

Examine the  
significance of the  
relationship between  
offered



Moira and Offred; one a non conformist rebel and a confessed bisexual, the other a hardworking dreamer who sees the values in family life. They are two very different people, yet have been the best of friends from as far back as their college days, pre Gilead," Moira breezing into my room, dropping her denim jacket on the floor. Got any cigs, she said." Theirs is a long-term friendship, one that lasts the course of time.

Within the friendship between Offred and Moira it is obvious to see that Moira is the leader, she is a role model for Offred throughout her whole life. Outwardly she is much more of a heroine than Offred, she is very domineering and outgoing, openly campaigning for gay rights," You're crazy. Where'd you get an idea like that?" Moira's ideas and schemes may seem 'crazy' to her, yet it is these things that really inspire Offred. Her confidence is something that Offred really admires. It is in this way that Moira is a mentor to Offred, not consciously but in the way that Offred thinks of her. Whenever times in Offred's life get tough, she seeks comfort from the thought of Moira and guidance by her example. Moira's confidence and rebellion are evident throughout her whole life, both in small ways in college, and then later in much larger ways in Gilead society," Water bombs, they were called. Leaning out of my dorm window, dropping them on the heads of boys below.

It was Moira's idea." This small example of their behaviour in college, and the fact that it is a lasting memory for Offred, shows what a significant impression Moira has on Offred's whole life. Surely it was something Offred would not have thought up on her own, but was led into by Moira. Gilead society itself is built around a framework of rules that must not be broken.

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This is something that Moira no doubt, with her almost natural rebellious attitude, finds very constricting and she refuses to be terrorised into conformity in any way. This is what leads her to escaping from the Red Centre by disguising herself as an Aunt," This is a loony bin Moira said." She is desperate to get out. However, to the women in the Red Centre, while Moira is there and also by her escape, she provides some hope and comfort for them through her humour and irony," She was our fantasy.

" By her escape she is representing something that all the women, Offred included, would like to do but would not dare. Moira is an ideal. Her personality and actions are the embodiment of a heroine in Gilead. However we do only hear this through Offred's voice. She is telling us about Moira through her memories. It is likely that these are slightly biased. With Moira no longer around, Offred is remembering what she wants to, she is reconstructing Moira in a way that provides her with as much hope and comfort as possible. After all, to Offred Moira is a hyperbole; it is in her that all her hopes are focused.

If her memory of Moira was jaded in any way these hopes could be damaged. While living as a handmaid, Offred understandably finds life very hard at times and it often tempted to give up hope of ever finding a way out. During these times we learn of Offred's coping strategy, she thinks of her life pre Gilead and all that it meant to her. Her most common thoughts are usually focused on Moira, she is Offred's link to the time before, she was her best friend and the person of whom she has many memories," It makes me feel safe, that Moira is here." By remembering Moira, the inspiration, the strong confident one, the friend, Offred is strengthened. This way in which Offred

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uses Moira, both pre and during Gilead, emphasises her importance in Offred's life. However this is not fully reciprocated. Moira obviously values Offred's friendship but it does not appear to be as vital to her.

When they are together in the Red Centre Offred is strengthened by Moira's mere presence, whereas Moira is simply desperate to escape. She is an individual, who copes and acts alone," Moira had power now, she'd been set loose, she'd set herself loose." Moira's feistiness is displayed in her actions, her sense of dress, her language, and her eventual escape. Offred also contains similar feistiness, yet hers is brought across in reflection. It is possible to see the seeds of Moira's strong individuality that leads to her escape, in her college days and her sense of dress," In her purple overalls, one dangly earring, the gold fingernail she wore to be eccentric." This strength of character also means Moira has much more of a clarity of vision than Offred. She points out the truth of the colonies to Offred when they meet in the toilets in Jezebels, and seems to have quite a large understanding. Offred does not display similar understanding, but seems not to want to.

If she fully grasps the horror of Gilead it would be much harder for her to continue with life every day, and not to think of her mother and Luke, who have most probably been caught up in the full horror of Gilead society. Just as Offred does not fully know what has become of Luke, her mother, or her daughter, she also does not know what has become of Moira after her escape from the red centre, until the Commander takes her to Jezebels."

Then I see her. Moira. She's standing with two other women, over near the fountain." This is surely a big moment in Offred's life since becoming a <https://assignbuster.com/examine-the-significance-of-the-relationship-between-offred/>

Handmaid; she has spent possibly years thinking of Moira and their friendship and now here she is, stood on front of her. It is a potential chance for all the questions she has about Moira's life since the escape to be answered. From the moment they notice each other's presence, it is obvious their friendship is still strong," Our old signal, I have five minutes to get to the women's washroom.

" The use of one of their old signals strengthens the idea of their friendship being long term, almost eternal. It is obvious that Moira has remembered their friendship just as well as Offred has. It becomes clear to Offred just how much Moira has been through since her escape, and she begins to notice a change in her," She is frightening me now, because what I hear in her voice is indifference, a lack of vision." After all that has happened to Moira, she seems to have gotten to stage where she is giving up, just going along with things. Her rebellion against Gilead society appears to have come to an end. This is something that Offred finds hard to comprehend. This ideal of Moira is no longer," I want gallantry from her, swashbuckling, heroism, single - handed combat. Something I lack.

" Offred needs the heroic, dynamic Moira to inspire her and guide her. This idea that she held on to, grasped on to, to get her through life has now been jaded, the things that Moira always represented have gone," But how can I expect her to go on with my idea of her courage, live through it, act it out, when I myself do not?" Offred now seems to have a great deal of empathy with Moira; it brings a closer link between the two friends who have been separated for such a long time. They are both trapped and have been oppressed by Gilead. However despite this, they also seem to have grown  
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slightly apart. Offred can no longer use the image of a free, heroic Moira for strength, that image of her no longer exists. Her dependence on Moira seems to grow weaker. It is true that Moira has survived, but it was at a cost, she has ended up broken, defeated and exhausted," I won't go into what happened after that. I'd rather not talk about it.

All I can say is they didn't leave any marks." Here, in the toilets, they are offering equal emotional support to one another, it is not a case of one being more dependant than the other, but both being brought to the same level, with the same needs. Whilst Offred's dependence on Moira has faded, Moira's dependence of Offred has grown. Throughout the whole of the Handmaid's Tale, Moira is an ideal to Offred. She provides constant emotional support, both when together and after they have been separated. However these women who start off so different, end up more similar than they would have thought. Moira's rebellion has eventually cost her something; she will end up in the colonies," I'd like her to end with something daring and spectacular..

. but as far as I know, that didn't happen." Offred still wants to hold on to this ideal of Moira, but it is now impossible, that Moira has gone. Whether or not Offred eventually escapes or ends up recaptured like Moira is unknown, however what does become evident at the end, is how many heroic qualities Offred herself embodies. She may not be outwardly daring, but is very resilient and manages to survive everything that is thrown at her throughout her life. Even without this image of Moira she still manages to pull through. Her fate to us is unknown, yet we would like to think that after everything, her outcome is more successful than Moira's.

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