[Name of the Writer]

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[Subject]

[Date]

Offred Assignment

**Introduction**

“The Handmaid’s Tale” is a dystopian novel that revolves around the story of a handmaid Offred. It was penned down by a Canadian Author, Margaret Atwood and was first published in 1985. The tale is all about the feelings and experiences of a lady who was forced to serve as a handmaid for one of the men belonging to high class. The novel is about the cruel treatment and exploitation of women by men and, even the women belonging to high class, in a patriarchal society. It explains the struggles of Offred and many like her to gain an identity, towards individualism. It includes various elements like politics, religion and even the secret services. The tale is narrated by Offred, the handmaid and the main character of the novel and has been written in the first person.

**Discussion**

Offred was a handmaid who was made to serve a high class of men, known as Commanders. She was one of those chosen women, who were assigned the duty of carrying a baby, in the times of infertility due to environmental pollution and radiation. So she was carrying on this task for Commander Fred Waterford and his wife Serena Joy.

Women, especially handmaids, were subjected to very poor treatment, at those times, even they were not even allowed to adopt their own birth names. This is the reason that “Offred” was given this name, which resembled “of Fred”, belonging to Fred. Offred was very disappointed over this treatment and expressed her views in the following words,

“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. I want to steal something.”

Once during a game of scrabble with the Commander, Offred comes to know of a phase, "Nolite te bastardes carborundorum”, which her master, explains to her is a Latin phrase that means “Don’t let the bastards grind you down”. Her thirst for knowing different things can be judged from her following words,

“Knowing was a temptation. What you don't know won't tempt you.”

Commander Fred, as he develops an informal relationship with her Handmaid, tells her about their old handmaid, who committed suicide. When Offred asked the reason, she came to know that the Commander’s wife, Serena, had come to know of her nigh activities. Offred took it as a lie and understood that the old handmaid would have given up in the hands of constant brutal treatment, thus had “let the bastards grind her down”.

In spite of all this, Offred kept fighting. She was a strong lady and knew how to keep her dignity. She wanted independence and her own identity and was constantly fighting for it. Her determination and bravery can be understood from her own words, “You can't help what you feel, but you can help how you behave”. She hated the life of a handmaid and wanted to run out of it, any moment. At one point in the story, she exclaimed. “I feel like the word shatter” but she never gave up,

**Conclusion**

In short, it can be concluded that Offred was "ground by the bastards" but not to the extent which is meant in the phrase. She was a strong lady and kept fighting for her rights and identity, but at times, she had to give up and accept the situations that were out of her control. At a whole, the phrase did not fit in her case.