

1984 SparkNotes Summary Book 3

Summary: Chapter I

Winston sits in a bright, bare cell in which the lights are always on—he has at last arrived at the place where there is no darkness. Four telescreens monitor him. He has been transferred here from a holding cell in which a huge prole woman who shares the last name Smith wonders if she is Winston's mother. In his solitary cell, Winston envisions his captors beating him, and worries that sheer physical pain will force him to betray Julia.

Ampleforth, a poet whose crime was leaving the word "God" in a Rudyard Kipling translation, is tossed into the cell. He is soon dragged away to the dreaded Room 101, a place of mysterious and unspeakable horror. Winston shares his cell with a variety of fellow prisoners, including his flatulent neighbor Parsons, who was turned in by his own children for committing thoughtcrime.

Seeing starvation, beating, and mangling, Winston hopes dearly that the Brotherhood will send him a razorblade with which he might commit suicide. His dreams of the Brotherhood are wrecked when O'Brien, his hoped-for link to the rebellion, enters his cell. Winston cries out, "They've got you too!" To which O'Brien replies, "They got me long ago," and identifies himself as an operative of the Ministry of Love. O'Brien asserts that Winston has known O'Brien was an operative all along, and Winston admits that this is true. A guard smashes Winston's elbow, and Winston thinks that no one can become a hero in the face of physical pain because it is too much to endure.

Summary: Chapter II

O'Brien oversees Winston's prolonged torture sessions. O'Brien tells Winston that his crime was refusing to accept the Party's control of history and his memory. As O'Brien increases the pain, Winston agrees to accept that O'Brien is holding up five fingers, though he knows that O'Brien is actually holding up only four—he agrees that anything O'Brien wants him to believe is true. He begins to love O'Brien, because O'Brien stops the pain; he even convinces himself that O'Brien isn't the source of the pain. O'Brien tells Winston that Winston's current outlook is insane, but that torture will cure him.

Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.

(See [Important Quotations Explained](#))

O'Brien tells Winston that the Party has perfected the system practiced by the Inquisition, the Nazis, and the Soviets—it has learned how to eliminate its enemies without making martyrs of them. It converts them, and then ensures that, in the eyes of the people, they cease to exist. Slowly, Winston begins to accept O'Brien's version of events. He begins to understand how to practice doublethink, refusing to believe memories he knows are real. O'Brien offers to answer his questions, and Winston asks about Julia. O'Brien tells him that Julia betrayed him immediately. Winston asks if Big Brother exists in the same way that he himself does, and O'Brien replies that Winston does not exist. Winston asks about the Brotherhood, and O'Brien responds that Winston will never know the answer to that question. Winston asks what waits in Room 101, and O'Brien states that everyone knows what waits in Room 101.

Summary: Chapter III

After weeks of interrogation and torture, O'Brien tells Winston about the Party's motives. Winston speculates that the Party rules the proles for their own good. O'Brien tortures him for this answer, saying that the Party's only goal is absolute, endless, and limitless power. Winston argues that the Party cannot alter the stars or the universe; O'Brien answers that it could if it needed to because the only reality that matters is in the human mind, which the Party controls.

O'Brien forces Winston to look in a mirror; he has completely deteriorated and looks gray and skeletal. Winston begins to weep and blames O'Brien for his condition. O'Brien replies that Winston knew what would happen the moment he began his diary. O'Brien acknowledges that Winston has held out by not betraying Julia, and Winston feels overwhelmed with love and gratitude toward O'Brien for recognizing his strength. However, O'Brien tells Winston not to worry, as he will soon be cured. O'Brien then notes that it doesn't matter, since, in the end, everyone is shot anyhow.

Summary: Chapter IV

After some time, Winston is transferred to a more comfortable room and the torture eases. He dreams contently of Julia, his mother, and O'Brien in the Golden Country. He gains weight and is allowed to write on a small slate. He comes to the conclusion that he was foolish to oppose the Party alone, and tries to make himself believe in Party slogans. He writes on his slate "FREEDOM IS SLAVERY," "TWO AND TWO MAKE FIVE," and "GOD IS POWER."

One day, in a sudden, passionate fit of misery, Winston screams out Julia's name many times, terrifying himself. Though he knows that crying out in this way will lead O'Brien to torture him, he realizes his deep desire to continue hating the Party. He tries to bottle up his hatred so that even he will not recognize it. Therefore, when the Party kills him, he will die hating Big Brother—a personal victory. But he cannot hide his feelings. When O'Brien arrives with the guards, Winston tells him that he hates Big Brother. O'Brien replies that obeying Big Brother is not sufficient—Winston must learn to love him. O'Brien then instructs the guards to take Winston to Room 101.

Summary: Chapter V

In Room 101, O'Brien straps Winston to a chair, then clamps Winston's head so that he cannot move. He tells Winston that Room 101 contains "the worst thing in the world." He reminds Winston of his worst nightmare—the dream of being in a dark place with something terrible on the other side of the wall—and informs him that rats are on the other side of the wall. O'Brien picks up a cage full of enormous, squirming rats and places it near Winston. He says that when he presses a lever, the door will slide up and the rats will leap onto Winston's face and eat it. With the writhing, starving rats just inches away, Winston cracks. He screams that he wants O'Brien to subject Julia to this torture instead of him. O'Brien, satisfied by this betrayal, removes the cage.

Summary: Chapter VI

Winston, now free, sits at the Chestnut Tree Café, where dismissed Party members go to drink. He enjoys a glass of Victory Gin and watches the telescreen. He accepts everything the Party says and does. Without acknowledging it to himself, he can still smell the rats. On the table, Winston traces "2 + 2 = 5" in the dust. He remembers seeing Julia on a bitter-cold day that March. She had thickened and stiffened, and he now found the thought of sex with her repulsive. They acknowledged that they had betrayed one another, and agreed to meet again, though neither is truly interested in

continuing their relationship. Winston thinks he hears the song lyrics “Under the spreading chestnut tree / I sold you and you sold me,” which he heard when he saw the political prisoners there many years earlier. He begins to cry. He remembers a moment of happiness with his mother and sister, but thinks it must be a false memory. He looks up and sees a picture of Big Brother on the telescreen, making him feel happy and safe. As he listens to the war news, he reassures himself of both the great victory he has won over himself and his newfound love for Big Brother.

And perhaps you might pretend, afterwards, that it was only a trick and that you just said it to make them stop and didn't really mean it. But that isn't true.