

APPENDICES

Synopsis of Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale

A religious group called the Son of Jacob has overthrown the United States government. A woman, who is later called Offred, is arrested for being married to a divorced man, which is considered heretical. Their daughter is taken away and given to the elite. Offred is sent to the Red Center. She is trained and brainwashed into submission to her new role as a handmaid by a group of women called Aunts. Later, she is sent to work for the Commander, Fred. She spends much of her time waiting in her designated room.

Offred goes shopping everyday accompanied by another handmaid, Ofglen. Sometimes Offred still dreams about her daughter, husband, and mother. Offred is also taken to the doctor for her monthly check-up. The doctor offers to do her the service of impregnating her, but she declines his offer although she desperately wants a child. Later the Commander has ceremonial sex with Offred and his wife in his wife's bed. The Commander then asks Offred to accompany him to attend a secret club for the elite and then they have some uninspired sex.

Serena Joy, the wife knocks on Offred's door later that night and tells her to go to Nick's apartment above the garage. Nick is the commander's chauffeur. They have sex but deny themselves any semblance of romance or intimacy. Offred visits Nick repeatedly afterwards. There is no certainty about the ending whether Offred is being freed or sent to the Colonies.

Synopsis of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland

Herland is an isolated, all-female land. There is no man in the society. Three male adventures are suspicious of Herland and its women, and they think they will find a society wrecked by chaos and disorder, since they believe that women are not intelligent and organized, or capable of surviving without their male-halves. Jeff, Van, and Terry, the male adventurers plan an expedition to the land. The fact that the female inhabitants of Herland can reproduce asexually satirizes the male gender by implying that women do not really need men, and that they can do everything men can do.

Ellador, one of the women who lives in Herland, welcomes the explorers. She spends a lot of time with the men in Herland. Being together with the men, she has to experience some unfairness from the men. But through her characteristics, she could show the men that women are not weak. As time goes by, the men grow to realize that. She marries one of the explorers named Van. The other explorers also take wives in Herland. Conflict between the partners develops regarding sexual

intercourse. The women feel that its only purpose is procreation, while the men all advocate recreational sex to some extent. Jeff and Van overcome these difficulties, and the former has a child with his wife. However, Terry's overly dominant personality leads to an attempted rape of his partner, which causes him to be banished. Van and his wife, Ellador, leave with Terry on their seaplane, because the vehicle needs two to operate, and because Ellador wants to evaluate the “modern world” firsthand. The book ends without revealing Ellador's future experiences.

Biography of Margaret Atwood

Margaret Atwood was born in Ottawa, Ontario, in 1939. She is the daughter of a forest entomologist, and spent part of her early years in the bush of North Quebec. She moved, at the age of seven, to Toronto. She studied at the University of Toronto, and then took her masters degree at Radcliffe College, Massachusetts, in 1962. She is a novelist and a poet who also writes short stories, critical studies, radio scripts and books for children.

Her first publication was a book of poetry, The Circle Game (1964), which received the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry. Other poetry collections have followed then. In her novels, she always deals with women characters who live in contemporary urban life and sexual politics, such as in The Edible Woman (1969); Surfacing (1973); Lady Oracle (1977); Life Before Man (1980); Bodily Harm (1982); The Handmaid's Tale (1986). Her latest novels have been: Cat's Eye (1989), The

Robber Bride (1993), Alias Grace (1996), The Blind Assassin (2000) and Oryx and Crake (2003). Her novels have received many awards and honorary degrees.

In 1986, The Handmaid's Tale was published and became bestseller. It has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction and was adapted for screen by Harold Pinter in a film directed by Volker Schlöndorff. The film was released in 1990 and is now staged as an opera by Poul Ruders.

Source: "Holcombe"

Biography of Charlotte Perkins Gilman

She is an American writer, economist, lecturer, and an early theorist of the feminist movement. Gilman saw that the domestic environment has become an institution which oppresses women. She was born in Hartford, Connecticut, the daughter of Frederick Beecher Perkins. She studied two years at Rhode Island School of Design (1878-1880).

In 1884, she married Charles Walter Stetson. After the birth of their daughter Katharine, she experienced depression. Gilman began to have treatment with Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell in 1886. His recommendations were to "live as domestic a life as possible" and "never touch a pen, brush or pencil as long as you live". In 1888 Gilman separated from Stetson (they divorced in 1894), and moved to California. Gilman's second husband was her cousin George Houghton Gilman, a New York lawyer.

In 1894-95 she served as editor of The Impress, a literary weekly published by the Pacific Coast Women's Press Association, and published an experimental series of stories, in which she imitated the style of well-known authors such as Louisa May Alcott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, Edgar Allan Poe, and Mark Twain.

Gilman was active in Nationalism, a reform movement which predicted the fall of capitalism and was inspired by Edward Bellamy's utopian socialist romance Looking Backward. This work also influenced her utopian novel Herland, published by Women's Press in 1979.

Gilman died on August 17, 1935, in Pasadena, California. An advocate of euthanasia, she ended her own life by taking an overdose of chloroform.

Source: "Liukknen"