



C A father's pride

The scene takes place in a prison cell.

'YOU here!' [...] 'What are you in for?' said Winston.

'Thoughtcrime!' said Parsons, almost
 5 blubbing. The tone of his voice implied at once a complete admission of his guilt and a sort of incredulous horror that such a word could be applied to himself. He paused opposite Winston and began
 10 eagerly appealing to him: 'You don't think they'll shoot me, do you, old chap? They don't shoot you if you haven't actually done anything – only thoughts, which you can't help? I know they give you a fair hearing.

15 Oh, I trust them for that! They'll know my record, won't they? You know what kind of chap I was. Not a bad chap in my way. Not brainy, of course, but keen. I tried to do my best for the Party, didn't I? I'll get off with five years, don't you think? Or even ten years? A chap like me could make himself pretty useful in a labour-camp. They wouldn't shoot me for going off the rails just once?' 'Are you guilty?' said Winston.

20 'Of course I'm guilty!' cried Parsons with a servile glance at the telescreen. 'You don't think the Party would arrest an innocent man, do you?' His frog-like face grew calmer, and even took on a slightly sanctimonious expression. 'Thoughtcrime is a dreadful thing, old man,' he said sententiously. 'It's insidious. It can get hold of you without your even knowing it. Do you know how it got hold of me? In my sleep! Yes, that's a fact. There I was, working away, trying to do my bit – never knew I had any
 25 bad stuff in my mind at all. And then I started talking in my sleep. Do you know what they heard me saying?'

He sank his voice, like someone who is obliged for medical reasons to utter an obscenity.

30 "Down with Big Brother!" Yes, I said that! Said it over and over again, it seems. Between you and me, old man, I'm glad they got me before it went any further. Do you know what I'm going to say to them when I go up before the tribunal? "Thank you," I'm going to say, "thank you for saving me before it was too late."

'Who denounced you?' said Winston.

35 'It was my little daughter,' said Parsons with a sort of doleful pride. 'She listened at the keyhole. Heard what I was saying, and nipped off¹ to the patrols the very next day. Pretty smart for a nipper² of seven, eh? I don't bear her any grudge for it. In fact I'm proud of her. It shows I brought her up in the right spirit, anyway.'

George Orwell, *1984*, 1949.

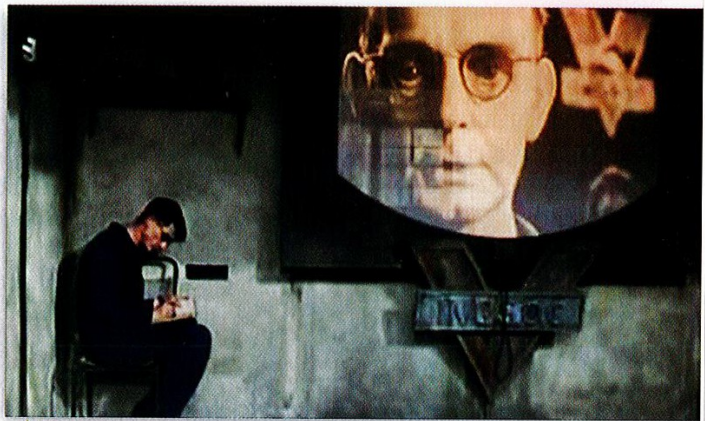
1. (here) = told - 2. small child

Read and write

1. Why is Parsons in prison?
2. Why is his 'little daughter' (line 33) mentioned?
3. Explain the title given to this extract.
4. To what extent does he accept his arrest?
5. What sort of society is described here? Give your opinion.

Prep task

You are a member of a dystopian blog. Write the article that corresponds to the following title: *This is what family life will look like by 2050.*



1984: the telescreen is watching you.

Toolbox

- monitor = control
- oppressed = dominated
- begrudge ≠ welcome
- eavesdrop = listen secretly
- report = denounce

Notion recap

BAC → p. 78

1. Compare the societies depicted in these two texts.

L'idée de progrès

2. To what extent is family life going to change in the future, according to you?