Animal Farm Study Guide

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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 of Animal Farm

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.

Key Facts about Animal Farm

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

Animal Farm 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 distil 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 labour. 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 distils 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 neighbouring 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 neighbours, 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 honours 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 honour, 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 neighbours 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.

Story Summary by Chapters

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.

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 labour. 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.

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 favour 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.

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.

Analysis

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.

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 labour—rather, they make chairs or farm for others who then profit off of their labour. 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.

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.

Character Development

Chapter I introduces the novel's full cast in economical strokes. Old Major is established as a wise, authoritative patriarch whose idealism and rhetorical power inspire revolution — he is the intellectual father of Animalism. Boxer and Clover represent the loyal, hardworking labouring class: strong, good-natured, but not intellectually sharp. Benjamin the donkey is the sceptic who suspects nothing will ever really change. Mollie is vain and comfort-seeking, more interested in sugar and ribbons than revolutionary ideals. Moses the raven, as Mr. Jones's pet, serves a special function that will become clearer later. The pigs, though not yet individually prominent beyond Old Major, position themselves closest to the stage, subtly foreshadowing their future leadership. Mr. Jones is shown only through his drunkenness and negligence, immediately establishing the case for revolution.

Themes and Motifs

The chapter establishes the novel's central themes with great economy. Oppression and exploitation dominate Old Major's speech, as he articulates how the animals' labor is stolen by a ruling class that produces nothing. Revolution and idealism emerge through his call to action and the utopian vision of "Beasts of England." The theme of equality is introduced through Old Major's declaration that all animals are comrades and that no animal must tyrannize another — principles that will be systematically betrayed as the novel progresses. The motif of songs and slogans as tools of political unity appears with "Beasts of England," which functions as both an anthem and a propaganda device. The contrast between Mr. Jones's incompetence and the animals' organized gathering foreshadows the transfer of power to come.

Notable Passages

"Man is the only creature that consumes without producing."

This line encapsulates Old Major's economic critique and serves as the philosophical foundation of the coming revolution. It frames the human-animal relationship as parasitic exploitation, echoing Marxist analysis of class relations, and provides the moral justification the animals will use to overthrow Mr. Jones.

"All animals are equal."

Old Major's declaration becomes one of the novel's most famous lines and its deepest source of irony. Stated here with genuine conviction, this principle will later be corrupted into the famous amendment "but some animals are more equal than others," making its original utterance in Chapter I a moment of unspoiled idealism against which all subsequent betrayals are measured.

"Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland, / Beasts of every land and clime, / Hearken to my joyful tidings / Of the golden future time."

The opening stanza of "Beasts of England" functions as the revolutionary anthem that unites the animals emotionally before they are united politically. Its utopian imagery and rousing rhythm demonstrate how music and art can be harnessed for ideological mobilization; a motif Orwell will revisit when the pigs eventually ban the song.

Questions about Chapter I

1. What is the main message of Old Major's speech in Chapter I?
2. Who does Old Major represent in Animal Farm?
3. What is the significance of the song "Beasts of England"?
4. What do the different animals in Chapter I symbolize?
5. Why is Mr. Jones's drunkenness important in Chapter I?

Chapter 2

Chapter II opens with the death of Old Major three nights after his stirring speech in the barn. Though the old boar never sees the rebellion he inspired, his ideas take root among the animals during the months that follow. The work of organizing and teaching falls naturally to the pigs, who are recognized as the cleverest of the animals. Two young boars in particular emerge as leaders: Napoleon, a large, fierce-looking Berkshire with a reputation for getting his own way, and Snowball, a more vivacious and inventive pig who is quicker in speech and more fertile in ideas. A third pig, Squealer, a small, fat porker with round cheeks and twinkling eyes, possesses an extraordinary talent for persuasive argument. The animals say of Squealer that he could turn black into white.

These three pigs elaborate Old Major's teachings into a complete system of thought, which they name Animalism. They hold secret meetings in the barn after Mr. Jones has gone to sleep, explaining the principles of Animalism to the other animals. The reception is mixed. Mollie, the vain white mare, asks whether there will still be sugar and ribbons after the Rebellion, revealing her attachment to human luxuries. Moses, the tame raven, spreads tales of Sugar-candy Mountain, a paradise beyond the clouds where animals go when they die, distracting them from revolutionary thought. The pigs have a hard time countering his influence. Meanwhile, Boxer and Clover, the two cart-horses, absorb everything the pigs tell them and pass it on to the other animals with simple, faithful devotion.

The Rebellion itself comes far sooner than anyone expects, and it arrives not through planning but through circumstance. Mr. Jones, who has grown increasingly neglectful and drunk since losing money in a lawsuit, goes on a weekend bender. His men milk the cows but forget to feed the animals. By the evening of Midsummer's Day, the animals have not been fed for over twenty-four hours. A hungry cow breaks into the store-shed with her horns, and the animals begin helping themselves to the feed. Jones and his four men rush in with whips, lashing out at the animals. But something snaps: the half-starved animals, acting together for the first time, turn on their masters. They butt and kick from all sides. Jones and his men are driven from the farm in minutes, and Mrs. Jones, seeing what is happening, slips out the other side with a few belongings. Moses flies after her.

The animals can scarcely believe their luck. They gallop around the farm boundaries, reveling in their freedom. They destroy the whips, nose-rings, halters, and degrading bits and reins, throwing them all into a bonfire. Napoleon distributes double rations of corn to everyone, and they sing "Beasts of England" seven times through. After a night of celebration, they wake to a glorious morning and tour the farmhouse with wonder and awe. Mollie lingers to admire herself with a ribbon from Mrs. Jones's dressing table, but the others agree that the farmhouse should be preserved as a museum and that no animal shall ever live there.

The chapter concludes with a crucial scene. The pigs reveal that during the past three months they have taught themselves to read and write from an old spelling book. Snowball paints over "Manor Farm" on the gate and replaces it with "Animal Farm." He then writes the Seven Commandments of Animalism on the barn wall in large white letters for all to see. The commandments establish the fundamental laws of Animal Farm, culminating in the declaration that all animals are equal. As the animals prepare to begin the hay harvest, the pigs are discovered to have taken the morning's milk for themselves—a small but ominous detail that closes the chapter.

Character Development

Chapter II introduces the novel's central power dynamic. Napoleon is defined more by temperament than intellect—he is forceful and determined, not brilliant. Snowball, by contrast, is creative and articulate, already emerging as the idealist of the revolution.

Squealer's introduction as the master propagandist foreshadows his essential role in maintaining the pigs' authority. Mollie's concern about ribbons and sugar marks her as an animal who values personal comfort over collective liberation, setting up her eventual departure. Boxer's earnest loyalty is established early, as he faithfully absorbs the pigs' teachings without question. Even Moses the raven, with his tales of Sugar-candy Mountain, is positioned as a useful distraction—an opiate for the masses that the pigs must work against.

Analysis

Orwell structures Chapter II as a compressed narrative of revolutionary history: the death of the visionary (Old Major as Marx/Lenin), the rise of competing successors (Napoleon and Snowball as Stalin and Trotsky), the spontaneous uprising of the oppressed, and the immediate emergence of a new ruling class. The pacing is deliberate—the slow buildup of Animalist education contrasts sharply with the sudden, almost accidental violence of the Rebellion itself. Orwell employs dramatic irony throughout: the reader recognizes the warning signs that the animals cannot. The pigs' literacy, their self-appointment as organizers, and especially the appropriation of the milk all point toward a new hierarchy forming beneath the rhetoric of equality. The Seven Commandments, painted in their pristine original form, function as a baseline against which readers will measure every subsequent betrayal. Orwell's prose remains deceptively simple, mirroring the fable form, but every detail carries allegorical weight.

Questions about Chapter II

1. What causes the animals to rebel against Mr. Jones in Chapter II?
2. What are the Seven Commandments in Animal Farm?
3. Who are the three pig leaders introduced in Chapter II and what roles do they play?
4. What is the significance of the milk disappearing at the end of Chapter II?
5. What is Animalism and how is it developed in Chapter II?
6. Why do Mollie and Moses resist the ideas of Animalism?

Chapter 3

The animals throw themselves into the harvest with extraordinary energy and determination. Under the supervision of the pigs, who direct the work rather than performing manual labour themselves, the animals bring in the biggest harvest Manor Farm has ever seen. Every animal contributes according to their abilities: Boxer distinguishes himself as the hardest worker on the farm, arriving at the fields before anyone else and volunteering for every difficult task. He adopts a personal motto—"I will work harder"—which becomes his answer to every setback and challenge. The horses and other large animals do the heavy pulling, while smaller animals like the hens and ducks contribute by

gathering stray bits of hay. Even the pigs find ways to make themselves useful, though their contribution takes the form of supervision and organization rather than physical toil.

The harvest proves remarkably successful. The animals finish it in two days fewer than Jones and his men typically required, and the yield is larger than any the farm has produced before. There is no wastage or theft, and the animals take genuine pride in the fact that every mouthful of food is their own, produced by and for themselves rather than for a human master. Only Mollie and the cat prove unreliable workers—Mollie frequently disappears from the fields, and the cat has a talent for vanishing whenever there is work to be done, only to reappear at mealtimes with elaborate excuses.

On Sundays, the animals do not work. They hold a ceremonial flag-raising in the mornings, followed by a general assembly called "the Meeting," where plans for the coming week are debated and resolutions put forward. It becomes clear that only the pigs are capable of putting forward resolutions, while the other animals can only vote for or against them. Snowball and Napoleon are the most active in these debates, though they rarely agree on anything. Snowball proves himself an energetic organizer and establishes a number of Animal Committees—the Egg Production Committee, the Clean Tails League, the Whiter Wool Movement, and others—though most of these committees ultimately fail.

Snowball also undertakes a literacy campaign, with mixed results. The pigs learn to read and write fluently. The dogs learn to read reasonably well but show no interest in reading anything beyond the Seven Commandments. Muriel the goat can read scraps of newspaper. Benjamin the donkey can read as well as any pig but refuses to exercise this ability, saying there is nothing worth reading. Clover learns the alphabet but cannot string words together. Boxer manages to learn the first four letters of the alphabet but cannot progress further. The sheep, hens, and ducks cannot get beyond the letter A. When it becomes apparent that many animals cannot memorize the Seven Commandments, Snowball reduces them to a single maxim: "Four legs good, two legs bad." The sheep take to bleating this phrase for hours on end.

Napoleon, meanwhile, takes little interest in Snowball’s committees. He declares that the education of the young is more important than anything that can be done for those who are already grown up. When Jessie and Bluebell each give birth to litters of puppies—nine in all—Napoleon takes the puppies away from their mothers, saying he will make himself responsible for their education. He removes them to a loft accessible only by a ladder, and the rest of the farm soon forgets about their existence.

The mystery of the missing milk is resolved in this chapter. The milk, along with the windfall apples from the orchard, is mixed into the pigs’ mash. When the other animals murmur about this arrangement, Squealer is dispatched to explain. He argues that the pigs do not actually enjoy milk and apples but consume them solely for the good of the farm. Science has proven, he claims, that milk and apples contain substances essential to the well-being of

pigs, who are brain workers responsible for the management of the farm. If the pigs fail in their duty, he warns, Jones will come back. This final threat silences all objections, and the matter is settled without further debate.

Character Development

Boxer emerges as the moral heart of the working class, his motto "I will work harder" embodying both admirable dedication and a dangerous lack of critical thinking. His immense physical strength and unwavering loyalty make him indispensable, yet his inability to learn beyond the letter D foreshadows his vulnerability to manipulation. Snowball reveals himself as an idealistic intellectual, genuinely invested in improving life for all animals through education and organization. Napoleon, by contrast, shows his calculating nature by quietly seizing control of the puppies—a move whose significance the other animals fail to recognize. Squealer steps forward as the regime's propagandist, demonstrating a terrifying ability to rationalize inequality. Mollie and the cat represent those who resist collective responsibility, each in their own way refusing to sacrifice personal comfort for communal goals.

Themes and Motifs

Class division and intellectual hierarchy: The pigs' assumption of a supervisory role introduces a new class system almost immediately after the revolution. Their superior literacy becomes the justification for their authority, establishing a pattern in which education functions not as liberation but as a tool of control. Propaganda and the manipulation of language: Squealer's speech about the milk and apples demonstrates how rhetoric can reframe selfishness as sacrifice. The reduction of the Seven Commandments to "Four legs good, two legs bad" shows how complex ideas are simplified to the point of meaninglessness. The corruption of revolutionary ideals: The harvest represents the revolution's genuine promise, while the appropriation of milk and apples signals its betrayal. These two developments exist side by side in the same chapter, suggesting that exploitation begins not with dramatic coups but with small, rationalized privileges.

Analysis

Chapter III is structurally pivotal because it compresses the entire arc of revolution into a single chapter: collective triumph followed by the quiet emergence of a new ruling class. Orwell uses the harvest as an emblem of genuine revolutionary potential—the animals work better without a master, and the results are measurably superior. This makes the pigs' subsequent appropriation of resources more insidious, since it occurs against a backdrop of real achievement. The chapter's tone shifts subtly from celebration to unease, mirroring the way authoritarian regimes often consolidate power during periods of national success. Napoleon's seizure of the puppies is presented almost as an aside, yet it is arguably the most consequential event in the novel. Orwell buries this moment amid the bustle of committees

and literacy classes, reflecting how the most dangerous power grabs often go unnoticed. The chapter also establishes Squealer's rhetorical method—the false dichotomy, the appeal to fear, the pseudo-scientific claim—as a systematic template for propaganda that will escalate throughout the narrative.

Questions about Chapter III

1. Why is the harvest in Chapter III the most successful in Manor Farm's history?
2. Why don't the pigs do any physical labour during the harvest?
3. What does Boxer's motto "I will work harder" reveal about his character?
4. Why does Snowball reduce the Seven Commandments to "Four legs good, two legs bad"?
5. Why does Napoleon take the nine puppies away from Jessie and Bluebell?
6. How does Squealer justify the pigs keeping the milk and apples for themselves?

Chapter 4

By late summer, word of the rebellion at Animal Farm has spread across the English countryside. Pigeons, dispatched by Snowball and Napoleon, carry news of the uprising to animals on neighbouring farms, teaching them the tune and words of "Beasts of England." The response among animals elsewhere is electric: bulls grow restive, sheep break down hedges, and an undercurrent of revolt simmers across the region. The humans, alarmed, circulate their own counter-narratives. They claim the animals on Manor Farm are starving, diseased, and engaged in constant fighting among themselves. When these rumours prove unconvincing, darker stories emerge—tales of cannibalism and torture—which are equally disbelieved by many of the listening animals.

Two neighbouring farmers watch these developments with particular anxiety. Mr. Pilkington of Foxwood, a gentleman farmer more interested in fishing and hunting than in agriculture, presides over a large but neglected estate. Mr. Frederick of Pinchfield runs a smaller, better-managed farm, but he is known for his ruthlessness, his perpetual lawsuits, and his reputation for hard dealing. Though Pilkington and Frederick are normally on poor terms, the threat of Animal Farm temporarily unites them in hostility. Neither, however, is willing to help Jones directly, and both secretly hope to profit from his misfortune.

In early October, Jones and a group of men from Foxwood and Pinchfield march on Animal Farm, armed with sticks and a gun. Snowball, who has been studying an old book on the campaigns of Julius Caesar, has anticipated this attack and prepared a detailed defence. He has organized the animals into divisions, assigned roles, and planned a strategy of staged retreats designed to lure the invaders into an ambush.

The first wave of defence consists of the pigeons and geese, who swoop at the men and peck at their legs. This initial skirmish is a feint, intended to give the impression that the animals are easily routed. When the men press forward confidently, Snowball launches the

second line of attack: Muriel the goat, Benjamin the donkey, and the sheep charge from a concealed position. Again, after a brief engagement, the animals fall back as planned. The men, now laughing and certain of victory, chase them into the yard—exactly where Snowball wants them.

At Snowball's signal, the full ambush is sprung. Three horses, three cows, and the pigs emerge from the cowshed and cut off the men's retreat. Snowball leads the charge directly at Jones, who fires his gun and sends pellets grazing across Snowball's back, killing a sheep. Snowball does not falter. He throws himself at Jones, knocking him into a pile of dung. Boxer rears up on his hind legs and strikes a stable-lad from Foxwood with his iron-shod hooves, and the boy falls motionless in the mud. Panic overtakes the men. They abandon their sticks and flee through the gate, pursued by the geese who nip viciously at their calves.

The victory is total. The animals are jubilant, though Boxer is deeply troubled. He believes he has killed the stable-lad and expresses genuine remorse, saying he had no intention of taking a life. Snowball dismisses his concern, declaring that the only good human being is a dead one. Boxer remains uneasy, quietly repeating that he does not wish to kill. It soon turns out that the boy was only stunned and has crawled away during the celebration.

The animals hold a ceremony on the battlefield. A flag is raised, a gun that was found in the farmhouse is fired—once on the anniversary of the Rebellion in June and once on the anniversary of this battle. Snowball and Boxer are awarded newly created military decorations: "Animal Hero, First Class." The dead sheep is posthumously awarded "Animal Hero, Second Class." The battle is officially named the "Battle of the Cowshed," after the site of the decisive ambush.

Character Development

Chapter IV is defining for Snowball, who emerges as a capable military strategist and courageous leader. His study of Caesar's campaigns and his ability to translate theory into battlefield tactics reveal an intellectual resourcefulness that goes beyond the farm's daily governance. He is also unflinching in combat, personally engaging Jones despite being wounded, and his callous remark about dead human beings, hints at an ideological rigidity that mirrors the very tyranny the animals sought to overthrow.

Boxer provides the chapter's moral counterweight. His distress at believing he has killed the stable-lad exposes a deep-seated gentleness that contrasts sharply with his enormous physical power. While Snowball rationalizes violence as a political necessity, Boxer clings to a personal ethic that values life regardless of species. This tension between Boxer's conscience and the leadership's pragmatism foreshadows the exploitation he will later suffer.

Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick are sketched as distinct types of human corruption—one lazy and indifferent, the other shrewd and cruel—who represent the capitalist powers that will shadow the farm's future.

Themes and Motifs

Propaganda and counter-propaganda dominate the chapter's first half. The pigeons spreading "Beasts of England" and the humans circulating horror stories about Animal Farm mirror real-world information wars, where competing narratives shape public perception far more than facts. Neither side tells the complete truth; both manipulate to serve their interests.

The morality of revolutionary violence surfaces in the exchange between Snowball and Boxer. Snowball's maxim that "the only good human being is a dead one" echoes the dehumanizing rhetoric that revolutions often use to justify bloodshed, while Boxer's refusal to celebrate killing preserves the original humane impulse behind the rebellion. Orwell positions the reader to question whether violence, even in self-defence, corrodes the ideals it claims to protect.

The creation of military honours and ceremonies introduces the motif of institutional ritual as a tool of power. What begins as genuine celebration will, in later chapters, become a mechanism for consolidating authority and rewriting history.

Analysis

Orwell structures Chapter IV as a miniature war narrative, complete with strategic preparation, escalating action, and a decisive climax. His prose during the battle is notably brisk and cinematic—short sentences, rapid shifts in focus—recreating the chaos and speed of combat. This stands in deliberate contrast to the measured, almost bureaucratic tone of the political passages that frame the battle, reinforcing the gap between ideology and lived experience.

The chapter's allegorical framework maps onto early Soviet history. The Battle of the Cowshed parallels the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War (1918–1921), when Western powers attempted to crush the Bolshevik government. Snowball's role as military hero corresponds to Leon Trotsky, who organized the Red Army and led it to victory. The neighbouring farmers represent the capitalist nations whose hostility both threatened and, paradoxically, legitimized the new regime.

Orwell also deploys dramatic irony throughout. The reader can already see seeds of future corruption in the pigs' willingness to adopt human tactics, human weapons, and human categories of honour. The military decorations, the ceremonial gun, and the official naming of the battle are not merely celebrations—they are the first steps toward the construction of a mythology that the ruling class will later exploit. Each ritual innocently established here will eventually be weaponized to silence dissent and glorify those in power.

Questions about Chapter IV

1. What is the Battle of the Cowshed in Animal Farm?

2. How does Snowball prepare for and lead the defense of Animal Farm?
3. Why do the neighboring farmers try to retake Animal Farm?
4. What historical event does the Battle of the Cowshed represent?
5. What happens to Boxer during the Battle of the Cowshed?
6. How do the animals commemorate their victory in the Battle of the Cowshed?

Chapter 5

Chapter V opens with the quiet disappearance of Mollie, the vain white mare who has never embraced the revolution's demands of sacrifice and equality. Clover confronts her after finding sugar and ribbons hidden in her stall—luxuries that represent everything Animalism forbids. Mollie denies the charges unconvincingly, and within days she vanishes from the farm entirely. Pigeons later report seeing her between the shafts of a smart dogcart outside a public house, her coat freshly groomed and a man stroking her nose while feeding her sugar. The animals never speak of Mollie again.

With winter setting in, the pigs assume an ever-larger role in governance. Snowball and Napoleon disagree on virtually every issue. When one proposes increasing the barley crop, the other demands more oats. Each has a following among the other animals, and the Sunday meetings become arenas for their escalating rivalry. Snowball proves the more eloquent speaker, winning support through vivid speeches and elaborate plans. Napoleon, by contrast, is more effective at building loyalty between meetings, quietly canvassing individual animals and cultivating personal allegiance.

The central dispute crystallizes around Snowball's grand proposal to build a windmill on the knoll at the highest point of the farm. Snowball has spent weeks studying Mr. Jones's old books on mechanics and engineering, filling three notebooks with plans and technical drawings. He envisions a windmill that would generate electricity, power a circular saw, a chaff-cutter, and a mangle-slicer, and ultimately heat the stalls and provide hot and cold running water. With electricity, the animals could work only three days a week. The vision is intoxicating.

Napoleon opposes the windmill from the beginning. He offers no detailed counter-argument but insists that the farm's immediate priority must be increasing food production. He urinates on Snowball's plans to signal his contempt. The farm divides into two factions: those rallying behind Snowball's slogan "Vote for Snowball and the three-day week" and those following Napoleon's "Vote for Napoleon and the full manger." Benjamin the donkey alone refuses to align with either side, remarking cryptically that life will go on badly regardless—it has always been so.

The sheep, whom Napoleon has been coaching privately, learn to bleat "Four legs good, two legs bad" at strategic moments during the Sunday debates, drowning out Snowball's

speeches at their most persuasive points. Despite this interference, Snowball's eloquence and the sheer ambition of the windmill scheme seem likely to carry the day. On the Sunday when the vote is to be taken, Snowball rises and delivers a passionate, visionary speech about the transformation the windmill will bring. The animals are swept along by his words. Napoleon stands and offers only a brief, quiet rebuttal, saying the windmill is nonsense and that no one should vote for it.

Then, at a signal from Napoleon, a terrible sound fills the barn. Nine enormous dogs wearing brass-studded collars burst through the door and hurl themselves at Snowball. These are the puppies Napoleon took from Jessie and Bluebell at birth, raised in secret in the loft above the harness room. Snowball bolts from the barn, the dogs snapping at his heels. He races across the pasture, squeezes through a hole in the hedge, and is never seen on the farm again.

The animals are stunned and terrified. The dogs return to Napoleon's side, wagging their tails as they once wagged them for Jones. Napoleon mounts the raised platform where old Major first delivered his vision of rebellion and announces that the Sunday meetings are abolished. Henceforth, all decisions concerning the farm will be made by a special committee of pigs, presided over by himself. The animals will still assemble on Sundays, but only to receive their orders for the week and to salute the flag. There will be no more debates.

Four young porkers attempt to protest but are immediately silenced by the growling of the dogs and the bleating of the sheep, who launch into "Four legs good, two legs bad" and continue for fifteen minutes. Squealer is soon dispatched to explain the new arrangement. He assures the animals that Napoleon has taken on the extra burden of leadership purely as a sacrifice—that no one wants power for its own sake. He warns that without Napoleon's firm guidance, the animals might make wrong decisions and that Jones could return. "Surely, comrades," he asks, "you do not want Jones back?" This argument silences every objection.

Three weeks later, Napoleon announces through Squealer that the windmill will be built after all. The animals are confused, particularly since Napoleon had opposed the project so forcefully. Squealer explains that Napoleon had never actually been against the windmill—that, in fact, the plans were Napoleon's own idea, stolen by Snowball from Napoleon's private papers. Napoleon's apparent opposition, Squealer says, was merely a tactic—"tactics, comrades, tactics"—to rid the farm of the dangerous influence of Snowball. The animals vaguely recall events differently but accept Squealer's version, especially after Boxer declares, "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right," and adopts the personal maxim "Napoleon is always right."

Character Development

Napoleon reveals his full nature in this chapter, transforming from a background schemer into an overt dictator. His refusal to engage in genuine debate, his secret raising of the dogs

as a private military force, and his immediate abolition of democratic assemblies show that he has been planning this seizure of power from the beginning. His later adoption of the very windmill plan he denounced exposes a willingness to appropriate others' ideas once the originator has been eliminated.

Snowball, by contrast, represents the intellectual idealist destroyed by brute force. His windmill vision is genuinely transformative, and his speeches display both brilliance and sincerity. But his faith in persuasion and democratic process leaves him fatally vulnerable to an opponent who has no interest in debate. His expulsion marks the end of any pretense that Animal Farm is governed by consent.

Boxer adopts the maxim "Napoleon is always right," which seals his trajectory as the regime's most loyal and most exploited supporter. His willingness to substitute obedience for independent thought makes him both admirable in his devotion and tragic in his blindness.

Mollie functions as a minor but thematically important figure. Her defection represents those who opt out of political struggle entirely, choosing personal comfort over collective responsibility—and the revolution's inability to accommodate individual desire.

Themes and Motifs

The corruption of revolution reaches a decisive point. Napoleon's seizure of power demonstrates Orwell's central argument: that revolutions fought against tyranny can reproduce the very tyranny they opposed, not through slow erosion but through deliberate, calculated betrayal from within. The moment the dogs attack Snowball, the original principles of Animalism are effectively dead.

Language as a tool of control intensifies through Squealer's rhetorical manipulations. His ability to rewrite recent history—transforming Napoleon's opposition to the windmill into secret support, and Snowball's authorship into theft—shows how propaganda operates not by making lies believable but by making truth irrelevant. The sheep's chanting serves a parallel function, using noise to prevent thought.

The elimination of dissent emerges as a structural motif. The protests of the four young porkers are crushed instantly. The abolition of debate removes even the forum for disagreement. Power, Orwell suggests, sustains itself not by winning arguments but by ensuring arguments cannot take place.

Notable Passages

As Squealer justifies the abolition of Sunday meetings, he deploys the regime's most effective rhetorical weapon:

"Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?"

This question, which recurs throughout the novel, functions as the ultimate silencer. It reframes every criticism of Napoleon's rule as an endorsement of the old tyranny, trapping the animals in a false binary where the only alternative to obedience is a return to human enslavement. It is the totalitarian argument distilled to its purest form.

Boxer's response to Squealer's rewriting of the windmill's history is equally significant:

"If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right."

Combined with his second personal maxim, "Napoleon is always right," this moment captures the psychology of willing submission. Boxer does not lack intelligence so much as he lacks the will to distrust authority. His faith becomes the foundation on which the regime's legitimacy rests, and his eventual fate will be its most damning indictment.

Squealer's explanation of Napoleon's apparent reversal on the windmill introduces a word that will echo through the rest of the novel:

"Tactics, comrades, tactics!"

The word provides a blanket justification for any contradiction. By invoking strategy too sophisticated for ordinary animals to grasp, Squealer transforms inconsistency into evidence of superior wisdom, making it impossible to hold Napoleon accountable for anything he says or does.

Analysis

Orwell constructs Chapter V as the novel's structural hinge. Everything before it depicts a flawed but genuine experiment in self-governance; everything after it charts the consolidation of dictatorship. The chapter's pacing mirrors this shift: the slow opening with Mollie's departure gives way to the escalating tension of the windmill debate, which detonates in the sudden, violent expulsion of Snowball. The speed of the coup—dogs appearing, Snowball fleeing, Napoleon mounting the platform—emphasizes how quickly democratic institutions can collapse when confronted with organized force.

The allegorical parallels to Soviet history are precise. Snowball's expulsion maps onto Leon Trotsky's exile in 1929, engineered by Joseph Stalin after years of political manoeuvring. The dogs represent the NKVD, Stalin's secret police, raised in secrecy and loyal only to their master. Napoleon's adoption of the windmill parallels Stalin's embrace of rapid industrialization—a policy he had denounced when Trotsky proposed it. The sheep's chanting echoes the role of state media in drowning out dissent with repetitive slogans.

Orwell's use of dramatic irony is particularly effective in the chapter's final pages. The reader can see that Squealer's explanations are transparent fabrications, yet the animals accept them because the alternative—acknowledging that they are governed by a liar backed by force—is psychologically intolerable. This gap between what the reader perceives and what the characters accept creates the novel's distinctive atmosphere of mounting dread. The

tools of oppression are already fully assembled; the only question remaining is how far Napoleon will go in using them.

Questions about Chapter V

1. Why does Mollie leave Animal Farm in Chapter 5?
2. How does Napoleon expel Snowball from Animal Farm?
3. What is the windmill debate in Animal Farm Chapter 5?
4. Why does Napoleon reverse his position on the windmill?
5. What is the significance of Boxer's second maxim, "Napoleon is always right"?
6. How does Squealer justify Napoleon's actions to the other animals?

Chapter 6

Throughout the entire year following the rebellion, the animals labour with gruelling intensity. The construction of the windmill dominates their existence. Napoleon announces that the animals will now work on Sunday afternoons as well, making the workweek sixty hours long. This labour is nominally voluntary, but any animal who refuses will have their rations cut by half. Despite the punishing schedule, the animals persist, driven by Boxer's unflagging example. The enormous cart-horse adopts a second personal motto—"I will work harder"—and begins rising nearly an hour before everyone else to put in extra time at the quarry before the day's work begins.

The windmill presents immense technical challenges. The animals must break limestone into usable pieces, but they have no tools designed for the task. At first, they can find no way to split the massive boulders that litter the quarry. The solution eventually devised is to drag stones to the top of the quarry and let them fall, smashing into fragments on impact. This backbreaking process consumes the entire summer. The animals haul the broken stone down to the windmill site, where it is gradually assembled into walls. The work is slow, exhausting, and seemingly endless, yet the animals take pride in knowing that every stone is laid for their own benefit rather than for a human master.

As the year progresses, the farm begins to run short of essential supplies it cannot produce: iron for horseshoes, nails, string, dog biscuits, paraffin oil, and above all, the machinery needed to complete the windmill. Napoleon announces a new policy: Animal Farm will engage in trade with the neighbouring farms. The animals are deeply troubled. They recall—or believe they recall—that resolutions were passed in the early days of the rebellion forbidding all contact with humans, and particularly forbidding any engagement in trade or the use of money. Several of the animals begin to voice objections, but the dogs growl menacingly and the protest dies before it takes shape.

Napoleon arranges for a human solicitor from Willingdon named Mr. Whymper to act as intermediary between Animal Farm and the outside world. Whymper visits the farm every Monday to receive his instructions. Napoleon addresses the animals through Squealer, who

explains that the resolution against trade and human contact was never actually passed—it was a lie, probably traceable to Snowball, who invented the story to cause trouble. The animals are uncertain. They think they remember the resolution, but since Squealer insists so confidently that it never existed, they accept his version of events.

The pigs, who have already been making all decisions and living in somewhat greater comfort, now move into the farmhouse. The other animals recall dimly that a resolution had been passed in the earliest days forbidding this, but Squealer persuades them that the pigs need a quiet place in which to work. He argues that it would hardly do for the brains of the farm to live in conditions unworthy of their intellectual labour. No one argues further, especially after Squealer invokes the ever-present threat: "Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?"

Even more troubling, it emerges that the pigs are sleeping in the farmhouse beds. Clover, the maternal mare who tries to be faithful to the original principles, asks Muriel to read her the Fourth Commandment from the barn wall. Muriel reads it aloud: "No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets." Clover does not remember the words "with sheets" being part of the original commandment, but since the words are plainly written on the wall, she accepts that her memory must be faulty. Squealer arrives shortly after to explain that a bed is simply a place to sleep—a pile of straw in a stall is a bed, after all—and that the commandment was always directed against sheets, which are a human invention. The pigs, he assures everyone, have removed the sheets and sleep between blankets. This, naturally, is perfectly acceptable.

In November, a violent storm strikes the farm. Tiles are blown from the barn roof, an elm tree is uprooted, and the flagstaff is knocked down. When the animals venture out the next morning, they discover that the windmill has been reduced to rubble. The walls they spent an entire year building lie in a heap of shattered stone. The animals stare in dismay. Napoleon, however, does not hesitate. He sniffs the ground near the ruins and announces that Snowball is responsible. The exiled pig, Napoleon declares, crept onto the farm during the night and deliberately destroyed the windmill out of pure malice. Napoleon pronounces a solemn death sentence on Snowball and offers a reward to any animal who captures him. He then rallies the devastated animals, declaring that they will begin rebuilding the windmill immediately. "Forward, comrades!" he cries. "Long live the windmill! Long live Animal Farm!"

Character Development

Napoleon consolidates power with increasing sophistication in this chapter. His decision to trade with humans represents a decisive break from the revolution's founding principles, yet he manages the transition smoothly by combining Squealer's rhetorical skill with the silent menace of his personal guard dogs. He never addresses the animals' objections directly; instead, he ensures that dissent is smothered before it can organize. His response to the

windmill's destruction reveals a leader who instinctively understands the political utility of an external enemy—blaming Snowball redirects the animals' frustration away from their own exhaustion and toward a convenient scapegoat.

Squealer reaches new heights of manipulative eloquence. His technique is no longer limited to persuasion; he now actively rewrites history, flatly denying that certain resolutions were ever passed. His rhetorical formula—confident assertion, appeal to the animals' self-doubt, and the closing threat of Jones's return—proves devastatingly effective.

Boxer continues to embody selfless, uncritical devotion. His willingness to work himself to the point of collapse is both admirable and deeply troubling, as it makes him the ideal subject for exploitation by those clever enough to harness his loyalty.

Themes and Motifs

The rewriting of history emerges as a central instrument of control. The altered commandment—"No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets"—is the chapter's most chilling moment, demonstrating that those who control the written record control reality itself. The animals' inability to trust their own memories leaves them defenceless against Squealer's revisions. This motif parallels the Soviet regime's systematic falsification of historical documents and photographs.

The scapegoat mechanism is fully activated with Napoleon's accusation against Snowball. By attributing the windmill's destruction to sabotage rather than structural failure or natural forces, Napoleon transforms a demoralizing setback into a rallying point. The absent Snowball becomes an all-purpose explanation for anything that goes wrong—a device that mirrors Stalin's use of Trotsky as a perpetual enemy of the state.

The theme of labour exploitation intensifies. The animals work harder than they ever did under Jones, yet the surplus of their labour flows upward to the pigs, who enjoy the farmhouse, the beds, and the privileges of the managerial class they have become.

Notable Passages

When the animals question whether a resolution against trade was passed in the early days, Squealer deploys his most brazen technique:

"He assured them that the resolution against engaging in trade and using money had never been passed, or even suggested. It was pure imagination, probably traceable in the beginning to lies circulated by Snowball."

This passage captures the essence of totalitarian gaslighting—the outright denial of documented fact, delivered with such authority that the victims question their own recollections rather than the speaker's honesty.

The discovery of the altered commandment is reported with devastating understatement:

"No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets."

The two added words represent an entire philosophy of corruption. By appending a qualifier, the pigs preserve the appearance of law while hollowing out its substance. Orwell demonstrates that tyranny does not always abolish rules—it reinterprets them.

Napoleon's reaction to the ruined windmill reveals his instinct for political theatre:

"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!"

The rhetorical question, the dramatic pause, and the thundering accusation are calculated to channel collective grief into collective rage. Napoleon offers not evidence but certainty, and the animals, desperate for an explanation, accept it.

Analysis

Orwell structures Chapter VI around a series of escalating betrayals, each cushioned by a layer of justification that makes resistance psychologically difficult. The progression is deliberate: voluntary Sunday labour becomes mandatory through economic coercion, trade with humans is introduced as practical necessity, the farmhouse becomes a workspace for the pigs, and the beds become acceptable once the commandment is discovered to have always permitted them. Each step is small enough to seem reasonable in isolation, yet the cumulative effect is a wholesale reversal of the revolution's principles.

The literary technique of the altered commandment is Orwell's most potent satirical device. It operates on multiple levels: as a plot mechanism, it shows how the pigs maintain the illusion of legality; as allegory, it mirrors the Soviet constitution's guarantees of freedoms that existed only on paper; as commentary on language itself, it demonstrates that meaning can be destroyed not by removing words but by adding them. The phrase "with sheets" is simultaneously absurd and terrifying in its implications.

Orwell also uses the windmill as a multivalent symbol. It represents industrialization, collective aspiration, and the regime's legitimacy. Its destruction—whether by storm or structural inadequacy—threatens all three. Napoleon's immediate pivot to blaming Snowball reveals a leader who understands that narrative control matters more than material reality. The windmill can be rebuilt; what cannot be permitted is any interpretation of its collapse that reflects poorly on the leadership. This dynamic—failure reframed as sabotage—is one of Orwell's sharpest observations about authoritarian governance.

Questions about Chapter VI

1. What happens in Chapter 6 of Animal Farm?
2. Which commandment is changed in Chapter 6 of Animal Farm?
3. Why does Napoleon blame Snowball for the windmill's destruction?
4. Who is Mr. Whymper in Animal Farm?

5. How does Squealer justify the pigs' behaviour in Chapter 6?
6. What is the significance of the windmill in Chapter 6 of Animal Farm?

Chapter 7

Chapter VII opens in the depths of a bitter winter. The animals labour to rebuild the windmill, hauling stones through frozen mud and cutting winds. Food grows desperately short. The corn ration is reduced again and again, and the potato crop, which was supposed to supplement the grain, has rotted in the clamps due to insufficient covering. Starvation looms over the farm, though Napoleon takes elaborate measures to conceal this reality from the outside world. He orders the almost-empty grain bins to be filled to the brim with sand and topped with a thin layer of grain. When Mr. Whymper, the human solicitor who serves as Animal Farm's intermediary with the outside world, makes his weekly visit, he is shown these bins and leaves convinced the farm is prospering. Selected sheep are coached to remark loudly, within Whymper's hearing, that rations have been increased.

In January, Napoleon announces that the hens must surrender their eggs for sale through Whymper. The farm needs four hundred eggs a week to pay for the grain and meal necessary to keep everyone alive until summer. The hens are outraged. Surrendering their eggs feels to them like murder, and they mount the first organized act of rebellion since the expulsion of Jones. Led by three young Black Minorca pullets, they fly up to the rafters and lay their eggs from the height so that the eggs smash on the floor. Napoleon responds with ruthless efficiency: he orders the hens' food rations to be stopped entirely. Any animal caught giving so much as a grain of corn to a hen will be punished by death. The dogs enforce the blockade. After five days of this, the hens capitulate. They return to their nesting boxes and resume normal laying. Nine hens have died during the standoff; the official account attributes their deaths to coccidiosis.

Meanwhile, Napoleon intensifies his campaign against Snowball. Squealer now claims that Snowball was never the hero of the Battle of the Cowshed. In fact, Squealer insists, Snowball was openly fighting on Jones's side. The bravery that the animals remember—Snowball's charge, his wound from Jones's gun—was all part of a deliberate scheme to lure the animals into a trap. Only Napoleon's strategic counterattack at the critical moment saved the farm. When Boxer objects, saying "I do not believe that. Snowball fought bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed. I saw him myself," Squealer fixes him with a piercing look and informs him that the evidence has been found among Snowball's secret documents. Napoleon himself has stated that Snowball was Jones's agent from the very beginning. Boxer, unwilling to question Napoleon, retreats to his personal maxim: "Napoleon is always right."

Then comes the most terrifying event in the novel so far. Napoleon summons all the animals to the yard. His nine enormous dogs, wearing brass-studded collars, flank him on every side. Without warning, the dogs lunge at four young pigs—the same four who had previously

voiced mild protests when Napoleon abolished the Sunday meetings. The dogs drag them forward by their ears, squealing in pain and terror. When Boxer tries to defend them by pinning a dog under his hoof, Napoleon orders Boxer to release it. The four pigs, trembling and bleeding, are forced to confess that they have been in secret contact with Snowball and have conspired with him to destroy the windmill. They further confess to having entered into an agreement with Mr. Frederick to hand over Animal Farm to the humans. When they finish their confessions, the dogs tear their throats out on the spot.

The executions do not stop there. Three hens who were ringleaders of the egg rebellion step forward and confess that Snowball appeared to them in a dream and incited them to disobey Napoleon's orders. They are slaughtered. A goose confesses to having secretly hoarded six ears of corn during the previous harvest. He is killed. A sheep confesses to having urinated in the drinking pool, claiming Snowball told her to do it. She and two other sheep are executed. When the killing is done, a pile of corpses lies at Napoleon's feet, and the air is thick with the smell of blood. Nothing like this has happened since Jones was expelled.

The surviving animals creep away in a huddle, shaken to their core. Boxer, struggling to comprehend what has occurred, concludes that the fault must lie in themselves: "I do not understand it. I would not have believed that such things could happen on our farm. It must be due to some fault in ourselves. The solution, as I see it, is to work harder." He sets off at a trot toward the quarry.

Clover makes her way to the knoll overlooking the farm. She gazes out at the fields, the windmill under construction, and the distant trees. Her thoughts are heavy with grief. This is not what they had looked forward to on the night of Old Major's speech. They had dreamed of a society of equals, free from hunger and the whip—not a place where confessions and executions happen under the watch of a ring of snarling dogs. Yet she does not voice any of this aloud. She does not question Napoleon. Instead, the animals gather together on the hillside and sing "Beasts of England" over and over, slowly and mournfully.

Squealer soon appears with an announcement. By special decree of Napoleon, "Beasts of England" is abolished. The song of the rebellion is no longer needed, he explains, because the rebellion is now complete. From this point forward, the song is forbidden. A poet pig named Minimus has composed a replacement, a bland hymn that begins "Animal Farm, Animal Farm, / Never through me shalt thou come to harm." The animals dutifully learn it, but none of them feel that it comes anywhere near "Beasts of England."

Character Development

Napoleon completes his transformation into a full dictator. His orchestration of the purge—the staged confessions, the public executions, the use of terror to silence dissent—reveals a leader who now rules entirely through fear rather than consent. His willingness to starve the

hens to death and execute animals who confess to trivial offenses demonstrates that power, not ideology, drives every decision.

Boxer reaches a heartbreaking crossroads. His instinct to defend the four pigs shows his innate decency, but his retreat into "Napoleon is always right" and his conclusion that the solution is simply to work harder reveal the tragic limitations of loyalty without critical thought. He cannot reconcile what he has witnessed with what he believes, so he buries his confusion in labour.

Clover emerges as the chapter's moral centre. Her wordless grief on the hillside is the closest any animal comes to genuine dissent. She sees clearly that the farm has betrayed its founding ideals, yet she lacks both the language and the courage to articulate her opposition. Her silence is the silence of millions under totalitarian rule—those who know something is wrong but cannot find a way to say it.

Themes and Motifs

The purge as political theatre is the chapter's dominant motif. The forced confessions echo the Moscow Show Trials of 1936–1938, in which Stalin's former allies publicly confessed to absurd conspiracies before being executed. Orwell reproduces the essential mechanism: once an atmosphere of terror has been established, victims will confess to anything, and each confession validates the regime's narrative that enemies lurk everywhere.

The rewriting of history escalates dramatically. Snowball's transformation from war hero to traitor is now nearly complete, and the animals' acceptance of this revision shows how collective memory can be overwritten when no independent record exists. The abolition of "Beasts of England" extends this erasure to culture itself—by eliminating the song that carried the revolution's original ideals, Napoleon ensures that even the emotional memory of what the animals once hoped for begins to fade.

The gap between appearance and reality runs through every scene, from the sand-filled grain bins to the official diagnosis of coccidiosis to the confessions themselves. The chapter insists that in a totalitarian system, truth becomes whatever the leader declares it to be.

Notable Passages

After the executions, Boxer expresses the bewilderment of the common citizen confronted by state terror:

"I do not understand it. I would not have believed that such things could happen on our farm. It must be due to some fault in ourselves. The solution, as I see it, is to work harder."

This passage captures one of Orwell's most devastating insights: that the victims of tyranny often blame themselves rather than the system. Boxer's instinct to respond to horror with harder work ensures that the regime benefits even from the suffering it inflicts.

Clover's silent reflection on the hillside, though rendered in indirect thought rather than dialogue, articulates the novel's emotional climax:

"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, every animal working according to his capacity…not this."

The passage is all the more powerful because Clover never speaks these thoughts aloud. The gap between her inner knowledge and her outward compliance is the essence of life under totalitarianism.

Squealer's justification for abolishing "Beasts of England" seals the chapter's logic of control:

"In Beasts of England we expressed our longing for a better society in days to come. But that better society has now been established."

The cynicism is breathtaking: by declaring the utopia already achieved, the regime makes any further aspiration—or any criticism of the present—an act of treason.

Analysis

Chapter VII represents the structural and emotional turning point of Animal Farm. Everything before it can be read as a gradual accumulation of warning signs; everything after it unfolds as consequence. Orwell shifts his narrative mode from political satire into something closer to tragedy. The brisk, wry tone of the earlier chapters gives way to passages of sustained horror and quiet grief, particularly in the execution scene and Clover's vigil on the hillside.

Orwell employs a technique of accumulative confession during the purge, listing each animal's crime in flat, matter-of-fact prose that mirrors the bureaucratic language of real show trials. The effect is chilling precisely because the narrator does not editorialize. Each successive confession is more absurd than the last—a goose hoarding six ears of corn, a sheep urinating in the drinking pool on Snowball's instructions—yet the executions proceed with mechanical regularity. The absence of authorial commentary forces the reader to supply the moral judgment that the animals themselves cannot articulate.

The chapter also demonstrates Orwell's sophisticated use of focalization. By filtering the post-execution scene through Clover's consciousness, he gives emotional weight to a character who has no political voice. Her inability to express her grief in words—Orwell notes that she would have put her thoughts into words "if she could have found the words"—is itself a political statement about the silencing power of authoritarian regimes. The substitution of Minimus's hollow anthem for "Beasts of England" enacts at the level of culture what the executions enact at the level of bodies: the systematic elimination of everything that once gave the revolution meaning.

Questions about Chapter VII

1. What happens in Chapter 7 of Animal Farm?
2. Why do the hens rebel in Chapter 7 of Animal Farm?
3. What are the confessions and executions in Chapter 7 of Animal Farm?
4. How is the history of the Battle of the Cowshed rewritten in Chapter 7?
5. Why is "Beasts of England" abolished in Chapter 7 of Animal Farm?
6. What is the significance of Clover’s thoughts at the end of Chapter 7?

Chapter 8

A few days after the executions, some of the animals recall that the Sixth Commandment states, "No animal shall kill another animal." When Clover asks Muriel to read the Commandment painted on the barn wall, however, it now reads: "No animal shall kill another animal without cause." The animals accept that the killings were justified, convincing themselves they must have forgotten the last two words.

Napoleon withdraws further from daily farm life. He now eats alone in the farmhouse, takes his meals from the Crown Derby dinner service, and appears in public only on rare occasions, attended by his dogs. He is referred to as "our Leader, Comrade Napoleon" and accumulates an ever-expanding catalogue of titles: Father of All Animals, Terror of Mankind, Protector of the Sheep-fold, and Ducklings' Friend. Every success on the farm—every good harvest, every overflowing water trough—is attributed to his personal leadership. Squealer reads out figures proving that production of every class of foodstuff has increased by two hundred, three hundred, or even five hundred percent. A poem by the pig poet Minimus, titled "Comrade Napoleon," is inscribed on the barn wall opposite the Seven Commandments, with a portrait of Napoleon in profile painted above it.

Meanwhile, Napoleon is negotiating the sale of a pile of timber to one of the neighbouring farms. The timber has been stacked since Jones's time, and both Mr. Pilkington of Foxwood and Mr. Frederick of Pinchfield want to buy it. Napoleon plays the two men against each other, appearing at times to favour one and then the other. Whenever Napoleon seems to lean toward Pilkington, Snowball is said to be hiding on Frederick's farm; whenever negotiations tilt toward Frederick, Snowball is revealed to have been at Foxwood all along. During this period, three hens confess that Snowball appeared to them in a dream and urged them to disobey Napoleon's orders. They are executed immediately.

By autumn, Napoleon has apparently settled his negotiations with Pilkington. He denounces Frederick in the strongest terms; Squealer warns the animals that Frederick is planning an imminent attack and that agents from Pinchfield have been poisoning the water supply. Then, abruptly, everything changes. Napoleon announces that he has been secretly

negotiating with Frederick all along and that the timber is to be sold to Pinchfield. The earlier rumours about Frederick are dismissed, and the animals are now told that Snowball has never been to Frederick's farm at all—the story was fabricated by Snowball himself to confuse them.

Frederick pays for the timber in five-pound notes, and Napoleon, deeply pleased, displays the banknotes to the assembled animals. Within days, however, it emerges that the notes are forgeries. Napoleon pronounces the death sentence on Frederick and warns the animals to expect the worst.

The attack comes swiftly. Frederick and fourteen men, armed with half a dozen guns, march through the five-barred gate. The animals cannot withstand the gunfire as they did at the Battle of the Cowshed. They retreat, and several animals are wounded. The men reach the windmill. The animals watch in horror as Frederick's men drill a hole at the base of the structure and pack it with blasting powder. Two men light a match and run for cover. A tremendous explosion tears the windmill to rubble. The animals are stunned into silence—two years of grinding labour destroyed in an instant.

Rage overcomes their fear. They charge the men with a fury they have never shown before. The fighting is savage. Nearly every animal is wounded, and several are killed outright, including two geese and three sheep. Even Boxer is struck by pellets from Jones's gun, which Frederick's men have brought, and blood streams from his knee. But the animals press forward relentlessly, and the men, unnerved by the ferocity of the counterattack, begin to retreat. The dogs seize their ankles as they flee, and they scramble over the hedge and escape. The Battle of the Windmill is over.

Despite the devastation, Squealer, who was not present during the fighting, arrives to declare it a glorious victory. He points out that the enemy has been driven from their soil. When the animals object that the windmill has been destroyed, Squealer counters that they have won back the very ground on which the windmill stood. A victory celebration is held: the gun is fired, the flag is raised, and songs are sung. Napoleon himself addresses the animals from the farmhouse steps.

A few days later, the pigs discover a case of whisky in the farmhouse cellar. That night, loud singing emanates from the building, including, strangely, a rendition of "Beasts of England." In the morning, the farm is eerily quiet. A rumour spreads that Napoleon is dying. Squealer emerges, ashen-faced, to announce that Comrade Napoleon has made a deathbed decree: any animal who drinks alcohol shall be punished by death. By evening, however, Napoleon has recovered. By the following morning, Squealer is seen with a lantern and a paintbrush near the barn wall in the early dawn. The Fifth Commandment now reads: "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess."

Character Development

Napoleon completes his transformation into a totalitarian dictator in this chapter. He surrounds himself with titles, eats from fine china, rarely appears in public, and manipulates the timber negotiations with cunning dishonesty—only to be outwitted by Frederick's forged banknotes. His drunken night in the farmhouse, followed by the hasty alteration of the Fifth Commandment, reveals both his hypocrisy and the brazenness with which he rewrites the rules to suit his appetites. The brief rumour of his death exposes the regime's fragility: without the singular leader, there is only confusion.

Squealer reaches new heights of rhetorical absurdity. His declaration that the destruction of the windmill constitutes a "victory" because the animals recaptured the land on which it stood is a masterclass in doublethink, demonstrating how propaganda can invert the meaning of catastrophic loss. Boxer, wounded and bleeding, continues fighting without hesitation, embodying the working class's capacity for sacrifice even when that sacrifice benefits a regime indifferent to their suffering.

Themes and Motifs

The alteration of the Commandments becomes the chapter's central motif. Both the Sixth and Fifth Commandments are amended with qualifying phrases that retroactively justify the pigs' behaviour. This incremental revision of foundational law mirrors how authoritarian regimes gradually erode civil protections—not by abolishing them outright, but by adding exceptions that render them meaningless.

The cult of personality surrounding Napoleon reaches full expression. The extravagant titles, the poem by Minimus, and the painted portrait on the barn wall echo the propaganda apparatus of Stalinist Russia, where every achievement was credited to the leader and every failure blamed on saboteurs. Orwell demonstrates that the cult of personality is not merely vanity—it is a political tool that replaces critical thought with devotion.

The futility of labour under tyranny is crystallized in the windmill's destruction. The animals have poured years of backbreaking work into the structure, only to see it obliterated in seconds. The swift pivot from devastation to "victory" underscores the regime's willingness to demand limitless sacrifice while offering nothing in return but manipulated language.

Notable Passages

After the explosion destroys the windmill, the animals' response captures the moment their grief becomes fury:

"It was as though the windmill had never been."

This deceptively simple sentence carries the full weight of two years' labour, hope, and sacrifice reduced to nothing. It also foreshadows Squealer's subsequent propaganda: if the

windmill "never was," then its destruction costs nothing, and any outcome can be reframed as victory.

Minimus's poem praising Napoleon includes the verse:

"Thou are the giver of / All that thy creatures love."

The language parodies religious devotion, elevating Napoleon from political leader to a quasi-divine figure. Orwell uses the poem to show how totalitarian regimes co-opt artistic expression, transforming literature into an instrument of worship rather than truth.

Squealer's reaction to the animals' dismay after the battle distils the logic of authoritarian propaganda:

"Do you not see what we have done? The enemy was in occupation of this very ground that we stand upon. And now—thanks to the leadership of Comrade Napoleon—we have won every inch of it back again!"

This passage epitomizes the rhetorical strategy of redefining defeat as victory. The windmill is rubble, animals lie dead, and yet the narrative insists on triumph. It is propaganda at its most audacious—and, for the exhausted animals, at its most effective.

Analysis

Orwell constructs Chapter VIII as a study in escalating absurdity. The cult of personality, the diplomatic double-dealing, the forged banknotes, the devastating battle, and the drunken night in the farmhouse pile upon one another in a rhythm that is simultaneously comic and horrifying. Each episode pushes the regime's hypocrisy further into the open, yet the animals' capacity for resistance diminishes with each revelation.

The allegorical framework is especially dense in this chapter. Napoleon's negotiations with Pilkington and Frederick mirror Stalin's diplomatic manoeuvring between the Western democracies and Nazi Germany, culminating in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and Hitler's subsequent betrayal with Operation Barbarossa in 1941. Frederick's forged banknotes represent the broken promises of the non-aggression treaty, while the Battle of the Windmill parallels the devastating German invasion of the Soviet Union and the enormous Soviet casualties suffered before the invaders were finally repelled.

Orwell deploys structural irony through the Commandment alterations. The reader watches the same words change meaning before the animals' eyes, yet the animals accept each revision because their memory is weak and their trust in authority remains intact. This pattern—alteration, confusion, acceptance—is Orwell's anatomy of how populations consent to their own oppression. The additions of "without cause" and "to excess" do not merely change rules; they destroy the very concept of inviolable principle, establishing that no law is beyond the reach of those who enforce it.

The chapter's final image—Squealer with his lantern and paintbrush, creeping along the barn wall in the predawn darkness—is among the novel's most memorable. It reduces the grand machinery of ideological control to a single, furtive figure altering words under cover of night, exposing the shabby reality behind totalitarian power.

Questions about Chapter VIII

1. What commandments are altered in Chapter VIII of Animal Farm?
2. What happens during the Battle of the Windmill?
3. Why does Frederick pay Napoleon with forged banknotes?
4. How does Napoleon's cult of personality develop in Chapter VIII?
5. Why does Squealer call the Battle of the Windmill a victory?
6. What historical events does Chapter VIII of Animal Farm parallel?

Chapter 9

Boxer's split hoof, sustained during the Battle of the Windmill, takes a long time to heal. Despite his injury, he refuses to take even a single day away from the windmill reconstruction. He rises earlier than any other animal and works later into the evening, dragging loads of stone up the quarry slope on willpower alone. The other animals admire his determination, but Clover and Benjamin urge him to take care of his health. Boxer dismisses their concern. He has set his mind on two goals: to see the windmill well underway before he reaches the age of twelve, and to accumulate a good store of stone. Retirement is his private dream. Under the original principles of Animalism, animals were to retire at twelve—horses and pigs at twelve, dogs at nine, cows at fourteen—and receive generous pensions. No animal has yet retired, but the idea sustains Boxer through his pain.

Life on the farm grows harder for all animals except the pigs and dogs. Rations are "readjusted" downward—Squealer's preferred euphemism for "reduced"—yet the pigs and dogs continue to eat well. Squealer produces endless columns of figures demonstrating that production has increased in every category: oats, hay, turnips. The animals, who cannot remember what conditions were like before the Rebellion, have no basis for comparison. They suspect they are hungrier than they were under Jones, but the statistics say otherwise, and the statistics are read aloud every Sunday morning.

Thirty-one young pigs are born that spring, all sired by Napoleon. He orders a schoolroom to be built for their education and personally oversees their instruction. The young pigs are discouraged from playing with the other animals' young. A new rule is introduced: when a pig and any other animal meet on a path, the other animal must step aside. All pigs, regardless of rank, now enjoy the privilege of wearing green ribbons on their tails on Sundays. The farm has a successful year in some respects—two fields are sown with barley,

and it is rumoured that every pig will receive a daily ration of beer. A brewery is set up in the farmhouse kitchen.

The farm is proclaimed a Republic, and an election is held for President. There is only one candidate—Napoleon—who is elected unanimously. On the same day, new evidence is said to have been discovered regarding Snowball's collaboration with Jones. It is now revealed that Snowball did not merely attempt to betray the animals at the Battle of the Cowshed, as previously claimed, but that he openly fought on Jones's side, charging into battle with the words "Long live Humanity!" on his lips. The wound on his back, which the animals had always believed was inflicted by Jones's gun, was in fact made by Napoleon's own teeth.

Around this time, Moses the raven reappears on the farm after an absence of several years. He is entirely unchanged. He still does no work and still speaks, with the same fervent conviction, about Sugar-candy Mountain—the paradise beyond the clouds where all animals go when they die. There, it is Sunday seven days a week, clover is in season the year round, and lump sugar and linseed cake grow on the hedges. Many of the animals believe him, reasoning that their present lives are so miserable that another world must surely exist somewhere. The pigs declare contemptuously that Moses's stories are lies, yet they allow him to remain on the farm and even give him a daily gill of beer.

Boxer's lung gives out in midsummer. He is dragging a load of stone to the windmill when he staggers, falls to his knees, and cannot rise. Blood trickles from his mouth. The animals rush to his side. Boxer manages to whisper that his lung has gone and that he does not think he can go on. Clover and Benjamin stay with him. Squealer arrives, expressing Napoleon's deep concern, and announces that Napoleon has arranged for Boxer to be treated at the veterinary hospital in Willingdon.

Two days later, a van arrives to take Boxer away. The animals gather to say goodbye. Benjamin, who rarely shows emotion, suddenly becomes agitated. For the first and only time in the novel, he breaks into a run, braying at the top of his lungs. He calls the animals to come quickly and read the writing on the side of the van. The lettering reads: "Alfred Simmonds, Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler, Willingdon. Dealer in Hides and Bone-Meal." The animals cry out in horror, begging Boxer to get out. Boxer hears them and tries to kick his way free, but his strength has left him. The van picks up speed and carries him away. He is never seen again.

Three days later, Squealer addresses the farm. He claims that Boxer died peacefully in the hospital at Willingdon, praising the excellent care he received. The van, Squealer explains, had previously belonged to a horse slaughterer but was purchased by the veterinary surgeon, who had simply not yet repainted it. The animals are enormously relieved to hear this explanation. Napoleon himself delivers a brief speech in Boxer's honour, urging the animals to adopt Boxer's two maxims—"I will work harder" and "Comrade Napoleon is always right"—as their own.

Shortly afterward, the farmhouse receives a large wooden crate from the grocer in Willingdon. That night, the sounds of raucous singing emanate from the farmhouse, and the next day a rumour spreads that the pigs have somehow acquired the money to buy themselves a case of whisky. No explanation is ever offered for where the money came from.

Character Development

Boxer reaches the end of his arc in this chapter, and his fate is the novel's most devastating episode. His unshakeable faith in Napoleon and his willingness to work past the point of physical collapse make him a tragic figure: the ideal citizen of a corrupt state, whose loyalty is repaid with betrayal. His whispered words after his collapse—that his lung has gone—mark the only moment in the novel where Boxer's relentless optimism falters, and it is too late for self-knowledge to save him.

Benjamin undergoes his most significant transformation. The cynical donkey who has always refused to act on his intelligence finally breaks into a desperate run, reading the van's lettering aloud in an anguished attempt to save his closest friend. His outburst arrives too late, and it crystallizes one of Orwell's sharpest indictments: passive wisdom is no better than active ignorance when it comes too late to prevent injustice.

Squealer delivers what is perhaps his most audacious lie, explaining away the horse slaughterer's van with a story so transparently false that it succeeds only because the animals need it to be true. His performance demonstrates the final stage of propaganda: when the audience becomes complicit in its own deception.

Themes and Motifs

The betrayal of the faithful is the chapter's central theme. Boxer has given everything—his strength, his health, his blind loyalty—and receives only exploitation in return. Orwell draws a direct parallel to the Soviet Union's treatment of its working class, whose labour built the state and whose suffering was rewarded with empty slogans and broken promises. The pigs' purchase of whisky with the proceeds of Boxer's sale to the knacker is the novel's most damning image of ruling-class parasitism.

Religion as social control appears through Moses the raven and his tales of Sugar-candy Mountain. The pigs publicly deny his stories but privately tolerate—and even subsidize—his presence, recognizing that the promise of an afterlife pacifies animals who might otherwise rebel against present misery. This mirrors the Soviet regime's complex relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church: officially atheist, yet willing to permit religion when it served the function of quietening social unrest.

The manipulation of memory continues with the latest revision of Snowball's history. The narrative of Snowball's treachery has now expanded to the point of absurdity—he was not merely a traitor but an open enemy who fought alongside Jones. Each revision stretches

credulity further, yet the animals accept each new version because they can no longer distinguish what they witnessed from what they have been told.

Notable Passages

When Benjamin reads the side of the van carrying Boxer away, the moment represents the shattering of his lifelong passivity:

"Alfred Simmonds, Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler, Willingdon. Dealer in Hides and Bone-Meal. Do you not understand what that means? They are taking Boxer to the knacker's!"

This is the only time in the novel that Benjamin uses his literacy to intervene in events. The tragedy lies in the futility: he has always been capable of seeing through the pigs' lies, but his refusal to speak until this moment means his intelligence serves only to confirm a horror he is powerless to prevent.

Squealer's explanation of the van encapsulates the regime's approach to inconvenient truths:

"The van had previously been the property of the knacker, and had been bought by the veterinary surgeon, who had not yet painted the old name out."

The explanation is absurd on its face, yet the animals accept it because the alternative—that their leaders sold a dying comrade for whisky money—is too terrible to contemplate. Orwell shows that the most effective lies are those that offer emotional refuge from unbearable realities.

Napoleon's eulogy for Boxer reveals the regime's final appropriation of its victim:

"He had made it his final wish, said Squealer, that 'Forward, Comrades! ... Forward in the name of the Rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right.' Those were his very last words, comrades."

The fabricated deathbed scene transforms Boxer from a living being into a propaganda tool. Even in death, he is made to serve the regime, his memory conscripted into endorsing the very system that destroyed him.

Analysis

Chapter IX is the emotional climax of Animal Farm, and Orwell constructs it with devastating precision. The chapter's power derives from the gap between what the reader understands and what the animals are willing to accept. Every reader recognizes that Boxer is being sent to the knacker; every reader sees through Squealer's explanation of the van. The horror is not in the deception itself but in the animals' acceptance of it—their willingness to believe because belief is less painful than knowledge.

Orwell employs dramatic irony as his primary literary weapon. The reader watches Boxer's doom approach with the inevitability of a closing trap: his injured hoof, his failing lung, Napoleon's "concern," the van with its damning inscription. Each element is visible from far off, yet none of the animals—except Benjamin, too late—assembles the pieces. This structure mirrors the experience of watching a totalitarian state consume its citizens: the pattern is visible, but the victims cannot or will not see it.

The allegorical dimension operates on multiple levels. Boxer's fate represents the Soviet working class, ground down by Five-Year Plans and discarded when no longer productive. Moses the raven allegorizes organized religion, tolerated by a nominally atheist regime because otherworldly hope suppresses this-worldly resistance. The sham election—one candidate, unanimous result—mirrors Soviet electoral practice with surgical precision.

Structurally, Orwell builds the chapter around a series of contrasts and juxtapositions. Boxer's selfless labour is set against the pigs' expanding privileges. The animals' hunger is set against Squealer's rising statistics. The promise of retirement is set against the reality of the knacker's van. And the chapter's final detail—the case of whisky delivered to the farmhouse the night after Boxer's departure—requires no commentary. The connection between the van and the crate is left for the reader to draw, and the silence is more damning than any accusation Orwell could have written.

Questions about Chapter IX

1. What happens to Boxer in Chapter IX of Animal Farm?
2. Why do the pigs allow Moses the raven to return in Chapter IX?
3. What does Boxer's death symbolize in Animal Farm?
4. How does Squealer explain the writing on the van that takes Boxer away?
5. What is Sugar-candy Mountain in Animal Farm?
6. Why is the farm declared a Republic in Chapter IX and what is significant about the election?

Chapter 10

Years pass. The seasons turn, and time erases much of what the animals once knew. Muriel, Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher are dead. Jones, too, has died—drunk, in an obscure corner of the country. Many of the animals now on the farm have no memory of the Rebellion at all; they have only heard of it second-hand. Even Clover is old now, well past the retiring age that was once promised but never granted. Benjamin alone is largely unchanged, a little greyer around the muzzle, a little more taciturn, but otherwise the same stubborn, cynical donkey he has always been.

The farm is more prosperous than in Jones’s day. Two additional fields have been purchased from Mr. Pilkington, and the windmill has at last been completed. It is not used for generating electricity, as Snowball once envisioned, but for milling corn—a handsome profit. A second windmill is under construction. The farm owns a threshing machine and a hay elevator. New buildings have gone up. Whymper has acquired a dogcart for himself. Yet the ordinary animals—the horses, the cows, the hens, the sheep—live no better than they did under Jones. They work as hard, eat as little, and sleep on the same bare floors. The luxury that the Rebellion was supposed to bring has materialized only for the pigs and the dogs.

Squealer takes the sheep aside to a secluded piece of waste ground at the far end of the farm. For a full week, the sheep remain there, out of sight. When they return, on a pleasant evening as the animals are finishing work, a shrill whinnying from the yard draws everyone's attention. The animals stare in astonishment: a pig is walking across the yard on his hind legs. It is Squealer. Before the shock can settle, a long file of pigs emerges from the farmhouse door, every one of them walking upright. Some walk better than others; one or two are slightly unsteady; but all maintain their balance successfully. Finally, Napoleon himself appears, walking majestically on two legs, a whip gripped in his trotter.

A stunned silence falls over the yard. The animals are terrified. They would protest, they would speak—but the dogs' growling and the sheep's sudden, deafening chant of "Four legs good, two legs better!" drown out every possibility of dissent. Now the animals understand the purpose of the sheep's week-long seclusion: Squealer had been teaching them their new slogan.

Clover, her eyes failing, asks Benjamin to read the Seven Commandments on the barn wall. Benjamin, for once, consents to break his rule against reading aloud. There is nothing there to read, he tells her, except a single Commandment. Where the original Seven Commandments once stood, the wall now bears only these words: "ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS."

After that, nothing the pigs do surprises anyone. They carry whips in the fields. They buy a wireless set. They take out subscriptions to newspapers. Napoleon parades the yard with a pipe in his mouth. The pigs put on Jones's old clothes. Napoleon himself appears in a black coat, ratcatcher breeches, and leather leggings, while his Favourite sow wears the watered silk dress that Mrs. Jones once kept for Sundays.

One evening, a delegation of neighbouring farmers arrives at the farmhouse for an inspection tour. From inside, the animals hear the sound of laughter and singing. Drawn irresistibly to the window, the animals creep close and peer in. Around the dining table sit pigs and humans together, playing cards, drinking, and toasting one another. Mr. Pilkington of Foxwood rises to make a speech. He congratulates the pigs on their achievements: the lower animals on Animal Farm do more work and receive less food than any animals in the county. He and his fellow farmers have much to learn from them.

Napoleon responds. He announces several reforms. The custom of animals addressing one another as "Comrade" is abolished. The practice of marching past Old Major's skull on Sunday mornings is to cease. The skull has already been buried. And the farm's name—which, he adds, has always been its true name—is to revert to "The Manor Farm."

The animals outside the window stare in silence as the card game resumes. Then a quarrel erupts: Napoleon and Pilkington have each played an ace of spades simultaneously. Angry voices shout accusations across the table. The animals look from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it is impossible to say which is which.

Character Development

Napoleon completes his total metamorphosis from revolutionary pig to indistinguishable human oppressor. His adoption of clothing, whips, a pipe, and the manners of a country gentleman is no longer mere imitation—it is replacement. By renaming the farm "The Manor Farm" and abolishing every vestige of the Rebellion's language and ritual, he does not simply betray the revolution; he erases it. Clover, now old and dim-sighted, serves as the reader's emotional anchor. She witnessed every stage of the betrayal and feels instinctively that something has gone wrong, yet she lacks the words, the memory, and the power to articulate her grief. Benjamin, in reading the single remaining Commandment aloud, performs his only act of overt disclosure in the entire novel—and it comes too late to matter.

Themes and Motifs

The cyclical nature of oppression is the chapter's defining theme. The final scene at the window, in which the animals cannot distinguish pigs from humans, completes a circle: the exploiters have simply changed species. Orwell suggests that revolution, when it lacks genuine democratic safeguards, merely rotates the personnel of tyranny without dismantling its structure. Language as an instrument of power reaches its terminus. The Seven Commandments, gradually whittled down through the preceding chapters, are now collapsed into a single paradox—"All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others"—that openly enshrines inequality while using the vocabulary of equality. The phrase is Orwell's most famous satirical coinage precisely because it captures, in thirteen words, the logic by which every authoritarian regime justifies privilege. Memory and forgetting also pervade the chapter: most of the animals who remember the Rebellion are dead, and those who survive cannot trust their own recollections.

Notable Passages

The single Commandment that replaces all seven distils the novel's political argument into one devastating sentence:

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

This paradox is the logical endpoint of every incremental alteration the pigs have made. Each previous amendment—"without cause," "to excess," "with sheets"—maintained the fiction of law while hollowing out its substance. This final formulation abandons all pretense. It declares inequality to be a form of equality, a rhetorical manoeuvre that renders the concept of rights meaningless.

Pilkington's toast to the pigs lays bare the economic reality underlying the political allegory:

"If you have your lower animals to contend with, we have our lower classes!"

The line draws an explicit parallel between animal subjugation and class exploitation, collapsing the distance between the fable and the world it satirizes. Pilkington's cheerful candor reveals that the human farmers always understood what the pigs were doing—and admired them for it.

The novel's final image crystallizes the theme of indistinguishability between oppressors:

"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."

This closing sentence is among the most celebrated in twentieth-century political fiction. Its rhythmic, back-and-forth syntax mirrors the act of looking from one face to another and finding no difference. The revolution has not merely failed; it has produced a ruling class identical to the one it overthrew.

Analysis

Orwell structures Chapter X as a slow accumulation followed by a rapid cascade. The opening paragraphs establish the passage of time with an almost elegiac calm: animals die, seasons turn, the farm grows. This measured pacing lulls the reader before the shock of the pigs' emergence on two legs, a moment that functions as the novel's climactic image. By delaying this revelation until the penultimate scene, Orwell gives it the force of inevitability—the reader has watched every incremental step that leads here, yet the sight of pigs walking upright still registers as grotesque.

The allegorical structure maps precisely onto Soviet history. Napoleon's dinner with the human farmers parallels the Tehran Conference of 1943, where Stalin sat as an equal alongside Churchill and Roosevelt, the revolutionary state now fully integrated into the international order it once vowed to destroy. The quarrel over the ace of spades—a dispute among allies that erupts without warning—foreshadows the breakdown of the wartime alliance and the onset of the Cold War.

Orwell employs dramatic irony with devastating economy. The animals peer through the window at a scene that the reader has long anticipated but that the animals experience as revelation. Their inability to distinguish pig from man is not merely a visual observation; it is an epistemological collapse. The categories that defined their world—animal and human,

oppressed and oppressor—have lost all meaning. In this final moment, Orwell demonstrates that the most insidious consequence of totalitarianism is not physical suffering but the destruction of the conceptual framework through which suffering can be understood and resisted.

The narrative voice in this closing chapter is notably restrained. Orwell does not editorialize; he simply presents. The pigs walk on two legs. The Commandment is rewritten. The card game proceeds. The quarrel breaks out. The animals look and cannot tell the difference. This restraint is itself a literary strategy: by refusing to interpret, Orwell forces the reader to confront the image directly, without the comfort of authorial judgment. The result is one of the most powerful endings in modern literature—an image that requires no explanation because its meaning is, like the pigs' transformation, impossible to deny.

Questions about Chapter X

1. Why do the pigs start walking on two legs in Chapter X?
2. What does "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" mean?
3. What happens at the dinner party between the pigs and the human farmers?
4. Why can the animals no longer tell the pigs from the humans at the end of the novel?
5. How have conditions on the farm changed by Chapter X?
6. What role do the sheep play in Chapter X, and why is it significant?

Themes

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 labour 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 skilfully 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 fuelled 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.

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 "mind-workers" to distinguish themselves from the other animals, who work as physical labourers. 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 "mind-working" 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 "mind-workers," 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 endeavour, 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 mind-worker, 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 mind-worker, 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 wilful 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.

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 labour 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 fuelled 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 "mind-workers" 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.

Most Famous Quotes

Chapter 1

"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."

"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."

Chapter 2

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.

Chapter 3

"I will work harder!"

Chapter 7

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.

Chapter 9

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.

Chapter 10

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.

"Four legs good, two legs better!"

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