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Close Reading Organizer - Chapter 13 **Sample Answers**

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.

Note: There is not always a definitive set of “correct” answers for which themes should appear in the Theme Tracker. Answers that differ from the ones we propose below should therefore not automatically be treated as incorrect, and in fact can serve as great discussion starters.

Themes Key

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

Summary	Theme Tracker						Your Analysis
Offred thinks about how she has too much time, and wishes she could have a hobby like knitting. She remembers nineteenth century paintings of fat women in harems, with whose boredom she now sympathizes. She, too, is waiting for a man to put her to use. She sympathetically imagines a caged pig or lab rat.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Though Offred doesn't have sympathy for the hanged men in Chapter 6, here she has imaginative sympathy for people and animals who seem much more distant.
Offred lies on a rug, practicing pelvic exercising like Aunt Lydia advised. Offred remembers the naptime in the Rachel and Leah Center, thinking that	1	2	3	4	5	6	Offred offers another possibility to explain Gilead's success, and (between the lines) her own hopeless yet accepting behavior: drugs. She never

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it was training for later boredom. She and her fellow Handmaids slept, but she didn't know if they were truly tired, shocked, or on drugs.							sees how her food is prepared, so it seems possible.
Offred remembers Moira's arrival at the Rachel and Leah Center, three weeks after her own. She and Moira tried not to be obvious about their friendship, but managed to schedule an appointment to talk in the bathroom. They plan to meet up at two thirty, during Testifying. Aunt Lydia and Aunt Helena lead the Handmaids to describe Janine's rape as her fault, and as God's will to teach her a lesson.	1	2	3	4	5	6	The Testifying scene shows where Aunt Lydia's encouragements to be sympathetic and to work together break down. Women turn against women in a dramatic scene of peer pressure and self-blaming.
Offred remembers the previous week, when Janine began crying during Testifying, and the others hated her and called her a crybaby. This week, Janine admits that it's all her fault. Offred carefully times her bathroom request, as she knows that sometimes the Handmaids are not permitted, pee on themselves, and are punished. Offred is allowed to go out. In one stall, there's a peephole through the wall to the women's bathroom, and she manages to make contact with Moira .	1	2	3	4	5	6	The punishment for a blameless, natural body function is in line with Gilead's will to blame women for their inability to have children, even when the men are the sterile ones. Though in later chapters the Commander will describe the scientific basis for Gilead, this scene shows its irrationality.

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<p>Back in the present time, Offred thinks about her body, her blood like red waves, and her failure to become pregnant. She imagines the first apartment she shared with Luke, all empty, with no suitable clothes. She remembers running through the woods with her daughter, whom she drugged to be quiet. Shots are fired behind her, so she drops and protects her daughter, momentarily fascinated by a beautiful red leaf. She loses consciousness, feeling her daughter pulling away. Cora and a bell wake her from her nightmare.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>This scene offers another possibility to explain Offred's passivity—she did try to rebel once, and she lost everything she loved. Offred's memories of her past failure to protect her daughter and stick with Luke are linked (also with the color red) to her present failure to achieve Gilead's demands. Duty to Gilead and duty to loved ones are parallel in her mind.</p>
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