



BEYOND THE WALL

What is Gilead? A nation? A city? Just a society? Whatever it is, Gilead is surrounded and shielded by a wall. Okay— a wall around a dystopian country thing isn't unheard of. Many examples throughout literature, media, and especially history have shown us the benefit of walls. Nobody can come in. Nobody can come out. So what happens to the people that do?

In Gilead, rebellion is almost unheard of. People dream about it, but it's just that. A fantasy. And that is because it is no secret to the citizens what happens to the people that do rebel. It is advertised; put on display. That very wall that doesn't allow people to come in or out of, is a canvas to portray the dead men who have committed crimes.

"They have committed atrocities and must be made into examples." Atwood writes, atrocities that may have been legal in the previous time. The wall is a symbol of being gone with the past; embracing the now. As brutal as it may be, this wall displays reality to all who hope to go against it.

My drawing was made to display all these values in the symbol. It is eerie and drawn with dark hues, symbolizing the darkness of the entire idea of the wall. Even though the style is not meant to feel like realism, the detail of the work shows the extreme reality and meticulousness that a Handmaid may feel as they gaze up at the wall.

Color was an important factor in the drawing. For the most part, it is black and white. A symbol of the hopelessness that is encaptured by the wall. But one color shines through and that is red. Red is of extreme importance throughout *The Handmaid's Tale*. Offred describes red as, "the color of blood, which defines us." A motif that continues throughout the story. But in this scene, as Offred looks up to see what were previously people, she thinks about red. "But on one bag there's blood, which has seeped through the white cloth, where the mouth must have been. It makes another mouth, a small red one, like the mouths painted with thick brushes by kindergarten children. A child's idea of a smile."

The color red pierces through the story. Blood representing so much in Gilead. Fertility, punishment, and life and death. Or flowers. "I look at the one red smile. The red of the smile is the same as the red of the tulips in Serena Joy's garden, towards the base of the flowers where they are beginning to heal. The red is the same but there is no connection." Offred compares and contrasts colors, her mind wanders as she looks up at something that feels utterly unreal.