themes contribute to the storys powerful impact:The Subjugation of Women: A Central ConcernGileads defining characteristic is its systematic oppression of women. Faced with a plummeting birth rate (largely attributed to environmental issues), the regime strips women of their rights, identities, and autonomy. fertile women, deemed Handmaids, are forced into sexual servitude to bear children for the ruling class. This is a brutal and calculated form of control, reducing women to nothing more than reproductive vessels.Loss of Identity: Handmaids are stripped of their names and given new ones derived from their Commanders (e.g., Offred, Ofglen, Ofwarren), signifying their ownership.Control of Bodies: Womens bodies are constantly policed, from their clothing (the iconic red robes) to their movements and interactions.Denial of Education and Freedom: Women are forbidden from reading, writing, or engaging in independent thought. They are confined to the domestic sphere and subjected to constant surveillance.Forced Reproduction: The Ceremony, a ritualized monthly rape, epitomizes the Handmaids utter lack of agency.Totalitarian Control and the Erasure of IndividualityGilead maintains power through fear, surveillance, and propaganda. The regime controls every aspect of citizens lives, from what they can say and do to what they can think.The Eyes: A secret police force that monitors citizens activities and reports any dissent.The Wall: A public display of executed dissidents, serving as a stark warning to others.Re-education Centers: Known as The Red Centers, these facilities indoctrinate Handmaids with Gileads ideology.Control of Information: News and entertainment are heavily censored, and any form of independent expression is suppressed.Resistance and Hope in the Face of DespairDespite the oppressive atmosphere, The Handmaids Tale offers glimmers of resistance and hope. Offred, the protagonist, struggles to maintain her sense of self and to find small acts of defiance.Internal Resistance: Offred clings to memories of her past, remembering her daughter, her husband, and her former life.Underground Networks: The Mayday resistance movement offers a potential path to escape and rebellion.Small Acts of Defiance: Offred forms forbidden relationships with other women, sharing secrets and offering each other support.The Power of Storytelling: Offreds narrative, recorded on tapes and later transcribed, becomes a testament to the human spirits ability to endure.Symbols and Their SignificanceAtwood masterfully uses symbolism to enrich the narrative and convey deeper meanings.The Red Robes: The Handmaids red robes symbolize fertility, blood, and the suppression of their individuality.The White Wings: Worn around the Handmaids faces, the wings restrict their vision and prevent them from seeing or being seen.The Commanders Uniform: The Commanders black uniform represents power, authority, and control.The Ceremony: This ritualized act of forced reproduction symbolizes the dehumanization of women and the regimes obsession with control.The Eyes: Represent the ever-watchful presence of Gileads surveillance apparatus.Historical and Social ContextThe Handmaids Tale is not merely a fictional creation; it draws inspiration from historical and social realities.Historical Precedents: Atwood has stated that every element of Gilead has a historical precedent, from the suppression of womens rights to the use of religious dogma to justify oppression.Feminist Concerns: The novel reflects feminist concerns about reproductive rights, gender inequality, and the dangers of patriarchal societies.Political Commentary: The Handmaids Tale serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked power, religious extremism, and the erosion of democratic values.Ongoing Relevance: The novels themes continue to resonate today, as discussions about womens rights, political polarization, and the rise of authoritarianism remain at the forefront of public discourse.My Experience with the TV SeriesWhile I havent seen the movie (as it seems to be undefined at this time), I have followed the TV series adaptation of The Handmaids Tale with considerable interest. The show does a commendable job of visually bringing Gilead to life, portraying the oppressive atmosphere and the characters struggles with remarkable intensity.Elisabeth Moss delivers a powerful performance as Offred, capturing her resilience and determination in the face of unimaginable adversity. The show also expands on the novel, exploring the backstories of other characters and delving deeper into the complexities of Gileads society. The adaptation has had a profound impact on cultural conversations, especially in recent years as womens rights have been challenged politically and socially in different countries, including the USA. The visuals are often shocking and deeply disturbing, forcing us to face the unthinkable consequences of totalitarian control, particularly when it is gendered. I have found it to be a very important work that, if anything, has enhanced and amplified the meaning behind the original novel. The production values are high, the acting is superb, and the storytelling (at least in the initial seasons) is gripping. The series continues to be a relevant reminder that vigilance and resistance are necessary to preserve our freedoms.Ultimately, What Does The Handmaids Tale Mean?The Handmaids Tale is a powerful and disturbing exploration of the dangers of totalitarianism, the subjugation of women, and the importance of resistance. It serves as a warning about the fragility of freedom and the need to defend human rights. The novels enduring relevance lies in its ability to provoke thought, spark conversation, and inspire action. It reminds us that we must be vigilant in safeguarding our democratic values and protecting the rights of all individuals. It speaks to us through the power of storytelling and the importance of hope, even in the darkest of times.Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)Here are some frequently asked questions to provide additional valuable information for the readers.H3: 1. Is The Handmaids Tale based on a true story?No, The Handmaids Tale is a work of fiction. However, Margaret Atwood drew inspiration from historical events and social realities to create the world of Gilead. She has stated that every element of the novel has a historical precedent.H3: 2. What is the significance of the title The Handmaids Tale?The title refers to the Handmaids position in Gilead as forced surrogates, as well as the storys narrative structure as a tale or testimony from Offred. It is a dark pun that speaks to both the grim role they are forced to play and the way their lives are reduced to mere story fodder by the regime.H3: 3. Who is the Commander in The Handmaids Tale?The Commander is a high-ranking official in Gilead. He represents the ruling class and embodies the regimes patriarchal power. His relationship with Offred is complex, oscillating between control and a twisted form of intimacy.H3: 4. What is Mayday in The Handmaids Tale?Mayday is an underground resistance movement working to undermine Gilead and help people escape. It represents a glimmer of hope and the potential for rebellion against the oppressive regime.H3: 5. What happens to Offred at the end of The Handmaids Tale?The ending of The Handmaids Tale is ambiguous. Offred is taken away in a van, and it is unclear whether she is being rescued by the Mayday resistance or taken away to face punishment. The ambiguity forces the reader to consider the different possibilities and the precarious nature of hope in Gilead.H3: 6. What are some of the key symbols in The Handmaids Tale?Red Robes: Represent fertility, blood, and the suppression of individuality.White Wings: Restrict the Handmaids vision and prevent them from seeing or being seen.The Wall: A public display of executed dissidents, serving as a warning to others.The Ceremony: The ritualized act of forced reproduction symbolizes the dehumanization of women.H3: 7. Why is The Handmaids Tale so relevant today?The Handmaids Tale remains relevant because its themes of totalitarianism, the subjugation of women, and the importance of resistance continue to resonate in contemporary society. The novel serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked power, religious extremism, and the erosion of democratic values.H3: 8. What is the overall message of The Handmaids Tale?The overall message of The Handmaids Tale is that freedom is precious and must be defended. The novel warns against the dangers of complacency and encourages us to be vigilant in protecting human rights and democratic values. It also emphasizes the importance of hope, resistance, and the power of storytelling in the face of oppression.The movie information seems to be undefined, but I hope this comprehensive analysis provides valuable insights into the meaning behind The Handmaids Tale. Also, the movie is undefined.

A handmaid's tale ending. What is the meaning behind the handmaid's tale. What does the wall represent in the handmaid's tale. The handmaid's tale what is it about. What does the wall symbolize in the handmaid's tale. What is the purpose of a handmaid.