

# WARNING

The following Litlog contains spoilers for the following videogames:

Nier Automata

Nier Replicant

Entire Playlist:

<https://music.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbjKfOrRjgJzPNweHT5psoUFLMxluYwdj&si=sWjr4QK1IAdtPNQ>

## **Scene 1: The book introduces us to the states of the handmaids**

Song: [Vague Hope \(Spring Rain\)](#)

Margaret Atwood begins her novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, by dropping readers off into the dystopian society that will soon be known as Gilead. In this oppressive dystopian theocracy, women have lost most if not all of their freedoms, being defined solely by their titles as handmaids. "I want to be held and told my name. I want to be valued, in ways that I am not; I want to be more than valuable. I repeat my former name; remind myself of what I once could do, how others saw me." Having lost every aspect of any personal identity, a Handmaid's value is completely determined by their ability to bear children to their respective Commanders. This truth the characters have been experiencing for an unknown amount of time leaves no room for hope or being saved in any possible way. *Vague Hope (Spring Rain)*, written by Keigo Hoashi for the 2017 video game *Nier Automata*, highlights similar emotions throughout the story. The game *Nier Automata* takes place some 15,000 years in the future, where all humans have died off leaving androids the sole caretakers of the world. This song plays when a stage in the game changes, showing a broken crumbling city where humans once roamed freely and safely. Like *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Vague Hope (Spring Rain)* shows how bleak their world is compared to mine.

## **Scene 2: Offred into the Commander's room**

Song: [複製サレタ街 Arranged by LITE - Copied City Arranged by LITE](#)

Fast forward some 22 chapters, Offred finds herself responding to the Commander's illegal request for her after hours. At first, Offred was cautious, seeing the whole situation as dangerous. "If I'm caught, it's to Serena's tender mercies I'll be delivered. He isn't supposed to meddle in such household discipline, that's women's business... I could become an Unwoman" (136) Handmaids are undervalued so severely in Gilead, that the potential consequences of inappropriate (and illegal) actions should outweigh any possible benefits they could bring. This system would effectively squash any trace of hope, but human nature can't be so easily erased. *Copied City Arranged by LITE* is an unreleased track created again by Keigo Hoash, representing hope and possibility. Although the track never made it to the game, It was intended to play during a scene where the characters experienced a near-perfect white replica of a past human city. With broken-down cities being the only remains of human civilization left for the player to experience, this city allowed us to hope. "What if humans are still alive? Could it be possible that they made it underground to this copied city?" The song provides a hopeful upbeat tempo, which contrasts with much of the soundtrack up to that point. Offred's life, which has been filled with nothing but suffering up to chapter 23, finally has a chance to change for the better. This was a chance she couldn't afford to let pass, allowing hope to breathe once more.

### **Scene 3: Offred sees the Photo of her daughter**

Song: [Emil/Sacrifice by SQUARE ENIX](#)

When Offred agrees to try for a baby with Nick after suspecting the Commander to be infertile, Serena Joy brings her a photo of her daughter as a way of thanks. At long

last, Offred finally caught a glimpse of another part of her from the before times; however, it was not what she expected. “I have been obliterated for her. I am only a shadow now... a shadow of a shadow, as dead mothers become. You can see it in her eyes: I am not there.” (228) Offred’s daughter, the very reason she has been enduring this unbearable life as a Handmaid no longer remembers her. She has been stripped of nearly everything important to her: Moira, her daughter, Luke, and her free will. With everything gone, life seems like nothing but a bleak trudge to the end. *Emil/Sacrifice* is a song that plays in Nier Replicant, 8,000 years before the events of Nier Automata. It is played a total of three times, with each time being crucial to the story. The character Emil sacrifices himself to stop a giant calamity, reducing himself to nothing but ash and a helmet. Soon after, the character Nier destroys the last device that could save the human race, dooming the entirety of the population to extinction. Lastly, a version of this song plays in Nier Automata, after it is revealed that Emil survived but needs to be killed due to corruption. The song's somber chorus represents a futility unlike any other in the game, immersing the player in feelings of grief and sadness. No matter what you do, it will all end up the same as humans no longer exist leaving you without a mission and thus a purpose. This song connects to Offred because she seemingly has no reason to keep on going; her losses have obliterated any chance of hope.

#### **Scene 4: Offred and Nick**

Song: [Kaine/Salvation by SQUARE ENIX](#)

As agreed upon with Serena, Offred finally meets with Nick to try for a baby after hours. We know Offred is worried about Nick replacing Luke due to both seemingly presenting a chance to be loved, something she has gone too long without. “Nick. We

look at each other. I have no rose to toss, he has no lute. But it's the same kind of hunger." (192) Offred's longing for desire can't be helped, as she and Nick continue to look at each other with such passion. Nick represents a possibility for her, something new that goes against the entirety of the oppressive force of Gilead. *Kaine/Salvation* by SQUARE ENIX embodies those feelings of hope and possibility. The song takes place in Nier Replicant and is played when the character Kaine is saved from her fate of being used as a vessel. This avoidance of fate is entirely new for the characters, as they have all been seemingly bound without any choice. Through the soft and hopeful melody of *Kaine/Salvation*, players are led to believe that hope still exists through persistence. Both Offred and Kaine highlight that hope and desire can never truly be destroyed.

### **Scene 5: Club Scene**

Song: [I like the way you kiss me](#)

Throughout *The Handmaid's Tale*, it has been made clear that the nation of Gilead does not truly hold firm to its religious beliefs. This was made ever apparent by Jezebel, an illegal nightclub created by The Commanders in which women roam around freely. "Some [Women] are in bathing suits, one-piece or bikini; I see, is wearing a crocheted affair, with big scallop shells covering the tits." (235) Gilead, a nation in which its leaders advocated for the complete and utter control and oppression of women runs a club where the very things they condemned takes place actively. In a way, it's almost laughable. Their religious identification is simply a facade they use to control the nation, something I knew but never to this degree. *I like the way you kiss me* by Artemas

reflects how surprising this experience must have been for Offred. We have had a slow and steady build-up to Offred's situation improving, and then we're dropped off in a club that completely contrasts with everything Gilead stands for. The upbeat tempo of the song and its lyrics, in line with the four Nier Automata soundtracks, puts into perspective how strange this sudden change was for me as a reader, as well as for Offred.

