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*Dramatic Publishing*

George Orwell's

# 1984

*Adapted by*

ROBERT OWENS, WILTON E. HALL, JR.,  
and WILLIAM A. MILES, JR.



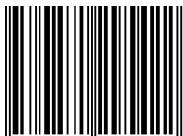
**THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY**

# 1984

***Drama. Adapted by Robert Owens, Wilton E. Hall Jr., and William A. Miles Jr. From the novel by George Orwell.***

***Cast: 14 actors (most roles interchangeable between men and women). "I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily will arrive, but I believe that something resembling it could arrive. The moral to be drawn from the dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one: Don't let it happen. It depends on you" (George Orwell). Orwell powerfully depicts the horrors of man's fate in a society where Big Brother is always watching—where everything that is not prohibited is compulsory. As you present this play, consider... We now have the means to this end. Bare stage w/ props.***

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A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

George Orwell's  
1984

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and WILLIAM A. MILES, JR.



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(1984)

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# 1984

A Drama in Three Acts  
For Fourteen Persons\*

CHARACTERS  
(in order of appearance)

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE  
PARSONS  
SYME  
WINSTON SMITH  
MESSENGER  
COFFEE VENDOR  
FIRST GUARD  
SECOND GUARD  
O'BRIEN  
JULIA  
BIG BROTHER'S VOICE  
GOLDSTEIN'S VOICE  
GLADYS  
LANDLADY  
MARTIN  
WAITRESS

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\*The parts of Winston Smith and O'Brien are male and the parts of Julia and the Landlady are female. With minor line changes, all the other parts may be played by either men or women. Extensive doubling is possible so the play can be effectively staged with as few as eight players.

## A NOTE ON THE SETTING

The play is designed for a curtain set—preferably gray. A few easily moved items of furniture represent the sets. Using only the essential furniture will enhance the barren, drab appearance that is desirable. The individual items should be plain and preferably worn. The only unusual item is a large poster of *BIG BROTHER*.\* The poster should be lit with an individual spotlight.

The play can also be performed against a row of plain gray flats; or the flats can be arranged so that the set consists of one basic gray room with the same furniture changes as noted above.

The properties required for the varying scenes are: four card tables (or desks) and chairs in the opening scene at the Ministry of Truth; a plain wood or metal chair, a small drab bureau, a chair and a cot or bed in Winston's apartment; a sofa bed, a bureau, a table and two chairs in the rented room. O'Brien's apartment should have a coffee table, a modernistic couch, and one luxurious easy chair as ostentatious as practical. The cell in the Ministry of Love is furnished with a bench; Room 101 has a chair; and the Chestnut Tree Café has two small tables and four chairs.

## A NOTE ON THE COSTUMING

The Party members of Oceania (male, female, adults and children) all wear one-piece blue coveralls with an identifying badge (name and party number) sewn over the left breast.

O'Brien, as a member of the Inner Party, wears black coveralls. This can be dressed up with a touch of white at collars and cuffs.

The Guards should also wear black and be as sinister in appearance as possible.

The Landlady can wear an old, sleazy dress of the sort to be found today in the slum sections of any large city.

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\*A special poster designed for this purpose may be obtained from The Dramatic Publishing Company for \$3.00 for the first one, \$1.00 for each additional poster.

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## NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

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**SYME:** Syme is a pale, timid, scholarly person, hesitant and self-effacing in manner, preferably wearing large horn-rimmed glasses as a sort of mask, and played by either a man or woman. Syme should be dressed in the faded blue coveralls of the Party.

**PARSONS:** Parsons is a jovial, stupid, and unpleasant-looking woman approaching middle age. She is wearing the blue coveralls of the Party, but with a red sash across her ample bosom. A legend on the sash reads, "Anti-Sex League."

**WINSTON:** Winston is an intelligent young man who disagrees with much of what he encounters but is too careful to express these feelings. He, too, wears the blue coveralls of the Party but he manages to look just a bit neater than the others.

**MESSENGER and COFFEE VENDOR:** They are both teen-age girls. They wear the blue coveralls of the Party.

**GUARDS:** The Guards wear black uniforms, and have heavy revolvers at their waists. In Act Two, Scene Two, the one who appears as Martin wears a loose white jacket over his or her coveralls.

**O'BRIEN:** O'Brien wears the black coveralls of the Inner Party. He is coarse, humorous, brutal. In spite of his formidable appearance, he does have a certain charm of manner. In Act Two, Scene Two, he appears in a silk smoking jacket over his black coveralls, and soft shoes. In Act Three he appears in Party clothes, as before.

**JULIA:** Julia is a small, beautiful young woman. Her hair is pulled back into a knot at the nape of her neck. She wears the blue coveralls with the red "Anti-Sex League" sash. Her manner is prim and rather diffident at first. In Act Two, Scene Three, when Julia first enters, she wears blue coveralls, then changes to the costume she will wear till the last scene. Her hair is combed out long, and it is wavy. There is a ribbon tied around her head. She has lipstick and rouge on, a bit too much of each, but she wears it without self-consciousness. Her face is beautiful.



The strict, schoolteacher look is gone completely. She is wobbling on high-heeled shoes. She is even wearing a dress of striped white flannel, caught at the waist with the red Anti-Sex League sash. There is a bunch of real violets pinned at her throat. In the last scene, she is again in Party coveralls.

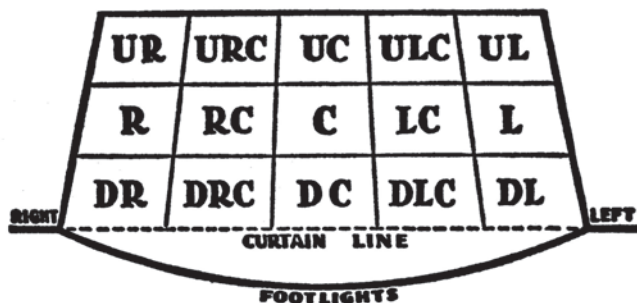
GLADYS: Gladys is a fourteen-year-old girl, a member of the children's Spies organization. She is dressed in blue coveralls.

LANDLADY: The Landlady is an unkempt old woman, dressed in an old, sleazy house dress. She is one of the "proles."

WAITRESS (or WAITER): The waitress is a rather slovenly woman. She wears the Party coveralls.

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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



### STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

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NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

## SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE, *Scene One:* London. The Ministry of Truth.  
Morning.

*Scene Two:* Winston's apartment. Months later.

ACT TWO, *Scene One:* A rented room. A week later.

*Scene Two:* O'Brien's apartment. Weeks later.

*Scene Three:* The rented room. Weeks later.

ACT THREE, *Scene One:* A cell in the Ministry of Love. Immediately following.

*Scene Two:* The Ministry of Love, Room #101.  
Months later.

*Scene Three:* The Chestnut Tree Café. Year later.

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# ACT ONE

## *Scene One*

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**BEFORE RISE OF CURTAIN:** *The loudspeaker voice is heard. The voice should be strident and disagreeable.]*

**LOUDSPEAKER.** Comrades of Oceania. Attention. Attention to news: A dispatch has this moment arrived from the Malabar Front. Our forces in South India have won a glorious victory. Thousands of the enemy have been annihilated.

**SCENE:** *The office in the Ministry of Truth. Morning. Four card tables utilized as desks are lined in formal order across the stage from L to R in front of a gray curtain backdrop. The tables (or desks) are squared off to face the audience directly. Each desk has a chair behind it and, if possible, they should each have identical wastebaskets and in-and-out wire trays. The entrance to this office from the outside is D R; other parts of the building are offstage D L. U C, hanging on the wall, is a large poster of BIG BROTHER. BIG BROTHER has black hair, piercing black eyes, and a large black mustache. The picture is so designed that the eyes seem to follow one about. A legend across the bottom of the poster reads: "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU." This poster is the so-called "telescreen" which appears in each scene of the play. The poster should remain in the same U C position throughout the production. All announcements to the citizens of Oceania are made through a loudspeaker behind this poster and it is through this telescreen/poster that the citizens of Oceania are constantly watched by the Thought Police, though from our side of the telescreen we can only see the everpresent face of BIG BROTHER as portrayed on the poster. Throughout the play, whenever the loudspeaker behind the poster is used, a spotlight focused on the poster should be turned on full. At other*

*times, the spotlight should be dimmed out. Hung in other appropriate places about the room are three party slogans: "WAR IS PEACE," "FREEDOM IS SLAVERY," and "IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH."]*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: SYME is seated at the desk far L. SYME is a pale, timid, scholarly person, hesitant and self-effacing in manner, preferably wearing large horn-rimmed glasses as a sort of mask, and played by either a man or woman. A huge dictionary is open on the desk and is referred to constantly as SYME works with a stack of papers, seemingly paying no attention to the loudspeaker voice, which continues to drone away. The spotlight is focused on the poster.]

LOUDSPEAKER. The action we are now reporting may well bring the war within measurable distance of its glorious end. All Hail Big Brother!

*[The brassy sounds of trumpets blare from the telescreen. The spotlight winks out. PARSONS enters D R. She is a jovial, stupid, and unpleasant-looking woman approaching middle age. She goes directly to her desk at L C.]*

PARSONS *[to SYME]*. Good morning, comrade!

SYME *[looking up absently]*. Uh-oh . . . yes, Comrade Parsons. Good morning.

PARSONS. And how is the news this morning?

SYME. The usual. Another victory for our army in India.

PARSONS. Then the war should be over soon. That's good. Very good. It's dragged on long enough now. . . .

*[The spotlight snaps on and trumpets blare from the telescreen/poster. PARSONS jumps and half turns toward the screen. SYME looks up, blinking nervously. From behind the telescreen/poster we hear a voice on a loudspeaker.]*

LOUDSPEAKER. Attention, comrades! This morning three spies

confessed to being members of the Goldstein Brotherhood of Traitors. This afternoon at 1700 hours they will be hanged in Victory Square. All Party members are invited to attend. [*Trumpets sound again. PARSONS sighs and seats herself slowly at her desk. SYME returns to work with a grunt.*] Here is more glorious news! We have won the battle for production. The Ministry of Plenty has announced the overproduction of shoes by 483,961,202 pairs for the second half of the Sixth Third-Year Plan.

[WINSTON SMITH enters D R as the loudspeaker voice is telling of the shoes. He pauses and looks down at his own shabby shoes but quickly recovers and goes to his desk at R C. WINSTON is an intelligent young man, who manages to look just a bit neater than the others although he, too, wears the blue coveralls of the Party. He carries an old black brief case. As the loudspeaker voice continues, WINSTON sits at his desk and takes from his brief case a battered edition of *The Newspeak Dictionary*. He very methodically arranges a row of pencil stubs on his desk and puts on a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles. The loudspeaker continues.]

LOUDSPEAKER. Our standard of living has risen twenty per cent over the past year. All over Oceania workers are parading through the streets with banners voicing their gratitude to Big Brother for the new, happy life which his wise leadership has bestowed upon us. All Hail Big Brother! All Love Big Brother! [*Trumpets blare again and the loudspeaker voice goes silent. Spotlight dims out.*]

PARSONS [*to WINSTON*]. A little late this morning, aren't you, comrade?

WINSTON [*nervously*]. They haven't brought this morning's work around yet.

PARSONS. You missed the morning newscast. I should report you.

WINSTON [*quickly, to change the subject*]. What is the news, Parsons?

PARSONS [*glancing guiltily at SYME, who is busy with the huge dictionary and pays no attention*]. As I was coming in, they were announcing still another victory. I'm not sure just where . . .

WINSTON [*disgusted*]. So, you were late, too.

PARSONS [*glancing over her shoulder at the telescreen*]. Of course, I was here. I heard the news—all of it. I . . .

[*A MESSENGER, a teen-age girl, enters D L. She is carrying an armful of manila folders stuffed with papers. She goes to each desk in turn.*]

MESSENGER. Good morning, comrades. Big Brother has plenty for you to do today. [*To SYME.*] Comrade Syme, this is for you. [*She hands over a folder jammed with papers.*] You are told to have it translated into Newspeak no later than 1230 hours. [*SYME takes it silently and goes right to work on it. The girl turns to PARSONS.*] Comrade Parsons—nothing for you.

PARSONS [*astonished*]. Nothing? I don't understand.

MESSENGER [*shrugging insolently*]. You are ordered to report to the Bureau of Hate. You have been reassigned.

PARSONS. Reassigned? But, why?

MESSENGER [*teasing, but not nicely*]. Ignorance is strength, comrade. Don't ask *me* why—ask the Thought Police. [*PARSONS shudders.*] Have you been making mistakes? Have you been indulging in crimethink?

PARSONS. No, certainly not. That's a terrible suggestion. . . .

Hum. The Bureau of Hate. It must be a promotion. [*To WINSTON.*] That's it, isn't it, Smith? I'm being promoted?

WINSTON. I wouldn't know.

PARSONS [*mumbling to herself*]. They wouldn't reassign someone who'd failed them. . . . There isn't a more devoted party member than I in all of London.

MESSENGER [*to PARSONS*]. Just be there by 0930. They'll be expecting you. [*To WINSTON, banding him a folder of papers.*] And this is for you, Comrade Smith. A whole month's work of malreports from the *Times*.

WINSTON. Thank you. [*As the MESSENGER turns to leave, he stops her.*] Wait! What about Withers? You forgot him.

MESSENGER [*turning back, blankly*]. Withers? I have nothing here for any Withers.

WINSTON [*pointing to desk at far R*]. This desk right here.

The man who's been working with us—next to me—Withers.

MESSENGER [*shortly*]. There's no such name on my route list.

[*Turns.*] Good morning, comrades. [*She exits D L. WINSTON and PARSONS stare at each other. SYME does not look up, nor pay any attention to any of this.*]

WINSTON [*slowly, to PARSONS, pointing toward desk at far R*].

Did you know about . . . about this, Parsons?

PARSONS. Yes.

WINSTON. But what . . .

PARSONS. Let's not talk about it. He's not here. That's all we need to know.

WINSTON. Then he was . . .

PARSONS. Yes.

[*The spotlight snaps on and there is another blast of trumpets from the loudspeaker.*]

LOUDSPEAKER. Attention. . . . Attention, all comrades under the age of sixty. Calisthenics! Out of your seats and on to your feet. Calisthenics! [*WINSTON, PARSONS and SYME immediately go to the center of the room and face the tele-screen.*] Good morning, comrades. First, we'll do our deep-breathing exercises. Hands raised slowly over your head as you inhale. Lower them slowly as you exhale. Now, by the numbers. [*WINSTON, PARSONS and SYME follow the directions of the voice. PARSONS works hard at her exercises, demonstrating that she is a good Party member. SYME goes through them completely mechanically, not caring or thinking about what is being done. WINSTON does them grudgingly, hating and resenting both the fact and the idea of public exercises.*] One—two. One—two. Keep it up. One—two. There, doesn't that make you feel better? One—two. One—



two. Oh, it's good to breathe the fine, clean air of Oceania. One—two. Don't—stop. One—two. Not like the old days, is it, comrades? Before the Revolution children went to work in factories . . . men died of tuberculosis before they were thirty. Keep it up, comrades. One—two. One—two. All rest! [WINSTON, PARSONS and SYME stand wearily in their places.] Our exercise period is to be cut short this morning. We have to be ready for the Two Minutes Hate. All ready? Last exercise! Hands on hips! Touch your toes with your fingertips and don't bend those knees. All ready? One—two. One—two. Down—up. [WINSTON is unable to come close to his toes. He is barely able to get his hands much below his knees. PARSONS and SYME do only a little bit better, but they are trying.] Down—up. Don't bend those knees. One—two. One—two. You, Smith! Number 6079. Comrade Winston Smith! [WINSTON comes to shaking attention.] You can do better than that. Your hands are barely reaching your knees. [The others turn their heads and verify the truth of this.] You're not trying. Now: for Oceania—for Big Brother, Smith. Make the effort. One—two. Let's see you do it. [WINSTON bends, and with a valiant effort just manages to touch his toes. He almost falls when he straightens back up.] One—two. That's better. All rest! That will be all for this morning. Back to your work. See you tomorrow. [The spotlight snaps off and the loudspeaker goes silent. WINSTON moves toward his desk and almost collapses before he can reach it. He slumps on the corner of it, fighting off a dizzy spell.]

SYME. Are you all right?

WINSTON. Of course, I'm all right.

PARSONS. You look pale.

WINSTON. I'm naturally pale.

SYME. I just thought . . .

WINSTON. Well, don't. [He pulls himself together and walks around to sit behind his desk.] It's time to get back to work.

[PARSONS and SYME move away toward their own desks.]

[Another teen-age GIRL enters D L. She is dressed the same as

*the messenger. This girl is pushing a coffee cart before her.]*

COFFEE VENDOR. Victory Coffee. Victory Coffee, comrades. [WINSTON groans slightly as he gets up and goes toward her.] Big Brother's compliments, and it's time for your morning stimulation. Get your coffee, comrades, and praise the bounty of Big Brother. [She continues to prattle on as she serves coffee to WINSTON, PARSONS and SYME in turn as they come to her.] Have you heard about the Two Minutes Hate this morning? I'm told it's something special. Something plusgood. Doubleplusgood.

WINSTON. It's always something special.

COFFEE VENDOR. We need something special. It keeps us interested in the war.

PARSONS. That's right, Smith. We who don't have the privilege of fighting on the front lines must fight the best we can here at home.

WINSTON [*wearily, to the COFFEE VENDOR*]. What is the hate today?

COFFEE VENDOR [*confidentially*]. I hear it's going to be Goldstein himself. Isn't that exciting?

WINSTON [*moving away, back to his desk*]. Doubleplus exciting.

COFFEE VENDOR. I can hardly wait. . . . Well, drink up. [She turns cart around and starts for exit.] Next coffee period at 1100 hours, comrades. Get your refills then. [She exits D L.]

SYME [*sipping coffee, grimacing*]. This stuff gets worse every day. I can hardly drink it.

PARSONS. That verges on crimethink, comrade. Really, it's quite good. [She gulps her coffee down as though she relishes drinking it.] I always feel much better after my Victory Coffee. Calmer, you know. . . . And—and more at ease about things.

SYME [*looking morosely into cup*]. I wonder what they put in this stuff? [Calls over to WINSTON.] Uh-ah, I say, Smith—do you know what they put in our coffee?

WINSTON [*looking up, carefully placing his coffee on the far*

*corner of his desk; he hasn't touched it*]. I really wouldn't know. I never drink it, anyway.

SYME [*sipping again*]. Whatever it is, I'm sure it isn't coffee.

PARSONS [*officiously*]. You're finding fault with Big Brother. That's crimethink. I had better report you to the Thought Police.

[*She is interrupted as two black-uniformed GUARDS appear in the entrance D L. They take positions at either side of the doorway, flanking it. Both have heavy revolvers at their waists.*]

FIRST GUARD [*shouting*]. Attention. Attention for a member of the Inner Party!

[WINSTON, PARSONS and SYME *jump to attention behind their desks as O'BRIEN and JULIA appear in the entrance D L. O'BRIEN wears the black coveralls of the Inner Party. He is coarse, humorous, brutal. JULIA is a small, beautiful young woman.*]

SECOND GUARD [*announcing*]. This is Comrade O'Brien! [*Turns respectfully to O'BRIEN, then points at WINSTON.*] He is Smith, sir. That one . . . number 6079.

O'BRIEN. Thank you. [*To FIRST GUARD.*] Turn the screen down.

FIRST GUARD. Do you mean to turn it off?

O'BRIEN. Of course not! Just turn the volume down!

FIRST GUARD. Yes, sir! [*Crosses to the telescreen and makes an adjustment in the knob below the telescreen.*]

O'BRIEN. I don't want any interruptions. [*The others, a little shocked, say nothing.*] It's all right if I turn the screen down. You must remember that although you cannot hear it and can only see the picture of Big Brother, it can still both hear and see you. Many thought criminals have been trapped by that. [*He advances toward WINSTON.*] Comrade Smith—I would like to talk to you.

WINSTON. Of course, Comrade O'Brien. I'll see that it doesn't

happen again, I wasn't very late . . . only a few seconds, really.

O'BRIEN [*brushing aside the excuses*]. Never mind that now. [*Significantly.*] There are more important things than lateness. [*He turns to PARSONS and SYME.*] I'd like to be alone with Comrade Smith. [*PARSONS and SYME exit D L, silently and hurriedly. They sidle between the two GUARDS as though afraid of being struck. JULIA still stands quietly just inside the door. O'BRIEN takes WINSTON by the arm and leads him aside D R.*] Comrade Smith, I was reading one of your Newspeak articles in the *Times*. You take a scholarly interest in Newspeak?

WINSTON [*trying to recover his self-possession*]. I'm only an amateur. It's not my subject. Syme is the expert. I have never had anything to do with the actual construction of the language.

O'BRIEN. You're too modest, Smith. You write it very elegantly. That is not only my own opinion. I was talking recently to a friend of yours. . . . [*He glances at the empty desk at far R.*] His name has slipped my memory for the moment. But—no matter. [*He turns and beckons JULIA to come forward. She does, slowly.*] This is Comrade Julia. She is to take the place of—the vacant place next to you. [*WINSTON turns and looks at JULIA for the first time. He is visibly startled. O'BRIEN notices this, and speaks sharply.*] You know each other, Smith?

WINSTON. No, Comrade O'Brien! It's . . . I just didn't expect a woman.

O'BRIEN. She's young, but she's worked here in the Ministry of Truth for three years now—in the Fiction Department. We of the Inner Party have watched her work closely. We believe she's capable of a more serious job.

WINSTON. Yes, of course, Comrade O'Brien.

O'BRIEN. Teach her. Answer her questions. You are fully capable of that, Smith. More so than you realize, perhaps.

WINSTON. Yes, Comrade O'Brien. Thank you, Comrade O'Brien.

O'BRIEN [*nodding to them shortly and turning abruptly*]. Good morning, comrades. [*The FIRST GUARD makes another adjustment to the telescreen, then, in company with the SECOND GUARD, falls in step behind O'BRIEN. All three exit silently* D L. WINSTON is nervous and very worried. He turns to JULIA hesitantly.]

WINSTON [*indicating it*]. That will be your desk, comrade.

JULIA [*formally*]. Thank you, comrade.

WINSTON [*looking at her carefully*]. Why are you here, comrade?

JULIA. I . . . Comrade O'Brien told you.

WINSTON. I heard him. He said the Inner Party thinks you are capable.

JULIA [*smiling faintly*]. That must be why they reassigned me.

WINSTON. But why here? You're not suited for this job.

JULIA [*indignant*]. I'm a loyal Party member.

WINSTON. That's not what I mean. [*Slowly*]. I've . . . I've seen you before, comrade.

JULIA. And I've seen you. What of it? We both work in the same building.

WINSTON. But we don't *live* in the same building. I've seen you in the street outside my apartment. Why?

JULIA [*drawing herself up, speaking very formally*]. I'm not here to be cross-examined, comrade. I'm here to do a job.

WINSTON [*speaking with great effort to be correct*]. I beg your pardon. I'll be glad to answer any questions, comrade.

JULIA [*still formal*]. Thank you. [*She settles herself behind the desk. She doesn't quite know where to begin.*] Whose place am I taking?

WINSTON. Bob Withers'. [*Angrily*]. I mean, no one's place. You are taking no one's place.

JULIA [*innocently*]. Who used to work here?

WINSTON. No one, I tell you. An unperson. Don't you understand an unperson?

JULIA. Unperson? No, no I don't understand.

WINSTON. Aren't you familiar at all with *Newspeak*?

JULIA. A few words. Crimethink, duckspeak, goodthink. Mini-

true, I know, means the Ministry of Truth. Proles means the workers, the proletariat—they aren't really human. Child-hero means a child who is a member of the children's Spies organization who has turned in one of his own family for thought-crime. But . . . but I've never heard of an *unperson*. WINSTON. I'll ask Comrade Syme, the expert, to explain Newspeak to you. In the meantime, here is a Newspeak dictionary. In it are all Oldspeak words—what we used to call Standard English—translated into Newspeak.

JULIA. But, an *unperson*?

WINSTON [*exasperated*]. An *unperson* is a person who's been vaporized—hanged—killed. He no longer exists.

JULIA. Oh! Vaporized. Of course . . . but, he did exist at one time.

WINSTON [*practically yelling*]. He never existed. That's your job here. [*He takes folded paper from the folder on his own desk.*] Look here! This message: "*Times* 17 slant 3 slant 82 Bob Withers malreported award rectify."

JULIA. What does that mean?

WINSTON. That in the March 17, 1982 edition of the *London Times*, Bob Withers was awarded the goodworker medal. So we choose the name of another worker in the Ministry of Truth on March 17, 1982. Any name. And send it to the *Times* with the correction.

JULIA. Then what happens?

WINSTON. That issue of the *Times* is re-run with the corrected name, and all old editions of that issue are destroyed. We toss this message in the incinerator . . . destroy it! Then—there is no record any place on earth that Bob Withers ever existed.

JULIA. But *you* know he existed.

WINSTON [*warily, certain she is trying to trap him into a speak-crime*]. I do *not* know he existed.

JULIA. But you just said . . .

WINSTON [*patiently*]. Comrade, you know the word double-think?

JULIA [*doubtfully*]. Yes. . . .