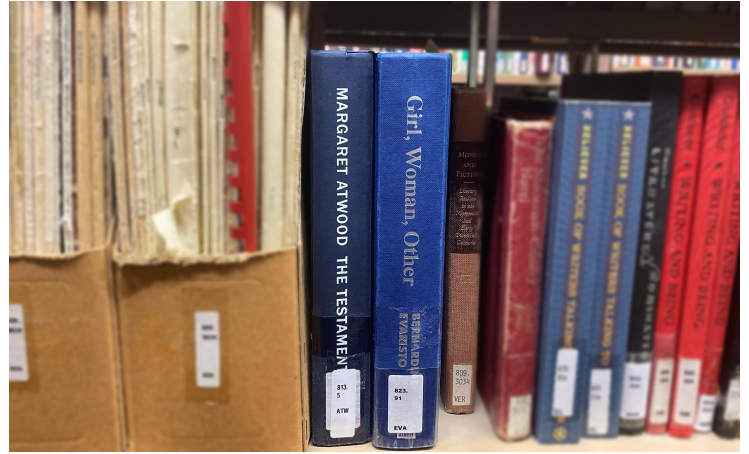


EVARISTO AND ATWOOD -



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A FUSION FANFICTION

By Leo McFaul

In 2019, Bernardine Evaristo was the first Black woman to be awarded the Booker Prize, making history with her novel [Girl, Woman, Other](#). However, controversy sparked as the judges chose to flout the rules and jointly award the prize to both Evaristo and a second author, Margaret Atwood. Critics questioned why the first Black woman to win Britain's most prestigious literary award had been forced to share the publicity and prize money associated with the award with a much more critically acclaimed writer.

This fanfiction aims to rewrite the second chapter of Atwood's dystopian sequel, [The Testaments](#), in a similar style to Evaristo's domestic fiction, *Girl, Woman, Other*. As Evaristo herself describes, the form is "patterned on the page, a bit like poetry, and there were very few full stops, but there are gaps between the lines that indicate some kind of breathing spaces. It allowed me to write each woman's story in a way that was inside their heads and outside. And also to go back into the past and forward to the present." I aim to contrast the works of the two feminist authors as they plunge the reader into unfamiliar worlds, aiming to educate and give rise to social change. Stylistic features I paid close attention to were the use of character first names at the start of sections, repetition, lack of full stops, word order, italics for emphasis and the illustration of youth, anger and rebellion.



Chapter Two

Agnes

I

Agnes
calls it a hunter's kiss -
the vision she sees in a man's eyes each time he leans away and
you can see his eyes darting and his mouth grinning
when he knows that his prey is within his net
but she is told that not all men are like that; the better kind have superior
characters
clearly, Agnes says
I have not met one like that

she hopes it'll be different when she gets married,
at least that's what the Aunts say, but Agnes believes they know nothing about it
they were not married,
they were not allowed to be,
they could have writing and books
they didn't have to be like us
I think she's talking nonsense,
personally
literal nonsense
Estée said they would choose her husband wisely for her when the time comes, in
hopes she would be less afraid
just learn your lessons and trust your elders, and everything will unfold just as it
should, Estée would say
Estée had dimples and a friendly smile
she teaches *and* she crafts, *and* she wants the girls to be happy, *and* she wants
them to be married
but she doesn't teach cats to crochet

It's Vidala's version that haunts the girls even more
the stories she tells are like bubbles made of glass, clinking and colliding
so quietly that you must pay attention to each and every one

for each lesson is so valuable, so rare
yet so true
she told Agnes about the shatterings and tearings and tramlings that leave you
scattered in pieces across the ground
but either way, the girls were glass houses that needed to be protected
but either way, the girls were punished for some reason or other
Agnes dreads the thought of growing older
but ageing is not something to be ashamed of,
but being older enough for a wedding is not easy
like every girl, she fears ending up with
a goat on fire

the Aunts forced Agnes into a plum dress,
that was the rule for special girls
ordinary girls wore the same thing all the time
they dressed just like their mothers with ugly jumpers and bobbly tights, and they
didn't even know petit-point embroidery or crochet work
just cleaning,
maybe cooking,
other such chores
they were not chosen to marry the very best men
although they might get selected if they become pretty enough when they're older
but if you're already pre-chosen
pretty doesn't matter so much
most of the girls do not believe they are pretty enough
Agnes always says

I have a doughy face, raisin eyes, and pumpkin-seed teeth. But I was chosen;
chosen to marry a Commander, chosen by my mother, Tabitha
doubly chosen!

Tabitha chimes in

I went for a walk, she said, then I came to an enchanted castle with lots of little girl
- none had mothers, but I could only rescue one little girl, so I looked and looked,
and out of them all, I chose you!

how did you unlock the castle?

with my magic ring

did the other mothers have magic rings?

yes, you need a magic ring
to be a mother

where is the magic ring now?

here, on my finger, but it is
not magic anymore

did you have to lift me
up and carry me out of the forest?

no, we crept out of the forest
together so the witches
wouldn't hear us

it sounded far too dangerous for a girl like Agnes to have done,
but she justified it
she could have hidden somewhere
happy and lucky, she repeats to herself - maybe it was true
maybe I am lucky like I am always told
lucky to be here, in this beautiful,
beautiful house
yes, of course, I am! happy and lucky.
maybe it was true.