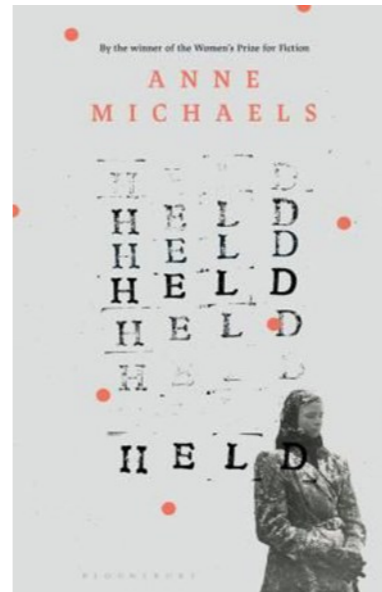
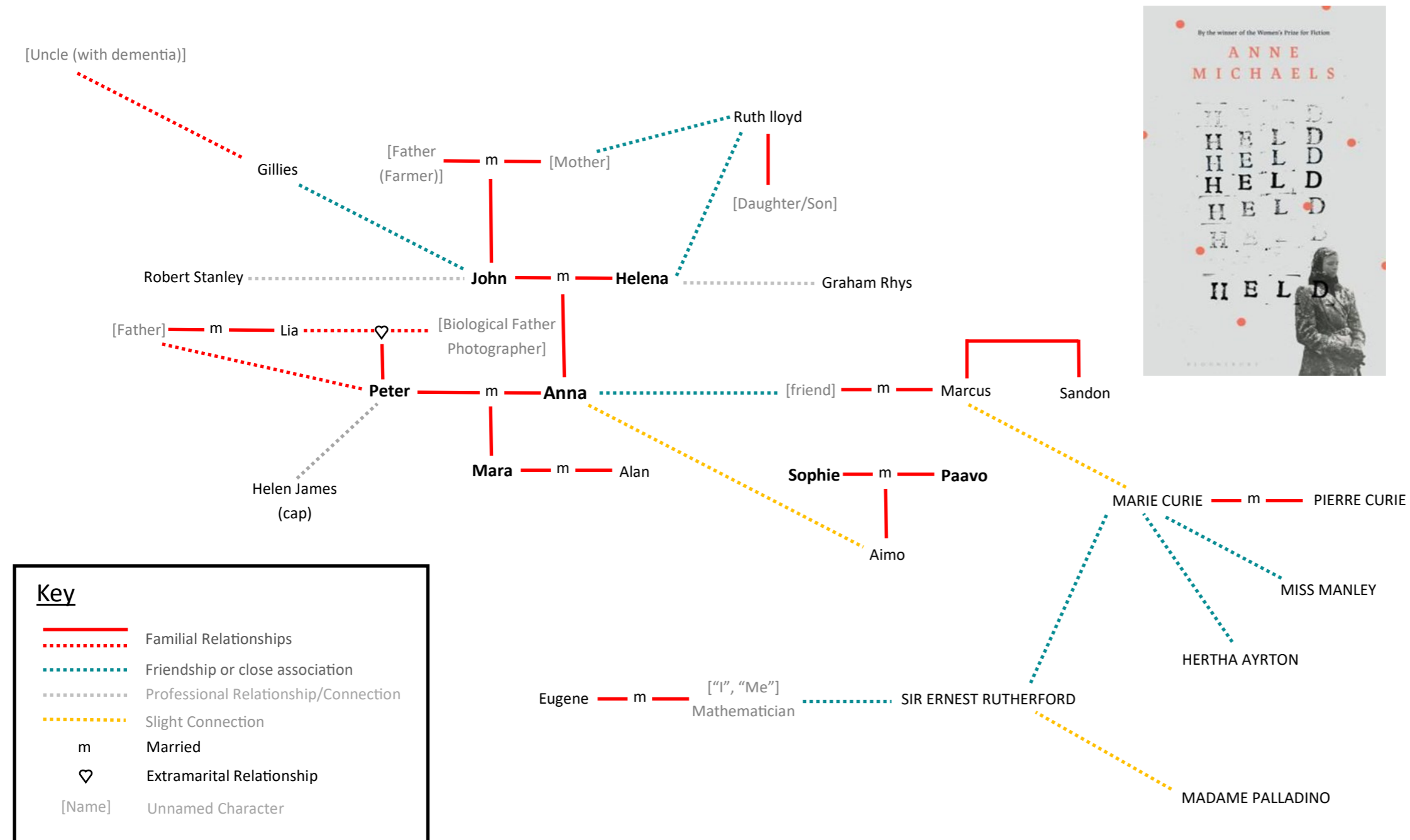


HELD—Anne Michaels

Responses to this novel have talked about the difficulty that some people have of following the characters and how they relate to each other. I have tried, as accurately as I can, to illustrate the characters and their relationships in this character map. To the right is a basic summary of each part of the book, with a list of the main characters who appear in that part.

HELD is a novel that is told non-sequentially from different points of view, including a first person narrator in part 9. The novel also blends fictional and real people. I have included any people drawn from life in CAPITAL LETTERS.

The minor difficulties created by the non-linear structure appear to be quite deliberate. Anne Michaels covers a range of issues around mystical and scientific ideas in this novel, including meditations on death, the soul and science. The final scene of the novel must be read carefully with reference to the dates and the ideas Michaels presents in the novel for it to make sense.



Summary and Character

Part 1 [1917] — John wounded on battlefield, Gillies dead, the early relationship of John and Helena

- John, Gillies, Helena, Ella Leather (nurse)

Part 2 [1920] — John’s photographic business, the miracle of the soldier’s photograph

- John, Helena, Mr Stanley Robinson, Young Soldier, Gillies, SIR ERNEST RUTHERFORD

Part 3 [1951] — Helena poses naked for artist, John Rhys

- Helena, Graham Rhys, Anna, John

Part 4 [1984] — Peter’s concerns for Mara. Mara’s developing relationship with Alan

- Peter, Mara, Alan, Peter’s father, Mia (Peter’s mother)

Part 5 [1964] — Anna returns home and family have just left

- Anna

Part 6 [1984] — Mara leaving for war zone. Sandor and Marcus comfort Peter during blackout, but then Mara returns from the airport

- Peter, Mara, Alan, Sandor, Marcus, Helen James

Part 7 [1910] — Lia is nursing her sick husband. She sees a photographer in a field. They speak of evolution, photography and the spirit. Lia desires a child and sleeps with the man. He leaves before she awakes

- Lia, Peter’s biological father, Peter’s father (Lia’s husband)

Part 8 [1980] — Paavo’s music suppressed by government. Sophia’s nightmares about losing her family

- Sofia, Paavo, Aimo

Part 9 [1908] — Narrator attends a dinner for Madame Curie and speaks about the mystic, Madama Palladino

- Eugene, First person narrator, SIR ERNEST RUTHERFORD, MARIE CURIE, PIERRE CURIE, MADAME PALLADINO

Part 10 [1912] — Marie Curie, in ill health, is taken to a pharmacist, Marcus, who treats her kindly

- HERTHA AYRTON, MARIE CURIE, MISS MANLEY, Marcus

Part 11 [2010] — Helen walks in the woods with a sense of the presence of her dead father

-Helen James

Part 12 [2025] — Aimo see Anna enter a café. He follows her. He forgets his book and she returns it

- Anna, Aimo

The designation of Ruth Lloyd’s child as ‘Daughter/Son’ is because the narrative seems contradictory. On page 47 Ruth gives birth to a daughter, while on page 73 (during the same year) Helena tells John, “I held Ruth’s son, moments after he was born”.