

## The Danger of Idolization

Chapters 35-39 of *The Handmaid's Tale* has been a rollercoaster. From sneaking out to a club with the Commander to sleeping with him at the end of the experience. Throughout all of this, there was one character I was excited to see and that was Moira. Throughout chapters Offred has been using Moira as a voice in the back of her head, "Chickenshit, Moira would say" (pg 232). It's always, *what would Moira do, what would she say if she were here?* Offred no longer has to use Moira as a voice in the back of her head as she stumbles upon her in the club. They catch up and Moira tells Offred everything that has happened to her and how she ended up here. Moira almost makes it out but they catch her at the docks and give her the option to go to the club or to work in the Colonies, she chooses the club. She tells Offred to come work at the club as it is much more free compared to being a handmaid. From Offred's reaction you can sense she is disappointed, as if she was expecting more. More than just Moira working at a club for the rest of her life, to get up and fight back. Fight the system. Offred views Moira as a hero, an inspiration. We see this when the handmaids learn of Moira's escape, "Moira was our fantasy. We hugged her to us, she was with us in secret," (pg 133). To learn that Moira had not only been able to switch the power dynamic but not get caught had been a mindblowing thing for the handmaidens. From this moment forward Offred starts comparing herself to Moira, wanting to have the strength it took to escape but ultimately stays in the lane she chose. "I don't want her to be like me. Give in, go along, save her skin ... I want gallantry... heroism ... Something I lack," (pg 249). So for Moira to once go from breaking the system to then obeying the rules must've been a shock towards Offred.

At this moment I could understand Offred. There have been times in my life where I put people on a higher pedestal than myself simply for accomplishing things I could never do. I look

onward and think to myself what would it be like to be in their position but ultimately I never take the steps to actually be in their position. We idolize people all the time but just because we do doesn't mean they'll always be what you shape them to be. Taeil is an artist a part of the k-pop group NCT. NCT has been one of my favorite k-pop groups due to their experimental style in music. I used to be an avid watcher of their interviews just as a way to learn more about the group. I really came to like Taeil because of his vocals, he always used the highest notes in the song and I was always so impressed. I was inspired by him for the fact that even though he was the oldest member of the group he still tried to understand everyone and always tried his best in performances. So I had respect for him for that. Because of that it was surprising to see that as I was scrolling on Youtube to find a video to watch for the day I saw a post created by some sort of k-pop fandom channel. In it I saw that Taeil had left the group and was no longer a part of group activities. I was immediately intrigued because this was the first I had ever seen this as the post had only come out an hour ago. In the post it said that he had left due to serious allegations of raping a minor, threatening her, and having a cameras in her room to watch her. Reading this post shocked me because it came out of nowhere. I hate to say it but this has happened to another member of the group, Lucas. With that case his company stuck beside him and helped him along the way. With Taeil's case the company just immediately kicked him out of the group.

When you have this image of a person, you expect them to stay in this image, to be confined in it. For me I expected Taeil to stay in the lane of an older sibling to his group mates and a kind singer to fans. I never thought of him outside of that. I know I don't have the relationship Moira and Offred have with Taeil because the relationship between fans and idols is one of a parasocial relationship. Even though it is, it doesn't mean fans such as myself don't

confine idols to a certain image like Offred does for Moira. You expect them to act a certain way for the rest of their lives when in reality you can't control their thoughts or actions.