

THE HANDMAID'S TALE  
Pilot

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THE HANDMAID'S TALE

"PILOT"

EXT. MAINE - COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A road curves through the Maine countryside.

A CAR appears, driving too fast. It swerves, fishtails, then SKIDS OFF THE ROAD.

The car bounces across a grassy pasture and stops. The engine revs. The wheels spin, but the car doesn't move.

LUKE (27, former hipster) jumps out, looks under the car. The wheels are buried in the soft ground.

JUNE (28) gets out. Carelessly pretty. On a normal day, she's feisty and capable. But today she's fighting panic.

She leans into the backseat and pulls out HANNAH. The three-year-old is scared, crying a bit.

JUNE

(to Hannah)

Shhh, you're okay. Did the car go bump?

(to Luke, urgent)

Can we push it out?

LUKE

(mind racing, fearful)

I don't know. I think.

(and then)

We need to put something under the wheels.

Luke moves around the car, pops the trunk. Rushing.

SIRENS SCREAM IN THE DISTANCE. Coming closer.

Luke and June FREEZE -- pure terror. They're out of time. Luke makes a decision.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Go, take her.

There's an augural certainty in his voice. But June is less sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNE

We need the car.

Luke grabs a BACKPACK, starts tossing in water bottles, diapers, a small ziploc bag filled with GOLD JEWELRY.

LUKE

Just keep going north.

Luke points, across the field to the woods.

LUKE (CONT'D)

It's about two miles to the river.  
They said someone would meet us.  
(and then)  
Go, I'll catch up.

The sirens grow louder. Engines GROWL nearby.

June hesitates, but just for a moment -- there's no time for sentiment.

June pulls Hannah close and RUNS FOR THE WOODS.

She doesn't look back.

EXT. MAINE WOODS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Tall boxelders and sugar maples shade an undergrowth of spindly Balsam Pines.

June runs, carrying Hannah as she weaves between the trees.

She gone a few hundred yards when --

THREE QUICK GUNSHOTS ECHO.

JUNE STOPS SHORT. She turns back and scans the woods for a long, terrible beat.

Nothing. Just the sounds of the forest. Trees creaking in the wind.

Then, she sees MOVEMENT.

NOT LUKE.

Men in BLACK UNIFORMS. She can hear their faint SHOUTS. They carry SNUBBY AUTOMATIC RIFLES.

FUCK. June RUNS FOR HER LIFE.

She stumbles, almost falls, keeps running. As fast as she can. She's gasping from fear and exertion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But she isn't going to outrun them, not carrying Hannah. She looks around for somewhere to hide -- makes a quick decision.

June pulls Hannah to the ground behind a FALLEN TREE. Hannah CRIES. June covers her mouth.

JUNE  
(almost silent)  
Shhh, baby girl. Please.

Her pursuers close in. Six, eight of them. All men.

We can see them clearly now.

These aren't police, and they aren't soldiers. There are no American Flags on these uniforms. Just a symbol on the shoulder.

Two Angel wings.

These are GUARDIANS OF THE FAITH.

GUARDIAN #1  
(pointing)  
Go up around there...

GUARDIAN #2  
Do you see her?

June holds Hannah tightly as the Guardians move closer. Her mind races.

Then, suddenly, her most primal instincts take over. June GETS UP AND RUNS WITH HANNAH IN HER ARMS.

A Guardian immediately spots them.

GUARDIAN #1  
There!

June runs HARD, FAST -- fueled by crystalline panic.

A GUARDIAN sprints after her, catches up. HE GRABS HER by the collar.

June twists VICIOUSLY. She punches the Guardian, a few hard jabs, and manages to pull free.

June runs, holding Hannah close.

But more Guardians have caught up. They grab for her, pulling her down to the ground.

JUNE  
Get off, get the fuck off me...!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

June SCREAMS, CLAWS, PUNCHES, KICKS. A Guardian pulls away screaming, his eye bloody. A BEADY-EYED GUARDIAN stumbles back claspng his groin.

BEADY-EYED GUARDIAN  
(hurting and furious)  
Whore....

She's a fighter. But there are too many. The Guardians manage to hold her.

They drag Hannah from her arms.

JUNE  
No no no! Don't touch her...!

HANNAH  
Mommmmmmy!

June desperately tries to get free. The BEADY-EYED GUARDIAN, still hurting from the kick to the groin, hits June in the head with a TRUNCHEON.

June FALLS BACK as the world swims gray.

GUARDIAN #1  
(re: June)  
Careful! She's a red tag.

HANNAH  
Mommmmmmy!

JUNE turns her head. Half-conscious, she sees HANNAH REACHING OUT FOR HER as a GUARDIAN CARRIES HER AWAY.

ON JUNE'S FACE as her eyes flutter into unconsciousness --

FADE TO PURE  
WHITE:

EXT. MAINE WOODS - DAY - LATER

OVER WHITE. VOICES. DRY LEAVES, STICKS CRACKING -- THE SOUND OF BOOTS WALKING ON THE FOREST FLOOR.

JUNE'S FACE as she drifts awake.

She tries to focus -- she can see the trees up above, stretching into gray sky.

She is MOVING.

PULLING BACK, we see that June is strapped to a STRETCHER. Guardians carry her out of the woods.

EXT. MAINE - COUNTRY ROAD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Guardians carry June towards the road. June can see her CAR, still sitting in the field where she left it.

No sign of Luke.

THREE BLACK SUV's sit parked on the road. Official vehicles with flashing lights. They are all marked with the same angel wings symbol. More GUARDIANS mill around.

A RED VAN waits. Doors open. Like a trap.

The Guardians load June into the van. THEY LOCK THE DOORS.

THE BLOOD-RED VAN drives away down the country road. As it grows smaller in the distance, we hear JUNE'S VOICE.

JUNE (V.O.)

(calm)

*A chair. A table. A lamp.*

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The bedroom is perfectly neat, decorated in beiges.

Polished wood floor, braided rug. A folksy touch.

It could be a room in a QUAIN T NEW ENGLAND B&B.

JUNE (V.O.)

*Above, on the ceiling in the middle of the room, there's a spot that's been plastered over.*

(and then)

*There must have been a chandelier once. They've removed anything you can tie a rope to.*

JUNE sits, hands folded, looking out of the window. She wears a full RED DRESS, almost a cloak.

A starched-white bonnet covers her head, obscures her face.

JUNE (V.O.)

*There's a window with white curtains. 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.*

(and then)

*Given a cutting edge.*

(and then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Or a twisted sheet and a  
chandelier.*

It is an otherworldly tableaux. A woman draped in red, in this dollhouse-perfect bedroom.

JUNE (V.O.)  
*I try not to think about those  
escapes. It's harder on Ceremony  
day.*

(and then)  
*Thinking can hurt your chances. And  
I intend to survive. I intend to  
survive for her.*

(and then)  
*My name is Offred. I had another  
name, but it's forbidden now. So  
many things are forbidden now.*

June is now OFFRED.

Welcome to our world. Welcome to Gilead.

Somewhere in the house, a CLOCK CHIMES loudly.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - HALLWAY/STAIRS - DAY

Offred walks down the stairs. She moves so quietly, it's like she doesn't even push any air in front of her.

She stops outside the kitchen door.

IN THE KITCHEN, RITA (50, gruff) kneads bread. She wears a DULL GREEN DRESS -- the uniform of a "Martha" -- the caste of domestic workers in this society.

Offred watches her kneading the heavy bread dough.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*Rita makes the bread from scratch.  
It's the kind of thing they like  
the Marthas to do.*

(and then)  
*A return to traditional values,  
that's what they fought for.*

Rita sees Offred.

RITA  
(annoyed)  
Always showing up when I'm in the  
midst. Hold your horses.

She wipes her floury hands on her apron and pulls a set of KEYS from her pocket. She crosses to a cabinet, unlocks it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Offred waits in the hallway. A SOFT CLICKING CATCHES HER ATTENTION. Offred looks across the hall. A door, slightly open, reveals a perfectly-decorated SITTING ROOM.

In the sitting room, Offred can just see the shoulder of a WOMAN IN BLUE. She sits in a chair, knitting. Her needles click against each other.

**LOOKING AT THE WOMAN, OFFRED FLASHES BACK TO:**

INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Outside the sitting room window, a hard rain falls.

OFFRED stands in her RED CLOAK, a red suitcase beside her. They are still damp from the rain.

She is alone in the room. Eyes cast down. An unmoving figure in red.

There are no books in the room. No visible writing of any kind. And no technology.

The only sound is the rain hitting the window. A spring rain, with plump, cold drops.

SERENA JOY opens the door, strides in. She's a brittle 40, in the signature pale blue of a Commander's wife.

Offred starts to look towards Serena -- it's a reflex. But she stops herself, keeps her head down.

Eyes to the floor.

Serena sees Offred twitch and catch herself. Serena takes a beat to enjoy her power at work. And then --

SERENA JOY

So. Here you are.

Offred keeps her eyes lowered.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*Here I am.*

*(and then)*

*Aunt Lydia said it was best not to speak to the wives unless they asked you a direct question. Think of it from their point of view, Aunt Lydia said. It isn't easy for them.*

*(and then)*

*Boo fucking hoo.*

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Serena Joy sits, takes out a cigarette. Lights it. She looks Offred up and down. After a long beat --

SERENA JOY

You can sit down. I don't make a practice of it, but just this time.

Offred considers -- she is carefully choosing every word, every movement. This is a dance. If Offred missteps, there will be consequences.

Offred sits, folds her hands in her lap.

SERENA JOY (CONT'D)

So, old what's-his-name didn't work out?

OFFRED

No, Ma'am.

SERENA JOY

Tough luck. This is your second posting, then?

OFFRED

Yes, Ma'am.

SERENA JOY

Good. Our last one was brand new. It was like training a dog. And not a very smart one.

(and then)

I expect you know the rules?

OFFRED

Yes, Ma'am.

SERENA JOY

Don't call me ma'am. You're not a Martha.

From the doorway, someone CLEARS THEIR THROAT. Offred glances over and sees COMMANDER WATERFORD (50'). Tall, a little thick in places, not necessarily handsome, but... *commanding*.

Offred IMMEDIATELY stands up, bows her head obediently.

SERENA JOY (CONT'D)

Well. Look what the cat dragged in.

(re: Offred)

This is the new one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COMMANDER  
(to Offred, too casual)  
Hello.  
(then, catching himself)  
Blessed be the fruit.

OFFRED  
May the Lord open.

A beat. And then --

COMMANDER  
I'm Commander Waterford. Fred  
Waterford.

OFFRED  
I am Of-fred.

COMMANDER  
Right.  
(and then)  
Well. Good.

The whole process is proscribed, unnatural. The Commander  
turns to leave, pauses --

COMMANDER (CONT'D)  
(brightly)  
Nice to meet you.

Serena Joy REACTS with a glare -- this isn't part of the  
ritual greeting. It is far too intimate.

Offred turns the words, and the rules, over in her head. She  
doesn't know how to play it, what to say. She chooses --

OFFRED  
Thank you.

The Commander leaves.

Offred shifts in the uncomfortable silence. The rain hits  
the window. An uneven rhythm of taps.

Offred sits down again.

SERENA JOY  
(sharply)  
Get up.

Offred gets up.

SERENA JOY (CONT'D)  
I want to see as little of you as  
possible. Understand?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED

Yes, Ma'am...  
(and then)  
Yes.

SERENA JOY

Mrs. Waterford.  
(and then)  
You'll find that in this house, we  
believe in mercy. But if I get  
trouble, believe me, I'll give  
trouble back.

Offred stares down at the floor, as we --

**END FLASHBACK**

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - HALLWAY/STAIRS - DAY

Rita steps up, bringing Offred out of her memory.

RITA

Tell them fresh for the eggs, not  
like last time. Tell them who it's  
for and they won't mess around.

Rita hands her a wicker shopping basket, then tears some  
paper tokens from a ration book.

They have pictures on them, but no words. Twelve eggs, a  
piece of cheese, a fish.

OFFRED

Okay.

Rita offers a frown and heads back to the work.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*The frown isn't personal. It's  
really the red dress she  
disapproves of.  
(and then)  
I've heard Rita talking to Marthas  
from other houses. "I wouldn't  
debase myself like that," they say.  
Or "It's not what you call hard  
work. Do the shopping and spread  
your legs."*

Rita goes back to kneading the bread, sinking her hands into  
the soft dough. Offred watches, hungrily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RITA

You gonna stand there all day? Be rude, leaving your friend out there waiting.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*I want to tell her that Ofglen is not my friend, that I've exchanged barely fifty words with her in the two months since I got here. I want to tell her that I sincerely believe that Ofglen is kind of a pious little shit with a broomstick up her ass.*

And then...

OFFRED

Under his eye.

Offred leaves. Off Rita -- back to work.

EXT. WATERFORD HOUSE - DAY

Offred comes out, walks down a path bordered with flowers. The garden is beautiful, perfectly kept.

A FEW GUARDIANS patrol, guns slung over their shoulders.

NICK BLAINE (26) digs in the flowerbed. He's attractive in a boyish sort of way. He wears a Guardian's uniform, with the jacket off and the shirt open at the throat.

OFFRED (V.O.)

(re: Nick)

*He's one of the Guardians assigned to the house. He drives for the Commander, but sometimes Serena Joy has him help her in the garden. Do some of the heavy lifting.*

(and then)

*I know his name. Nick. I heard the Commander speaking to him once. "Nick, I won't be needing the car."*

Offred stops. Nick's wheelbarrow and garden tools block the path. She doesn't say anything, waits for him to notice.

NICK

(re: the roadblock)

I'm sorry.

Offred gives a tiny nod, doesn't look up. Nick starts to clear the path.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Offred looks at his sweaty, muscled forearms as he lifts the heavy tools. She forces herself to look away.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Going shopping?

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*No, Nick, I'm gonna knock back a few mojitos at the Oyster House Bar. Wanna come along?*

And then --

OFFRED  
Yes.

NICK  
If you're going to *All Flesh*, avoid the chicken. I read they've got crazy levels of dioxin.

Offred hesitates, weighs her responses. Always so careful.

OFFRED  
I'm going to *Loaves and Fishes*.

NICK  
Then you should avoid the tuna.

A beat, and then --

OFFRED  
Mercury?

NICK  
No, I just don't like tuna very much.

Nick smiles. It is *almost* a normal moment. The garden path is clear, but Offred lingers.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*He lives here, over the garage. Low status, he hasn't even been issued a woman. Maybe he's lonely. Maybe he watches me. (and then, horribly) Maybe he's an Eye.*

Oh FUCK. We can see the terror in her eyes, even if we don't know exactly why. Later, we'll find out "The Eyes" are the secret police of Gilead. The Gestapo. Offred goes pale, looks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED  
(as saintly as possible)  
Peace be with you.

She hurries away, through the gate. OFGLEN waits on the sidewalk. In her red cloak and white bonnet, she is another Handmaid. Offred's twin, dressed exactly alike. Head bowed.

OFGLEN  
Blessed be the fruit.

Offred is still rattled -- did she make a mistake with Nick? A fatal mistake? It's possible.

OFFRED  
(shaky)  
May the Lord open.

Ofglen notices that she is agitated.

OFGLEN  
Are you okay, Offred?

OFFRED  
Yes, very well, praised be. You  
are so kind to ask.  
(and then, V.O.)  
*Pious little shit.*

Offred tries to calm herself as she walks off with Ofglen.

EXT. GILEAD - UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Idyllic. Stately homes, with beautiful gardens, hiding so much darkness.

MARTHAS walk on the streets, some GUARDIANS. No wives, no Commanders. A few Marthas push strollers or walk with boy children. THERE ARE NO GIRL CHILDREN OUTSIDE.

The cars that pass are either commander-black or wife-blue, luxury gas guzzlers. A few MILITARY HUMVEES pass -- black with the winged symbol on the doors.

Offred walks with Ofglen.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*We go everywhere in twos. This is  
supposed to be for our protection,  
but that's bullshit. The truth is  
we're watching each other for any  
whiff of heresy.*  
(and then)  
*She is my spy, as I am hers.*  
(and then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*She has never said anything that was not strictly orthodox. But then neither have I. She may be a true believer, a Handmaid in more than name. I can't take that risk. I can't end up on the Wall and leave my daughter here. Alone.*  
(and then, aloud)  
We've been sent good weather.

OFGLEN  
Which I receive with joy.  
(and then)  
The war is going well, I hear.

Offred reacts, hungry to hear any news. But she quickly buries her desire, answers as evenly as possible.

OFFRED  
(eager, playing cool)  
By His hand.

OFGLEN  
They've defeated more of the rebels.

OFFRED  
Praise be.  
(and then, very carefully)  
What were they? The rebels.

Ofglen hesitates, narrows her eyes.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
(re: Ofglen's look)  
*When she gives me that look, I want to punch her in the face.*  
(and then)  
*But she's right. Any curiosity is dangerous. But I'm ravenous for news. Even if it's false news it must mean something.*

Ofglen's suspicion wanes. She smiles.

OFGLEN  
Baptists, I think. Suicide bombers. They had a stronghold in the Blue Hills.

Offred waits, eager for Ofglen will offer more. She doesn't. After a long beat, Offred abandons her hopes --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED  
(unfulfilled)  
Praise be.

Offred and Ofglen pass a SMALL WHITE CHURCH.

Behind a wrought iron gate, Commander's Wives in blue dresses stand chatting near a line of idling black SUV's. The door to the church opens.

A dozen pre-pubescent GIRLS emerge from the church, dressed in long, pink and white smocks. Virginal. ARMED GUARDIANS escort them.

Offred STOPS -- stares at the girls. ONE GIRL looks her way, smiles. On OFFRED as we --

**FLASHBACK TO:**

EXT. BEACH - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Three-year-old HANNAH runs into the breaking waves, laughing. Pure joy.

**END FLASHBACK:**

EXT. GILEAD - UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD / CHURCH

Back on Offred, rocked by her memory.

OFGLEN  
Offred.  
(and then)  
We should go.

She turns, trembling slightly, fighting her emotions. They walk on.

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES - DAY

Offred and Ofglen enter. A sign shows a LOAF OF BREAD and a FISH. Pictures, no writing.

Only women are shopping -- Handmaids, some Marthas, and a few ECONOWIVES -- working-class wives in multicolored dresses.

It is a grocery store. Some bare shelves, not too much produce, but otherwise, pretty ordinary.

It's like *Ralphs*. Except for the armed guards patrolling the aisles, and the packages of food marked with pictures.

There is no writing anywhere.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Offred is still shaken by her memory of Hannah. She follows Ofglen by rote, not thinking. Two Handmaids, OFSAMUEL (19, talker) and OFERIC (32, observant) step up. Excited whispers.

OFSAMUEL

Under his eye.

(chatty)

Did you see? They have oranges.

OFGLEN

Praised be. The war in Florida must be going well.

OFSAMUEL

I know, right?

OFGLEN

(to Offred)

Your Mistress likes oranges.

OFERIC

(cynical)

Just make sure she knows you got them. Don't let a Martha take the credit.

Offred fights to focus on the conversation. Finally says...

OFFRED

I don't have a token for oranges.

OFSAMUEL

Tell them you're Commander Waterford's. He's very high up. His name is in the news...

The Oferic looks to her, sharply. Ofsamuel realizes, goes ashen.

OFSAMUEL (CONT'D)

I didn't read it. I promise. I just overheard my Mistress...

Ofsamuel is digging herself in deeper. Ofglen comes to the rescue.

OFGLEN

We should get some oranges before they're all gone.

They all walk off. Offred waits a moment, still shuddering from her memory of her daughter. A beat, then she follows.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES - MINUTES LATER

Crates of oranges are stacked into a makeshift display. Women crowd around. Ofglen, Oferic, and the other Handmaids take oranges.

Offred just stares at the crates. Mind elsewhere.

OFGLEN

Praise be His bounty.  
(to Offred)  
Take some.

Offred takes a few oranges, puts them in her basket. As she does --

OFFRED

*They took my daughter. I don't  
need oranges. I need her back. I  
need to scream. I need to grab the  
nearest machine gun.  
(and then)  
I need someone to talk to.  
(and then)  
I wish Moira was here.*

**FLASHBACK TO:**

INT. RED CENTER - GYMNASIUM - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

ANGLE ON a young woman -- MOIRA (28, quick and profane) seems to be listening intently. She wears a red handmaid's dress, sits at a SCHOOL DESK.

WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL --

A former high school has been turned into a indoctrination center for Handmaids.

AUNT LYDIA (O.S.)

They made such a mess of  
everything. They filled the air  
with chemicals and radiation and  
poison.

In the gym, Moira and other WOMEN in red dresses sit at rows of desk -- hands folded, silent, obedient, eyes front.

Stern women in brown uniforms watch the class. Cattle prods hang from their belts. These are AUNTS -- brutal overseers of the Handmaids.

AUNT LYDIA (50, pleasant and sadistic) lectures to the women. A computer projects power-point slides on a screen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It shows a graph of FALLING BIRTH RATES.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

So God whipped up a special plague,  
just for them. A plague of  
infertility. Do you blame Him? I  
most certainly do not.

A door opens. Moira turns her head slightly, just enough to see.

Across the room, GUARDIANS lead in a group of NEW ARRIVALS, including JANINE (22, ballsy) and OFFRED.

Offred shuffles, looking a little sleepy. Drugged.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

And as birthrates fell, what did  
they do? They made things worse.  
Can you imagine? Birth control  
pills, morning after pills,  
murdering babies in the womb?  
Cutting them into *pieces*.

Aunt Lydia takes a beat, as if the pain is too much for her. She steadies herself, goes on.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

How could they have done such  
things? Just so they could have  
their orgies. Their Tinder. So  
they could rut about like beasts.  
Such *wickedness*.

(and then)

They were dirty women. They were  
sluts.

The Guardians leads the women to the desks. Offred looks over the room of women. She spots MOIRA. Eyes connect. Recognition. WE **FLASHBACK** TO:

INT. CAMBRIDGE APARTMENT - MORNING - **FLASHBACK**

Offred, in normal clothes, sits at the kitchen table, working on a laptop. Notes and books are scattered across the table. She sips coffee.

It all seems so normal. And so decadent, compared to life in Gilead.

Moira enters, T-shirt and pajama bottoms. Bed head.

MOIRA

Got any cigarettes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED  
In my jacket maybe.

MOIRA  
Where's your jacket?

OFFRED  
(exasperated)  
Dude, I need to finish this. It's  
due by ten.

MOIRA  
For Dietrich's class?  
(off her nod)  
What's it about?

OFFRED  
Campus sexual assault.

MOIRA  
For or against?

This gets a little grin from Offred. A PRETTY WOMAN comes  
out of Moira's bedroom, leans into the kitchen.

WOMAN  
Moira honey? I've got to get to  
work.  
(and then)  
We should do this again.

MOIRA  
Babe, I would love that.

The woman smiles, waves politely to Offred, then heads out.  
Offred looks to Moira.

OFFRED  
You don't even remember her name,  
do you?

MOIRA  
(busted)  
Just give me a fucking cigarette.

Two friends.

**END FLASHBACK:**

INT. RED CENTER - GYMNASIUM - CONTINUING

Moira and Offred meet eyes. Moira shakes her head just  
slightly.

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then Moira looks away.

Offred understands the message -- *don't let anyone see that we know each other*. She walks past Moira, not offering any recognition. She sits down.

Aunt Lydia continues her lecture, full of devotion.

AUNT LYDIA

...but you are special girls.  
Fertility is a gift directly from  
God. He left you intact for a  
Biblical purpose.

(and then)

Like Bilhah served Rachel, you  
girls will serve the Leaders of the  
Faithful and their barren wives.  
You'll bear children for them. You  
are so lucky. So *privileged*.

JANINE (23, ballsy) another new arrival, sits down behind  
Offred. Leans to her --

JANINE

(whisper)

Welcome to the friggin' looney bin,  
right?

Janine grins. Immediately, an AUNT strides over. Without a  
word, she HITS JANINE IN THE HEAD.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Jesus, what the fuck!?

Aunt Lydia comes over. A murmur runs through the woman.

AUNT LYDIA

All right, girls. We'll have  
quiet. Like little mice.

(to Janine)

Welcome to the Rachel and Leah  
Center.

(and then)

Up.

JANINE

(defiant)

Fuck you.

AUNT LYDIA

Blessed are the meek, Dear.

Aunt Lydia quickly pulls out her prod and jams it into  
Janine's neck. She SHOCKS HER, HOLDING THE PROD AGAINST HER  
SKIN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Janine screams, cowering. Three Aunts descend, pulling Janine to her feet and dragging her away.

Aunt Lydia heads back to the front of the makeshift classroom.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*Blessed are the meek.*

(and then)

*They always leave out the part  
about inheriting the earth.*

AUNT LYDIA

Back to work, shall we, girls?

On Offred, as Aunt Lydia returns to her lecture.

INT. RED CENTER - CAFETERIA - NIGHT

The cafeteria has been converted into a dorm for the Handmaids in training.

Blue moonlight glows through the windows, illuminating neat rows of narrow cots.

Moira and Offred lie in their beds, talking quietly, carefully.

OFFRED

I tried to run with her, but she  
was so heavy. I tried.

MOIRA

(so much sympathy)

Hey, I know.

(and then)

Those motherfuckers were chasing  
you with machine guns. None of this  
is your fault.

OFFRED

(doesn't know)

I know.

(and then)

Then I heard shots. He must have  
tried to slow them down somehow,  
give us a better chance to get to  
the border.

(and then)

They just shot him.

Moira reaches out, touches her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOIRA

Don't lose hope, darlin'. He's  
always been a survivor.

OFFRED

No. He's dead, Moira.  
(and then)  
What about Odette?

MOIRA

Reclassified as an Unwoman and sent  
to the colonies. She was gone in  
the first dyke purge. She was on  
top of their list.

(and then)

We were stupid. They told us  
exactly what they believed in.  
What they wanted to do. We called  
them wing-nuts.

OFFRED

They are.

MOIRA

We should've taken them seriously.  
We didn't look up from our fucking  
phones until it was too late.

Across the cafeteria, the door opens loudly. Offred and Moira  
immediately close their eyes and feign sleep.

Two Aunts drag JANINE into the room. She's limp, moaning.

A BANDAGE COVERS HER RIGHT EYE. There is a small stain of  
BLOOD on the gauze.

They drop Janine onto her cot and leave. After the door  
shuts, the room is silent.

Janine curls up and whimpers, softly.

Offred listens. It is a terrible sound.

OFFRED

What did they do to her?

MOIRA

*If my right eye offends thee, pluck  
it out.*

(and then)

We're breeding stock, kid. You  
don't need eyes for that.

Offred tries to absorb this unreality. Janine whimpers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED

We are down the rabbit hole or something.

MOIRA

Yup, no joke.  
(and then)  
God, I'd kill for a fucking cigarette.

Offred musters a smile. Off these friends, we --

**END FLASHBACK**

EXT. GILEAD - THE WALL - DAY

FOUR BODIES hang by their necks from hooks set into the brickwork. Hands tied in front, white bags over their heads.

Each body has a placard hung around its neck: A human fetus, a black triangle, a red inverted cross...

Pull back to reveal OFFRED and OFGLEN looking at the wall.

OFFRED

*A priest, a doctor, a lesbian.  
(and then)  
I think I heard that joke once.  
This wasn't the punchline.  
(and then)  
Moira isn't up there. She could still be dead, I know. There are a hundred other walls in a hundred towns, a thousand mass graves in the woods.  
(and then)  
But she isn't here, and that gives me hope. It may be false hope, but that's a sort of hope nonetheless.*

CHURCH BELLS ring out. Time to go home.

OFGLEN

Should we take the long way, by the river?

Offred nods, then remembers. Painfully. It's Ceremony day for Offred.

OFFRED

I can't.  
(and then)  
I have to get ready for the Ceremony.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Offred looks gray. But Ofglen reacts with restrained joy.

OFGLEN

Praised be. We'll go straight home then.

(and then)

May God bless your endeavor and bring forth His miracle.

OFFRED

(hiding dread)

Praised be.

CUT TO:

INT. - WATERFORD HOUSE - BATHROOM - TWILIGHT

The bathroom is decorated with blue wallpaper, curtains, a blue fake-fur cover on the toilet seat. Perfectly neat.

It's a bathroom that might belong to your great-aunt.

Steam rises from the full bathtub.

Offred undresses, removing her white wings and shaking loose her long hair.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*They took out the mirror. And there are no razors, of course. There were incidents in the bathrooms at the beginning. Cuttings, drownings. Before they got all the bugs ironed out.*

She removes her heavy red cloak, the petticoats, the red stockings, the loose white cotton pantaloons.

Offred slides into the tub. Hot water. It feels lovely.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*The bath is required before the ceremony. I am to make myself clean. But it's also a luxury. Just to take off the veil, to feel my own hair again with my own hands, is a luxury.*

Offred washes her hair. For the first time, we notice a small RED METAL CUFF on the top curve of one ear -- there's a six digit number etched in the surface.

The cuff could be jewelry, in another time, edgy and urban. But this isn't jewelry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It is an ear tag, akin to the identity tags used on cattle.  
Offred lays back and closes her eyes.

On OFFRED, **WE FLASHBACK TO:**

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Offred takes a bath with baby MAYA -- she's six months, fat and slippery. Maya squeals. Offred buries her face in Maya's wet and perfect neck. Inhales deeply.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*She comes to me so clearly in the bath.*

A perfect memory. But dark questions intrude...

OFFRED (V.O.)  
(rising fear)  
*When do I come to her?*  
(and then)  
*Does she even remember me? Please, God, let her remember me.*

The memory bursts abruptly --

**END FLASHBACK**

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BATHROOM - TWILIGHT

...as Offred jerks back into reality. Her eyes open.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*They probably told her I was dead. That's what they would do. Best thing for everyone, they'd say.*  
(and then)  
*When people say that, they always mean that it's the best thing for them. It never means the best thing for you.*

Off her face...

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Offred sits on the bed, dressed and still. Hands folded in her lap. A tableaux. Her mind races.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*I am washed and brushed like a prize pig.*  
(and then)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*I want to know what I did. To  
deserve this.*

Offred **FLASHES BACK TO:**

INT. RED CENTER - GYMNASIUM - DAY

Chairs are arranged in a circle, with a single chair at the center. Offred, Moira, and the other Handmaids-in-training sit on the perimeter.

Janine sits in the central chair. She wears a SMALLER BANDAGE over her missing eye. Aunt Lydia stands beside her.

Other Aunts stalk the outside of the circle, watching all the women, cattle prods ready.

JANINE

The boys kept coming down into the basement for hours, it felt like. At first they took turns, but later I think there were two or three at a time. I knew most of them from school. I just couldn't believe they were doing it, that it was happening.

AUNT LYDIA

But it did happen.

JANINE

Yeah.

AUNT LYDIA

And whose led them on? Whose fault was it?

Janine shrugs, weakly. She hangs her head.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

Whose fault was it, girls?

Offred looks at Janine. She's crying now. Moira and the other women in the circle respond, pointing and chanting in unison. Offred joins, weakly.

WOMEN

Her fault! Her fault! Her fault!

Aunt Lydia gives Offred a stern look -- she is not showing enough *enthusiasm*. Moira leans to her.

MOIRA

(urgent whisper)  
Come on, do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUNT LYDIA

And why did God allow such a  
terrible thing to happen?

Aunt Lydia looks at Offred. Offred steels herself and joins in with terrible energy. The women point at Janine, accusing.

WOMEN

Teach her a lesson! Teach her a  
lesson! Teach her a lesson!

It's a scene of horror from another century.

**END FLASHBACK**

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A CLOCK CHIMES, bringing Offred out of her memory. She stands up, walks out of the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Offred enters. The room is quiet, empty.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*I am here before the others. That,  
too, is part of the ritual.*

Offred steps to her spot, marked by a small RED CUSHION. She kneels. Head down, hands in her lap.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*I am to wait. I am to be a woman  
in waiting.*

(and then)

*Ordinary, said Aunt Lydia, is what  
you're used to. This may not seem  
ordinary to you now, but after a  
time it will. It will become  
ordinary.*

(and then)

*I want to throw up.*

Rita enters, wiping her hands on a dish towel. She takes her place, standing behind Offred.

Nick enters next. Stands beside Rita. A long beat.

RITA

Wish they'd hurry up. Some of us  
got things to do, you know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

Hurry up and wait.

Footsteps in the hall, then Serena Joy enters. She sits down. Lights a cigarette. A beat, and then...

SERENA JOY

Late again, as usual.  
(then, to no one)  
What is it about men?

A long beat. There is a knock at the door.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*The knock is prescribed. This room is her domain. It's a little thing, but in this house, little things mean everything.*

SERENA JOY

Come in.

The Commander opens the door. He is dressed in his black uniform. He looks over the assembled group.

COMMANDER

Good evening.  
(and then, to Serena Joy)  
Dear.

He smiles. Almost warmly. She nods in return. He pulls out a key on a brass ring.

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

Then let's get started.

A polished wooden box sits on the table beside his chair. The commander uses the key to unlock the box. Extracts a King James BIBLE, opens to a marked passage.

Clears his throat.

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

Excuse me.  
(reading)  
And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said unto Jacob, Give me children or else I die...

He continues reading in V.O. As we --

CUT TO:

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - SERENA JOY'S BEDROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON OFFRED'S FACE. We can hear a soft GRUNTING. Offred moves a bit, in the same rhythm.

COMMANDER (V.O.)  
*And she said, Behold my maid  
Bilhah, go in unto her...*

PULLING BACK, we reveal that Offred is lying between Serena Joy's open legs.

Serena Joy lies, fully clothed, on her outsized Colonial four-poster bed. She holds Offred's hands, pulling them back awkwardly.

Offred's red skirt is hitched up to her waist. No higher.

COMMANDER (V.O.)  
*...and she shall bear upon my knees  
that I may also have children by  
her. And she gave him Bilhah her  
Handmaid to wife, and Jacob went  
unto her.*

Below that, the Commander fucks Offred. Methodically. With monotonous exertion.

ON OFFRED. Her back hitting against Serena Joy's pubic bone. Trying not to wince. Her face blank.

ON THE COMMANDER, pumping. Dutifully. He glances at Offred for a moment. She avoids eye contact.

ON SERENA JOY. Pained. She grips Offred's wrists tightly, digs her nails in.

ON OFFRED -- What lesson is God teaching her?

The Commander grunts softly.

Serena Joy twists Offred's wrists PAINFULLY, contorting her into a posture that looks like sadomasochistic bondage.

Offred bites back a moan. The Commander grunts loudly and COMES.

Offred looks relieved.

The Commander rests for a beat. Then he steps back and pulls up his pants. Neatens his clothes.

He nods formally, then leaves.

The door CLOSES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Offred is left entangled with Serena Joy. They lay there for a beat, then Serena Joy roughly extracts herself and sits up. She finds a cigarette, lights it.

SERENA JOY

Get out.

Offred hesitates, startled by her venom.

SERENA JOY (CONT'D)

Are you deaf?

OFFRED

(respectfully)

The chances are better if I lay on my back afterwards...

SERENA JOY

(slow, fierce)

Just get out.

Offred gets off the bed and leaves. ON SERENA JOY for a miserable beat, then we --

CUT TO:

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Offred lies in her bed, awake. Moonlight through the curtains makes patterns on her face.

The grotesque horror of the ceremony replays in her mind. She tries to settle her thoughts. It's not working.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*This is what I do when I'm back in my room.*

*(and then)*

*I take off my clothes. I want to wash, but it's not allowed. I put on my nightgown and get into bed. I don't sleep. I try not to smell them on me. I try to think about something else.*

*(and then)*

*The moon is the same. That's something. They haven't changed that.*

*(and then)*

*I'll think about the moon.*

*(and then, terribly)*

*I can feel the Commander's come running out of me. I can feel it on my legs.*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
(and then, rising panic)  
*I can smell it.*

Offred gets out of bed. Driven by waves of claustrophobic panic, she heads out of the room.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Offred runs down the staircase. She's freaking out.

EXT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Offred runs out the back door and into the yard. A tall fence protects the garden.

She stops on the grass, breathing hard, trying to calm down.

She looks up at the moon. Pale white.

Suddenly, she *feels* someone watching. She turns.

NICK sits on the garage steps, outside his room. He holds a worn paperback book. He was reading in the cool night.

Offred and Nick lock eyes.

The moonlight shines through her nightgown. Nick can see the silhouette of her body.

Offred is frozen for a beat. Then she turns and runs inside.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Offred comes in, reeling. She sits on the bed, but her mind races.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*He'll tell the Commander. Will he  
wake him up, or wait for the  
morning? How long do I have? But I  
didn't do anything, not really.*

(and then)  
*That's bullshit, I left my room,  
that's enough. They don't need a  
reason anyway. A Commander can  
punish us any way he wants. A  
belt, a steel cable. He could  
shoot me in the fucking head. I've  
heard the real creative ones like  
to tie our hands to the stove  
burners with wire.*

(and then)  
*Breeders don't need their hands.*

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

As she fights panic...

**FLASHBACK TO:**

INT. RED CENTER - CAFETERIA - NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

Moonlight shines on the rows of cots. Handmaids-in-training sleep.

ON OFFRED, sleeping. A far off MUMBLING wakes her. She sits up, looks across the room.

JANINE stands at the windows, naked. Her eye is still bandaged.

Her red nightgown is tangled on the floor beside her. She stares out, mumbling. Offred walks to her.

JANINE

(mumbling)

Hello, can I help you?

(and then)

Good morning, welcome...

OFFRED

Janine?

Janine's mouth fixed is in a smile. By now, other Handmaids are stirring. Redheaded ALMA, steps up.

ALMA

Put your clothes on, Janine. Aunt Beth is on bedcheck. I don't want extra prayers on account of you.

JANINE

(scary friendly)

Hello, welcome. Can I help you?

Moira steps up.

MOIRA

(to the other Handmaids)

Go to bed, don't make this a thing.

Most of the Handmaids head back to bed.

OFFRED

Janine, wake up. You're having a dream...

Janine looks at Offred. But she isn't talking to her. She's talking to an imagined world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANINE

Hello. My name's Janine. I'm your server this morning. Can I get you some coffee to start?

MOIRA

Oh, Christ.

ALMA

Don't swear.

MOIRA

Alma, go back to your Goddamn bed.

Alma slinks away.

OFFRED

Snap out of it, Janine. Come on.

JANINE

(smiling)

You have a nice day, now.

Moira grabs Janine by her shoulders, then SLAPS HER HARD.

MOIRA

You aren't there anymore. That's all gone. Now go back to your bed.

Janine touches her cheek, confused.

JANINE

What did you hit me for? Wasn't it good? I can bring you another one.

MOIRA

My name is Moira and this is the Red Center.

JANINE

I don't know any Moira.

MOIRA

Don't you know what they'll do? They'll send you to the Colonies. You'll be cleaning up toxic waste. You're skin will peel off in sheets and then you'll die. You'll die, Janine.

JANINE

(breaking)

I want to go home. I want my mom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Janine starts to cry. Offred pushes the nightgown into her hands.

OFFRED  
(warmly)  
Put on your clothes, Janine. Get  
into bed.

Janine nods. She pulls on her nightgown. Whimpering, she shuffles back to her cot.

MOIRA  
And shut up.  
(to Offred)  
She does that again and I'm not  
around, slap her. Hard, don't be a  
fucking pussy about it.

OFFRED  
Okay.

MOIRA  
That kind of stuff is contagious.  
If we're going to survive we need  
to keep our fucking shit together.

They are all close to breaking. Offred nods.

**END FLASHBACK**

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Offred paces, Moira's words in her head.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*Pull your fucking shit together.*

Offred takes a breath, calms down a little.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*You're alive. That's all that  
matters.*  
(and then)  
*You're alive.*

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. WATERFORD HOUSE - MORNING

MORNING. NICK polishes the Commander's black car with a soft rag. Tilting up, we see OFFRED watching from the bedroom window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED (V.O.)

*That hasn't changed. The way men  
caress cars. I still don't get it.*

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Offred looks out the window, watching Nick.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*He saw me outside last night. I  
know he did. But the Eyes haven't  
come for me. No black van. No  
boots on the staircase. Nothing.  
Yet.*

In the distance, a BELL TOLLS. THREE SLOW CHIMES. Offred reacts --

OFFRED (V.O.)

*Three bells. A death knell.  
(and then)  
They're calling us. There's a  
Salvaging today.  
(and then)  
I am not safe, I know that. Soon  
enough that bell could ring for me.  
(and then)  
But not today.  
(and then)  
Okay. As Moira would say, every  
day above ground is a good day.  
And with some nice tequila, it's a  
fucking great day.*

Offred heads out.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Offred enters. Rita gets out the shopping basket and the food tokens. She's not happy.

OFFRED

*Blessed day.  
(and then)  
I've been called...*

RITA

*(crabby)  
Yeah, I heard. Now I've got my  
work to do and your shopping.  
Three bells and my whole day goes  
to the goose.*

OFFRED

*I'm sorry.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick enters. Offred stops, surprised to see him. He hesitates as well. Offred decides to be bold.

OFFRED (CONT'D)

Good morning.

It is a suspiciously casual greeting, definitely a breach of the strict etiquette.

Rita shoots a look, taking note.

Nick considers -- then.

NICK

Good morning.

(to Rita)

Mrs. Waterford wanted you to remember to get oranges, if they still have any.

RITA

(bitter)

Yes, Sir. My pleasure.

(and then)

Any other special requests?

Offred thinks, then...

OFFRED

They had tuna at Loaves and Fishes yesterday. It looked good, you should get some.

Offred looks to Nick -- the tuna is an inside joke. She knows he doesn't like it.

In this world of nuance and danger, she's sending a message, asking a question -- *We had a moment, remember? We're friends, aren't we?*

She's trying to charm him. It might keep her alive.

RITA

(yuck)

Oranges and tuna. Sounds delicious.

(offhand)

Under His eye.

OFFRED

Under His eye.

Rita leaves.

Offred and Nick stand in silence. Nick is cool, unreadable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

After a long beat, NICK SMILES. Detente. Maybe Offred has bought herself a little safety, some good will.

THE BELLS TOLL AGAIN. THREE SLOW CHIMES.

NICK  
Blessed be the fruit.

OFFRED  
(self-satisfied)  
Praised be.

Offred leaves. PRELAP the sound of THE BELL, tolling again, slowly. A steady chime now.

EXT. THE WALL/THE COMMON - DAY

Inside the tower overlooking the Common, the bells RING. In here, the sound is huge. Medieval.

DOWN BELOW, HANDMAIDS converge. They move through an ornate set of GATES in the wall.

In their cloaks, they make a red river, flowing onto the grassy field. THEY ARE GATHERING FOR THE SALVAGING.

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*To the tolling of the bells we walk, along paths once used by students, past buildings that were once lecture halls and dorms.*  
(and then)  
*These buildings belong to the Eyes now. No one ever goes in, not willingly. And no one ever comes out.*

GUARDIANS line the path, herding the Handmaids. Watching, listening.

In the crowd, we find OFFRED. She waits as the other Handmaids pass. They exchange greetings. *Praise be... Blessed... May the Lord open...*

OFFRED (V.O.)  
*This is a district Salvaging, for Handmaids only. They don't have them very often anymore. There's less need, we are all so well-behaved.*  
(and then)  
*I don't want to be telling this story.*

OFGLEN steps up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFGLEN

Blessed be the fruit.

OFFRED

May the Lord open.

Paired, they join the others heading through the gates.

EXT. THE COMMON - CONTINUOUS

At the front of the lawn is a large STAGE, with microphones. Center stage is a FORKLIFT. Two ROPES hang from the blades.

With nooses. This is a public execution.

RED CUSHIONS sit in rows on the grass. Handmaids come in, choose cushions, kneel. Guardians watch everyone.

As Offred crosses the grass, she looks for a familiar face among the sea of Handmaids.

OFFRED (V.O.)

*When there are so many of us together, sometimes you can find someone you knew. From before, or from the Red Center. You can trade some news, if you're careful.*

Offred spots someone, drifts over. It's redheaded ALMA, from the Red Center.

OFFRED

Blessed be the fruit.

ALMA

(with recognition)

May the Lord open.

They are Guardians everywhere. Alma only glances up. They speak in very low whispers.

ALMA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Hey.

OFFRED

(whispers)

Alma. Where are you posted?

ALMA

(whispers)

Commander Ellis. He can't barely get it up. Where're you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED  
Waterford.

ALMA  
Fancy pants. Nice house I bet. I  
saw Gabby a few months ago. She  
had a miscarriage.

A somber beat, mourning the lost pregnancy. And then...

OFFRED  
Have you seen Moira?

ALMA  
Not since the center.

OFFRED  
Me neither.

A few feet away, a Handmaid turns around.

IT IS JANINE -- we know her by the SCARRED LID AND EMPTY  
SOCKET where her right eye used to be. She smiles, clearly a  
bit insane.

JANINE  
(brightly)  
Oh, she's dead.

ALMA  
Janine?

A nearby Guardian glares.

GUARDIAN #4  
Quiet!

They fall silent, look down meekly.

Across the Common, a procession of Aunts files onto the  
stage. Behind them, Guardians in BLACK HOODS -- Salvagers --  
escort two manacled HANDMAIDS. The prisoners stumble, drugged  
to keep them from struggling.

The Guardian moves off. Offred leans close to Janine.

OFFRED  
(whispering)  
Janine? Who's dead?

JANINE  
(brightly)  
Moira. She hung herself.  
(and then)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

JANINE (CONT'D)

She used the bedsheet. They were blue. Mine are white.

OFFRED CAN'T BREATHE. MOIRA KILLED HERSELF? She has no time to process as -- AUNT LYDIA steps to the microphone.

AUNT LYDIA

To you places, please. Thank you.

Janine moves away, leaving Offred shaking. Ofglen watches her -- always watching and listening.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

Well. Good afternoon girls.

HANDMAIDS

(in unison)

GOOD AFTERNOON, AUNT LYDIA...

Offred doesn't respond. She is still in shock.

AUNT LYDIA

Don't you just love these Salvagings? Who loves them?

Dozens of hands shoot up automatically.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

*I hate them. They are wasteful. You girls are given so much. You are so privileged. And yet you are still so weak. So wicked.*

(and then)

*Wicked, like Ofscott...*

Onstage, the Salvagers drag OFSCOTT forward, the first condemned Handmaid. Ofscott can barely stand up by herself.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

The *filthy wanton whore* who lured a Guardian into breaking his pledge of abstinence. Can you even stand to look at her, girls?

HANDMAIDS

(in unison)

NO, AUNT LYDIA.

Offred doesn't respond. Ofglen shoots her a look. There are Guardians everywhere, watching, looking for any disobedience.

OFGLEN

(low)

Offred...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No good. Offred is still lost, thinking of Moira.

Onstage, OFRAY, a young Handmaid, is dragged forward.

AUNT LYDIA

Wicked like Ofray. A girl  
disgusting enough to commit  
adultery with her Commander. Under  
his own roof. Where she was  
welcomed by his *wife*.

Onstage, The Salvagers help the drowsy Handmaids up onto  
STEPSTOOLS. Slide the nooses around their necks.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

These disgusting *creatures* have  
given us no choice. They asked for  
this, didn't they girls?

HANDMAIDS

(in unison)

YES, AUNT LYDIA...!

AUNT LYDIA

Yes they did. And we are bound by  
Grace to oblige.

(off mike)

Are we ready?

Aunt Lydia looks back to the Salvagers. They put CANVAS  
HOODS OVER THE PRISONERS, then nod -- everything is ready.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

(off mike)

Praise be.

(to the crowd)

Are you ready girls?

HANDMAIDS

(in Unison)

YES AUNT LYDIA.

AUNT LYDIA

Hands, please.

Moving together, all the Handmaids put one hand over their  
hearts. Aunt Lydia does the same.

Ofglen nudges Offred. Blankly, automatically, Offred puts  
her hand over her heart.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)

All together now.

(and then)

His will be done.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANDMAIDS  
(in Unison)  
HIS WILL BE DONE.

The Salvager KICK OUT THE STOOLS.

Offred looks up as --

OFRAY and OFSCOTT fall and the ROPES GO TIGHT.

NECKS SNAP.

Muscles spasm. Feet jerk. A drool of URINE from Ofscott falls onto the stage.

Offred, imagining Moira, goes pale.

A CHEER rises. Aunt Lydia raises her hand, and the Handmaids fall SILENT.

AUNT LYDIA  
Amen.  
(and then)  
Now, some of you may have already heard that we have a special treat for you today. Please stand up and form a circle.

She smiles down, munificent. The Handmaids shove as they form a circle -- they're excited, they know what's coming.

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)  
Orderly, girls. You know the rules.

Offred comes out of her fog.

OFFRED  
What's happening?

OFFRED (CONT'D)  
A Particicution.

Two more Guardians appear, dragging a man. He wears a torn Guardian uniform, his face bruised and bloodied.

On OFFRED -- his beady eyes look familiar somehow.

They drag him into the circle of Handmaids.

AUNT LYDIA  
This man, once a Guardian in the army of Gilead, is convicted of rape.

(low moan from the crowd)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUNT LYDIA (CONT'D)  
The penalty for rape, as you know,  
is death. But what's worse, he  
raped a Handmaid.  
(whispers dramatically)  
She was pregnant. And the baby  
died.

A wave of rage from the Handmaids.

ON OFFRED -- she finally recognizes the Guardian. We  
**FLASHBACK TO:**

EXT. MAINE WOODS - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

The Maine woods, from the opening. OFFRED RUNS WITH HANNAH  
IN HER ARMS.

GUARDIANS descend on OFFRED, pulling away her screaming  
daughter. The BEADY-EYED GUARDIAN swings his truncheon,  
hitting OFFRED. She falls.

BEADY-EYED GUARDIAN  
Bitch...

Looking up, she sees his face.

**FLASHBACK ENDS:**

EXT. COMMON - DAY

THE GUARDIAN IN THE CIRCLE IS THE SAME BEADY-EYED GUARDIAN  
FROM THE WOODS.

Offred BOILS WITH FURY, READY TO POUNCE. Ofglen pulls her  
back. Other Handmaids are ready to charge as well.

Aunt Lydia looks out, proudly.

AUNT LYDIA  
Not until I give the signal. When  
I blow the whistle, what you do is  
up to you. Until I blow it again.  
Are you ready?

Aunt Lydia raises her whistle to her lips.

The Guards release the prisoner's arms.

The Beady-eyed Guardian staggers, falls to his knees.  
Sputters unintelligibly.

CLOSE ON Aunt Lydia's lips, closing around the whistle.

SHE BLOWS THE WHISTLE -- A SHRILL, HIGH-PITCHED TONE --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED SCREAMS and attacks. All around her, the crowd surges. A tide of rage and red.

Offred is the first to get to the beady-eyed prisoner. He looks up. Offred kicks him viciously. Then again.

He crumples backwards. She STOMPS ON HIM --

FROM ABOVE, OFFRED VANISHES IN THE RED THRONG as the Handmaids descend on the prisoner.

The prisoner disappears beneath the red cloaks. We see and hear FLASHES -- blood, fists, screaming, choking.

UP ON THE STAGE, Aunt Lydia raises her whistle to her lips and starts blowing. As the SOUND ECHOES --

Ofglen finds Offred, pulls her back.

OFGLEN

Are you all right?

No answer. Offred looks down to see A CLUMP OF HAIR IN HER HAND. Janine emerges from the crowd.

Blood smears her face. She smiles.

JANINE

Have a nice day.

Janine starts to walk away. Offred calls after her -- she might know more about Moira.

OFFRED

Janine.  
(and then, louder)  
Janine!

This is DANGEROUS -- even using Janine's name is dangerous. The murmuring crowd camouflages her voice, but a few nearby GUARDIANS turn.

Offred starts to follow Janine. Ofglen grabs Offred's arm, pulls her away.

OFGLEN

(low)  
No.

Offred is shaking, unhinged as Ofglen leads her away.

They pass the spot of the Particicution. A WHITE SHEET now covers the remains of the dead Guardian. Blood seeps through the sheet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On Offred -- *What did I do?*

OFGLEN (CONT'D)

(low)

Walk.

Offred obeys, following Ofglen from the Common.

EXT. GILEAD STREETS - DAY

Handmaids leave the Salvaging. They split into pairs and head in different directions.

Ofglen leads Offred by her arm. The sidewalks are emptier now -- most of the Handmaids have peeled off in other directions.

Ofglen walks with her head down. Speaks in low, secret whispers as they walk.

OFGLEN

(whispers)

I'm so sorry about your friend.  
Moira?

Offred nods. She is still shaken from everything that's happened, but she recognizes that Ofglen is breaking rules here. This is dangerous talk.

OFGLEN (CONT'D)

(whispers)

You knew her from the Red Center?

Offred nods, and then...

OFFRED

And before.

A beat...

OFGLEN

Was there ever a before?

Ofglen gives Offred a thin smile. A moment of connection. Trust, almost. But should she trust Ofglen?

Ofglen nods towards a storefront across the street. The sign is just a pictograph -- Bees and a round loaf -- Bread and Honey.

OFGLEN (CONT'D)

That used to be an ice cream place.

OFFRED

I remember.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFGLEN

They had this amazing salted  
caramel.

(and then)

That stuff was better than sex.

Offred reacts to this blasphemy, surprised.

OFFFRED

I always thought...

(and then)

You were always such a true  
believer.

OFGLEN

So were you. So stinking pious.

(and then)

They do that really well. Make us  
distrust each other.

A BLACK VAN PASSES, SLOWLY. The windows are tinted. On the  
side is painted a simple but terrifying image.

AN EYE, with two angel wings. The secret police are on the  
prowl.

Offred watches it go past. Terrified.

OFFFRED

Eyes.

OFGLEN

Come on. Just keep walking.

They head off in silence. Offred looks back as the van  
follows for a block, then peels off.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Offred and Ofglen walk towards home. It's quiet, only a few  
people on the streets.

They look down, speak in low voices.

OFGLEN

How old is your daughter?

Offred reacts, surprised.

OFGLEN (CONT'D)

(off her look)

When you saw the girls outside the  
church....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ofglen has been watching. Taking note.

OFFRED  
She would be six. Hannah.

This is the first time we have heard her name. Ofglen smiles.

OFGLEN  
Pretty name.

OFFRED  
She's the only thing keeping me  
from stepping in front of a car.

OFGLEN  
(I get it)  
My wife and I had a son. Oliver.  
He's almost ten by now.

OFFRED  
Do you know where they are?

OFGLEN  
Montreal. She had family there,  
they had Canadian passports.  
(and then)  
I didn't. I got caught at the  
airport.

OFFRED  
We were trying to cross in Maine.  
With my husband. We split up.  
(and then)  
They killed him.  
(and then)  
His name was Luke.

Now he has a name. You can hear the guilt in her voice.

OFGLEN  
If you were together, they would've  
done the same thing. They didn't  
want him, and they weren't going to  
let any of us get away. Not if you  
had a red tag.

OFFRED  
I know.  
(and then)  
When I left him, I didn't even look  
back.

This clearly tortures Offred. Ofglen has nothing to say, no  
solace to offer.



EXT. WATERFORD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They stop in front of the Waterford House.

OFGLEN

This is your stop. As they used to say.

(and then)

I'm Emily.

Offred hesitates -- after keeping herself secret for so long, saying her own name feels wrong.

OFFRED

June. I'm June.

JUNE. IT IS THE FIRST TIME THE AUDIENCE HAS HEARD HER NAME.

Has Offred found a friend? Someone she can trust?

OFGLEN

Nice to meet you, June.

Ofglen leans close.

OFGLEN (CONT'D)

(very low)

Listen to me. They're watching.

There's an Eye in the house.

(and then)

Be careful.

Offred REACTS -- someone in the house is an Eye?

And how in the world could Ofglen know this? Is she *helping* Offred, or is this some kind of trap?

Her mind races.

TWO GUARDIANS walk towards them. Ofglen steps back, bows her head. The image of a docile Handmaid.

OFGLEN (CONT'D)

(to Offred)

Blessed be the fruit.

Ofglen walks away, leaving Offred stunned. She turns and looks up at the WATERFORD HOUSE.

A beautiful tableaux -- this woman in red, in front of this stately, dangerous house.

IN VOICE-OVER, we hear OFFRED.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFRED (V.O.)

(calm)

*A chair. A table. A lamp.*

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Offred sits in her red cloak, looking out of the window.

It is the image from the start of the episode.

That otherworldly tableaux. A woman draped in red, in this dollhouse-perfect bedroom.

JUNE (V.O.)

*I sit and watch the curtains move  
in the breeze.*

(and then)

*Nothing can change. Someone is  
watching. It all has to look the  
same.*

(and then)

*Because I intend to survive. I  
intend to survive for her.*

(and then)

*Her name is Hannah. My husband was  
Luke.*

(and then)

*My name is June.*

(and then)

*Some things can't be wiped away.  
Some things can't be forbidden.*

OFFRED looks out the window. Still. Seemingly docile. But there is a new defiance in her eyes.

**END PILOT**