

The Handmaids Tale (BBC Radio Collection)

Margaret Atwood, Michael O'Brien

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Margaret Atwood, Michael O'Brien : The Handmaids Tale (BBC Radio Collection) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Handmaids Tale (BBC Radio Collection):

1607 of 1715 people found the following review helpful. What kind of world we could be if we stop valuing the diversity of all people
By Barbara Searles
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. 264 of 300 people found the following review helpful. ... friends since I already read it and got to love it! Canadian Author Margaret Atwood depicted dystopian society ... By Elen 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 than 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. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a great book. It really makes you think. By CG This is a great book. It really makes you think. What if one of the political or religious groups on the fringe of society were able to take over, where would we end up as a nation. Would you be able to escape or would you turn a blind eye as long as the effect to your daily life or your family was minimal.

[Read by William B. Davis, Emma Campbell, and Donna Goodhand.] Set in the not-too-distant future, in a terrifying world where religion is used as a tool of repression and social control, *The Handmaid's Tale* is the story of a young woman, Offred, recruited for reproductive purposes at a time of plummeting birth rates. The gripping narrative switches between her memories of the old world where she was a working mother and the terrifying realities of her life as a state-controlled breeding machine a Handmaid. A masterpiece of modern literature, Margaret Atwood has crafted a powerful, unforgettable novel. [Winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award for Science Fiction]

From Library Journal In a startling departure from her previous novels (*Lady Oracle* , *Surfacing*), respected Canadian poet and novelist Atwood presents here a fable of the near future. In the Republic of Gilead, formerly the United States, far-right Schlafly/Falwell-type ideals have been carried to extremes in the monotheocratic government. The resulting society is a feminist's nightmare: women are strictly controlled, unable to have jobs or money and assigned to various classes: the chaste, childless Wives; the housekeeping Marthas; and the reproductive Handmaids, who turn their offspring over to the "morally fit" Wives. The tale is told by Offred (read: "of Fred"), a Handmaid who recalls the past and tells how the chilling society came to be. This powerful, memorable novel is highly recommended for most libraries. BOMC featured alternate. Ann H. Fisher, Radford P.L., Va. Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc. "The most poetically satisfying and intense of all Atwood's novels." -Maclean's "The Handmaid's Tale is in the honorable tradition of Brave New World and other warnings of dystopia. It's imaginative even audacious, and conveys a chilling sense of fear and menace." -The Globe and Mail "The Handmaid's Tale brings out the very best in Atwood--moral vision, biting humor, and a poet's imagination." -Chatelaine From the Paperback edition. From the Inside Flap "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.