

College English

Ms. Pahomov

Mira Khurana

September 30, 2024

## Night Owls

In Chapter 7 of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred talks about the night. She writes, "...the night is my time out. Where should I go?" (37). In my feature article for Mr. Clapper, I wrote, "The hours between 10 pm and 3 am were my time. They had been since I was little." My love for the night is very well known. I'm the dictionary definition of a night owl. So much so, that my friend pointed out the first line of Chapter 7 and said to me, "She's just like you!". I proceeded to show her the post-it note I had on that page reading, "I feel the exact same way."

Offred uses her time at night as a way to escape from her reality. She thinks about her old memories and loses herself in the world of her past. This is the only time she is able to let herself get sucked into these memories and fantasies. I use my time at night to read, watch TV, or scroll on social media. I get lost in the world of others, whether it's in a fantasy world or a story from an influencer.

The night is the greatest place to escape. It sometimes feels like time stops. Everyone else around you is asleep, it's beautifully quiet, and everything is dark. Sometimes the night feels like a different world from the day. During the night, I like to forget about the things I'm stressed about during the day, and let myself take a breath.

It was nice to see someone that had a similar relationship the nighttime as me, because I often feel like I'm the odd one out. I'm always the last to go to bed in my house, the last to go to bed out of my friends, and probably the last to go to bed on my street. I'm a night person, in a world centered around morning people, and I struggle with it every day. If it were up to me, I

would go to bed at 3, wake up at 11, and go to school from 12 to 7 every day. I'm always fighting with my mom about it because she likes to wake up at 5 in the morning, which is close to my bedtime. She doesn't understand my inability to wake up early (my body physically has a reaction, usually a headache or a stomachache) or go to sleep early. But one day I explained why I really love the night. I explained how it felt like the only time of the day I had to myself. It turned out she felt the same way about the morning. Though I know she'll never be happy that I go to bed so late, I think she is beginning to understand why I do it.

Though Offred and I are in very different situations, we use this time of day to forget about our worries. It's also the time when you have no responsibilities. The only expectation of you is to be sleeping. For me, that means I don't feel the pressure to be doing homework, because I'm supposed to be asleep anyway. For Offred, it means she finally gets a second to herself, where she doesn't have to be hyperaware of her surroundings or follow anyone's orders. It's no one's time but her own, "The night is mine, my own time, to do with as I will..." (37).

When someone is going through something difficult for them, whether it's living in Gilead or struggling with college applications, they need to find a place to escape. For some people it may be watching movies, hanging out with friends, or meditating. For my mom, it's drinking her tea at 6 in the morning. For Offred and I, it is the silence and stillness of the night. It is the period of time when we are free to do what we want (usually in the confines of our bedrooms), free to waste time, and free to daydream.

There's actually a name for this kind of thing, it's called "Revenge Bedtime Procrastination". I read up on it last year after seeing someone post about it, and realized that it described me to a tee. It's the decision you make to stay up late to "make up" for the time you lost during the day. Usually, that time is lost because of a busy schedule. It makes a lot of sense why Offred feels this way about the nighttime. It's the one time for her to relax, take a breath,

and reminisce. And just maybe, she could close her eyes and imagine she is back with her husband and child, once again living a normal life.