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Songs of a Silent World

Song #1 // [Rescue by Lauren Daigle](#)

For Offred the most hopeful—or rather, most desired—reality for Luke is that he made it across the border to Canada and made contact with the resistance. She is naively hopeful that Luke will come and save her, saying, “It’s this message, that may never come, that keeps me alive. I believe in the message” (106). The song *Rescue* by Lauren Daigle represents Luke’s hypothetical message. The song makes a promise. A promise to always come when the other calls. Luke hears her pleas and her cries for help at night, through her dreams. This connection is the feeling that both Offred and Luke share: a whisper in their ears, telling them that there is still light in the shadows. The song says, “I hear your S.O.S, your S.O.S,” and Offred soothing her mind, “I must be telling it to someone. You don’t tell a story only to yourself. There’s always someone else” (40). She believes that there has to be someone out there who is listening. This can’t be all that’s left in the world. The song’s tempo is soft, gentle, and full of hope, representing Luke’s self-appointed destiny to save his wife and child.

Song #2 // [Mad World by Michael Andrews](#)

The tone and lyrics of *Mad World* depict the overall atmosphere and sorrow of Gilead—quiet suffering, emotionless, machine-like. The first line, “All around me are familiar faces,” mirrors how Offred felt when she was first brought to the Red Center: seeing the other women, but not truly recognizing them. The next line, “Their tears are filling up their glasses,” denotes the silent agony of both Offred and Serena Joy. Specifically, Serena Joy being stripped of her voice and Offred’s freedom of choice being amputated from her world. The following verse, “When people run in circles it’s a very, very mad world,” resembles the uniformity and pointlessness of the Handmaidens’ daily walks, ultimately only occurring to “keep abdominal muscles in working order.” Their heads are down, not speaking, being gawked at by tourists. “Look right through me, look right through me,” annotates the isolation the women of Gilead feel on a daily basis.

Song #3 // [Free by Florence + the Machine](#)

This song symbolizes the conflict in Offred’s mind: the internal question of whether or not to give up total control. The opening lyrics, “Sometimes I wonder if I should be medicated. If I would feel better just lightly sedated,” connect to Offred’s suspicion that she was being drugged (pg. 70), and to the recurring motif of her need for control. The repeating line, “It chews me up, spits me out. It picks me up, puts me down a hundred times a day,” mirrors her mental battle. The frequency and abruptness of her visions and dreams give readers the sense that Offred sometimes invites these escapes (as in Chapter 7), but is often attacked by them (end of Chapter 13). This push and pull confuses the reader, leaving them unsure of what reality to believe.

Gilead believes that music is tied to remembering the “before times,” and thus it is outlawed. However, this

does not stop Offred from humming a faint tune. The lyric, “I hear the music, I feel the beat and for a moment, when I’m dancing, I am free,” represents the freedom and solace she finds escaping within her mind—no matter how untrue or fleeting that escape may be (pg. 54).

Song #4 // [They Don't Care About Us by Micheal Jackson](#)

This song is about giving voice to those who face prejudice and oppression. It reflects Moira’s feelings while resisting the indoctrination in the Red Center by the Aunts. The tone is spiteful and angry, begging for the other Handmaids to join her and revolt against Gilead. The repetition of “All I wanna say is that they don't really care about us,” acts as a plea towards her peers to be courageous. The lines, “Beat me, hate me. You can never break me. Will me, thrill me. You can never kill me,” demonstrate Moira’s persistence and determination to escape this oppressive world, and her utter refusal to accept the newly enforced system.

Song #5 // [Every Breath You Take by The Police](#)

Though intended as a love song, *Every Breath You Take* eerily reflects the Eye in *The Handmaid’s Tale*. While we don’t yet fully understand who or what the Eye is, we know it is constantly watching over Gilead. The Handmaidens can’t do anything without being observed—“Every step you take, every word you say, every night you stay I’ll be watching you.” This directly connects to the plaster eye on Offred’s ceiling and her constant anxiety about surveillance, as seen in her nervousness at the doctor’s office. The ever-watchful Eye becomes a powerful deterrent against even thinking of escape.