

Chapter 1 : War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength

It was a bright **cold day in April**, and the clocks were strik-ing thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from enter-ing along with him. The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enor-mous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and rugged-ly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was sel-dom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**, the caption beneath it ran. Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of fig-

1984ures which **had something to do with the production of pig-iron**. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguish-able. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off complete-ly. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagreness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the win-ter that had just ended. Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The blackmoustachioâ€™s face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winstonâ€™s own. Down at street level an-other poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word **IN-GSOC**. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the po-lice patrol, snooping into peopleâ€™s windows. The patrols did

Free eBooks at Planet eBook.comnot matter, however. **Only the Thought Police mattered**. Behind Winstonâ€™s back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the overfulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vi-sion which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to liveâ€™’did live, from habit that became instinctâ€™’in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized. Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer, though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealing. A kilometre away the **Ministry of Truth**, his place of work, towered vast and white above the grimy landscape. This, he thought with a sort of vague distasteâ€™’this was London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania. He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this. Were there always these vis-tas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with baulks of timber, their windows patched with card-board and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy

1984 garden walls sagging in all directions? And the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air and the wil-low-herb straggled over the heaps of rubble; and the places where the bombs had cleared a larger patch and there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooden dwellings like chick-en-houses? But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible. The Ministry of Truthâ€™Minitrue, in Newspeak [New-speak was the official language of **Oceania**. For an account of its structure and etymology see Appendix.]â€™was star-tlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white con-crete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, 300 metres into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party: **WAR IS PEACE FREEDOM IS SLAVERY IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH** The Ministry of Truth contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications below. Scattered about London there were just three other buildings of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architec-ture that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see

Free eBooks at Planet eBook.comall four of them simultaneously. They were the homes of the four Ministries between which the entire apparatus of government was divided. **The Ministry of Truth**, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. **The Ministry of Love**, which maintained law and order. And the **Ministry of Plenty**, which was responsible for economic affairs. Their names, in Newspeak: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, and Miniplenty. The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all. Winston had never been inside the Ministry of Love, nor within half a kilometre of it. It was a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors, and hidden machine-gun nests. Even the streets leading up to its outer barriers were roamed by gorilla-faced guards in black uniforms, armed with jointed truncheons. Winston turned round abruptly. He had set his features into the expression of quiet optimism which it was advis-able to wear when facing the telescreen. He crossed the room into the tiny kitchen. By leaving the Ministry at this time of day he had sacrificed his lunch in the canteen, and he was aware that there was no food in the kitchen except a hunk of dark-coloured bread which had got to be saved for tomorrowâ€™s breakfast. He took down from the shelf a bottle of colourless liquid with a plain white label marked **VICTORY GIN**. It gave off a sickly, oily smell, as of Chinese rice-spirit. **Winston poured out nearly a teacupful, nerved**

1984 himself for a shock, and gulped it down like a dose of medi-cine. Instantly his face turned scarlet and the water ran out of his eyes. The stuff was like nitric acid, and moreover, in swallowing it one had the sensation of being hit on the back of the head with a rubber club. The next moment, however, the burning in his belly died down and the world began to look more cheerful. He took a cigarette from a crumpled packet marked **VICTORY CIGARETTES** and incautiously held it upright, whereupon the tobacco fell out on to the floor. With the next he was more successful. He went back to the living-room and sat down at a small table that stood to the left of the telescreen. From the table drawer he took out a penholder, a bottle of ink, and a thick, quarto-sized blank book with a red back and a marbled cover. For some reason the telescreen in the living-room was in an unusual position. Instead of being placed, as was normal, in the end wall, where it could command the whole room, it was in the longer wall, opposite the window. To one side of it there was a shallow alcove in which Winston was now sitting, and which, when the flats were built, had probably been intended to hold bookshelves. By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen, so far as sight went. He could be heard, of course, but so long as he stayed in his present position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual ge-ography of the room that had suggested to him the thing that he was now about to do. But it had also been suggested by the book that he had

9Free eBooks at Planet eBook.comjust taken out of the drawer. It was a peculiarly beautiful book. Its smooth creamy paper, a little yellowed by age, was of a kind that had not been manufactured for at least

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for-ty years past. He could guess, however, that the book was much older than that. He had seen it lying in the window of a frowsy little junk-shop in a slummy quarter of the town (just what quarter he did not now remember) and had been stricken immediately by an overwhelming desire to possess it. Party members were supposed not to go into ordinary shops (â€™dealing on the free marketâ€™, it was called), but the rule was not strictly kept, because there were various things, such as shoelaces and razor blades, which it was impossible to get hold of in any other way. He had given a quick glance up and down the street and then had slipped inside and bought the book for two dollars fifty. At the time he was not conscious of wanting it for any particular purpose. He had carried it guiltily home in his briefcase. Even with nothing written in it, it was a compromising possession. The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by **twenty-five years** in a forced-labour camp. **Winston fitted a nib into the penholder and sucked it to get the grease off.** The pen was an archaic instrument, seldom used even for signatures, and he had procured one, furtively and with some difficulty, simply because of a feeling that the beautiful creamy paper deserved to be written on with a real nib instead of being scratched with an ink-pencil. Actually he was not used to

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Chapter 2 : Thoughtcrime

1984 phrase generally usedâ€”had overheard some compromising remark and denounced its parents to the **Thought Police**. The sting of the catapult bullet had worn off. He picked up his pen half-heartedly, wondering whether he could find something more to write in the diary. Suddenly he began thinking of Oâ€™Brien again. Years agoâ€”how long was it? Seven years it must beâ€”he had dreamed that he was walking through a pitch-dark room. And someone sitting to one side of him had said as he passed: **â€”We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness.**â€”It was said very quietly, almost casuallyâ€”a statement, not a command. He had walked on without pausing. What was curious was that at the time, in the dream, the words had not made much impression on him. **It was only later and by degrees that they had seemed to take on significance.** He could not now remember whether it was before or after having the dream that he had seen Oâ€™Brien for the first time, nor could he remember when he had first identified the voice as Oâ€™Brienâ€™s. But at any rate the identification existed. It was Oâ€™Brien who had spoken to him out of the **dark**. Winston had never been able to feel sureâ€”even after this morningâ€™s flash of the eyes it was still impossible to be sure whether Oâ€™Brien was a friend or an enemy. Nor did it even seem to matter greatly. There was a link of understanding between them, more important than affection or partisanship. **â€”We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness,**â€” he had said. Winston did not know what it meant, only that in some way or another it would come true.

Free eBooks at Planet eBook.comThe voice from the telescreen paused. A trumpet call, clear and beautiful, floated into the stagnant air. The voice continued raspingly:â€”Attention! Your attention, please! A **newsflash** has this moment arrived from the Malabar front. Our forces in South India have won a glorious victory. I am authorized to say that the action we are now reporting may well bring the war within measurable distance of its end. Here is the newsflashâ€”â€”Bad news coming, thought Winston. And sure enough, following on a gory description of the annihilation of a Eurasian army, with stupendous figures of killed and prisoners, came the announcement that, as from next week, the chocolate ration would be reduced from thirty grammes to twenty. **Winston belched again.** The gin was wearing off, leaving a deflated feeling. The telescreenâ€”perhaps to celebrate the victory, perhaps to drown the memory of the lost chocolateâ€”crashed into â€”Oceania, â€”tis for theeâ€”. You were supposed to stand to attention. However, in his present position he was invisible.â€”Oceania, â€”tis for theeâ€” gave way to lighter music. Winston walked over to the window, keeping his back to the telescreen. The day was still cold and clear. Somewhere far away a rocket bomb exploded with a dull, reverberating roar. About twenty or thirty of them a week were falling on London at present.

1984 4Down in the street the wind flapped the torn poster to and fro, and the word INGSOC fitfully appeared and vanished. Ingsoc. The sacred principles of Ingsoc. Newspeak, doublethink, the mutability of the past. He felt as though he were wandering in the forests of the sea bottom, lost in a monstrous world where he himself was the monster. He was alone. The past was dead, the future was unimaginable. What certainty had he that a single human creature now living was on his side? And what way of knowing that the dominion of the Party would not endure FOR EVER? Like an answer, the three slogans on the white face of the Ministry of Truth came back to him: **WAR IS PEACE FREEDOM IS SLAVERY IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH**He took a **twenty-five cent piece out of his pocket**. There, too, in tiny clear lettering, the same slogans were inscribed, and on the other face of the coin the head of Big Brother. Even from the coin the eyes pursued you. On coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters, and on the wrappings of a cigarette packetâ€”everywhere. Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bedâ€”no escape. Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull. The sun had shifted round, and the myriad windows of the Ministry of Truth, with the light no longer shining on

Free eBooks at Planet eBook.comthem, looked grim as the loopholes of a fortress. His heart quailed before the enormous pyramidal shape. It was too strong, it could not be stormed. A thousand rocket bombs would not batter it down. He wondered again for whom he was writing the diary. For the future, for the

pastâ€”for an age that might be imaginary. And in front of him there lay not death but annihilation. The diary would be reduced to ashes and himself to vapour. Only the Thought Police would read what he had written, before they wiped it out of existence and out of memory. How could you make appeal to the future when not a trace of you, not even an anony-mous word scribbled on a piece of paper, could physically survive?The telescreen struck fourteen. He must leave in ten min-utes. He had to be back at work by fourteen-thirty. Curiously, the chiming of the hour seemed to have put new heart into him. He was a lonely ghost uttering a truth that nobody would ever hear. But so long as he uttered it, in some obscure way the continuity was not broken. It was not by making yourself heard but by staying sane that you carried on the human heritage. He went back to the table, dipped his pen, and wrote: To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live aloneâ€”to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone: From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of doublethinkâ€”greetings!

1984 He was already dead, he reflected. It seemed to him that it was only now, when he had begun to be able to formulate his thoughts, that he had taken the decisive step. The consequences of every act are included in the act itself. **He wrote: Thoughtcrime does not entail death: thoughtcrime IS death. Now he had recognized himself as a dead man it became important to stay alive as long as possible.** Two fingers of his right hand were inkstained. It was exactly the kind of detail that might betray you. **Some nosing zealot in the Ministry** (a woman, probably: someone like the little sandy-haired woman or the dark-haired girl from the **Fiction Depart-ment**) might start wondering why he had been writing during the lunch interval, why he had used an old-fash-ioned pen, WHAT he had been writingâ€”and then drop a hint in the appropriate quarter. He went to the bathroom and carefully scrubbed the ink away with the gritty dark-brown soap which rasped your skin like sandpaper and was therefore well adapted for this purpose. He put the diary away in the drawer. It was quite useless to think of hiding it, but he could at least make sure whether or not its existence had been discovered. A hair laid across the page-ends was too obvious. With the tip of his finger he picked up an identifiable grain of whitish dust and depos-ited it on the corner of the cover, where it was bound to be shaken off if the book was moved.

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