

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 blackmoustachi oâ€™™d 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 another 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*. Behi

nd
 *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. Win
 ston 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-cent
 ury 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. T
 he Ministry of
 Truthâ€™Minitr
 ue, in
 Newspeak
 [New-speak
 was the official
 language of
 Oceania. For
 an account of
 its structure
 and etymology
 see
 Appendix.]â€™
 was star-tingly
 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 advisable 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 tomorrow'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 himself for a shock, and gulped it down like a dose of medicine*. 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 geography 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 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

(end of excerpt)

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 state-ment, 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 partisan-ship. 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.com The 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 pris-oners, 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€™TM. You were supposed to stand to attention. However, in his present position he was invisible.â€”Oceania, â€”tis for theeâ€™TM 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 packet—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 bed—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.com, 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 past—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 anonymous word scribbled on a piece of paper, could physically survive? The telescreen struck fourteen. He must leave in ten minutes. 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 alone—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 doublethink—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.

(end of excerpt)