THE HANDMAID'S TALE

"Prodigal"

Written by

Willie J. Hagan

Based on the novel by Margaret Atwood

Previously On The Handmaid's Tale

"The Handmaid's Tale is the story of life in the dystopia of Gilead, a totalitarian society in what was formerly part of the United States. Facing environmental disasters and a plunging birthrate, Gilead is ruled by a twisted religious fundamentalism that treats women as property of the state. As one of the few remaining fertile women, Offred is a handmaid in the Commander's household, one of the caste of women forced into sexual servitude as a last desperate attempt to repopulate a devastated world. In this terrifying society where one wrong word could end her life, Offred navigates between Commanders, their cruel wives, domestic Marthas, and her fellow handmaids — where anyone could be a spy for Gilead — all with one goal: to survive and find the daughter that was taken from her." – Bruce Miller (Executive Producer)

This episode is set immediately after the last episode of Season Two

After the execution of Nick's wife, Eden, for adultery, Offred and Rita sort through her belongings. They discover a hidden Bible with handwritten notes that show Eden's strong religious beliefs. This is heretical. In Gilead, women aren't allowed to read. Offred argues to Serena that God's word should not be forbidden to women. Serena resists, claiming her daughter, Nicole, when she grows up, will obey "His Word." June counters that Nicole won't be able to read "His word."

When Serena learns it was Eden's father who turned her in she can no longer deny the horrors women face in Gilead. Serena goes before the Sons of Jacob and proposes that girls be allowed to read. The men, including her husband, Commander Waterford, are amused. When she pulls out Eden's Bible and reads, the men are infuriated. After the ceremony, her husband oversees her arrest and she receives the punishment meted out to women who read; an amputated finger.

Oflawrence (Emily) prepares for her first 'ceremony' with her new Commander. Commander Lawrence, an enigmatic and idiosyncratic man, does not have sex with Emily, yet tells the abhorrent Aunt Lydia the 'ceremony' went well. Later, Emily snaps and stabs Aunt Lydia in the back and kicks her down the stairs. Instead of having her arrested and sent off to an almost certain death, Commander Lawrence places the terrified Emily into his car and drives off.

A fire across the street from the Waterford house distracts everyone. Rita tells Offred she can help her and baby Nicole escape. They have to flee now. Serena catches them and wants Nicole back. Offred appeals to Serena's love for Nicole, reminding her Gilead is not the right place to raise a girl. Serena relents and after a tearful farewell gives Nicole back to Offred.

At the rendezvous point Offred is stunned to find Commander Lawrence is there with Emily. Although a founding Commander of Gilead he is helping Emily escape. In a final twist, Offred hands Nicole to Emily. She can't leave without trying to rescue her first daughter, Hannah, who is still trapped in Gilead. As the van pulls away, Offred turns and walks back toward the town she just fled. A look of determination and destruction on her face. EXT. WATERFORD HOUSE - NIGHT

Police lights flash. Under Nick's direction, Guardians with snarling German Shepherds, search streets and yards.

Despite the chaos, Nick takes a moment to glance down the dark street. Taking solace, knowing Offred has fled to freedom.

Commander Waterford observes from the steps as the Guardians search. His fury barely contained.

He watches as Nick stares off in the distance. He is suspicious.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Serena sits in her chair. Distraught. Deep in thought.

She shakily puffs on a cigarette with her good hand while Rita rebandages the bleeding stump of her amputated finger.

They startle as they hear the front door slam open as Commander Waterford enters from the outside.

Serena quickly snuffs out her cigarette. Rita grabs the cigarettes and matches and stuffs them into her smock.

The door to the sitting room bursts open and Waterford storms in. He is Satan unleashed.

Rita quickly leaves the room and closes the door behind her.

Serena stares at him, looking like a peacock about to be plucked.

WATERFORD You and Nick know something.

SERENA

I don't know anything.

He leans over placing his palm on top of her amputated finger. Pressing down.

She gasps in pain and fear.

EXT. SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rita stands outside the sitting room door, listening. Her body clenches as she hears Serena cry out.

INT. SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

COMMANDER

The fact that you are not as consumed by anger, and beside yourself in fear for Nicole as I am makes me think you know where our daughter is.

Serena shakes her head.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) Offred takes our daughter and you didn't see anything?

SERENA No, I would have told you.

She stops talking, face clenched.

He leans harder on her hand.

The pain is excruciating. She can't bear it.

SERENA (CONT'D) I would have stopped them. If I saw them, I would have stopped them.

Silent tears roll down her face.

COMMANDER

Them?

Fear replaces the pain in her face.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) This is nothing.

He stares at her amputated finger.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) Maybe we need to take another visit to see the doctor.

The implication is not lost on her.

(MORE)

You will tell us how Offred escaped with my daughter and you will tell me who else was involved. He stands up, releasing the pressure. COMMANDER (CONT'D) Perhaps the idea of being a Handmaid yourself will loosen your tongue. Serena is frightened to the core. About to stay something. The sitting room door opens and Rita steps in. RITA It wasn't her. It was me. I helped Offred escape with the baby. She looks at Serena. RITA (CONT'D) (to Waterford) Mrs. Waterford was in the Greenhouse. If she saw us, she would have tried to stop us. He turns on her, growling. COMMANDER Where are they? RITA On their way to Canada. We have a network. (and then) We've taken others as well. He fumes, waiting for more. Rita ignores him and takes a seat in a side chair. She crosses her legs and stares straight ahead. Strangely calm. EXT. WATERFORD HOUSE - STREET - NIGHT Waterford and Nick stand next to the back door of the van. Rita and Nick exchange quick glances as the two Guardians place her into the van. Nothing either of them can say. She sits on the bench. Waterford leans in.

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

3.

COMMANDER You know you will tell us everything, don't you?

Rita pays him no attention. Breathing deeply, almost meditative.

Serena watches from the kitchen window.

The van door is slammed shut. The Guardians nod to Commander Waterford and climb into the front of the van.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Rita sits there in the semi-darkness.

She reaches into her smock and pulls out the pack of cigarettes and matches she hid for Serena.

She lights a cigarette and takes a drag. Inhaling deeply. Savoring it.

She calmly leans down and places the still lit match against the hem of her dress.

EXT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

The van drives a few yards down the street then slams to a halt. The Guardians leap out and rush to the back door.

Commander Waterford and Nick watch from the steps.

The Guardians pull open the back door of the van and leap back as a huge ball of flames erupts from the van.

Rita stumbles out, fully engulfed in flames. She staggers a few feet drops to the ground.

Commander Waterford and Nick are stunned.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Serena gasps and steps back, shocked, as the flames from Rita's burning body illuminate her face.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick walks down the hallway. He passes the sitting room and sees Serena sitting, staring off into space, lost in thought.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Commander Waterford sits at his desk equally deep in thought, a shroud of anger still hangs over him.

There is a knock at the door. He looks up as Nick enters.

NICK Everything's been cleaned up sir.

Neither one of them says anything for a moment.

NICK (CONT'D) Still no sign of Offred, sir. (and then) Or the baby.

The anger rekindles in Waterford.

He is not satisfied...with a lot of things, including Nick.

He looks at Nick's gun, poking from his jacket.

Nick's hand moves reflexively towards his gun. He stops himself.

NICK (CONT'D) I'm sorry, sir. They thought it might be a terrorist attack. After the bombing at the Rachel and Leah Center we were ordered to take extreme measures to protect all of the Commanders.

COMMANDER I know about you and Offred, Nick.

Nick stiffens.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) What would you have named your baby, Nick? Serena and I chose Nicole. (and then) What did you name her? NICK I don't know what you're talking about, sir.

COMMANDER

(standing) Yes you do, Nick. Serena told me the baby is not mine. Hinted it might be yours.

NICK That's not true, sir.

COMMANDER Then why would she tell me that if it's not true?

Nick hesitates then pulls his gun. Waterford is momentarily taken aback.

Nick steps towards him, turns the barrel towards himself and holds the gun out to Waterford.

Waterford takes the gun.

He points it at Nick's chest.

NICK I don't know, sir. Maybe she wanted to get back at you for something you did to her.

Waterford stares at Nick for a hard second, then a cynical smile crosses his face.

He chuckles and hands the gun back to Nick.

NICK (CONT'D) We'll find her, sir. We always do.

Commander Waterford FLASHES BACK.

FLASHBACK

INT. LIMOUSINE - MOVING - STREET IN CANADA - DAY

Commander Lawrence and Serena stare out, concerned as Canadians and displaced Americans lean in shouting and angrily waving signs at them. Commander Lawrence sees Moira among the crowd holding up a sign, screaming at him.

Their eyes lock.

END OF FLASHBACK

COMMANDER Not always. (and then) But when we do.

The depth of hatred in his eyes almost unnerves Nick.

NICK I understand, sir.

COMMANDER

Good.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Exhausted, Nick enters, stressed over the events of the night. A weary smile as he thinks about Offred having escaped with their baby.

He sets down his gun and takes off his jacket.

He freezes.

Offred steps out of the shadows. He is alarmed.

NICK How did you get in here?

OFFRED Everyone was watching Rita burn.

NICK You saw her?

OFFRED

Yes.

Her eyes well up and she reaches out to embrace him.

He steps back.

NICK You can't be here. You got out. What are you doing here? She steps in until she is pressing against him.

NICK (CONT'D) This is insane. Do you know what they'll do to you?

She presses her fingers against his lips.

OFFRED Shhh, Nick. Holly is safe.

She hugs him. His hands remain at his sides.

OFFRED (CONT'D) Our baby is safe. She got away. Thank you for that.

He slowly hugs her.

NICK I wanted you out of here. I wanted you away from this place.

OFFRED I had to come back.

NICK For Hannah?

OFFRED She's my child, too.

He hugs her. A tear rolls down his cheek. Glad their baby is safe. Sad she is back. Glad to hold her in his arms.

INT. COMMANDER WATERFORD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Nick makes a pot of coffee. There is no Rita to do it anymore.

Commander Waterford enters. They exchange wary looks. Waterford pours himself a cup of coffee. It's not great.

> NICK I'll be leading a team through the Hedgebrook neighborhood this morning.

COMMANDER You do that, Nick. I have to go. Seems like we weren't the only ones with a Handmaid problem last night.

The Commander grabs his jacket and briefcase and heads for the door.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) Serena doesn't leave the house today, understand? If she tries, call me.

Nick nods.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - DAY
Serena sits in her chair, a cold compress on her hand.
A knock on the door.

SERENA

Come in.

The door opens and Nick enters.

SERENA (CONT'D) What Rita did last night...

Nick stands aside to let Offred enter the room.

Serena is apoplectic. She leaps out of the chair.

SERENA (CONT'D) Where's Nicole?

OFFRED She's safe. She's on her way to Canada.

SERENA You're supposed to be with her. You were going to take care of her. You were supposed to protect my baby.

Offred gives her a hard stare.

OFFRED We made me a deal. No, you made the deal. (MORE)

OFFRED (CONT'D)

As long as your baby was safe, my baby would be safe. My baby isn't safe. I came back to get her.

SERENA

You'll be arrested. They'll make you talk and then we'll all die. Nobody's baby will be safe. (and then) Are you a fool?

OFFRED Just tell me where Hannah is and we'll go get her.

SERENA

I can't. You need to leave here now. Both of you. You need to go and take care of my baby.

OFFRED

You gave me Nicole because you knew growing up in Gilead would be a living hell for her. How could you think I would leave my daughter behind?

SERENA

You lied to me.

Offred slaps her hard across the face.

OFFRED This place lied to you. Where is my daughter?

Serena studies Offred.

SERENA She's with her parents.

Offred doesn't bother to explain the obvious.

OFFRED Do you know where they live?

SERENA Yes, but they're Commanders. You'll never get close.

Serena looks at the clock.

SERENA (CONT'D) They'll drop her off at school in an hour. OFFRED Which one? SERENA The middle school in Acadia. NICK I know where that is. SERENA They won't let you into the school. The children are guarded. They are always guarded. (and then) They will let me in. I'm a Commander's wife. I can get her out. Offred and Nick stare at each other. SERENA (CONT'D) If they catch you everyone who helped you will be tracked down and killed. Offred turns to Nick. OFFRED I can't be taken alive. He understands and nods. They hug. Off her eyes.

> OFFRED (V.O.) Nick will make sure I'm not taken alive. That's true love. That's so fucked up.

ACT II

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Commander Waterford gets out of his car and heads for the Hospital entrance.

LAWRENCE (O.S.) Commander Waterford, wait up.

Waterford turns to see Commander Lawrence approaching with AUNT DAWN and a HANDMAID.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Commander Waterford, I'd like you to meet my new Handmaid, Oflawrence.

The Handmaid is young and terrified, not daring to lift her head while under the stern gaze of the cattle-prod toting Aunt Dawn.

> COMMANDER Blessed be the fruit.

> > OFLAWRENCE

Under His eye.

LAWRENCE

(to Aunt Dawn) Fine, that will do. Drop her at the house, she can show herself around.

Although displeased with the abrupt dismissal, Aunt Dawn nods to Oflawrence and they walk off.

The two Commanders start up the stairs.

COMMANDER Unusual they would bring your new Handmaid here.

LAWRENCE Unusual how I lost my last one. INT. HOSPITAL - BEDROOM - DAY

Aunt Lydia lays comatose in the hospital bed. Alive, but barely. Tubes feed into her nose and limbs; stitches cover her battered face.

Commanders Waterford, Lawrence and Pryce stare down at her.

PRYCE One Handmaid steals a baby, another tries to murder an Aunt. And all of them missing. Vanished from the face of Gilead.

WATERFORD We've been searching all night. We'll find them.

LAWRENCE

I think not.

Pryce and Waterford stare at him.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D) I believe we have a highly organized conspiracy on our hands. And now they are emboldened. The bombing, the abduction of babies, and now this! The brazen attack on an Aunt, one of the mainstays of our society. This is the work of May Day.

PRYCE

If there is turmoil they think Canada will come to their rescue. Things like this have happened before. Especially in the beginning. We need to stop this. Just like we stopped it in the past.

He gently rubs Aunt Lydia's arm.

PRYCE (CONT'D) Bring in anyone even remotely suspicious and let's get the truth out of them.

LAWRENCE Don't discount people in high places. (MORE) LAWRENCE (CONT'D) They could not have vanished without help at all levels, Guardians, Citizens, perhaps even Eyes and Commanders.

He casts an uncomfortable glance at Commander Waterford.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Don't you agree, Commander Waterford?

COMMANDER Yes. Actually, I do. We've seen the recent weakness in one of our Guardians, Issac.

PRYCE Your Guardian. (and then) We need to convene The Sons of Jacob.

LAWRENCE There is something festering just below the surface. We have to cleanse it before it spreads.

Commander Lawrence leans in close to Aunt Lydia, staring at her lovingly.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Who in the world would want to harm Aunt Lydia?

FLASHBACK

INT. SAINT EUGENIA GIRLS CATHOLIC SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Teenage girls dressed in school uniforms file orderly out of the class room.

The teacher, SISTER REBECCA, so named in the time before, we now know as Aunt Lydia, reaches out and holds back one nervous student.

Sister Rebecca sits across from the YOUNG GIRL who knows she is in trouble.

REBECCA

Janice, dear. When you consume alcohol on campus you are violating the rules of this school, the church, and of God.

Janice is in tears.

REBECCA (CONT'D) I know, dear. However, consequences must be paid. Pay them, be good from now on and we can be friends again. Okay?

Janice meekly nods her head.

Sister Rebecca looks up as Janice's PARENTS arrive.

REBECCA (CONT'D) Ah, your parents are here.

Janice is sick with dread.

REBECCA (CONT'D) (to Janice) Wait here, dear.

Rebecca stands and goes to the parents.

REBECCA (CONT'D) I smelled alcohol on her breath during attendance and followed her into the ladies room. I caught her drinking with several other girls. (and then) What is the world doing to our children?

Before she can continue a school SECRETARY pokes her head in the room. She has a look of urgency on her face.

EXT. SAINT EUGENIA GIRLS CATHOLIC SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

A deeply concerned Rebecca rushes across the lot, climbs into her car and takes off.

EXT. STATE PRISON - DAY

Imposing slate-gray walls under a slate gray sky.

A gate opens and Rebecca leads her much younger sister, MELISSA, mid-30's, out of the prison.

Melissa clutches a newborn baby to her chest. She smiles and nuzzles the baby.

REBECCA At your age. Shameful. How do you even get pregnant in prison?

Rebecca, dour-faced, supports Melissa. To lighten the mood, Melissa turns the baby to Rebecca.

MELISSA Jonathan, this is your Aunt Rebecca. She's your Godmother. She's going to let us stay with her for a while. Tell her thank you.

The baby coos and gurgles. Rebecca can't maintain her dour mood. She smiles broadly

REBECCA I'm his Godmother?

MELISSA Of course you are. Who else would it be?

This puts Rebecca over the moon.

EXT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A single level, three family apartment building in a working class neighborhood.

A small grocery store across the street, the red sign of a hospital a few blocks away.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - SMALL SECOND BEDROOM - DAY

A modest apartment; what one can afford on a teacher's salary.

A small baby crib in the corner.

Rebecca sits in a chair rocking baby Jonathan while singing softly the hymn, 'How Great Thou Art'.

REBECCA

(singing) O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder, consider all the works thy hand hath made. I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder; thy power throughout the universe displayed.

She hears the outside door open in the kitchen.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Melissa enters carrying a bag of groceries. Rebecca walks in from the bedroom rocking Jonathan in her arms, still singing.

REBECCA (singing) Then sings my soul, my savior God, to thee, how great thou art. How great thou are.

Melissa snuggles and kisses Jonathan while Rebecca holds him.

Melissa puts the groceries away.

MELISSA

The fish didn't smell right so I didn't buy any. But I paid him upfront and he said I can pick up fresh fish tomorrow morning. Okay?

Rebecca nods, oblivious, caught up in the magic of the baby in her arms.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Melissa sits on the couch, feet up on the coffee table, watching animals maul each other on National Geographic. She rocks Jonathan in her arms.

Rebecca enters carrying a bag. She pulls out several cute newborn outfits.

REBECCA I stopped at the store after work. Look what I bought. Aren't they lovely?

Melissa barely glances at them. It takes her a few seconds to comprehend the conversation.

MELISSA Yeah, they're great. Thank you.

Rebecca looks at the carnage on television with disdain.

REBECCA I'll put these in your room.

Melissa is oblivious.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - SECOND BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is messier now, Melissa's stuff strewn about.

Rebecca puts the baby's clothes in a small dresser drawer.

She accidentally steps on a pair of Melissa's jeans on the floor next to the baby's crib and hears glass crack.

She inspects the pocket and pulls out a cracked glass flute and a small bag of crystal methamphetamine.

She is outraged.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca storms in, furious. She is horrified beyond belief when she sees Melissa breast-feeding Jonathan.

She snatches Jonathan right off of Melissa's teat.

REBECCA (screaming) Are you insane?

She slams the cracked meth pipe on the coffee table. It shatters into thousand pieces.

REBECCA (CONT'D) You bring that poison into my house and then you pump it into the baby?

Holding Jonathan in one hand, Rebecca uses the other to snatch Melissa off the couch and shove her toward the door.

REBECCA (CONT'D) Get out! Get out of my house.

MELISSA I don't have anywhere to go. Melissa makes a half-hearted reach for Jonathan.

MELISSA

My baby.

Rebecca shoves her out the door and slams it shut. You can still hear Melissa shouting outside.

MELISSA (O.S.) (CONT'D) That's my fucking baby. You got no right.

Rebecca walks away from the door. Melissa's voice fades in the distance.

By now, Jonathan is wailing up a storm. Rebecca rocks him trying to calm both him and herself.

REBECCA Let me get you some milk.

She heads for the refrigerator.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - REBECCA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The crib has been moved into Rebecca's room.

Jonathan wails and wails, a high-pitched cry of anguish.

Rebecca, bone tired, is at her wits end trying to comfort him; rocking him, rubbing his back, trying to feed him.

Nothing works.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - REBECCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sunlight streams through the window.

Rebecca, still in yesterday's clothes, slumps sound asleep in her chair.

Jonathan lies in the crib, finally quiet.

Rebecca rouses, instinctively sensing something is wrong.

She goes to the crib. Jonathan is unmoving. Not breathing.

EXT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Rebecca bursts out of her apartment door, running. The lifeless body of baby Jonathan clutched in her arms.

She runs towards the hospital several blocks away.

She runs, breathlessly screaming. Her anguished cries her personal siren.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - HALLWAY - DAY

Through the window we see baby Jonathan lying on a gurney, surrounded by medical paraphernalia unable to bring him back.

Rebecca sits on a bench across from the emergency room window. Composed, stoic, eyes staring straight ahead.

Down the hallway a DOCTOR and a POLICE OFFICER talk to a very distraught Melissa.

Another DOCTOR takes a seat next to Rebecca.

DOCTOR Sudden Infant Death can occur in infants withdrawing from drugs they were exposed to while in their mother's womb.

Rebecca casts a baleful glare towards Melissa.

DOCTOR (CONT'D) It's called Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. The sad irony is that if he was still getting breast milk from his addicted mother he might have lived.

A long blink, Rebecca's only reaction.

DOCTOR (CONT'D) There is a chapel down the hall if you need to pray.

Rebecca looks at the doctor and then stares down the hall in disgust at Melissa.

REBECCA Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; (MORE) REBECCA (CONT'D) I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

She gets up and walks out of the hospital.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Aunt Lydia (nee Rebecca) lies in bed as Commander Pryce leaves the room. Commander Waterford prepares to follow but turns to Commander Lawrence who still stands over Aunt Lydia.

> LAWRENCE (singing softly) "You say you want a revolution, well, you know, we all want to change the world..."

> > COMMANDER

A song? Now?

Commander Lawrence straightens and turns to Commander Waterford.

LAWRENCE The Beatles. I thought she might like it.

Commander Waterford shrugs, not understanding.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D) "If I can't dance I don't want to be in your revolution."

Waterford loses patience and walks out of the room.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Emma Goldman said that. I kind of like it.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF HOSPITAL - DAY

Commander Waterford and Commander Pryce watch Commander Lawrence drive away.

COMMANDER Nick stopped me from going outside to search for my Handmaid and my baby. Pryce looks at him surprised.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) Said he was under orders to protect me.

Pryce ponders this for a moment.

PRYCE

Nick has always shown himself to be pretty reliable. But to be safe, perhaps we should talk to him.

COMMANDER Gently. He may be telling the truth. He is still stressed over the death of his wife.

PRYCE Understandable. Just a chat then.

He stares at Waterford.

PRYCE (CONT'D) You've had some turmoil in your house.

Waterford stares back, trying to read him.

COMMANDER Yes, but I think we've handled it well.

Commander Pryce nods and gets into his car and is driven away.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Dressed to go outside, Nick and Offred wait nervously.

Serena finally enters impeccably dressed.

She looks at them, still uncertain of their course of action.

SERENA How will you get out once you have Hannah?

OFFRED There are people we can contact. OFFRED

I hope so.

Serena takes a deep breath.

SERENA

Let's go.

Serena looks out the window and is shocked to see Commander Waterford pull into the driveway.

She turns to Offred and Nick.

Through the window we see that she turned away too soon. Two black vans also pull up to the driveway with Commander Waterford.

> SERENA (CONT'D) My husband is back.

Offred ducks back into the hall, out of sight.

Commander Waterford walks into the Kitchen and sees Serena and Nick dressed to leave.

He stares at them. A shark like smile crosses his face.

COMMANDER Going somewhere?

ACT III

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Offred stands in the hallway. Quiet. Listening to the conversation going on in the kitchen.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Waterford stares skeptically at Nick and Serena.

SERENA I asked Nick to take me to the doctor. I need more pain killers for my finger.

COMMANDER I can understand that. Unfortunately, that will have to wait. Nick has an appointment elsewhere.

Nick is confused. Two Guardians come in.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) Oflawrence stabbed Aunt Lydia and escaped. They think she might have had help. Perhaps the same people who helped Offred. The authorities are questioning everyone who was out last night, including the Guardians. They want to see if any clues might have been overlooked. Routine.

One of the Guardians takes Nick's gun. Anything but routine.

Nick is escorted out.

HALLWAY

Offred bites her fist. Horrified at what's happening.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Waterford turns to Serena.

COMMANDER

I have an important errand to run. I'll get the medications for you on my way back. You and I can have a deep conversation when I return.

Serena tries to look stoic but isn't convincing.

He leaves.

Serena stands there, confused and worried.

OFFRED (O.C.) We need to get a message to Commander Lawrence.

Serena turns to her, still having a hard time processing that Offred is really here.

SERENA

What?

OFFRED Commander Lawrence. He helped Emily escape after she stabbed Aunt Lydia.

This snaps Serena out of her trance.

OFFRED (CONT'D) He was at the rendezvous with her. He knew the van was going to be there to take us to safety. He helped Emily and Nicole escape. Maybe he can help save Nick.

SERENA Do you think Nick needs saving?

OFFRED Everyone needs saving, Serena.

SERENA Commander Lawrence is a Commander. He won't help Nick.

OFFRED

He has to be part of May Day. He knows how and where we escaped. He might even be the one who set up the network in the first place. SERENA He's one of the bad guys.

OFFRED They're all bad guys, but he's all I have.

SERENA I don't know how much more I can do to help you.

LATER

Offred comes into the Kitchen from Rita's room wearing one of Rita's Martha's outfits.

Nothing marks her as a Handmaid. She seals an envelope containing a note.

SERENA (CONT'D) Where are you going?

OFFRED To get help and to get my daughter.

SERENA They'll arrest you.

OFFRED They're looking for a Handmaid not a Martha. Marthas can walk freely by themselves.

SERENA You could die out there. Then what of Hannah?

OFFRED Rita died out there. Some things are worth dying for, Serena.

SERENA Why would Rita die to save me?

OFFRED She didn't. She died to protect the Marthas who helped my escape. She knew you didn't have the strength. They would break you and more good people would die. (and then) She wouldn't have died to save you. (MORE) OFFRED (CONT'D) She knew you wouldn't have died to save her.

Serena is somewhat offended.

OFFRED (CONT'D) If you actually had your own child you would understand. Some things are worth dying for.

Offred starts towards the door then stops and thinks. She goes to a kitchen drawer and pulls out a thin, long-blade boning knife.

She stares at Serena, tucks the knife in her smock and leaves.

OFFRED (V.O.) Nick was going to make sure I wasn't taken alive. I might have to do it myself.

EXT. GILEAD STREET - DAY

Offred walks down the street. Her head on a swivel. Handmaids in pairs walk by. Marthas and other citizens pass by as well.

Gun toting Guardians give a cursory scan.

Handmaids don't say a thing to her. Marthas give a brief smile and a greeting.

MARTHA

Praise be.

OFFRED

Under his eye.

She is nervous as shit and tries to hide it.

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES - DAY

Oflawrence, Commander Lawrence's new Handmaid, peruses the vegetable bin.

Offred enters and scans the shopping Handmaids. She approaches one and whispers a question. The Handmaid points out the new Oflawrence. Offred moves close to Oflawrence and inspects the vegetable bin next to her. She whispers.

OFFRED I need you to deliver a message to Commander Lawrence.

Oflawrence is startled, not knowing Offred and not used to speaking to a Martha who is not her own.

OFLAWRENCE I'm sorry but I'm not allowed to talk to you.

OFFRED I know the damn rules. Your Commander is expecting a message from Commander Waterford and you are going to deliver it or explain why you disobeyed the direct orders of two Commanders.

OFLAWRENCE No one told me about this.

OFFRED Because you're too new and apparently too stupid to understand how Commanders work.

Offred discreetly holds out the envelope for her.

OFFRED (CONT'D) And do not open it.

Oflawrence refuses to take the envelope.

OFFRED (CONT'D) Fine. I'll let the Commanders know you overruled them. I did my part. At least I know I won't be the one they send to the Colonies.

Offred turns to leave.

OFLAWRENCE

Wait.

Offred turns back to her. The letter is passed between them.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Again, Offred walks down the street, blending in but feeling like she has a blinking target on her back.

INT. COMMANDER LAWRENCE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Commander Lawrence stands holding the envelop from Rita. He levels a withering stare towards Oflawrence.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE A stranger on the street tells you to deliver a bomb to me and you do it?

OFLAWRENCE No, Commander. She said Commander Waterford sent it.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE A stranger? How do you know this doesn't contain Ricin or some other deadly poison?

Oflawrence blanches. She hadn't thought of that.

Commander Lawrence rips open the envelope and reads the message:

'They've taken Nick. Please save him. Offred.'

He stands there pondering.

OFLAWRENCE Did I make a mistake?

He sighs.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE We all did. (and then) Get me my jacket.

She scurries off. He calls after her.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Thank you.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

A small complex of gray granite buildings surrounded by a black wrought iron fence. A large grassy yard is at the back of the school.

School CHILDREN play in the yard.

Offred walks along the fence discretely looking at the kids in the yard. No Hannah.

A commotion near the main entrance of the school. The kids run to the front of the yard to see what's happening.

Offred looks ahead and sees a black SUV parked near the entrance of the school.

Keeping her head down, while discretely looking, Offred walks along the fence towards the front.

A man exits the school leading a young girl by the hand. Offred is too far away to see them clearly.

She quickens her pace. Panic grips her as she sees...

Commander Waterford leading Hannah out of the school.

She gasps and freezes, torn between shouting and running towards them or fleeing.

Waterford and Hannah get into the SUV.

She can't help herself. This is her daughter.

Offred breaks into a run towards the SUV, but it pulls away and disappears around a corner.

People stare.

Offred stops. Anguished. Not knowing what to do.

She crosses the street away from prying eyes.

Too late.

A black van roars away from a curb and heads her way.

At first, uncertain, she continues to walk. Maybe it's not for her.

It barrels her way. She knows.

She runs.

The van screeches to a halt next to her. Two Guardians leap out and grab her roughly.

A black hood is pulled over her head and she is thrown into the van.

Her muffled screams can be heard from inside but the roar of the engine quickly drowns them out.

ACT IV

INT. BACK OF A VAN - DRIVING - DAY

Offred sits in the back of the van, the hood still over her head, even though her hands are untied.

OFFRED (V.O.) I've been here before.

She cradles the boning knife in her hands.

OFFRED (V.O.) Maybe this time death will be real.

She feels the van roll to a stop.

She puts the knife back into her smock.

OFFRED (V.O.) Maybe not.

EXT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Offred is pulled from the van and hustled up a set of stairs.

OFFRED (V.O.) But this time I'm alone.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She is hustled down a long hallway.

OFFRED (V.O.) I should probably be happy it's just me. But I have to admit, I'm kind of sad. Misery does love company.

INT. LARGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Offred is placed in a chair and her hood is removed.
She's in a library. She looks around.
Row after row of bookcases. All empty.
Commander Lawrence steps into her line of vision.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE I call this the Women's Library.

Despite the fear and disorientation, Offred has to laugh at the irony.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) You know, you're like a bad penny. There is no point in helping you get out, you keep coming back.

He looks at the rows of empty bookcases.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) At least here you won't be tempted to break the law and start reading something.

OFFRED I came back to get my daughter, Hannah.

He waves her note in her face.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Your note says, save Nick. Which is it, Nick or Hannah? The likelihood of both is very slim. The likelihood of you surviving is probably even thinner.

OFFRED You helped Emily escape.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE It would have been an even greater nuisance to keep her around. And she wasn't very competent Handmaid. Aunt Lydia is still a live.

Offred shudders at the thought.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Why should I help you?

OFFRED You're May Day.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE A myth born out of Handmaid desperation. OFFRED

It's not a myth. People have died helping Handmaids escape.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE

People died helping you escape. And you are not even grateful. You don't want small victories, like freedom in Canada. You want it all. You want to be free, you want to have Nicole, Hannah and Nick. That is a high level of greed for a Handmaid, don't you think?

OFFRED

Yes.

She gives him a hard stare.

OFFRED (CONT'D) I want it all because all of it was taken from me.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Humph, so you're one of those.

OFFRED

If you're not going to help me, let me go and I will do what I can on my own.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Which is nothing. Do you even have a plan?

OFFRED Save my daughter or die trying.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Please, useless sentiment. Let's be honest. To get what you want you have to destroy all of Gilead. Isn't that why you really came back?

She stands to face him.

OFFRED If I could, I would burn this place to the ground.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE

Now we're getting somewhere. Because quite frankly, it's not enough to help one or two people escape this infernal place while thousands remind behind.

He gets even closer to her.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) I am not May Day. May Day is about resistance. I'm about destruction. The end of Gilead is bigger than you, Nick or your precious babies. Do you want to destroy Gilead?

She nods.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Are you willing to sacrifice yourself for that purpose? Are you willing to sacrifice Nick?

A tear rolls down her cheek.

OFFRED If I have to, yes.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Are you willing to sacrifice your children.

She hesitates.

OFFRED

No.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Not even to bring an end to this place? If you want to save the world, don't put limits on what you're willing to sacrifice. Then it's just a game.

She nod slightly, then nods again.

OFFRED Whatever it takes.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE

Good. Let's start with the former and hope it doesn't come to the latter.

(and then)

Minor detail, however. Waterford has your daughter and the Eyes have Nick. And I doubt either will be inclined to be of help.

OFFRED

If you can save Nick, I can go to Commander Waterford to get Hannah.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE And how would you do that?

OFFRED

I would make him a deal he can't refuse.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE

I think you would be dead before you completed your first sentence. What kind of deal could you offer?

OFFRED

If he brings me Hannah, I won't implicate him.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE What do you have on him?

OFFRED

The Handmaid's letters that killed the negotiations with Canada. Waterford took me to the Jezebels and I gave them to my friend who escaped and distributed them in Canada. I can say he gave her the letters, and he helped her escape.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE He would deny it.

OFFRED

But enough of it rings true that it would destroy him. He has a history and he knows none of you trust him. He doesn't want to lose his position of power.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE

Agreed. But that's exactly what has to happen. The Sons of Jacob need to catch a big fish. If it's Commander Waterford that would be perfect. It will destabilize things, sow distrust within the ranks. Could be very helpful. (and then) Is that all you have?

OFFRED It's a credible threat. I don't think he would risk what I would say under interrogation.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE It's a plan, I guess. Let's give it a shot. I've got nothing to lose.

He turns and heads for the door.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) My men will take you to Waterford's house this evening. Good luck with your plan. You bait the hook. I'll reel him in. Oh, you'll need this.

He returns the boning knife to her.

OFFRED Where are you going?

COMMANDER LAWRENCE To save Nick. Isn't that why you called this meeting?

OFFRED

You were one of the founding members of the Sons of Jacob. You helped create Gilead. Why do you want to destroy it now?

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Our population was dying and it seemed like a good idea at the time. But Gilead is just another kind of death. Perhaps worse. INT. COMMANDER WATERFORD'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Serena sits in her chair. Commander Waterford stands behind her, massaging her neck and stroking her hair.

It's a picture of marital intimacy. Clearly Serena isn't enjoying it and Waterford's thoughts are elsewhere.

COMMANDER A lot of negative attention has fallen on our household lately. A lot of bad people. Offred, Issac, Rita.

Serena tenses at the mention of Rita's name.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) Perhaps even Nick.

He smiles ruefully.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) We look like a den of inequity. And you and your reading, well, that was a miscalculation we had to weather as well. (and then) We'll have to put up with a lot more scrutiny for awhile. Now is the time for you and I to stay strong in our solidarity. It's the only way we can survive.

He kisses her on the top of the head.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) Our love will get us through this.

Serena's gaze is far off. No longer listening to him.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Nick sits strapped to a chair.

A vicious punch to the face by an INTERROGATOR, leaves his face bruised and his nose bloody.

A second INTERROGATOR sits at a table taking notes.

The door opens and Commander Lawrence walks in.

He sees Nick's bloody face.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (to interrogator at table) I was told this was supposed to be a gentle conversation.

INTERROGATOR It is. If we knew for certain he was guilty it would be worse.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Guilty of what?

The interrogator consults his documents.

INTERROGATOR Helping a Handmaid escape.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Well he isn't guilty. We know where the Handmaid is and a team will be picking her up tonight.

Nick's eyes widen in fear for Offred.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) He wasn't helping her, he was trying to find her. His actions lead us right to her.

He walks over to Nick.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Offred, that's her name, correct?

Nick stares at him, not answering.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Yes, I wouldn't be in the mood to talk either under such a miscarriage of justice. (to interrogator) Unlock him, please. I'll take him.

INTERROGATOR On whose authority?

COMMANDER LAWRENCE The Sons of Jacob are holding a special meeting tonight and want to talk to him. He looks Nick in the eye.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) We have strong evidence his Commander, Commander Waterford, was in cahoots with the Handmaid. After they had their baby, the Commander and the Handmaid were going to flee Gilead together. Isn't that right, Nick? But you stopped them. Good job, Nick. Good job.

Nick is confused.

Commander Lawrence turns to the standing interrogator.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) You deliver a hard blow my man. Hopefully, he'll be able to speak fully at the meeting.

INTERROGATOR We'll need to escort you.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE

I insist.

INT. SONS OF JACOB MEETING HALL - NIGHT

The Sons of Jacob sit in their chamber seats. Conspicuously absent is Commander waterford.

Nick stands before the council.

COMMANDER PRYCE Commander Waterford said you threatened to pull your gun on him.

NICK

Yes, I thought he might be trying to escape with the Handmaid. As an Eye, I would have reported him earlier but I knew I needed more evidence given his status as a Commander.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE And you confirm, you drove Commander Waterford to the Jezebels on more than one occasion?

NICK

Yes.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE With his Handmaid, Offred?

NICK

Yes.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE And who did he know, biblically speaking, when he wasn't there with his Handmaid?

NICK

There were several, but he often saw Moira, a former Handmaid who was captured trying to escape and sent to the Jezebels.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE A friend of Offred in the time before? NICK That's what I have heard.

COMMANDER PRYCE Why is this important?

COMMANDER LAWRENCE We have confirmed that Moira was the one who oversaw the release of the Handmaid's letters in Canada at the time of our negotiations with them.

This stirs up the council.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) Those letters were written by Handmaids in Gilead and delivered to a Jezebel who then escaped to Canada with them. Commander Waterford is the link between them all.

COMMANDER PRYCE It could have been his Handmaid as well.

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Doubtful, but we can question them both.

COMMANDER PRYCE What do you mean?

COMMANDER LAWRENCE The Handmaid, Offred, had a daughter from the time before, Hannah. The parents of Hannah reported that Commander Waterford took her from her school this morning. He told them he was taking her to see someone important. This could only mean Offred.

This is all new to Nick and he is uncertain of what to make of what Commander Lawrence in saying.

> COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) I will take a squad of Guardians with me to Commander Waterford's house.

(MORE)

COMMANDER LAWRENCE (CONT'D) I wouldn't be surprised if we don't find Offred and Commander Waterford plotting how all three of them will escape Gilead.

INT. CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Offred rides in the back seat. A silent Guardian drives. She watches the normal looking houses and streets pass by. She looks as the back of the head of her driver.

> OFFRED Why do you do this?

He doesn't answer.

OFFRED (CONT'D) Thank you.

DRIVER I had a sister once.

Offred senses it wasn't good.

OFFRED Was she a Handmaid?

DRIVER No, she was barren. They sent her to the Colonies. I never saw her again. I heard she died there.

They drive on in silence.

INT. GUARDIAN READY ROOM - NIGHT
Guardians arm up. Nick is given his gun and holster back.
Commander Lawrence goes over to him.

NICK What's going on?

COMMANDER LAWRENCE Offred has a plan. I think it's a bad one. I'm playing back up. EXT. GUARDIAN STATION - NIGHT

Nick and several Guardians pile into a van. Commander Lawrence takes the front seat.

EXT. WATERFORD HOUSE - NIGHT

A full moon but a dark night nonetheless due to the intermittent clouds.

Offred's car pulls up and she gets out.

DRIVER Destroy him. If you can, destroy him.

Offred nods.

She looks up the steps towards the house. The night, the house. It has an Exorcist kind of feel.

She slowly climbs the stairs.

INT. COMMANDER WATERFORD'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Commander Waterford leans over his desk reading official papers.

He looks up, annoyed, as the door to his office opens without a knock.

He is surprised when Offred steps in.

He smiles and sits back in his chair, evilly smug.

He appraises her standing there in a Martha's outfit.

COMMANDER I knew you would come back for Hannah. That's why I took her.

He shakes his head, truly amused.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) I have to give you credit, Offred. You have guts coming back here. You won't survive, but I admire your tenacity.

The smile vanishes.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) Tell me where my daughter is and I'll make sure you and Nick die quickly.

Offred walks towards him and removes her bonnet.

OFFRED

Tell me where Hannah is and I'll make sure you don't die at all.

He stands and walks around the desk. It unnerves her, but only for a moment.

COMMANDER

So you think you have some kind of power over me. What are you going to tell the authorities? That we played scrabble? That I took you to the Jezebels?? That I took you bad boy? Like all of the other Commanders?

He walks towards her.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) You're in over your head, Offred You have no idea what power is.

OFFRED

That you delivered the Handmaid's letters to the Jezebel Moira. That you helped her escape with the letters, which lead to the death of a guard. That you wanted them distributed in Canada so they would kill negotiations between Gilead and Canada.

This gives him pause.

OFFRED (CONT'D)

That you helped me escape with Nicole using the same network that helped Emily escape after she stabbed Aunt Lydia. That you're part of May Day.

He steps right up to her. She doesn't back down.

COMMANDER Now why would you think anyone would believe that pack of lies?

OFFRED

Because your wife was cold and barren. And you wanted the forbidden fruit. You had my body but you wanted more than that. You wanted to have fun with me. That's why you took me to Jezebels and bought me fancy clothes. And it just wasn't me. It was your other Handmaid. The one who hung herself.

COMMANDER

You mean Offred?

This gives her pause. He smiles. It's not a friendly one.

COMMANDER (CONT'D) They did find her hanging. (and then) But what makes you think...she hung herself?

This totally sets Offred back on her heels.

She tries to regroup.

OFFRED Even if they don't believe me they'll no longer believe in you. Do you want to find out what that is like? Give me Hannah and you'll never see me again.

INT. WATERFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The front door slams open and several Guardians flood in, closely followed by Nick and Commander Lawrence.

Serena comes out of the sitting room to see what's going on. For a moment she is sure they are coming for her.

> COMMANDER LAWRENCE Where is he?

SERENA I think his office. What's going on? OFFICE

Commander Waterford is shocked as Commander Lawrence and the Guardians storm in.

Offred turns her head towards them, equally shocked.

She sees Nick with the Guardians. He takes a step towards her. Commander Lawrence stops him with a subtle shake of his head.

Offred turns back to Waterford.

He lashes out, his fist slamming into her face. Everything goes black as she goes unconscious.

OFFRED (V.O.) Oh, fuck!

End of Episode