

Room 101 essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Room 101 is a place introduced in the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell. It is a torture chamber in the Ministry of Love in which the Party attempts to subject a prisoner to his or her own worst nightmare, fear or phobia.

“ You asked me once, what was in Room 101. I told you that you knew the answer already. Everyone knows it. The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world.” — O’Brien

Such is the purported omniscience of the state in the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that even a citizen’s nightmares are known to the Party. The nightmare, and therefore the threatened punishment, of the protagonist Winston Smith is to be attacked by rats. Smith saves himself by begging the authorities to let his lover, Julia, have her face gnawed by the ferocious rodents instead. The torture, and what Winston does to escape it, breaks his last promise to himself and to Julia: never to betray her emotionally. The book suggests that Julia is likewise subjected to her own worst fear (although it is not revealed what her worst fear is), and when she and Winston later meet in a park, he notices a scar on her forehead. The original intent of threatening Winston with the rats was not necessarily to go through with the act, but to force him into betraying the only person he loved and therefore break his spirit.

Orwell named Room 101 after a conference room at Broadcasting House where he used to sit through tedious meetings. When the original room 101 at the BBC was due to be demolished, a plaster cast of it was made by artist

Rachel Whiteread and displayed in the cast courts of the Victoria and Albert Museum from November 2003 until June 2004.