

We



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF YEVGENY ZAMYATIN

Yevgeny Ivanovich Zamyatin was born on February 1, 1884, in Lebedyan, Tambov Governorate, in the Russian Empire. His father was a Russian Orthodox priest and his mother was a musician. While studying naval engineering in Saint Petersburg from 1902-1908, Zamyatin joined the Bolsheviks, though he would later become ambivalent toward or critical of many of the Soviet Union's policies later in his life. Zamyatin's engineering background plays out in the mathematical themes present throughout *We*. He was arrested during the Russian Revolution of 1905 as a student activist and exiled to Siberia. He escaped, returned to Saint Petersburg, and lived there illegally. He was arrested and exiled again in 1911 and amnestied in 1913. Zamyatin began to write satires during his arrest, most notably "In the Backwoods," which was published in 1914. After being sent to work in England, Zamyatin returned to Russia and was given literary work by socialist realism writer Maxim Gorky, during which time he published a horror story called "The Cave." He was arrested by Soviet authorities again in 1919 and 1922. *We*, which is regarded as his most famous work, was written between 1920 and 1921. In 1931, Zamyatin appealed to Stalin to leave the Soviet Union, as his position as a writer put him at heightened risk of political persecution. Stalin approved Zamyatin's request, and he and his wife moved to Paris. While in Paris, Zamyatin collaborated with director Jean Renoir on his 1963 adaption of Gorky's *The Lower Depths*, which Zamyatin co-wrote. Zamyatin died in poverty in 1937.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

We is Zamyatin's critical response to the transformation of Russian politics and culture at the turn of the century as the country underwent the shift from the Russian Empire to the Soviet Union. Specifically, Zamyatin explores the negative consequences of the Soviet Union's practical application of Taylorism and its negative consequences on labor practices and their impact on workers. Taylorism, named for its founder, American mechanical engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor, is a theory of workflow management that applies science to manufacturing practices in an effort to maximize industrial productivity. Developed in late 19th-century America, Taylorism emphasizes logic, rationality, and empiricism. In America, Henry Ford applied Taylor's principles to maximize production efficiency in his automobile factories. Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky embraced Taylorism as a means to strengthen the Soviet Union's growing industrial infrastructure

and the power of the Soviet Union's "super population." In practice, maximizing efficiency at all costs resulted in the transformation of workers from members of an empowered super population to dehumanized cogs in an unfeeling, unempowered industrial machine. In his own words, Zamyatin's rhetorical purpose in composing *We* was to illustrate the "hypertrophy of the power of the machine and the power of the state—any state." In this way, *We*—specifically its thematic emphasis on the collective versus the individual—should be read as a critique of the mechanization of people in general, not only as it applies to Soviet political ideals.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

We is a work of dystopian science fiction—one that explores, specifically, the dire consequences of a collectivist ideology enforced by a ruthless authoritarian regime. Numerous writers cite Zamyatin's work as a direct influence on their own. Some examples include Ayn Rand's [Anthem](#) (1938), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952), and Ursula K. Le Guin's [The Dispossessed](#) (1974). George Orwell claims that Aldous Huxley's [Brave New World](#) (1931) must have been influenced directly by *We*, but Huxley supposedly rejected Orwell's position. *We*'s skeptical approach to mechanization also resonates within the Modernist tradition of expressing anxieties toward urbanized society post-WWI. An example of a prominent literary work in this vein is T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922).

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *We*
- **When Written:** 1920-1921
- **Where Written:** The Soviet Union
- **When Published:** First publication in English in 1924. Earliest Russian text published in 1952.
- **Literary Period:** Modernism
- **Genre:** Science Fiction
- **Setting:** The One State
- **Climax:** D-503 and I-330 fail to seize control of the Integral for MEPHI. The Benefactor tells D-503 that I-330 never loved him: she was only using him to get to the Integral.
- **Antagonist:** I-330
- **Point of View:** First Person

EXTRA CREDIT

Synesthesia. In her introduction to *We*, translator Natasha Randall writes that Zamyatin reportedly told the artist Yuri

Annekov that he attaches qualities of sound and colors to certain letters. For example, “L is pale, cold, light blue, liquid light. R is loud, bright, red, hot fast.” This trait plays out in Zamyatin’s heavy use of color imagery and symbolism in *We*.

Off Limits. After its completion in 1921, *We* was the first work banned by the Soviet censorship board.



PLOT SUMMARY

We unfolds over the course of 40 “Records” written by the novella’s narrator, D-503. The action takes place in the distant future in the One State, a civilization ruled over by an authoritarian government. D-503 works as a mathematician and engineer, and is the lead designer of the Integral, a rocket ship the One State will use to travel to alien planets to spread the doctrine of complete subservience to the government and an absolute reliance on logic, mathematics, and rationality to govern public life. D-503 writes his records to be read by the conquered alien civilizations so that they might have a better understanding of the values and history of their new authoritarian overlords.

A God-like, cruel dictator known as the Benefactor rules over the One State. The Benefactor believes that the freedom of individuals is secondary to the welfare of the State. As such, citizens (called “ciphers”) live under the oppressive, hyper-watchful eye of government-appointed police officers called Guardians. The One State is cut off from the wild, free world by a massive barrier called the **Green Wall**. Ciphers live in transparent, glass houses. The government rips them of their individuality, forcing them to wear identical uniforms (“unifs”) and harshly condemning all acts of personal expression. Ciphers’ daily lives are precisely organized around a carefully controlled schedule called the Table of Hours. Even their sex lives are not in their own hands: the State assigns ciphers sex partners, and they must request a “pink ticket” to engage in scheduled, passionless sex with their state-sanctioned partners. Should ciphers break any of the State’s strict laws, they are punished by execution via a mechanical contraption known as the Machine of the Benefactor.

In his early records, D-503 is completely subservient to the One State. He fully subscribes to the government’s idea that the collective’s welfare is more important than individuals’ personal freedom, believing that happiness is achieved through a commitment to logic and rationality and the removal of desires. As the plot unfolds, however, he gets more in touch with his human side, and his records become more expressive, irrational, and confused.

One day, while on an assigned walk with O-90, his regular sex partner, D-503 runs into a female cipher named I-330 and a male cipher, S-4711, whom D-503 recognizes as a Guardian.

I-330 flirts shamelessly with D-503, which is against State protocol. D-503 is uncomfortable with her advances because he can’t figure out what motivates her to act so boldly and rebelliously. He states that she has an “**irritating X**” about her personality. Still, he finds himself equally repulsed and attracted to this mysterious female cipher.

One day, I-330 invites D-503 to accompany her to the Ancient House. Once there, I-330 leads D-503 to an apartment and dons an old-fashioned yellow dress that accentuates her feminine features. D-503 is aroused. I-330 tries to convince him to stay with her after the Personal Hour ends, explaining that she has a doctor friend at the Bureau of Medicine who will write them both phony sick notes to get them out of work. The enthusiasm with which I-330 dismisses her obligations to the One State appalls D-503, though. He refuses her offer and vows to report her behavior to the Bureau of Guardians. Despite his supposed hatred for I-330 and her subversive behaviors, D-503 finds himself unable to report her to the authorities, claiming that he doesn’t have time to do so. Instead of going to the Bureau of Guardians, he goes to the Bureau of Medicine, claiming he is sick.

One day, I-330 files a request for D-503 to meet her in her room for sex. He meets her there and she proceeds to smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol, both of which are against the law. I-330 slips some alcohol into D-503’s mouth and he becomes inebriated, impassioned, and suddenly in touch with his animalistic side, which he refers to as his “other” self. In the throes of passion, I-330 insinuates that she has another lover, which causes D-503 to become jealous. He suddenly grabs her with his “**shaggy paws**” (his term for his unusually hairy, animal-like hands) and bites her flesh. The Personal Hour ends before they can have sex. Eventually, D-503 and I-330 get phony sick notes from I-330’s doctor friend at the Bureau of Medicine. They ditch work and engage in un-sanctioned, passionate sex at the Ancient House. Immediately after the encounter, I-330 disappears mysteriously from the premises. The next evening, D-503 has a Sex Day with O-90, but he’s unable to perform. O-90 is crushed. D-503 acknowledges that although I-330 is destroying his relationships with O-90 and his poet friend, R-13, he’s unable to stop loving her.

D-503 reports to work at the hangar and the Second Builder of the Integral informs him that an unnumbered cipher broke into the hangar while he was out sick yesterday. Guardians escorted the cipher away and forced him to undergo the Operation, a surgical procedure that destroys the mind’s capacity for imagination. D-503 is ambivalent toward the procedure, noting that while he *knows* he is obligated to behave rationally and efficiently for the State, he doesn’t necessarily *want* to submit to the Operation to cure his “sickness,” even if this sickness makes him sleepless, irrational, and miserable.

D-503 hasn’t heard from I-330 since she disappeared from the Ancient House and he becomes lovesick and desperate to see

her again. As he searches for her, he realizes he will be late to work, so he goes to the Bureau of Medicine to obtain a sick note. There, D-503 is diagnosed with having a “soul,” or imagination, which the State considers a grave condition, as it makes ciphers less machine-like. I-330’s skinny doctor friend instructs D-503 to take more walks to cure him of the insomnia, dreaming, and irrational thinking brought on by his “soul.”

Per the doctor’s orders, D-503 takes a walk the next day. As he edges along the Green Wall toward the Ancient House, he spots a hairy, beastly human with yellow eyes on the other side of the Wall and wonders whether this barbaric person is happier than he is. D-503 arrives at the Ancient House in search of I-330. He discovers a secret passageway in the closet of the apartment where they spend time together. D-503 passes out. When he regains consciousness, he is at the end of a corridor. He follows voices and eventually finds I-330 and the skinny doctor. D-503 demands that I-330 tell him where he is and what’s going on. She promises that she will.

Shortly after this, O-90 writes D-503 a letter telling him she can no longer bear to see him since he is in love with I-330. She vows to remove herself from his sex list. A couple days later, D-503 returns to his apartment to find O-90 waiting for him. She pleads with him to give her a baby—something she has always wanted, despite the State’s forbiddance. D-503 honors her request, even though he knows the state will punish O-90 severely. Later, during the Day of the One Vote (the One State’s election day) dissenters interrupt the normally peaceful electoral process by voting against the Benefactor. The One State condemns these rebels in the newspaper the next day, calling them “the enemies of happiness.”

Later that day, D-503 goes to the Ancient House to meet I-330. She brings him to the free world beyond the Green Wall, where he sees a massive crowd of hairy, naked people. I-330 addresses them, announcing the rebels’ plans to steal the Integral. She introduces D-503 as the Integral’s builder. The crowd cheers for him and he feels good to be a special individual. I-330 hands D-503 a drink and his memory becomes fuzzy, though he recalls seeing S-4711 among the crowd of naked people, which makes him uneasy. S-4711 has been watching D-503 closely for some time, which makes D-503 paranoid but also grateful that S-4711’s authoritative presence might prevent him from acting against the One State.

In the days after D-503’s trip to the free world, I-330 fills him in on the structure and origins of MEPHI, the rebel organization with which she is involved. MEPHI’s goals are to overthrow the One State and restore freedom and individuality to its people. I-330 tells D-503 that during the Integral’s first test flight (the day after tomorrow) MEPHI will seize control of the Integral and use it to overthrow the One State. D-503 agrees to betray the State and join forces with MEPHI, though he is highly conflicted and anxious about his decision.

24 hours before the Integral’s test flight, D-503 walks outside and runs into a mass of zombie-like ciphers who’ve undergone the Operation. They try to force D-503 to join them and receive the Operation as well. D-503 flees the scene and runs into O-90, now visibly pregnant, who is also hiding from the post-Operation ciphers. Fearing for the safety of her unborn child, O-90 accepts D-503’s offer to help her escape across the Green Wall to freedom.

On the day of the Integral’s scheduled test flight, growing acts of civil disobedience cause the One State to push back the mission an extra day. On the day of the rescheduled flight, D-503 attempts to steal the Integral, but somebody has alerted the authorities to MEPHI’s plan. The Integral returns to the One State intact and protected. I-330 accuses D-503 of betraying her. He denies her accusation. D-503 eventually realizes that it was U, the woman who monitors the front desk at D-503’s apartment, who—out of concern for D-503 and jealousy toward I-330—alerted the authorities to MEPHI’s plans. Enraged, D-503 attempts to murder her, but he is summoned to the Benefactor’s chambers before he can do so. The Benefactor condemns D-503’s disloyal actions and tells him that I-330 was only pretending to love him and had been using him to get to the Integral. D-503 leaves the Benefactor and returns to I-330. They say goodbye, but their romance has fizzled out and their parting is cold and impersonal.

The Guardians come to D-503’s apartment and he submits to the Operation. His final record differs vastly from those in the middle portion of *We* in that it is devoid of emotion or subjective expressionism. He informs the reader that he turned over I-330 to the Guardians. Although the Guardians tortured her, she refused to betray her cause. *We* ends with D-503’s resounding confidence in the One State. Although enemies of the state still exist, D-503 knows that the State will persevere, as it values reason above all else, and “reason should win.”



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

D-503 – D-503 is the narrator and protagonist of *We*, which is the resultant compilation of his carefully composed records, or journal entries. He is a mathematician and rocket engineer, and the lead designer of a rocket called the Integral. In the beginning of *We*, D-503 is obedient to the One State’s authoritarian rule. He espouses the rationality, predictability, and “settledness” the One State enforces, and he is happy to be part of a system that values the needs of the collective over the desires and needs of individuals. He is content in his relationship with O-90, a female cipher the State has assigned to him as a sexual partner. Once he meets I-330, however, his structured, settled life begins to unravel as he becomes increasingly infatuated with and unsettled by her shameless

disobedience to the One State and begins to torturously question his own subservience to the government. After D-503 and I-330 are intimate, D-503 becomes “sick,” gaining a greater perspective on his unique, internal life and suffering from imaginative thoughts and repressed desires. He starts to conceive of himself as two people: his “real,” subservient self, and this new, “other” self that wants to rebel, love, and be an individual. As I-330’s influence on D-503 grows, his writing relies more heavily on metaphor and other figurative language, and it becomes harder for him to tell the difference between dreams and reality. Ultimately, D-503’s confused state reflects his ambivalence toward the One State. On the one hand, he trusts in the superiority of logic, rationality, and subservience; however, his so-called “**hairy paws**” serve as a constant reminder of the “barbaric,” pre-One State blood that pulses through his veins, and his alliance with I-330 repeatedly shows how capable and willing he is to break free of the One State’s rules and act on his natural, animalistic impulses. At the end of *We*, D-503 is forced to undergo the Operation, abolishing his capacity for imaginative thought and free will, and prompting him to turn in I-330 and MEPHI to the Guardians. Thematically, D-503’s fate suggests that human urges are impossible to suppress fully; they cannot be prohibited out of existence and must be removed by force.

I-330 – I-330 is a female cipher and rebel involved with MEPHI. She frequents the Ancient House, where there is a secret elevator that leads to the world beyond the **Green Wall** and a commune of people living free of the One State’s authoritarian rule. I-330 is outwardly rebellious: she smokes cigarettes, drinks alcohol, wears old-fashioned dresses that accentuate her feminine features, and engages in intimate relationships not sanctioned by the government. I-330 strikes up a romance with D-503 that, at first, appears to be genuine. As *We* unfolds, however, it becomes increasingly apparent that I-330 is only manipulating D-503’s emotions to compromise his allegiance to the One State and gain control of the Integral, though the details of her exact motives are never explicitly revealed. D-503 becomes infatuated with I-330, but not without suffering immense moral strife: her opacity, or “**X-ness**,” frustrates him. To D-503, I-330 is like an irrational number in mathematics: she has no inherent solutions, and there is no end to the ways he can misread her emotions and intentions. D-503 hates I-330’s mysteriousness and irrationality, and he frequently describes her using sharp, malevolent imagery. Unlike D-503, for whom the notion of infinity and the unknown is a threat against predictability and happiness, I-330 embraces the aspects of the world that humans can’t know, taking comfort in the fact that humanity will witness an infinite number of revolutions. I-330 is so committed to personal freedom and revolution that, after D-503 turns her in to the Guardians, she refuses to betray MEPHI, even as she is tortured.

O-90 – O-90 is a female cipher assigned to D-503 as a sexual partner. Despite the One State’s prohibition of romantic attachments, O-90 is D-503’s regular companion, and she feels real affection toward him, becoming jealous once it’s clear that D-503 has developed feelings for I-330. O-90 is I-330’s foil, as she is neither outwardly threatening nor rebellious. Whereas D-503 describes I-330 using sharp, angular imagery, he emphasizes O-90’s round, soft, and childlike characteristics, and her clear **blue** eyes. Still, despite her soft, unintimidating personality, O-90 is not entirely devoid of rebelliousness: from the start of *We*, she is consumed by a repressed desire to have and raise her own child, something the State has explicitly prohibited her from doing. Ultimately, her desire to procreate is too strong to repress, and she propositions D-503 to impregnate her. He does so, and, with the help of I-330, she and her unborn child escape to the free world beyond the **Green Wall**.

S-4711 – S-4711 is a Guardian, or member of the One State’s police force charged with monitoring ciphers’ daily activities. Secretly, he is a double agent, involved with MEPHI. He monitors D-503 carefully, which makes D-503 paranoid about being watched, but also grateful, as he views S-4711’s presence as fortunate, as it makes it easier for him to stay loyal to the One State and not act on his increasingly rebellious influences. S-4711 most often appears in critical moments in *We*, intervening in D-503’s multiple near-arrests. D-503 describes S-4711 as cunning and snake-like, emphasizing his twisted, S-like characteristics. The double-bends in the shape of the letter “S” also seem to evoke S’s status as a double agent.

U – U is a desk monitor that works at D-503’s apartment building. D-503’s relationship with U is an ambivalent one: he is repulsed by her, frequently describing her as having “fish gills,” but he also feels affectionately toward her, seeing her almost as a maternal figure. Throughout *We*, U is critical of I-330’s attempts to lead D-503 astray. She feels a maternal instinct to protect D-503 from his animalistic impulses, and often comments on how sick or unlike himself D-503 behaves and looks. Symbolically, U seems to represent D-503’s ambivalence toward the One State: on the one hand, he feels repressed by her overbearing surveillance, but, on the other hand, takes comfort in her watchful, protective gaze because it keeps him in line. At the end of *We*, U’s desire to protect D-503 causes her to betray D-503, MEPHI, and the rebellion against the One State.

R-13 – R-13 is a poet and D-503’s friend. They share O-90 as a sexual partner, and the three of them exist as a harmonious triangle at the beginning of *We*. Once I-330 seduces D-503, however, their triangle quickly disintegrates as D-503 becomes jealous of R-13, with whom I-330 is also intimately involved. Like S-4711 and I-330, R-13 is involved with MEPHI, though D-503 is unaware of this. R-13 performs his duties to the One State, writing poetry that praises the beauty of math and logic,

but he also harbors disdain for the One State's condemnation of individuality and artistic expression.

The Benefactor – The Benefactor is the authoritarian dictator of the One State. The One State's ciphers regard the Benefactor as a living God and live in great fear of his wrath. He preaches that happiness can only be achieved through the removal of desire and unpredictability. At the end of *We*, the Benefactor summons D-503 to his chambers and informs him that I-330 never truly loved him—she had only been using him to get to the Integral and set the revolution against the One State into motion.

MINOR CHARACTERS

The Skinny Doctor – A doctor at the Bureau of Medicine who is friends with I-330 and involved with MEPHI and the revolution. D-503 describes the skinny doctor as having a mouth like scissors, which hints at his disloyalty to the One State.

D-503's Neighbor – D-503's neighbor at his apartment. For much of *We*, he is engrossed in work at his desk. At the end of the novella, he tells D-503 that he's been working on calculations that prove that the universe is finite.

Second Doctor – Another doctor at the Bureau of Medicine.

Second Builder – An engineer who works with D-503 on the Integral.

Old Woman – A woman who guards the Ancient House.

valuing the self as unique and separate of the collective whole—as a threat to equality and the strength of the State. Through the One State's dystopian collectivism, Zamyatin explores a question of balance that governments have pondered for centuries: how should a ruling body balance the welfare of its individual citizens against concerns of public interest? The One State illustrates an example of public interest run amok—to the detriment of its citizens. Zamyatin suggests that such extreme attempts to enforce absolute collectivism are ultimately in vain, as humankind's impulse to live as unique individuals will inevitably overpower even the most extreme governmental attempts to suppress individual agency and expression.

The One State denies ciphers individuality on the most basic level by robbing them of individual names and forbidding visible differences. Beyond this, the government also condemns and suppresses all acts of self-expression and creativity. The One State's totalitarian government teaches its citizens to view the arts and human creativity as “a strange form of epilepsy.” D-503—a rocket engineer, and *We*'s narrator—considers the music of the “Ancients” (humans who existed on Earth before the One State came to power) to be barbaric and “fantastical.” When I-330, D-503's love interest and a woman heavily involved with the underground rebel organization MEPHI, plays the Ancients' old, expressive music on the piano in the auditorium during a required assembly, it is so that the ciphers may hear how “convulsive” and “silly” such inspired compositions were.

In contrast, the One State's music is not the product of human ingenuity, but derived from “mathematical” syllogisms. After I-330 plays the Ancients' music, D-503 and the rest of the ciphers in the audience listen “with particular pleasure” to the “unwavering predictability” of their mechanical music based in logic, rationality, and mathematics. The ciphers' admiration for such uncreative, predictable music reflects how the One State has taught them to value the universality of logical, objective music over music derived of subjective, individual creativity. *We* is composed as a series of D-503's journal logs. Typically, one considers journaling, like music, to be an expression of one's personal thoughts. But D-503 claims just the opposite in Record One of *We*. He states, “I will just attempt to record what I see, what I think—or, more exactly, what we think.” Even D-503's personal journal, thus, is not fully personal: it isn't a collection of his own thoughts, but his recorded rendition of the *collective* thoughts of the One State.

Despite the One State's efforts to suppress individuality, however, various characters rebel against the government's authoritarian collectivism. I-330 is the most obvious of these characters: behind closed doors, she smokes, consumes alcohol, and is heavily involved with MEPHI. More striking than the rebellious I-330's individuality, though, is when characters like D-503, who initially see themselves as unconditionally



THEMES

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INDIVIDUALITY VS. COLLECTIVISM

We is set in the distant future in the One State, an urban, highly surveilled regime ruled over by an authoritarian, God-like dictator known as the

Benefactor. Life in the One State is governed according to the philosophy that the collective whole's well-being outweighs the interests of individuals; thus, the One State robs its citizens of all identifying characteristics. The One State regards its citizens (referred to as “ciphers”) not as individual beings with unique perspectives and needs, but as mere cogs in the machine of the larger society. Ciphers are assigned numeric values in place of names. They all wear the same uniform, and they walk down the city streets in a synchronized march. They work, eat, and sleep to advance the prosperity of the State. The One State vehemently condemns any expression of individualism—of

supportive of collectivism and the welfare of the One State, begin to express their individuality as rebels like I-330 infiltrate their accepted way of life. D-503 begins his records using the rational, expressionless language of straight, dry, mathematical vocabulary that the One State idealizes. Early in the novel, D-503 criticizes O-90, the female cipher assigned to him as a sexual partner (ciphers' sexual lives are also controlled by the State) for speaking too openly: "She has an incorrectly calculated speed of tongue. The microspeed of the tongue ought to be always slightly less than the microspeed of the thoughts and certainly not ever the reverse." The words D-503 uses to criticize O-90 are stale and technical. They say nothing about O-90's personality or individuality; on the contrary, his word choice depicts O-90 as a malfunctioning machine.

As I-330 begins to influence D-503's perspective, though—and shows him how fulfilling life as an individual can be—the tone of his records shifts drastically, utilizing more vivid imagery and figurative language. Describing I-330, with whom he is infatuated, D-503 writes: "Because she is not she, but the universe." D-503 uses metaphor, calling I-330 "the universe," to express how intensely and fully moved he is by her. Describing how he feels in I-330's presence, D-503 writes: "I am a crystal and [...] there is a door inside me and [...] I feel like a happy chair." Again, D-503 evokes metaphor here to articulate the depth of his internal experience. D-503's new style of writing reflects his transformed perspective of himself and the world. Despite his hesitations—at his core, he still longs to support the One State and its collectivist ideals—he acquires a more expressive personality and sense of self. D-503's reluctant and unlikely transformation into an individual shows the strength of individualism, suggesting that even authoritarian governments like the One State are incapable of suppressing humanity's drive toward individuality and self-expression.



ALIENATION

When D-503 meets and becomes infatuated with I-330, she introduces him to a new way of living and a new way of seeing the world. Soon, D-503 finds that he is no longer capable of relating to the other ciphers of the One State who march in synchronized step, engage in passionless, predictable sexual relationships, and go about their days blindly accepting the State's unconditional control over their lives. Despite his burning desire to resume the content, collectivist life he once had, D-503 finds himself unable to dismiss the perpetually growing alienation he feels from the rest of the One State. D-503's social isolation suggests that alienation is the cost of his gained knowledge and experience.

Before meeting I-330 and experiencing the fulfilling aspects of romantic love, individuality, and expression, D-503 is content with his life in the One State: he repeatedly expresses how happy he is to be a small part of the larger whole. While at work at the hanger designing the Integral, a rocket the One State will

use to travel to and overtake distant alien civilizations, D-503 gazes on the machinery that operates around him: "Eyes shut, oblivious, the spheres of the regulators were spinning; the cranks were twinkling, dipping to the right; the shoulders of the balance wheel rocking proudly [...]. Instantly I saw the greater beauty of this grand mechanized ballet, suffused with nimble pale-blue sunbeams." D-503's meditation on the "greater beauty" of the machinery speaks to his admiration for the corresponding "greater beauty" of the One State's method of governance: what D-503 finds so mesmerizing about the machines is how with their "eyes shut" they go about their tasks, "proudly," to accomplish the greater end goal of creating the Integral. Like these machines, D-503 considers himself to be part of a "grand mechanized ballet," living his life to serve the greater cause of the One State's welfare. Like these machines, D-503, too, is "oblivious" to what an unmechanized life could offer, but because he is largely ignorant of his individual interests and desires, he is content.

After I-330 enters D-503's life, he finds it impossible to resume his formerly "oblivious life." Upon seeing himself as an individual, he becomes dissatisfied, frustrated, and alienated from the rest of the One State. The day after D-503 and I-330 have a passionate sexual encounter in the Ancient House (an old private and opaque building from the pre-One State days of freedom that serves as a museum), D-503 looks in the mirror and remarks, with horror: "for the first time in my life, I see myself clearly, definitely, consciously. I see myself, with astonishment, like some kind of 'him,' I am him: black eyebrows that look like they've been struck through with a straight line; and a vertical wrinkle between them, like a scar [...]. I had never known what was there." When D-503 says that he looks "like some kind of 'him,'" he draws attention to his masculine features, perhaps noting how significantly different they are from I-330's comparatively feminine features. D-503's observation of his distinctly masculine outward appearance marks the beginning of his journey into seeing himself as an individual, and, subsequently, into alienation from the rest of the One State who do not share this individualistic perspective. D-503's new perspective causes him to consider himself "sick" when he realizes he can relate neither to the other ciphers nor the mathematics that was once central to his existence. Later on in the novel, he lies in bed before the morning work bell rings, considering how math has begun to fail him: "My mathematics—until now, the only solid and stable island in my entire gone-crazy life—had also become detached, was floating, spinning." After the morning bell rings, D-503 joins the rest of the ciphers to eat and go to work: "I go downstairs, mechanically, on the beat, and I write my name down in the exit book, as everyone does. But I feel: I live separately from everyone else, alone, fenced in by a soft, sound-muffling wall, and behind this wall is my world..." D-503 once relished in his collectivist, mechanical existence. Now, however, going through the motions has become a depressing, alienating routine. His

indoctrination into the world of individuality and expression renders him unable to connect with the people and tenets of the One State.

Ultimately, D-503 undergoes the Operation—a state-sanctioned lobotomy to remove the brain’s capacity for imagination—which effectively rids him of all knowledge of another way of life. In his final recorded entry, it’s clear that D-503 has regained his former contentedness: “I am completely, absolutely healthy. I smile—I can’t not smile: some kind of splinter has been dragged from my head and my head is light, empty” (202). D-503 is “absolutely healthy,” and fully recovered from his formerly crippling alienation. When he describes his head as “light, empty,” he seems to suggest that the Operation has removed the weight of knowledge and curiosity from his head. D-503’s regained sense of acceptance and contentedness with the One State suggests that complete happiness and knowledge and a curious, critical engagement with the world are mutually exclusive. In other words, one must accept that a fulfilling, examined life comes at the cost of alienation.



FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

The One State offers extreme, mechanized rationality in place of free will as the solution to navigating the world’s unpredictable forces.

Everything in the One State is governed exclusively by an adherence to rigid logic and mathematical claims, and ciphers’ daily lives are organized according to highly regulated scheduling. The One State values absolute subservience to a governing power, math and predictability as the path toward happiness, and it indoctrinates its citizens to perceive the attempts of their savage, uncivilized “Ancient” forbearers to harness control over the world as naïve, superstitious, and self-destructive. At the end of the day, however, the problems and complexities of individual people and the larger world are infinite, and it is impossible to know all. In *We*, Zamyatin suggests that humanity’s attempts to exercise control over a largely uncontrollable, unknown world are vain and fruitless.

The One State believes that absolute subservience and logical, rigorous structure hold the key to happiness. Ciphers are monitored constantly: they live in glass houses, and government-appointed “Guardians” watch their every move and punish anyone who deviates from the status quo. The One State uses rationality to validate its surveillance state, arguing that the “beneficial yoke of reason” will bring “mathematically infallible happiness.” On the other hand, the One State believes that imagination and unpredictability bring about only pain, suffering, and chaos. The *State Gazette*, the One State’s newspaper, publishes an article championing the Operation, a procedure that rids ciphers of their capacity for imagination and irrational thought. The article claims, “the beauty of a mechanism is in its steadfast, precise, and pendulum-like

rhythm.” In other words, the beauty of machines is that they are rational, steady, and perfectly predictable: they leave no space for doubt and invite no threat of the unknown. The One State wants its ciphers to undergo the Operation because it will render them even more predictable and machine-like than they already are, thus assuaging the government’s fear of the unknown.

The One State regards the Ancients’ embracement of individual freedom and illogical superstition as silly, ineffective, and destructive. They use propaganda like the story of *The Three Released* to warn ciphers of the dangers of the freedom and the unknown. *The Three Released* tells the story of three ciphers who, as an experiment, were allowed to take a month off work. The “released” ciphers didn’t know what to do with their new free time, so they “loitered around the place they usually worked and peeped inside with hungry eyes.” Eventually, they became so tormented by their jarring lack of structure and predictability that they drowned themselves in the lake. *The Three Released* orients freedom and the unknown as a source of fear and structure and subservience as a source of happiness and stasis.

Ultimately, logic and control cannot sufficiently grant humanity the power to understand and predict everything about the world. Despite the One State’s efforts to harness control over its citizens through mechanizing their schedules and surveilling every aspect of their lives, it cannot prevent rebel organizations like MEPHI from gaining traction. In spite of D-503’s belief that all the world can be explained and known by mathematics, I-330’s mysterious smile continues to deceive him. What irks D-503 most about I-330 is her unreadable demeanor. When he first meets her, he remarks on “the annoying **X** in her smile,” with “X” referring to the algebraic symbol for an unknown value or quantity. D-503 finds I-330’s unknowable demeanor “annoying” because he views it as a threat: he has no way to determine with certainty what I-330 is thinking or what her intentions are. I-330’s mysteriousness makes her unpredictable and thus, in D-503’s and the One State’s eyes, a threat. At the end of the novel, the reader learns that D-503 *did* have reason to see a threat in I-330’s unreadable face: the Benefactor eventually reveals to D-503 that I-330 was only interested in him because he had access to the Integral and could be of use to MEPHI in its plot to take over the Integral and overthrow the One State. I-330’s betrayal (or, at least, her dishonesty) shows that rationality cannot account for all of life’s unknown variables.

I-330’s statement to D-503 that “revolutions are infinite” also highlights the insufficiency of math to know and predict human behavior. In response to D-503’s observation that MEPHI’s revolution will be impossible because the One State’s revolution at the end of the Two-Hundred-Year-War “was the last,” I-330 offers that there can never *be* a “last” revolution, as, like numbers, revolutions are “infinite,” and there is thus no way

to quantify which will be the last. She explains, “Revolutions are infinite. Final things are for children because infinity scares children and it is important that children sleep peacefully at night...” Her remark suggests that D-503 and the One State have only chosen to believe that their authoritarian revolution was the last because it is easier and more comforting to believe this than to accept the possibility—and inevitability—of an infinite future of subsequent revolutions. If D-503 accepts the possibility of an infinite supply of future revolutions, he must also be ready to accept that such revolutions will be infinitely unpredictable, and, subsequently, beyond his ability to control.



REPRESSION OF DESIRE

Many of the characters in *We* seem subservient and submissive to the demands of the One State.

Beneath their passive exteriors, however, they fight a perpetual, invisible battle between acting as the One State dictates they ought to, and acting to fulfill their own repressed desires. Despite characters’ best efforts, these repressed desires come to the surface and cause them to behave rebelliously. Zamyatin offers that while prohibiting undesirable behaviors and desires through repression might hide them from the public eye, prohibition does little to erase human urges. Throughout *We*, Zamyatin shows how characters attempt to deny the presence of desire. Characters like D-503, for example, go out of their way to convince themselves that they don’t *think* they want what they intuitively *feel* they want. Zamyatin’s portrayal of repression in *We* suggests that desire—the conflicted longing for something one does not have—is the default state of human experience. Repression does not rid society or individuals of conflict: it only hides and magnifies the strength of discontentment.

D-503 wants to remain loyal to the One State, so he repeatedly tries to repress his human urges by disassociating himself from them. As D-503 continues to act irrationally and out of character, he begins to refer to two versions of himself: the “real,” former D-503 who was rational and supported the State at all costs, and the unreal, current self who loves I-330, behaves irrationally, and aids the MEPHI rebel organization. Despite ample evidence that D-503 is changing—that he has acquired a decidedly unmechanical “soul,” an imagination, and has urges to rebel and act irrationally—he insists: “I still consider the former me to be the real me—all this recent stuff is, of course, sickness.” By referring to “this recent stuff” as mere “sickness,” D-503 disassociates himself from his rebellious urges, passing them off as external “sickness” and refusing to claim responsibility for them. He represses his urges by attributing them to “sickness” and by forcing himself to believe they have nothing to do with his “real” self. Despite his protestations, though, D-503 is never really able to erase his supposedly “unreal” self: his “strange, **shaggy hands**,” which resemble those of the uncivilized, pre-One State Ancients,

serve as a visible, constant reminder of his “barbaric,” urge-driven human origins.

D-503 employs the same method of denial when he realizes, to his horror, that he has developed feelings for I-330. As his feelings for I-330 grow, D-503 refuses to accept them, as love or ownership of another cipher runs counter to the One State’s rules. He repeatedly articulates his hatred for her throughout his records. At the end of *We*, D-503 confesses to S-4711 his involvement with I-330 and MEPHI, and their thwarted plan to steal the Integral to overthrow the One State. He claims, “It seems to me I always hated her, from the very beginning,” despite ample evidence that suggests the opposite. D-503 seems to believe that by insisting to S-4711 and to himself that he hates I-330—and all the irrationality and rebellion that she represents—he can repress and eradicate his inner, parallel tendencies toward rebellion and irrational behavior.

Characters besides D-503 also suffer from repressed urges. O-90 longs to be a mother, despite the State’s forbiddance. She makes repressed, barely comprehensible remarks to D-503 about her sorrow: “Dear D, if only you—if only...” O-90 constantly mourns her inability to act on her urge to be a mother, but she represses her grief to the point that she can only articulate it indirectly and partially to D-503. Ultimately, however, O-90 can no longer repress her desire to reproduce, and she solicits D-503 to impregnate her—an act that will be met with severe repercussions and which necessitates that she flee the One State to escape punishment.

In a more literal instance, one may view the **Green Wall**—the barrier that stands between the One State and the wild, uncontrolled world that lies beyond it—as the State’s attempt to repress the urges of its citizens on a grand scale. The Green Wall is the One State’s attempt to deny the existence of the irrational, non-surveilled world. In constructing the wall, the government attempts to physically separate ciphers from their human urges. D-503 states, “none of us, since the Two-Hundred-Year War, has been beyond the Green Wall.” The One State knows that, should its citizens venture beyond the Green Wall, free of surveillance, the desire to act on urges of human nature would be too strong to suppress. The fact that the Green Wall exists, and, more generally, that the One State feels an authoritarian style of government is necessary to maintain control of its citizens suggests that desire and human urges cannot be extinguished—they can only be repressed and controlled.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



D-503'S HAIRY PAWS

D-503's hairy paws repulse him because they represent life before the One State: a time when humans acted unpredictably on their animalistic impulses instead of adhering to the predictability of logic and rationality. D-503 fixates frustratedly on his hairy paws whenever he acts irrationally and unpredictably, often attempting to disassociate his logical mind from the hairy paws and the human urges they represent, thereby denying the existence of the illogical, animalistic side of his personality. When U tries to come between D-503 and I-330, for example, D-503 impulsively lashes out at U. He describes "straining to contain my other self with his trembling hairy fists" as he angrily confronts U for trying to control his life and disrupt his romance with I-330. The One State requires its ciphers to behave agreeably and rationally, so D-503 disassociates from his angry outburst and "trembling hairy fists," attributing both to an out-of-character "other self." D-503's hairy hands—and his desperate attempts to deny ownership of them—shows that while desires may be repressed, repression ultimately does little to reverse or erase the presence of human urges and desires. D-503's repeated attempts to deny accountability for the irrational actions his hairy paws commit don't make his paws less hairy, and they don't make his behaviors less irrational.



THE VARIABLE X

D-503 uses the mathematical variable "X" to convey unpredictability and unknowability throughout his records, and his choice to do so points to two crucial ideas. Firstly, it shows how heavily D-503 relies on math to quantify, relate to, and explain the world around him, especially things that are scary or unknown to him. Secondly, D-503 often relies on X when he cannot or will not find the words to explain what scares him. He seems almost unwilling to accept that there are unknowable or irrational things in the world that are beyond his ability to control. D-503 often associates X with I-330, whose intentions and internal thoughts are often a mystery to him. The first time D-503 encounters I-330, he observes "a kind of strange and irritating X to her, and [he] couldn't pin it down, couldn't give it any numerical expression." I-330's "X" irritates D-503 because, like irrational numbers in mathematics, it presents a problem that has no solution. Ultimately, I-330's internal life is fully knowable only to herself and D-503 can only guess at what she is thinking and feeling. In this way, the possibilities of logic and rationality are limited in the face of the larger, unpredictable world.



COLORS

Color imagery figures prominently in *We*. D-503 often evokes colors to hint at essential

characteristics of people and objects. For example, the color blue evokes clarity and certainty. In Record Two, D-503 emphasizes the blue color of the cloudless sky. "On days like these," he states, "you can see to the very blue depths of things, to their unknown surfaces, those marvelous expressions of mathematical equality—which exist in even the most usual and everyday objects." In D-503's observation, the clearness of the sky's blue lends it a transparent quality: it allows the viewer to see through the sky's exterior and into the "unknown surfaces" of the sky's inner depths.

While blue represents clarity, knowability, and comfort, D-503 tends to associate the color yellow with opacity and the threatening unknown. Zamyatin often evokes the color yellow when D-503 engages in thoughts or activities that go against the One State's rules. For example, when D-503 first goes with I-330 to the Ancient House, she changes into an old-fashioned, yellow dress—a garment explicitly prohibited in a society that condemns any outward expression of individuality. When I-330 inexplicably disappears and remains away from D-503 for a stretch of several days, he anguishes over her absence and not knowing where she is, whom she is with, or what she is doing. The world around him is no longer a crisp, clear blue, but a murky, threatening yellow: "All days are the same yellow color, like desiccated, incandescent sand, and there is not a tatter of a shadow, not a drop of water—it is yellow sand without end."

D-503's tendency to attach colors to people and objects also serves as an indirect means by which he can make subjective, creative observations about the world around him without being overly expressive. Because the One State condemns expressions of individuality, D-503 is actively guarded and skeptical of personal creativity. By describing people and objects using colors—descriptors that one may objectively, logically see with one's own eyes—he strikes a compromise between describing the world logically and expressively. D-503's rhetorical strategy also serves as evidence of his tendency to deny and repress his innate capacity for individuality, irrationality, and other human characteristics the One State condemns.



QUOTES


Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Modern Library edition of *We* published in 2006.

Record 2 Quotes

●● On days like these, you can see to the very blue depths of things, to their unknown surfaces, those marvelous expressions of mathematical equality—which exist in even the most usual and everyday objects.

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), I-330

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 5

Explanation and Analysis



In this passage, D-503 looks up at the clear, blue sky in admiration. In the beginning of *We*, D-503's records reflect his unfaltering faith in logic and rationality as the best means by which to navigate the world around him. He admires the blue sky because it has nothing to hide: the blue sky's clarity and cloudlessness allows D-503 to "see to the very blue depths of things, to their unknown surfaces." D-503 finds this comforting, as living in the One State has taught him that certainty, structure, and complete predictability are the foundation of happiness.


D-503 continues to praise the blue sky, writing that, in it, he sees "those marvelous expressions of mathematical equality." The One State offers empiricism as the best method by which to gain a full, certain understanding of the world, and D-503 frequently evokes math to describe the world around him. In the beginning chapters of *We*, D-503 is still subservient to the One State, so he makes it a point to write his records as rationally as possible.

As the book unfolds and D-503 is corrupted by I-330, subjective, figurative language replaces mathematical analogies as D-503's primary rhetorical device. Throughout *We*, D-503 associates the color blue with clarity, finitude, and knowability, so this early passage is important in establishing the thematic undertones associated with blue objects.

●● And I don't know—perhaps it was somewhere in her eyes or eyebrows—there was a kind of strange and irritating X to her, and I couldn't pin it down, couldn't give it a numerical expression

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), O-90, I-330

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 8

Explanation and Analysis

While outside with O-90 on a scheduled walk during the Personal Hour, D-503 encounters I-330 for the first time. His initial impression of I-330 is one of skepticism and frustration. Living in the One State has instilled within D-503 the belief that all of the world is knowable through logic and rationality, and I-330's unreadable, mysterious demeanor completely dismantles this worldview. When D-503 writes about the "kind of strange and irritating X to her," he articulates the inability of math and logic to explain the unknowability of other humans. I-330 frustrates D-503 because—unlike most other aspects of his life—he can't use math to understand the mystery of her intentions.

When D-503 describes I-330's mysteriousness in terms of "X," he is attempting to describe her mysteriousness using a mathematical variable, which becomes a recurring symbol throughout *We*. Ultimately, D-503 realizes he can't attach "a numerical expression" to I-330's unreadable face, which challenges the assumptions he holds about humans' ability to know the world around them. Ciphers like D-503 who are subservient to the One State suppress any characteristics that might set them apart from others, but I-330 rejects the State's collectivist position, choosing instead to embrace individuality and uniqueness. I-330's unique demeanor renders her unfamiliar to D-503, suggesting that people cannot reliably be understood objectively.

Record 4 Quotes

●● With particular pleasure, I listened to our contemporary music [...]. Crystal chromatic degrees converging and diverging in infinite sequences and the summarizing chords of Taylor and Maclaurin formulae with a gait like Pythagorean pant-legs, so whole-toned and quadrilateral-heavy [...]. What magnificence! What unwavering predictability! And how pitiful that whimsical music of the Ancients, delimited by nothing except wild fantasy.

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), I-330

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 19

Explanation and Analysis

D-503 sits alongside the other ciphers in Auditorium 112. I-330 has just performed the emotional, "whimsical music of the Ancients" on the piano, and now everyone listens with great satisfaction to the mathematical, predictable music of the One State.

The One State's music conveys what the government values

most: empiricism, objectivity, and “unwavering predictability.” Because the One State’s music is based on mathematical formulas, it is completely devoid of human subjectivity and creativity. As an authoritarian government that prioritizes the welfare of the collective over the rights of individuals, the One State perceives the creativity and expressivity inherent in the Ancients’ music as a threat, so the government instills within ciphers the belief that such music is “pitiful” and “nothing except wild fantasy.” Expressive music evokes desire—and the One State knows that desire leads to dissatisfaction, and that dissatisfaction leads to rebellion. Thus, it is essential that the State demonizes such music in order to keep its citizens out of touch with and skeptical of their emotional, irrational urges.

align him with the Ancients, whose “savage epoch” the One State ridicules for its emphasis on individual freedom and irrationality.



The fact that D-503’s content, rational state is so easily interrupted by unwanted thoughts about his hands shows how hard he must work to suppress such thoughts. In his records, D-503 tries repeatedly to present himself as a model citizen, but moments like these show how contrived his identity truly is. Like so many other ciphers in the One State, D-503’s absolute rationality and subservience to the State is only possible when he suppresses his innate human desires. D-503 doesn’t like his shaggy paws because they betray his inner urge to acquire personal freedom and live life as a unique individual.

Record 5 Quotes

☞ ...Strange: I was writing today about the highest of heights in human history and all the while breathing the cleanest mountain air of thought, but, meanwhile, there were clouds and cobwebs and a cross, some kind of four-pawed X, inside me. Maybe it was my own paws, since they were in front of me on the table all this time—my shaggy paws. I don’t like talking about them and I don’t like them: they are evidence of the savage epoch. Could there actually be, within me—

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols:  

Page Number: 22

Explanation and Analysis

So far, D-503’s unsatisfied with his ability to record the history of the One State sufficiently enough for outsiders to understand, so he uses Record Five to discuss the “highest of heights in human history” with great precision and clarity, “all the while breathing the cleanest mountain air of thought.” D-503’s clear head and crisp, logical tone of voice he employs in his written history of the One State is very much in line with the State’s most revered principles of logic and rationality, so it comes as a shock to him when irrational, unconscious thoughts enter into his brain.

These irrational thoughts, which D-503 likens to “clouds and cobwebs and a cross, some kind of four-pawed X,” come about when D-503 unconsciously looks at his “own paws” that rest on the table in front of him. Throughout *We*, D-503’s hairy hands are a source of shame for him, as they

Record 7 Quotes

☞ Freedom and crime are so indissolubly connected to each other, like...well, like the movement of the aero and its velocity. When the velocity of the aero = 0, it doesn’t move; when the freedom of a person = 0, he doesn’t commit crime.

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 33

Explanation and Analysis

Here, D-503 opens the newspaper on his way to work and reads that there is growing evidence of a rebel organization who aims to free ciphers from the One State’s authoritarian regime. D-503 takes issue with the rebel group’s stance that ciphers need to be liberated from the One State, as he firmly supports the State’s belief that freedom and happiness are mutually exclusive. When individuals are allowed freedom, D-503 asserts, they are also afforded the opportunity to abuse that freedom. “Freedom and crime are so indissolubly connected to each other,” he reasons. In other words, freedom brings about more bad than good. Left to their own devices, humans will inevitably use freedom to do harm unto themselves and to others; therefore, it is the collective State’s job to limit the means by which individuals may be destructive.

In reality, there is no way to predict with absolute certainty how humans will make use of their personal freedom. This complicates the One State’s rationalization for denying its citizens individual freedom, however, so it must present the causal relationship between freedom and crime as a certain,

provable truth. D-503 attempts to do this when he compares freedom to velocity. The velocity of an aero can be measured and predicted: “When the velocity of an aero = 0, it doesn’t move.” D-503 attempts to claim that the same equation can be applied to humans and personal freedom: “when the freedom of a person = 0, he doesn’t commit a crime.” D-503’s comparison isn’t necessarily false, but it ignores the fact that what humans do when their freedom does not equal “0” can’t—nor should it—be thought of in such absolute, mathematical terms. Further, his analogy reflects the One State’s strategy of using logic as a means of controlling the unpredictability of human behavior by imposing limitations on personal freedom.

☞ Yes: I never went to the Guardians, no. But it’s not my fault that I’m sick.

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), The Skinny Doctor, I-330

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

I-330 has just invited D-503 to the Ancient House, after which she skipped work and encouraged him to do the same, reasoning that she has a doctor friend who can write them sick notes to excuse their absences. D-503 vows to report her illegal behavior to the Bureau of Guardians but, motivated by his growing attraction to I-330, he repeatedly fails to do so. Unwilling to accept that he would allow something as irrational as romance to prevent him from honoring his obligation to the One State, he externalizes his inability to report I-330, framing his inaction as the result of being “sick” as opposed to a consequence of his conscious decision to behave irrationally.

As I-330 continues to corrupt and manipulate D-503, he becomes more in touch with his individuality and begins to act, irrationally, on the human urges he was once able to suppress. D-503 refuses to accept that he could behave in ways that contradict the values of logic and rationality that the One State espouses, so he blames his behavior on a sickness to externalize and alienate himself from these new, uncharacteristically irrational actions.

Record 8 Quotes

☞ “Oh come on—knowledge! This knowledge of yours is utter cowardice. Yes, that’s it—really. You just want to build a little wall around infinity—and you’re afraid to look behind it! Peek over it and you’ll have to squeeze your eyes shut—ha!”

Related Characters: R-13 (speaker), I-330, O-90, D-503

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 37

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, D-503 runs into R-13 and O-90 at the Bureau of Guardians, where he has headed to try—again—to report I-330’s misbehavior to the Guardians. As D-503 frets over his inability to report I-330, R-13 jokingly accuses him of daydreaming, which upsets D-503 and inspires him to gush over how fully dedicated he is to the pursuit of knowledge, and how useless he considers jokes and daydreaming.



R-13 responds to D-503’s frantic monologue critically, suggesting that D-503’s obsession with knowledge and his rejection of less serious forms of inquiry aren’t noble pursuits but, rather, are indicative of his “utter cowardice.” R-13 thinks that D-503 hides behind knowledge and rationality because he is in denial that there are aspects of life he will never be able to understand. “You just want to build a little wall around infinity—and you’re afraid to look behind it!” argues R-13, mocking D-503’s total confidence in rationality’s ability to explain the world. Because the universe is infinite, there will always be limits to what humans may know and understand.

Choosing to believe that the universe is finite—and thus absolutely accessible and knowable—doesn’t make D-503 better equipped to understand the world around him; instead, it shows that he would rather “squeeze [his] eyes shut” and pretend that knowledge can provide answers to everything than accept that are things beyond his ability to grasp. R-13 views D-503’s complete faith in knowledge as a willful act of ignorance: like the One State, D-503 cannot accept the reality of the unknown, so he must harnesses a false sense of control over his world by enacting walls and ideological structures that place artificial limitations on the world.

Record 9 Quotes

☛ [The Ancients], however, worshipped their absurd, unknown God whereas we worship a non-absurd one—one with a very precise visual appearance. Their God didn't give them anything except an eternal, torturous journey; their God didn't think up anything more clever than that. And there's no apparent reason why it sacrificed itself. We, on the other hand, make sacrifices to our God, the One State—calm, carefully considered, reasonable sacrifices.

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 41

Explanation and Analysis

D-503 goes to the Cube Plaza to witness the public execution of a condemned cipher and reflects on the superiority of the One State's religion in comparison to that of the Ancients. To D-503, the Ancients' God was "absurd" because he was "unknown" to them—they had no means of visualizing their God, interpreting him empirically, and making sense of what they gained from worshipping him. The Ancients relied on faith, which is absurd to D-503 because it is completely untestable. What's more, the Ancients' God gave them only "an eternal, tortuous journey" in return for their sacrifices.


D-503 and the other ciphers worship and make sacrifices not to an amorphous, unqualifiable God, but to the One State. Worshipping the One State is not absurd to D-503 because it is extremely clear to him what he gets out of remaining loyal to the government: there are no unknowns over which to fret. Ciphers might make sacrifices to the One State, but D-503 finds these sacrifices to be "calm, carefully considered, [and] reasonable" because the One State provides its citizens with predictability, protection, and the comfort of a structured, painless life in return for their sacrifices.

Record 10 Quotes

☛ There were two of me. One me was the former, D-503, cipher D-503, but the other one...Before, he only just managed to stick his shaggy paws out of my shell, but now he has crawled out whole, the shell is cracked open, now shattered into pieces and...and what next?

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), I-330

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 50

Explanation and Analysis

D-503 has just become passionately intimate with I-330 after she invited him to her room and intoxicated him with alcohol. In his records, he describes the impassioned scene from a removed perspective in order to distance himself from the irrational, unacceptable behavior he has just exhibited. When D-503 insists that "there were two of me," he separates his "former," logical self from this new, "other" one who behaves impulsively and acts on his repressed, carnal desires. D-503's decision to separate his "other" self with the "shaggy paws" from the formerly subservient "cipher D-503" reflects his unwillingness to accept that he possesses the ability and willingness to act on barbaric, human urges.



Still, when he fears that the "other" D-503 "has crawled out whole, the shell cracked open, now shattered into pieces," he acknowledges that—whether he likes it, or not—there is no way to rid oneself of one's human desires. Once the "shell" of his interiority is cracked open, the desires that his subservience to the One State repressed can go unchecked.

Record 13 Quotes

☛ "I hate the fog. I am afraid of fog."

"That means you love it. You're afraid of it—because it is stronger than you. You hate it—because you are afraid of it. You love it—because you can't conquer it yourself. You see, you can only love the unconquerable."

Related Characters: I-330, D-503 (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 64

Explanation and Analysis

D-503 and I-330 are talking after I-330 calls D-503 requesting that he meet her on the corner at 12:00, even though their work hour begins at that time. D-503 resolves to meet her, but only so that he can reject her subversive advances in person. When he first approaches her on the corner, D-503 inwardly professes his hatred for her. Still, the fact that D-503 meets up with I-330 at all betrays his reluctant attraction to her.

After D-503 internally insists that he hates I-330, he says aloud: “I hate the fog. I am afraid of fog.” The reader is privy to D-503’s earlier hateful thoughts about I-330, so it’s logical to draw a direct link between D-503’s hatred of fog and his hatred of I-330: he insists that he hates both, but only because he is afraid of them. Like fog, I-330 is opaque and unknowable. Just as fog diminishes visibility, I-330’s unreadable facial expressions and cryptic words prevent D-503 from knowing her true intentions. D-503 hates I-330’s and the fog’s lack of clarity because they both present problems he cannot solve with the logic he so often relies on to navigate the world.

I-330 challenges D-503’s hatred of mystery when she suggests that he only hates the unknown because he sees it as “stronger” than him. The unknowable parts of the world are “unconquerable” to D-503, so he uses hatred as a coping mechanism to avoid failure. In a larger sense, the One State does the same thing: it fears—and perhaps knows—that its citizens will rebel, should they be exposed to fulfilling experiences like love, freedom, and desire, so it frames these experiences as fearsome and unpleasant to dissuade ciphers from pursuing these fulfilling but “unconquerable” experiences.

predictable structure of his schedule. In this later entry, however, he seems to regard the mechanical aspects of his day with indifference and melancholy. Though he “go[es] downstairs, mechanically, on the beat” with everyone else, he feels separate from them, as though he is “alone, fenced in by a soft, sound-muffling wall, and behind this wall is [his] world...” As D-503’s life becomes more erratic and unpredictable, the synchronized stasis the One State provides becomes increasingly harder for D-503 to accept without question.

On the one hand, he would like to return to his old, mechanical world, but the new knowledge he gains each time he cavorts with I-330 renders him unable to feel as completely a part of the One State as he used to feel. D-503’s melancholy shows that, though there are fulfilling aspects to individuality, such fulfillment also creates the potential for social alienation.

It’s also worth noting that D-503 evokes figurative language to illustrate the essence of his alienation, describing himself as “fenced in by a soft, sound-muffling wall.” As D-503 becomes more attuned to his individuality, he uses more subjective, figurative language in his journals.

Record 18 Quotes

☝☝ Through the fog, I see: long glass tables; sphere-heads are chewing in time, slowly and silently. From a distance, through the fog, a metronome is tapping, and under the regular caress of this music, I count to fifty, mechanically, together with everyone: the fifty mandatory masticatory motions to each bite. I go downstairs, mechanically, on the beat, and I write my name down in the exit book, as everyone does. But I feel: I live separately from everyone else, alone, fenced in by a soft, sound-muffling wall, and behind this wall is my world...

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), I-330

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 91

Explanation and Analysis

After D-503 discovers the secret passageway hidden in the Ancient House closet, he finds it impossible to return to his former acceptance of the One State’s mechanical way of life. He tries to go to work alongside the other ciphers, but his world is cloaked in a disorienting, confusing “fog,” and he feels horribly alienated from others.

Before, D-503 would have taken pleasure in the mechanical,

Record 21 Quotes

☝☝ Didn’t I populate these pages with all of you? Not long ago they were just four-cornered, white deserts. Without me, would you have ever been seen by all those that I am leading through the narrow footpaths of these written lines?

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), Old Woman

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 105

Explanation and Analysis

D-503 goes to the Ancient House to look for I-330, but the old woman insists that she is not there and that there is no reason for D-503 to go upstairs to the apartment. D-503 can’t bear to be apart from I-330, so, in his journals, he responds to the old woman angrily and irrationally, lashing out at her for delivering news he did not wish to hear. His anger soon becomes a general gripe directed at everyone who pains or inconveniences him: “Didn’t I populate these pages with all of you?” D-503’s question is thematically important because it shows how his journal entries have developed from objective logs which aim to praise the One

State to creative, generative pieces that illustrate the inner-workings of D-503's individual mind.

In proposing that he has "populate[d] these pages" of his logs, D-503 implicitly draws attention to the ways he has created subjective, interpretive renderings of the people meets in his daily life. Before D-503 took it upon himself to fill the pages of his journal, "they were just four-cornered, white deserts." Only after he considers others through his own unique, subjective lens do the pages take on a life of their own. D-503's narrative rendering of the world around him takes a "white," opaque world and lends it a sense of clarity and personal perspective.

"Without me," protests D-503, "would you have ever been seen by all those that I am leading through the narrow footpaths of these written lines?" In the beginning logs, D-503 claims to speak on behalf of the collective whole; now, however, he boldly insists that his writing presents his ideas, and his alone.

But, as D-503 muses in Record Twenty-Two, the One State's insistence that the world is finite and their civilization indestructible is as fragile as glass. The suppression and surveillance through which the One State maintains its society and controls its citizens is anything but impermeable. As the reader encounters time and time again, acts of rebellion and disruption motivated by ciphers' innate human urge to rebel and live as individuals repeatedly wreak havoc on the One State's precarious illusion of structure and control.

The "glass paradise" of the One State can only maintain the illusion of utopia: in reality, it is nothing more than the One State's construction of finitude. When faced with the uncontrollable, natural forces at play in the infinite universe, the One State's fragile illusion of control will crumble. Just as the "rumbling, burning rocks spill[] through infinity toward" the One State, so too do ciphers' suppressed drives threaten to destroy the State's illusion of control.

Record 22 Quotes

☝️ What if today's essentially irrelevant occurrence—what if all this is only the beginning, only the first meteorite in a whole series of rumbling, burning rocks, spilling through infinity toward our glass paradise?

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), I-330

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 113

Explanation and Analysis

As D-503 is walking outside, a condemned cipher escorted by Guardians creates a disturbance which causes them to punish him. A woman who D-503 thinks is I-330 demands that the Guardians stop, and they seize her. Impulsively, D-503 leaps forward to protect the woman before realizing that she is a stranger. He dwells on this disturbance and his involvement in it, wondering if more incidents like it are bound to occur in the future.

Zamyatin's rhetorical decision to describe the One State as a "glass paradise," emphasizes the utopian society's tenuousness and artificiality: it is built not upon sturdy, truthful values that acknowledge infinity and humanity's resultant inability to fully understand everything around them, but on the artificial, fragily constructed premise that the universe is finite and can be known completely through a strict adherence to logic, rationality, and subservience to the government.

Record 23 Quotes

☝️ With a ridiculous, muddled flood of words, I attempt to tell her that I am a crystal and that there is a door inside me and that I feel like a happy chair. But such nonsense comes out that I stop.

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), I-330

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 115

Explanation and Analysis

D-503 sits on the floor of his apartment, hugging I-330's legs to his body while she sits in a wooden chair. He's smitten with her by this point in *We*, and he tries to articulate his emotions with an impassioned rush of figurative language, though he is only partially and nonsensically able to do so.

D-503 acknowledges the irrationality of his articulated feelings, describing them as "a ridiculous, muddled flood of words." Still, his love for I-330 is so strong that he can't help but try to tell her how he feels. He makes use of metaphor when he describes himself as a crystal, and simile when he claims to "feel like a happy chair." After I-330 enters D-503's life, he increasingly exchanges his formerly dry, objective prose for more stylized prose that relies heavily on figurative language to convey his thoughts. This particular passage might be nonsensical, but it illustrates D-503's transformation from a soulless cog in the One State's

machine to an individual with unique emotions who employs creative means to articulate these emotions to others.

Record 25 Quotes

☛ What will tomorrow bring? What will I turn into tomorrow?

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), The Benefactor

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 129

Explanation and Analysis



D-503 frets over what the future holds in the aftermath of the Day of the One Vote, where chaos and violence erupted after dissenters chose to vote against the Benefactor's normally unanimous reelection. D-503's questions about the future get to the core of one of *We's* central themes: the fear of the unknown. Throughout the book, the One State maintains that logic, rationality, and subservience to the state are the best means by which to combat the fear and discomfort that comes with unknowability. The One State enforces structure and surveillance on its citizens so that they never have to worry about the unpredictable forces of the universe. Initially, D-503 embraces the One State's stance toward the unknown, relying on logic and knowledge in order to leave no questions unanswered and no matters up to chance.


The fact that D-503 chooses to actively question the certainty of the future and the role he will play in it shows that he is beginning to doubt the One State's false construction of the world as a finite place that can be known and understood completely. D-503 concludes Record Twenty-Five with two questions: "What will tomorrow bring? What will I turn into tomorrow?" He fails to offer any answers, suggesting that he is more willing to accept the world's uncertain, unpredictable elements. He cannot know what the future holds, and he must be willing to leave his questions about tomorrow unanswered.

Record 27 Quotes

☛☛ The sun...it wasn't our sun, evenly distributed along the mirrored surfaces of the streets: it was live splinters and incessantly jumping dots, blinding your eyes and spinning your head. And the trees were like candles jutting right up into the sky; like spiders on gnarled paws squatting on the earth; like mute, green fountains...And everything is crawling, stirring, rustling, and a sort of rough, little tangle rushes up underfoot and I am riveted, I can't take one step because it is not level under my feet—do you understand? It was not level but sort of repulsively soft, yielding, living, green, bouncy.

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), I-330

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 135-136

Explanation and Analysis


Here, I-330 takes D-503 beyond the Green Wall for the first time, and he records the unfamiliar sights he saw there. To D-503, the most striking feature of the natural world is its lack of organization: unlike in the One State, where the sun is "evenly distributed along the mirrored surfaces of the streets," the sun that shines down on the natural world does so in "live splinters and incessantly jumping dots." This lack of structure flusters D-503, "blinding [his] eyes and spinning [his] head," illustrating how the free world's lack of structure and organization disorients the self, rendering their position in the world more unknown and unfamiliar.

D-503's use of figurative language to describe the free world is extensive, illustrating how significantly freedom impacts his ability to get in touch with his individuality and uniqueness. He personifies the natural world when he writes about how alive it is: "everything is crawling, stirring, rustling." He evokes simile in his description of trees, stating that they "were like candles jutting right up into the sky; like spiders on gnarled paws squatting on the earth." D-503 also draws the reader's attention to the greenness of the natural world, likening the trees to mute, green fountains," and making note of how "living, green, [and] bouncy" everything around appears to be. Zamyatin regularly uses the color green to symbolize the free, natural world.

☞ In a blink, I am somewhere up high and underneath me are heads and heads, and gaping, screaming mouths, and arms pouring upward and then falling. This was exceptionally strange, intoxicating: I felt myself above everyone, I was myself, a separate thing, a world; I stopped being a component, as I had been, and I became the number one.

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), I-330

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 138

Explanation and Analysis

I-330 takes D-503 to the world that lies beyond the Green Wall and the One State. There, she stands atop a yellow rock and addresses a group of hairy, free humans. She praises MEPHI and informs the free humans that, as the Builder of the Integral, D-503 is of vital importance to their mission to overthrow the One State and therefore must be celebrated.



Despite his earlier contentedness to be part of the One State's collective whole, D-503 takes pleasure in the fulfillment he feels at being the object of attention of so many "heads and heads, and gaping, screaming mouths, and arms pouring upward and falling." These free people treat D-503 as "a separate thing, a world" in himself, and he finds their direct attention "exceptionally strange," though "intoxicating," just the same.

D-503 is happy to "[become] number one," and his positive response to individuality emphasizes how drastically his personality and worldview have changed over the course of *We*. Before, D-503 was appalled by I-330's bold sense of uniqueness. As he allows his love for her to corrupt him, however, he begins to embrace the fulfillment inherent in individuality and human ingenuity.

Record 28 Quotes

☞ "Who knows who you are...A person is a novel: you don't know how it will end until the very last page. Otherwise, it wouldn't be worth reading to the very end..."

Related Characters: I-330 (speaker), U, D-503

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

After I-330 takes D-503 to the other side of the Green Wall and introduces him to the hairy, free people and to MEPHI's aim to steal the Integral, he sits with her in his room and they talk about what D-503's new knowledge means for their relationship. Because D-503 now knows that I-330 is involved with MEPHI, she argues that she is beholden to him, as he could betray her and her organization at any moment.

D-503 insists that he's not who he used to be, but I-330 reminds him that identity and individuality are more complicated and nuanced than this: "Who knows who you are...A person is a novel: you don't know how it will end until the very last page." Ultimately, people are unknowable—even to themselves. To believe that one can predict how they will act in the future is an unrealistic assumption to make.

The unknowability of others and the self can be pleasurable, as in the whirlwind experience of reading a novel, but it can also take a sharper, more threatening turn: I-330's remark that "it wouldn't be worth reading to the very end" also foreshadows the double betrayal she and D-503 will ultimately undergo by the end of *We*. Although Zamyatin never reveals I-330's true motivations with a satisfying degree of certainty, D-503 learns that I-330 was likely only pursuing him in order to get closer to the Integral. Learning this knowledge crushes D-503, making him more amenable to undergoing the Operation. After the procedure, he freely condemns I-330 as a traitor, and she is tortured and later executed.

Record 30 Quotes

☞ "Well, which final revolution do you want then? There isn't a final one. Revolutions are infinite. Final things are for children because infinity scares children and it is important that children sleep peacefully at night..."

Related Characters: I-330 (speaker), D-503

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 153

Explanation and Analysis

D-503 meets I-330 at the Ancient House and she finally tells him about MEPHI, its aims to overthrow the One State, and her involvement with all of this. D-503 responds skeptically, reasoning that MEPHI's aims cannot be achieved: overthrowing the One State would be considered

a revolution, and—according the government’s propaganda—the One State’s revolution was the last of its kind.

I-330 takes issue with D-503’s criticism, however. Because the universe is infinite, it must be true that “Revolutions are infinite,” as well. D-503’s claim that he knows that the One State’s revolution was the last of its kind rests on the false premise that the universe is finite and, therefore, can be predicted with absolute certainty. The idea that anyone can predict the future of the world’s revolutions is a childish coping mechanism the One State employs to comfort and console its citizens and to assure that they remain loyal to the State.

I-330’s observation that “it is important that children sleep peacefully at night,” sheds light on the One State’s motivation for teaching its ciphers that the universe is finite. When ciphers listen to their government and reject the existence of infinity, they can sleep peacefully. When ciphers sleep peacefully, they shut their eyes to all that is fearsome and unknowable about life. I-330 suggests that, to loyal ciphers, the benefits of peace and comfort are worth the cost of personal freedom, and she finds this trade-off to be inadequate and childish.

Record 31 Quotes

☝☝ The beauty of a mechanism is in its steadfast, precise, and pendulum-like rhythm. But then you, who have been nurtured by Taylorist systems from childhood, haven’t you grown up to be pendulum precise?

With one exception: mechanisms don’t have imaginations.

Have you ever seen an inanely dreaming and distant smile break across the physiognomy of a pump cylinder while it was at work? Have you ever heard of a crane, in the nighttime, in the hours allocated for repose, turning over in agitation and sighing?

No!

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 157

Explanation and Analysis

The day after dissenters wreak havoc on the Day of the One Vote by voting against the Benefactor, the *State Gazette* publishes an article to promote the Operation—a procedure that removes the brain’s capacity for imagination.

The *State Gazette* promotes the Operation first by

addressing the “beauty” of machinery. Machines are beautiful because their “steadfast, precise, and pendulum-like rhythm” makes them predictable and content. If all of the One State’s ciphers were machines, the disturbances that occurred on yesterday’s holiday could have been prevented entirely. The One State’s ciphers might have grown up “nurtured by Taylorist systems” of efficiency, but their capacity for imagination leaves room for error and agitation. Ciphers who can imagine and think creatively also can respond critically to the One State’s ideologies, and this opens the door for future moments of dissent and chaos to occur.

The One State wants its ciphers to undergo the Operation so that it doesn’t have to deal with future uprisings, but it frames its argument to seem as though receiving the Operation is most beneficial to individual ciphers. Imagination might bring about something pleasant, like a “distant smile,” but it also can result in negative emotions like the “agitation and sighing” that accompanies a bad dream. Should ciphers receive the Operation, argues the *State Gazette*, they would be able to exist free of pain and suffering. Machines like cranes and pump cylinders might not have the capacity to feel or think freely, but they also don’t bear the human burdens of desire and discomfort; should ciphers undergo the Operation, they, too, could exist without the burden of human desire.

Record 32 Quotes

☝☝ A ridiculous feeling but I was sure of it: yes, I must help. Ridiculous, because it was a duty and yet another crime. Ridiculous, because a white duty cannot, at the same time, be a black duty and a crime—they can’t coincide. Life is either blackless or whiteless and its color only depends on a basic, logical premise. And if the premise is that I gave her a child illegally...

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), O-90

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 167

Explanation and Analysis

While walking outside, D-503 encounters a crowd of mechanical, mindless post-Operation ciphers who try to lead unoperated ciphers into the Auditorium to undergo the procedure. Frightened, D-503 flees. He runs into O-90, who is also hiding from the mechanical ciphers in order to protect her unborn child.

D-503 is struck by the “ridiculous feeling” that it’s his duty to help O-90. He finds this assessment difficult to explain, as it runs counter to logical reasoning that he could use a new crime (sneaking O-90 over the Green Wall and to safety) to negate the wrongness of a previous crime (impregnating O-90 in the first place). D-503’s assessment of reality is not nuanced enough to carve out a space for the gray areas of life: “Life is either blackless or whiteless,” he asserts, “and its color only depends on a basic, logical premise.” To D-503, the premise of his predicament is that he “gave her a child illegally,” so any subsequent step he takes to help her cannot be a “white duty,” as its intentions will always be tainted by the original illegality of the original crime.



But D-503’s affection for O-90—and perhaps even a touch of paternal responsibility—clouds his judgment, causing him to entertain the notion of committing “yet another crime” by helping O-90 flee the One State. D-503 remains conflicted about his growing tendency to act on emotions and human urges and doesn’t know what to do, so he thinks about his predicament as though it were “a basic, logical premise” rather than a human, moral issue.

Record 35 Quotes

☝☝ “Because I...I was afraid, that if she was...that they would have...you would have...you would stop lov...Oh, I can’t—I couldn’t have!”

I understood: this was the truth. A ridiculous, funny, human truth!

Related Characters: D-503, U (speaker), I-330

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 185

Explanation and Analysis

After the One State shuts down MEPHI’s attempt to steal the Integral, D-503 remembers seeing U looking through his journals and realizes it must have been her that reported MEPHI’s plans to the authorities. D-503 resolves to kill her to prove to I-330 that he remains loyal to her and the rebels.

D-503 traps U in his room and she confesses that she betrayed MEPHI; however, she chose not to turn over I-330’s name, as she knew that doing so would anger D-503 to such a degree that he would stop loving her. D-503 most often associates U with subservience to the One State and its tenets of logic and rationality, so to see that U remains incapable of suppressing her emotional urges shows that



even ciphers who appear completely loyal to the One State cannot fully extinguish their human desires—they can only repress them. If she wanted to be fully loyal to the One State, U should have told the authorities everything, including I-330’s name; yet, she chose to omit I-330’s name from her confession for fear of the romantic consequences naming I-330 would have for U’s relationship with D-503.

When D-503 realizes that love motivated U’s actions, he sees it as “the truth. A ridiculous, funny, human truth!” In describing U’s emotions as “a human truth,” D-503 acknowledges that humanity possesses an innate drive to act on their repressed desires, and that not even the One State’s authoritarian rule can fully rid its citizens of such instinctual drives.

Record 36 Quotes

☝☝ “The most merciful Christian, God himself, slowly burning all the recalcitrants in the fires of Hell—is he not an executioner? And were there really fewer burned at the stake by the Christians than Christians who were burned themselves? And yet, understand this, and yet, they glorified this God as the God of Love. Absurd? No, the opposite: it is testimony, written in blood, to the ineradicable good sense of a human. Even then—wild, shaggy as they were—they understood: true algebraic love toward humankind is inhuman—and the sure sign of truth is its cruelty.”

Related Characters: The Benefactor (speaker), D-503

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 187

Explanation and Analysis

After MEPHI’s failed attempt to steal the Integral, the Benefactor demands that D-503 stand before him and confess to the crimes he tried to commit against the One State. D-503 admits to his disloyalty, and the Benefactor delivers a monologue in which he condemns D-503’s behavior and reinforces that cruelty toward individuals is necessary in order to ensure the strength of the collective whole.


The Benefactor compares the sacrifices ciphers must make to the One State to the sacrifices Ancient Christians made to their God. Despite the pain Christianity brought upon its followers through human suffering and persecution, Christians still regarded their god as “the God of Love.” Although this might seem contradictory, the Benefactor

assures D-503 that it is just to call the Christian God loving because individual sacrifices are “testimony, written in blood, to the good sense of a human.” The Benefactor suggests that humanity needs cruelty and the fear of consequences to maintain the strength of the larger institutions—like religion or the government—that keep their morals and values in check.

To the Benefactor, “true algebraic love toward humankind is inhuman—and the sure sign of truth is its cruelty.” In other words, allowing humans to govern themselves gives them the opportunity to run wild. Without the threat of punishment to govern their actions, all of humanity would destroy itself slowly. In the Benefactor’s assessment, to allow for “true algebraic love” at the cost of humankind’s mass suicide is far crueler than punishing the relatively few individuals who choose to misbehave.

☛ If only I had a mother like the Ancients: my—yes, exactly—my own mother. She would know me as—not the Builder of the Integral, and not cipher D-503, and not a molecule of the One State—but simply a fragment of humanity, a fragment of herself, trampled, squashed, thrown away...”

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker), I-330, The Benefactor

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 189

Explanation and Analysis

D-503 is overcome with misery after being scolded by the Benefactor for his role in MEPHI’s attempt to steal the Integral. Life has become too much for him to handle since I-330 entered his life and coerced him into betraying the One State, and nothing makes sense anymore. He wants to end it all.

In the midst of his suffering, he wishes he “had a mother like the Ancients.” In the One State, children are owned and raised by the collective State, not as the property of their respective parents, so D-503 would not have known his biological mother. Still, he longs for this missing maternal connection, expanding his wish to specify that he wants not just *any* mother, but his “own mother.” Despite all the pain acquiring an individual soul has brought upon D-503 over the course of *We*, what he wants more than anything is to be

seen as an individual: “She would know me as,” he says of his mother, “not the Builder of the Integral, and not cipher D-503, and not a molecule of the One State—but simply a fragment of humanity, a fragment of herself.” D-503’s use of the word “fragment” reflects the relative insignificance of individuals in the grander scheme of life.

Still, though, D-503’s wish to be known as an individual—despite the fact that individuals are so unimportant as to be “trampled, squashed, thrown away”—speaks to humankind’s innate drive to be known and treated as individual creatures with unique feelings and needs. The One State’s dehumanization of its ciphers leaves D-503 feeling unfulfilled, and in his heart he longs to be loved and seen for who he is—not just for what he can *do* for the larger cause.

Record 40 Quotes

☛ And I hope we will win. More than that: I know we will win. Because reason should win.

Related Characters: D-503 (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 203

Explanation and Analysis

In Record Forty, D-503’s writing returns to its original, hyper-rational tone. After the One State forces him to undergo the Operation, he becomes a mindless, mechanical shell of the unique, creative individual into which he developed over the course of his records.

The final words of *We* are evidence that D-503 once more embraces the One State’s collectivist ideology. D-503’s repeated use of the word “we” illustrates his return from an alienated individual to an anonymous, enslaved member of the One State’s collective whole. The certainty with which D-503 articulates his optimism in the One State’s ability to “win” and remain in power illustrates how strongly he believes in the One State’s ideology that the world is finite and can be known and understood, completely, through logic and rationality. When D-503 writes “I know we will win,” he expresses his complete confidence in the One State’s ability to remain in power and defeat those who challenge it.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

RECORD 1

The narrator opens Record One by including a copy of an announcement posted in the *State Gazette*. The announcement reveals that in 120 days, construction of the Integral will be complete, and it will venture into outer space to help the One State gain control of the entire universe.

The announcement addresses its readers directly, informing them that it will be their task to encounter alien civilizations that live “in the savage state of freedom, and subjugate[e] them to the beneficial yoke of reason.” It is only through reason, claims the *State Gazette*, that such civilizations may acquire “mathematically infallible happiness.” The *State Gazette* makes this announcement in the name of the Benefactor and ends its proclamation by praising the One State, ciphers, and the Benefactor.

The narrator is excited to be “taming a wild zigzag [...] into a straight line.” He reveals that he is D-503, the Builder of the Integral, and one of the One State’s few mathematicians. D-503 states that his records will be a testament to what “we” think—*We* will also be the title of his records. D-503 feels his cheeks burn as he recounts how, after he pours his thoughts out into this records, they will be taken from him and handed over to the One State.

The One State’s fear of the unknown drives it to force its ideologies on the whole rest of the world—the One State cannot accept that unknown civilizations espouse conflicting, unknown ways of life, because this would allow for the possibility of confrontations and rebellions from outside forces.



The One State condemns freedom as “savage” because it allows for individuals to make destructive decisions that harm themselves as well as the collective whole. Where there is freedom, there is the possibility that individuals will act in unpredictable, harmful ways. Subjugation to reason rids individuals of free will, but also rids them of the capacity to act negatively and irrationally.



*D-503’s position as a mathematician signifies that he is especially attuned to and in favor of the One State’s rigorous adherence to logic and rationality. His decision to title his records *We* shows that he is a firm believer in the One State’s position to value the collective welfare over individuals’ rights. Even in his personal journals, he believes he is speaking on behalf of the collective “we.”*



RECORD 2

It’s Spring. A wild expanse of nature sits beyond the **Green** Wall. The sky is blue and cloudless, and D-503 imagines that “the Ancients” might have written silly, poetic musings to evoke the beauty of clouds. In contrast, D-503 and his cohort love the cloudless sky for its “sterile” and clear quality: it allows its viewer to see all, as though it were made of glass, like the “Green Wall,” and like all of the One State’s architectural structures. D-503 praises the ability to know all, likening it to “those marvelous expressions of mathematical equality.”

D-503 frequently uses colors to convey truths about the world around him. Blue, for instance, evokes clarity and certainty. When the sky is blue, there is no room for doubt and suffering: all is visible. His criticism of the “Ancients” poetic musings on clouds (pre-One State citizens who embrace irrationality and uncertainty) stems from their belief that there is beauty in uncertainty and clouded ambiguity. This passage may be subtly alluding to Romantic poet William Wordsworth’s poem “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud.” In contrast, clear, blue skies and the One State’s sterile, precise architectural structures are beautiful to D-503 because they are like “marvelous expressions of mathematical equality.” They leave no room for misinterpretation and subjectivity.



As an example of this, D-503 recounts that he was at the hangar earlier that morning working on the Integral when he noticed the beauty of the machines working around him. The machines were operating predictably and mechanically, which D-503 regards as beautiful because it is an example of “non-free movement” and “subordination.”

D-503’s musing are interrupted by the click of an intercom, which alerts him to O-90’s imminent arrival: the two of them have a walk scheduled together that afternoon. D-503 regards O-90 pleasantly, noting her round, soft, and welcoming appearance and demeanor. She is agreeable and kind in his company, and her mouth is a “pink O.” She is quite short, at “10 centimeters below the Maternal Norm.” They greet each other and venture outside for their walk.

It’s crowded outside, as people normally use the “Personal Hour” after lunch to walk when it’s nice outside. D-503 can hear the “March of the One State” flowing from the Music Factory. He reveals that ciphers are required to march in synchronized step. They also wear “pale bluish unifs” with badges that list the respective numeric identifies assigned to them by the One State. D-503 observes the order and uniformity that surrounds him and relishes in its “quadratic harmony,” especially in comparison to the earlier, irregular chaos of 20th-century civilizations.

Just then, an unfamiliar woman with sharp teeth laughs and tells D-503 that his revelatory, “inspired” face and laughter reminds her of a mythical god gazing upon his newly created world. D-503 is annoyed by the woman, observing that she has “a strange and irritating X to her.” D-503 reads the badge of her uniform: I-330.

*Machines are beautiful to D-503 because their movements are pre-planned, programmed, and predictable. In the beginning sections of *We*, D-503 finds beauty in “subordination,” and discomfort and frustration in freedom and unpredictability.*



*The color pink is otherwise associated with the pink tickets ciphers must obtain before they can engage in scheduled, state-sanctioned “Sex Days” with other ciphers. When D-503 describes O-90’s mouth as pink, he implicitly associates her with subordination to the One State’s rules and regulations. It’s important to note that O-90 is “10 centimeters below the Maternal Norm.” Throughout *We*, she expresses a deep longing to have a baby, but is unable to act on this desire because the One State prohibits it.*



The “Personal Hour” should be taken somewhat ironically: although the government presents it as being an hour of free time, it’s closely monitored and regulated by the One State, so it’s only “personal” on a symbolic level. D-503’s observation of the One State’s beauty as “quadratic” underscores his—and, by extension, the One State’s—belief that order and subjugation is beautiful and irregularity and randomness is ugly.



When I-330 describes D-503’s face as “inspired,” it makes him uncomfortable because it suggests that his internal thoughts are personal and subjective: her observation positions him as an individual and not a mere cog in the One State’s collectivist machine. When he says that she has “a strange and irritating X to her,” he means that her face is unreadable and, thus, that her thoughts and intentions cannot be known. D-503 frequently describes the unknown in terms of the mathematical variable “X,” underscoring his tendency to observe the world through a rational, mathematical lens. In using the variable “X,” D-503 also implies that everything should be solvable, like an algebraic equation.



D-503 notes how sharp and angular I-330 is compared to O-90. He sees that she has sharp, **white** teeth. He also notes a male cipher walking next to her, who has a bent body that resembles an S. D-503 becomes increasingly riled in I-330's presence and rattles off more logic and praises his world's scientific advancements, promising that in the future everyone will look even more identical. I-330 asks D-503 to show her his hands, which further embarrasses him, as his hands are shaggy: "**Monkey hands**," he calls them.

When D-503 emphasizes how starkly I-330's sharp, angular frame contrasts with O-90's soft, round frame, it signifies to the reader that the women are foils for one another. While O-90 is round, pleasing, and subservient to the One State, I-330 is sharp, threatening, and—as the reader and D-503 later learn—opposed to the One State. The whiteness of I-330's teeth recalls the whiteness of clouds, evoking the uncertainty and frustration with which D-503 regards her. D-503 is embarrassed by his shaggy "monkey hands" because they align him with the free, barbaric Ancients and distance him from the clean, subordinate One State ciphers.



The Accumulator Tower bell strikes 17:00, and the Personal Hour is over. Before the foursome parts ways, I-330 tells D-503 to drop by Auditorium 112 the day after tomorrow. He protests that he doesn't know whether he'll be given instructions to do so, but she confidently asserts that he will. Before O-90 leaves, she tells D-503 she wishes he could come over and "lower the blinds," even though he can't, because it's not yet their assigned Sex Day. D-503 kisses her clear, **blue** eyes, and they part ways.

When D-503 notes O-90's blue eyes, he embraces her clarity and knowability. O-90 is predictable—and therefore comforting—to D-503 in a way that I-330 is not.



RECORD 3

The next day, D-503 fears he hasn't written yesterday's records as clearly and as detailed as he'd have liked. For this reason, he will now fill in the blanks for a readership unfamiliar with history's more recent events—like the fact that no ciphers have stepped beyond the **Green** Wall since the Two-Hundred-Year War.

D-503's obsession with composing his records as clearly and detailed as possible shows how readily he embraces a rational, empirical relationship to the world. Zamyatin's decision to make the Wall that separates the One State from the rest of the world green evokes nature and freedom.



To D-503, his current world is merely a continuation of humanity's journey from a nomadic to a settled lifestyle. Civilization's journey toward "settledness" was the result of the Two-Hundred-Year War, in which roads were destroyed and urban centers became cut off from one another. At first, this was likely difficult to adjust to, but D-503 can't imagine life without the **Green** Wall or the Table of Hours—an organizing mechanism for the One State's ciphers, assigning purpose to every hour of their day. Ciphers eat, sleep, work, exercise, and even engage in two hours of personal time according to the Table's schedule. D-503 sees these two hours as a flaw, and he's confident that one day the table will account for every hour of the day.

The One State can only achieve a sense of "settledness" if it exists in a vacuum. By destroying roads, the One State effectively cut itself off from the rest of the world, suggesting that its citizens are only obedient because they have no knowledge or possibility of a free, unmonitored way of life. The One State knows that, given the choice, ciphers would inevitably act on their human, irrational urges, so they must deny them the option to do so.



The Table is good because it disallows for freedom. D-503 suggests that freedom is nothing more than “mass murder,” as, left to their own devices, people would engage in destructive, criminal behavior. He finds it ludicrous that earlier governments hadn’t taken away their citizens’ freedom sooner, instead letting them run wild and destroy themselves slowly.

D-503 anticipates that his readers might believe he’s joking, but he’s not: he knows that life used to be this way, as One-State Science confirms it was so. Even today, there are “minor incidentals” that hint at the disorder of earlier civilization, though they are quickly “repaired,” as the Benefactor and the Guardians repair and maintain order in the One State. D-503 recalls that he’s seen the S-shaped man he saw earlier with I-330 around the Bureau of Guardians, insinuating that this man is one of the Guardians. The sleep bell rings at 22:30, and D-503 finishes his record for the night.

RECORD 4

Discord and unpredictability enter into D-503’s formerly clear life the next day when he is actually called to Auditorium 112, an event of which there was a mere 3/20,000 likelihood of happening. When D-503 arrives, he and the other ciphers rise and sing the Hymn of the One State. Over a loudspeaker, a voice tells the story of a barbarian and a barometer as a screen displays images to accompany the tale. The barbarian observed that every time the barometer’s mercury level indicated rain, it rained; when he wanted it to rain, thus, he emptied out enough mercury so that the level mercury level read rain. The barbarian’s reasoning might be archaic, but it demonstrated logic and a knowledge of cause and effect, which was civilization’s first step toward achieving the One State’s level of rational sophistication.

The loudspeaker shifts to the assembly’s main topic: music. The voice talks about the Ancients’ music, likening it to the product of “a strange form of epilepsy.” On stage, the curtains part to reveal a piano. I-330, dressed in a tight black dress, walks up to the instrument and plays some of the Ancients’ “convulsive” music. All around D-503, most ciphers laugh at the ludicrousness and unpredictability of such music, but D-503 is initially emotionally stirred by I-330’s performance. He notes her pale skin and her teeth. D-503 knocks himself from his emotional trance and begins to laugh with the rest of the ciphers as he registers how silly and emotional the music sounds.

D-503 equates freedom with the ability to act on desires. The One State can’t eliminate ciphers’ drives to act destructively and criminally: it can only repress them.



D-503’s flippant description of instances of insubordination as “minor incidentals” shows that he’s in denial about humankind’s desire to rebel. He doesn’t want to believe that rebellion and freedom are humanity’s default condition, so he brushes off moments of rebellion as incidental.



It’s discomfoting to D-503 that he’s called to Auditorium 112 because this means that I-330’s prediction defied statistical odds. I-330’s unlikely prediction means that D-503 cannot rely completely on statistics and mathematics to navigate his way through life, as there’s always the chance that unlikely events will occur. The story about the barbarian’s rudimentary engagement with cause and effect is meant to suggest that logic and rationality are humanity’s default condition—not irrationality and freedom.



Describing the Ancients’ music as “a strange form of epilepsy” aligns human creativity and ingenuity with sickness and abnormality. Still, D-503’s initially emotional response to I-330’s performance shows that there is something innately beautiful to be found in human gestures of subjective expressivity. D-503’s minor slip here is an early sign of his romance with I-330 and his path toward defying the One State’s demands.



After this, the ciphers listen to their society's contemporary music. This music is derived of "Taylor and Maclaurin formulae" and is "whole-toned and quadrilateral-heavy." D-503 relishes in its mechanical predictability. After this second performance, the ciphers exist the auditorium. D-503 remembers that O-90 is scheduled to come over in an hour, as it is their Sex Day, and the only occasion on which they may lower the blinds of their transparent, glass-walled apartments. At 22:00, D-503 tears O-90's pink ticket and the two have brief, mechanical sex. Afterward, D-503 shows her his records. O-90 suddenly cries, which D-503 attributes to her wishing he could give her a baby, something she cries over regularly. He also wonders whether her tears could be in response to the new woman before deciding that would be stupid.

Colin Maclaurin was an 18th-century Scottish mathematician known for his *Treatise of Fluxions*, in which he explores Taylor series, or mathematical functions that involve the representation of an infinite sum of terms. The One State's decision to compose music in terms of algebraic and geometric functions eliminates the need for human ingenuity and aligns musical beauty with predictability and mathematical precision. On another note, O-90's desire to have a baby shows that she is not completely subservient to the One State: she still harbors rebellious, emotional, human urges.



RECORD 5

The next day, D-503 again expresses discontentment with his records. He's been addressing his readers too familiarly, as though they were his friend R-13, not alien creatures with no inside knowledge of the One State's intricacies. Because everything about the One State is a given to D-503, it's hard for him to regard it from an outsider's unfamiliar perspective; still, he resolves to try to do so.

D-503's tendency to criticize his records as inadequately empirical shows his repressed fear that he is not as rational and predictable as he would like to think he is.



D-503 begins his history of the One State by transcribing an ancient adage: "Love and hunger are the masters of the world." He explains that his ancestors conquered Hunger—and gained control of the entire world—through the Two-Hundred-Year War, a battle waged between the city and the country. Thirty-five years before the One State's founding, D-503's ancestors invented petroleum-based food, which allowed for 0.2 percent of earth's population to survive. While the survival rate was small, it allowed for the One State's population to live in complete bliss, so D-503 sees it as ethically defensible.

The fact that the One State feeds its ciphers petroleum-based food shows that it regards them more as machines that run on oil than as human beings. D-503's defense of the Two-Hundred-Year War's mass casualties reflects the One State's philosophy that the collective whole's welfare is far more important than the deaths of individuals.



D-503 reasons that bliss and envy are "the numerator and the denominator of the fraction known as happiness." Thus, the One State had to wipe out envy so that the sacrifices incurred during the war would be worth it. After, the One State set out to destroy love. In the One State, thus, there is no monogamy: all ciphers have a right to other ciphers for sexual relations. The State studies its citizens' hormone levels at the Bureau of Sex, determining how often and when ciphers may be granted Sex Days. On one's assigned Sex Day, they make a request to "make use of" a particular cipher, and the government gives them a pink ticket. Such as system disallows for jealousy or love to develop and peace reigns. The One State's system makes the Ancients' "innumerable silly tragedies" an impossibility, so ciphers are better able to live lives of maximized productivity and efficiency.

D-503 thinks that human emotions like bliss and envy can be quantified and predicted in mathematical terms. The One State might claim that it wiped out irrational human emotions like envy and love, but it is really only able to manage them via surveillance and repression. Zamyatin's rhetorical decision to frame sexual encounters between ciphers as them "mak[ing] use of" one another illustrates how the One State dehumanizes its citizens. Ciphers don't connect with one another in sexual encounters—they only "make use of" the objectified bodies of one another.



D-503 reveals that as he was recording the progress of civilization he felt “some kind of four-pawed **X**, inside” him. This could’ve been the result of unconsciously spotting his “**shaggy**” hands perched on the desk before him. He hates his hands because they remind him of his ancestors, the pre-One State barbaric Ancients. He wants to cross out this observation, but leaves it in his records, as he wants them to be as exact and precise as possible. Defensively, D-503 passes off his “X” feeling as a fluke.

When D-503 writes about the “four-pawed X” inside him, he’s referring to his repressed human instincts. D-503’s refusal to ever talk about his urges suggests that he’s in denial about them. He must compartmentalize his impulses, considering them only in abstract, externalized mathematical terms because he cannot accept the possibility that he harbors irrational, unpredictable desires within himself.



RECORD 6

D-503 reiterates that he will be completely open in his records. Therefore, he must admit that, unfortunately, not everything in the One State has reached its “ideal” state, in which nothing unpredictable happens. Unforeseen circumstances still arise; earlier today, for example, D-503 read in the paper that a Celebration of Justice is scheduled to take place on the Cube Plaza in two days—the resultant consequence of a cipher choosing to disrupt the One State’s plans for progress.

D-503 wrote earlier that unanticipated disruptions are rare, yet one of these incidents has occurred with the first six records of his journals. This suggests that insubordination is more common than D-503 would like to admit, and that he is in denial about ciphers’ unconditional allegiance to the State.



What’s more, D-503 recalls, a different, unforeseen circumstance greeted him during the Personal Hour that day when he received a phone call from I-330, inviting him to the Ancient House. He doesn’t want to go with D-503, and yet—or perhaps because of it—he agrees. Shortly after, the two of them fly in an aero to the Ancient House. A cloud appears before them in the formerly clear, **blue** sky. D-503 spots blotches of green on the ground beyond the Green Wall.

The cloud’s appearance in the formerly blue, clear sky foreshadows the uncertainty and irrationality that will increasingly dismantle D-503’s life as the novella unfolds. It becomes a frequent habit of D-503’s to go along with I-330 despite (supposedly) not wanting anything to do with her. Still, his actions reveal his repressed desire for her.



D-503 and I-330 arrive at the Ancient House and an old, wrinkled woman greets them. It appears that I-330 is a frequent visitor. The two of them climb up a staircase, and I-330 says she loves the old woman, “Just because,” even though the State forbids loving for the simple sake of loving. D-503 responds, “It’s clear...” but catches himself saying the word “clear.” I-330 hasn’t noticed: her eyes are shut off like lowered blinds. D-503 wonders what she’s thinking and why she invited him to the Ancient House.

The One State denounces loving someone “just because” because love for love’s sake doesn’t fulfill a specific task and does nothing to advance the welfare of the State. When I-330’s eyes shut off, D-503 can’t predict what she’s thinking, and he feels alienated from her.



They enter through an opaque door into an apartment, whose walls are **dark-blue**. There are multicolored books in the room, a candelabra, and a Buddha statue. The room appears disorganized to D-503, and he's uncomfortable, though I-330 loves the room—she says it's her favorite one in the Ancient House. They venture further into the apartment. D-503 notes that I-330's smile contains "that annoying **X**." He becomes infuriated and wants to argue with her. They stand before a mirror and D-503 looks at I-330's eyes: they are "terrifyingly dark," and "unknown" to him. D-503 is disturbed to see himself in the mirror. I-330 instructs D-503 to go into the next room. She reappears wearing an old-fashioned yellow dress. He accuses her of wanting to be "original," which goes against the One State's regulations.

I-330 asks D-503 what he'd do if she asked him to stay in the Ancient House with her after the Personal Hour ends. She knows a doctor at the Bureau of Medicine who will write him a phony prescription to get him out of work. D-503 is appalled at I-330's foolish and risky behavior. Unfazed, I-330 picks up the phone and arranges for an unknown someone to meet her at the Ancient House. D-503 takes the aero back to the One State. Although he had a Personal Hour at 21:30, he fails to report I-330 to the Bureau of Guardians, though he promises himself that he'll do so tomorrow, as misbehavior must be reported within 48 hours.

RECORD 7

That night, D-503 dreams about his afternoon at the Ancient House with I-330. He wakes to **bluish** light and the glass fixtures of his transparent apartment, which is comforting to him. He thinks something must be wrong with him, as the One State views dreams as a sickness. He feels as though there is a "foreign body" in his brain.

At 7:00, it's time to get up. D-503 watches other people in adjacent glass apartments also rising for work, which comforts him. He regards Taylor as the "most brilliant" Ancient figure. After breakfast, D-503 thinks about his earlier dream. He's glad he refused I-330 yesterday.

Nothing in the One State is opaque—it's all transparent and made of glass—so it's significant that the Ancient House is constructed of opaque, impenetrable surfaces. The plethora of colors D-503 observes in the Ancient House also stands in direct contrast to the One State, where everything is clear and colorless. The Ancient House's overly colorful appearance reflects the chaotic, unordered state of the pre-One State world. It's disarming for D-503 to see himself in the mirror because it forces him to regard himself as an individual person with unique physical traits rather than a faceless cog in the One State machine. In contrast to the identical blue uniforms (uniforms) the One State forces ciphers to wear, I-330's yellow dress makes D-503 see her as uniquely attractive.



D-503 tries to rationalize his failure to report I-330 to the Bureau of Guardians, illustrating that he's in denial about his feelings for her and his capacity to break the State's rules.



The One State prohibits dreaming, as dreams allow ciphers to use their imaginations and think creatively, so this occurrence is highly unsettling to D-503. His decision to regard his dream as the effect of a "foreign body" in his brain again highlights that he's in denial that he possesses the capacity to have personal, imaginative thoughts—even in his unconscious state.



Fredrick Winslow Taylor was an American mechanical engineer who pioneered strategies of workflow management that applied science to industrial practices in order to maximize efficiency. D-503 describes Taylor as "brilliant" because his work champions rationality and empiricism, which are tenets on which the One State bases its collectivist ideologies.



D-503 goes to work. With pleasure, he thinks about the math involved in the Integral's design. D-503's daydreams of logic and rationality are interrupted by the S-shaped man, whose tag reads S-4711. S-4711's penetrating gaze threatens D-503: it is clear to D-503 that S-4711 is a Guardian. D-503 confesses to S-4711 that he was at the Ancient House yesterday with I-330, but he finds that he can't turn in I-330 for staying after the Personal Hour.

D-503 reads the *State Gazette*, which reports on evidence of a strengthening rebel organization that aims to overthrow and liberate the One State. D-503 laughs at the organization's use of "liberation." Freedom wouldn't liberate the One State, as freedom is the biggest cause of crime.

D-503 anguishes over his inability to report I-330 to the Bureau of Guardians. He resigns to do so after 16:00. At 16:10 he runs into O-90, which he sees as fortunate, for she will encourage him in his pursuit. O-90 suggests they go for a stroll, which enrages D-503. He tells her he has to go to the Bureau, which upsets O-90, as she'd brought a lily of the valley to give to D-503. D-503 derides her for finding the flower's scent beautiful, as scents should be purely objective. He goes off on a rant about there being spies in the ancient world and spies, now, in the One State.

D-503's outburst hurts O-90, and she asks him if he's sick. Internally, he recalls images of the Ancient House, and agrees that he's sick. She tells him he should go to the doctor, because he's obligated to be well. He goes to the Bureau of Medicine instead of the Bureau of Guardians. Later, O-90 comes to his apartment and they do math problems together. After O-90 leaves, D-503 shames himself for not going to the Bureau of Guardians earlier, but insists it's "not my fault that I'm sick."

RECORD 8

D-503 recalls when he was a schoolboy and "[the square root of negative one] happened to [him]." D-503's math teacher, Pliapa, taught the class about irrational numbers, which made him so frightened and uncomfortable that he began to weep, thinking that "this irrational root had sunk into [him]." He recognizes his current sickness as a coping mechanism to deny the existence of irrationality—to justify his inability to report I-330 to the Bureau of Guardians.

S-4711's S-shaped body symbolizes and foreshadows his crookedness: he is a double agent, working as a One State Guardian while also secretly plotting its downfall.



From the One State's perspective, freedom isn't liberating because it allows for unpredictability and the capacity for irrational, negative behavior. Freedom won't liberate ciphers—it will imprison them in a web of self-destruction.



D-503 seems to know—at least on an unconscious level—that he needs another person's encouragement to report I-330 because something inside himself prevents him from doing so voluntarily. Again, he is denying his capacity to be irrational and act on his emotions. The way D-503 mocks O-90 for liking the scent of the lily of the valley could be interpreted as psychological projection: he doesn't want to admit that he can't report I-330 for emotional, subjective reasons, so he externalizes his irrationality onto O-90, indirectly criticizing "himself" as he criticizes her.



Attributing his emotional outburst to his "sickness" allows D-503 to avoid taking personal responsibility for his actions. In blaming his undesirable behavior on an unpreventable, external cause (a physical ailment), he can both rationalize his behavior and deny his capacity to act irrationally.



In mathematics, square root of negative one is i , or an imaginary number. Imaginary numbers (as opposed to real numbers) cannot be expressed as a quantifiable distance across a line. Imaginary numbers scare D-503 because they represent the universe's unknown quantities. By acknowledging that he's using his sickness to rationalize not reporting I-330, D-503 shows that he's becoming more in touch with his rebellious, irrational side.



D-503 recalls how, earlier in the day, he stood inside the Bureau next to other ciphers who had come to turn in themselves and their loved ones for illegal activity. There, he runs into R-13 and O-90. R-13 accuses D-503 of daydreaming, jokingly telling him that he should have been a poet. Unamused, D-503 huffs that it's his duty to "serve knowledge." R-13 accuses D-503's precious knowledge as "cowardice," claiming that D-503 uses knowledge to cope with the unknown: "You just want to build a little wall around infinity—and you're afraid to look behind it!" D-503 is upset.

D-503 invites R-13 over to work on math problems, but O-90 hesitates because she and R-13 have a scheduled Sex Day. D-503 is upset because he doesn't want to be left alone with his newly sick self and its disturbing, irrational thoughts. O-90 gives in, and the three go to R-13's room. There, they reminisce about old times, and D-503 loses some of his anxiety. R-13 asks D-503 about the Integral, which excites D-503. R-13 then says he's writing poetry about legal conviction. He tells D-503 about a One State poet who went crazy and started using the word "I" and calling himself a genius. D-503 notices a locked suitcase in the corner of R-13's room, which disturbs him: he feels that something is amiss.

In response to R-13's story about the poet, D-503 expresses gratitude that the days of individual creativity are gone. R-13 agrees, but D-503 sees that there is a joylessness in his eyes, which reminds him of I-330. It's time for O-90 and R-13's Sex Day activities, so D-503 leaves, noting that there is something "also" about the two of them. Still, he reminds himself that the three of them are a "triangle," albeit not an "equilateral one," and that being a triangle is a good thing.

RECORD 9

It's a bright day, and D-503 can look past his sickness. He and a crowd of other ciphers are at the Cube Plaza, which is constructed of 66 concentric glass circles. The atmosphere is grave and silent. D-503 likens his surrounding environment to the Ancients' religious services, though he mocks the ludicrousness of their relationship to God—Ancients who offered sacrifices to their God were met mostly with anguish and tragedy. In contrast, the ciphers who make sacrifices to their God receive "the victory of the many over the one."

D-503's defensiveness shows that he's still uncomfortable with his increasingly irrational behavior. R-13's critique that D-503's reliance on knowledge is a sign of "cowardice" may be extended to a critique of the One State's desperate reliance on knowledge, as well. His observation that D-503 "just want[s] to build a little wall around infinity" explicitly draws attention to the literal Green Wall the One State built so that it wouldn't have to "look behind" the confines of their artificially constructed finitude.



D-503 doesn't want to be left alone with his thoughts because he fears he won't be able to repress them without the guidance of others. This reflects the One State's hyper-surveillance of its citizens: the One State must monitor its citizens at all times because it knows that, left unchecked, human instinct would take over and ciphers would rebel. It's crazy for the One State poet to regard himself as a genius because this renders him an individual "I" and makes his work the product of human ingenuity. The One State wants its poets to be mere vessels through which it may espouse tenets of the State. In this way, poetry is not pleasurable, but purposeful: it is created to advance the welfare of the State.



When D-503 describes O-90, R-13 and himself as not an "equilateral" triangle, he hints at the jealousy that exists in their supposedly harmonious group friendship. Although the One State claims that its Sex Day system eliminates jealousy, D-503's comment implies this isn't fully the case.



The bright, blue sky instills within D-503 a sense of comfort and clarity. D-503 can defend the One State's religiosity because it is purposeful and productive. While Ancients worshiped and suffered for a God who gave them only suffering in return, ciphers worship and suffer for a "God" (the Benefactor), who in turn provides them with "the victory of the many over the one." In this way, D-503 can justify the One State's policy of executing rulebreakers in the Cube.



D-503 is about to witness one such sacrifice at the Cube Plaza: a convicted cipher stands, restrained and afraid, on the steps of the Cube. Above him, on the Cube, is the Machine—a mechanical surrogate for the Benefactor, consisting of “quadratic outlines” and heavy, stone hands. R-13 rises and recites poetry condemning blasphemous poetry that insults the Benefactor. R-13 sits. The Benefactor approaches the Machine, pulls a lever, and the Machine chemically eviscerates the convicted cipher. D-503 and the rest of the crowd are excited by the execution, as it affirms the power and order of the Benefactor and the One State.

The Machine is a physical manifestation of everything for which the One State stands: it is mechanical and impersonal, and it uses fear to repress ciphers’ desires to rebel.



RECORD 10

Yesterday’s execution was purifying for D-503, and he feels more like himself again. D-503 approaches a woman named U who monitors the downstairs lobby of his apartment. She has droopy cheeks that look like fish gills. Grinning, U hands him a letter that she’s read and approved on behalf of the One State. The letter says that I-330 has registered him as a sex partner, and that he is to meet her at 21:00. D-503 recalls the Ancient House and doesn’t want to go.

D-503 enjoyed the execution because it reaffirmed to him the One State’s absolute power. On an unconscious level, though, it’s possible that he also needs the threat of violence to keep his desires in check. In his records, D-503 reasons that he doesn’t want to see I-330 again, though his subsequent actions contradict his claims.



It’s almost 21:00 and D-503 is heading to meet I-330 anyway. He arrives and gives her the pink ticket. D-503 expresses frustration at not being able to know what I-330 is thinking, noting the “irritating **X**” in her face. On her insistence, D-503 admits he was unable to report I-330 to the Bureau of Guardians. I-330 retreats to another room. When she returns, she is wearing a **yellow**, ancient dress. D-503 looks at her body. To D-503’s dismay, I-330 lights a cigarette and then offers him a glass of green liqueur—both of which are forbidden in the One State, as poisoning the self diminishes the efficiency of the collective State. I-330 laughs at D-503’s discomfort.

When D-503 remarks on the “irritating X” in I-330’s face, it conveys the frustration he feels to not know what she’s thinking. D-503 frequently associates yellow objects and people with subversive behavior and the unknown, so I-330’s yellow dress reflects her rebellious tendencies. The yellow dress is also significant because it makes I-330 look like a unique individual. The unifs ciphers are required to wear do just the opposite: they are designed to make ciphers look identical to one another, reminding them that they are part of a collective whole. The green color of the liqueur I-330 drinks symbolizes the free, wild world.



D-503 can barely manage to dictate the next scene, as he feels he witnessed it from outside his own body, as though he were glass: “There were two of me,” he explains. I-330 approaches D-503 and kisses him, slipping the liqueur into his mouth. The “other” D-503 jumps out of his body in protest, watching as his body grabbed I-330 “with his **shaggy paws**” and “sunk his teeth into her.” I-330’s eyes become unreadable. The shaggy-pawed D-503 begs I-330 for sexual intimacy, calling her “my sweet,” but their assigned sex time is nearly over, and they are unable to have sex. D-503 regains his senses and inwardly proclaims his hate for her. He leaves and tries to convince himself that he’d hallucinated this odd incident. D-503 can’t sleep that night and fears that he will be unable to fulfill his obligation to work tomorrow.

It’s difficult for D-503 to write about his sexual encounter with I-330 because he wants to deny that it happened. Still, his goal in writing these records is to be as precise and accurate as possible. In this instance, his need to behave rationally and dictate his experiences overrides his hesitancy to articulate his desire for I-330’s body. When D-503 notes that he grabbed I-330 “with his shaggy paws,” he denies responsibility for his passionate impulses. By stating that he hates I-330, D-503 displaces his irrational sexual longings, purporting that they were not his own but rather came from the “other” him, a wilder being that is more animalistic and has “shaggy paws.”



RECORD 11

It's evening, and the sky is a cloudy and opaque **white**. D-503 scoffs, reminded of the Ancients' foolish belief in God; the One State, in contrast, knows there is nothing up there. D-503 stands before a mirror and, for the first time, sees particularly masculine features in himself: "I am him," he says. This "him" is an "alien" to D-503, and he insists that he—the narrator—is the real D-503, and not this masculine man he sees in the mirror.

Twenty minutes later, R-13 arrives. D-503 is happy for the company, as he doesn't want to be alone with his other self. D-503 praises the impact of R-13's poetry at the execution the other day. R-13's eyes look troubled, though, and he admits that he's tired of hearing about the execution. He changes the subject and cheers up, telling D-503 that he's writing new poetry about the Integral. His new work will explore the choice between "happiness without freedom or freedom without happiness," celebrating the One State's decision to embrace happiness without freedom, which simplifies life and eliminates the need to sort out good from evil and right from wrong.

D-503 respects R-13's plans for his new poetry and thinks about how he admires his friend's clarity and rationality. R-13 senses this and embraces D-503. R-13 tells D-503 that O-90 has a **pink** ticket for D-503, and that D-503 is clearly something special to O-90—not just a pink ticket, as R-13 is to her.

This makes D-503 think about his night with I-330. He asks R-13 if he's ever tried nicotine or alcohol. D-503 can read the concern in R-13's face. R-13 admits that he hasn't, but "one woman" he knows has. D-503 immediately knows R-13 is speaking of I-330. He thinks about his masculine features and watches as his other "wild, **shaggy**" self becomes jealous of R-13. D-503 regains composure and apologizes to R-13, explaining that he's been sick. R-13 says he is familiar with the feeling, "theoretically." R-13 throws D-503 a book of his latest poetry and then leaves. D-503 anguishes over the irrationality of the jealousy he feels.

It's jarring for D-503 to see his distinctly masculine features in the mirror because these physical attributes make him unique, something that is condemned in the One State. Yesterday's sexual encounter with I-330 emphasized to him that he is a man and she is a woman. This fundamental difference opens up door for him to discover the infinite other number of ways that he is different from I-330 and from other ciphers. This possibility frightens him, as the State insists that individuality is a threat to the collective's welfare, and D-503 desperately wants to be loyal to the One State. When D-503 insists that his masculine self is "alien" to him, he implies that he feels alienated from his former self.



It's possible that R-13 has an ulterior motive for bringing up his new Integral poetry. R-13's new poetry's assertion that happiness and freedom are mutually exclusive denies the possibility that humans can be happy and free at the same time. If humans are free, they are free to act on desire, and the One State believes that desire leads only to suffering and unhappiness.



D-503 respects R-13's poetry because it is purposeful: it doesn't articulate R-13's individual musings but, rather, espouses the One State's principles. The fact that D-503 is special to O-90 weakens the One State's claim that controlling ciphers' sex lives eliminates love and envy.



D-503's must watch his "wild, shaggy" self grow jealous of R-13 because he cannot accept that he's capable of acting on irrational, jealous impulses. Similarly, R-13 can only tell D-503 that he knows the feeling of being sick "theoretically," because he doesn't want to outwardly admit to D-503 that he's indulged in condemned activities.



RECORD 12

D-503 thinks he's recovering—he slept excellently last night. As he travels to work on the subterranean rail, he thinks about how excited he is about his Sex Day with O-90, as it will restore order to his life. D-503 thinks about R-13's new poems and sees S-4711 and his "twice-bent" body behind him, though he pretends he hasn't noticed. As D-503 reads a poem called "Happiness," about the beauty and simplicity of math, he regards S-4711 as his guardian angel, his surveillant eye preventing D-503 from disobeying the One State.

D-503 thinks about how math is more perfect than the Ancients' God, as God created humans capable of making mistakes, but the multiplication table is incapable of being wrong. Math is "happy" because it doesn't have the freedom to be wrong.

D-503's thoughts are interrupted when he feels S-4711's breath on the back of his neck. At first, D-503 is worried that S-4711 will see him daydreaming and demand to know about what he was thinking. However, he feels confident that his thoughts—on R-13's poetry, on the beauty and predictability of math, on the collective superiority of the One State—were completely in line. D-503 reflects some more on the superiority of the One State's poetry in comparison to the old, Brazen nightingale call[s]" of ancient verse, asserting that, now, "poetry is purpose," as it inspires ciphers to bow down to the Benefactor.

It's naively optimistic for D-503 to believe he's recovering, but he's so upset and in denial about being "sick" that he resorts to this wishful thinking. His hope that having a state-sanctioned Sex Day with O-90 will further restore his health is another instance of misplaced optimism. It's ironic that D-503 regards S-4711 as his guardian angel, as S-4711, like his body, is "twice-bent": as readers will soon find out, he pretends to serve the State while simultaneously plotting against them with the rebel group MEPHI.



D-503 meditates on the happiness of math and certainty to encourage himself to recover from his irrationality-inducing sickness.



D-503's thinks about math because he wants to behave appropriately in front of S-4711. Thus, D-503 is not praising logic because he innately wants to—he's praising logic to repress other, less rational thoughts. S-4711's presence intimidates D-503 and makes him keep his desires repressed.



RECORD 13

D-503 wakes up feeling good: O-90 will be over tonight. When he gets up to go to work it's foggy outside and the sky is immensely cloudy and **white**. He returns home before leaving for his required physical labor session, and I-330 calls him on the phone, insisting that he come to her. D-503 goes to meet her outside so he can reject her and affirm his obligations to the State in person. He thinks about how much he hates her, but when she appears he feels smitten. D-503 tells I-330 he hates the fog and she responds, "That means you love it."

The clouds and fog in the sky symbolize irrationality, foreshadowing D-503's illicit sexual encounter with I-330 later that day. D-503 needs to lie to himself that he's only meeting up with I-330 to reject her advances in order to rationalize his erratic behavior—on some level, he seems to know that he's only trying to convince himself that he doesn't want what he indeed wants. When I-330 tells D-503 that hating the fog means he "love[s] it," she suggests that D-503's hatred of fog is symptomatic of his repressed love for it.



D-503 and I-330 walk together to the Bureau of Medicine, where they meet a very thin doctor with scissors-like lips. I-330 convinces the doctor to certify that she and D-503 are both sick. D-503 is now excused from work, so he and I-330 take an aero to the Ancient House. They go back to the apartment and have passionate, pink ticket-less sex. Afterward, D-503 notes “her ever-sharp smile-sting.” D-503 leaves the room so I-330 can change back into her clothes, but when he returns, she is gone. D-503 brushes off his rendezvous with I-330 as a mere “improbable incident,” but also notes how emotionally fulfilled he feels.

There is a threatening connotation to D-503’s description of the thin doctor’s lips as scissors-like, which foreshadows the doctor’s ties to MEPHI. By claiming that his rendezvous with I-330 is nothing more than an “improbable incident,” D-503 diminishes and denies his active involvement in it. The fulfillment D-503 feels when he’s with I-330 illustrates his transformation into an individual.



RECORD 14

The next day, D-503 writes about what happened after he returned from his incident with I-330: O-90 comes over, as planned, and senses something is wrong with him. He tells her he’s sick. When it’s time, D-503 lowers the blinds. D-503 begins to kiss O’s **pink** mouth. She is happy to be intimate with D-503 at first, but she sees how distant he is and insists, “you aren’t mine!” At first, D-503 scoffs at her use of the word “my,” but he realizes that, in his new, irrational world, he *really* isn’t O-90’s anymore. He sees his new world as an unpredictable realm “of square roots of minus one.”

D-503’s rhetorical decision to notice O-90’s pink mouth shows that he consciously associates her with order, rationality, and loyalty to the State: as he kisses her pink mouth, and they are having legally permissible, pink ticket-sanctioned sex. D-503’s inability to be close to O-90 reflects his growing alienation from the One State’s ideologies. Still, his decision to articulate this alienation in terms “of square roots of minus one” shows how desperate he is to maintain some semblance of logic in his increasingly illogical life.



O-90 asks where D-503 was earlier. He can’t tell her the truth, so he starts to kiss her. He quickly realizes how emotionally empty he is and that he’s unable to have sex, which upsets O-90, who immediately leaves. D-503 anguishes alone, noting how I-330 has taken away both R and O from him. Despite this, he seems to know he still has feelings for her, though he can’t quite articulate it explicitly.

D-503’s inability to perform for O-90 is further evidence of his budding individuality and his growing alienation from O-90 and the One State. D-503 now sees that it’s irrational of him to love I-330—she’s taken away two of his closest companions—but his inability to articulate this thought fully shows that he is still somewhat in denial about it.



RECORD 15

D-503 enters the hangar to work on the Integral and the Second Builder tells him that while he was out sick yesterday an unnumbered person broke in. Authorities carried the person to the Operation Room, a medical facility that operates under the supervision of the Benefactor and contains such devices as the Gas Bell Jar, a mechanism under which rule-breakers are trapped and gradually deprived of air.

The disturbance that the unnumbered cipher causes is further evidence that acts of rebellion are actually quite common in the One State, and that trouble is brewing just beneath the One State’s venter of perfect order and obedience.



D-503's thoughts shift suddenly to I-330 and her mysterious disappearance at the Ancient House yesterday. The Second Builder interrupts him by expressing concern over the threat unnumbered people pose. He tells D-503 about a new operation the One State has invented to rid ciphers of their imagination and suggests that D-503 have it done on himself. D-503 notes, internally, that the Second Builder is troubled by the idea that he has an imagination. D-503 might have related to the man before, but now that he's sick, he can't.

The Second Builder's enthusiasm for the Operation—relative to D-503's own ambivalence—shows D-503 how alienated he is becoming from the rest of the One State's ciphers. Still, D-503 attributes his alienation to sickness rather than the result of his actively changing mindset, which suggests that he wants to deny and resist his changing worldview.



D-503 reflects on the Integral's future, when it will travel to alien civilizations and seize control on behalf of the One State, submitting these newly conquered people to the obligation of "inescapable happiness." It's almost ready to embark on this journey. D-503 looks on the people obediently working on the machine in admiration. He walks down from his position on the deck to be with them. Someone inquires about D-503's health, which rattles him. Embarrassed by his slip-up, he flees the scene, reflecting on how "contaminated" he is, and how he "will no longer be able to pour [him]self into the precise mechanical rhythm" of his work. D-503 hurriedly dismisses his frantic thoughts as mere paranoia.

D-503's observation that he "will no longer be able to pour [him]self into the precise mechanical rhythm" of his work illustrates his growing alienation. His attempts to rationalize his increasingly erratic behavior are ironically irrational: though he initially accepts that his thoughts are "contaminated," he ultimately claims that such thoughts are only the result of paranoia. He contradicts himself when he simultaneously accepts and rejects responsibility for his actions, and having contradicting thoughts is illogical in itself.



RECORD 16

Several days have passed since D-503's last entry. He's lovesick over I-330 and can't stop thinking about her disappearance in the Ancient House. He's only seen her once since then, and briefly, on a walk. She was with S, the thin doctor, and two other unknown people. D-503 overheard someone in the foursome mention the Integral.

When D-503 overhears S, I-330, the thin doctor, and the other ciphers discussing the Integral, it foreshadows MEPHI's plot to steal the rocket and overthrow the One State. The relative flippancy with which D-503 dismisses what he hears evokes a willingness to turn the other way when it comes to I-330. His love for her makes him behave irrationally.



That evening, I-330 has a pink ticket for D-503. Excitedly, he waits in his room for her, but she never arrives. He imagines she is with another man, like R or S. D-503 frets over S, believing he has been watching him closely over the past few days. He wonders if I-330 is the cause of this surveillance.

D-503's instinctual jealousy demonstrates how love makes him behave irrationally. It's also a nod to his all-consuming fear of the unknown: he can't stand not knowing what she's doing, and with whom.



D-503 can no longer bear I-330's absence, so he calls her, but he hangs up the phone before he can speak to her. Instead, he leaves his apartment and goes to her. These events, D-503 explains, unfolded yesterday. He continues his record of the night's events: at 16:00, he goes to I-330's apartment. He imagines that she will respond coyly to his desperate visit. Eventually, D-503 realizes that it's after 17:00 (the end of the Personal Hour), so it's imperative that he visit the Bureau of Medicine to get a doctor to say that he's sick to excuse his lateness.

Increasingly, D-503 is willing to break the One State's rules, such as lying to get out of work, in order to be with I-330.



On his way to the Bureau of Medicine, D-503 runs into S. Ashamed and paranoid, he tells S that he's sick. Sternly, S instructs D-503 to follow him. D-503 is worried S will turn him in, but they arrive at the Bureau of Medicine, where the thin doctor with the "scissor-lips" informs D-503 that he appears, most unfortunately, to have acquired a "soul," which is incurable. The only way to rid the body of a soul is to undergo the Operation and cut out the brain's capacity for imagination.

Having a "soul" means having the agency to act on one's repressed desires, and this negatively affects the One State's ability to control its citizens. The fact that such an extreme procedure (the Operation seems most akin to a lobotomy) is required to keep ciphers in check speaks to how inadequately surveillance is able to suppress human urges.



The thin doctor tells a second doctor that D-503 is the Builder of the Integral; he responds by nodding and leaving the room. The thin doctor examines D-503. He tells D-503 that he's not the only cipher with a soul—that the sickness is an "epidemic." The doctor tells D-503 to take long walks to help with his insomnia and dreaming—specifically, he tells him to walk to the Ancient House. D-503 looks at the doctor and imagines he sees "something wrapped up in the fine fabric of his smile—[...] a particular name..." The doctor writes D-503 a sick note and D-503 leaves, feeling as though tomorrow's adventure will be joyous.

D-503's position as the Builder of the Integral makes him an invaluable asset to the One State's success. When D-503 sees "something wrapped up in the fine fabric of [the skinny doctor's] smile," he's implicitly wondering whether I-330 might be involved with the doctor's decision to let him off the hook for being late.



RECORD 17

The day after his D-503 writes that, although he thought yesterday would be a clarifying experience, it only provided him with a new set of unknown "X's" to sort through. He goes on to describe yesterday's events: per the doctor's orders, D-503 goes for a long walk. He ends up on a street along the edge of the **Green** Wall. D-503 looks at the wild growth that lies beyond it and feels fortunate to have the Green Wall as a barrier. On the other side of the glass, he sees a "beast" with "yellow eyes" staring at him unreadably. D-503 wonders if this beast is happier than him and the other ciphers that live inside the Green Wall's boundaries.

D-503's decision to walk toward the Green Wall and the Ancient house is full of contradictions: though he tries to tell himself he's following the doctor's orders so that he can be cured, he's also walking to a place he associates with I-330, who brought on his illness in the first place. D-503 wants to be cured, but he also wants to stay sick and in love with I-330. When D-503 wonders whether the yellow-eyed beast is happier than he is, he's expressing doubt in the One State's belief that freedom and happiness are mutually exclusive.



D-503 keeps walking and sees the Ancient House. He greets the old woman at the entrance with a kiss, though he is ashamed to admit so. Once inside, D-503 calls out for I-330, but she is nowhere to be seen. As he heads upstairs to the apartment they met in before, he hears a door slam and sees S downstairs. D-503 doesn't want S to see him, so he hurriedly jumps into the closet in the apartment. The floor shakes beneath him, his vision blurs, and he writes that he "died." In retrospect, D-503 realizes this "death" was an instance of what the Ancients called "temporarily death," but which does not generally occur to ciphers.

When D-503 kisses the old woman, it illustrates his growing urge to be affectionate for affection's sake—the kiss doesn't serve any higher, productive purpose and thus has no place in the One State. The kiss shows that it's becoming more difficult for D-503 to suppress his irrational desires. When D-503 temporarily "die[s]," he's actually just blacking out. It's unclear why ciphers don't black out like the Ancients did, though it's possible that this is because blacking out is an inefficient use of the body, and the purpose of bodies is to serve the State as effectively as possible.



When D-503 comes to, he has a cut on his finger. He feels around in the dark and finds a handle, which opens into a long corridor lined with lamps. It reminds him of a cave. He walks toward voices he hears and runs into the skinny doctor. The doctor brings I-330 to him and D-503 is elated. He tells her he couldn't stand her absence any longer and tells her about his sickness, his soul, and his temporary death. The doctor leaves D-503 and I-330 alone, and D-503 writes that she "plunged a sharp, sweet needle into my heart." They walk together.

When D-503 tells I-330 he couldn't bear her absence any longer, he indirectly admits to her—and to himself—that it was his repressed desire to see her that motivated his decision to walk to the Ancient House. When I-330 "plunge[s] a sharp, sweet needle into [D-503's] heart," it symbolizes that she is further corrupting him and his loyalty to the One State.



D-503 regains consciousness in the Ancient House. I-330 is still with him and implies she wants to see him at 16:00 tomorrow. In retrospect, D-503 is unsure whether the day's events actually happened or if they were merely a figment of his imagination. At work the next day, the Second Builder tells him the cut on his finger is from accidentally touching the polishing wheel, further contributing to D-503's uncertainty.

D-503 has to question whether that day's events actually happened because he is unwilling to believe how swiftly and completely I-330 is corrupting his worldview. His confusion is also the result of his growing alienation from the One State and from his former, subservient self.



RECORD 18

D-503 writes about a dream he had yesterday in which he was in the Ancient House with I-330. She took off her dress and he followed her into the closet. The dream scared him and he woke up in his apartment. It's becoming harder for him to tell the difference between dreams and reality. He lies in bed and thinks about the frustrating unsolvable quality of irrational formulas like square root of minus one. The existence of such formulas terrifies him, as they evoke infinity. Before, math had provided stability for D-503, but now, it brings him only fear and uncertainty. He connects this to all that is unknown behind the **Green Wall**.

D-503 compares his current, seemingly unsolvable infatuation with I-330 to mathematical formulas in an effort to reground his life in the comfortable familiarity of logic and rationality. His efforts prove to be futile, however, as he realizes that even math can contain an element of uncertainty.



The morning bell rings and D-503 joins the other ciphers to go to work, but there is a "fog" in his head, and he can no longer engage in the One State's synchronized schedule without question.

The fog in D-503's head symbolizes the fear and uncertainty he faces as he becomes more alienated from the One State.



That evening, per the skinny doctor's orders, D-503 goes for another walk instead of joining the rest of the ciphers for an assembly. He compares himself to an "unnatural" finger cut off from the rest of the human hand. After the sun sets, he returns to his apartment building and U hands him a letter. D-503 is excited because he thinks it's from I-330, but it's actually from O-90.

D-503's comparison of himself to an "unnatural," severed finger reflects the pain brought on by his increased sense of alienation.



In her letter, O-90 writes that D-503 is particularly special to her: that she loves him and cannot live without him. In the past few days, her world has transformed from something “four-cornered” to something “round and endless.” She knows that D-503 needs “that other woman” and not her, so she will remove herself from his Sex Day list and not bother him ever again. D-503 seems fine with what she has to say, but questions why he feels this way.

The transformation of O's world from something “four cornered” to something “round and endless” reflects We's thematic emphasis on the fear of the unknown. O's “four-cornered” world was predictable and comfortable, but this new world is full of pain and unpredictability.



RECORD 19

D-503 recalls how I-330 told him to meet her the day after tomorrow—it is now that day. Before meeting with I-330, there is an explosion at the hangar. A dozen ciphers die, but D-503 is fixated on the fact that work on the Integral didn't falter as a result of the tragedy: the workers and the machines worked on.

D-503's fixation on the Integral's progress over the tragic deaths of a dozen ciphers is a nod to his older, collectivist worldview: the Integral's larger mission is more important than the individual ciphers' deaths.



At 16:00, D-503 goes to his building and U tells him I-330 requests his presence. On her pink ticket are instructions to lower his blinds—even though I-330 won't actually make an appearance. D-503 is distraught and wishes he had a doctor's note so he could walk off his anguish. Instead, he is assigned to appear in Auditorium 13 for a lecture. He has trouble paying attention to the presentation.

The One State's lectures used to interest and ground D-503 in reality, but his growing alienation prevents him from relating to the activities and ideas he once valued.



When D-503 arrives home, O-90 is waiting for him. She asks him if he received her letter. He tells her he did and agrees with what she said in it. O-90 then pleads with D-503 to give her a baby, and then she'll go. D-503 scoffs at this request, as it will result in certain punishment at the hands of the Machine and the Benefactor. Still, O-90 insists that it is what she wants. D-503 honors her request and they have sex.

O-90's desire to have a baby—born of the instinctual human desire to reproduce—overrides her loyalty to the One State and its rules. She is no longer as repressed as she used to be, which causes her to act on individual desires rather than honor the One State's collectivist mission. D-503's decision to impregnate her shows that he's grown more willing to disobey the One State.



RECORD 20

D-503 reflects on his prohibited intimate act with O-90. He pictures O-90 being punished for getting pregnant against the One State's orders and wonders if the act has cured him of his sickness. If O-90 turns him in for his role in their illegal act, he will “kiss the punishing hand of the Benefactor.” In the One State, ciphers' one “right” is to be punished.

D-503 rationalizes his unsanctioned sexual encounter with O by telling himself that he did so because she would be punished for her actions. In this way, he can convince himself that he's indirectly contributing to the strength of the collective State as opposed to being complicit in O's subversive act.



D-503's thoughts become abstract as he considers the consequences of having rights. He firmly believes that even the Ancients realized that rights and power are interconnected. Addressing the alien civilizations reading his records who might disagree with his stance, he offers a visual analogy of two trays on a weighing scale, affirming that the welfare of the collective far outweighs the rights of individuals.

According to the One State, individual rights are dangerous because they can be used to subvert the state's supreme, collective power.



RECORD 21

D-503 writes that I-330 was assigned to see him yesterday and, again, left a confusing note on her pink ticket, instructing D-503 to lower his blinds as though she were actually in his room with him. He goes along with her request without understanding it, as he fears that without I-330 he'll never know the answers to **“those unknown quantities,”** such as the secret passageway in the closet at the Ancient House, and he is obligated by the One State to seek answers.

D-503 tries to rationalize his decision to break the law by claiming that he's only doing so because it will help him gain answers to “those unknown quantities,” which helps the One State.



At 16:00, D-503 takes an aero to the Ancient House: he sees it as his “authorly duty” to do so. The flight there is cloudy and icy. When he arrives, the old woman tells him nobody is there. D-503 is outraged at the woman. He takes out his anger on her in his written record: “Didn't I populate these pages with all of you? [...] Without me, would you have ever been seen by all those I am leading through the narrow footpaths of these written lines.” D-503 makes the old woman lead him to the courtyard, but it is empty. He looks around and tries to find the secret corridor he walked down with I-330, but it's nowhere to be found.

D-503 cites his “authorly duty” as the reason he's going to the Ancient House, thereby denying that his desire to see I-330 has anything to do with his visit. When he angrily reflects on how, without his records, nobody in the One State “would [...] have ever been seen,” he acknowledges the significance of his personal records. In this way, he asserts his importance as a creative individual.



Back in the main courtyard, D-503 runs into S, who inquires after D-503's health. D-503 remarks that there is an unusually large number of Guardians' aeros surveilling the sky. S responds with a convoluted explanation that a good doctor begins treating a patient while they are still healthy in the event that they might become sick later. S leaves and D-503 returns home. On his way there, he notes an abundance of birds flying above the **Green Wall**.

S's cryptic comment relates to the skinny doctor's treatment of D-503: the doctor strangely continues to prevent D-503 from having the Operation, despite D-503's increasingly frequent transgressions, which raises the question of if the doctor is trying to save D-503 for some other purpose. The birds above the Green Wall symbolize nature and the free world, foreshadowing the growing threat the rebels pose to the One State's power.



Later that evening, D-503 says, he attempted to write in his record about the Day of the One Vote. However, he found he was unable to write, as he was too distracted by the sound of the wind outside. Later, U comes to D-503's room. He watches her adjust the pleats of her unif and feels close to her. She tells him about how she found a caricature of her drawn as a fish on the wall of the Children-Rearing Factory, where she works, earlier that day. D-503 assures her she doesn't look like a fish, and informs his reader that it was wrong of him to describe U's “gills” in his earlier records.

D-503 had earlier criticized the Ancients for being distracted by their silly absorption with nature, but now he's absorbed in nature in the same, silly way. He doesn't acknowledge this similarity outwardly, though, so he represses it. D-503 insists that he was wrong to say U had fish gills in his earlier records because she represents his loyalty to the State. By denying his earlier critiques of her, he symbolically denies his earlier disloyalty to the State.



U continues with her story: she turned the children in to the Guardians, considering her “cruelty” in so doing to be, in fact, an act of love. D-503 understands and commends U’s decision. U then starts to tell him news about the Day of the One Vote, but she stops herself, instead telling D-503 that if he needs anything, she’ll be there for him. U leaves D-503’s room. He falls asleep and has a dream about making love to an old-fashioned, wooden chair.

U’s “cruelty” is motivated by her belief that the collective’s welfare outweighs the rights of individuals. By commending U’s decision to be cruel, D-503 affirms his loyalty to the One State’s collectivist ideology. D-503’s odd dream shows that while he may take active steps to affirm his loyalty to the One State, his unconscious thoughts betray his repressed desire to be disloyal to the government. The wooden chair recalls I-330 and his illicit meetings with her.



RECORD 22

D-503 writes about how the ciphers’ recent Table-scheduled walk was interrupted when a condemned young cipher being escorted by a quadrangle of guards tried to look for someone in D-503’s row. The guards begin to hit the young cipher with an electrical whip. Suddenly, a female cipher leaves D-503’s row and demands that the guards stop hurting the boy. As the guards accost her, D-503 is suddenly certain that the woman is I-330. Instinctually, he throws himself at the guards to protect her, only then realizing the woman is actually a stranger.

This is another instance that shows how rebellion is actually quite common in the One State, despite D-503’s earlier insistence that rebellion is rare. When D-503 lunges toward the woman he thinks is I-330, it’s an emotionally charged moment where he acts on his repressed desires and human instincts, going against the State to assist the woman he loves.



D-503 wants to defend his impulsive—and mistaken— leap by shouting “There she is! Get her!” but finds he can’t speak. He tries to rationalize his actions to the guards, but they carry him away to be arrested. Suddenly, S appears and tells the guards D-503 is sick and can’t be held accountable for his misguided actions. D-503 proclaims his allegiance to the Benefactor, and he resumes walking in step everyone else, though he feels internally alienated from them.

D-503 realizes he acted on a repressed desire and tries to rationalize his behavior, insinuating that he actually jumped toward the woman to help the One State. That S prevents D-503’s arrest once again suggests that S is setting D-503 aside for some other purpose.



RECORD 23

As he walks to U’s monitor desk, D-503 writes about a flower that blooms only once a century and wonders if there are also flowers that bloom once every 1,000 years or 10,000 years. He imagines that everything around him—chairs, lamps, boots—is blooming. D-503 hands his pink ticket to U, who tells him he looks sickly, and that he is ruining himself. Inwardly, D-503 acknowledges that he is sick, but he also wonders whether blooming is a sickness.

When D-503 imagines that the objects around him are blooming, he evokes figurative language—a sign of his growing tendency to insert creativity and individual flair into his writing.



Later, D-503 is in his room with I-330. He holds her knees and imagines himself melting into her: “Because she is not she, but the universe.” He imagines he is the chair she sits in. He attempts to tell her these things aloud but becomes embarrassed by his “nonsense.” I-330 proposes that nonsense might not be a bad thing—that she loves him for his nonsense.

D-503 evokes metaphor when he remarks that I-330 “is not she, but the universe.” His desire to be the chair she sits in isn’t literal, but poetic. He realizes that these thoughts are nothing more than creative nonsense, and his embarrassment suggests that he wishes he could repress him.



D-503 asks why I-330 has repeatedly failed to see him, and she tells him she needed to “test” his total allegiance to her. He insists that he is absolutely hers. She asks him about his recent duties to the One State, and he finds that he can’t uncover them in his mind or in his records.

I-330 has become a bigger priority to D-503 than his work, demonstrating how his priorities have shifted from advancing the collective’s power to serving his own self interests.



I-330 begins to speak: “Maybe, on that day,” but stops herself. Her eyes become unreadable to D-503. D-503 thinks about the birds above the **Green** Wall that he saw the other day. Suddenly, I-330 begins to get dressed. D-503 tells her he can’t handle her opaqueness and lack of communication with him. She asks him if he really wants to know everything, and he insists that he does. She makes him swear total allegiance to her once more and then says that when the holiday is over, she will tell him all there is to know. Cryptically, I-330 asks about the Integral’s progress. After she leaves, D-503 wonders why she wanted to know about it.

When I-330’s eyes become unreadable, it hints that she has a secret ulterior motive in pursuing D-503. D-503’s confusion as to why she would ask about the Integral shows that he is beginning to wonder at I-330’s motives for seeing him.



RECORD 24

I-330’s mixed signals and opacity make D-503 feel like an overworked machine. The holiday—the Day of the One Vote—is tomorrow. D-503 will see I-330 there, but only from afar. This will be painful for him, but the pain is worth it. D-503 finds his masochistic longings absurd, as pain is negative and detracts from happiness.

D-503 knows that it’s irrational of him to love I-330 because loving her pains him. Still, he finds it increasingly impossible to repress his feelings for her.



D-503’s record picks up in the evening, where he explains the history and significance of the Day of the One Vote, which he compares to the Ancients’ Easter holiday. The Day of the One Vote is the same every year: it is the day the ciphers vote, unanimously, to reelect the Benefactor. Ciphers vote publicly, not in private, like in older civilizations’ elections. The Day of the One Vote is symbolic: it reminds ciphers of the power of their collective unity.

The Day of the One Vote reinforces the importance of the collective whole. The lack of privacy involved in the One State’s electoral process shows that the government knows that, given the freedom to choose, its citizens might not reelect their authoritarian government; they must make voting a public, monitored event to ensure that ciphers will not vote based on their own self-interest.



As D-503 wraps up his record, he sees a woman undressing in an adjacent apartment. His thoughts turn to I-330’s cryptic utterance, “one last thing,” but any doubts he has are quickly replaced by feelings of love for her. He immediately calls her to ask if she will come over tomorrow. She says she can’t, and that he’ll understand why tomorrow.

D-503 is repressing his anxieties, but the tables have turned: whereas before he dismissed his love for I-330 to remain loyal to the One State, he now dismisses moments of rationality to continue loving I-330.



RECORD 25

D-503 recounts the Day of the One Vote: he and the other ciphers sing the Hymn together before voting. He's forgotten about I-330's cryptic remarks yesterday. The Benefactor emerges out of the clear, **blue** sky and the ciphers look upon him in admiration. A poet reads an ode. D-503 spots S in the crowd and thinks about the "thread" that seems to connect S and I-330. D-503 suddenly sees S converge with I-330 and R-13. He feels viscerally jealous, but remains still and silent.

The election process begins. Over the loudspeaker, a voice asks those in favor of the Benefactor to raise their hands. D-503 and millions of others do so enthusiastically. The voice then asks who opposes the Benefactor. Normally, nobody raises their hands, but today, thousands do—including I-330. Suddenly, the scene turns chaotic: screams break out, and Guardians rush in.

D-503 sees O-90 on a projection screen, here hands placed protectively across her stomach. Suddenly, D-503 sees R-13 holding I-330 in his arms. Her unif is ripped and she is covered in blood. D-503 runs to them and demands that R-13 let her go. D-503 hits R-13 in the head, which makes him feel light and satisfied. I-330 moves from R-13 and screams at him to go away. D-503 feels immense relief.

D-503's log resumes that evening, at 22:00, as he reflects on that morning's events. He wonders whether the all-powerful One State is beginning to dissolve. He shifts his narrative to his interaction with I-330 after R-13 left them alone: sitting on a bench, bleeding, I-330 tells D-503 that tomorrow is always a mystery—that the future is always unpredictable. I-330 looks straight at D-503, and he zones out the chaos and screaming that unfolds below them. Her gaze reminds him of the wild person he saw on the other side of the **Green** Wall.

I-330 tells D-503 she will take him back beyond the wall tomorrow if "nothing in particular" happens. D-503 doesn't understand what she's referring to, but agrees nonetheless. He fears for tomorrow and its unpredictability.

The Benefactor emerges out of the blue sky, making him a clear symbol of reason and clarity. When D-503 observes a "thread" that connects I-330 and S-4711, it shows that he's starting to catch on to that they are both involved anti-government activity. D-503's jealousy toward R-13 reflects his growing irrationality. He tries to repress his jealousy by refusing to act on it.



This year, the Day of the One Vote isn't unanimous, which shows that repressed dissatisfaction with the government isn't as rare as D-503 previously believed (or wanted to believe) it is.



The satisfaction D-503 derives from hitting R-13 shows that he is more prone to act on irrational desires.



When D-503 zones out the chaos around him to focus on I-330, it shows that he is now willing to dismiss the welfare of the collective in favor of the welfare of individuals. He is also more willing to act on his desires. D-503's comparison of I-330 to the wild person on the other side of the Green Wall signifies that he is beginning to realize that she may be involved with the rebels.



In accepting I-330's cryptic invitation, D-503 shows that he is more comfortable acknowledging the unknown. Still, his simultaneous fear of tomorrow suggests that he is not entirely ready to welcome unpredictability and irrationality into his life.



RECORD 26

In the morning, D-503 reads the One State's response to yesterday's disrupted election in that day's issue of the *State Gazette*. The State issues a notice condemning the Benefactor's dissenters, calling them sick, and "the enemies of happiness." It vows not to take their negative votes into account in determining the election's results. The paper also states that the Administrative Bureau, the Bureau of Medicine, and the Bureau of Guardians will meet that day to create a State Act. These notices reassure D-503 of the State's strength, though he also feels "lost." On his way to work, D-503 sees a piece of paper bearing the word MEPHI tacked to a wall, and S trying to remove it. S sees D-503 and smiles at him. D-503 sees similar papers around the city as he travels to the hangar for work.

D-503 arrives at the hangar where he and the other workers are preparing the Integral for a test flight. D-503 tries to chat up the Second Builder, though he is only able to engage in nervous, nonsensical speech. He asks him to imagine he is in a falling, failing aircraft—and about to die—yet can think only of tomorrow's anticipated hourly schedule. D-503 affirms that this is what the workers at the hangar are doing.

The State Gazette's response to the disruption at yesterday's Day of the One Vote underscores the One State's position that freedom leads to unhappiness. By writing off the dissenters as "the enemies of happiness," the One State reinforces that personal freedom brings about only chaos and dissatisfaction, and therefore must be prevented at all costs. Their proposed solution to chaos, thus, is to eliminate ciphers' capacity for desire through requiring citizens to undergo the Operation. S's smile as he removes the MEPHI sign hints at his disloyalty to the One State.



D-503's inability to connect with the Second Builder reflects his growing alienation from obedient ciphers. The falling scenario he envisions illustrates his growing skepticism of rationality and predictability. When he admires the workers' efforts, though, it suggests that, ultimately, he still wants to believe in the power of the One State's collectivist ideals.



RECORD 27

Later that day, D-503 waits in the secret corridors beneath the Ancient House. 16:00 has come and gone, and I-330 has yet to arrive. Suddenly, she appears behind him. He is overcome with joy and questions "What formula could explain this whirlwind that clears my soul of everything except her?" I-330 leads him away through the door from which she entered.

D-503's record resumes 24 hours later as he contemplates what unfolded next. He feels as though "a bomb had exploded in [his] head." The record continues: initially, he imagines that the rebels blew up the **Green** Wall while he waited for I-330 in the corridor, but she says they have not. In fact, she says, they are now walking beyond the Green Wall. D-503 observes the intensity of the natural world around him. He sees the thin doctor next to I-330. The two of them drag him forward and lead him to a crowd of hundreds of hairy, naked people.

When D-503 questions "what formula could explain [the] whirlwind that clears my soul of everything except her," he acknowledges logic's inability to answer life's unknown questions.



D-503 evokes more figurative language when he compares the revelations he underwent to "a bomb [that] had exploded in [his] head," reflecting his growing use of creativity and subjectivity to define and describe the world around him.



I-330 leaves D-503, and he is alone. Suddenly, he sees her above the crowd, perched upon a **yellow** rock. She addresses the masses, announcing their plans to steal the Integral. When the Integral takes off, it will be the rebels will be on board—not the One State loyalists. She tells them the Integral’s builder—D-503—is in the crowd, and everyone chants “All hail the Builder!” D-503 feels good to be “the number one.”

D-503 frequently evokes the color yellow to describe people and objects that threaten the One State’s absolute power, so the fact that I-330 sits upon a yellow rock aligns her with rebelliousness and subversion. When D-503 enjoys being seen as “the number one,” it reflects his growing appreciation for individualism and personal accomplishment.



The crowd places D-503 on the rock next to I-330. They both drink from a wooden cup. D-503 sees the words MEPHI inscribed on the rock. D-503’s memory now becomes fragmented. He remembers seeing S in the crowd and worries, as S is a Guardian, and it would be bad if his people saw them beyond the Wall. I-330 smiles, which calms D-503.

When D-503 drinks from the same cup as I-330, it symbolizes his transformation from a loyal cipher to a disloyal person with free will. D-503’s anxiety upon seeing S reveals that he’s still not fully comfortable with this transformation, however.



RECORD 28

D-503 is trying to write, but he hears I-330 and U arguing outside his apartment. I-330 bursts in and accuses U of trying to keep her from D-503. U confirms this. D-503 screams at U to leave. He tells I-330 that U is upset because she wants to be registered to him. I-330 says this doesn’t matter because, after yesterday, she is completely beholden to him, as he now knows about her involvement with MEPHI and could turn her in at any moment. He assures her that he isn’t the person he used to be.

On the surface, U’s motivations for keeping D-503 and I-330 stem from her loyalty to the One State; however, she also seems to be motivated by jealousy, as I-330’s presence threatens her own relationship with D-503. This shows that even highly loyal ciphers like U can’t help but be influenced by their repressed human desires.



I-330 tells D-503 that the One State’s auditoriums were shut down today and that she saw “them” in the auditorium with medics and tables. D-503 doesn’t know who I-330 is referring to, or whether he is for or against “them.” D-503 tells I-330 that it’s crazy of her to be against the One State and urges her to abandon her rebel organization and join him in subservience, but she refuses.

D-503 is confused about whose side he is on, which evokes tortured desire to both please his romantic love and his honor his obligations to the collective. I-330 is surer of her desires, refusing to abandon MEPHI.



I-330 grabs D-503’s **hairy hands** and tells him that people on the outside have had relationships with people from the One State, and that it’s possible he has some wild blood in him—and that perhaps this is why she loves him. D-503 demands to know who these wild people are, and how they became that way. I-330 tells him that MEPHI developed out a small group of survivors left beyond the **Green** Wall.

I-330 confirms what D-503 has always feared and repressed about his hairy hands: that they are evidence of his innate ties to human nature and freedom.



I-330 is interrupted when the doctor appears at the door to warn them that the Guardians—including S—are headed their way. Hurriedly, D-503 begins to write words praising the Benefactor. The Guardians arrive in D-503's room. U arrives with them and reminds S that D-503 is the designer of the Integral and a loyal, dedicated citizen of the One State. S orders D-503 to show him what he's been writing. S approves of D-503's words and the Guardians leave. U tells D-503 he's lucky she defended him. D-503 later discovers that the Guardians had arrested three other ciphers.

When D-503 hurriedly writes positive words about the Benefactor, he simultaneously covers for I-330 and affirms his allegiance to the One State. He is torn is between remaining a loyal part of the collective and acting on his personal desires. U's decision to cover for D-503 demonstrates her desire to put the wellbeing of the individual she cares for over the welfare of the collective.



RECORD 29

D-503 walks toward the Ancient House, as I-330 told him she wanted to meet in the apartment. He spots O-90 behind him. O-90 is especially round today: she is visibly pregnant. O-90 tells D-503 how happy she is to be expecting a child. She kisses D-503's hand and he feels an odd sensation that he likens to an "ancient caress." He pulls his hand away and tells her she's crazy to be happy about something that will result in her punishment.

O-90 is happy to be pregnant, despite that fact that she will be punished for it. To O-90, acting on her desires—at least as far as having a child is concerned—is more important than remaining loyal to the One State. Not even the threat of punishment can extinguish her instinctual human desires to reproduce.



D-503 comes up with a plan to save O-90 and her baby—with the help of I-330. O-90 refuses to accept the help of "that woman" and walks away. D-503 walks toward the Ancient House and imagines "invisible threads" floating around his face.

When O-90 refuses D-503's help because I-330 would have to be involved, she chooses to act on her irrational desires: O resents I-330 because she took D-503 away from him, and her jealousy and bitterness prevents her from making a logical decision that would spare both her life and the life of her unborn child.



RECORD 30

D-503 writes about his conversation with I-330 in the Ancient House the day before, as he believes its contents is valuable to the One State's welfare. I-330 tells D-503 that the day of the Integral's first test flight—the day after tomorrow—MEPHI will seize control of it. She says that many ciphers were taken randomly by the Guardians yesterday, 12 of whom were MEPHI. Time is of the essence. At 12:00, says I-330, the dinner bell will ring, and everyone will go to the cafeteria. MEPHI will stay behind, lock the cafeteria doors, and take control of the Integral.

D-503 rationalizes his engagement with the One State's enemies by framing it as an act that will benefit the State in the long run. He remains incapable of acknowledging his complicity in MEPHI's plot to overthrow the government.



D-503 tells I-330 that she is describing a revolution—something he knows is impossible, as the One State's revolution was the last of its kind. I-330 disagrees: just as numbers are infinite, so, too, are revolutions. Therefore, one can never know which revolution will be the last. "Final things are for children because infinity scares children," she says. MEPHI, on the other hand, knows that "that there is no final number."

D-503 needs to believe that the One State's revolution was the last of its kind because it's too frightening to imagine an infinite number of future revolutions. When I-330 states that "Final things are for children," she indirectly suggests that the One State controls its citizens as though they are children who need to be protected from the truth.



After I-330 leaves, D-503 walks past an auditorium and sees tables covered in white glass with blood on them. He fears the unknowns of tomorrow, believing it unnatural to accept life's unpredictability. He compares his current situation to wandering around blindfolded, with each step risking falling off the edge of a cliff. He wonders what might happen if he were to not accidentally wander off the edge but willingly dive headfirst into it.

D-503's cliff scenario illustrates the choice he must make to embrace or reject the world's unknowable aspects.



RECORD 31

D-503 reads the morning's *State Gazette* and decides everything has been a bad dream. The *Gazette* issues a statement informing ciphers that the only thing that prevents them from being as perfect and precise is their imaginations. According to the *Gazette*, happiness ends where sickness begins; therefore, the State has developed an operation to "heal" ciphers of their imagination, rendering them "perfect" and "machine-equal." The *Gazette* calls on its readers to undergo this new Great Operation.

Imagination prevents ciphers from being "perfect" because it allows for unpredictability and inefficiency. The One State needs its ciphers to be "machine-equal" in order to prevent events like the Day of the One Vote disruption from happening again.



D-503 calls I-330 and tells her about the *Gazette's* statement. She tells him to come by her place at 16:00, "without fail," which pleases him. D-503 goes to work at the hangar. He strokes the Integral's engine affectionately as he thinks about its test run tomorrow and about how he will betray it at 12:00 the next day. The Second Builder appears and tells D-503 that the test run has been pushed back a day because of the Operation.

D-503 feels affection for the Integral while thinking about how he will betray it, demonstrating how conflicted he continues to feel about his dual allegiance to I-330 and to the One State.



D-503 returns to his room, where U is sitting at his desk. He forgives her for her outburst about I-330 the other day. U tells D-503 how happy she is that he will soon be "totally healthy" again. She tells D-503 about how she took the children to the Operation. Once there, they resisted and had to be held down.

U forces the children to undergo the Operation because she values the welfare of the One State over that of individuals. The children's resistance demonstrates the human urge to be free, and posits that predictability and perfection are not the default, ideal human condition, despite the One State's contrary claims.



U leaves and D-503 heads over to I-330's place. He goes to her and hugs her knees. A storm rages outside. I-330 says goodbye to D-503: he is sick, has committed crimes for her, and she assumes he will undergo the Operation to wipe his consciousness of such unbearable wrongdoings and obtain complete happiness. D-503 insists he will not undergo the Operation, as he cannot go on living without her. He agrees to help her steal the Integral at 12:00 the day after tomorrow. He walks home alone, apart from the other ciphers: "everyone was saved, but there was to be no saving me, I don't want saving..."

D-503's decision to forgo the Operation and continue suffering in order to love I-330 shows that he values love and interpersonal relationships over predictability, rationality, and painlessness. When he notes that "everyone was saved, but there was to be no saving me, I don't want saving..." he finally admits to himself that he is actively making choices to behave freely and irrationally. He can finally accept that he's not acting out because of his "sickness": he actively wants to be free, act on irrational desires, and live life as an individual.



RECORD 32

It's 24 hours before the Integral's planned test run. While at work, D-503 contemplates death, the unknown, and how every hour brings him closer to deciding whether he will help MEPHI or remain loyal to the One State. The Second Builder asks how much fuel the Integral will need. Anticipating MEPHI's seizure of the Integral, D-503 suggests that the Integral will need 100 tons of fuel. Later, D-503 is outside walking and sees a mass of ciphers exiting an auditorium. They look more like machines or "sort of people-looking tractors" than like people. They are the first batch of ciphers to receive the Operation. Suddenly, the machine-like ciphers move into the crowd outside the auditorium in attempt to lead them in so they can receive the Operation. D-503 flees.

D-503 runs into O-90, who is also hiding from the machine-like ciphers. O-90 is so terrified about the safety of her unborn child that she accepts D-503's offer to sneak her across the **Green** Wall—even if such a plot must involve I-330. Suddenly, D-503 sees S behind him and realizes he won't be able to bring O-90 to I-330 himself with S perpetually on his back. Instead, he writes her a note and tells her she must go alone. O-90 bids D-503 a tearful goodbye and leaves.

Outside his apartment, D-503 approaches U at her monitor's desk. She tells him about how a cipher told her he'd seen a naked, hairy person near the Ancient House. She condemns the cipher's belief as mere "gibberish." Inwardly, D-503 remarks: "No, fortunately it is not gibberish. No, unfortunately it is not gibberish."

RECORD 33

It's finally the day of the Integral's first test flight. D-503 opens that morning's *State Gazette* and reads an announcement that all ciphers will be required to submit to the Operation tomorrow. In the face of growing anti-State sentiment, ciphers must hand over their imaginations to maintain their happiness. D-503 is so anxious and worried about the decision he must make later that day that he can hardly believe there will be a tomorrow. He leaves for work, "walk[ing] off—into the unknown."

When D-503 contemplates death and the unknown, he demonstrates how much more conscious he has become of his own fears and repressed desires over the course of the book. He now places more value on his thoughts as an individual. When D-503 suggests to the Second Builder that the Integral will need an excessive amount of fuel, he takes a concrete, active step to aid MEPHI, which further signifies that he's more comfortable acting on his own desires. His description of the post-Operation ciphers as "sort of people-looking tractors" shows how little he relates to them. While the earlier, rational D-503 might have wholeheartedly embraced the Operation, the new, individual D-503 cannot relate to these machine-like people. He doesn't want to undergo their same transformation and feels alienated from them.



O-90's choice to sneak across the Green Wall reflects her decision to embrace the unknown. D-503 had earlier rationalized impregnating O-90 by taking solace in the fact that she would most likely be punished for her illegal actions. Now, his decision to help her demonstrates that he's willing to take responsibility for his actions, and that he values her individual safety over upholding the rules of the collective State.



D-503 finds the cipher's "gibberish" fortunate because of his new ties to MEPHI, individualism, and personal freedom, but also unfortunate, because the presence of the free people beyond the Green Wall threatens the One State's power. D-503 might grow more critical of and alienated from the State throughout We, but he never becomes fully invested his altered worldview, choosing instead to remain conflicted about how he wants to feel and how the State has taught him he should feel.



The One States makes the Operation mandatory because it knows that, left to their own devices, ciphers will continue to act on their repressed urges and rebel against the government. As D-503 anguishes over what decision he will make about the Integral the next day, he acknowledges that he has no way to predict how he will act. By acknowledging that he is "walk[ing] off—into the unknown," he comes to terms with the fact that he cannot predict the future.



RECORD 34

In the aftermath of the Integral's test flight, D-503 anguishes over how things actually played out, but he forces himself to be rational and goes into detail outlining to his readers exactly what happened.

D-503 writes about the Integral's test flight: on the day of the test flight, D-503 boards the Integral. He feels morally conflicted about lying to the other personnel onboard the spacecraft and helping MEPHI take away the One State's control over their lives. D-503 relates the workers on the Integral to figures in the tragic story *The Three Released*. In this story, three workers are given a month off work. Overwhelmed and unable to deal with their newfound freedom, they waste away and eventually commit suicide.

D-503 leaves to check the engine before the Integral's launch when he is struck by the realization that he is mere minutes away from making the decision to betray the One State. He doesn't know if I-330 is there yet. He hears an explosion as the Integral takes off. As the aircraft leaves the atmosphere, he imagines he is flying into a new, "upside-down" world. D-503 goes to the wardroom to look for I-330. He finds S, who tells him that I-330 is in the radio room. D-503 goes to the radio room and sees I-330 and two others wearing "winged earphone helmets."

D-503 returns to the command room. He calls to the engine room to stop. The Integral slows to a halt then begins to drop "like a rock" to the ground. 12:00 draws closer, and D-503 compares himself to the rock and I-330 to the Earth: "I was a rock flung by someone, and this rock absolutely had to fall and smash on the ground into smithereens..." D-503 messages the engine room to "slow ahead" and the Integral stops falling.

It's almost 12:00 and everyone onboard convenes on the deck to look out on the mysterious "over-the-wall-world" beneath them. Someone behind D-503 says they saw a face through their binoculars. At 12:00, One State loyalists intervene before D-503 and MEPHI can make the move to steal the Integral. Angrily, I-330 asks D-503 if he betrayed her. He insists he did not. Later on, D-503 remembers seeing U looking through the pages of his records he'd left on his desk and realizes she must be the informant.

Some of D-503's former rationality reemerges as he makes a point of detailing the events of the Integral's test flight.



The story of The Three Released is meant to teach ciphers that they should be grateful for the structure and comfort the State offers them—the alternative to structure might be freedom, but freedom comes at the cost of misery, listlessness, and tortuous uncertainty.



D-503's reflection that he is flying into a new "upside-down" world reflects the unknown, alienating territory into which he is embarking through his new association with MEPHI. In acknowledging that he is making a conscious choice to betray the One State, he demonstrates a refined awareness of the agency he possesses as an individual with the ability to act on desires and make decisions.



In comparing himself to the Integral, D-503 retreats back to his old habit of externalizing his irrational choices. By stating that he is "a rock flung by someone," he implies that his current situation is the result of actions done to him rather than by him. He's conflicted about this impending decision to help MEPHI out of love for I-330 and wants to repress the fact that he desires to do so.



When I-330 accuses D-503 of betraying her and MEPHI, it shows how there is a degree of uncertainty inherent in all human relationships: I-330 values free will and individuality, but these things come at the cost of unpredictability and betrayal.



Horrified, D-503 gives the order to stop the engines and the Integral begins to fall. The Second Builder intervenes with D-503's attempt at a suicide mission and instructs the engine room to "Reverse—full speed!" The Integral stops falling, which is the last thing D-503 remembers.

The failure of MEPHI's mission makes D-503's decision to betray the One State even more difficult for him to accept, and he would rather end it all than admit that his irrational behaviors can have unpredictable, uncontrollable outcomes.



RECORD 35

D-503 doesn't sleep that night. He discovers that his head is wrapped in a steel band. Furious with U for informing the authorities of his and I-330's plans, D-503 resolves to murder her to show I-330 that she was the one that betrayed the mission—not him. D-503 finds a steel rod in his room. He carries it downstairs, but U isn't at her monitor's desk. He goes outside and finds chaos all around him. He sees a flag in the air bearing the message "Down with the machines! Down with the Operation." He sees a young boy terrified and running away from something and realizes that U must be at school, at her other job. He tries to board the subterranean rail to search for her, but someone tells him it's not running today. He is accosted by several post-Operation ciphers who try to force him to join them in receiving the Operation. He escapes and returns home.

D-503 frequently associates U with loyalty to the One State, so murdering her would allow D-503 to prove that he is still loyal to both I-330 and to MEPHI. Further, when D-503 flees from the post-Operation ciphers, it shows that, despite all the misfortune and chaos that I-330 has brought into his life, his desire for her is too strong for him to betray her by undergoing the Operation and becoming a machine of the collective One State.



U is still not at her desk. D-503 returns to his room. At 21:00, U walks in. D-503 looks at the steel rod on the table and presses the button to lower his blinds, even though he hasn't received permission to do so. U runs to the door to try to escape, but D-503 cuts her off. U moves to the bed and takes off her unif, and D-503 realizes that she thinks he lowered his blinds so they could have sex. D-503 begins to laugh. The telephone rings. He picks it up and is instructed to report to the Benefactor immediately. U admits that it was she who reported MEPHI, though she didn't give them I-330's name, seemingly because she thought it would make D-503 stop loving her, though she has difficulty articulating this fully.

U's assumption that D-503 lowered the blinds so they could have sex shows that it was her romantic desire for D-503 that motivated her decision to betray MEPHI—not just her loyalty to the One State. The fact that she failed to give the Guardians I-330's name specifically—something that would crush D-503—further underscores this point. U seems to be ashamed and embarrassed that her actions were motivated by irrational emotions, which is why she has difficulty articulating her thought process to D-503.



RECORD 36

D-503 feels like his head is "an empty **white** page." He doesn't remember walking to see the Benefactor, only regaining consciousness as he stands before him. The Benefactor has "enormous cast-iron hands" and is large and intimidating. The Benefactor asks D-503 if it's true that he made plans to betray the One State, and that he had tried to be an "executioner." D-503 agrees. The Benefactor condemns D-503's actions and suggests to him that MEPHI—and I-330—were only interested in him because he was the Builder of the Integral and would be useful to them. D-503 begins to laugh. He has the sudden urge to see I-330 and runs out the room, becoming unconscious as he tries to find her.

D-503's choice to describe his head as "an empty white page" evokes his longing to repress his unpleasant meeting with the Benefactor. Zamyatin never reveals with certainty whether or not the Benefactor's admission about I-330's ulterior motives for pursuing D-503 is legitimate, but his suggestion does shed some light on I-330's frequently unreadable demeanor. Every time D-503 described I-330 as having a frustrating "X" quality in her face, he could have been sensing her secret, unspoken motives for seeing him. His decision to run to I-330 despite learning that her love might have been insincere suggests he's in denial about her betrayal.



When he regains consciousness, D-503 sees the Machine of the Benefactor in a public square. He approaches the Machine, crying out for it to punish him. D-503 wishes he had “[his] own mother” to comfort him like the Ancients did. He wants a mother figure to “know me as—not the Builder of the Integral, and not cipher D-503, and not a molecule of the One State—but simply a fragment of humanity, a fragment of herself.”

D-503 wants to be punished because he can no longer accept the chaos that surrounds his life. He can't stand not knowing I-330's true feelings, and he is ashamed that he is complicit in MEPHI's attempted rebellion. D-503's desire to have “[his] own mother” evokes his longing to be seen, loved, and appreciated as an individual.



RECORD 37

It's morning at the cafeteria. A cipher tells D-503 to eat, and he forces a smile, though it feels “like some kind of crack on [his] face.” D-503 walks outside and sees birds in the air. The cipher with “the overhanging-forehead” approaches D-503 and tells him that the **Green** Wall has been breached. D-503 demands to know where I-330 is, but the man responds incoherently. Stating “She is here, in the city, activated. Oh yes—we are activated!” D-503 doesn't know who is the “we” the man is talking about. D-503 looks around and sees “hundreds just like” the man, walking around “swallowing the storm with open mouths.”

D-503's confusion about the other cipher's use of the word “we” conveys his overwhelming sense of alienation. After learning of I-330's possible betrayal, he feels alienated from both MEPHI and the One State—he's completely on his own now, neither belonging to nor able to trust either group. The hundreds of other people who are “just like” the other cipher refers to ciphers who have received the Operation and are now machines, unable to think for themselves, “swallowing the storm with open mouths” and obeying the One State unconditionally.



D-503 runs to I-330's building. He waits outside her apartment but doesn't see her. He looks through the glass walls into her room and sees a pile of pink tickets with his digits on them and begins to laugh. He also sees a ticket with the letter “F” on it. He continues to wait for I-330 in the corridor outside her apartment. Eventually, he returns home and passes out in his bed.

When D-503 sees the other pink tickets in I-330's room, it provides him with further evidence that she was only using him—and others—as a way to gain control of the Integral and overthrow the One State. It's a sad and alienating moment for D-503: he realizes that, as strongly as he felt for I-330, their relationship was built on lies, and he never really knew her.



RECORD 38

When D-503 wakes up, it's daytime and I-330 is sitting at his desk, smirking. He is overjoyed to see her, as he thought she'd been taken by the State. They embrace, but D-503 remembers the pink ticket with the letter “F” on it he found in her room yesterday and hesitates. I-330 asks D-503 if he was really with the Benefactor yesterday, and when he confirms that he was, “her face paled, faded, and disappeared.” He tells her everything that happened, then asks if this was why she came—to get information she wanted. She doesn't respond, but D-503 intuits the truth. They say goodbye, but I-330's lips are cold. D-503 cries out that he “can't take it anymore.”

Despite his growing certainty that I-330 was only using him to get to the Integral, D-503 is happy to see her, which reveals that he's still willing to behave irrationally for her. His happiness fades when he remembers the pink ticket with the letter “F” on it that he found in her room, and he feels alienated from her. I-330 and D-503's parting lacks closure because neither character gets any closure regarding the forces that tore their romance apart: D-503 suspects that I-330 was only using him, but she doesn't explicitly tell him so. I-330 likely suspects that D-503 betrayed MEPHI in his meeting with the Benefactor the day before, but she doesn't know this for certain.



RECORD 39

D-503 decides that he will undergo the Operation tomorrow morning. He feels too tortured to go on as he is. He wakes up at 10:00 and leaves his apartment. Outside, the sky is clear and pale blue. He forces himself to clear his head and not think. The streets are empty around him. As he walks, he stumbles over a corpse. He looks more closely at it and sees that it is R-13. D-503 arrives at the Bureau of Guardians. Inside, ciphers wait in line to undergo the Operation.

D-503 runs into S, who asks him why he's there. D-503 confesses everything to S—about his involvement with MEPHI, his “real self” and his “**shaggy self**,” about his increasingly compromised relationship to the One State. When D-503 finishes his confession, S smirks: he knows this is so, because he is also one of “them.”

D-503 leaves the Bureau of Guardians. He feels ill and begins to groan. His neighbor—the cipher with the forehead like an “enormous bald parabola”—comforts him by telling him that he has been working on his calculations for some time now, and has come to the conclusion that “there is no infinity.” D-503 asks the man for paper so he can finish writing his final record. D-503 asks his neighbor where the “finite universe end[s],” and “what is next?” but he doesn't respond. D-503 hears stomping above and below him.

RECORD 40

D-503 can't believe it was truly he who wrote the previous 200 pages of records: “None of the ravings, none of the ridiculous metaphors, none of the feelings” make sense to him now that he is “healthy” again. D-503 fills in the reader on the events that unfolded after his neighbor told him about the universe's finitude. He and his neighbor—and everyone else who was with them—were forced to undergo the Operation.

The uncertainty, suffering, and alienation that plague D-503's life is too much for him to bear, so he decides he'd rather undergo the Operation and live life as a mindless, unfeeling machine. In making this decision, he accepts the One State's philosophy that freedom and happiness are mutually exclusive.



D-503 regresses back to his old habit of referring to himself in terms of his “real,” subservient self and his “shaggy,” irrational self. In so doing, he denies his innate desire to rebel and act on his human urges. S finally confirms that he is a double agent, working as a Guardian for the One State while serving MEPHI.



When D-503 asks his neighbor “what is next?” he articulates his uncertainty about the man's calculations: if the universe is finite, there can't be a “next” thing. As tortured and remorseful as D-503 is with his life at the end of We, his unwillingness to accept his neighbor's conclusion shows that he has grown as a character. The former, rational D-503 would have gladly and wholeheartedly embraced the assumption that there is no infinity, and nothing that can't be deduced with logic and mathematical calculations. This new, transformed D-503 is more skeptical.



Record Forty marks a distinct tonal shift in D-503's writing style: he can no longer make sense of the “ravings” and “ridiculous metaphors” contained within the middle section of his journal entries. His writing is now completely rational and objective. In a way, the Operation makes him alienated from his “sick” former self. Now that he is “healthy,” he's regained the rationality by which his character was once defined.



The day after receiving the Operation, D-503 reports to the Benefactor and confesses everything to him—something he'd wanted to do the entire time, he insists, but couldn't while he was sick with a soul. Later that day, D-503 sits with the Benefactor in the Gas Room. They bring in I-330 and she is subjected to the Bell Jar. The authorities pump air out of the Jar, but I-330 refuses to talk. Tomorrow, I-330 and her cohort will be put to death at the hands of the Machine of the Benefactor. Their punishment must be administered hastily, as "there is still chaos, howling, corpses, wild beasts, and—unfortunately—a significant amount of ciphers betraying reason in the western quarters."

A new, temporary wall has been raised to separate the One State from the wild, free world. D-503 expresses confidence in the success of the One State: "I know we will win. Because reason should win."

Over the course of the We, D-503 becomes more willing to take responsibility for his repressed desires and irrational thoughts and actions. The Operation reverses this: he returns to blaming everything on his sickness. D-503's betrayal of I-330 also emphasizes his return to his former self: though he was once willing to betray the State out of love for her, he now betrays her out of loyalty to the State.



When D-503 claims that he "know[s]" the State will remain powerful, he does so with his former self's sense of certainty. The Operation rids of agency and imagination, and he is subservient to the One State once more.





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