

For my Lit Log, I created a playlist that would accompany certain (live action) scenes in the Handmaid's Tale. As I searched for songs, I imagined which would be the best in the background of a certain scene, and then selected the scene based on the mood and quotes/lyrics.

Theatre by Etta Marcus

In Gilead, everyone is deprived of physical contact – a stark contrast to the world beforehand. Repeatedly throughout the book, we get glimpses into Offred's thoughts of Luke and the connection they used to have. She now craves the slightest bit of physical/sexual relationship; the lack thereof only intensifies these feelings. Through the change in pace and volume, this song captures the yearning for love and perfectly encapsulates Offred's desire for human touch and connection.

When Nick touches Offred's arm under her sleeve, it sparks what she's been trying to suppress. "It's so good, to be touched by someone, to be felt so greedily, to feel so greedy." (99). At this moment, *Theatre* would be a perfect addition to the scene. Starting slow and pretty, the song feels like a love song but quickly changes at the chorus. The loud drums and electric guitar create a feeling of anger and need. Etta's voice during this moment would fit perfectly into the feelings Offred is struggling with during this scene and capture the intensity of this kiss to both of them. The repetition of "I want to be loved" fits into the repeating thoughts Offred has of Luke, what she no longer has, and what she is doing in place of it.

Take Me to Church by Hozier

Take Me to Church is a beautiful track emphasizing hypocrisy and violence in religion. Hozier's voice is versatile and soulful, so the song is sung like gospel mixed with blues. His voice is predominantly what listeners hear, which creates emphasis on the lyrics. As we know, Gilead's society is based on religion, with (supposed) rules of Christianity being present in every aspect of life. Offred's narrative reveals the hypocrisy and exceptions that come with this new life, which fits perfectly with this song.

A rule imposed on everyone is that music is banned. While Gilead takes its laws very seriously, this one appears mildly disregarded. The readers don't know why, but

it could be because they have bigger fish to fry, like limiting information to those who aren't influential. "Sometimes Rita will hum... a wordless humming, tuneless, unfathomable. And sometimes... there will be the thin sound of Serena's voice, from a disc... played now with the volume low, so she won't be caught listening." (55). This quote shows us how criminalizing music isn't a proper ban. While Offred doesn't seem to pay much attention, as readers, we are left curious as to why this rule was enacted if it wasn't enforced.

"Take me to church/I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lifes/I'll tell you my sins, and you can sharpen your knife." This line in the song reveals Hozier's perspective on the hypocrisy in the church – the feeling as though you could do everything asked of you, and it is still not enough.

[Time to Run by Lord Huron](#)

Time to Run begins slow and unique with windchimes, snare, and overlaid vocals. It transitions into an upbeat tempo and a feeling of adventure. Behind this front, the lyrics have a more profound (and darker) meaning when connected to *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Offred has vivid memories of her family attempting to escape the United States. She dreams about running in the woods with her daughter, with what readers assume are Guardians chasing them. "I'm running, with her, holding her hand, pulling, dragging her through the bracken..." (75). This scene causes your heartbeat to speed up, knowing the implications of if (or, as we know, when) they are caught. The imagery of a mother and daughter running in the woods and their fate chasing them is powerful.

"It's time to run, they'll string me up for all that I've done/I'm going soon, gonna leave tonight by the light of the moon/I did it all for you, well, I hope you know the lengths I've gone to." These lyrics would resonate hard with this scene. The feeling of wrongdoing and escape is present throughout the song while connecting with doing the wrong *for* somebody else. Played during the scene of Offred and her daughter running through the woods it would give a sense of freedom and protection.

[Angels by Khalid](#)

Angels is a mellow, vocally prominent, and heartfelt ballad focusing on imagining people no longer there and how it brings up memories. Khalid sings over a slow piano that matches the tone of his voice.

Similarly to Khalid, Offred often daydreams vividly about the people she has lost: Luke, Moira, and her daughter. Her thoughts about those in her past life seem to keep her going as if she's pushing through for them.

The specific moment to play this song would be when Offred imagines her daughter in the car as they drive north to Canada. "The little girl who is now dead sits in the back seat, with her two best dolls, her stuffed rabbit, mangy with age and love> i know all the details. They are sentimental details but I can't help that. I can't think about the rabbit too much though, I can't start to cry." (84) She focuses on minute details, although she knows it will make her emotional. This slow, sad song in the background would connect perfectly to Offred's thought process: that those in the car with her are dead, and they are angels now. It would emphasize the size of this loss to Offred and how she can't even think about her daughter's rabbit without crying.

Meet Me in the Woods by Lord Huron.

Meet Me in the Woods is a soulfully loud and evocative song with acoustic guitar and piano. With an upbeat tune overlaid with both a male and female voice, Lord Huron describes the journey of going somewhere, and it changes you fundamentally. "There ain't language for the things I've seen / and the truth is stranger than my own worst dreams / I have seen what the darkness does / take me back to who I was." This song's lyrics would connect perfectly with Offred's struggle with truth and that this is her new reality.

Offred, as we know, has been through a lot as a Handmaid. She's seen people hung to death on the Wall, the aftermath of Moira being tortured, and having to experience the Ceremony an unknown amount of times. This song, would be a perfect addition to a moment where Offred is reflecting on her new life, or perhaps how she has changed since her new life started. "I used to think of my body as an instrument, of please or a means of transportation, or an implement for the accomplishment of my will. I would use it to run, push buttons of one sort or another, make things happen... Now the flesh arranges itself differently." (73) If this were spoken over with the song,

the connection between her mindset change and Lord Huron's insight on truth and darkness would be profound.