

# The Handmaid's Tale

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(Book Jacket Status: Jacketed)

A gripping vision of our society radically overturned by a theocratic revolution, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* has become one of the most powerful and most widely read novels of our time.

Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead, serving in the household of the enigmatic Commander and his bitter wife. She may go out once a day to markets whose signs are now pictures because women are not allowed to read. She must pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, for in a time of declining birthrates her value lies in her fertility, and failure means exile to the dangerously polluted Colonies. Offred can remember a time when she lived with her husband and daughter and had a job, before she lost even her own name. Now she navigates the intimate secrets of those who control her every move, risking her life in breaking the rules.

Like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Handmaid's Tale* has endured not only as a literary landmark but as a warning of a possible future that is still chillingly relevant.

Offered is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. She may leave the home of the Commander and his wife once a day to walk to food markets where signs are now in pictures instead of words because women are no longer allowed to read. She must lie on her back once a month and pray that the Commander makes her pregnant because, in an age of declining births, Offered and other Handmaids are only valued if their ovaries are viable. Offered can remember the years before, when she lived and made love with her husband, Luke; when she played with and protected her daughter; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But all of that is gone now....

Funny, unexpected, horrifying, and altogether convincing, *The Handmaid's Tale* is at once scathing satire, dire warning, and tour de force.

"Splendid."

NEWSWEEK

It is the world of the near future, and Offred is a Handmaid in the home of the Commander and his wife. She is allowed out once a day to the food market, she is not permitted to read, and she is hoping the Commander makes her pregnant, because she is only valued if her ovaries are viable. Offred can remember the years before, when she was an independent woman, had a job of her own, a husband and child. But all of that is gone now...everything has changed.

"Deserves the highest praise."

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

From the Paperback edition.

#### Other Books

Language's influence on control and rebellion in Margaret Atwood's "*The Handmaid's Tale*", Seminar paper from the year 2018 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,3, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, language: English, abstract: Overall, Atwood utilized Gilead's oppressive manipulation of language in "*The Handmaid's Tale*" to reveal the hierarchical dynamics of power in the theocratic state. Therefore, it is vital to determine in

how far Gilead's discourse is used to maintain the existing power structures, but also whether, and if so, in how far it is used to offer resistance against the state's rigid hierarchy. Therefore, it will first be analyzed what Gilead's social structure looks like, before the highly original thoughts of Pierre Bourdieu on the relations among language, power and politics will be introduced to facilitate a real understanding of the correlation of language and power. After that, a closer look at the concrete content of the novel and particular text passages will give an insight into how the Gileadean power structures are maintained through the use of language. Following this, it will then be analyzed how language also enables Gilead's opponents, in general, but mainly, the novel's first-person narrator Offred, in particular, to offer resistance. Therefore, it will first be described how the coexistence of two discourses can be a threat to the system, before it will be dealt with Offred's main means of resistance: her storytelling.

After that, a closer look at the concrete content of the novel and particular text passages will give an insight into how the Gileadean power structures are maintained through the use of language."