1984 Review Pages 1-156

Character list

Directions: Briefly describe each of the following characters and what they might represent in the story.

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| 1. Winston Smith— Why do you think the author chose this name for his protagonist? |
| 1. Obrien |
| 1. Syme |
| 1. Mr. Parsons |
| 1. Mrs. Parsons |
| 1. The Parsons children |
| 1. Mr. Charrington |
| 1. Julia |
| 1. Katharine |
| 1. Big Brother |
| 1. Goldstein |

Section 1: Class System (pages 69-72, 82-93, 136-138, 141-142)

1. Describe the class system in place.
2. How are the Proles described? Find an example to prove your point. Consider the discussion of the lottery, the bombings, and the discussion Winston has with the old man in the bar.
3. What do you think the argument over the flimsy pots and the lottery reveal about the masses?
4. Why does Winston keep saying that “If there is hope, it lies with the Proles”?
5. Consider the conversation Winston has with the man in the bar. Winston keeps saying that the man’s memory is jumbled and useless. Yet, when you look closer at what he is talking about, you can see that the man is really answering Winston’s questions. What can we discern about the man’s past life based on what he says?
6. Winston says that “animals and the Proles are free”. In what ways is this true? In what ways is this false?
7. Describe the “red armed prole woman”. Why is Winston so interested by her? What do you think she could represent in the novel?
8. Write any other observations that you have related to this topic, or that you heard from a classmate.

Section 2: Language and truth (pg 49-55)

1. What is Newspeak and what is its purpose? Why is Syme so interested in it?
2. What is Duckspeak? Describe the example given in the book.
3. Can you think of an examples of duckspeak in our world? Times where people talk and talk without really saying anything, though it may sound good?
4. Write any other observations that you have related to this topic, or that you heard from a classmate.

Section 3: Sexuality and relationships (pg 63-69, 125-126, 132-133)

1. What is the Party’s stance on eroticism? Why does Winston say that it is not love, but love that is abolished?
2. Why would the party not allow people to marry anyone they are attracted to?
3. What is Julia’s explanation of the ban on lust? Do you agree with her argument?
4. How does Winston react when Julia says that she has slept with “scores of men”? Why does he react that way? Why might he had “goodness”?
5. Explain the following quote: “No emotion was pure, because everything was mixed up wth fear and hatred. Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the party. It was a political act” (126).
6. Describe Winston’s relationship with his wife, Katharine. What did he dislike the most about her? What might she represent?
7. When Winston first tries to make love with Julia, he says that “he had no physical sensation except that of mere contact. All he felt was incredulity and pride”. Why would he feel these things? Does it suggest anything about their future relationship?
8. Write any other observations that you have related to this topic, or that you heard from a classmate.

Section 4: Doublethink, mutability of the past (34-35, 58-61, 78-81)

1. What is doublethink? How does it work? Why is doublethink so important to the society?
2. What are some examples of doublethink and perception control in our society? What examples have you seen of people believing two opposing ideas at the same time?
3. How is doublethink applied in the Party’s view of the Proles?
4. Explain the following quote: Not merely the validity of experience, but the very existence of external reality was tacitly denied by their philosophy” (80). What does that mean? How could the Party reject external reality?
5. Answer the following question that is posited by Winston: “If both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable—what then?” (80)
6. Winston says that he understand HOW the Party can control the past (through changing the documentation and getting people to control their memories), but he does not understand WHY. What do you think is the answer to that question?
7. Write any other observations that you have related to this topic, or that you heard from a classmate.

Section 5: History (72-79, 93-103)

1. What piece of evidence does Winston find that proves the Party’s deception? Why is he so excited by it?
2. There are several rhymes that show up in these sections, both connected to places. One is about the Chestnut Tree and one is about the bells of the churches. Write down the rhymes here.
   * Why do you think the author keeps bringing them up? What might they represent?
   * Why do you think something like these would have survived into the new society?
   * Consider the rhymes themselves. How do they relate to the ideas of the story?
3. What do you think is meant by the line from Winston’s dream: “We shall meet in the place that has no darkness”?
4. Why does Winston go back to store where he bought the diary? Why is he so interested in antiques?
5. Describe the glass paperweight that he buys. Why is he so interested in it? What might it represent for him?
6. How are the capitalists described in these sections? In what ways are these descriptions accurate? In what ways are they skewed? Why have they been skewed in these ways?
7. Write any other observations that you have related to this topic, or that you heard from a classmate.