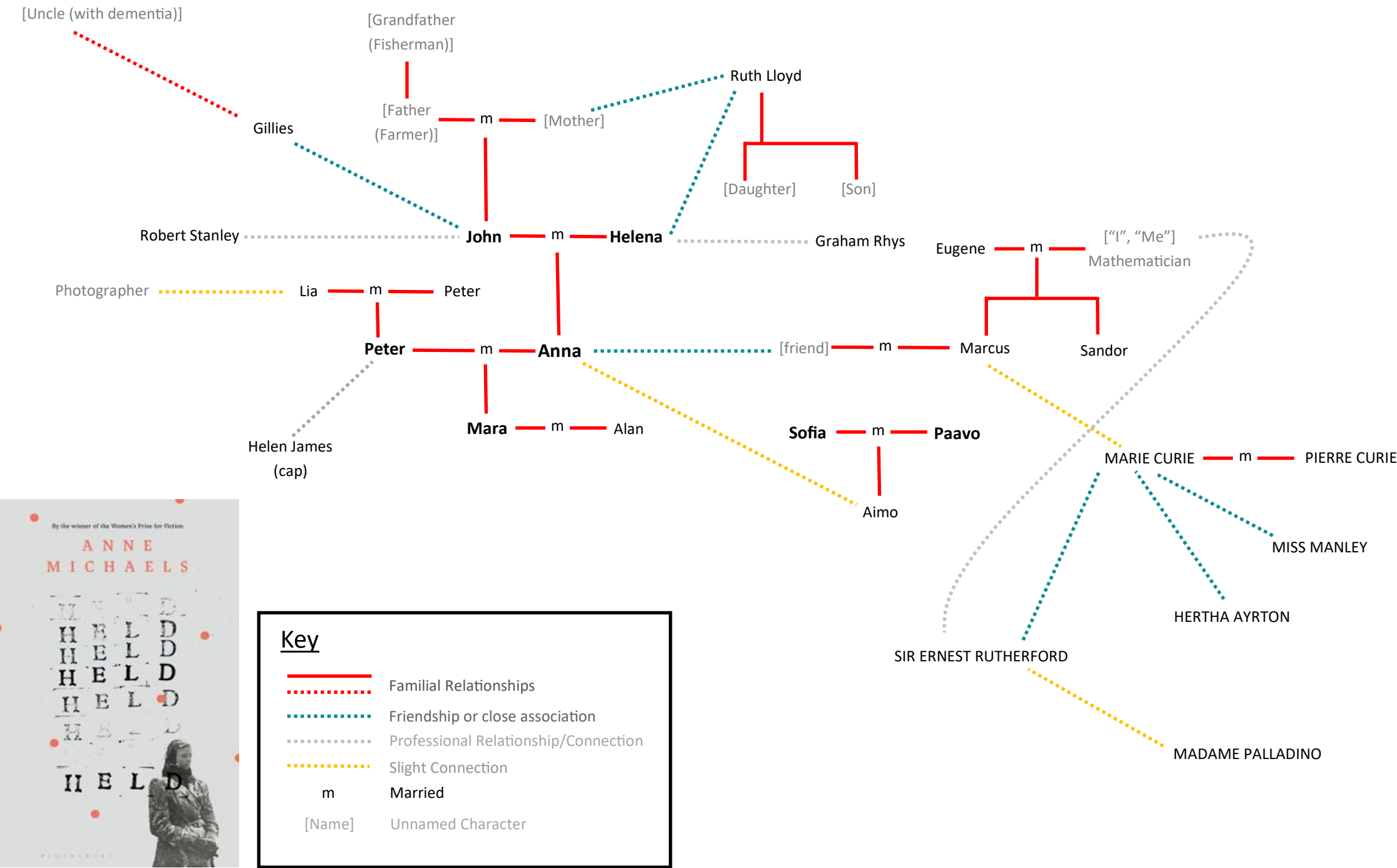


HELD—Anne Michaels

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.



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 sees a photographer in a field. They speak of evolution, photography and the spirit. They fall asleep. He leaves before she awakes

- Lia, Photographer, Peter’s father (also Peter)

Part 8 [1980] — Paavo’s music suppressed by government. Sofia’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 sees Anna enter a café. He follows her. He forgets his book and she returns it

- Anna, Aimo