**Happy Ending Study Notes**

Author: Margret Atwood

Date: 1983

Theme: One of Atwood's aims in "Happy Endings" is to show the uncertainty and potential tragedy hovering around that treasured peaceful ending. The imaginary, yet worshipped, rigidity of the structure is often its downfall. Focuses on the unrealistic situation that she creates, which draws on an understanding that humans still hope for a simple ‘‘happy ending,’’ even thought that might be unrealistic, and society continually reinforces this fanatical idea. Atwood wants the writers and reading of these stories to focus more on the “how” and “why” rather than the just the beginning and end.

Characters: John, Mary, Madge, Fred

Story has five stories in it, with the four central characters present in every story, sometimes not all at once however.

Style: Written in third person, up until the end where it suddenly changes to second person. Written as a kind of satire. By the end it acts as a sort of metafiction.

Implications: The end of every story after Story A concludes with “as in A”, as the stories themselves might be different in content, but all the endings end up being the same as in A.

Formal elements: self-consciousness and self-reflexivity, very modernist, and acts as metafiction, directly addressing the reader at the end

Location: Does not really mention a specific place, but story E mentions living next to a shoreline