



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

The Testaments by Margaret Atwood

1. It has been 30 years since *The Handmaid's Tale* was published. Did this passage of time make it difficult to reconnect with the world created so many years ago?
2. Atwood has said she wrote this book in part because she worries the world is trending more toward Gilead than away from it. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
3. *The Handmaid's Tale* centres on envy between women, whereas *The Testaments* looks at collaboration. What are some examples?
4. Gilead was first imagined by Atwood after living in West Berlin before the fall of the wall. It was a place where people were unaware of things, including the sins of those in charge. With access to information at our fingertips, do you think this statement still holds true?
5. Certain scenes from *The Testaments* — children ripped from the arms of their parents, flights across borders, inhumane detention centers — track closely with today's headlines. Were these passages more or less difficult to read because of recent events?
6. Aunt Lydia's induction into the order of Aunts is described with a chilling vigour. Has learning about her circumstances changed your view of her character?
7. Atwood says she long rejected calls for a sequel because she knew she could not re-create Offred's voice. Was telling the story through the eyes of three women an effective solution?
8. The author has been quoted as saying, "What is life without challenges?" Do you think the challenges women have faced historically were equal to those faced in Gilead?
9. Has this novel changed you—broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or yourself?

The above questions were made by Clarington Library, Museums & Archives staff to enhance your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Margaret Atwood grew up in northern Ontario and Quebec. She received her undergraduate degree from Victoria College at the University of Toronto and her master's degree from Radcliffe College. Atwood is a critically acclaimed author; her works have been translated into multiple languages and several screen adaptations.

<https://www.biography.com/writer/margaret-atwood>

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