Animal Farm

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE ORWELL

Eric Blair was born and spent his youth in India. He was educated at Eton in England and from 1922-27, he served in the Indian Imperial Police in Burma. Through his autobiographical work about poverty in London (*Down and Out in Paris and London*, 1933), his experiences in colonial Burma (*Burmese Days*, 1934), and in the Spanish Civil War (*Homage to Catalonia*, 1938), and the plight of unemployed coal miners in England (*The Road to Wigan Pier*, 1937), Blair, who wrote under the name George Orwell, exposed and critiqued the human tendency to oppress others politically, economically, and physically. Orwell particularly hated totalitarianism, and his most famous novels, *Animal Farm* and *1984*, are profound condemnations of totalitarian regimes. Orwell died at the age of 47 after failing to treat a lung ailment.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1917, two successive revolutions rocked Russia and the rest of the world. The first revolution overthrew the Russian monarchy (the Tsar) and the second established the USSR, the world's first Communist state. Over the next 30 years, the Soviet government descended into a totalitarian regime that used and manipulated socialist ideas of equality among the working class to oppress its people and maintain power. *Animal Farm* is an allegory of the Russian Revolution and the Communist Soviet Union. Many of the animal characters in *Animal Farm* have direct correlations to figures or institutions in the Soviet Union.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

The literary work most often mentioned alongside *Animal Farm* is Orwell's own *1984*. It envisions a future in which a dictatorship monitors and controls the actions of all its citizens. Like *Animal Farm*, *1984* depicts the horrific constraints that totalitarian governments can impose on human freedom. Other popular novels with antitotalitarian themes include Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. *Animal Farm* specifically critiques Communism, as put forth by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's *The Communist Manifesto*, through its allegorical Animalism ideology. In his autobiographical writing, Orwell cited the British author W. Somerset Maugham as a major influence on his work, though he also wrote about his love of the works of Shakespeare and Charles Dickens, as well as the work of some of his contemporaries including T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Animal Farm
- **When Written:** 1944-45
- **Where Written:** England
- **When Published:** 1945
- **Literary Period:** Modernism
- **Genre:** Allegorical Novel
- **Setting:** A farm somewhere in England in the first half of the 20th century
- **Climax:** The pigs appear standing upright and the sheep bleat, "Four legs good, two legs better!"
- **Antagonist:** Napoleon specifically, but the pigs and the dogs as groups are all antagonists.
- **Point of View:** Third Person

EXTRA CREDIT

Tough Crowd. Though *Animal Farm* eventually made Orwell famous, three publishers in England and several American publishing houses rejected the novel at first. One of the English editors to reject the novel was the famous poet T.S. Eliot, who was an editor at the Faber & Faber publishing house. One American editor, meanwhile, told Orwell that it was "impossible to sell animal stories in the U.S.A."

Red Scare. Orwell didn't just write literature that condemned the Communist state of the USSR. He did everything he could, from writing editorials to compiling lists of men he knew were Soviet spies, to combat the willful blindness of many intellectuals in the West to USSR atrocities.

PLOT SUMMARY

Manor Farm is a small farm in England run by the harsh and often drunk Mr. Jones. One night, a boar named Old Major gathers all the animals of Manor Farm together. Knowing that he will soon die, Old Major gives a speech in which he reveals to the animals that men cause all the misery that animals endure. Old Major says that all animals are equal and urges them to join together to rebel. He teaches them a revolutionary song called "Beasts of England." Old Major dies soon after, but two pigs named Snowball and Napoleon adapt his ideas into the philosophy of Animalism. They set about trying to spread Animalism's ideals to the other animals on the farm, but this proves to be an uphill battle. The carthorses, Boxer and Clover,

prove to be their best disciples, as they're able to distill Animalism into simple arguments and share them with the other animals.

Three months later, Mr. Jones neglects to feed his animals for more than 24 hours. The animals revolt and chase Mr. Jones and the farmhands off of the farm in what ends up being an easy victory. The animals promptly burn all items that allowed Mr. Jones to maintain power, such as whips, bits, and knives. The next morning, the animals tour the farm and the pigs reveal that over the last few months, they've taught themselves to read. Snowball is the best at writing, and with white paint he amends the farm's gate to read "Animal Farm." At the big barn, Snowball also writes the tenets of Animalism, which he and Napoleon distilled into Seven Commandments. The commandments state that all animals are equal, and no animal may act like a human by sleeping in a bed, walking on two legs, killing other animals, or drinking alcohol. They state that humans are the only enemy. The animals turn to the hay harvest after the pigs figure out how to milk the cows, but the milk begins to disappear.

The absence of humans means that the animals are far more successful than Mr. Jones ever was. There's enough food, and the animals take pride in being able to feed themselves with their own labor. The pigs are clever enough to figure out how to perform certain tasks without standing on two legs, while Boxer seems as strong as three horses and adopts the motto "I will work harder!" All the animals throw themselves into the running of the farm except for the vain horse Mollie, who makes lots of excuses as to why she can't work. Benjamin the donkey seems not to care about anything and cryptically tells everyone that donkeys live a long time.

Snowball organizes committees for the animals—which are mostly unsuccessful—and more successfully teaches animals to read. The dogs, the pigs, the goat Muriel, and Benjamin are the only ones who become fully literate. Less intelligent animals, such as the sheep, only learn the letter A and cannot remember the Seven Commandments, so Snowball distills this down into the maxim "Four legs good, two legs bad." He has to explain to the birds why this is acceptable, since they have only two legs. Napoleon, meanwhile, takes the nine new puppies to train, insisting it's more useful to focus on educating the young. A fight for power soon develops between Snowball and Napoleon.

Snowball and Napoleon send out pigeons to neighboring farms to spread the word to other animals. The other farmers sympathize with Mr. Jones, but only want to make the situation work for them. Fortunately for the animals, their neighbors, Mr. Pilkington of Foxwood Farm and Mr. Frederick of Pinchfield Farm, hate each other, though they're both terrified of what happened at Animal Farm. In October, Mr. Jones and some men invade the farm with a gun. The animals fight bravely and send the men racing away, though Boxer is distraught when he believes he killed a stable boy. Snowball gives a speech about the importance of dying for Animal Farm and they agree to fire Mr. Jones's gun twice per year, on the anniversaries of the rebellion and of the Battle of the Cowshed. They also come up with military honors and confer one on Snowball.

In the winter, Mollie disappears to serve a man in town. The pigs argue over how to plan the coming season and the rivalry between Snowball and Napoleon comes to a head over Snowball's idea to build a **windmill**. Snowball convinces animals by insisting that a windmill would give them electricity and ensure they only have to work three days per week, while Napoleon quietly insists this is nonsense. At the final debate about the windmill, Napoleon summons the puppies, whom he secretly reared to be his own vicious servants, and has them chase Snowball from Animal Farm. Napoleon tells the other animals that Snowball was a "bad influence," eliminates the animals' right to vote, and takes "the burden" of leadership on himself. He sends around a pig named Squealer, who persuades the animals that Napoleon has their best interests at heart.

Three weeks later Napoleon decides they should build the windmill after all—the windmill, he insists, was his idea to begin with, but Snowball stole his plans. The animals set to work, with Boxer leading. Focusing on the windmill reduces the productivity of the farm, and all the animals but the pigs and the dogs get less to eat. Napoleon institutes work on Sundays that's voluntary, but animals who don't work will receive reduced rations. The pigs engage a solicitor named Mr. Whymper to represent them and begin to trade with other farms. They move into Mr. Jones's farmhouse and start to sleep in beds. This confuses Clover, who thought this was forbidden. When she asks Muriel to read her the Commandment about beds, it reads: "No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets." Squealer, accompanied by dogs, insists that if the pigs don't get enough sleep, Mr. Jones will return.

That winter, a storm destroys the partially complete windmill. Napoleon blames the catastrophe on the "traitor" Snowball and insists that Snowball is hiding out at Foxwood. Humans insist that the windmill fell because of the weather and though the animals don't believe it, they build the walls of the second windmill twice as thick. Napoleon covers up that the farm doesn't have enough food, and in January, tells the hens that he's agreed to trade 400 eggs per week for grain. The hens are distraught, as they'd all planned on hatching spring chicks, so they revolt and sacrifice their eggs. Napoleon cuts their rations and the hens give up after five days, after nine hens die. Napoleon circulates that they died of disease and catches wind that Snowball is sneaking onto Animal Farm and causing mischief, such as trampling eggs and stealing. One evening, Squealer insists that Snowball is in league with Mr. Frederick and has been on Mr. Jones's side the whole time. Boxer is dumbfounded and notes that Snowball fought with them, but Squealer insists that according to Napoleon, Snowball is on Mr.

Jones's side.

Four days later, Napoleon sets his dogs on four young pigs and Boxer during a meeting. Boxer paws the dogs away, but the dogs rip the pigs' throats out after they confess to conspiring with Snowball. Other animals confess heinous crimes as well, and the dogs kill all of them. The remaining animals gather at the windmill, and Boxer suggests that this happened because they've done something wrong. Clover can't formulate her thoughts into words, but she thinks that this wasn't what she had in mind when she joined the rebellion. However, she still thinks that this is better than living under Mr. Jones and vows to accept Napoleon's leadership. She leads the animals in a round of "Beasts of England," but Squealer stops by and announces that the song is now banned: the revolution it speaks of has happened, so it's no longer useful. Minimus the pig composes a new song that none of the animals like as much. A few days after the massacre, Clover remembers that the Seven Commandments stated that animals shouldn't kill each other, but when she asks Muriel to read the Commandments on the barn, the Commandment reads that animals can't kill each other without cause.

The animals work harder than ever, and Squealer regularly reads them figures that show the farm's productivity is up by 200 to 500 percent. Napoleon stays inside the farmhouse most of the time, guarded by the dogs. When Minimus composes a poem in Napoleon's honor, Napoleon has it written on the barn next to the Commandments and a portrait of himself. Napoleon negotiates with Mr. Frederick and Mr. Pilkington about timber on the property he'd like to sell, and tensions run high. They finish the windmill in the fall and soon after, Napoleon announces he sold the timber to Mr. Frederick after promising it to Mr. Pilkington. The money will buy the animals the machinery for the windmill. Mr. Whymper, however, reveals that Mr. Frederick paid for the timber with forged banknotes. Mr. Frederick and his men, many with guns, invade Animal Farm and blow up the windmill. The enraged animals chase them away but feel discouraged until Squealer points out that they achieved a great victory. The pigs discover a case of whiskey and after initially announcing that Napoleon is dying, they declare that all spare fields will be planted with barley. All of it will go to the pigs. One night, animals hear a crash and find Squealer next to the barn with a broken ladder and paint. The next morning, the Commandments read that animals shouldn't drink to excess.

As Boxer approaches retirement, he refuses to take time to let his injuries heal. He wants to see the windmill done. When 31 piglets, all Napoleon's children, are born in the spring, Napoleon announces that they need to build a schoolhouse and institutes a rule that all other animals must let pigs pass. Napoleon is unanimously voted to be the farm's president when it becomes a republic. In the summer, Boxer collapses while working on the windmill, and Napoleon announces that a human vet will treat him. When the van comes to collect Boxer, however, Benjamin rouses everyone: the van reads that Boxer is going to the glue factory. They never see Boxer again, and Squealer insists that the van was recently purchased by a vet and hadn't yet been repainted. The pigs come up with money to buy more whiskey a few days later.

Years pass. Now only a few of the remaining animals on the farm experienced the revolution. Even fewer remember its goals. They complete the first windmill and begin a second, but neither windmill will electrify the farm. The pigs teach themselves to walk on two legs, begin carrying whips, and teach the sheep to bleat "Four legs good, two legs better." When Clover and Benjamin check the Seven Commandments, they only see the statement: "All animals are equal. But some animals are more equal than others." The pigs make peace with their human neighbors and have a feast, but both Napoleon and Mr. Pilkington cheat at cards and begin a fight. The other animals are shocked to discover that they can no longer tell the pigs from the humans.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Napoleon – The primary antagonist of the novel; a pig who is one of Old Major's disciples, along with Snowball. At first, Napoleon and Snowball work together to develop the ideology of Animalism and spread its ideals throughout all the animals on the farm, but Napoleon proves to have very different goals than Snowball. Where Snowball is relatively idealistic and wants to help others, Napoleon soon proves himself cruel and power hungry. When the conflict comes to a head over whether or not to build a **windmill**, Napoleon reveals that he's trained nine dogs to be his secret police force, chases Snowball off the farm, and institutes a totalitarian state at Animal Farm. He maintains his rule by demanding unwavering loyalty and trust from his subjects, and he achieves at least outward displays of trust through intimidation and the spread of misinformation through propaganda. Napoleon is often the one to make grand, sinister-sounding pronouncements, but then always sends the pig Squealer around to convince everyone that Napoleon is actually acting in their best interests—and never in his own self-interest. He's especially interested in developing an educated ruling class, which he does by educating the dogs, and later by insisting on educating the 31 piglets he fathers in a special schoolhouse. Throughout the novel, Napoleon proves himself to be paranoid, self-important, and unable to accept that he's wrong—he blames all manner of horrible things on either Snowball or the neighboring farmers. By the end of the novel, Napoleon is undistinguishable from the humans he has denounced along: he is fat, powerful, and begins to walk on two legs, wear clothes, and carry a whip. In Napoleon's eyes, it's a good thing that the other animals are so hungry and powerless,

and he insists that this state of affairs is called for in Animalism. He ultimately changes Animal Farm's name back to Manor Farm in a bid to make it seem more palatable to the farmers, and he proves himself to be just as corrupt as his human counterparts. **Napoleon** *symbolizes Stalin, who led the Soviet Union from 1930 until his death in 1953.*

Snowball – At first, a friend and companion of Napoleon's. Together, Snowball and Napoleon develop the theory of Animalism from the ideas of Old Major's speech, and later they distill these ideas down into the Seven Commandments. Snowball is responsible for generating the maxim "four legs good, two legs bad," which he teaches to the sheep and other less intelligent animals in order to give them some version of the Seven Commandments to repeat. Despite being the generator of this maxim, in the months after, the phrase often gets used against Snowball during Sunday meetings, as the sheep often start bleating the maxim out of the blue during Snowball's speeches. It's implied that these interruptions are Napoleon's work, as the two pigs develop an intense rivalry in the months after the rebellion. Snowball is somewhat of an idealistic individual; he proposes that the farm animals build a **windmill** in order to generate electricity, which he suggests will ultimately lead to a three-day workweek. He also comes up with a variety of other schemes and groups aimed at improving the animals' lives and education status, and he also promotes spreading news of the rebellion far and wide. Despite his idealism, however, Snowball still shows himself to be willing to exploit the other animals for his own gain, as when he says nothing about taking the milk and apples for the pigs only. On the day that the animals vote to build the windmill, Napoleon exiles Snowball by setting his attack dogs on him. After this, Snowball disappears as a character, but Napoleon continues to invoke Snowball as a nefarious figure who conspires against Animal Farm, is in league with humans, and is intent on messing everything up on the farm. Through this, Napoleon discredits Snowball's bravery and actions in the Battle of the Cowshed and makes it so no animal can feel any affinity for Snowball. **Snowball** *symbolizes Trotsky, a rival of Stalin exiled from Russia and assassinated on Stalin's orders in Mexico in 1940.*

Boxer – A huge, gentle carthorse. Boxer isn't especially intelligent—he only learns the first four letters of the alphabet—but Old Major's speech and the equality expressed in the Seven Commandments appeals to his generous nature. Because of this, Boxer becomes one of Napoleon and Snowball's biggest disciples as they attempt to spread the ideals of Animalism to others, as Boxer is capable of making simple, easy to understand arguments to his peers. After the rebellion, Boxer then becomes one of the most valuable members of Animal Farm, as he's fully sold on its ideals, entirely loyal to Napoleon, and convinced that his hard work is absolutely essential to the success of the farm. On that final point, Boxer is right: his labor is what makes it so that the animals are able to build both attempts at their **windmills**. To this end, Boxer adopts two personal mottos: "I will work harder," and "Napoleon is always right." Through these mottos, the novel shows how someone like Boxer sacrifices himself to the cause at the expense of everything, including his health, his intellect, and his possibility for advancement. Boxer never realizes that Napoleon is the reason conditions are so poor on Animal Farm, and he never becomes aware of his own strength or power to change anything. This means that when Boxer collapses, he fully believes that Napoleon is going to send him to a human veterinarian—and he can't read the writing on the van that comes to take him away, which is a van bound for a glue factory. By the time other animals alert Boxer to what's going on, Boxer is far too weak to make any successful attempt to save himself, and instead, his death goes on to benefit the ruling class of pigs on Animal Farm. **Boxer** *represents the male working class and peasants of the Soviet Union.*

Benjamin – A jaded donkey with the skeptical view that life will always be difficult and painful. Because of this outlook, Benjamin isn't surprised when the pigs corrupt the revolution and transform Animal Farm into a totalitarian state. Though his skepticism proves to be well-founded and he alone among the animals seems aware of what's going on, it also renders him ineffective as he's unwilling to speak up or do anything to stop it. He also consistently refuses to explain what's going on to his friends, as when he refuses to read the Seven Commandments to Clover and alone understands what he's seeing when the animals find Squealer and paint next to a broken ladder and the Seven Commandments. This comes back to haunt him when Napoleon betrays Boxer and sends him to the glue factory—though Benjamin does speak up and tell the animals what's going on, it's too late to save Boxer. **Benjamin** *represents those who were aware of Stalin's unjust and oppressive policies but did nothing to try to stop them.*

Squealer – A fat pig who's a skilled orator. Squealer works closely with Snowball and Napoleon at first—and later, just Napoleon—to interpret or distill what the pigs' plan is for the other animals. Squealer is purportedly able to convince animals of anything, and he's very effective in his job. Sometimes he's effective because of the way he's able to manipulate language; other times, Squealer is effective because the attack dogs accompany him. He benefits from Napoleon's rule, as Squealer is often tasked with addressing the animals during Sunday meetings and gets the same extensive rations as the rest of the pigs. At the end of the novel, Squealer learns to walk on two legs and teaches the sheep the new maxim "Four legs good, two legs better!" He's present at the meeting between the pigs and the farmers. **Squealer** *represents the Soviet press, which Stalin controlled throughout his rule.*

Old Major – A revered old boar who, at the beginning of the novel, gathers the animals together to speak to them about what's wrong with their world. He proposes that humanity is

their one true enemy, as people profit off of what animals produce without producing anything themselves—and specifically in the case of Mr. Jones, humans are cruel, unfeeling, and abuse those below them. Old Major's speech forms the basis for Animalism, a theory that Napoleon and Snowball develop in the three months after Old Major's death. Old Major dies a few months before the revolution and so never gets to see his ideas play out in the real world, but Napoleon does eventually disinter Old Major's head so that the other animals can walk past it reverently. **Old Major** *symbolizes both Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, the fathers of Communism.*

Clover – A gentle, motherly, and powerful carthorse. She supports the revolution, as she naturally takes it upon herself to protect those weaker than she is, and she recognizes this kind of communal spirit echoed in the Seven Commandments. When Animal Farm begins to descend into a totalitarian state under Napoleon, however, Clover becomes dismayed—but she doesn't have the will, personality, or education to resist the pigs. Clover never becomes fully literate and only learns the alphabet, and so she's unable to detect changes to the Seven Commandments and buys into everything the pigs say. In this sense, she becomes a witness to the corruption, though she only vaguely understands that something went wrong—but still believes that the totalitarian state she finds herself living in must be better than life under Mr. Jones. **Clover** *symbolizes the female working class and peasants of the Soviet Union.*

Mr. Jones – The original owner of Manor Farm. Once a strict and fierce master, in the years before the story begins, Mr. Jones became drunk, careless, and ineffective, as well as casually cruel and arrogant. Mr. Jones's carelessness and cruelty are the final straw for the animals: they instigate a rebellion when he neglects to feed them and then tries to beat them when they break into the stores of grain. Though Mr. Jones attempts to take back Animal Farm, his attempt is unsuccessful and none of the other farmers have much genuine sympathy for him. **Mr. Jones** *symbolizes the Russian Tsar in the early 20th century.*

Mr. Pilkington – The gentleman farmer who owns Foxwood, one of Animal Farm's neighbors. Foxwood is large, sprawling, and old-fashioned, and Mr. Pilkington himself spends more time hunting and on leisure activities than he does farming. Though Napoleon vilifies Mr. Pilkington at various times, Mr. Pilkington does appear to enter into an agreement to buy timber from Animal Farm in good faith—but he rudely pulls his support for Animal Farm when Napoleon double-crosses him. Mr. Pilkington attends the final card game at Animal Farm and tries to cheat Napoleon. **Mr. Pilkington** *represents the Allies before World War II.*

Mr. Frederick – The owner of the neighboring farm of Pinchfield. He's vicious, cruel, and calculating, and rumors circulate that he's especially horrible to his farm animals. After suffering abuse from Napoleon, Mr. Frederick ultimately purchases timber from Animal Farm, but pays for it with counterfeit bills, and days later, attacks Animal Farm and blows up the **windmill**. Though he's successful in this endeavor, he disappears from the story after this point. **Mr. Frederick** *symbolizes the fascist Germans and Hitler in particular.*

The Cat – A greedy and self-serving farm cat. She's only interested in participating in the rebellion when there's no cost or danger to do so, and she's only willing to support Animalism when it might help her—though it's implied that she doesn't truly believe in the ideology even then; she parrots its ideals to try to dupe birds she'd like to eat. The cat disappears before Napoleon turns Animal Farm into an entirely totalitarian state.

Mollie – A vain, white horse who, prior to the rebellion, pulls Mr. Jones's cart. She loves sugar and wearing pretty ribbons in her mane, and she never cares much for the revolution—supporting it would mean she couldn't have sugar or ribbons. Because of this, she abandons Animal Farm and enters into service for another human only a few months after the rebellion. **Mollie** *symbolizes the selfish and materialistic middle class.*

The Sheep – Some of the least intelligent animals on Animal Farm. They never become fully literate and can't remember the Seven Commandments, but Snowball teaches them the maxim "Four legs good, two legs bad," which they love and bleat all the time. They're receptive to propaganda and follow orders without questioning anything. **The sheep** *represent the duped citizens of a totalitarian state.*

The Hens – Unintelligent laying hens on Animal Farm. They're initially fully behind the rebellion and the ideals of Animal Farm but become somewhat disillusioned—and terrified—when Napoleon insists that they must surrender their eggs. The hens' rebellion is unsuccessful, and nine die over the course of their five-day resistance. **The hens** *correspond to the Ukrainian peasants who attempted to resist Stalin's five-year plan and died.*

The Dogs – Jessie, Bluebell, Pincher, and the nine attack dogs provide the pigs with the brute force necessary to terrorize the other animals. In return, the dogs receive special privileges and often sit close to the pigs. They don't rule, but they live comfortably and get enough to eat because they support the pigs. **The dogs** *symbolize the Soviet secret police.*

Muriel – A white goat; one of the few animals who becomes fully literate. While **Muriel** doesn't correspond to any one person, *she can be seen as a representation of educated individuals who are able to interpret what's going on, but who don't have the charisma or the power to speak their minds.*

MINOR CHARACTERS

Moses – A tame raven and Mr. Jones's special pet. The animals dislike him because he doesn't work, but many of them do believe his stories about Sugarcandy Mountain, a wonderful

place where animals go when they die. **Moses** *represents organized religion, and specifically the Russian Orthodox Church.*

Mr. Whymper – The solicitor whom Napoleon hires to represent Animal Farm to the outside world. He's shrewd and calculating, and by the end of the novel, has done well for himself. **Mr. Whymper** *represents the capitalists who got rich doing business with the USSR.*

Minimus – A pig who writes propaganda poems and songs praising Napoleon and Animal Farm. **Minimus** *represents the takeover of art by propaganda in a totalitarian state that aims to control what its citizens think.*

Mrs. Jones – Mr. Jones's wife.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

TOTALITARIANISM

George Orwell once wrote: "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been [...] against totalitarianism." *Animal Farm*, Orwell's tale of the titular farm animals' takeover of a provincial English farm and their development of a totalitarian state there, is no exception. Totalitarianism is a form of government in which the state seeks to control every facet of life, from economics and politics to each individual's ideas and beliefs. Different totalitarian states have different justifications for their rule, but *Animal Farm* suggests that all totalitarian regimes are fundamentally the same: those in power care only about maintaining their power by any means necessary, and they do so by oppressing the individual and the lower classes.

While *Animal Farm* is, most directly, a pointed critique of the USSR, the totalitarian regime established by Joseph Stalin in the early 20th century. However, the book also implies at various points that the USSR was not—and indeed, isn't—the only totalitarian regime worth critiquing. At the beginning of the novel, Mr. Jones's running of Manor Farm reads as similarly totalitarian and despotic to Stalin's regime. Mr. Jones spends his time drinking and hires corrupt, unfeeling cronies to run the farm while his animals toil their lives away, only to be slaughtered or otherwise killed gruesomely when they're no longer useful to him. The animals' lives are short and guaranteed to be lived in hunger, while Mr. Jones lives in relative luxury and believes that the natural order of things is that he, as a human, should be the one in charge of his animals. After the animals overthrow Mr. Jones and Napoleon the pig takes over the farm, the animals themselves begin to emulate this oppressive hierarchy despite basing their initial uprising on the notion that all animals are equal. At the end of the novel, it's possible to see that if the other farmers who visit Napoleon's Animal Farm aren't yet running totalitarian farming establishments already, the hunger to do so is definitely there—Mr. Pilkington notes that it's commendable that Napoleon manages to eke so much labor out of his animals while providing so little in the way of food and other care. This makes it clear that the tendency for a government or organization to lean toward totalitarianism is often present, even if it's not always evident in practice at a given time. In other words, Napoleon as a totalitarian dictator isn't an anomaly—he's part of a much larger tendency of powerful leaders to consolidate and hoard as much power as possible.

The way that Napoleon, Stalin, and other leaders, fictional and real, achieve these totalitarian states is by controlling every aspect of life in their state. Napoleon demonstrates that this is particularly achievable through offering education and elite job training to some, while denying those opportunities to many—while also assuring the "many," through propaganda and pro-state events, that things are as they should be. While the pig Snowball takes it upon himself to attempt to educate everyone on Animal Farm, Napoleon insists that it's not worth it to educate the animals who are already adults and instead, it's better to focus on educating the youth. This does several things. First, by having an uneducated adult population, Napoleon ensures that those adults won't be able to teach their offspring to think and potentially push back on him. Those adults also won't be able to push back themselves, both because of their own illiteracy and because of how little power they have to begin with. Then, while Napoleon uses "youth" to describe who he wants to educate, the youth are at first just the dogs' nine puppies and later, are just the 31 piglets he fathered. Educating the puppies turns them into nine vicious adult dogs that mirror the Soviet secret police and go on to help Napoleon maintain his rule, while the young pigs represent an educated and powerful ruling class. Essentially, when Napoleon mentions educating youth, he very purposefully doesn't include the young chicks, ducklings, calves, or foals in the term, thereby relegating them to a position in society where they're unable to advocate for themselves or for change—or indeed, even to understand that speaking up is something they can or should do.

In addition to controlling education and advancement opportunities, the novel also illustrates the role of propaganda in a totalitarian state. From Napoleon's initial takeover of Animal Farm to the very end of the novel, he skillfully deploys propaganda in the form of the Seven Commandments themselves, as well as the skilled orator pig Squealer and the pig Minimus, who composes songs and poems that praise Animal Farm and Napoleon. Importantly, much of what the pigs

write and say to the other farm animals comes in the form of absolutes, as when Old Major says initially that animals should never concede that they might have common interests with men, or when Squealer insists that the pigs need all the food they can get—or else Mr. Jones will surely return. Importantly, the exhausted and uneducated animals have complete trust that Napoleon has their best interests at heart—something Squealer reminds them of constantly—in addition to the inability to recognize the pigs' propaganda efforts for what they are. In this way, Napoleon creates a cult of personality around himself that is fueled by fear, ignorance, and the deeply-held belief that Napoleon's version of Animal Farm (while still short on food and requiring hard work) is the best possible scenario.

Animal Farm offers no real remedies for overthrowing totalitarianism. Indeed, the end of the novel, in which both pigs and humans are revealed to be equally corrupt and interested in presiding over totalitarian states, is extremely grim. However, the very existence of the novel itself allows readers to understand how a totalitarian state comes into being, gains power, and holds onto it. Knowing how this process happens and has happened historically, as well as recognizing one's own power to not let this happen in the first place, the novel suggests, are the best thing readers can do to guard against totalitarianism in their own lifetimes.

REVOLUTION AND CORRUPTION

Animal Farm depicts a revolution in progress. Like all popular revolutions, the uprising in *Animal Farm* develops out of a hope for a better future, in which farm animals can enjoy the fruits of their own labor without the overbearing rule of humans. At the time of the revolution, all of the animals on Mr. Jones's farm, even the pigs, are committed to the idea of universal equality—but these high ideals that fueled the revolution in the first place gradually give way to individual and class-based self-interest. *Animal Farm* thus illustrates how a revolution can be corrupted into a totalitarian regime through slow, gradual changes.

At first, the revolution creates the sense that there could be a bright future in store for Animal Farm. Old Major makes a number of objectively true points in his speech to the animals, such as that Mr. Jones is a cruel and unfeeling master who cares little or not at all for their wellbeing, and that humans themselves don't produce anything (like eggs or milk). The Seven Commandments that Snowball and Napoleon come up with in the months after are similarly idealistic, and, in theory, lay the groundwork for a revolution that truly will elevate individual workers above horrible, totalitarian leaders like Mr. Jones. Indeed, when the rebellion surprisingly happens, things initially seem as if they're going to go in a positive direction for everyone: there are debates among the animals, animals have the ability to propose items for discussion, and every animal participates in the working of the farm. Best of all, the animals pull in the best and fastest hay harvest that the farm has ever seen, suggesting that their revolution has benefits in addition to freeing them from a cruel situation under Mr. Jones. It seems possible that they'll truly be able to make self-government work.

However, the novel also offers early clues that corruption begins to take hold on Animal Farm long before Napoleon takes drastic steps to turn it into a totalitarian state, even when by most metrics, things seem to be going smoothly and fairly. For instance, it's not an accident that only the pigs and the dogs are the ones who become fully literate. While to a degree, this becomes a chicken and egg question (in terms of which came first: literacy or corrupt power), the fact remains that the only literate creatures are the ones who ultimately seize control. Further, even idealistic Snowball insists to the other animals that because the literate pigs are "mindworkers" engaged in figuring out how exactly to run the farm, they need the entire crop of apples and all the cows' milk. This power shift takes place during that first exceptional hay harvest, making it clear that things aren't as rosy as the hay yield, and the increased productivity it suggests, might lead one to believe.

The corruption doesn't end with the theft of milk and apples; by the end of the novel, the pigs sleep in the farmhouse, have a school for their pig children, drink alcohol, and consume sugar off of the Jones's set of fine china—all things initially forbidden in some form in the original Seven Commandments. However, one of the most corrupt things that the pigs do is to modify the Seven Commandments to effectively legalize whatever it is they decide they want to do, from drinking alcohol to sleeping in beds. This corruption is something that most animals don't notice, while those that do are either cowed into pretending that they don't notice or executed for expressing concern. This combination of fear and unthinking trust in leaders, the novel suggests, is one of the most important elements that allows corruption to flourish.

Though the animals' rebellion began as one against humans and everything they stand for in the animals' eyes—greed, alcoholism, decadence, and cruelty, among other vices—it's telling that the novel ends when animals, led by Clover, cannot tell Napoleon and his pig cronies apart from the human farmers who came for a tour and dinner. With this, the novel proposes that revolution is something cyclical that repeats throughout time. Because of corruption, those individuals who are powerful to begin with or who overthrow cruel and heartless leaders will inevitably come to resemble those former leaders, once they understand what it's like to occupy such a position of power. In this sense, Orwell paints a grim view of revolution as a whole, as *Animal Farm* demonstrates clearly that even when the ideals of a revolution may be good, it's all too easy to twist those ideals, fall prey to corruption, and poison the movement, harming countless powerless individuals in the process.

CLASS WARFARE

One of the main tenets of Animalism, the ideology that Napoleon and Snowball develop, is that all animals are equal. However, it doesn't take long for the pigs to begin to refer to themselves as "mindworkers" to distinguish themselves from the other animals, who work as physical laborers. Through this, *Animal Farm* shows how differences in education and occupation lead to the development of a class hierarchy, which leads inevitably to class warfare, in which one class seeks to dominate the other. Though *Animal Farm* suggests that the "mindworking" or intellectual class will almost always prevail in this struggle, it also goes to great lengths to suggest that whether because of ignorance, inaction, or fear, this is something that the working class allows to happen.

Even as early as Old Major's speech, it's possible to detect that there are class divisions at play on Manor Farm. It's telling, for one, that it's a pig who's giving the speech, and that the other pigs sit closest to the platform while the other animals fill in behind them. The respect that all animals have for Old Major, and the seating arrangements, suggest that pigs as a species already occupy a special and revered place on the farm. Following the rebellion, the pigs prey on this structure by using their literacy to catapult themselves to positions of power as "mindworkers," or those in charge of figuring out how to run the farm (rather than doing the manual work of running the farm). Because of the pigs' literacy, they're able to effectively take control over every aspect of the farm and subjugate those they believe to be less intelligent or less powerful than they are. They do so in part by making it extremely scary and dangerous to stand up to them, which Napoleon does by training nine attack dogs and sending them out with the pigs when they spread news. With the dogs— known killers—around, no one dares ask too many questions that might betray their dissatisfaction with their lives.

As objectively successful as the pigs may be in this endeavor, *Animal Farm* goes to great lengths to show that especially at the beginning, the pigs are only able to achieve superior status by tricking others into thinking they're less powerful. This is especially apparent in the case of Boxer, a good-hearted but unintelligent carthorse. Boxer throws himself into the work of cultivating the farm—his personal motto becomes, "I will work harder"—and he fully supports Napoleon and Napoleon's rule, even when at times, Boxer recognizes that Napoleon isn't actually acting in Boxer and the other workers' best interests. The fact that he's not a mindworker, however, means that Boxer never pushes back on this much. This all comes to a head during Napoleon's trials and executions of "traitorous" farm animals, when Napoleon sets his dogs on four young pigs, and three of the dogs attack Boxer. Boxer sends two dogs flying and pins the third under his massive hoof—it's clear, through the dog's terrified reaction, that if Boxer were so inclined, he could do away with Napoleon and Napoleon's brutal dogs with a couple of kicks. Napoleon's power as a mindworker, however, means that he's created an environment in which Boxer isn't aware of his own physical strength. Part of being part of the lower class, *Animal Farm* suggests, is not being aware of one's power to effectively fight back against rulers like Napoleon, even if just physically. This state of not recognizing even one's physical power to fight back, furthermore, isn't unique to Boxer; if the non-pig farm animals were somehow able to band together, it's possible they could've ousted Napoleon through force.

On the other end of the spectrum, the novel offers Benjamin, the jaded donkey who believes that no matter what, life will be difficult, and everyone will work against him. Notably, Benjamin, unlike Boxer, becomes completely literate within a few months and seems to alone in his awareness of the pigs' corruption and attempts to manipulate the animals. Benjamin, however, stubbornly refuses to read the ever-changing Commandments to others and never sees a reason to enlighten his fellow working animals as to what's going on. As a result, when Benjamin finally does speak up about Napoleon's betrayal of Boxer and reads that Boxer is headed for the glue factory rather than the vet, it's too late to do anything: the animals don't have enough time to trap the van containing Boxer on farm property, and Boxer is too ill and weak to break out of the van. Through this, the novel illustrates how willful inaction and ignorance of all sorts work together to keep the lower classes oppressed: those who know what's going on never alert those who might be able to fight, while those capable of fighting never figure out who their true enemy is, and therefore are never able to do anything but support the state that oppresses them.

Through this, *Animal Farm* paints a picture of class struggle in which once class divisions are established, it's very difficult to change them or break them down, even in light of guiding principles like the Seven Commandments that would theoretically suggest that class shouldn't exist in the first place. However, even more damning is the novel's assertion that this is something that the repressed lower classes allow to happen to them when they're unable to identify their oppressors or refuse to speak out when they do see what's going on. The novel ultimately suggests that silence—especially when combined with fear and a lack of education—is the primary reason for oppression and the reason why the upper classes are able to maintain their power so effectively.

LANGUAGE AS POWER

From the beginning of the popular revolution on Manor Farm, language—both spoken and written—is instrumental to the animals' collective success, and later to the pigs' consolidation of power. Through *Animal Farm*, Orwell illustrates how language is an influential tool that individuals can use to seize power and manipulate others via propaganda, while also showing that education and

one's corresponding grasp of language is what can turn someone into either a manipulative authority figure or an unthinking, uneducated member of the working class.

At the novel's beginning, the animals are on equal footing in terms of education, more or less—though Old Major has had time in his retirement to think about the state of the world and develop his theory that man is the root of all the animals' problems, none of the animals, at this point, are literate or can do much more than expound on their ideas. Right after the rebellion, however, the pigs reveal that Old Major's speech was the start of what will become their rise to power in two distinct ways. First, the pigs Napoleon and Snowball spent the three months between Old Major's speech and the rebellion distilling Old Major's ideas into a theory they call Animalism; second, the pigs taught themselves to read. Taken together, these efforts turn the pigs into an intellectual class and provide them the basis for going on to refer to themselves as "mindworkers," or individuals whose contributions to society are intellectual in nature, and therefore don't have to contribute by doing manual labor or something of the sort. In this sense, the pigs' grasp of language is what propels them to power in the first place.

It doesn't take long, however, before the pigs begin to abuse their power. Though Snowball takes it upon himself to try to teach every farm animal to read, his efforts are overwhelmingly unsuccessful—only Muriel and Benjamin ever become fully literate. Most other animals only learn some of the alphabet, and in the case of the sheep, never get past the letter A. While the novel is consistent in its assertion that this is because animals like the sheep and Boxer are unintelligent, it's also important to note that, in terms of the working of the farm, Boxer and the sheep are more valuable for the physical labor they can perform than for anything they might be able to do intellectually. Further, because of the hard labor required of the animals, it's implied that there's little time for someone like Boxer to work at learning to read, and indeed, when Boxer begins to think about his retirement, he suggests he'd like to take the time—which he's never had before—to learn the rest of the alphabet. By contrast, education and achieving literacy for pig and dog youth soon becomes a center point of the pigs' rule, especially once Napoleon declares they need a school for pig children—a project that, conveniently for the powerful pigs, also leaves the animals tasked with building the school no time to learn anything themselves.

The consequences of the other animals' illiteracy and lack of education, the novel shows, is that it makes them susceptible to blindly believing misinformation and propaganda that the pigs spread through Squealer and Minimus. Not only can animals like Clover not recognize when the pigs tamper with the Seven Commandments and alter them to meet their needs; Clover also cannot remember correctly what the Commandments *used* to be. Further, *Animal Farm* also shows how the extremely uneducated, such as the sheep (and, it's implied, Boxer) can be manipulated into becoming important tools for spreading propaganda. Though Boxer is unable to read, he nevertheless trusts his leaders completely and so adopts the maxim "I will work harder," which the other animals find more compelling and noble than any of the flowery speeches that Napoleon or Squealer give. The sheep, on the other hand, are unable to memorize the Seven Commandments and so learn a maxim that Snowball develops: "Four legs good, two legs bad." This maxim in particular is so simplistic as to be almost meaningless, in addition to containing no nuance. The fowl, for instance, have two legs and take issue with this maxim until Snowball is able to explain to them why they're actually wrong—and because of their lack of intelligence and Snowball's grasp of language, he's able to effectively convince them that the maxim functions as it should.

By the end of the novel, the pigs are so powerful that their language and intellectualism doesn't have to make sense—or be true—in any way; rather, it simply has to *look like* they're smart and in charge. Squealer's constant recitation of figures "proving" that Animal Farm is producing more than ever function to make him look powerful and intelligent, but the animals are unable to fully reconcile that in reality, they have little food no matter what Squealer says. Similarly, the final change to the Seven Commandments, in which the Commandments change from seven (albeit altered) guiding principles to the phrase "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" encapsulates this idea. The phrase mocks the meaning of the word "equal," for one—if all animals are equal, there shouldn't be a hierarchy among them, when clearly, there is one—while also being ambiguous enough for the pigs to essentially make the phrase mean whatever they want it to. In this sense, it allows them to maintain their power, since they can insist the phrase means they *should* have more power, while also still employing words like "equal" that make the other animals feel as though, per the phrase, everything is still fine. In this way, *Animal Farm* shows clearly how those in power and with a firm grasp of language can easily use it to manipulate those who don't have the education or memory to stand up to them—and in doing so, keep those individuals down, deny them any possibility of advancement, and create the illusion that things are just as they should be.

THE SOVIET UNION

While *Animal Farm* condemns all forms of totalitarianism, it's most explicitly a bitter attack on the Soviet Union. Though Orwell supported the ideals of socialism, he strongly opposed the Soviet Union's descent into totalitarianism under Stalin in the decades before and during World War II. *Animal Farm* satirically attacks the Soviet Union by mirroring many events from Soviet history, and though *Animal Farm* is subtitled "A Fairy Story," almost nothing that happens in it is at all fantastical; nearly every event, and

indeed every **character**, correlates to a historical event, person, or group of people.

The first portion of the novel has parallels to the final years of the 19th century and the first few decades of the 20th century. Mr. Jones is a parallel to Tsar Nicholas, the final monarch of Russia, whose family was widely seen as decadent and unconcerned with the fact that many Russians at that point were starving and wildly dissatisfied with their rulers. Old Major represents Vladimir Lenin, a Marxist revolutionary who led the Bolshevik Party that ultimately ousted Nicholas during the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Like Old Major, Lenin didn't survive to see his ideals come to fruition; rather, his associate Leon Trotsky, represented by Snowball in the novel, took over and advocated for spreading revolutions all over the world (as when Snowball proposes sending out more pigeons to spread word of the rebellion to neighboring farms) and planned to modernize what, by this time, had become the USSR. Joseph Stalin exiled Trotsky, however, and ultimately assassinated him in Mexico. Stalin, like his literary counterpart Napoleon, didn't care much for debate, and instead amassed power, developed a totalitarian state, and relied heavily on propaganda to control the population. Events on Animal Farm after Napoleon's takeover mirror many that happened in the USSR during his rule, including Stalin's Five Year Plans (the first and second **windmills**), rebellions on the part of farmers and sailors (the hens' rebellion), and Stalin's show trials and executions (the confessions and executions of the four young pigs and other animals). The novel ends with a parallel to the Tehran Conference in 1943, during which Winston Churchill of Great Britain, Franklin D. Roosevelt of the US, and Stalin met to discuss how to achieve peace after World War II, an event that Orwell mocks when both Mr. Pilkington (the Allies) and Napoleon cheat at cards, presciently predicting what would ultimately develop into the Cold War between the US and the USSR.

Notably, *Animal Farm* focuses intently on the inner monologues and experiences of those who don't have much or any power, such as Clover and Boxer (who symbolize female and male peasant workers, respectively). Through Clover's experience in particular, Orwell paints a picture of 40 years' worth of history that was alternately, and at times simultaneously, hopeful and horrific—and often hungry and scary for those without power, education, or the means to escape—as Mollie, the cat, and the real-life middle class do and did. Further, Orwell doesn't stop at vilifying the USSR alone. Instead, he suggests that capitalists who got rich doing business with the USSR, as represented by Mr. Whymper, and ultimately, the allies who gave Stalin a legitimate place on the world stage, as represented by the farmers' visit to Animal Farm at the end of the novel, are also to blame for what happened. Through this, Orwell cautions against romanticizing any aspect of Russian or USSR history, as even though he may have sympathized with the ideals that drove the revolution to begin with, he makes it very clear that the fruits of the revolution are nothing anyone should aspire to. Rather than helping anyone, the revolutions actually led to starvation, fear, death, and trauma of all sorts.

SYMBOLS

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

CHARACTER NAMES

As Orwell wrote *Animal Farm* as an allegory—a symbolic representation of real events—many characters and events in the novel symbolize individuals or groups in the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. Some of the characters who symbolize individuals or groups in Soviet society include Mr. Jones (the Russian Tsar and the old aristocratic order); Old Major (Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin); Napoleon (Stalin); Snowball (Trotsky); Squealer (the press); the dogs (the secret police); and Moses the Raven (organized religion). Nearly all of the other animals represent the working class and Soviet peasants.

THE WINDMILL

The windmill represents the massive infrastructure construction projects and modernization initiatives that Soviet leaders instituted immediately after the Russian Revolution, specifically Joseph Stalin's Five-Year Plans. The way that the animals go hungry in order to build the windmill in the first place mirrors how the Five Year Plans, while intended to create enough food for everyone, were wildly unsuccessful and led to widespread famine in the early 1930s. Later in the novel, the windmill also comes to symbolize the pigs' totalitarian triumph: the other animals work to build the windmill thinking it will benefit everyone, but even after it benefits only the pigs, the animals continue to believe that it benefits all of them.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Signet Classics edition of *Animal Farm* published in 1996.

Chapter 1 Quotes

"Why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings."

Related Characters: Old Major (speaker), Mr. Jones

Related Themes:

Page Number: 7

Explanation and Analysis

Old Major gives a rallying speech to the other farm animals. He claims, here, that animals are trapped in a system that extracts the products of their labor and therefore makes them dependent on their human masters.

The entirety of Old Major's speech is built on a socialist framework, and this line is particularly reminiscent of Soviet speech patterns and ideology. That "labour" has been "stolen" speaks to the common Marxist critique of alienated labor: in this account, Karl Marx, the theoretical origin for communism, believed that capitalist practices had divorced the producers of commodities from the actual use of those commodities. Instead of, for example, building one's own car or farming one's own corn, capitalism had forced people to build cars and farm corn for others. Old Major is subtly invoking this idea when he points out that what the animals produce is "stolen." Whereas the Marxist sense was more metaphorical or symbolic, in this case the stealing is literal. The animals are thus a useful way to make abstract concepts concrete (as any good allegory does). Orwell's work therefore positions the animals as both engaging in and representing a revolution against the "miserable condition" of capitalism. Their relative successes and failures can be read as the corresponding values and limits of other revolutionary movements.

"Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever. Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving, and the rest he keeps for himself."

Related Characters: Old Major (speaker), Mr. Jones

Related Themes:

Page Number: 7-8

Explanation and Analysis

The boar Old Major gives this rousing speech after calling the other animals into the barn. He argues that humans hold an unfair power over animals, for they take the animals' resources without offering anything in return.

Old Major's rhetoric employs many features characteristic of revolutionary speech. For instance, it posits the existence of a single evil that, if removed, would fix all issues. In making man the single and "root cause" of the animals' hardship, Old Major glosses over any differences or quibbles among the animals themselves. To do so, he selects the quality that all animals hold in common except humans: resource production. Though Old Major could have chosen a value that, say, people and some animals have in common, his decision instead allows the animals to unify against this false "lord."

Orwell here shows the efficacy of this revolutionary speech, while also pointing out its false premise: that all animals can be considered equal and will live in harmony and without hunger once humanity is removed. The story thus becomes a parody of the socialist and soviet efforts to unify disparate groups or people in the fight to overturn governmental systems—for that tactic predicts the fact that new lords will simply replace the vanquished humans.

"Remember, comrades, your resolution must never falter. No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you that Man and the animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others. It is all lies. Man serves the interests of no creature except himself. And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship in the struggle. All men are enemies. All animals are comrades."

Related Characters: Old Major (speaker), Mr. Jones

Related Themes:

Page Number: 10

Explanation and Analysis

As Old Major's rousing speech draws to a close, he gives these final polemical statements. They draw harsh boundaries between humans and animals and offer a specific, prescriptive strategy for the animals to unite.

What stands out in Old Major's language here is his absolutism: each sentence carries a term such as "never," "no," "all," and "perfect," thus permitting no space for nuance or exceptions. The goal in employing such terms is to draw strict boundaries that consolidate one group against another. By defining a singular and complete evil—"All men

are enemies"—Old Major can link a disparate set of animals with the single term "comrades." Thus adopting a direct foe becomes the essential way to consolidate a group with a direct purpose.

Yet Orwell also implies the danger inherent in this kind of rhetoric: Old Major insists, for instance, that the animals not take into account any other perspectives. When he says, "No argument" and "It is all lies," Old Major does not actually offer compelling counter-evidence, but rather asserts that any potential criticism should be ignored without due consideration. This sort of blind acceptance is precisely what will allow new tyrants to take control in the animal world after they have overthrown the humans—for Old Major has paved the way for them by indoctrinating the animals with authoritarian values and squashing the merit of independent thought.

Chapter 2 Quotes

THE SEVEN COMMANDMENTS

1. *Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.*
2. *Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.*
3. *No animal shall wear clothes.*
4. *No animal shall sleep in a bed.*
5. *No animal shall drink alcohol.*
6. *No animal shall kill any other animal.*
7. *All animals are equal.*

Related Characters: Napoleon, Snowball, Old Major

Related Themes:

Page Number: 24-25

Explanation and Analysis

After having successfully ousted Mr. Jones and taken control of the farm, the pigs publicly display these tenets of Animalism. They detail the new rules of Animal Farm, which has been founded on a communal philosophy.

The tone of these commandments continues the kind of absolutist rhetoric employed by Old Major in his rousing speech. They all begin with words that permit no exception—"Whatever," "no," and "all"—and thus unify the farm animals under well-defined terms. Their society is thereby shown to stem from a singular ideology, developed by Old Major, rather than from a democratic election or debate process. By publicly displaying the commandments, they imply that any social contention can be resolved by returning to these seven rules.

The order of the commandments deserves some additional attention: By first designating "an enemy" and then "a friend," the commandments situate the fear of humans as the farm's core value. Through this detail, Orwell seems to point out how the USSR, along with other authoritarian regimes, rely first and foremost on a well-defined enemy in order to derive their other societal values. Indeed, almost all the commandments refer indirectly to humans, defining animal behaviors as anti-consumer and anti-economic. Only the last two commandments actually speak to morality as it concerns inter-animal relations, and the term "equal" remains deliberately unclear. Orwell thus stresses how an ideologically-driven society derives power but also creates ambiguity through its strict public rules.

Chapter 3 Quotes

"I will work harder!"

Related Characters: Boxer (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 29

Explanation and Analysis

Boxer adopts this phrase as his motto in the animal's new society. He becomes the epitome of the socialist work ethic, in which one derives one's value from the ability to contribute to the wellbeing of others.

Above all, this sentence shows how Boxer has fully internalized the values of Animalism. He is motivated to work ever harder based on a striking commitment to the society, and to his belief that he can improve the lives of others simply through hard work. Indeed, he is quite effective in this endeavor, and is able to aid the animals in producing an excellent harvest.

Yet the phrase also speaks to his narrow-minded perspective: Boxer does not consider other ways that he could approach life, but rather identifies fully with a single quality: his physical strength. Orwell renders him a caricature of how adherents to socialism were required to behave dependently: the best workers were instructed not to reflect on their position in the system, but simply drive themselves to work ever harder. Boxer thus demonstrates both the efficacy of a revolution like that in the USSR, as well as the significant drawbacks to such a structure.

> Nobody stole, nobody grumbled over his rations, the quarreling and biting and jealousy which had been normal features of life in the old days had almost disappeared.

Related Characters: Old Major

Related Themes:

Page Number: 29

Explanation and Analysis

Immediately after the animals take control of the farm, their society seems to be functioning extremely well. The text presents an ideal scenario in which Animalism solves not only the external fight with humans but also the internal strife between animal factions.

Once more, a set of absolutist terms—"nobody" and "almost disappeared" highlight how extensively the change has permeated the farm. These changes refer to the interpersonal dealings of the animals, which, the reader can presume, normally included stealing, grumbling, quarreling, biting, and jealousy. Thus not only has Animalism prevented bad actions done by some animals to each other; it has also eliminated bad thoughts such as "jealousy." It seems that the revolution has indeed successfully led to the equity and peace envisioned by Old Major. Orwell thus shows how the early moments after a revolutionary event can indeed bring about the intended effects—and that only later will the less positive outcomes manifest themselves.

> "Four legs good, two legs bad."

Related Characters: The Sheep (speaker), Snowball

Related Themes:

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

Snowball invents this phrase when the sheep are unable to learn the commandments of Animalism. Yet the sheep cannot actually make sense of the specific nature of the sentence and thus apply it constantly to irrelevant contexts.

The sentence reflects both the need to simplify ideological language and the drawbacks of oversimplification. The fact that the sheep cannot read or memorize the full Commandments is a metaphor for how less-educated members of a populace often cannot fully make sense of the political regime under which they live. In light of that divide, leaders must translate the tenets of the regime into increasingly simple language. The sheep's way of responding to the phrase—applying it randomly—shows the way those distilled slogans will rapidly shift contexts and be misappropriated when they are unleashed in the general populace.

Once more, the most essential part of Animalism is shown to be the opposition to humans: it does not concern the actual ways that animals should treat each other, but rather focuses on the enemy of "two legs bad." "Four legs good," pointedly, does not refer to whether a relative hierarchy exists between animals, and it even leaves open the chance that animals who stand on two legs could disrupt this binary. Thus the phrase showcases how the original commandments of Animalism become diluted, and how they are perverted in the process.

> "Comrades!" he cried. "You do not imagine, I hope, that we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege? Many of us actually dislike milk and apples. Milk and apples (this has been proved by Science, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brainworkers. The whole management and organization of this farm depend on us. Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples."

Related Characters: Squealer (speaker), Napoleon, Snowball

Related Themes:

Page Number: 35-36

Explanation and Analysis

Squealer gives this speech to defend the way the pigs have hoarded milk and apples away from the other animals. He claims that they need the nutrients from the foodstuffs to properly run the farm and thus best serve the needs of others.

This speech represents a critical turning point in the novel: whereas previously the pigs' subterfuge had remained secretive and unacknowledged, here they publicly admit to withholding resources from the other animals. Their explanation is that such unequal distributions actually will have overall positive effects on the animal society. In this way, they take advantage of an ambiguity in the idea of equality: if equality is defined based on social well-being, the thinking goes, then redistributing resources to the

intelligent pigs could theoretically create *more* equality by bettering the lives of all.

Squealer's flowery language also harnesses uncertainty and vagueness as a propaganda strategy. He uses the rhetorical question, "You do not imagine" to ridicule any potential criticism and summons the abstract idea of "Science" as an objective standard without offering any specific data. Squealer also claims that the pigs' supposedly selfish behavior is actually entirely selfless. In these ways, he becomes a parody of governmental speeches that justify the unfair distribution of resources to those in power.

Chapter 4 Quotes

"I have no wish to take life, not even human life," repeated Boxer, and his eyes were full of tears.

Related Characters: Boxer (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 43

Explanation and Analysis

During the Battle of the Cowshed, Boxer believes that he has killed a stable boy. After the animals finish the battle, Boxer mourns the fact that he has unintentionally become a murderer. Boxer's sadness is indicative of both a striking moral compass and a naive relationship to his strength. He feels an intense ethical burden over killing the stable boy, and the fact that his reaction is motivated by emotion indicates that this wish to preserve all life is somehow innate to his identity. Orwell contrasts this quality with the more artificial Animalism system, which is based on harsh principles rather than emotional sensitivity to specific events.

Boxer's perspective also notably separates him from other interpretations of Animalism, which would require that animals kill humans. But while Boxer's ethical beliefs bring him into conflict with the Seven Commandments of Animalism, he remains unable to fully articulate the disparity. His role continues to be that of a powerful worker, committed to toiling ever more and to representing society. This laudable single-mindedness also leaves him blind to the way the pigs have taken advantage of his strength—not only to cultivate the farm, but also to go against Boxer's own moral wishes.

Chapter 5 Quotes

At this there was a terrible baying sound outside, and nine enormous dogs wearing brass-studded collars came bounding into the barn. They dashed straight for Snowball, who only sprang from his place just in time to escape their snapping jaws.

Related Characters: Napoleon, The Dogs, Snowball

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 52-53

Explanation and Analysis

After the animals agree to pursue Snowball's plan for the windmill, Napoleon unleashes his dog minions. They successfully oust Snowball and allow Napoleon to implement a tyrannical regime over the other animals.

The dogs, here, represent the use of military force by political leaders to dispose of each other. Napoleon has reared the dogs (i.e., built up a secret military) in case such an instance arrives, but he delays unleashing them until the population of animals goes against his own wishes. Orwell thus points out how military force can be harnessed in direct opposition to democratic or socialist principles of equality. It becomes a way for leaders with more military power but less social appeal to impose their whims on the world. The specific historical parallel here is how in the USSR, Stalin (represented by Napoleon) used force to overcome Trotsky (Snowball) after the two disagreed on the future of the country. Orwell stresses the irony of this action by showing just how clearly Napoleon's actions—attacking another animal—violate the rules of Animalism.

"No one believes more firmly than Comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal. He would be only too happy to let you make your decisions for yourselves. But sometimes you might make the wrong decisions, comrades, and then where should we be?"

Related Characters: Squealer (speaker), Napoleon

Related Themes:

Page Number: 55

Explanation and Analysis

Squealer offers these comments to shore up Napoleon's recent tyrannical actions against Snowball. He claims that power should be concentrated in the hands of fewer animals because others will inevitably make wrong decisions.

Once more, Squealer uses clever rhetorical tactics to convince the other less intelligent animals to give up their freedoms and rights. He first reiterates the central tenet of Animalism—"that all animals are equal"—which makes it seem that the later comments will not violate the principle, even if that is precisely what they do. His further comments rest on this idea that democratically chosen decisions may not, indeed, be preferable for the other animals and that they should therefore cede their rights to the supposedly smarter animals. The phrase "be only too happy" casts Napoleon as falsely willing to acquiesce, while the taunting rhetorical question "where should we be?" goads the audience. Orwell thus emphasizes the essential role of propaganda in maintaining control of a populace.

"Napoleon is always right."

Related Characters: Boxer (speaker), Napoleon

Related Themes:

Page Number: 56

Explanation and Analysis

Boxer makes this characteristically terse comment after listening to Squealer's defense of Napoleon. Instead of responding to the specific terms, however, he offers his universal adherence to the leader.

This line reiterates Boxer's role as a committed adherent to the political regime on the Animal Farm. He continues to deal in the absolute of "always right" even after evidence has been presented that would contradict that firm belief. Unable to take into account how Napoleon's military tactics conflict with his own anti-violent system of ethics, Boxer blindly reaffirms his belief in the leader of the moment. He thus symbolizes the unquestioning supporter of a totalitarian governmental system, one who is persuaded by propaganda and will believe in the system despite indications that it is no longer effective. As a result, he will go on to be used and victimized by the very state to which he has pledged his unyielding loyalty and for which he has worked so hard.

Chapter 6 Quotes

"Comrades, do you know who is responsible for this? Do you know the enemy who has come in the night and overthrown our windmill? SNOWBALL!"

Related Characters: Napoleon (speaker), Snowball

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 69-70

Explanation and Analysis

After the half-finished windmill is destroyed by a storm, Napoleon investigates the rubble. He suddenly concludes, here, that Snowball destroyed it in an act of political subterfuge.

By blaming Snowball, Napoleon is able to protect his own reputation and motivate the animals to work even harder at rebuilding the windmill. Whereas his authority could have potentially been challenged for having recommended bad practices, attributing the destruction to Snowball renders himself both immune to criticism and necessary for the future defense of his followers. Napoleon can use the idea of Snowball as a shadowy, nefarious figure to effectively instill fear into the animal populace.

This tactic notably parallels the motivation behind the animals' revolution in the first place: they blamed a single enemy, the humans, for all their hardships. Orwell thus points out how any given political regime will gather support by selecting such an adversary—whether it be false or accurate—and organizing popular support against that foe. Developing a culture of fear around an unseen or arbitrary enemy allows a group to justify its tactics and explain away any negative events as the result of those enemies' actions.

Chapter 7 Quotes

If a window was broken or a drain was blocked up, someone was certain to say that Snowball had come in the night and done it, and when the key of the store-shed was lost, the whole farm was convinced that Snowball had thrown it down the well. Curiously enough, they went on believing this even after the mislaid key was found under a sack of meal.

Related Characters: Squealer, Snowball

Related Themes:

Page Number: 78

Explanation and Analysis

As the conditions on Animal Farm continue to worsen, rumors spread through Squealer that Snowball is conducting an extensive campaign of sabotage against the farm. Here, all negative events are attributed to him, even in the face of direct evidence to the contrary.

Snowball here becomes less an actual agent and more of a social tool to unify the animals. That "someone was certain" to blame him indicates that the animals are not rationally responding to each negative event, but rather are immediately using Snowball as a stock response to the issue. This reaction indicates that Squealer's propaganda campaign has successfully reordered the way the animals think about the events on the farm. They have come to see these moments as the result of neither poor leadership nor chance occurrence, but rather due to a paranoid belief in foreign espionage.

The animals believe this theory even in the face of direct counter-evidence— for instance, when the location of the "mislaid key" clearly indicates that Snowball has not disposed of it in a well. Orwell thus makes a mockery of how willing citizens are to accept the fear mongering tactics of despotic regimes, such as that of the USSR. Once leadership decides on a single enemy, the populace is apt to reinterpret *all* events as the result of transgressions by that enemy.

> If she herself had had any picture of the future, it had been of a society of animals set free from hunger and the whip, all equal, each working according to his capacity, the strong protecting the weak [...] Instead - she did not know why - they had come to a time when no one dared speak his mind, when fierce, growling dogs roamed everywhere, and when you had to watch your comrades torn to pieces after confessing to shocking crimes.

Related Characters: Napoleon, The Dogs, Clover

Related Themes:

Page Number: 86-87

Explanation and Analysis

This passage describes Clover's disheartened response to the current state of Animal Farm. She observes that its present conditions are directly opposed to what she had envisioned during the earlier revolution.

Clover's observations reflect the disenchantment that many felt as the Soviet Union grew poorer and increasingly despotic. She points out the distance between the original image—"set free" and "all equal"—with the current reality of repression and violence. Unlike some of the other animals, who remain unable to compare these two things, Clover's memory allows her to reflect on the difference between ideal goal and pragmatic implementation. Yet the subtle addition "she did not know why" stresses how she still cannot locate the exact causes of the current state of terror. She may notice that conditions are bad, but she cannot tie that observation to Napoleon's behavior. Thus Clover represents an ultimately passive citizen, one who can note the occurrence of bad events but cannot make sense of why those events are indeed taking place.

> *"Animal Farm, Animal Farm,*
> *Never through me shalt thou come to harm!"*

Related Characters: Minimus (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 88

Explanation and Analysis

The pig Minimus composes this new song to replace the now-banned "Beasts of England." This choice represents the increasing crackdown on animal behavior and the turn away from the revolutionary ideas that were spoken of in the original song.

It is revealing, here, to consider exactly why the pigs would want to ban "Beast of England." Recall that the song represented the triumphs of the animals against the despotic human and promised, through that revolution, equality for all. Now that the pigs have taken on more and more human characteristics—and gathered increasing stores of power—they have actually become the hierarchical establishment that "Beasts of England" challenges. As a result, they fear the very revolutionary ideology that created Animal Farm to begin with and take it upon themselves to censor the information that the other animals receive.

Minimus's new song swaps out the idea of universal Animalism in order to doubly reaffirm the role of the state: "Animal Farm, Animal Farm." Ironically, it is through the state that the animals are supposed to be protected from

harm—when in fact the government is the main instrument of terror. Orwell points out the irony in much socialist propaganda, in which the promises of protection were actually used to create a state that violated the rights of the people. The fact that "Minimus" means "smallest" in Latin also speaks to the relative triviality of this song. Whereas "Beasts of England" aggrandized the feats of the animals, the new text downplays their relative merits, instead stressing how they should remain passive with respect to the state.

Chapter 8 Quotes

❝ At the foot of the end wall of the big barn, where the Seven Commandments were written, there lay a ladder broken in two pieces. Squealer, temporarily stunned, was sprawling beside it, and near at hand there lay a lantern, a paint-brush, and an overturned pot of white paint. [...] None of the animals could form any idea as to what this meant, except old Benjamin, who nodded his muzzle with a knowing air, and seemed to understand, but would say nothing.

Related Characters: Squealer, Benjamin

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 108-109

Explanation and Analysis

After the pigs begin to consume alcohol, Squealer is discovered modifying the Commandments to sanction their behavior. Though most of the animals are unable to make sense of the event, the skeptic Benjamin is unsurprised by what he sees.

The novel has previously implied that the pigs were modifying the commandments, but here their actions become fully conspicuous: not only does Squealer reinterpret the laws with clever propaganda, but he also literally rewrites them to suit the whims of the pigs. What is more surprising about this passage, however, is how the animals are unable to make sense of the event. Orwell points out how, even when confronted with clear evidence of political malpractice, a populace will not necessarily be able to make sense of it or agree to do anything about it. Due perhaps to exhaustion, a lack of education, or simply fear, the animals are still unable to challenge the leaders. Benjamin's character might seem to offer a source of insight, for from the beginning, he has been skeptical and observant of the pigs' actions. Yet his passivity and unwillingness to share his opinions renders him fundamentally ineffective, thus pointing out that knowledge of corruption does not necessarily lead to changing it.

Chapter 9 Quotes

❝ Besides, in those days they had been slaves and now they were free, and that made all the difference, as Squealer did not fail to point out.

Related Characters: Mr. Jones, Squealer

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 113

Explanation and Analysis

As the conditions deteriorate on Animal Farm, the pigs organize a series of celebrations. They aggrandize the supposed freedom of the animals from their previous human overlords.

This ironic sentence epitomizes the false story the pigs have told about Animal Farm's society. Their belief that things today are preferable to the past relies solely on the abstract idea of being "slaves" versus "free," rather than the actual conditions experienced by the animals. That this supposed distinction "made all the difference" implies that the animals are not considering other significant differences that may make their current lives equivalent to or worse than they were under the rule of Mr. Jones. And the addition of the clause "as Squealer did not fail to point out" reiterates how this belief is more a trick of rhetoric than an actual indication of content. The passage thus corroborates Orwell's presentation of the animals as unable to gain an objective viewpoint on their situation. Blinded by the pigs' rhetoric and crippled by weak memories, they continue to believe in the improvement of their society.

Chapter 10 Quotes

❝ Somehow it seemed as though the farm had grown richer without making the animals themselves any richer—except, of course, for the pigs and the dogs.

Related Characters: The Dogs, Minimus, Squealer, Napoleon

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 129

Explanation and Analysis

The story has now jumped several years into the future, and the narrator observes how the relative wealth of the farm is distributed unevenly among the animals.

Introducing the phrase with the term "somehow" speaks to the incredulity and naïveté of the animals. Despite having witnessed the pigs' actions for many years, they remain unable to see exactly why wealth is being unfairly sequestered in their hands. Yet the "of course" stresses how this process is logical considering the story thus far, and how it is at least understood on some level by the animals. Orwell thus points out how the populace in such a fascist regime oscillates between recognition of and blindness to what is taking place. In particular, as time has gone by and few of the animals can recall a different form of society, the current political regime becomes normalized, and inequality fades into the "of course" of a natural order.

"Four legs good, two legs *better*!"

Related Characters: The Sheep (speaker), Squealer

Related Themes:

Page Number: 134

Explanation and Analysis

When the pigs begin walking on two legs, the sheep change their earlier stock phrase. Having been trained by Squealer, they replace "two legs bad" with "two legs better."

The extent and ease of the change to the phrase is remarkable. Whereas earlier acts of propaganda or commandment-revision simply altered phrases slightly, here the text has been entirely rewritten. Yet Squealer has maintained the sonic and rhythmic flow of the phrase, swapping in "better," which begins with the same "b" sound as "bad" and thus makes the change in the slogan more subtle. His action reiterates how the Animal Farm society is founded less on principles and more on a set of empty terms that can be manipulated at will. Unable to actually make sense of what they are saying, the sheep rapidly swap out the new phrase for the old one—and the other animals seem unable to resist the strategy. Orwell has now transformed the pigs into complete human-analogs, showing how after a revolution, the new leaders have a natural tendency to mimic old ones—and then to adjust their principles to slowly revert to the old power structure.

ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL, BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.

Related Characters: Squealer, Napoleon, Clover, Benjamin

Related Themes:

Page Number: 134

Explanation and Analysis

When Benjamin recounts the Seven Commandments, he sees only this single statement. The pigs have evidently replaced the other principles with this one.

This law is a mockery of the term "equal," and it epitomizes perfectly how the pigs have manipulated the word throughout the text. Presumably, if all the animals are indeed equal, there would be no ability to form a hierarchy between different "types" of equalities. Yet the pigs' actions have relied on just this idea, for instance when they claimed that they needed more and better food in order to best help the other animals. The phrase makes explicit what they have been doing all along: manipulating language and ideology to suit their own ends.

Yet, once again, the strategy is effective instead of incriminating. Reducing a set of seven principles to just a single one also shows how simplification can be an instrument of these despotic regimes. Distilling a more complex set of ideas into a single, highly ambiguous formulation gives the pigs great freedom to interpret the laws as they wish. They can both maintain the supposed ideology of the revolution—"All animals are equal"—and allow for corruption and the preferential position of being "more equal than others." Orwell thus stresses how simplified phrases and positions are critical instruments of despotic regimes—and how any equal society has a natural tendency to reorganize itself such that some become "more equal" than others.

The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.

Related Characters: Mr. Pilkington, Squealer, Napoleon, Clover

Related Themes:

Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

In the novel's closing passage, the pigs are seen playing cards with neighboring farmers. When they squabble over cheating, the narrator reflects how the two species are essentially indistinguishable.

These lines confirm the way the pigs have slowly come to mimic the oppressors they overthrew in the beginning of the book. Whereas before, the animals seemed unaware of this parallel, here they finally see it manifested before them. That the pigs and men are playing poker is no symbolic accident: it stresses their selfish behavior as authority figures and the way they play fast and loose with resources in a way that harms normal citizens and animals. They become, thus, representations of world leaders casually throwing around wealth and lives stolen from others. It is notable, too, that this reflection is caused by the pigs and humans fighting over cheating: what makes the pigs finally akin to humans is not their liaisons or trade deals, nor the way they consume alcohol or sleep in beds, but rather the way they persist in deceiving each other even when they have no need. Orwell implies that the fundamental character of leader-regimes like that of the USSR is a pervasive and unending greed, even once one has acquired a position of wealth and power.

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.

CHAPTER 1

The owner of Manor Farm, Mr. Jones, locks his henhouses for the evening—but he's too drunk to remember to shut everything before he goes to bed. As soon as the lights are off in the farmhouse, the animals all stir and make their way to the big barn, where the old boar, Old Major, wants to address everyone. Old Major lies on a raised platform. The three dogs and all the pigs come in first and settle right in front of the platform. The hens and pigeons perch in windows and the rafters; the sheep and cows settle behind the pigs; and Boxer and Clover, the carthorses, lie down in the back. Clover settles a brood of orphaned ducklings in the crook of her leg as the cantankerous old donkey, Benjamin, and the goat Muriel join the horses.

To begin with, all the animals exist under Mr. Jones's somewhat totalitarian regime, and therefore are on somewhat equal footing at this point. However, pay attention to the way in which the animals arrange themselves. That the pigs and the dogs go to the front naturally suggests that they already hold an important place on the farm, while the fact that a pig is giving this speech is another indication that these two species are somehow superior to the others. In this sense, this represents the beginnings of class distinctions on the farm.

The foolish mare Mollie shakes her braided and beribboned mane while she munches sugar, and the cat finds the warmest spot between Boxer and Clover. The cat doesn't listen to Old Major at all. Seeing that everyone but old Moses, the tame raven, is present, Old Major begins. He addresses everyone as "comrades" and announces that he's going to die soon but wants to share his wisdom and a dream he had with everyone before he does. He says that the nature of their lives is horrendous: they only get enough food to keep them going, and once they're no longer useful, Mr. Jones kills them. Animals, he insists, are slaves, though they don't have to be. Manor Farm would support many animals comfortably if only humans didn't steal the products of their labor. If they remove man, they won't be hungry or overworked.

Mollie and the cat are representative of the middle classes who, prior to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, were already pretty comfortable with their lot in life, as represented by Mollie's ability to obtain sugar and the cat's beeline for the best, warmest spot and lack of interest in what happens. Everything that Old Major says paints a horrific picture of what life is like on the farm. His speech as a whole mirrors The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, in that the problem is the ruling class and that the lower classes are allowing themselves to be subjugated.

Old Major insists that humans are the only creatures who consume without producing anything, like milk or eggs. He asks the animals to consider all they've given up, from gallons of milk to hundreds of eggs to Clover's four foals, gone forever. Old Major points out that Mr. Jones butchers pigs, will someday sell Boxer to the glue factory when he can't work, and drowns dogs when they get too old. Man, Old Major suggests, is the root of all evil. Getting rid of men through rebellion would free the animals, and Old Major insists that the rebellion will come in due course. He warns everyone that they can't entertain the idea that humans and animals have common interests; they must believe that all men are enemies and all animals are comrades.

Again, the idea that humans are the only creatures who don't produce anything is a direct parallel to The Communist Manifesto, as Marx proposes that the real evil is that people don't get to enjoy the fruits of their own labor—rather, they make chairs or farm for others who then profit off of their labor. Notice that Old Major uses absolutes when he warns the animals that they cannot ever think that animals and humans might be able to work together. This means that if the animals take this seriously, there will be little room for nuance.

Suddenly, the dogs catch sight of four rats listening in and chases them back to their holes. Old Major calls for silence and insists that they must vote on whether wild animals are enemies or comrades. The assembly votes overwhelmingly in favor of wild animals being comrades. Only the cat and the dogs vote no, but some discover later that the cat voted on both sides. Solemnly, Old Major insists again that they can't forget that man is their enemy, but they also can't ever come to resemble man by drinking alcohol, sleeping in beds, or trading. He also says that animals cannot terrorize each other, as they're all equal.

Despite the absolutist language Old Major uses, it's important to keep in mind his warning that once the animals achieve a revolution, they cannot come to resemble those who once oppressed them. With this, he alludes to the idea that revolution and rebellion are, to a degree, cyclical and it's normal for those who seize power to want to have all of it—while also warning everyone to be on the lookout for corruption.

Old Major explains that he's going to teach everyone a song that his mother taught him part of long ago. It's called "Beasts of England" and it speaks of a "golden future time" in which animals will be free from human tyranny. All the animals, both the highly intelligent and the less intelligent, learn it quickly and they sing it all together five times through. They only stop when Mr. Jones shoots his gun into the side of the barn, breaking up the meeting.

"Beasts of England" represents the unifying power of language: every animal, no matter how smart, can learn it, rally around it, and take heart in its revolutionary content. However, note that it idealizes the coming revolution, which leaves little room for the realities of human (or animal) nature to complicate things.

CHAPTER 2

Old Major dies three nights later, in early March. Over the next three months, his ideas capture the imaginations of the more intelligent animals on Manor Farm, specifically the pigs. Two young boars, Napoleon and Snowball, see that they must prepare for the promised rebellion. With a small fat pig named Squealer, who is a brilliant orator and can convince listeners of anything, they hold secret meetings and develop Old Major's teachings into a system they call Animalism. They try to explain the theory to others, but it's slow going. Many animals suggest they owe loyalty to Mr. Jones and others point out that they'll starve without Mr. Jones to feed them. Others insist simply that they don't need to care about what might happen long after they're dead.

The differences between how the pigs begin to think about the revolution and how the other animals think about the revolution again start to show how class will develop on the farm. The pigs are already becoming part of an intellectual class concerned with abstract ideas and education, while the concerns of the masses—or in this case, the lower classes—are mostly concerned with making it through the day and don't have the energy to consider the possibility that things will ever get better.

Mollie asks the silliest questions, such as if there will be sugar after the rebellion and if she'll still be able to wear ribbons in her mane. Snowball patiently tries to impress upon her that she doesn't need sugar and that the ribbons are a badge of slavery, but Mollie seems unconvinced. The pigs also have issues with the tame raven Moses. Though he doesn't work and therefore isn't well-liked, he also tells tales about a place called Sugarcandy Mountain, a beautiful place where animals go when they die. Many animals believe in Sugarcandy Mountain, and the pigs work hard to convince those believers otherwise. Boxer and Clover, however, prove to be the pigs' best disciples. They're not incredibly intelligent, but they distill the pigs' ideas into simple arguments that they share with the other animals.

As a parallel to the comfortable middle class, Mollie's main concern is whether she'll be able to maintain her comparatively decadent lifestyle after the rebellion—a lifestyle that Snowball suggests is indicative of Mollie having bought into the idea that being "enslaved" by the upper classes and trying to move up is totally fine. Moses, meanwhile, is a parallel to organized religion, which in the pigs' mind distracts people from thinking about what truly matters—the rebellion in this life, not heaven in the next one (as represented by Sugarcandy Mountain).

The rebellion arrives much earlier and happens much more easily than anyone expected. Mr. Jones has, in the last few years, begun drinking more, so he neglects his animals and property. In June, when the hay is almost ready to cut, Mr. Jones goes to Willingdon, gets extremely drunk, and is gone for a full 24 hours. His lazy farmhands hunt rabbits and don't feed the animals, and when Mr. Jones gets back, he falls right back to sleep. The hungry animals snap, break down the door of the store shed, and eat. Mr. Jones wakes up and leads his farmhands in whipping the animals, but the animals revolt and turn on the men. Terrified, the humans race down the drive, and Mrs. Jones packs a bag and slips out a back way. The animals slam the gate behind Mr. Jones.

One of the most important things to note here is that the rebellion happens when animals use their physical strength as one to overthrow their leader, something that, unfortunately for those in the lower classes, the animals will go on to forget. This event as a whole is a parallel to the Bolshevik Revolution, in which the Red Army—as well as Tsar Nicholas's own guards—turned on him and ousted him quickly. As in the novel, the revolution grew out of dissatisfaction with the way Tsar Nicholas was running the country.

The animals first gallop gleefully around the farm and then destroy evidence of Mr. Jones's power. They throw bits, dog chains, and knives down the well, and they burn halters and whips. Snowball even throws the horses' mane and tail ribbons into the fire, insisting that ribbons are clothes and the mark of humans. Animals, he suggests, should go naked. At this, Boxer throws the straw hat he wears in the summer to protect his ears from flies on the fire. Napoleon serves everyone a double ration, and the animals sing "Beasts of England" seven times and sleep well.

Singing "Beasts of England" here again allows the animals to connect through language. At this point, the song likely has more meaning for more animals, since they now have, in theory, reached the "golden time" the song speaks of. Boxer's choice to throw his very useful straw hat on the fire again shows how absolutist the ideology guiding this revolution is, as there's no room for nuance and the possibility that purely useful things should be able to remain.

In the morning, the animals all rush to the top of a hill to gaze upon the farm. They inspect every building and pasture, ending with the farmhouse. Napoleon and Snowball lead the animals into the house for a tour. They're in awe of the luxury until they realize Mollie is missing, but they find her playing with Mrs. Jones's hair ribbons and reprimand her. The animals agree to maintain the farmhouse as a museum; no animal should live there. After breakfast, Snowball and Napoleon call everyone together for an announcement. They reveal that the pigs have been teaching themselves to read and write over the past few months. Everyone watches as Snowball covers up "Manor Farm" on the gate with "Animal Farm."

The farmhouse itself is a symbol of decadence and of totalitarian rule, as it contains all the fruits of Mr. Jones's illegitimately or immorally amassed wealth. The proposal to make it a museum, meanwhile, will in theory offer the animals a touchstone of what not to do, thereby saving them from corruption. The revelation that the pigs taught themselves to read and write throws a wrench in things, as it means that they'll be more powerful than the other illiterate animals. Renaming the farm is only the first instance of the pigs literally rewriting history.

Then, at the big barn, the pigs explain that they've come up with the Seven Commandments, which convey the ideals of Animalism. Snowball climbs a ladder and paints the rules on the side of the barn. They read that anyone on two legs is an enemy, while anyone on four legs or with wings is a friend. Animals shouldn't wear clothes, sleep in a bed, drink alcohol, or kill other animals. The final rule is that all animals are equal. Snowball reads it aloud for everyone and then calls everyone for the hay harvest. The cows protest, as they haven't been milked. The animals wonder what to do with the milk, but Napoleon gallantly tells everyone not to worry about it. When the animals return that evening from the hay fields, the buckets of milk are gone.

The Seven Commandments encapsulate the idealistic nature of the rebellion as, in theory at least, they set out the groundwork for the animals to celebrate themselves. Vilifying everything that makes humans human, however, leaves little room for the animals to advance, given that the novel has already laid out the expectation that as individuals become more powerful (as through literacy, for one), they effectively become more human. The missing milk is an early clue, too, that this revolution isn't as rosy as it might seem at first.

CHAPTER 3

Every animal, down to the ducks and the hens, works hard to bring the hay in. The pigs are clever enough to figure out how to do this without tools that involve standing on two legs, while Boxer and Clover know the intricacies of bringing hay in. Because the pigs are so intelligent, they don't actually work and instead assume leadership positions. It takes the animals less than time than it ever did Mr. Jones to bring in the hay, and the harvest is bigger than it's ever been. Throughout the summer, things work perfectly. The animals are thrilled to eat food that they produced for themselves and not have to share it with humans.

Though it seems like everything is going smoothly, note that the pigs are already elevating themselves above the rest of the animals by assuming leadership positions rather than laboring physically. This again is an indicator that class divisions are developing on Animal Farm, and that the pigs are the ones who will end up assuming privileged, upper-class roles in this society.

Some things prove difficult, such as threshing the corn without a threshing machine, but the pigs are clever enough to figure it out and Boxer is strong enough to pull them through. Everyone admires Boxer, as he seems as strong as three horses and even gets up 30 minutes earlier than everyone else to labor where he's needed most. His motto becomes, "I will work harder!" All the animals work as hard as they can, save for Mollie and the cat. Mollie struggles to rise in the morning and often leaves work early because of stones in her hooves, while the cat disappears during work time and shows up for meals with excellent excuses. Benjamin seems unchanged since the rebellion. He cryptically repeats that donkeys live a long time and that no one else has seen a dead donkey when asked if life is better without Mr. Jones.

Boxer is a representation of male peasants in the USSR. The success of Animal Farm—which represents the Soviet Union—rests on these peasants performing as much labor as possible, something that Boxer throws himself into with gusto. His personal motto suggests, however, that he's overly idealistic and is putting the ideals of the revolution above his own self-interest in a way that, in the end, won't serve him. Meanwhile, Benjamin broadly represents intellectuals who, the novel suggests, could see what was going to come—his cryptic answers suggest that he's aware that revolutions happen on a cycle, and that the farm will inevitably find itself right back where it started.

On Animal Farm, there's no work on Sundays. After a late breakfast, the animals hoist a flag that Snowball painted with a white hoof and horn on a green field. The animals then attend a meeting in the big barn, where they discuss the work for the week ahead and put forth resolutions for debate. The pigs are the only ones who propose resolutions and Napoleon and Snowball are the most active debaters. However, they never seem to be able to agree on anything. The meeting ends with a round of "Beasts of England."

On paper, the system that the animals work out should work for everyone. In theory, everyone gets a say in what happens. However, it's still telling that the pigs are the only ones who ever speak up. They do this because of their education and their rising class status, while the animals' willingness to go along with this suggests that they'll be easily manipulated into giving up their voices in the future.

The pigs adopt the harness room as their headquarters and study books from the farmhouse in the evenings. Snowball organizes committees such as the Egg Production Committee for the hens and the Whiter Wool Movement for the sheep, but these projects fail. His only success is with the reading and writing classes—every animal is somewhat literate by fall. The dogs learn to read well, but only read the Seven Commandments. Muriel learns to read and reads newspapers out loud, while Benjamin is completely literate but refuses to read. Clover learns the whole alphabet but cannot read words, while Boxer learns the first four letters and nothing more. Mollie, meanwhile, learns only to spell her name.

The different animals' varying degrees of literacy, as well as what they choose to read once literate, speak to how class will continue to develop thanks to language. The dogs' choice to read only the Seven Commandments suggests that they'll become loyal to the cause and are uninterested in truly educating themselves, while Muriel's willingness to read newspapers suggests an interest in the outside world—and possibly, in other ideas of how life should be.

The less intelligent animals, such as the sheep, learn only the letter A and struggle to memorize the Seven Commandments. Snowball reduces them to the maxim "Four legs good, two legs bad." At first, this goes over poorly with the birds, who have only two legs, but Snowball explains to them that what makes humans evil is their hands—and birds don't have hands. Everyone else also learns the maxim and the sheep take to repeating it for hours on end.

Coming up with this maxim illustrates how easy it can be to distill somewhat complex ideas into an easily digestible, easily repeatable phrase that lacks nuance. It's impossible to tell, from the phrase, that Snowball's explanation should actually be correct—but because of his grasp of language, he can essentially make the maxim mean whatever he wants it to.

Napoleon takes an interest in the nine puppies born to the dogs, which arrive soon after the hay harvest. He takes them to educate himself, believing that it's more important to educate the young than teach everyone else to read. The other animals soon forget about the puppies, but they do discover that the missing milk ends up in the pigs' mash. The pigs insist that they should get all the fallen apples, which the other animals assumed would be divided evenly. Squealer makes the case that the pigs are "brainworkers" and therefore need the milk and apples in order to care for everyone else—if they don't get them, Mr. Jones will come back. The animals see his point and say nothing when the main crop of apples also goes to the pigs.

Notice that when Napoleon insists on educating the young, the only "young" he seems truly interested in educating are the puppies—that is, children of a literate, somewhat powerful class, not the offspring of any of the cows, sheep, or chickens. Doing this allows Napoleon to start to dictate who's worthy of education and through doing so, dictate who's able to move up the class system and gain power. Squealer's insistence that the pigs need the milk and apples because of their work shows that the pigs are already beginning to take advantage of the system they've set up.

CHAPTER 4

By late summer, half of England knows about Animal Farm. Snowball and Napoleon send out pigeons to spread the word to other animals and teach them "Beasts of England," while Mr. Jones sits in the bar in Willingdon and complains about his fate. The other farmers sympathize but refuse to help—they all want to make his misfortune work for them. Luckily for the animals, the owners of the two neighboring farms hate each other. The gentlemanly Mr. Pilkington owns Foxwood, an overgrown and old-fashioned farm on one side, while the shrewd Mr. Frederick owns Pinchfield on the other side. They hate each other too much to agree on anything, even if it's in their best interests. Despite this, they're terrified of what happened on Animal Farm. Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick try to keep their animals in the dark about what happened there and insist on continuing to call it Manor Farm.

The other farmers' desire to make Mr. Jones's misfortune work in their best interests suggests that when it comes to leaders like these farmers, it's natural for them to want to amass as much power as possible with little regard for how their power might negatively affect those below them—in this case, the animals all over the country. Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick's terror at what happened on Animal Farm shows that it's possible for rebellion like what happened there to happen anywhere; in essence, these leaders are aware that they're in a precarious and easily-toppled position.

None of the rumors that Mr. Frederick or Mr. Pilkington spread about Animal Farm, however, land well with their animals. Over the next year, animals that were once easygoing begin to act out and the humans cannot stop their animals from singing "Beasts of England." In October, pigeons arrive with the news that Mr. Jones and men from Foxwood and Pinchfield are coming up the driveway to retake the farm. Mr. Jones has a gun. Snowball is prepared and sends animals to their posts. First, the pigeons and geese dive bomb and harass the men. Then, Muriel, Benjamin, and the sheep converge to butt and kick them. The men are too strong, so at Snowball's signal, the animals race into the barnyard.

The miniature rebellions on the part of the other farmers' animals speaks again to the power of language to unify people around a common cause, especially since the rebellious atmosphere is spreading due to "Beasts of England." At this point, it still looks hopeful that the revolution might go in a good direction and avoid too much corruption. The attack by the men on Animal Farm mirrors the Russian Civil War, which took place not long after Tsar Nicholas was forced out.

To the men this looks like a retreat, so they rush after the animals. In the yard, however, the horses, cows, and pigs charge. Mr. Jones shoots at Snowball, but only grazes his back. Snowball flattens Mr. Jones as Boxer strikes at men with his front hooves. Even the cat leaps on a man, and the animals send the men racing for the main gate. Boxer, however, mournfully paws at a stable boy who appears to be dead and insists that he didn't mean to kill anyone. Snowball insists that Boxer was right to kill the boy; he's better off dead.

Though the cat does participate in this battle, it's implied that there's little risk to the cat. In this sense, it becomes clear that the cat is only interested in supporting the revolution if the revolution is in line with what it wants anyway. Snowball's advice to Boxer shows how it's possible for leaders to corrupt people's strength and use it for their own personal gain, ethical or not.

The animals realize that Mollie is missing and find her hiding in her stall, terrified of the gun. When the animals return to the barnyard, they discover that the stable boy wasn't dead and ran off. Nerves give way to excitement and a celebration of their victory. They run up the flag, sing "Beasts of England," and they bury the one sheep who died in the battle. Snowball gives a speech emphasizing that animals must be willing to die for Animal Farm, and the animals create the honor of "Animal Hero, First Class," which they give to Snowball. They also give the deceased sheep the honor of "Animal Hero, Second Class." Together, the animals decide to call this conflict the Battle of the Cowshed, and when they find Mr. Jones's gun, they decide to set it up and fire it twice per year on the anniversaries of the battle and the rebellion.

Unlike the cat, whose reasons and motives are somewhat less clear, it's obvious to Mollie that participating in the battle would put her at risk of losing out on ribbons and sugar, so she's not going to participate. Snowball's speech in its entirety begins to illustrate how he's starting to train the lower classes to be entirely loyal to the state—and even willing to die for it. Establishing holidays commemorating the revolution and the Battle of Cowshed create built-in times for Snowball to remind the animals of their duty to the state, as well as their pride in what they've created.

CHAPTER 5

As winter approaches, Mollie becomes more difficult to deal with. She's often late for work and complains, but she spends most of her time gazing at her reflection in the drinking pool. One day, Clover takes Mollie aside and quietly asks if she really saw Mollie allowing a man from Foxwood to pet her nose. Mollie denies this accusation, but she can't look Clover in the eye. Secretly, Clover goes to Mollie's stall and discovers a stash of sugar and ribbons. Mollie disappears, and after a few weeks, pigeons report that they've seen her in Willingdon happily pulling a dogcart and wearing ribbons.

Mollie leaving is a parallel to how many in the middle class simply left the USSR while they still could. If Snowball or Napoleon were to assess her motivations and the implications of her leaving, they'd likely say that Mollie has bought into the narrative that she needs to strive to become a member of the ruling class in order to leave a successful life—something that Animalism tries to discount by insisting that class itself is silly. This is hypocritical, of course, as the pigs are becoming their own upper class.

The weather becomes bitterly cold in January, so the animals can't do anything in the fields. They attend many meetings and the pigs plan out the coming season, something the animals accept as natural given how intelligent the pigs are. The other animals still get to ratify the pigs' decisions, however. The system would be perfect, except that Snowball and Napoleon disagree on every point. Snowball is better at speaking and convincing animals at meetings, but Napoleon is better at convincing animals individually between meetings. He's especially successful with the sheep, who begin bleating "Four legs good, two legs bad" in the middle of meetings—and especially in the middle of Snowball's speeches.

Again, when the animals accept outright that the pigs should make decisions because they're smarter, it shows how the uneducated lower classes essentially give away a lot of their power by not recognizing their own right to an opinion—or, for that matter, their ability to voice it. The relationship between Snowball and Napoleon mirrors that between Trotsky and Stalin, especially in the way the two were able to connect (or not) with potential supporters.

Snowball speaks often about farming theory and develops complicated schemes. Napoleon comes up with no ideas of his own, but quietly insists that Snowball's schemes are silly. Their biggest dispute, however, is over the **windmill**. Snowball proposes that they build one on the highest point on the farm, as it would be able to give the farm electricity, which would then allow the animals to enjoy leisure time while machines work for them. It takes Snowball a few weeks to develop the plans in chalk on the smooth floor of a shed. The other animals can't make sense of the drawing, but it looks impressive, so everyone visits daily—except for Napoleon. Napoleon does visit once, contemplates the plans, and then urinates on them.

Trotsky had grand plans to modernize the USSR and bring it into the modern world, plans symbolized by the windmill. Note that with Snowball, he makes it clear that modernization like this is actually in line with the ideals of the revolution in that all the animals will benefit from putting in this work on the front end. They'll all enjoy electricity and the ensuing leisure time. This suggests that in an ideal situation, there would be fewer class distinctions, since leisure time is a mark of being higher-class—one can only enjoy leisure time if they don't have to work all the time.

Snowball is upfront that building the **windmill** will be difficult. They'll have to carry stone, build walls, and somehow procure cables, but he insists they can do it in a year. After this, he says, the animals will only have to work three days per week. Napoleon argues that they need to increase their food production and that focusing on the windmill will lead to starvation. The farm is deeply divided over the windmill, but the only animal who doesn't take a side is Benjamin. He insists that no matter what happens, life will continue to be awful.

Napoleon in particular plays to the concerns of the lowest, most uneducated classes by insisting that the windmill is a pipe dream that will leave them all in dire hunger. This begins to create an environment of fear, as many animals are probably starting to fear that if this windmill idea goes through, their reasonably happy lives will disappear instantly.

The other question that occupies the animals is that of the farm's defense, as they all recognize that their conflict with humans isn't over—they expect humans to try to reinstate Mr. Jones, especially since news of the animals' victory at the Battle of the Cowshed has spread. Napoleon insists they must train the animals to use firearms, while Snowball proposes they send out more pigeons to stir up revolution elsewhere. The other animals can't make up their minds and agree with whoever's talking at any given time.

Snowball makes the case here that if Animal Farm is able to incite rebellion all over England, they'll effectively get rid of all the people who might want to stop them—and then, there will be no reason to fight, since there's no one to fight in the first place. This represents a more idealistic take on things, as it holds that rebellion like this is always good and will always end well, if only the rebellion keeps going.

Snowball finishes his plans for the **windmill** and brings it to a vote at the Sunday meeting. He makes his case logically. Napoleon then stands and says only that the windmill is nonsense, and nobody should vote for it. In response, Snowball jumps up, shushes the sheep, and passionately explains why they need the windmill. His passion wins over the animals as he talks about how electricity can operate farming machinery, as well as equip stalls with lights, hot and cold water, and heat. Just as everyone seems decided, Napoleon stands, looks at Snowball, and whimpers oddly. Suddenly, nine ferocious dogs bound into the barn and chase Snowball all the way through a hedge. The animals realize that these dogs are the nine puppies Napoleon educated.

The events in this passage make it clear that while it's possible to use language persuasively to bring someone to one's side, what will win in the end is brute strength and fear, as represented by the nine attack dogs. Napoleon doesn't have to say anything, he just has to make it clear that anyone who agrees with Snowball's rhetoric will be chased down and possibly killed. Removing Snowball also means that Napoleon has a clear path to declaring himself leader, which will allow him to turn Animal Farm into a terrifying totalitarian state.

Napoleon stands on the raised platform, surrounded by the dogs. The other animals notice that these dogs wag their tails at Napoleon just like other dogs used to wag at Mr. Jones. Napoleon announces that there will be no more Sunday meetings, as they're unnecessary and waste time. Farm policy will be decided by a special pig committee that he oversees, and the committee will convey their decisions to the others when they all sing "Beasts of England." There will be no more debates. The other animals, even Boxer, are dismayed. Four young pigs squeal in disapproval, but the dogs growl and silence them. The sheep bleat "Four legs good, two legs bad!" for 15 minutes.

Napoleon's announcements make it clear to the reader, if not entirely to the animals, that no one else will have any power in his state: he oversees the pig committee, after all, which means that he can still squash ideas that he doesn't like. The fact that the young pigs' disapproval is so quickly silenced by the dogs again shows the power of brute force and fear over language and illustrates how leaders like Napoleon shut down open communication in order to take power.

Later, Squealer makes the rounds to explain the new rules. He points out that Napoleon is sacrificing himself by taking on the difficult job of leadership, and he must do so because the other animals might make the wrong decisions. Squealer asks where they'd be if they'd followed Snowball, but someone points out that Snowball fought bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed. Squealer insists that bravery isn't as important as loyalty or obedience and implies that Snowball's role in the battle was exaggerated. He reminds everyone again that if they're not disciplined, Mr. Jones will return. This convinces the animals entirely—anything that might help Mr. Jones must stop. Boxer declares that if Napoleon says it, it must be right.

Using Squealer like this essentially allows Napoleon to employ a good cop, bad cop strategy, as he terrified the animals during the meeting—but now, Squealer can make everything okay by "explaining" it to everyone. However, Squealer is clearly on Napoleon's side, as he insists that the other animals aren't capable of making good decisions. Specifically, spreading misinformation about Snowball allows Napoleon to make the case that he himself is the only one the animals can trust.

Winter turns into spring and the plowing begins. Every Sunday, the animals gather in the barn to get their orders for the week. Napoleon disinters Old Major's skull and asks everyone to walk past it reverently, while during meetings, the animals sit separated. Napoleon, Squealer, and a pig named Minimus sit together surrounded by the nine dogs, while the other pigs sit behind them. The rest of the animals sit in the body of the barn, looking at the pigs. Three weeks after Snowball's departure, Napoleon announces that they'll build the **windmill**. It will take two years and will require everyone's rations to be reduced.

Digging up Old Major's skull is a nod to the fact that Stalin disinterred Lenin's skull and treated it in a similar manner. This has the effect of making the animals constantly declare loyalty and reverence to the state, as represented by both Napoleon and Old Major, the "father" of the revolution. The way the animals sit in the barn, however, shows clearly that there are major class divisions at play. The dogs and the pigs have all the power, while the others have little or none.

Later, Squealer explains privately that Napoleon never opposed the **windmill**—it had been his idea and Snowball stole his plans. Napoleon only appeared to oppose the windmill to get rid of Snowball, whom he declares is dangerous and a bad influence. Squealer says that this is called "tactics," a word the other animals don't understand. Squealer is persuasive and has three dogs with him, so the animals don't ask questions.

When Squealer insists on calling Napoleon's scheming "tactics," a word the other animals don't know, it shows how he's beginning to use language to make himself seem smart and competent. But really, using language like this is just a way to scare the other animals and impress upon them how unintelligent he thinks they are.

CHAPTER 6

The animals work like slaves that year, but they're happy knowing that humans won't profit from their efforts. They work 60-hour weeks through the summer, and in August, Napoleon announces that they'll work on Sunday afternoons. This is voluntary, but animals who don't work Sundays will see reduced rations. The harvest is less successful this year and mishaps mean that the animals missed planting certain crops. The winter is guaranteed to be difficult.

This work on Sunday is clearly voluntary in name only, but because the other animals are so poorly educated and devoted to the cause, they can't parse out that voluntary doesn't actually mean anything here. Further, by focusing on the idea that humans won't profit from their work, the pigs can instead direct attention to the cause.

Construction on the **windmill** proves difficult as well. There's a quarry on the farm and a stash of other building materials, but the animals cannot break the rocks in the quarry without standing on their hind legs. After a few weeks, the animals begin hauling huge boulders to the top of the quarry and toppling them over the edge to shatter. The horses, sheep, Muriel, and Benjamin all haul stone to the site of the windmill. The process is exhausting. Boxer seems stronger than ever; he singlehandedly keeps the other animals from sliding back down the hill, begins getting up 45 minutes before everyone else to work, and carries loads of stone to the windmill alone. He ignores Clover's warnings to not strain himself.

When Boxer throws himself into the windmill project, it shows how thoroughly hoodwinked he is into thinking that he must sacrifice his own wellbeing for the wellbeing of the state—in other words, he's being encouraged to put national interest above his own, with results that the novel shows later are disastrous. That Boxer is so instrumental to this process, however, means that he looks like the ideal worker to other animals, who will likely try to emulate his actions.

The summer is reasonable for the animals. They don't have more food than they had under Mr. Jones, but they don't have less. The animals find that their methods of performing tasks are more efficient than human methods, and since the animals don't steal, they don't have to worry about maintaining fences and hedges. Despite all of this, late in the summer, the animals realize they need things like oil, nails, dog biscuits, and horseshoes. Later, they'll need tools, machinery, and seeds. Nobody knows how to get these things. One Sunday morning, Napoleon announces that Animal Farm will trade with the neighboring farms for the items they need. He's going to sell hay, wheat, and later, possibly eggs. Napoleon tells the hens that they should welcome this sacrifice.

The problem with an isolated state, the novel shows, is that it's impossible to create everything the state needs—thus, it will at some point become necessary to trade with others. Remember, however, that trading with neighboring farms would technically be forbidden by Old Major, as he made it very clear that the animals shouldn't have common interests with humans—and trading with them qualifies as such. This shows, then, how those ideals are consistently being corrupted as the needs of the state evolve.

The other animals are vaguely uneasy, as they remember the Seven Commandments stating that the animals shouldn't engage in trade or use money. The four young pigs speak up timidly, but the growling dogs silence them, and the sheep begin bleating "Four legs good, two legs bad!" Napoleon explains that the animals won't have to see much of the humans, as he's hired a solicitor named Mr. Whymper to deal with their affairs. After the meeting, Squealer sets everyone at ease by telling them privately that they must all be imagining that they can't engage in trade or use money, but that this was just a rumor started by Snowball. This is comforting for the animals to hear.

That Mr. Whymper wants to work for Napoleon and Animal Farm in the first place speaks to how much there is to gain by trading with a state like Animal Farm—he doesn't have to agree with any of its ideology in order to make a buck. By offering Mr. Whymper as a character, Orwell is able to critique the capitalist countries and individuals who got rich working with the USSR while ignoring the humanitarian atrocities. Blaming Snowball for the rumors, meanwhile, saves Napoleon from having to admit how hypocritical and corrupt he's becoming.

Mr. Whymper visits every Monday. The animals avoid him as much as possible, but they do pridefully watch Napoleon—on four legs—giving orders to a two-legged human. Other humans hate Animal Farm more than ever. They all believe that Animal Farm will go bankrupt at some point and that the **windmill** will fail—but against their will, they do develop a grudging respect for the animals' efficiency. They even begin to call it Animal Farm instead of Manor Farm. Rumors circulate that Napoleon is going to strike a deal with either Mr. Pilkington or Mr. Frederick, but not with both.

No matter how corrupt it may be for Napoleon to go against the Seven Commandments and hire Mr. Whymper, the fact remains that this is still a great public relations stunt for him to be seen in such a powerful position over a human. This has the effect of both boosting his reputation and prestige at home, as well as legitimizing him and Animal Farm in the eyes of the neighboring farms (as represented by the farmers' willingness to call the farm Animal Farm).

About this time, the pigs move into the farmhouse. Squealer circulates to assure everyone that it's not actually true that there was a resolution forbidding animals living inside—it's necessary, since the pigs are the brains of the farm, for them to have a quiet place to work. Referring to Napoleon as "Leader," Squealer also insists that it's more dignified for Napoleon to live in a house. Despite Squealer's insistences, some animals are disturbed to learn that the pigs eat in the kitchen and sleep in the beds. Boxer brushes this off, but Clover remembers that there was a rule against sleeping in beds. She asks Muriel to read her the commandment about beds to confirm, but it now reads that no animal will sleep in a bed with sheets. Clover doesn't remember this, but since it's in writing, she reasons that it must've always been this way.

Notice how Squealer frames his argument: the pigs are doing such important and necessary work for the farm that they don't just deserve, but truly need to live in the luxury of the farmhouse. Essentially, he insists that the pigs have to be corrupt and continue to improve the markers of their class by moving into the farmhouse, while the other animals remain hungry and living in the barns. When Clover decides everything is fine since the Commandment is in writing, it shows how easy it is to dupe an uneducated population with a poor memory—there's little understanding that just because something's in writing doesn't make it true.

Squealer, accompanied by a few dogs, passes by and helps put things in perspective for Clover. He points out that there never was a ruling against beds, since the word "bed" just refers to a place to sleep. Sheets are the problem, as they're a human invention. He assures Clover that the beds are only as comfortable as they need, and the pigs need their sleep since they need to keep their wits about them—if they don't, Mr. Jones might return. Knowing that Mr. Jones's return would be disastrous, the animals agree with Squealer and say nothing when days later, the pigs announce that they'll get up an hour later than everyone else.

Though Squealer is clearly splitting hairs here when he makes the distinction between beds and sheets, it feels impossible for Clover to push back at all because of the dogs. This shows how the fear and violence of an organization like the secret police (as represented by the dogs) allows powerful individuals to not have to make total sense in what they say, since what they say doesn't really matter that much. Because of the threat the dogs pose, Squealer could say almost anything, and nobody would object.

The animals are tired but happy when fall arrives. The stores of food for the winter are low after the sale of the hay and corn, but the **windmill** is almost halfway done and that bolsters their spirits. After the harvest, the animals dedicate themselves to building up the walls of the windmill. Boxer even spends hours at night working alone, and everyone except Benjamin spends their spare time admiring the structure. In November, however, a storm blows through. One morning, the animals wake and see that the windmill is in ruins. They run to the windmill and mournfully look at the fallen stone.

Pay attention to the fact that the animals are looking at a very lean winter, but yet, feel good because of the windmill. In this sense, the windmill comes to represent the state and how it refocuses attention onto its strengths to detract from very real problems within it. The storm destroying the windmill foreshadows what's to come: the windmill and the things it promises will be far more difficult to achieve.

Napoleon rushes to the site and snuffles around sharply. He suddenly stops and quietly says that Snowball came in at night and destroyed the **windmill**. Napoleon sentences Snowball to death and announces rewards for anyone who captures him. They discover pig prints leading to a hole in the hedge near Foxwood, and Napoleon declares that they're Snowball's. He cries that they must build all winter to show Snowball up.

Blaming the windmill's destruction on Snowball is a smart move for Napoleon, as it means that nobody is going to blame him for shoddy planning and not having a plan B. Further, he's then able to use this deflection to unite the animals against Snowball as a common enemy—and in doing so, comes up with a way to convince the animals to work even harder in support of the state.

CHAPTER 7

The winter is bitter and cold, but the animals toil on the **windmill** knowing that the humans will be thrilled if they don't finish on time. The humans spitefully pretend that the windmill fell because the walls were too thin, not because of Snowball. The animals know better, but they decide to build three-foot-thick walls just in case. Snow stops their progress for a while and the animals struggle to feel hopeful. Squealer gives many speeches on the dignity of labor, but the animals find more inspiration in Boxer. In January, rations are reduced when they discover that the potatoes went bad. The animals don't have much to eat and fear they'll starve to death, but they conceal this from the outside world. Napoleon devises strategies to make it seem to Mr. Whymper that there's lots of food.

Note that while the humans' spite comes from the fairly impartial omniscient narrator, it's likely more reflective of the effectiveness of Napoleon's campaign to cast all humans as the enemy, who of course will be thrilled to see the animals fail. That the animals find so much inspiration in Boxer also speaks to the success of Napoleon's attempt to, at least in terms of rhetoric, elevate the worker to a revered place in society. When Napoleon covers up the fact that they don't have food, it speaks also to the way that Napoleon feels he must look big and powerful to his enemies who may take advantage of his weakness.

Near the end of January, Napoleon recognizes that he has to find grain somewhere. He spends most of time in the farmhouse guarded by the fierce dogs. When he occasionally comes out, it's a ceremonious affair and dogs surround him. Squealer conducts the Sunday meetings. One morning, he announces that the hens will need to surrender their eggs: Napoleon entered into a contract to trade 400 eggs per week for enough grain to support them until summer. The hens are enraged, as they all plan to raise spring chicks, so they rebel. Hens lay eggs in the rafters at first, but Napoleon cuts their rations. The rebellion lasts five days, during which time nine hens die, before the hens give up. Napoleon insists that the nine hens died of disease.

Napoleon's current living conditions begin to situate him as a tried and true totalitarian leader: the constant guard of dogs suggests that he's somewhat paranoid that people are out to get him, while the ceremony surrounding his outings creates an even bigger cult of personality. The hens' rebellion can be seen as a parallel to a variety of rebellions that took place in the USSR in response to Stalin's Five Year Plans. These included rebellions by sailors and farmers, specifically those farmers who were victims of the Holodomor genocide in Ukraine (Stalin cut off their food, resulting in millions of deaths).

Rumors circulate that Snowball is hiding at Foxwood or Pinchfield, while Napoleon's relationships with both farms improve. Animal Farm has a pile of timber that Mr. Whymper suggests selling, and both Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick want to buy it. Napoleon deliberates in his decision to sell, and whenever it seems he's close to selling to one farmer, rumors fly that Snowball is on that farmer's farm and he changes his mind. Early in the spring, the animals discover with horror that Snowball has been sneaking onto the farm. He supposedly comes in nightly to trample eggs and steal, and the animals begin to blame everything wrong or upset on Snowball. This continues even when the animals find the key to the store-shed (which Snowball supposedly threw down a well) under a sack of meal.

In the years preceding World War II, Stalin flirted with making deals with both the Allies (Mr. Pilkington) and with Hitler (Mr. Frederick). This is symbolized in the novel by the sale of the timber, which (in theory, at least), would improve relations with whomever Napoleon chooses to sell to. Continuing to vilify Snowball continues to mean that Napoleon can essentially do whatever he wants and blame bad things on someone else. It becomes apparent that all of these bad things are staged when the animals find the key that supposedly went down a well under the sack—a sign of corruption and an attempt to manipulate the population.

Napoleon announces an investigation into Snowball's activities. He and his dogs tour the farm, finding evidence of Snowball's scent everywhere. This frightens everyone. One evening, Squealer calls the animals to tell them that they've discovered something terrible: Snowball sold himself to Mr. Frederick and Pinchfield, and he plans to lead their attack on Animal Farm. Further, Snowball was in league with Mr. Jones all along, which they know because of newly discovered documents. Squealer insists that Snowball's attempt to destroy them all at the Battle of the Cowshed makes sense now. The animals are dumbfounded, as most of them remember that Snowball fought valiantly for them and that Mr. Jones shot Snowball.

Keep in mind that while Napoleon insists that they have documents proving Snowball's treason, none of the other animals will be able to read and confirm those documents for themselves—Napoleon could have anything on paper and still be able to make this point, given how undereducated his subjects are. Continuing to cast doubt on Snowball's loyalty at all gives Napoleon a way to make the animals trust him and him alone—which also has the effect of making the animals trust no one else, even those who might genuinely want to help.

Boxer questions this and shares his recollection of events, but Squealer insists he's mistaken—they have, in Snowball's own writing (which Boxer unfortunately cannot read) that Snowball was going to give them all away. His plot would've succeeded if Napoleon hadn't leapt at Mr. Jones crying "Death to Humanity" and bit Mr. Jones's leg. This graphic description helps the animals remember that Squealer's recollection is the correct one, but Boxer uneasily says that he still thinks that Snowball was on their side at the Battle of the Cowshed. Firmly, Squealer insists that according to Napoleon, Snowball was in league with Mr. Jones long before the rebellion took place. This satisfies Boxer, since Napoleon said it, but Squealer gives him an ugly look as he tells the animals to keep an eye out for Snowball's secret agents, who are all over the farm.

Squealer makes the stakes very clear here when he reminds Boxer that Boxer isn't capable of reading Snowball's documents. This impresses upon Boxer that he truly isn't as intelligent as the pigs, which makes him far more willing to accept their rule and their stories as fact. Squealer is able to do this in part because he knows that despite his questioning, Boxer is unwaveringly loyal to Napoleon and the state he stands for—so insisting that Napoleon says that these are the facts is the only surefire way to convince Boxer.

Four days later, Napoleon orders the animals to assemble in the yard and emerges from the farmhouse, wearing both his first- and second-class Animal Hero medals and surrounded by the dogs. The animals cower as Napoleon whimpers. The dogs drag the four young pigs to the front and three dogs leap at Boxer. Boxer slings them aside and pins one before looking at Napoleon for what to do next. Napoleon tells Boxer to let the terrified dog go. The four pigs are the same ones that protested when Napoleon did away with the Sunday meetings, and they confess crimes without hesitation. They say that they've been working with Snowball and planned to help him give Animal Farm to Mr. Frederick. They also corroborate that Snowball worked with Mr. Jones. When they're done, the dogs tear their throats out.

It's clear from the way that Boxer handles the dogs' attack that if he wanted to, he could oust Napoleon and the guard dogs without much trouble—but his unthinking loyalty to Napoleon means that he both doesn't understand who the enemy is, and doesn't know that he has the strength to do anything about this unjust treatment. In this way, Napoleon ensures that Boxer knows exactly where things stand: because Boxer doesn't know his own strength, he doesn't know that he can just do away with the dogs easily.

Napoleon asks who else has something to confess. Three hens confess that in a dream, Snowball told them to disobey Napoleon. A goose confesses to stealing corn and a sheep confesses that they urinated in the drinking pool on Snowball's orders. Others confess crimes and Napoleon slaughters them all. When it's over, the other animals slink away, unsure which is more shocking: the fact that the dead animals were in league with Snowball, or their punishment. This is the first time since Mr. Jones's departure that there's been bloodshed on the farm. The animals—except for the cat, who disappeared—lie down together near the **windmill** while Boxer paces. Boxer announces that he wouldn't have believed that this could happen on Animal Farm, but it must've happened because they're at fault. He vows to get up an hour earlier and promptly rushes to the quarry.

These confessions and executions, especially those of the four young pigs, mirror Stalin's "show trials," in which many people confessed to all sorts of crimes and were killed for it. Notice that the cat is gone now—once the society stopped working for her, she got out because unlike the other animals, she had the means to do so. When Boxer blames the animals—or the working class—instead of recognizing that Napoleon is turning into a bloodthirsty, power hungry tyrant, it shows how successful Napoleon has been in manipulating the situation to favor him over anyone else.

Clover and the other animals remain by the **windmill**. They look out over Animal Farm and remember that they own all of it. Tears fill Clover's eyes and though she can't formulate her thoughts, if she could, she'd think that this wasn't the goal when they rebelled. Her idea of the future was animals free from abuse and hunger, working together, the strong protecting the weak. Instead, now nobody can speak their mind, dogs growl, and they have to watch their friends be killed for confessing to awful crimes. She doesn't think of rebellion or disobedience, however, as she still recognizes that this is better than Mr. Jones's return would be. She'll accept Napoleon's leadership, even if this wasn't what she hoped for.

Pay attention to the narrator's assertion that Clover cannot formulate her thoughts. This, the novel suggests, is why Clover and her fellow working class animals aren't able to stand up to Napoleon: they're too tired, overworked, and uneducated to be able to effectively formulate their thoughts and voice their concerns. Because of this, they can, to a degree, recognize that there's hypocrisy and corruption at play—but if they're not able to harness language to talk about it, it's meaningless.

Clover begins to sing "Beasts of England" and the other animals join in and sing it mournfully. When they finish their third time through, Squealer and two dogs arrive and announce that "Beasts of England" has been abolished. Stiffly, he explains that it's no longer necessary since the rebellion ended earlier with the execution of the traitors. The society portrayed in "Beasts of England" is now established, so the song is useless. The animals are frightened, and some consider protesting, but the sheep begin to bleat "Four legs good, two legs bad" and this ends any discussion. Minimus composes a song that begins "*Animal Farm, Animal Farm, / Never through me shalt thou come to harm!*" For most animals, the new song doesn't measure up to "Beasts of England."

Squealer (and likely Napoleon) recognize that Animal Farm is in a place right now that's not all that different from Mr. Jones's rule, which necessitated "Beasts of England" as a unifying song. Now, however, allowing "Beasts of England" to be sung means that there's a chance the animals would realize that what they have now isn't actually what's spoken of in "Beasts of England." In short, the song might stir them to rebellion all over again, necessitating this censorship to keep the pigs and dogs in power.

CHAPTER 8

A few days later, some animals think they remember that the Sixth Commandment said that animals shouldn't kill other animals. Nobody says anything to the pigs or the dogs, but Clover feels that the executions aren't in line with this rule. She asks Benjamin to read her the Commandment, but he refuses so, Muriel reads instead. The Commandment reads, "No animal shall kill any other animal WITHOUT CAUSE." She sees that the Commandment wasn't violated.

Benjamin's refusal to read the Commandments, when it seems he's the only one who understands anything, continues to situate him as someone who enables the pigs' rule by keeping silent. Clover, on the other hand, doesn't have the education or the suspicion of her leaders to recognize that the Commandment truly was changed.

The animals work harder than they ever have. The **windmill**, in addition to regular farm work, means they sometimes wonder if they work harder now than they did for Mr. Jones, but possibly for less food. On Sunday mornings, Squealer reads lists of figures that prove production is up by at least 200 percent and sometimes up by 500 percent. The animals don't question this, especially since many don't remember clearly how things were before—but they also think some days that they'd rather have more food and less of the figures.

What the narrator says would suggest that life is actually worse now than it was under Mr. Jones, which makes Squealer's figures look especially silly—if there really was 500 percent more food, the animals wouldn't be so hungry. Instead, Squealer's figures are a way for him to look powerful and knowledgeable, all the while feeding the workers uplifting lies about how great things are.

Napoleon is now seldom seen in public. He never goes out without the dogs, and now, a black rooster that marches ahead and trumpets. In the farmhouse, he lives alone and eats off of the Crown Derby dinner service. Squealer and the other pigs relay his messages, and it's decided that the farm will fire the gun on Napoleon's birthday. These days, Napoleon is referred to as "our Leader, Comrade Napoleon," and the pigs refer to him as Father of All Animals, Protector of the Sheep-fold, and other such titles. Animals credit Napoleon for everything, from good laying rates to the clean water. Minimus expresses these feelings in a poem, which reads that Napoleon cares for everyone and everyone is faithful to Napoleon. Napoleon asks Squealer to paint it on the big barn next to a portrait of him.

Everything that Napoleon asks for and begins to do in this passage continues to situate him as a totalitarian leader, in power because he works hard and strategically to cultivate a cult of personality that reveres him above all else—and gives him the credit for everything good happening on Animal Farm, true or not. That animals revere Napoleon so much speaks to his success in this endeavor, while Minimus's poem and Squealer's portrait mirror the role that portraits like these have played in totalitarian regimes worldwide, from Chairman Mao in China to Hitler in Nazi Germany.

Napoleon busies himself negotiating with Mr. Frederick and Mr. Pilkington about the timber. Mr. Frederick wants it badly, but he won't offer a good price—and rumors still circulate that he wants to attack Animal Farm and destroy the **windmill**. Pinchfield supposedly still houses Snowball too, and in the summer, three hens confess that Snowball inspired them to try to murder Napoleon. After their execution, Napoleon begins sleeping guarded by dogs and appoints a pig to taste his food for poison. Napoleon eventually agrees to sell the timber to Mr. Pilkington and enters into an agreement to trade regularly with him. As the windmill's completion approaches, rumors of an impending attack from Mr. Frederick grow stronger, and rumors circulate of all the cruel things Mr. Frederick does to his animals.

These negotiations continue to parallel Stalin's dealings with both the Allies and Hitler during the eve and early days of World War II. Napoleon's increasing paranoia speaks to how precarious he realizes his position is and suggests that no matter what kinds of rumors he may circulate about either Mr. Frederick or Mr. Pilkington, he suspects that either of them might have the power to take over Animal Farm. This then makes it necessary to convince the animals that they can't trust anyone but Napoleon, so that they won't help oust him in a possible invasion.

One Sunday, Napoleon announces that he never considered selling the timber to such a horrible human as Mr. Frederick. He commands the pigeons to leave Foxwood alone and also to spread the slogan "Death to Frederick." Later in the summer, the animals discover that with the help of a goose, Snowball mixed the wheat and corn seeds with weeds. The goose commits suicide, and the animals learn that Snowball never received "Animal Hero, First Class." Rather, he was punished for cowardice after the Battle of the Cowshed and made up the story of the honor to make himself look better. Squealer convinces everyone that their memories were faulty.

Continuing to make Snowball the evil henchman responsible for every ill on Animal Farm makes Napoleon's hold on power even stronger, as he's then able to position himself as the one who got rid of Snowball and gave the farm normalcy and stability. Again, Squealer is able to convince the animals that they didn't remember correctly because the animals don't have much education to draw on, and they work too hard to be able to put much effort into their minds at all.

The animals finish the **windmill** in the fall, though Mr. Whymper is still in the process of negotiating for the machinery. The animals are tired but proud of their work, and they think of what the windmill will be able to do for them. Napoleon announces that they'll name the windmill Napoleon Mill. Two days later, Napoleon announces that he sold the timber to Mr. Frederick. He changes the pigeons' message to "Death to Pilkington," says the rumors about Mr. Frederick's cruelty are untrue, and insists that Snowball is living in luxury at Foxwood. The pigs are thrilled, as Napoleon's dealings made Mr. Frederick raise his price by £12, to be paid in cash. The money will buy the machinery for the windmill.

There's no real way to verify if any of Napoleon's dealings worked the way he and his cronies insist they did—but though the animals may be shocked, they also have nothing to do but accept Napoleon's words as fact, given how tight and scary his control over the farm is. Making the deal with Mr. Frederick is a reference to the non-aggression pact that Stalin signed with Hitler, which said that Hitler wouldn't attack the USSR—something that Hitler promptly went on to do.

Mr. Frederick's men cart away the timber quickly and when it's gone, the animals gather to reverently inspect the banknotes. Three days later, Mr. Whymper arrives with horrible news: the banknotes are forgeries. Napoleon immediately sentences Mr. Frederick to death and warns that Pinchfield might attack Animal Farm. He also sends pigeons to Foxwood with nice messages. The next morning, Mr. Frederick's men attack. There are 15 men, many with guns, and the animals cannot stand up to the bullets. They're forced to hide, and even Napoleon looks nervous. The pigeons return with a note from Mr. Pilkington reading, "Serves you right."

The attack by Mr. Frederick and his men parallels the opening of the Eastern Front of World War II, in which Hitler's armies began to invade the USSR, and within months were within 40 miles of the capital city of Moscow. Stalin's men were unable to effectively fight back, and the Allies were understandably unwilling to work with Stalin after he signed the non-aggression pact with Hitler.

Mr. Frederick and his men gather around the **windmill**. At first it looks like they're going to try to knock it down, but Benjamin nods in amusement and notes that they're going to blow it up. He's right: after a deafening explosion, the windmill is gone. The enraged animals charge. Boxer kills three men and the dogs bite and terrify the rest. The animals win, but they're bloody and tired. They gather around the windmill's foundations and note that they won't even be able to reuse the stones. Squealer skips up to them looking satisfied as the gun booms in the distance. Squealer cries that it's to celebrate their victory. Boxer points out that this wasn't a victory since the men destroyed the windmill. He insists that they just won back what they had before, which Squealer says *is* a victory.

The destruction of the windmill and the animals' ensuing victory continues to parallel the German occupation of the Soviet Union, though the Soviet forces did eventually emerge victorious. Notice that the animals—the ones who actually did the hard work of fighting off the armed men—have a far more realistic view of what happened and what will happen going forward. Squealer, however, has to spin this to look like a grand victory, as that's the only way to lift spirits and trick the animals into thinking that this is far more meaningful than they suspect it is.

At the barnyard, Boxer feels the pellets in his leg and begins to mentally prepare himself to rebuild the **windmill**. It occurs to him that he's 11 now and maybe isn't as strong as he once was. However, when he and the other animals see their flag, hear the gun, and listen to Napoleon's speech, they all agree that this was a great victory. They solemnly bury the killed animals, name the battle the Battle of the Windmill, and Napoleon confers the new Order of the Green Banner on himself. Everyone forgets the forged banknotes.

Pay attention to the way that the celebration brings the animals around to Squealer and Napoleon's way of thinking. This makes it clear that the purpose of these celebratory exercises is to remind the lower classes what exactly they're fighting for—the state—and distract from whatever injuries, illness, or other wrongs they're suffering at the hands of the state.

A few days later, the pigs discover a case of whiskey. That night, the animals hear loud singing that sounds suspiciously like "Beasts of England" coming from the farmhouse, and Napoleon inexplicably gallops around the yard in Mr. Jones's hat. In the morning, Squealer is the first to emerge at nine a.m. He announces that Napoleon is dying because Snowball poisoned his food. Squealer says that Napoleon's final pronouncement that drinking alcohol is punishable by death. By the next afternoon, Napoleon is entirely well and asks Mr. Whymper to purchase books on brewing and distilling, and orders that the pasture for retired animals should be planted with barley.

That the pigs mistake Napoleon's hangover for death shows clearly how unprepared the pigs are to be members of the human world—even though they're clearly headed in that direction, given their discovery of alcohol and Napoleon's jaunt in Mr. Jones's hat (which, remember, is a piece of clothing and therefore forbidden as a mark of humanity). Reallocating the retirement pasture to alcohol production (barley) shows that Napoleon is more than willing to do things that help himself at the expense of those who have, for the most part, served him selflessly.

One night at about midnight, the animals wake to a crash. They discover a broken ladder by the Seven Commandments along with Squealer, who is stunned on the ground next to a lantern, a paintbrush, and white paint. The dogs surround Squealer and escort him back to the farmhouse. No one but Benjamin seems to understand anything. A few days later, Muriel sees that the Commandment that she thought forbade drinking alcohol actually forbids drinking alcohol *to excess*.

This is the first and only real proof that the reader ever gets that the pigs are tampering with the Commandments. When the animals cannot figure out what's going on, it shows that they're entirely loyal to Napoleon and his rule—and cannot fathom that the person leading them could possibly want to hurt him. That would, after all, be against the Seven Commandments.

CHAPTER 9

Boxer's split hoof takes a long time to heal. He refuses to take time off from work on the **windmill**, but in the evenings, he shares with Clover that his hoof is painful. Clover and Benjamin encourage Boxer to be careful, but Boxer insists he wants to see the windmill done before he retires. The age of retirement for horses is 12 on Animal Farm, and though no animal has yet retired, they'll all receive a generous pension when the time comes. Boxer's 12th birthday is next summer.

Even though Boxer looks forward to retirement, keep in mind that Napoleon just reallocated the retirement pasture for barley—a suggestion that Boxer is being overly idealistic about whether or not retirement is even in the cards for him. His devotion to the windmill and to Animal Farm, meanwhile, shows that he's still easily manipulated into serving those projects at the expense of his own health.

The winter is cold and hard. The animals, except for the pigs and dogs, suffer reduced rations. Squealer explains that equality in rations isn't in line with Animalism—and furthermore, that they're not short on food and are doing better than they did in the days of Mr. Jones. He points out all the things that are better now and the animals believe him, in part because they barely remember Mr. Jones. They're also thrilled that they're free, not slaves. That spring, the four sows give birth to 31 piglets, all obviously Napoleon's children. Napoleon announces plans for a schoolroom for them but teaches them himself in the farmhouse kitchen. The piglets aren't allowed to play with other animals, and it becomes law that other animals should step aside for pigs. Pigs can also wear ribbons in their tails on Sundays.

The hungry animals imply that clearly, there's not enough food—while Squealer's figures and insistence that food equality isn't in line with Animalism allows him to abuse language to trick the animals into believing that this is as it should be. At this point, the pigs are also seriously corrupting language, as the original Seven Commandments have lots of room to argue for ration equality. When Napoleon insists on only educating these 31 piglets and insists that other animals should step aside, he gives these piglets a leg up in the world while reminding the other animals that they're of a lower class than the pigs.

The farm is fairly successful this year, but it's still short on money. The animals need building materials and sugar for Napoleon, so Napoleon increases the hens' egg quota to 600 per week. He reduces rations twice over the winter, though the pigs seem to put on weight. In late winter, the animals smell cooking barley from the brew-house and wonder if they'll get a warm mash for supper. However, the pigs announce that the pigs will get all the barley—as well as a pint of beer per day. Napoleon gets a half-gallon. Despite the hardships, life has more dignity. Napoleon holds "Spontaneous Demonstrations" weekly to celebrate Animal Farm. This often takes the form of a military-style parade, followed by speeches and songs. The animals enjoy the celebrations, as it helps them forget that they're hungry.

The "Spontaneous Demonstrations" are, again, a way for Napoleon to focus his subjects' attentions on the state and how awesome it is, while also detracting from all the things that are going wrong. That the pigs are getting beer while the other animals get nothing is another mark of corruption, while the success of Napoleon's rule is evident when the narrator insists that life has more dignity. In many ways, life is exactly the same as it was under Mr. Jones—the animals feel like there's more dignity just because Napoleon tells them so.

In April, Animal Farm becomes a Republic in need of a president. Napoleon is the only candidate and wins the election unanimously. He uncovers more documents detailing Snowball's dealings with Mr. Jones, including some saying that Snowball led the human forces and shouted, "Long live humanity!" Moses returns and continues to not work while talking about Sugarcandy Mountain. The animals like the idea of Sugarcandy Mountain since their lives are so hard, and oddly, the pigs allow Moses to stay and even give him an allowance of beer.

Now that the pigs are effective rulers over the other animals, Moses—and the religion he represents—isn't such a huge threat. Indeed, the idea of Sugarcandy Mountain makes the animals even more likely to continue to submit to Napoleon's demands, as they now have hope that things will get better in the afterlife. In this sense, Moses gets his beer because he's giving the pigs another tool to hang onto their power.

Boxer works harder than ever once his hoof heals—though all the animals work like slaves. His coat begins to look somewhat dull and he seems to function on determination alone, but the animals reason he'll pick up once summer comes. Clover and Benjamin warn him to take care of himself, but Boxer ignores them. One summer evening, however, Boxer falls while dragging stone to the **windmill**. The animals rush to him and Boxer weakly tells Clover that his lung has collapsed, but he doesn't care—his work means the others will be able to finish the windmill without him. He's looking forward to retirement now.

When the narrator insists that all the animals work like slaves, it makes it clear that none of the promises of the rebellion have come true: the animals may feel as though things are fine, but Boxer's sudden downturn in health shows clearly that living in this totalitarian state means that he must sacrifice everything, including his health, in order to support it.

Except for Benjamin and Clover, all the animals run to tell Squealer what happened. Squealer concernedly tells Boxer that Napoleon is going to send him for treatment at the Willingdon veterinary hospital. This disturbs the animals, but Squealer convinces them that the vet is better able to help Boxer. Boxer manages to limp back to his stall and remains there for two days. Benjamin and Clover stay at his bedside when they're not working and listen to Boxer talk about studying the alphabet once he's retired.

Boxer's desire to study the alphabet suggests that on some level, Boxer recognizes that getting some education will be the key to spending his old age like Old Major did—as a visionary, with time to think about the world and how it works. His belief that he'll be able to retire, however, is indicative of his blind trust that Napoleon still has his best interests at heart.

The van arrives to take Boxer away in the middle of the day, while the other animals are working. The animals are astonished when Benjamin races for them, braying that they're taking Boxer away. The animals race back to see Boxer in a big horse-drawn van with lettering on the side. They yell goodbye to Boxer, but Benjamin reads the writing on the van: "Alfred Simmonds, Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler." The man whips his horses and they race down the drive. Clover shouts for Boxer to get out, and Boxer kicks a few times—but he's too weak. They never see Boxer again. Three days later, Squealer announces that Boxer died in the hospital and that he was with Boxer to the end. Boxer's last words were in support of the **windmill**, Napoleon, and Animal Farm.

It takes the obviously impending death of his best friend to rouse Benjamin to action, but at this point, it's too late. Boxer's unthinking loyalty to Animal Farm, which robbed him of knowledge of his strength—combined with Benjamin's silence—means that Benjamin never alerted Boxer to the fact that if he'd chosen to do so, he could've stopped Napoleon's reign of terror long ago with a single kick. Boxer's weak kicks are a stark contrast to his former strength, symbolizing how the state used and abused him until he was no longer useful to them—or able to survive for himself.

Suspiciously, Squealer notes that he's heard rumors that some animals believe Boxer went to the glue factory. This isn't true: Napoleon would never do that, for one, and for another, the veterinary hospital had just purchased a van from the glue factory and hadn't yet had the opportunity to repaint it. Squealer's descriptions of Boxer's death and of the misunderstanding calm the animals. On Sunday, Napoleon gives a speech commemorating Boxer and orders a wreath for Boxer's grave. He announces a banquet in Boxer's honor in a few days. On the day of the banquet, the pigs receive a crate at the farmhouse and spend the night singing. Rumors circulate that the pigs came up with the money to buy whiskey.

Once again, there's no way for the illiterate animals, who have no connections to the outside world, to confirm that Squealer is telling the truth here—but because they trust that Napoleon is looking out for them and because of Squealer's grasp of language, they're tricked into believing this lie. The speech Napoleon gives in Boxer's honor is simply lip service designed to make the animals believe he feels sorry for Boxer—while the cask of whiskey suggests that selling Boxer to the glue factory actually just gave the pigs the cash to keep profiting.

CHAPTER 10

Years pass, and soon, only Clover, Benjamin, Moses, and some of the pigs remember life before the rebellion. Everyone else dies and even Boxer is forgotten. Clover is now 14, but she's still not retired. Napoleon and Squealer are both huge and fat. There are many animals on the farm, but not as many as they'd projected to have by this time. Because of this, most of the animals don't grasp the importance of the rebellion. There are three other horses besides Clover, none of whom are intelligent. The farm is prosperous, bigger than ever, and better organized. The **windmill** is done, but they use it for milling profitable corn, not for electricity as Snowball had proposed. Napoleon insists that Animalism is about working hard and living frugally, not about electricity and a three-day workweek.

That Clover is 14 and not retired means that even if Boxer had survived, he too wouldn't have had anything great to look forward to: Animal Farm was going to continue to abuse him until he dropped dead, whether that was before or after the age of retirement. When Napoleon insists that Snowball's promises for the windmill weren't in line with Animalism, it's another way for Napoleon to corrupt the ideals to serve his own agenda. Insisting that Animalism entails living frugally allows him to justify keeping the animals in poor conditions, while living in luxury himself.

Though the farm seems richer, the animals, except for the pigs and the dogs, don't feel any richer. Squealer talks often about how much work the pigs must do to supervise and organize the farm, though he insists the other animals are too ignorant to understand what the pigs do. Regardless, the pigs and dogs don't produce food, but they eat a lot. The other animals are still hungry, sleep on straw, and labor in the fields. The older ones try to remember if life was better immediately after Mr. Jones disappeared, but they can't remember. They have nothing to compare their present to except for Squealer's figures, which show that life is getting better. Benjamin is the only one who supposedly remembers everything, but he insists that things have never been better or worse. Life, he suggests, is about being hungry and disappointed.

Notice that at this point, the pigs don't do much—so in this sense, they've become much like the humans they worked so hard to overthrow in that they don't produce anything themselves. This shows that while the rebellion may have had noble beginnings, thanks to Napoleon's corruption and his totalitarian rule, aren't actually any better. In this sense, Benjamin is right: things for the animals have always been horrible, as they've seldom understood their power to rebel or been able to use it to create a society that actually serves them equally, as Old Major envisioned.

The animals never give up hope and are proud to be a part of Animal Farm. They still feel immense pride at the sight of their flag, and they all believe that Old Major's foretold Republic of the Animals will still come. They secretly hum "Beasts of England" and take pride in the fact that all animals are equal on Animal Farm.

This passage speaks to the power of the state to make the populace feel nationalistic pride. That pride distracts them from all the things that are going wrong in their own lives, as they're encouraged to think only about the bigger picture—which, for the pigs, looks great.

One summer day, Squealer takes the sheep to an overgrown part of the farm to browse and leaves them there for a week. He tells everyone that he's teaching the sheep a new song. Just after the sheep return, Clover neighs in shock: Squealer is walking on his hind legs. The other pigs file out of the farmhouse on two legs as well. The dogs bark and the black cockerel announces Napoleon's entrance. Napoleon haughtily looks on the other animals and carries a whip in his trotter. The animals consider saying something, but at once, the sheep loudly bleat "Four legs good, two legs *better*!" The pigs go back inside.

The shift to walking on two legs represents one of the pigs' final steps toward becoming more human than animal. The maxim that Squealer teaches to the sheep shows again how easy it is to corrupt this kind of simplified language and twist or alter it to mean almost anything. Now, Squealer has come up with a phrase that, by all counts, actually supports human, two-legged superiority over everyone else—despite the stated ideals of the initial revolution.

Clover nuzzles Benjamin and leads him to the barn where the Seven Commandments are written. She says that she still can't read, but she thinks the wall looks different. Benjamin reads the entirety of the text: "ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL, BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS." With this, it doesn't seem strange when the pigs all carry whips, purchase a radio, and install a telephone. It's not odd when Napoleon starts to wear clothes and smoke a pipe.

The current text of the Seven Commandments is pretty meaningless. It corrupts the meaning of "equal" by making it clear that they don't actually mean that anyone is equal, no matter what the word actually means. Because of this, however, the pigs are able to make it mean whatever they want it to—in this case, they use it to justify their rule and to justify wearing clothes.

A week later, several dogcarts containing neighboring farmers drive up to the farm for a tour. They admire everything, especially the **windmill**. The animals aren't sure whether to be more afraid of the pigs or of the humans. That night, the animals hear laughter and singing from the farmhouse. They creep up to the house and the tall animals look in through the window. They see Napoleon sitting at the head of the table, surrounded by pigs and men all with mugs of beer. A card game is in progress. Mr. Pilkington stands to make a speech and says that he's thrilled that the era of hostility between Animal Farm and the human farmers is over. The farmers believed that pigs couldn't run a farm, but today, they saw that they were wrong—and the pigs are setting an example.

This dinner is a parallel to the Tehran Conference, in which Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Stalin met to talk about how to create peace after World War II. Orwell mocks everyone involved here by showing how the people who sought to get rich working with the Soviet Union made Stalin and the Soviet Union legitimate through giving them a stage like this—when, in Orwell's opinion, the pigs and Stalin have and had no business in such a negotiation. Pilkington's praise of Napoleon suggests that lording over a totalitarian state like this is appealing to many.

Mr. Pilkington says that the "lower animals" on Animal Farm perform more work and get less food than animals elsewhere—and he and his companions intend to copy Animal Farm's methods. He emphasizes that there's no reason for animosity between Animal Farm and the other farms. Mr. Pilkington chokes up on his own joke and then manages to say that if Animal Farm has its lower animals to deal with, the humans have their lower classes. Everyone roars with laughter and they toast to Animal Farm.

What Mr. Pilkington says about "lower animals" and "lower classes" makes it clear that the pigs—and Mr. Pilkington and the farmers—are in power exactly because they're profiting off of a class structure of their own making, in which they end up on top. It's a joke to them because they are so powerful in the grand scheme of things, which shows that they don't actually care about anyone below them.

Napoleon stands to make a speech. He says that the rumors that Animal Farm is rebellious and subversive are false; they just want to coexist peacefully and would never consider stirring up rebellion elsewhere. Though he knows nobody is suspicious anymore, he's going to make some changes. Animals will stop addressing each other as "Comrade," and they'll no longer observe the odd custom of marching past a boar's skull on Sundays. The flag is now plain green too. Napoleon's only criticism of Mr. Pilkington's speech is that he spoke of Animal Farm, which isn't the correct name anymore—the farm will go by its original name, Manor Farm. They drink to Manor Farm.

Changing the name of the farm back to Manor Farm is an attempt by Napoleon to begin manipulating the world at large through language. While Animal Farm is a name that speaks to the rebellious and revolutionary nature of the farm, calling it Manor Farm allows him to convey that the farm is normal, acceptable, and capable of existing as a part of polite society. The same goes for the other changes Napoleon mentions making; they all erase the farm's history.

The animals outside see something strange happening to the pigs but can't figure out what it is and creep away. They hear an uproar inside and return to the window. They see that Napoleon and Mr. Pilkington each played an ace of spades at the same time, and everyone is shouting. The animals can't tell the difference between the pigs and the men.

When Napoleon and Mr. Pilkington both play an ace at the same time, it shows that both of them are more than willing to cheat—in this sense, Napoleon is truly no better than any of the humans. The other animals are back exactly where they started: under the thumb of cruel, power-hungry, and cheating humans.

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