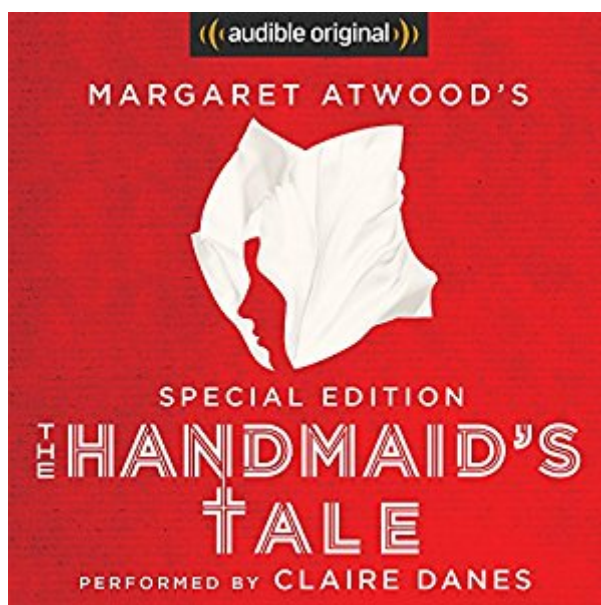


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# The Handmaid's Tale: Special Edition



## Synopsis

"Are there any questions?" The final line in Margaret Atwood's modern classic, *The Handmaid's Tale*, has teased and perplexed fans since the book's original release more than 30 years ago. Now, in this Audible Original production, listeners get some of the answers they've waited so long to hear. Featuring an all-new interview with Professor Piexoto, written by Atwood and performed by a full cast, *The Handmaid's Tale: Special Edition* is a must-listen for both fans and newcomers alike. Emmy Award winner Claire Danes (*Homeland*, *Temple Grandin*) gives a stirring performance of this classic in speculative fiction, where the message (and the warning) is now more timely than ever. In addition to rich sound design that honors the audio origins of Atwood's classic, the special edition also includes a brand-new afterword from the author and an essay written by author Valerie Martin (*Mary Reilly*, *Property*). After a violent coup in the United States overthrows the Constitution and ushers in a new government regime, the Republic of Gilead imposes subservient roles on all women. Offred, now a Handmaid tasked with the singular role of procreation in the childless household of the enigmatic Commander and his bitter wife, can remember a time when she lived with her husband and daughter and had a job, before she lost everything, even her own name. Despite the danger, Offred learns to navigate the intimate secrets of those who control her every move, risking her life for mere glimpses of her former freedom, and records her story for future listeners. Whether you're a fan of the original novel or someone who has recently discovered it, *The Handmaid's Tale: Special Edition* will shock, impress, and satisfy all those who listen. The *Handmaid's Tale: Special Edition* features performances by Claire Danes, Margaret Atwood, Emily Bauer, Allyson Johnson, Gabra Zackman, Suzanne Toren, Tim Gerard Reynolds, Jennifer Van Dyck, Ray Porter, Emily Cox, Lauren Fortgang, Dan Reiss, Prentice Onayemi, Therese Plummer, and Mark Boyett.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I first read *The Handmaid's Tale* around the time it was published in 1986. I was just 22, a sheltered young thing. I recall wondering what everyone was raving about, since only the top story layer of the book connected for me. Now, with decades of life experience behind me, I see that this is a deeply moving, complex book. I'm so glad I decide to read again just at this moment in time. You would think that something written thirty years ago would seem dated. But that wasn't the case for me. If anything, I think there are so many things imagined in the book which have become more possible today instead of less. In a sense, this is a cautionary tale that a large part of the population ignored or misunderstood. More than ever, we should be reading this and sharing it with the young women in our lives. And discussing it with them, so they see more of the depth than my 22-year-old self did. Margaret Atwood imagined a world where a totalitarian power went into action against foreign zealots and their own people's "wanton" behavior. This power was meant to make the world better, but it also created a world of highly distinct "haves" and "have nots." She says, "Better never means better for everyone... It always means worse, for some." It might be just me (although I suspect not) but this sure sounds like what we often hear today on the news and in conversations. Reading this at the end of 2016 after a brutal election cycle, the following quote from Atwood seems both wise and horrible. Have we not been hearing about people who feel invisible? "We were the people who were not in the papers. We lived in the blank white spaces at the edges of print. It gave us more freedom. We lived in the gaps between the stories." Atwood's Republic of Gilead gives people one-dimensional functions. Correction - she gives women one-dimensional functions. They are Wives, Marthas, Handmaids, Aunts, or Unwomen (and a few more which would be spoilers). Unwomen are rebels, likely to be banished to the toxic waste dumps of the colonies. Everyone else plays a part in the singular female focus - procreation. As I read, I wondered what category I'd fall into should I have the bad luck to land in Gilead. The women there have no layers of life or experience. They are expected only to fulfill their narrow role. Why is procreation such a focus? Because of falling birth rates among white people. This book doesn't discuss race except one small spot near the end. It's as if there is only one race in Gilead. And the only people in that race with any power are men. The

main character, Offred (literally of Fred named after the Commander she serves) is the perfect blend of weak and strong. She tells us of her past and says, "When we think of the past it's the beautiful things we pick out. We want to believe it was all like that. But her life is not beautiful. And Atwood straddles the line of past and present, sending back and forth in a way that keeps you wanting more. Just as Offred wants more. Just as we all want more for ourselves and the generations of women coming after us. If you read this book long ago, pick it up again. If you haven't yet read it, move it up to the top of your TBR. Buy it for friends. Buy for your sons and daughters. Use it to teach and to learn what kind of world we could be if we stop valuing the diversity of all people.

I bought this book as a present for one of my friends since I already read it and got to love it! Canadian Author Margaret Atwood depicted dystopian society in this novel, formed because of lack of fertility, where antifeminism has reached its peak. Though the book is pretty dark, it makes the reader think a lot and is very fast to read. Once started, one hardly can stop. It is a remarkable piece. The book is written using first person narrative technique, which helps to empathize and get connected with the main hero, the handmade Offglen even better. There are many parallels drawn between The Republic of Gilead and The US, but nowhere does it explicitly state that the described state is The US. There is a lot of symbolism and imagery, which make the novel rich and beautiful. Every other time going through it new things get connected in readers mind and develops a deeper understanding of this novel. I particularly enjoyed the very last part, but will not spoil for readers. It's definitely must read! I ordered paperback. The book came in great packaging and in great condition. Update: May 28, 2017 I bought the book again for another one of my acquaintances. The book is regaining new popularity and "second life" in a sense, since the recent situation in the world and especially in the US is finding a suite with the depictions of the book, unfortunately. I would recommend this book now more then ever to read, analyze, understand and fight for the life you would like to live and for the world you would like to live in.

I was struck by the possibility that the world of Gilead could have been real at some point in history, it might have well been real which is even more striking. The author is a genius developer of thoughts and wishpers of the deepest kind, a picturesque illusion that the human soul can be salvaged in the face of horrific events. The amasing resilience of the mind and body against psychological rape of values and norms. I honestly could not decide which was more worrisome: finding consolation in the restrictive yet previsible routine of the day as a Housemaid or the

revolutionary thoughts and actions determining perhaps a slight change for better or worse in the regime. This looks like a feminist movement led by men, thoroughly gone awry due to the greediness for lust and body control. Yet there were so many women who were adepts and helping, or was this also an illusion to keep the women slightly in charge as if the regime itself was created for their own good. I have many many thoughts provoked by this book and endless questions and musings. It is for sure a must read and a genius work, no matter how horrific the actions and the ideas depicted.

This is an interesting book about a utopian society run by men. It has some twists and turns, is very well written with good character development and a quick read. The writer also goes back in time to help give the reader the history of the society and the main character and her relationships. Although the book is somewhat depressing and, at times, strange and apocalyptic, I kept reading it because I was interested in finding out what was going to happen next. It was a book that really made you think about the future and society as a whole. I wasn't crazy about the ending but I would highly recommend it. It's also a book that will provoke some interesting discussions.

The plot lagged on occasion, but the overall story was interesting. I especially like the ending, which reviews the manuscript in the manner we are wont to do, trying to give cohesion to partial documents and records, to make of them a cohesive life.

Loved this book. Beautifully written and frighteningly real. You can really believe that society could disintegrate to such a level. My only complaint is Ms Atwood has left us hanging. Can't wait for the next book.

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