

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Close Reading Organizer - Chapter 23

Directions: Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.

Themes Key

- 1 Gender Roles
- 2 Religion and Theocracy
- 3 Fertility
- 4 Rebellion
- 5 Love
- 6 Storytelling and Memory

Summary	Theme Tracker						Your Analysis
<p>Back in the present time, Offred muses about how all of her memories are “reconstructions.” If she ever manages to escape and tell her story, that too will be a reconstruction, even further separated from the original events. Offred thinks about the impossibility of remembering and telling anything perfectly. She thinks that maybe her biggest concern isn’t who has control, but who can do terrible things and still be forgiven for them. At the end of all these thoughts, Offred tells us that the Commander asked her to kiss him.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<p>Offred backs up into an explanatory flashback. Still on the day that Janine gave birth, Offred wakes from her nap when Cora brings dinner. Cora is happy about the healthy baby</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

<p>and hopeful that Offred will have one too. Offred wishes that Cora were disapproving instead.</p>							
<p>At nine pm, Offred goes to meet the Commander in his office, as Nick previously instructed her. Offred is powerfully aware of the illegality of this action, and how Serena Joy would punish her. Still, Offred knows that she now has some amount of power over the Commander.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<p>The Commander's study is filled with books. The Commander has posed himself impressively in front of the fireplace. When he says hello to Offred, she feels she might cry. The Commander is friendly and sits across from her, showing that he's not going to take physical advantage of her. The Commander finally says that he wants to play Scrabble with Offred.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<p>Offred finds this hysterical, but she keeps herself expressionless. She understands that this once innocent game is now illegal, as risky as a drug. And she knows that the Commander can't play with Serena Joy. They play two games—she wins the first, then lets him win. Offred loves the feeling of freedom and of using the letters, which she imagines as tasting delicious.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<p>At the end, the Commander thanks Offred and asks her to kiss him. Offred considers following Moira's lead and</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

<p>making a weapon out of the toilet mechanism and killing the Commander next time. Then Offred confesses that she only pictured such violence afterwards, during her reconstruction. At the time, she gives the Commander a close-mouthed kiss, and he asks for one that seems more meaningful, and looks sad. But then Offred says again that this is just a reconstruction.</p>							
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