

# Captain

By: Marisa Phan

I am a captain; one of the two captains for my softball team. Being a captain has put me on an important standard around my peers. Now, technically my coach has given me a choice whether I decide to take the role as captain or not. However, by his tone I really didn't have an option. I have a very strict coach and I fear I would be penalized if I were to say no although that wouldn't be fair. Just like in the handmaids tale I feel like a wife, specifically Serena Joy.

Just like a wife there is always a person with higher power above me, which would be the commander. Funny enough all commanders are men and my softball coach is a man, fitting under that position. He is the real ruler in this situation. Of course the circumstances aren't as bad however, these roles fit under the roles in Gilead. The coach makes all the rules, has control over the captains, who have control over the other players, who are like the other women in Gilead. They don't really have options or voices, they have to listen to what the coach says and follow the rules.

I have a hard role. It is difficult to pay attention to my flaws when I have to keep everyone else in line as well, in fear I might get in trouble if I don't. Which has happened before. Although I have some power it isn't enough to free me from punishments. During one of our class discussions we talked about how Serena Joy gave Offred a picture of her kid. "It must have been Martha who got it for her. There's a network of Marthas then, with something in it for them." (pg. 228). Behind this quote was the context of Serena Joy using others for her dirty work. She did have power, and used it wisely. However, she knew in the back of her mind that if she got caught there would be consequences.

While this quote was in this discussion, Noah and his table brought up a question, "Is it better to live without knowledge or uncertainty?" There was a point that was brought up that in our world, knowledge feels inevitable. In a way I feel as if I can connect this to myself. To my understanding the wives sometimes don't want to be on that standard to begin with and when I think to myself I don't either. I want to have my freedom and play softball without being extra supervised and also supervising my team. So is it really better, being a captain instead of a normal player? Is it really better, being a wife instead of any other women in Gilead?

Another part of the book was a ritual of some sort. A hanging. "On the stage, to the left, are those who are to be salvaged: two Handmaids, one Wife. Wives are unusual, and despite myself I look at this one with interest. I want to know what she has done." (pg. 273) This quote can prove that although wives do hold some power, that power isn't enough to be saved from punishments. At the end everybody can get punished the same way. At any point in time Serena Joy could have been that wife. The wife that would soon be hung by a handmaid. It shows that no one is really safe in this society, even if you think you are.

I realize that these are two completely different situations however, by looking at the bigger picture when you are involved in different communities, everyone has a role. Just like if you were in a club, there is a president, a vice president and then the people involved. This can also go for a school. If you look at the dynamics there is the principal, then the teachers, and finally, the students who attend the school. With my situation I could act like a good person and

turn my back onto my teammates, just like a wife, like Serena Joy. She had knowledge of illegal acts Offred committed. The end could be put up to debate however, for this situation Serena Joy could've called the eyes on Offred.

Everyday when I have softball I get this feeling of being watched over my shoulder every second. I am so used to being just a team player who would listen to both the captains and coach. However, I am not the captain. There have been times where the whole team has gotten in trouble however, the captains have had it worse. We hold a position of leadership although we don't get treated like leaders.