

# A helpless hero



A Helpless Hero In the totalitarian society created in "1984" by George Orwell, the only factor one can own is their rebellion. Of course the choice is available to defy Big Brother, but the result is inevitable. You can live as a lie, or die as the truth — which will vanish just as the one who revealed it. Orwell presents this "heroic" figure as just the opposite. Physically and mentally, Winston is the exact opposite of the generic image of a hero. Winston appears to be a lanky, skinny middle-aged man. Winston is a quiet, intelligent, pensive man who in the end is the cause of his own demise. The interaction with certain characters, the decisions he made, and didn't make, all added to his strong, yet vulnerable personality, which in the end caused this "failure." Elements that contributed to Winston's downfall were his own intelligence and reflectiveness. Winston naturally always questioned what reality really was as his work for the Ministry of Truth is one of the most risky jobs; he knows everything. With knowing the past, he creates the truth from scratch. Due to his curiosity, he constantly questions his work, Big Brother, himself etc. The moment he wrote "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" in his diary, he knew he would not live. His sense of paranoia about the Party also is underlying; that the Party inevitably will catch him. With that, Winston knew that those are all "thought crimes" and that no matter what, the Thought Police would come after him. Secondly, as mentioned above, his sense of fatalism coaxed him into taking unnecessary risks. That carelessness ultimately led him to trust and confide in people without really questioning it, as there was no reason to anymore. For example, trusting O'Brien and renting the room above Mr. Charrington's shop are decisions that the rational Winston would not go through with. With him thinking he has nothing to lose, he ended up losing it all. His affair with Julia was the epitome

of rebellion. The Party disallows personal satisfactions, or feelings for that matter. By secretly seeing Julia, his mindset significantly changed. He became more in touch with himself and true happiness and care was discovered. Inevitably, Julia and Winston were caught by the people they trusted the most, and that risk with her becomes meaningless as Room 101 is introduced. Lastly, Winston's true downfall didn't lie in the fact that he was caught by the Party, it was the moment he said, " I love Big Brother. " It was the moment he told O'Brien in Room 101 that he rather have him torture Julia instead of him. As Julia explained to Winston, "...perhaps you might pretend, afterwards, that it was only a trick and that you just said it to make them stop and didn't really mean it. But that isn't true. At the time when it happens you do mean it. You think there's no other way of saving yourself and you're quite ready to save yourself that way. You want it to happen to the other person. You don't give a damn what they suffer. All you care about is yourself. (page 292). " Those moments showed the truth of how successful fear can be. By the end, Winston's rebellion is shown as playing into O'Brien's ways of physical and psychological torture, transforming Winston into a loyal subject of Big Brother. For both Winston and Julia, torture is able to burn through the deepest bonds of loyalty. The definition of failure in this society can be seen as ' disobeying'. The failure Winston displays — the more significant one — is obeying. All the risks he took, all the true happiness he did feel, meant nothing. The fact that he did know the reality of the indoctrination, and how he commonly expressed his hate for Big Brother, vanished. In the end, when the all he had left was the truth to himself, he gave up, and gave in; he obeyed. The thought that Winston previously valued was, " to die hating them [the Party], that was freedom. " The

moment he defied that motto, and himself, that was the point where the hero turned into the one that needed to me saved.