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George Orwell's classic novel 1984 edited and censored in such a way that everything negative; all the dystopia, all the social critique, harsh or gloomy weather, bad smells etc. has been cut out. Due to the nature of the original book, what remains is a series of descriptions of environments and a romance. In George Orwell's novel a totalitarian state is controlling every instant of the life of its citizens, to the extent of effecting thought patterns and language, ensuring that it is not even possible to think negative thoughts. In "1984, Updated" the original text has been put through a similar treatment.

GEORGE ORWELL & CONNY BLOM

1984 UPDATED



PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

It was a bright day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith slipped quickly through the glass doors.

Winston made for the stairs. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston was thirty-nine.

Inside the flat Winston moved over to the window. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine.

Outside the sun was shining.

This, he thought – this was London.

The Ministry was different from any other object in sight. It was a pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans:

PEACE

FREEDOM

STRENGTH

Winston turned round. He crossed the room into the kitchen. There was food in the kitchen. He took down from the shelf a bottle of gin. He took a cigarette from a packet and went back to the living-room and sat down at a small table. 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.

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 forty years past. He could guess, however, that the book was

much older than that. He had seen it lying in the window of a little shop and had been stricken immediately by an overwhelming desire to possess it. He had 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 home in his briefcase.

Winston fitted a nib into the penholder and sucked it to get the grease off. He dipped the pen into the ink and in small letters he wrote:

April 4th, 1984. Last night to the flicks.

Winston stopped writing. A totally different memory had clarified itself in his mind, to the point where he almost felt equal to writing it down. It was, he now realized, because of this other incident that he had suddenly decided to come home and begin the diary today.

It had happened that morning at the Ministry.

It was nearly eleven. In the Records Department, where Winston worked, two people whom he knew by sight, but had never spoken to, came unexpectedly into the room. One of them was a girl whom he often passed in the corridors. He did not know her name, but he knew that she worked in the department. Presumably – since he had sometimes seen her with oily hands and carrying a spanner – she had some mechanical job. She was a bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven, with thick hair, a freckled face, and swift, athletic movements. A narrow scarlet sash, was wound several times round the waist of her overalls, just tightly enough to bring out the shapeliness of her hips. Winston had liked her from the very first moment of seeing her. He knew the reason. It was because of the atmosphere of hockey-fields and baths and hikes and general clean-mindedness which she managed to carry about with her. He liked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones. But this particular girl gave him the impression of being more than most. Once when they passed in the corridor she gave him a quick sidelong glance.

The dark-haired girl was young and pretty. He wanted to go to bed with her. Her sweet supple waist seemed to ask you to encircle it with your arm.

He sat back in his chair and laid down the pen. There was a knocking at the door.

He got up and moved towards the door.

CHAPTER 2

As he put his hand to the door-knob Winston saw that he had left the diary open on the table. He had not wanted to smudge the creamy paper by shutting the book while the ink was wet.

He drew in his breath and opened the door. A woman was standing outside.

'Oh,' she began, 'I thought I heard you come in. Do you think you could come across and have a look at our kitchen sink?'

It was Mrs Parsons, the wife of a neighbour on the same floor. She was a woman of about thirty. Winston followed her down the passage.

'Of course it's only because Tom isn't home,' said Mrs Parsons.

The Parsons' flat was bigger than Winston's. Games impedimenta – hockey-sticks, boxing-gloves, a football, a pair of shorts turned inside out – lay all over the floor.

'It's the children,' said Mrs Parsons, casting a half-apprehensive glance at the door. 'They haven't been out today.'

Winston knelt down and examined the angle-joint of the pipe. Mrs Parsons looked on.

'Of course if Tom was home he'd put it right in a moment,' she said. 'He loves anything like that. He's ever so good with his hands, Tom is.'

Parsons was Winston's fellow-employee at the Ministry. He was an active man, a mass of enthusiasms – he was a leading figure on the Sports Committee and all the other committees engaged in organizing community hikes, and voluntary activities generally. He would inform you with quiet pride that he had put in an appearance at the Community Centre every evening for the past four years.

'Have you got a spanner?' said Winston, fiddling with the nut on the angle-joint.

'A spanner,' said Mrs Parsons. 'I'm sure.'

Mrs Parsons brought the spanner. Winston let out the water and removed the clot that had blocked up the pipe. He cleaned his fingers in the water from the tap and went back into the other room.

A handsome boy of nine had popped up from behind the table.

He took his leave of Mrs Parsons and made for the door.

Back in the flat he sat down at the table again.

He picked up his pen, wondering whether he could find something more to write in the diary.

Winston walked over to the window. The day was still clear.

The sun had shifted round.

Curiously, the chiming of the hour seemed to put new heart into him. Two fingers of his right hand were inkstained. He went to the bathroom and carefully scrubbed the ink away with the brown soap which was well adapted for this purpose.

He put the diary away in the drawer.

CHAPTER 3

Winston was dreaming of his mother.

She was a tall, statuesque, rather silent woman with slow movements and magnificent fair hair. His father he remembered more vaguely as dark and thin, dressed always in neat dark clothes and wearing spectacles.

At this moment his mother was sitting with his young sister in her arms.

It was one of those dreams which, while retaining the characteristic dream scenery, are a continuation of one's intellectual life, and in which one becomes aware of facts and ideas which still seem new and

valuable after one is awake. The thing that now suddenly struck Winston was that he belonged to a time when there was privacy, love, and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason. All this he seemed to see in the large eyes of his mother and his sister, looking at him.

Suddenly he was standing on short springy turf, on a summer evening when the slanting rays of the sun gilded the ground. The landscape that he was looking at recurred so often in his dreams that he was never fully certain whether or not he had seen it in the real world. In his waking thoughts he called it the Golden Country. It was an old pasture, with a foot-track wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the hedge on the opposite side of the field the boughs of the elm trees were swaying very faintly in the breeze, their leaves just stirring in dense masses like women's hair. Somewhere near at hand, though out of sight, there was a clear, slow-moving stream where dace were swimming in the pools under the willow trees.

The girl with dark hair was coming towards him across the field. With what seemed a single movement she tore off her clothes and flung them aside. Her body was white and smooth, it aroused desire in him. What overwhelmed him in that instant was admiration for the gesture with which she had thrown her clothes aside. With its grace and carelessness it seemed to be a gesture belonging to the ancient time. Winston woke up with the word 'Shakespeare' on his lips.

It was seven fifteen, getting-up time. Winston wrenched his body out of bed – naked, and seized a singlet and a pair of shorts that were lying across a chair.

CHAPTER 4

When his day's work started, Winston put on his spectacles. Then he unrolled and clipped together four small cylinders of paper which

had already flopped out of the pneumatic tube on the right-hand side of his desk.

Winston examined the four slips of paper which he had unrolled. Each contained a message of only one or two lines.

With a feeling of satisfaction Winston laid the fourth message aside. It was an intricate and responsible job and had better be dealt with last. The other three were routine matters.

Winston glanced across the hall. In the corresponding cubicle on the other side a small, precise-looking, dark-chinned man named Tillotson was working steadily away, with a folded newspaper on his knee. He looked up in Winston's direction.

Three messages had slid out of the pneumatic tube while Winston was working, but they were simple matters, and he had disposed of them before he settled down to his main job of the morning.

Winston's greatest pleasure in life was in his work. Most of it was routine, but included in it there were also jobs so intricate that you could lose yourself in them as in the depths of a mathematical problem. Winston was good at this kind of thing. On occasion he had even been entrusted with the leading articles. He unrolled the message that he had set aside earlier.

Winston read through the article.

Winston stroked his nose gently with a paper-clip. He wondered whether Tillotson was engaged on the same job as himself.

Winston thought for a moment and began dictating.

Something seemed to tell him with certainty that Tillotson was busy on the same job as himself.

CHAPTER 5

In the canteen, the lunch queue jerked forward. From the grille at the counter the steam of stew came pouring forth.

'Just the man I was looking for,' said a voice at Winston's back.

He turned round. It was his friend Syme. Syme was a philologist. Indeed, he was one of the enormous team of experts now engaged in compiling the Eleventh Edition of the Dictionary. He was a tiny creature, smaller than Winston, with dark hair and large, eyes, which seemed to search your face closely while he was speaking to you.

The queue gave another jerk forward. As they halted he turned and faced Syme again. Each of them took a tray from a pile at the end of the counter.

Winston and Syme pushed their trays beneath the grille. On to each was dumped swiftly a pannikin of stew, a hunk of bread, a cube of cheese, a mug of Coffee, and one saccharine tablet.

'There's a table over there,' said Syme.

They threaded their way across the crowded room and unpacked their trays on to the table. Winston suddenly discovered that he was hungry. He began swallowing spoonfuls of the stew, which had cubes of meat. Neither of them spoke again till they had emptied their pannikins. From the table at Winston's left, a little behind his back, someone was talking rapidly and continuously.

'How is the Dictionary getting on?' said Winston.

'Slowly,' said Syme. 'I'm on the adjectives. It's fascinating.'

He had brightened up immediately. He pushed his pannikin aside, took up his hunk of bread in one delicate hand and his cheese in the other, and leaned across the table.

He bit hungrily into his bread and swallowed a couple of mouthfuls, then continued speaking, with a sort of pedant's passion. His face had become animated, his eyes had grown almost dreamy.

'It's a beautiful thing.'

Winston did know that, of course. He smiled sympathetically. Syme bit off another fragment of the dark bread.

Winston had finished his bread and cheese. He turned a little sideways in his chair to drink his mug of coffee. At the table on his left the man with the strident voice was still talking remorselessly away. A young woman who was perhaps his secretary, and who was sitting

with her back to Winston, was listening to him and seemed to be eagerly agreeing with everything that he said. From time to time Winston caught some such remark as 'I think you're so right, I do so agree with you', uttered in a youthful and feminine voice. Winston knew the man by sight, he held some important post in the Department. He was a man of about thirty, with a muscular throat and a large, mobile mouth. His head was thrown back a little, and because of the angle at which he was sitting, his spectacles caught the light and presented to Winston two blank discs instead of eyes.

Syme had fallen silent for a moment.

He had read many books, he frequented the Chestnut Tree Cafe, haunt of painters and musicians.

Syme looked up. 'Here comes Parsons,' he said.

Parsons, was in fact threading his way across the room – a middle-sized man with fair hair. At thirty-five his movements were brisk and boyish. It was almost impossible not to think of him as being dressed in shorts, grey shirt, and neckerchief. He greeted them both with a cheery 'Hullo, hullo!' and sat down at the table. Syme had produced a strip of paper on which there was a long column of words, and was studying it with an ink-pencil between his fingers.

'Look at him working away in the lunch hour,' said Parsons, nudging Winston. 'Keeness, eh? What's that you've got there, old boy? Something a bit too brainy for me, I expect.'

Parsons had lugged out a huge pipe which was already half full of tobacco. Winston was smoking a cigarette.

He looked round the canteen again. On the far side of the room, sitting at a table, a man was drinking a cup of coffee.

At this moment he was dragged out of his reverie. The girl at the next table had turned partly round and was looking at him. It was the girl with dark hair. She was looking at him in a sidelong way, but with curious intensity. The instant she caught his eye she looked away again.

Syme had folded up his strip of paper and stowed it away in his pocket.

CHAPTER 6

Winston was writing in his diary:

It was three years ago. It was evening, in a side-street near one of the big railway stations. She was standing near a doorway in the wall, under a street lamp. She had a young face and bright red lips. There was nobody else in the street. I —

He shut his eyes and pressed his fingers against them, trying to squeeze out the vision that kept recurring.

He thought of a man whom he had passed in the street a few weeks back; a quite ordinary-looking man, aged thirty-five to forty, tallish and thin, carrying a brief-case. They were a few metres apart when they were passing one another.

He drew his breath and went on writing:

I went with her through the doorway and across a backyard into a kitchen. There was a bed against the wall, and a lamp on the table, turned down very low. She —

He thought of Katharine.

Katharine was a tall, fair-haired girl, very straight, with splendid movements. She had a bold, aquiline face, a face that one might call noble.

He touched her.

Winston picked up his pen again and wrote:

She threw herself down on the bed, and at once, pulled up her skirt.

He was
full of lust

He pressed his fingers against his eyelids again. He had written it down at last.

CHAPTER 7

People today had more food, more clothes, better houses, better recreations – they lived longer, worked shorter hours, were bigger, healthier, stronger, happier, more intelligent, better educated, than the people of fifty years ago.

A voice was singing:

*'Under the spreading chestnut tree
you and me:
There lie they, and here lie we
Under the spreading chestnut tree.'*

He wrote:

*'Truisms are true! The solid world exists, its laws do not change.
Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall towards the
earth's centre.'*

CHAPTER 8

From somewhere at the bottom of a passage the smell of roasting coffee came floating out into the street. Winston paused.

He had walked several kilometres. The balminess of the April air had tempted him. The sky was a warmer blue than he had seen it that

year. On impulse he had turned away from the bus-stop and wandered off into the labyrinth of London, first south, then east, then north again, among unknown streets.

He was somewhere to the north and east of Saint Pancras Station. He was walking up a cobbled street of little two-storey houses. There were girls in full bloom, with lipsticked mouths, and youths who chased the girls, and children who played and their mothers. Most of the people paid no attention to Winston; a few eyed him with curiosity. Two women with arms folded across their aprons were talking outside a doorway.

He walked on.

He then turned down a side-street to the right. Within three or four minutes he was out of the area. In an angle formed by a projecting house-front three men were standing very close together, the middle one of them holding a folded-up newspaper which the other two were studying over his shoulder.

The street into which he had turned ran downhill. He had a feeling that he had been in this neighbourhood before, and that there was a main thoroughfare not far away. From somewhere ahead there came voices. The street took a sharp turn and then ended in a flight of steps which led down into an alley where a few stall-keepers were selling vegetables. At this moment Winston remembered where he was. The alley led out into the main street, and down the next turning, not five minutes away, was the shop where he had bought the blank book which was now his diary. And in a small stationer's shop not far away he had bought his penholder and his bottle of ink.

He paused for a moment at the top of the steps. On the opposite side of the alley there was a little pub whose windows appeared to be frosted over. A very old man pushed open the swing door and went in. As Winston stood watching, it occurred to him that the old man must be eighty at the least. Suddenly an impulse took hold of him. He would go into the pub, he would scrape acquaintance with that old man.

Hurriedly, he descended the steps and crossed the street. He

pushed open the door. A game of darts was going on at the other end of the room. The old man whom he had followed was standing at the bar, having some kind of large stout.

Winston caught him gently by the arm.

'May I offer you a drink?' he said.

'You're a gent,' said the other, straightening his shoulders. 'Pint!' he added to the barman. 'Pint of wallop.'

The barman swished two half-litres of dark-brown beer into thick glasses.

'You must have seen great changes since you were a young man,' said Winston tentatively.

The old man's pale blue eyes moved from the darts board to the bar, and from the bar to the door of the Gents, as though it were in the bar-room that he expected the changes to have occurred.

He took up his glass, and his shoulders straightened again. "Ere's wishing you the very best of 'ealth!"

In his lean throat the sharp-pointed Adam's apple made a surprisingly rapid up-and-down movement, and the beer vanished. Winston went to the bar and came back with two more half-litres.

'You are very much older than I am,' said Winston. 'You must have been a grown man before I was born. You can remember what it was like in the old days. Here in London people lived in great gorgeous houses with thirty servants, they rode about in motor-cars and four-horse carriages, they drank champagne, they wore top hats —'

The old man brightened suddenly.

'Top 'ats!' he said. 'Funny you should mention 'em. The same thing come into my 'ead only yesterday, I dono why. I was jest thinking, I ain't seen a top 'at in years. Gorn right out, they 'ave. The last time I wore one was — well, I couldn't give you the date, but it must'a been fifty years ago. '

The old man brightened again.

'I recollect — oh, donkey's years ago — I used to sometimes go to 'Yde Park of a Sunday afternoon to 'ear the blokes making speeches.'

The old man looked meditatively at the darts board. He finished up

his beer, more slowly than before. When he spoke it was with a tolerant philosophical air, as though the beer had mellowed him.

'There's great advantages in being a old man. You ain't got the same worries. No truck with women, and that's a great thing. I ain't 'ad a woman for near on thirty year, if you'd credit it. Nor wanted to, what's more.'

Winston sat back against the window-sill. He was about to buy some more beer when the old man suddenly got up and shuffled rapidly into the urinal at the side of the room. Winston's feet carried him out into the street again.

He halted and looked up. He was in a narrow street, with a few little shops, interspersed among dwelling-houses. Immediately above his head there hung three coloured metal balls which looked as if they had once been gilded. He seemed to know the place. Of course! He was standing outside the shop where he had bought the diary.

Although it was nearly twenty-one hours the shop was still open. He stepped through the doorway.

The proprietor had just lighted a hanging oil lamp which gave off a clean friendly smell. He was a man of perhaps sixty, with a long, benevolent nose, and mild eyes. His hair was almost white, but his eyebrows were bushy and still black. His spectacles, his gentle, fussy movements, and the fact that he was wearing a jacket of black velvet, gave him a vague air of intellectuality, as though he had been some kind of literary man, or perhaps a musician. His voice was soft. 'I recognized you on the pavement,' he said immediately. 'You're the gentleman that bought the young lady's keepsake album. That was a beautiful bit of paper, that was. Cream-laid, it used to be called.' He peered at Winston over the top of his spectacles. 'Is there anything special I can do for you? Or did you just want to look round?'

'I was passing,' said Winston vaguely. 'I just looked in. I don't want anything in particular.'

He made an apologetic gesture with his softpalmed hand.

The interior of the shop was comfortably full. All round the walls were stacked innumerable picture-frames. In the window there were

trays of nuts and bolts, chisels, penknives, watches and other odds and ends – lacquered snuffboxes, agate brooches, and the like. As Winston wandered towards the table his eye was caught by a round, smooth thing that gleamed softly in the lamplight, and he picked it up.

It was a heavy lump of glass, curved on one side, flat on the other, making almost a hemisphere. There was a peculiar softness, as of rain-water, in both the colour and the texture of the glass. At the heart of it, magnified by the curved surface, there was a strange, pink, convoluted object that recalled a rose or a sea anemone.

'What is it?' said Winston, fascinated.

'That's coral, that is,' said the old man. 'It must have come from the Indian Ocean. That wasn't made less than a hundred years ago. More, by the look of it.'

'It's a beautiful thing,' said Winston.

'It is a beautiful thing,' said the other appreciatively. 'Now, if it so happened that you wanted to buy it, that'd cost you four dollars.'

Winston immediately paid over the four dollars and slid the coveted thing into his pocket. What appealed to him about it was its beauty. The soft, rainwatery glass was not like any glass that he had ever seen. The thing was doubly attractive because of its apparent uselessness, though he could guess that it must once have been intended as a paper-weight. The old man had grown noticeably more cheerful after receiving the four dollars. Winston realized that he would have accepted three or even two.

'There's another room upstairs that you might care to take a look at,' he said. 'There's not much in it. Just a few pieces. We'll do with a light if we're going upstairs.'

He lit another lamp, and, with bowed back, led the way slowly up the steep stairs and along a passage, into a room which did not give on the street but looked out on a cobbled yard and a forest of chimney-pots. Winston noticed that the furniture was still arranged as though the room were meant to be lived in. There was a strip of carpet on the floor, a picture or two on the walls, and a deep arm-chair drawn up to the fireplace. An old-fashioned glass clock was ticking away on the

mantelpiece. Under the window, and occupying nearly a quarter of the room, was an enormous bed with the mattress still on it.

'We lived here,' said the old man half apologetically. 'I'm selling the furniture off by little and little. Now that's a beautiful mahogany bed.'

He was holding the lamp high up, so as to illuminate the whole room, and in the warm dim light the place looked curiously inviting. The thought flitted through Winston's mind that it would probably be quite easy to rent the room for a few dollars a week. The room had awakened in him a sort of nostalgia. He knew exactly what it felt like to sit in a room like this, in an arm-chair beside an open fire with your feet in the fender and a kettle on the hob; no sound except the singing of the kettle and the friendly ticking of the clock.

'Ah,' said the old man, 'Now that's a nice gate-leg table in the corner there.'

There was a small bookcase in the other corner, and Winston had already gravitated towards it. The old man, still carrying the lamp, was standing in front of a picture in a rosewood frame which hung on the other side of the fireplace, opposite the bed.

'Now, if you happen to be interested in old prints at all —' he began delicately.

Winston came across to examine the picture. It was a steel engraving of an oval building with rectangular windows. There was a railing running round the building, and at the rear end there was what appeared to be a statue. Winston gazed at it for some moments. It seemed vaguely familiar, though he did not remember the statue.

'The frame's fixed to the wall,' said the old man, 'but I could unscrew it for you, I dare say.'

'I know that building,' said Winston finally. 'It's in the middle of the street outside the —'

'That's right. Outside St Clement Danes.' He smiled apologetically, as though conscious of saying something slightly ridiculous, and added: 'Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's!'

'What's that?' said Winston.

'Oh — "Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's." That was

a rhyme we had when I was a little boy. How it goes on I don't remember, but I do know it ended up, "Here comes a candle to light you to bed." It was a kind of a dance. They held out their arms for you to pass under. It was just names of churches. All the London churches were in it – all the principal ones, that is.'

'Now, how did that rhyme go? Ah! I've got it!

*'Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's,
You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin's –'*

there, now, that's as far as I can get. A farthing, that was a small copper coin, looked something like a cent.'

Winston did not buy the picture. But he lingered for some minutes more, talking to the old man, whose name, he discovered, was not Weeks – as one might have gathered from the inscription over the shop-front – but Charrington. Mr Charrington, it seemed, was aged sixty-three and had inhabited this shop for thirty years. Throughout that time he had been intending to alter the name over the window, but had never quite got to the point of doing it. All the while that they were talking the half-remembered rhyme kept running through Winston's head. Oranges and lemons say the bells of St Clement's, You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin's! It was curious, but when you said it to yourself you had the illusion of actually hearing bells. From one steeple after another he seemed to hear them pealing forth.

He got away from Mr Charrington and went down the stairs alone. He had already made up his mind that he would visit the shop again.

Yes, he thought again, he would come back. He would buy the engraving, and carry it home. He would drag the rest of that poem out of Mr Charrington's memory. Even the project of renting the room upstairs flashed momentarily through his mind again. He stepped out on to the pavement. He had even started humming to an improvised tune-

*Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's,
You owe me three farthings, say the –*

A figure was coming down the pavement, not ten metres away. It was the girl from the department, the girl with dark hair. There was no difficulty in recognizing her. She had not seen him.

Winston turned to the right and walked away, not noticing for the moment that he was going in the wrong direction.

The street was a blind alley. Winston halted, stood for several seconds wondering vaguely what to do, then turned round and began to retrace his steps. As he turned it occurred to him that the girl had only passed him three minutes ago and that by running he could probably catch up with her. But he abandoned the idea immediately. She was young and lusty and all he wanted was to get home quickly and sit down.

It was after twenty-two when he got back to the flat. He went to the table in the alcove, sat down, and took the diary out of the drawer. But he did not open it at once. He sat staring at the marbled cover of the book.

He opened the diary. It was important to write something down.

PART TWO

CHAPTER 1

It was the middle of the morning, and Winston had left the cubicle to go to the lavatory.

A solitary figure was coming towards him from the other end of the long, brightly-lit corridor. It was the girl with dark hair. Four days had gone past since the evening when he had run into her outside the shop.

They were perhaps four metres apart when the girl stumbled and fell. Winston stopped. The girl had risen to her knees. Her mouth stood out redder than ever. Her eyes were fixed on his, with an appealing expression.

A curious emotion stirred in Winston's heart. Already he had instinctively started forward to help her. In the moment when he had seen her fall, it had been as though he felt pain in his own body.

'You're hurt?' he said.

'No, I'm all right.'

She held out her hand to him, and he helped her up.

'Thanks!'

And with that she walked on in the direction in which she had been going. The whole incident could not have taken as much as half a minute. In the two or three seconds while he was helping her up the girl had slipped something into his hand. There was no question that she had done it intentionally. It was something small and flat. It was a scrap of paper folded into a square.

Obviously there must be a message of some kind written on it.

His heart bumped in his breast.

He flattened it out. On it was written, in a large unformed handwriting:

I love you.

For several seconds he was stunned.

Immediately after lunch there arrived a delicate piece of work which would take several hours and necessitated putting everything else aside. This was the kind of thing that Winston was good at, and for more than two hours he succeeded in shutting the girl out of his mind altogether. Then the memory of her face came back, and with it a raging desire. At the sight of the words *I love you* the desire had welled up in him.

He thought of her naked, youthful body, as he had seen it in his dream.

The next day she reappeared. When he came into the canteen she was sitting at a table well out from the wall, and was quite alone. It was early, and the place was not very full. Winston secured his tray and began to make for her table. He walked casually towards her, his eyes searching for a place at some table beyond her.

Five seconds later, with a thundering heart, Winston was sitting at the girl's table.

Both Winston and the girl were eating a soup, of haricot beans. In a low murmur Winston began speaking.

'Where can we meet?'

'Can you get Sunday afternoon off?'

'Yes.'

'Then listen carefully. You'll have to remember this. Go to Paddington Station —'

With precision that astonished him, she outlined the route that he was to follow. A half-hour railway journey; turn left outside the station; two kilometres along the road; a gate with the top bar missing; a path across a field; a grass-grown lane; a track between bushes; a tree with moss on it. It was as though she had a map inside her head.

'Can you remember all that?'

'Yes.'

'You turn left, then right, then left again. And the gate's got no top bar.'

'Yes. What time?'

'About fifteen. You may have to wait. I'll get there by another way. Are you sure you remember everything?'

'Yes.'

Her hand felt for his and gave it a squeeze.

A long time their hands were clasped together. He had time to learn every detail of her hand. He explored the long fingers, the shapely nails, the palm, the smooth flesh under the wrist. Merely from feeling it he would have known it by sight.

CHAPTER 2

Winston picked his way up the lane through dappled light and shade, stepping out into pools of gold wherever the boughs parted. Under the trees to the left of him the ground was misty with bluebells. The air seemed to kiss one's skin. It was the second of May. From somewhere deeper in the heart of the wood came the droning of ring-doves.

He was a bit early. There had been no difficulties about the journey.

The lane widened, and in a minute he came to the footpath she had told him of, a mere cattle-track which plunged between the bushes. He had no watch, but it could not be fifteen yet. The bluebells were so thick underfoot that it was impossible not to tread on them. He knelt down and began picking some partly to pass the time away, but also from a vague idea that he would like to have a bunch of flowers to offer to the girl when they met. He had got together a big bunch and was smelling their faint scent. He went on picking bluebells. It was the best thing to do. He picked another and another. A hand fell lightly on his shoulder.

He looked up. It was the girl. She parted the bushes and quickly led

the way along the narrow track into the wood. Obviously she had been that way before. Winston followed, still clasping his bunch of flowers. He watched the strong slender body moving in front of him, with the scarlet sash that was just tight enough to bring out the curve of her hips. The sweetness of the air and the greenness of the leaves daunted him. They came to the fallen tree that she had spoken of. The girl hopped over and forced apart the bushes, in which there did not seem to be an opening. When Winston followed her, he found that they were in a natural clearing, a tiny grassy knoll surrounded by tall saplings that shut it in completely. The girl stopped and turned.

'Here we are,' she said.

He was facing her at several paces' distance. As yet he did not dare move nearer to her.

'Look at the trees.' They were small ashes, which at some time had been cut down and had sprouted up again into a forest of poles, none of them thicker than one's wrist. 'I've been here before.'

They were only making conversation. He had managed to move closer to her now. She stood before him very upright, with a smile on her face that looked as though she were wondering why he was so slow to act. The bluebells had cascaded on to the ground. They seemed to have fallen of their own accord. He took her hand.

'Would you believe,' he said, 'that till this moment I didn't know what colour your eyes were?'

The next moment, it was hard to say by whose act, she was in his arms. At the beginning he had no feeling except sheer incredulity. The youthful body was strained against his own, the mass of dark hair was against his face, and yes! actually she had turned her face up and he was kissing the wide red mouth. She had clasped her arms about his neck, she was calling him darling, precious one, loved one. He had pulled her down on to the ground, she was utterly unresisting, he could do what he liked with her. All he felt was incredulity and pride. He was glad that this was happening, he had physical desire. The girl picked herself up and pulled a bluebell out of her hair. She sat against him, putting her arm round his waist.

'We've got the whole afternoon. Isn't this splendid? I found it when I got lost once on a hike. If anyone was coming you could hear them a hundred metres away.'

'What is your name?' said Winston.

'Julia. I know yours. It's Winston – Winston Smith.'

'How did you find that out?'

'I expect I'm better at finding things out than you are, dear.'

The girl laughed delightedly.

Then, she felt in the pocket and produced a slab of chocolate. She broke it in half and gave one of the pieces to Winston. Even before he had taken it he knew by the smell that it was chocolate. It was dark and shiny, and was wrapped in silver paper.

'I do voluntary work three evenings a week.'

The first fragment of chocolate had melted on Winston's tongue. The taste was delightful.

'You are very young,' he said. 'You are ten or fifteen years younger than I am. What could you see to attract you in a man like me?'

'It was something in your face. I thought I'd take a chance. I'm good at spotting people. As soon as I saw you I knew you were it.'

They had left the clearing and were wandering again through the chequered shade, with their arms round each other's waists whenever it was wide enough to walk two abreast. He noticed how soft her waist seemed to feel. Presently they had reached the edge of the little wood. She stopped him.

They were standing in the shade of hazel bushes. The sunlight, filtering through innumerable leaves, was still hot on their faces. Winston looked out into the field beyond. He knew it by sight. An old, close-bitten pasture, with a footpath wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the hedge on the opposite side the boughs of the elm trees swayed just perceptibly in the breeze, and their leaves stirred faintly in dense masses like women's hair. Surely somewhere nearby, but out of sight, there must be a stream with green pools where dace were swimming?

'Isn't there a stream somewhere near here?'

'That's right, there is a stream. It's at the edge of the next field, actually. There are fish in it, great big ones. You can watch them lying in the pools under the willow trees, waving their tails.'

'It's the Golden Country – almost,' he murmured.

'The Golden Country?'

'It's nothing, really. A landscape I've seen sometimes in a dream.'

'Look!' whispered Julia.

A thrush had alighted on a bough not five metres away, almost at the level of their faces. Perhaps it had not seen them. It was in the sun, they in the shade. It spread out its wings, fitted them carefully into place again, ducked its head for a moment, as though making a sort of obeisance to the sun, and then began to pour forth a torrent of song. In the afternoon hush the volume of sound was startling. Winston and Julia clung together, fascinated. The music went on and on, minute after minute, with astonishing variations, never once repeating itself, almost as though the bird were deliberately showing off its virtuosity. Sometimes it stopped for a few seconds, spread out and resettled its wings, then swelled its speckled breast and again burst into song. Winston watched it with a sort of vague reverence. For whom, for what, was that bird singing? No mate, no rival was watching it. What made it sit at the edge of the wood and pour its music into nothingness? The flood of music drove all speculations out of his mind. It was as though it were a kind of liquid stuff that poured all over him and got mixed up with the sunlight that filtered through the leaves. He stopped thinking and merely felt. The girl's waist in the bend of his arm was soft and warm. He pulled her round so that they were breast to breast; her body seemed to melt into his. Wherever his hands moved it was all as yielding as water. Their mouths clung together; it was quite different from the hard kisses they had exchanged earlier. When they moved their faces apart again both of them sighed deeply.

Winston put his lips against her ear. 'NOW,' he whispered.

Quickly, with an occasional crackle of twigs, they threaded their way back to the clearing. When they were once inside the ring of saplings she turned and faced him. They were both breathing fast, but the smile had

reappeared round the corners of her mouth. She stood looking at him for an instant, then felt at the zipper. And, yes! it was almost as in his dream. Almost as swiftly as he had imagined it, she had torn her clothes off, and when she flung them aside it was with that same magnificent gesture. Her body gleamed white in the sun. But for a moment he did not look at her body; his eyes were anchored by the freckled face with its faint, bold smile. He knelt down before her and took her hands in his.

He pulled her down so that they were kneeling face to face.

'Listen. I love you. Do you understand that?'

'Yes, perfectly.'

'You like doing this? I don't mean simply me: I mean the thing in itself?'

'I adore it.'

That was above all what he wanted to hear. He pressed her down upon the grass, among the fallen bluebells. Presently the rising and falling of their breasts slowed to normal speed, and in a sort of pleasant helplessness they fell apart. The sun seemed to have grown hotter. They were both sleepy. Almost immediately they fell asleep and slept for about half an hour.

Winston woke first. He sat up and watched the freckled face, still peacefully asleep, pillowed on the palm of her hand. The short dark hair was extraordinarily thick and soft. It occurred to him that he still did not know her surname or where she lived.

The young, strong body awoke in him a protecting feeling. The mindless tenderness that he had felt under the hazel tree, while the thrush was singing, had come back.

CHAPTER 3

'We can come here again,' said Julia.

As soon as she woke up her demeanour had changed. She became

alert and put her clothes on, and began arranging the details of the journey home. It seemed natural to leave this to her. She seemed to have an exhaustive knowledge of the countryside round London, stored away from innumerable hikes. The route she gave him was quite different from the one by which he had come, and brought him out at a different railway station.

She named a place where they could meet after work, four evenings hence. It was a street where there was an open market.

'And now I must go,' she said as soon as he had mastered his instructions. 'I'm due back at nineteen-thirty. Give me a brush-down, would you? Have I got any twigs in my hair? Are you sure? Then good-bye, my love, good-bye!'

She flung herself into his arms, kissed him almost violently, and a moment later pushed her way through the saplings and disappeared into the wood with very little noise. Even now he had not found out her surname or her address.

As it happened, they never went back to the clearing in the wood.

When they met they sat talking for hours.

Julia was twenty-six years old. She lived in a hostel with other girls and she worked, as he had guessed, on the machines in the department. She enjoyed her work, which consisted chiefly in running and servicing a powerful but tricky electric motor. She was fond of using her hands and felt at home with machinery.

She had no memories of anything before the early sixties and the only person she had ever known who talked frequently was a grandfather. At school she had been captain of the hockey team and had won the gymnastics trophy two years running.

She had had her first love-affair when she was sixteen.

His mind went back to Katharine. He began telling Julia of something that had happened on another sweltering summer afternoon, eleven years ago.

It was three or four months after they were married. They had lost their way on a hike somewhere in Kent. They had only lagged behind the others for a couple of minutes, but they took a wrong turning, and

presently found themselves pulled up short by the edge of an old chalk quarry. It was a sheer drop of ten or twenty metres, with boulders at the bottom. There was nobody of whom they could ask the way. She wanted to hurry back by the way they had come and start searching in the other direction. But at this moment Winston noticed some tufts of loosestrife growing in the cracks of the cliff beneath them. One tuft was of two colours, magenta and brick-red, apparently growing on the same root. He had never seen anything of the kind before, and he called to Katharine to come and look at it.

'Look, Katharine! Look at those flowers. That clump down near the bottom. Do you see they're two different colours?'

She had already turned to go, but she did come back for a moment. She leaned out over the cliff face to see where he was pointing. He was standing a little behind her, and he put his hand on her waist to steady her. It was the hottest sleepest hour of the afternoon. The sun blazed down upon them.

They were sitting side by side. He pulled her closer against him. Her head rested on his shoulder, She was very young, he thought.

'This is me, this is my hand, this is my leg, I'm real, I'm solid, I'm alive! Do you like *this*?'

She twisted herself round and pressed her bosom against him. He could feel her breasts, ripe yet firm. Her body seemed to be pouring some of its youth and vigour into his.

'Yes, I like that,' he said.

CHAPTER 4

Winston looked round the little room above Mr Charrington's shop. Beside the window the enormous bed was made up, with blankets and a bolster. The old-fashioned clock was ticking away on the mantelpiece. In the corner, on the gate-leg table, the glass paperweight which

he had bought on his last visit gleamed softly out of the half-darkness.

In the fender was a tin oilstove, a saucepan, and two cups, provided by Mr Charrington. Winston lit the burner and set a pan of water to boil. The clock's hands said seven-twenty. She was coming at nineteen-thirty.

Actually the idea had first floated into his head in the form of a vision, of the glass paperweight mirrored by the surface of the gate-leg table. As he had foreseen, Mr Charrington had made no difficulty about letting the room. He was obviously glad of the few dollars that it would bring him. He looked into the middle distance and spoke in generalities, with so delicate an air as to give the impression that he had become partly invisible. Privacy, he said, was a very valuable thing. Everyone wanted a place where they could be alone occasionally. And when they had such a place, it was only common courtesy in anyone else who knew of it to keep his knowledge to himself. He even, seeming almost to fade out of existence as he did so, added that there were two entries to the house, one of them through the back yard, which gave on an alley.

Under the window somebody was singing. Winston peeped out. The June sun was still high in the sky, and in the sun-filled court below, a woman, with an apron strapped about her middle, was stumping to and fro between a washtub and a clothes line, pegging out a series of square white things which Winston recognized as babies' diapers. Whenever her mouth was not corked with clothes pegs she was singing in a powerful contralto:

*'It was only a fancy.
It passed like an Ipril dye,
But a look an' a word an' the dreams they stirred!'*

The woman sang tunefully. He could hear the woman singing and the scrape of her shoes on the flagstones, and yet the room seemed curiously silent.

On the evening beforehand they met briefly in the street. Winston looked at Julia.

During The month that he had known her the nature of his desire for her had changed. The smell of her hair, the taste of her mouth, the feeling of her skin seemed to have got inside him, or into the air all round him. She had become a physical necessity. Their hands met. She gave the tips of his fingers a squeeze that seemed to invite affection. A deep tenderness, such as he had not felt for her before, took hold of him. He wished that they were a married couple of ten years' standing. He wished that he were walking through the streets with her just as they were doing now, talking of trivialities and buying odds and ends for the household. It was not actually at that moment, but at some time on the following day, that the idea of renting Mr Charrington's room had occurred to him. When he suggested it to Julia she had agreed with unexpected readiness.

At this moment there was a quick step on the stairs. Julia burst into the room. She was carrying a tool-bag of brown canvas, such as he had sometimes seen her carrying to and fro at the Ministry. He started forward to take her in his arms, but she disengaged herself rather hurriedly, partly because she was still holding the tool-bag.

'Half a second,' she said. 'Just let me show you what I've brought. Look here.'

She fell on her knees, threw open the bag, and tumbled out some spanners and a screwdriver that filled the top part of it. Underneath were a number of neat paper packets. The first packet that she passed to Winston had a familiar feeling. It was filled with

sugar

'And here's a loaf of bread and a little pot of jam. And here's milk.'

The smell was already filling the room, a rich hot smell.

'It's coffee,' he murmured.

'I got a little packet of tea as well.'

Winston had squatted down beside her.

'Blackberry.'

'Listen, dear. I want you to turn your back on me for three minutes. Go and sit on the other side of the bed. And don't turn round till I tell you.'

Winston gazed abstractedly through the muslin curtain. Down in

the yard the woman was still marching to and fro between the washtub and the line. She took two more pegs out of her mouth and sang with deep feeling:

*'They sye you can always forget;
But the smiles acrorss the years
They twist my 'eart-strings yet!'*

She knew the whole song by heart, it seemed. Her voice floated upward with the sweet summer air, very tuneful, charged with a sort of happy melancholy. One had the feeling that she would have been perfectly content, if the June evening had been endless and the supply of clothes inexhaustible, to remain there for a thousand years, pegging out diapers and singing.

'You can turn round now,' said Julia.

He turned round, and for a second almost failed to recognize her. What he had actually expected was to see her naked. But she was not naked. The transformation that had happened was much more surprising than that. She had painted her face.

She must have bought herself a complete set of make-up materials. Her lips were deeply reddened, her cheeks rouged, her nose powdered; there was even a touch of something under the eyes to make them brighter. It was very skilfully done. The improvement in her appearance was startling. With just a few dabs of colour in the right places she had become not only very much prettier, but, above all, far more feminine. Her short hair merely added to the effect. As he took her in his arms a wave of violets flooded his nostrils.

'Scent too!' he said.

'Yes, dear, scent too. And do you know what I'm going to do next? I'll wear silk stockings and high-heeled shoes!'

They flung their clothes off and climbed into the huge mahogany bed. The blanket they lay on was smooth, and the size and springiness of the bed astonished both of them.

Presently they fell asleep for a little while. When Winston woke

up the hands of the clock had crept round to nearly nine. He did not stir, because Julia was sleeping with her head in the crook of his arm. A light stain of rouge still brought out the beauty of her cheek-bone. A yellow ray from the sinking sun fell across the foot of the bed and lighted up the fireplace, where the water in the pan was boiling fast. Down in the yard the woman had stopped singing, but the faint shouts of children floated in from the street. In the cool of a summer evening, a man and a woman with no clothes on, making love when they chose, talking of what they chose, not feeling any compulsion to get up, simply lying there and listening to peaceful sounds outside. Julia woke up, rubbed her eyes, and raised herself on her elbow to look at the oilstove.

'Half that water's boiled away,' she said. 'I'll get up and make some coffee in another moment.'

She pressed herself against him and wound her limbs round him.

He sat up against the bedhead. Julia got out of bed and made the coffee. The smell that rose from the saucepan was powerful and exciting. What was even better than the taste of the coffee was the silky texture given to it by the sugar. With one hand in her pocket and a piece of bread and jam in the other, Julia wandered about the room, glancing at the book-case, the gate-leg table, plumping herself down in the arm-chair to see if it was comfortable, and examining the clock with a sort of tolerant amusement. She brought the glass paperweight over to the bed to have a look at it in a better light. He took it out of her hand, fascinated, as always, by the soft, rain-watery appearance of the glass.

'What is it, do you think?' said Julia.

'I don't think it's anything – I mean, I don't think it was ever put to any use. That's what I like about it.'

'And that picture over there' – she nodded at the engraving on the opposite wall – 'would that be a hundred years old?'

'More. Two hundred, I dare say.'

She went over to look at it.

The fragment of rhyme that Mr Charrington had taught him came back into his head: "Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clement's!"

To his astonishment she capped the line:

*'You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St Martin's,
When will you pay me? say the bells of Old Bailey —'*

'I can't remember how it goes on after that. But anyway I remember it ends up, "Here comes a candle to light you to bed."'

It was like the two halves of a countersign. But there must be another line after 'the bells of Old Bailey'. Perhaps it could be dug out of Mr Charrington's memory, if he were suitably prompted.

'Who taught you that?' he said.

'My grandfather. He used to say it to me when I was a little girl.'

'That picture,' said Julia. 'I'll take it down and give it a good clean some day.'

Winston did not get up for a few minutes more. He turned over towards the light and lay gazing into the glass paperweight. The inexhaustibly interesting thing was not the fragment of coral but the interior of the glass itself. There was such a depth of it, and yet it was almost as transparent as air. It was as though the surface of the glass had been the arch of the sky, enclosing a tiny world with its atmosphere complete. He had the feeling that he could get inside it, and that in fact he was inside it, along with the mahogany bed and the gate-leg table, and the clock and the steel engraving and the paperweight itself. The paperweight was the room he was in, and the coral was Julia's life and his own, fixed in a sort of eternity at the heart of the crystal.

CHAPTER 5

The weather was baking hot. In the Ministry the air-conditioned rooms kept their normal temperature.

In the room over Mr Charrington's shop, Julia and Winston lay

side by side on a stripped bed under the open window, naked for the sake of coolness. The room was paradise. As soon as they arrived they would tear off their clothes, and make love with sweating bodies, then fall asleep.

He usually stopped to talk with Mr Charrington for a few minutes on his way upstairs.

The old man seemed glad of the opportunity to talk. Wandering about among his stock, with his long nose and thick spectacles and his bowed shoulders in the velvet jacket, he had always vaguely the air of being a collector rather than a tradesman. With enthusiasm he would finger this or that – a china bottle-stopper, the painted lid of a snuffbox, a pinchbeck locket containing a strand of baby's hair – never asking that Winston should buy it, merely that he should admire it. To talk to him was like listening to the tinkling of a musical-box. He had dragged out from the corners of his memory some more fragments of forgotten rhymes. There was one about four and twenty blackbirds, and another about a cow, and another about Cock Robin. 'It just occurred to me you might be interested,' he would say with a little laugh whenever he produced a new fragment. But he could never recall more than a few lines of any one rhyme.

Both of them knew – in a way, it was never out of their minds – that what was now happening could last long. There were times when the fact seemed as palpable as the bed they lay on, and they would cling together with sensuality. They both felt, no harm could come to them. The room itself was sanctuary. It was as when Winston had gazed into the heart of the paperweight, with the feeling that it would be possible to get inside that glassy world, and that once inside it time could be arrested. Often they gave themselves up to daydreams. Their luck would hold indefinitely, just like this, for the remainder of their natural lives. Winston and Julia would get married.

She was one of those people who can go to sleep at any hour and in any position.

CHAPTER 6

It had happened at last. All his life, it seemed to him, he had been waiting for this to happen.

Love.

CHAPTER 7

Winston had woken up. Julia rolled sleepily against him, murmuring something.

'I dreamt —' he began, and stopped. It was complex. There was the dream itself, and there was a memory connected with it that had swum into his mind in the few seconds after waking.

He lay back with his eyes shut, still in the atmosphere of the dream. It was a vast, luminous dream in which his whole life seemed to stretch out before him like a landscape on a summer evening after rain. It had all occurred inside the glass paperweight, but the surface of the glass was the dome of the sky, and inside the dome everything was flooded with clear soft light in which one could see into interminable distances. The dream had also been comprehended by — indeed, in some sense it had consisted in — a gesture of the arm made by his mother.

In the dream he had remembered his mother, and within a few moments of waking it had all come back. He was not certain of the date, but he could not have been less than ten years old, possibly twelve, when it had happened.

She did everything that was needed — cooked, washed, mended, made the bed, swept the floor, dusted the mantelpiece — always very slowly and with a curious lack of superfluous motion. Her large shapely body seemed to relapse naturally into stillness. Occasionally she would take Winston in her arms and press him against her for a long time.

He remembered the room where they lived, a room that seemed half filled by a bed with a white counterpane. There was a gas ring in the fender, and a shelf where food was kept, and on the landing outside there was a brown earthenware sink. He remembered his mother's statuesque body bending over the gas ring to stir at something in a saucepan.

One day his mother broke off three-quarters of chocolate and gave it to Winston, giving the other quarter to his sister. The little girl took hold of it and looked at it, perhaps not knowing what it was. Winston stood watching her for a moment.

His mother's eyes were fixed on his face. His mother drew her arm round the child and pressed its face against her breast.

The dream was still vivid in his mind, especially the enveloping protecting gesture of the arm in which its whole meaning seemed to be contained. His mind went back to another dream of two months ago.

He told Julia the story. Without opening her eyes she rolled over and settled herself into a more comfortable position.

From her breathing it was evident that she was going off to sleep again. She possessed a kind of nobility, a kind of purity. What mattered were individual relationships, and a gesture, an embrace.

'We've been lucky,' he said, 'it can last much longer. You're young.'

CHAPTER 8

They had done it, they had done it at last!

Winston's heart was thumping so hard that he doubted whether he would be able to speak. They had done it, they had done it at last, was all he could think. The whole atmosphere of the huge block of flats, the richness and spaciousness of everything, the smells of good food and good tobacco, the silent and incredibly rapid lifts sliding up and down, the white-jacketed servants hurrying to and fro – everything was good.

CHAPTER 9

Slowly, in mild afternoon sunshine, he walked up a street in the direction of Mr Charrington's shop.

At twelve it was unexpectedly announced that all workers in the Ministry were free till tomorrow morning. Winston went home, shaved himself, and almost fell asleep in his bath.

He climbed the stair above Mr Charrington's shop. He was not sleepy any longer. He opened the window, lit the little oilstove and put on a pan of water for coffee. Julia would arrive presently. He sat down in the armchair and undid the straps of the brief-case.

A heavy black volume, with no name or title on the cover.

Winston began reading.

The Sweet summer air played against his cheek. From somewhere far away there floated the faint shouts of children: in the room itself there was no sound except the voice of the clock. He settled deeper into the arm-chair and put his feet up on the fender. It was bliss, it was eternity. Suddenly, as one sometimes does with a book of which one knows that one will ultimately read and re-read every word, he opened it at a different place and found himself at Chapter III. He went on reading.

Winston stopped reading for a moment. The blissful feeling of being alone with the book had not worn off. Solitude and safety were physical sensations, mixed up somehow with the softness of the chair, the touch of the faint breeze from the window that played upon his cheek. The book fascinated him, or more exactly it reassured him. In a sense it told him nothing that was new, but that was part of the attraction. It said what he would have said. It was the product of a mind similar to his own. The best books, he perceived, are those that tell you what you know already. He had just turned back to Chapter I when he heard Julia's footstep on the stair and started out of his chair to meet her. She dumped her brown tool-bag on the floor and flung herself into his arms. It was more than a week since they had seen one another.

She knelt down beside the oilstove to make the coffee.

They did not return to the subject until they had been in bed for half an hour. The evening was just cool enough to make it worth while to pull up the counterpane. From below came the familiar sound of singing and the scrape of boots on the flagstones. The woman whom Winston had seen there on his first visit was almost a fixture in the yard. There seemed to be no hour of daylight when she was not marching to and fro between the washtub and the line, breaking forth into lusty song. Julia had settled down on her side and seemed to be already on the point of falling asleep. He reached out for the book, which was lying on the floor, and sat up against the bed-head.

'You read it,' she said with her eyes shut. 'Read it aloud. That's the best way. Then you can explain it to me as you go.'

The clock's hands said six. He propped the book against his knees and began reading.

'Julia, are you awake?' said Winston.

'Yes, my love, I'm listening. Go on. It's marvellous.'

He continued reading.

Winston became aware of silence, as one becomes aware of a new sound. It seemed to him that Julia had been very still for some time past. She was lying on her side, naked from the waist upwards, with her cheek pillowed on her hand and one dark lock tumbling across her eyes. Her breast rose and fell slowly and regularly.

'Julia.'

No answer.

'Julia, are you awake?'

No answer. She was asleep. He shut the book, put it carefully on the floor, lay down, and pulled the coverlet over both of them.

A yellow beam from the sinking sun slanted in through the window and fell across the pillow. He shut his eyes. The sun on his face and the girl's smooth body touching his own gave him a strong, sleepy, confident feeling. He was safe, everything was all right. He fell asleep.

CHAPTER 10

When he woke it was with the sensation of having slept for a long time, but a glance at the old-fashioned clock told him that it was only twenty-thirty. He lay dozing for a while; then the usual deep-lunged singing struck up from the yard below:

*'It was only a fancy,
It passed like an Ipril dye,
But a look an' a word an' the dreams they stirred'*

The song seemed to have kept its popularity. You still heard it all over the place. Julia woke at the sound, stretched herself luxuriously, and got out of bed.

'Let's make some more coffee.'

'I'm going to put my clothes on,' she added.

Winston also got up and dressed himself. The indefatigable voice sang on:

*'They sye you can always forget;
But the smiles acrorss the years
They twist my 'eart-strings yet!'*

As he fastened the belt he strolled across to the window. The sun must have gone down behind the houses; it was not shining into the yard any longer. The flagstones were wet as though they had just been washed, and he had the feeling that the sky had been washed too, so fresh was the blue between the chimney-pots. Tirelessly the woman marched to and fro, singing and pegging out more diapers, and more and yet more. He wondered whether she took in washing for a living. Julia had come across to his side; together they gazed down with a sort of fascination at the sturdy figure below. As he looked at the woman in her characteristic attitude, her thick arms reaching up for the line,

her powerful mare-like buttocks protruded, it struck him for the first time that she was beautiful. It had never before occurred to him that the body of a woman of fifty could be beautiful. But it was so, and after all, he thought, why not? The solid body, like a block of granite, bore the same relation to the body of a girl as the rose-hip to the rose. Why should the fruit be held inferior to the flower?

'She's beautiful,' he said.

He held Julia's supple waist easily encircled by his arm. From the hip to the knee her flank was against his. The woman down there had strong arms, a warm heart, and a fertile belly. He wondered how many children she had given birth to. A wild-rose beauty. She was still singing. The mystical reverence that he felt for her was somehow mixed up with the aspect of the cloudless sky, stretching away behind the chimney-pots into interminable distance. It was curious to think that the sky was the same for everybody, in Asia as well as here. And the people under the sky were also very much the same – everywhere, all over the world, hundreds of thousands of millions of people just like this.

'Do you remember,' he said, 'the thrush that sang to us, that first day, at the edge of the wood?'

He noticed that the clock on the mantelpiece said nine.

PART THREE

CHAPTER 1

He thought of Julia. He loved her and would not betray her.

CHAPTER 2

He was lying in bed. Light that seemed stronger than usual was falling on his face.

Everything was all right.

A blissful, healing warmth spread all through his body.

CHAPTER 3

His feelings towards her remained the same.

CHAPTER 4

He dreamed a great deal and they were always happy dreams. He was in the Golden Country, or he was sitting among enormous

glorious, sunlit ruins, with his mother, with Julia – not doing anything, merely sitting in the sun, talking of peaceful things. He was not bored.

His mind grew more active. He sat down on the bed, his back against the wall.

He began to write down the thoughts that came into his head.

How easy it all was! Everything was easy!

'I could float off this floor like a soap bubble.'

One day he was walking. His body was healthy and strong. He walked easily, with a joy of movement, walking in sunlight. He was in the Golden Country, following the foot-track across the old rabbit-cropped pasture. He could feel the short springy turf under his feet and the gentle sunshine on his face. At the edge of the field were the elm trees, faintly stirring, and somewhere beyond that was the stream where the dace lay in the green pools under the willows.

'Julia! Julia! Julia, my love! Julia!'

She seemed to be not merely with him, but inside him. It was as though she had got into the texture of his skin. In that moment he loved her far more than he had ever done.

CHAPTER 5

He was in the middle of a great empty plain drenched with sunlight.

CHAPTER 6

The Chestnut Tree was almost empty. A ray of sunlight slanting through a window fell on table-tops. It was the hour of fifteen.

Winston sat in his usual corner.

Winston was listening to the music.

A waiter brought the chessboard and the current issue of 'The Times', with the page turned down at the chess problem. There was no need to give orders. They knew his habits. The chessboard was always waiting for him, his corner table was always reserved. He had always plenty of money nowadays. He had a job, a sinecure, more highly-paid than his old job had been.

He examined the chess problem and set out the pieces. It was a tricky ending, involving a couple of knights. 'White to play and mate in two moves.'

He picked up the white knight and moved it across the board. There was the proper spot. He drew a deep breath.

Something changed in the music. A voice was singing:

*'Under the spreading chestnut tree
you and me —'*

Occasionally, perhaps twice a week, he went to an office in the Ministry and did a little work. He had been appointed to a sub-committee dealing with minor difficulties that arose in the compilation of the Eleventh Edition of the Dictionary. It was something to do with the question of whether commas should be placed inside brackets, or outside.

Winston raised his head again. They were merely changing the music.

He picked up the white knight and made a tentative move. Check. It was evidently the right move.

Uncalled, a memory floated into his mind. He saw a candle-lit room with a vast white-counterpaned bed, and himself, a boy of nine or ten, sitting on the floor, shaking a dice-box, and laughing excitedly. His mother was sitting opposite him and also laughing.

His mother said, 'Now be good, and I'll buy you a toy. A lovely toy – you'll love it'; and then she had gone out to a little general

shop which was still open nearby, and came back with a cardboard box containing an outfit of Snakes and Ladders. He could still remember the smell of the cardboard. Winston looked at the thing and then his mother lit a piece of candle and they sat down on the floor to play. Soon he was wildly excited and shouting with laughter as the tiddly-winks climbed hopefully up the ladders and then came slithering down the snakes again, almost to the starting-point. They played eight games, winning four each. His tiny sister, too young to understand what the game was about, had sat propped up against a bolster, laughing because the others were laughing.

He turned back to the chessboard and picked up the white knight again.

Winston, sitting in a blissful dream, paid no attention as his glass was filled up. He was in love. The feeling of walking in sunlight.

It was all right, everything was all right.

George Orwell & Conny Blom
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PEACE

FREEDOM

STRENGTH