Animal Farm

Background Info

**Author Bio**

**Full Name:** Eric Arthur Blair  
**Pen Name:** George Orwell  
**Date of Birth:** 1903  
**Place of Birth:** Motihari, India  
**Date of Death:** 1950  

**Brief Life Story:** Eric Blair was born and spent his youth in India. He was educated at Eton in England. 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 (Burmes 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 (1945) and 1984 (1949), are profound condemnations of totalitarian regimes. Orwell died at the age of 47 after failing to treat a lung ailment.

**Key Facts**

**Full Title:** Animal Farm - A Fairy Story  
**Genre:** Novel  
**Type:** Fairy Tale  
**Alllegory:** Setting: A farm somewhere in England in the first half of the 20th century

**Historical and Literary Context**

**When Written:** 1944-45  
**Where Written:** England  
**When Published:** 1945  

**Related Literary Works:** Orwell subtitled Animal Farm “A Fairy Story.” Characters in fairy tales tend to be two-dimensional stereotypes used to reveal some broad observation about life. As the critic C.M. Wodehouse wrote in a piece on Animal Farm in 1954, a fairy tale has no moral. It simply says, “Life is like that—take it or leave it.” Animal Farm uses the format of a fairy tale to expose the evils of totalitarian exploitation. Rather than attack totalitarianism directly, the book shows its offenses plainly and clearly and lets the reader deduce the dangers posed by totalitarian governments. The literary work most often mentioned alongside Animal Farm is 1984, another Orwell novel. 1984, published in 1949, envisions a future in which a dictatorship monitors and controls the actions of all of its citizens. Like Animal Farm, 1984 depicted the horrific constraints that totalitarian governments could impose on human freedom.

**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. Three months later, the animals defeat Jones in an unplanned uprising. The farm is renamed “Animal Farm.”

The ingenuity of the pigs, the immense strength of a horse named Boxer, and the absence of parasitical humans makes Animal Farm prosperous. The animals post the Seven Commandments of Animalism on the side of the barn. 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, drinking alcohol, and so on.

A fight for power soon develops between the two pigs Snowball and Napoleon. The rivalry comes to a head over Snowball’s idea to build a windmill. At the final debate about the windmill, Napoleon summons dogs he has 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 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 animals set to work, with Boxer leading. Focusing on the windmill reduces the productivity of the farm, and all the animals but the pigs get less to eat. The pigs begin to trade with other farms, move into Mr. Jones’ farmhouse, and start to sleep in beds. This confuses the animals who considered this forbidden behavior. But when they check the Commandment about beds, it reads: “No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets.”

Over the next few years, Animal Farm battles with its human neighbors. The windmill gets destroyed first by a storm and then by a human attack. Napoleon blames all catastrophes on the “traitor” Snowball, and uses fear tactics, information control, and deadly purges of anyone he considers an enemy to strengthen his power over the farm. Meanwhile, the pigs secretly continue to rewrite the Commandments and all of Animal Farm’s history to support their lies. They give the animals less food and demand more work, while eating more and working less themselves. The other animals, duped by the pigs’ misinformation, continue to consider themselves part of a great revolution. When Boxer, the most devoted worker on the farm, is no longer able to work, the pigs sell him to a glue factory and use the proceeds to buy whiskey.

Years pass. Now only a few of the remaining animals on the farm experienced the revolution. Even fewer remember its goals. The pigs teach themselves to walk on two legs and begin carrying whips. When the animals look at the Seven Commandments, they have been replaced by the statement: “All animals are equal. But some animals are more equal than others.” The pigs make peace with their human neighbors and have a feast. The other animals are shocked to discover that they can no longer tell the pigs from the humans.

**Characters**

**Old Major** — A pig. He creates the ideas behind Animalism and inspires the other animals to rebel. As a prize boar, Old Major has lived a relatively privileged life among the animals. This privileged life has given him the time to think about and understand fully the ways that humans exploit and enslave animals. Old Major’s ideas inspire the animals’ revolution, though Old Major dies before the revolution occurs. Old Major symbolizes both Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, the fathers of Communism.

**Napoleon** — A pig. One of Old Major’s main disciples. A “fierce-looking Berkshire boar,” Napoleon prizes power over ideas, unlike Snowball, Napoleon’s other main disciple. Napoleon is cowardly, shrewd, calculating, and selfish. While he fully supports the revolution against Mr. Jones, he cares more about his own power than he does about the ideals of the revolution. His selfishness leads him to build a totalitarian government based on terror and lies that gives him more power over the other animals than Mr. Jones ever had. Napoleon symbolizes Stalin, who led the Soviet Union from 1930 until his death in 1953.

**Snowball** — A pig. Alongside Napoleon, one of Old Major’s main disciples. Snowball is a more lively, original, and intelligent pig than Napoleon, but he is less shrewd in the ways of power. Snowball values the ideals of the revolution more than Napoleon does, though at times Snowball does seem willing to sacrifice the principle of animal equality for his own personal comfort. In the end, despite Snowball’s bravery in supporting the revolution, his political naiveté is no match for Napoleon’s cunning. Snowball symbolizes Trotsky, a rival of Stalin exiled from Russian and assassinated on Stalin’s orders in Mexico in 1940.

**Squealer** — A pig. Short and fat, Squealer is a terrific speaker who prioritizes his personal comfort above all else. Whenever the pigs violate the tenets of Animalism, Squealer persuades the other animals that the pigs are actually acting in everyone’s best interest. Squealer represents the Soviet press, which Stalin controlled throughout his rule.

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

**Related Historical Events:** In 1917, two successive revolutions rocked Russia and 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 thirty 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.

**Extra Credit**

**Rejection.** Though Animal Farm eventually made Orwell famous, three publishers in England rejected the novel at first. One of those who rejected it was T.S. Eliot, the famous poet and an editor at the Faber & Faber publishing house. Several American publishing houses rejected the novel as well. One editor told Orwell it was “impossible to sell animal stories in the U.S.”

**Outspoken Anti-Communist.** Orwell didn’t just write literature that condemned the Communist state of the USSR. He did everything he could, from writing editorials to compiling lists of men he knew were Soviet spies, to combat the willful blindness of many intellectuals in the West to USSR atrocities.
Boxer – A horse. Strong and hardworking, Boxer is extremely honorable, though not so intelligent. Boxer believes deeply in the revolution, so much so that he thinks the Animal Farm leader, who also leads the revolution, must be virtuous and wise. One of Boxer’s favorite sayings is “Napoleon is always right.”

Boxer has the strength to overthrow Napoleon’s dictatorship, but not the wit to realize that it is a dictatorship. Boxer devotes all his strength to supporting Napoleon, yet when that strength finally fails him, Napoleon betrays him. Boxer symbolizes the male working class and peasants of the Soviet Union.

Clover – A horse. Clover is a gentle, motherly, and powerful mare, who supports the revolution, but becomes dismayed by the direction it takes under Napoleon. Yet she has neither the will nor the personality to resist the pigs. She becomes a witness to the corruption of the revolution as it turns into a totalitarian state, though she only vaguely understands that something has gone wrong. Clover symbolizes the female working class and peasants of the Soviet Union.

Mollie – A vain horse who loves sugar and wearing pretty ribbons in her mane. Mollie never much cares about the revolution. She abandons Animal Farm and puts herself into service for another human well before totalitarianism even takes hold on the farm. Mollie symbolizes the selfish and materialistic middle-class.

Benjamin – A donkey. Guided by a skeptical philosophy that life will always be difficult and painful, Benjamin is not surprised when the pigs corrupt the revolution and transform Animal Farm into a totalitarian state. Though Benjamin’s skepticism proves to be correct, it also makes him powerless. Alone among the other animals, Benjamin seems to understand what’s going on, but he does nothing to stop it. In the end, his inaction comes back to haunt him when his dear friend Boxer is betrayed and killed. Benjamin represents those who were aware of Stalin’s unjust and oppressive policies but did nothing to try to stop them.

The Dogs – Jessie, Bluebell, Pincher, and the nine attack dogs provide the pigs with the brute force necessary to terrorize the other animals. In return, the dogs receive special privileges. The dogs don’t rule, but they live comfortably. The dogs symbolize the Soviet secret police.

Moses – A tame raven who constantly speaks about a beautiful place called Sugarcandy Mountain where all animals go when they die. Moses represents organized religion.

Themes

In LitCharts, each theme gets its own corresponding color, which you can use to track where the themes occur in the work. There are two ways to track themes:

- Refer to the color-coded bars next to each plot point throughout the Summary and Analysis sections.
- Use the ThemeTracker section to get a quick overview of where the themes appear throughout the entire work.

Totalitarianism

George Orwell once wrote: “Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been ... against totalitarianism.” Animal Farm 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 the individual’s ideas and beliefs. Different totalitarian states have different justifications for their rule. For instance, Mr. Jones runs Manor Farm based on the idea that human domination of animals is the natural order of things, while Napoleon and the pigs run Animal Farm with the claim that they are fighting for animals against evil humans.

Orwell’s underlying point is that the stated goals of totalitarianism don’t matter because all totalitarian regimes are fundamentally the same. Every type of totalitarianism, whether communist, fascist, or capitalist, is founded on oppression of the individual and the lower class. Those who hold power in totalitarian regimes care only about one thing: maintaining their power by any means necessary. While the story of Napoleon’s rise to power is most explicitly a condemnation of totalitarianism in the Soviet Union, Orwell intends Animal Farm to criticize all totalitarian regimes.

Symbols

Symbols are shown in red text whenever they appear in the Plot Summary and Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

Character Names

Orwell wrote Animal Farm as an allegory, a symbolic representation of real events. Many characters and events in the novel symbolize people in the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. Here are some of the animals who symbolize individuals or groups in Soviet society: Mr. Jones (Russian Tsar and the aristocratic order); Old Major (Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin); Napoleon (Stalin); Snowball (Trotsky); Squealer (the press); the pigs (ruling bureaucrats); and Moses the Raven (organized religion). Nearly all of the other animals represent the working class and Soviet peasants. For a more complete list, see the “Character” section.

The Sheep – Dumb animals who believe whatever propaganda is told to them and follow orders. The sheep represent the duped citizens of a totalitarian state.

Muriel – A goat. One of the few animals other than the pigs and dogs who becomes fully literate.

Mr. Jones – The owner of Manor Farm, and once a strict and fierce master. Mr. Jones has in recent years become drunk, careless, and ineffective, though he remains as casually cruel and arrogant as ever. Mr. Jones symbolizes the Russian Tsar in the early 20th century.

Mr. Frederick – The owner of the neighboring farm of Pinchfield. A vicious, cruel, and calculating man, Frederick symbolizes the Fascist Germans.

Mr. Pilkington – The gentleman owner of the neighboring farm of Pilkington. A man who prefers recreation to farm work, Pilkington represents the Allies before World War II, particularly the British.

Mr. Whymper – The human that the pigs use as their connection to the outside world, Whymper symbolizes capitalists who got rich doing business with the USSR.

The Revolution and Corruption

Animal Farm depicts a revolution in progress. Old Major gives the animals a new perspective on their situation under Mr. Jones, which leads them to envision a better future free of human exploitation. The revolution in Animal Farm, like all popular revolutions, arises out of a hope for a better future. At the time of the revolution, even the pigs are excited by and committed to the idea of universal animal equality.

So what undermines the animal’s revolution and transforms it into a totalitarian nightmare? Animal Farm shows how the high ideals that fuel revolutions gradually give way to individual and class self-interest. Not even Napoleon planned to become a dictator before the revolution, but as his power grew, he took more and more until his power became absolute. Revolutions are corrupted in a slow process. Animal Farm portrays that process.

Class Warfare

One of the main tenets of Animalism is that all animals are equal. But quite quickly the pigs begin to refer to themselves as “mindworkers” to distinguish themselves from the other animals, who are physical laborers. Over time, this sense of separation takes hold: the pigs begin to discourage their children from playing with the children of the other animals, and then establish themselves as absolute rulers of the “lesser” menial laborers. Animal Farm shows how differences in education and occupation lead to the development of class, which leads inevitably to class warfare, in which one class seeks to dominate the other. Animal Farm suggests that the “mindworking” class will almost always prevail in this struggle.

Animal Farm doesn’t just focus on the upper classes, however. In fact, it focuses more closely on the oppressed working class. The farm animals work so hard that they have no time to learn or educate themselves or think deeply about their world. Instead, they’re taught that work is their contribution to society, their way to freedom. Boxer believes that “I will work harder” is the answer to every problem, though he never perceives that the pigs exploit his effort. Benjamin occupies the other extreme: he recognizes what’s going on, but his cynicism stops him from taking action against the pigs. In the end, Animal Farm implies that whether because of ignorance, inaction, or fear, the working class allows itself to be dominated by the “mindworkers.”

Language as Power

Animal Farm shows how the minority in power uses vague language, propaganda, and misinformation to control the thoughts and beliefs of the majority in the lower classes. The pigs, especially Squealer, become extremely sophisticated and effective in their attempts to rewrite the rules of Animal Farm and Animalism. They even revise the farm’s entire history in order to mislead the other animals into believing exactly what they say. By the end of the novel, the animals on the farm believe Snowball fought against them at the Battle of the Cowshed even though they saw him fight with them. They believe life on the farm has improved even though they have less food than ever, and that Napoleon has their best interests at heart even though he kills those who disagree with him. As the only literate animals on the farm, the pigs maintain a monopoly on information that they use to build and hold their power.

The Soviet Union

While Animal Farm condemns all forms of totalitarianism, it is most explicitly a bitter attack on the Soviet Union. Though Orwell supported the ideas of Socialism, he strongly opposed the Soviet Union’s descent into totalitarianism under Stalin. Animal Farm satirically attacks the Soviet Union by mirroring many events from Soviet history in the novel. The events of Animal Farm that mirror historical events in the Soviet Union, such as the revolution and the subsequent corruption of its ideals, will be highlighted and discussed in the Summary and Analysis sections.

The Windmill

The windmill represents the massive infrastructure constructions projects and modernization initiatives that Soviet leaders instituted immediately after the Russian Revolution. In Animal Farm, the windmill also comes to symbolize the pigs’ totalitarian triumph: the other animals work to build the windmill thinking it will benefit everyone, and even after it benefits only the pigs the animals continue to believe that it benefits all the animals.
Summary and Analysis

The color-coded bars in Summary and Analysis make it easy to track the themes through the work. Each color corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section. For instance, a bar of indicates that all five themes apply to that part of the summary.

Chapter 1

On the Manor Farm in England, Mr. Jones, drunk as usual, goes to sleep without properly securing the animals.

Word had spread among the animals during the day that Old Major, an old and respected prize boar, had a strange dream and wants to speak to them.

The animals gather in the barn to hear what Old Major has to say: the dogs arrive first; then the pigs, who sit in front of Old Major’s speaking platform. Next come the hens, pigeons, sheep, and cows; two cart horses, the enormous Boxer, and the motherly Clover who lets some orphaned ducklings shelter between her legs. Muriel the goat and Benjamin the donkey. Mollie, a white horse showing off the red ribbons in her hair; and finally, the cat. Only Moses, the tame raven, fails to come.

Old Major addresses the animals, calling them “comrades.” He says he won’t live much longer, then describes all the hardships the animals face on the Farm—long hours, little food, and death in the slaughterhouse. He and his lazy workers ditch their farm work to go hunting. The hungry animals break into the feed shed, which wakes up the sleeping Mr. Jones. He and his men start whipping the animals, who grow furious and attack, driving the men and Mr. Jones from the farm. Moses the raven flies after them.

The pigs also have to contend with Moses the raven, who spreads tales of a wonderful place called Sugarcandy Mountain where animals go when they die. Most of the animals dislike Moses because he never does any work, but many also believe in Sugarcandy Mountain.

Boxer and Clover show the most devotion to Animalism. Neither is very smart, but their belief in animal equality never wavers, and they never miss a secret meeting.

The revolution happens much earlier and more easily than the animals expect. In June, on Midsummer’s Eve, Mr. Jones gets so drunk in town that he forgets to feed the animals, and his lazy workers ditch their farm work to go hunting. The hungry animals break into the feed shed, which wakes up the sleeping Mr. Jones. He and his men start whipping the animals, who grow furious and attack, driving the men and Mr. Jones from the farm. Moses the raven flies after them.

The joyous animals destroy Mr. Jones’s whips, reins, and halters. They sing “Beasts of England,” treat themselves to double rations, and go to sleep happy. The next morning the animals run around the farm surveying their territory. They break down the farmhouse door, tour it, and decide it should be preserved as a museum. Finally, the pigs, who had secretly taught themselves to read and write in the previous three months, repaint the sign at the gate of the farm to read: Animal Farm.

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

The pigs work hard but happily at the harvest. The pigs, the smartest animals, soon start directing the other animals’ work. The pigs’ cleverness and Boxer’s strong body and work ethic help solve all the problems the animals encounter in their work. Boxer even adopts the motto “I will work harder” in response to every problem. The harvest is the biggest the farm has ever seen.

Everyone pitches in, each according to his or her own abilities. The animals have more food and leisure, and they enjoy being their own masters. Though Mollie does tend to disappear when there’s work to be done, and Benjamin the donkey remains cynical, refusing to voice an opinion about the revolution.

The pigs fear belief in the afterlife might make the animals less revolutionary. Moses symbolizes the Russian Orthodox Church, which the Tsars used to control the lower classes.

Though unsophisticated, Boxer and Clover value the essence of Animalism: equality among animals.

Like the Russian Revolution, the animals’ revolution results from their rage at what they perceive, correctly, as mistreatment. Later on, when the pigs seize power, they take special care to make sure that the animals don’t perceive their mistreatment.

Old Major’s utopian dream seems to have come true. Orwell describes the animals as a single group, indicating their equality. The symbol used to enslave them are destroyed. The renaming of the farm symbolizes their self-mastery, and mirrors the change from Russia to the Soviet Union.

Now that Jones is gone, Napoleon’s self-interest separates him from the other animals: he wants the milk for himself. And Napoleon, who clearly cares more about himself than about Animalism, realizes he can manipulate the animals’ revolutionary spirit to get what he wants. A minute after the Commandments are posted, Napoleon has started to undermine them.

Old Major dies three nights later, but his message takes hold. The pigs are the smartest of the animals, and over the next three months two pigs in particular emerge as leaders: the lively Snowball and the powerful Napoleon. A third pig, Squealer, gives eloquent speeches that can convince anyone of anything. These three pigs turn Old Major’s ideas into a philosophy called Animalism.

Chapter 3

The early days are idyllic. Animalism results in a successful harvest and happy animals. Yet already signs of class difference between the pigs and other animals have arisen based on their intellectual differences.

The pigs teach Animalism to the animals, overcoming the worry, apathy, and selfishness of the others. For instance, Mollie worries that after the revolution she won’t get any more sugar or be able to wear ribbons in her hair. Snowball tells her she shouldn’t want sugar and ribbons, since these are signs of her slavery.
On Sundays the animals don’t work. Instead, they rise and salute their flag (a hoof and horn on a field of green) and hold a meeting to plan the next week. At the meeting, everyone is allowed to put forward resolutions and vote, but only the pigs ever come up with resolutions. Snowball and Napoleon are the most active debaters, but they almost never agree.

Snowball soon starts setting up committees such as the Whiter Wool Committee to improve life on the farm. But only the reading and writing classes generate any interest. Soon Muriel and Benjamin can read as well as the pigs and dogs.

The sheep can’t read or memorize the Seven Commandments. To help them, Snowball summarizes all of Animalism with the single phrase “Four legs good, two legs bad.” Soon the sheep start bleating this phrase whenever they feel like it.

Napoleon sees little value in Snowball’s committees, but he says he believes in the importance of educating the young. When two dogs give birth, Napoleon trains their nine puppies in a secret place.

The mystery of the missing milk is solved when the pigs declare that only they can use all apples and milk on the farm. The other animals grumble, but Squealer explains that the pigs are crucial to the running of the farm and need the milk and apples to stay healthy. If the pigs fail, Squealer says, Mr. Jones will return. The animals agree that the pigs should get the milk and apples.

Chapter 4

It’s late summer and news of the revolution at Animal Farm spreads. Snowball and Napoleon send out flights of pigeons to teach “Beasts of England” to the animals of nearby farms.

Mr. Jones spends his time getting drunk and complaining about his fate. The owners of the farms neighboring Animal Farm, the gentleman farmer Mr. Pilkington of Foxwood and the shrewd Mr. Frederick of Pinchfield, are concerned that the revolution might spread to their own farms. But they dislike each other so much that they can’t even agree on defending themselves. Instead, the Frederick and Pilkington spread rumors about the misery of life on Animal Farm. No animals anywhere believe them. “Beasts of England” spreads across England with incredible speed.

One day in October, pigeons fly into Animal Farm with news that Jones, along with men from Pilkington and Frederick, are headed to attack the farm. Snowball has a defense planned out: he draws the men into trains their nine puppies in a secret place.

The meetings show Animalism’s followers trust each other because they’re all animals. Napoleon exploits the animals’ blind idealism in his rise to power.

Animals and dogs form a nucleus by the end of the year, and they agree to start committees in the Soviet Union. The pigs define themselves as a separate class deserving of special privileges, and use fear tactics and confusing language to convince the other animals that the privileges are in the common interest. Even Snowball is willing to sacrifice Animalism for his own self-interest.

Soviet Communists also spread propaganda, hoping to make Communist global.

In 1918, anti-Communist forces (Jones), helped by Western nations (Frederick and Pilkington), attacked the Russian Communists (the animals), in two years of Civil War, in which Trotsky (Snowball) showed great bravery, the Communists defeated the anti-Communists.

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Pilkington and Frederick symbolize the capitalists. Aliens and Fascist Germany. These nations feared the rise of Communism because it threatened their own countries; what if their own working classes, inspired by Communism, revolted? But these nations hated and feared each other too much to band together against the Soviet Union.

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Instead, they let the pigs dominate. So it’s not just that the pigs seize power; it’s that the other animals let them.

Snowball’s committees show their commitment to Animalism, but also his political naiveté. Trotsky set up similar committees in the Soviet Union.

Snowball’s slogan creates a breakdown in language—four legs are good and two legs are bad only if four legs follow Animalism and two legs don’t.

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As the animals bury the sheep, Snowball emphasizes that animals must be willing to die to defend Animal Farm. Snowball and Boxer receive the award of Animal Hero, First Class. They name the battle the “Battle of the Cowshed,” and agree that twice each year they’ll fire Mr. Jones’s gun, which they found lying in the mud, to celebrate both this battle and the anniversary of the revolution.

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Chapter 5

One day, Clove spots Mollie at the boundary of Foxwood letting one of Mr. Pilkington’s men stroke her nose. On a hunch, Clove searches Mollie’s stall and finds sugar cubes. Mollie denies all of it, but three days later she disappears. Weeks after that, a pigeon spots Mollie pulling a man’s cart, with ribbons in her hair. No one on Animal Farm ever mentions Mollie again.

The pigs plan for the next year throughout the winter. All the animals now accept that the pigs will decide all farm policy, subject only to a farm-wide majority vote.

In the Sunday meetings, Snowball and Napoleon now argue about everything. The most intense point of disagreement between the two is Snowball’s plan to build a windmill. He says the windmill will produce electric power to warm stalls and run electrical tools that will make everyone’s life easier. Napoleon, though, argues that the farm should focus on more pressing needs like food production.

The animals take sides: some support Snowball’s windmill, while others favor Napoleon and food production. Only Benjamin refuses to join sides, observing that no matter who wins, life will go on as it always has—badly.

Snowball finally finishes his plans for the windmill. The next Sunday the animals gather to vote. Snowball speaks passionately about the paradise the windmill will create, while Napoleon just says the windmill is nonsense. Snowball’s eloquence prevails.

Just as Snowball finishes speaking, Napoleon makes an odd whimpering sound. Suddenly nine vicious dogs, the dogs Napoleon had reared from pups, bound into the barn. The dogs jump at Snowball, who runs. The dogs chase Snowball, who flees through a hole in a hedge that leads out of Animal Farm. Once Snowball is gone, the dogs surround Napoleon like a guard. Napoleon announces to the terrified and silent farm animals that the Sunday meetings are over. A special committee of pigs will now decide all Animal Farm policy and give weekly orders on Sunday morning when the animals gather to salute the flag and sing “Beasts of England.”

Napoleon’s announcement disturbs the animals, but few can muster any counterarguments. Four young pigs protest, but the dogs growl and silence the pigs. The sheep burst into an extended bleating repetition of “Four legs good, two legs bad.”

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Later, Squealer comes around and explains that Napoleon took on the “burden” of leadership and eliminated voting only because he feared that the animals might make the wrong decisions. Squealer also says it was recently discovered that Snowball was a criminal. When the animals say Snowball fought bravely at the battle of the Cowshed, Squealer says he thinks Snowball’s actions at the battle may have been exaggerated. He adds that bravery is not nearly as important as discipline and obedience. Without those, Jones might return.

Snowball’s position seems noble: the animals should be willing to die for Animal Farm, right? But the implication is that whatever Animal Farm does must always be right, even if it results in the killing of animals.

Mollie, like the Russian middle-class, chooses comfortable slavery over less comfortable freedom, which makes all the other animals hate her. But later in this same chapter the other animals also choose comfortable slavery over less comfortable freedom.

Class differences continue to take hold. The animals allow the pigs to take nearly absolute power.

These disputes mirror Trotsky and Stalin’s main disagreement: Trotsky favored modernizing the USSR while Stalin emphasized more immediate concerns. Note that the disagreements intensify only after the human threat is gone.

Benjamin believes that in the relationship between individual and state, the individual always ends up oppressed.

The rules of Animal Farm and Animalism state that if Napoleon convinces the majority, he wins.

But Napoleon isn’t playing by Animalist rules. By snatching power and denying the non-pigs’ right to vote, Napoleon counters the fundamental idea of Animalism: all animals are equal. If the animals let Napoleon get away with this act, Animal Farm will no longer be Animalist and the animals’ freedom will vanish. In the USSR, Stalin defeated Trotsky in a power struggle and exiled him.

Fear stops the animals from opposing Napoleon. Like Mollie, they choose comfort over freedom.

Unlike Boxer, Snowball thinks the enemies of Animalism deserve death. Napoleon will later kill animals for “opposing Animalism. It’s a small step from Snowball’s position to Napoleon’s.”

Squealer manipulates language in citing secret documents and using fear tactics to make it seem like Napoleon is defending freedom when really he’s undermining it. Tricky language effectively makes all poorly educated, frightened, and idealistic population.
None of the animals wants Jones back, and Boxer, after heavy thinking, says, “If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right.”

Three weeks later, Napoleon announces that they’ll build the windmill after all. Squealer explains: Napoleon opposed the windmill just to get rid of Snowball, who was a bad influence on everyone. The animals accept this explanation, especially since Squealer has the attack dogs with him.

Squealer begins to refer to Napoleon as “The Leader” and the pigs move into the farmhouse and begin sleeping in beds. Though Boxer dismisses the change by saying “Napoleon is always right,” Squealer insists that the Commandments ban the change by saying “Napoleon is always right,” and Boxer changes his mind and says then it must be true. Still, Squealer gives Boxer a dark look and warns the animals to be on the lookout for Snowball’s secret agents.

Squealer now issues almost all orders through Squealer, who one day announces that the hens must give up four hundred eggs a week to pay for grain and feed. The hens angrily refuse. Napoleon responds by cutting the hens’ rations. He also declares that any animal that feeds the hens will be killed. After five days, during which nine hens starve to death, the hens give in.

At about the same time, Napoleon enters negotiations to sell some wood to either Pilkington or Frederick. Whenever he’s close to a deal with Pilkington, rumors circulate that Snowball is hiding at Frederick’s farm, and vice versa.

Napoleon shows Boxer that he believes Animalism is good, Animal Farm must be good. To build the windmill and keep the farm running at the same time, the animals have to work like slaves, enduring long hours. The animals make the sacrifice happily, since it’s for their own benefit rather than for a human master. Boxer works the longest and hardest. Despite all the effort, the time spent working on the windmill makes the harvest slightly worse than it was the previous year.

The farm suffers shortages of items it can’t produce itself, like nails and iron. Napoleon announces Animal Farm will start trading hay, wheat, and possibly even eggs with its neighbors, not for commercial uses, but for the benefit of the windmill. The animals are uneasy because they had agreed never to use money. Napoleon hires a man named Mr. Whymper to represent the farm, while Squealer convinces everyone that no rule ever banned the use of money.

Though the humans outside Animal Farm still hate and fear it, they also develop a grudging respect for the farm’s efficiency.

Squealer begins to refer to Napoleon as “The Leader” and the pigs move into the farmhouse and begin sleeping in beds. Though Boxer dismisses the change by saying “Napoleon is always right,” Clover is certain that the Commandments ban beds. She gets Muriel to read her the Fourth Commandment, but they discover that they seem to have misremembered it. It says: “No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets.”

By October the animals grow tired. Since the farm had to sell some food for money, the winter promises to be bad. The windmill is now half finished, which pleases everyone (except Benjamin).

One night in November, a terrible storm knocks down the windmill. The animals are horrified. Napoleon sniffs around the rubble. He looks worried and his tail waggles as if he’s thinking fast. Suddenly Napoleon shouts “SNOBALL!” He announces that Snowball destroyed the windmill. The animals are shocked and furious that Snowball could do such a thing. Napoleon vows they will start rebuilding the windmill that very day.

Napoleon inflates his image through propaganda, making himself bigger than life and all-powerful. Stalin used propaganda similarly to increase his power.

The pigs begin to rewrite Animalism and all of Animal Farm history. If they can get the animals to fear Snowball, they can use Snowball to justify their own rule, as they once used Jones.

Stalin “purged” the Soviet government by torturing those he considered enemies until they admitted to crimes they hadn’t committed. Then he had them killed. Napoleon considers Boxer an enemy because Boxer remembers the past correctly and Boxer can’t comprehend that Napoleon just attacked him.

By tricking the animals into thinking Animalism and Animal Farm are the same, the pigs can kill or punish anyone who disagrees with their orders and claim they’re defending Animalism. It’s slavery disguised as freedom.

Chapter 6

To build the windmill and keep the farm running at the same time, the animals have to work like slaves, enduring long hours. The animals make the sacrifice happily, since it’s for their own benefit rather than for a human master. Boxer works the longest and hardest. Despite all the effort, the time spent working on the windmill makes the harvest slightly worse than it was the previous year.

The pigs’ deception has worked. The animals still believe they are free even though they have no freedom at all. The pigs use Animalism to get the animals to sacrifice for the pigs’ benefit.

To be fair, it’s not clear how Animal Farm would need necessary supplies without resorting to trade. But the pigs don’t explain the issue and then slightly modify Animalism. Instead, they lie, and use the threat of force to get the other animals to accept the lie.

Humans start accepting the farm as the pigs act more like humans.

Note the pigs’ manipulation of language to increase their power and luxury. They take more privileges for themselves and justify those privileges by secretly rewriting the Commandments of Animalism.

By manipulating Animalism rather than overthrowing it, the pigs exploit the animals without angering them.

The destruction of the windmill shocks Napoleon: he fears the animals might question his authority now. To save himself, he cleverly shifts the blame to Snowball. Stalin could have used Trotsky in a similar way.

Chapter 7

Despite the hard, bitter winter, the animals work to rebuild the windmill, which the humans claimed fell because of its thin walls. Though the pigs say the humans’ claim is a lie, they make the new windmill’s walls three feet thick.

In January, the farm’s food supply runs out. Even though it seems possible the animals could starve, the pigs hide the food trouble from the humans, escorting Mr. Whymper through a storehouse made to appear full of food.

The animals trust the pigs’ lies rather than the obvious truth because they still believe blindly that “Four legs good, two legs bad!”

Under Stalin’s catastrophic Five-Year Plan, the USSR suffered famines that killed millions. Stalin covered up the tragedy.

Chapter 8

Clover and some other animals remember that the Sixth Commandment forbade killing. But when they get Muriel to read it for them, it says: “No animal shall kill any other animal without cause.”

The animals work harder than ever to rebuild the windmill with walls twice as thick. Sometimes they feel like they’re working harder and getting less food than back when Jones was master. But each Sunday Squealer reads off figures proving the animals are happier and better off than ever.

Napoleon almost never appears in public anymore, and when he does only with great ceremony. Minimus composes poems that honor Napoleon. Napoleon’s birthday becomes a holiday, and all animals are encouraged to praise Napoleon for every good thing that happens.
Meanwhile, Napoleon’s negotiations with Frederick and Pilkington for the wood intensify. Napoleon waves back and forth between selling the wood to one or the other. Whichever farm fails out of favor in the negotiations is the subject of nasty, and temporary, rumors around Animal Farm. Napoleon at last seems ready to come to a deal with Pilkington, and his mantra of “Death to Humans” is changed to “Death to Frederick!”

The animals joyfully finish the windmill in autumn. But Animal Farm still lacks the machinery to produce electricity, and two days later Napoleon announces a deal to sell the wood to Frederick. (His mantra is changed to “Death to Pilkington!”). The sudden reversal shocks the animals. The pigs explain that Napoleon planned all along to play Pilkington and Frederick against each other to raise the price of the wood.

Three days later, Whyymper rushes into the farmhouse. The animals hear Napoleon let out a roar of anger. As it turned out, Frederick paid for the timber with fake bills! Napoleon promises Frederick will be killed and warns the animals to brace for the worst.

The next morning, Frederick and his men attack. All the men have guns and push the animals back into the barn. The animals watch as the men blow up the windmill. The sight drives the animals into a rage, and they attack. Many animals die, and most, including Boxer, suffer injuries. But they manage to drive Frederick and his men from Animal Farm.

Though the animals are tired and bloody, the pigs lead two days of patriotic celebrations of their victory over the men. The animals’ spirits rise and the memory of the forged bank notes fades.

A few days later, the pigs discover whiskey in the cellar of the farmhouse. There are shouts and revelry that night in the farmhouse. But the next morning the pigs announce that they now feel free to drink alcohol to excess. The pigs’ power is so complete that they now feel free to manipulate the animals’ feelings.

Soon, four sows give birth to over thirty young pigs. From the piglet’s markings, it’s clear they’re descendants of Napoleon’s children. He discourages the piglets from playing with the other young animals, and teaches them himself until a schoolhouse can be built for them.

Festive processions and weekly Spontaneous Demonstrations celebrating the triumphs of Animal Farm now dominate life on the farm. The celebrations remind the animals that they are working as their own masters, which alleviates their hunger somewhat.

In April, the farm is declared a Republic, and an election takes place. Napoleon, the only candidate, wins unanimously. On the same day, it’s announced that Snowball fought openly against the animals at the Battle of the Cowshed.

Moses the raven suddenly reappears, talking of Sugarcandy Mountain. The pigs say it’s all nonsense, but give him an allowance of beer.

One day, while working on the new windmill, Boxer’s lung fails and he falls, no longer able to work. Squealer announces that Napoleon has decided to send Boxer to a human veterinary doctor. The idea of a human examining Boxer disturbs the animals, but Squealer says a vet can do more for Boxer than they can. Boxer stays in his stall until a van comes to pick him up. The animals yell their goodbyes, but Benjamin shouts that side of the van reads, “Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler.” The animals cry out. Boxer tries to break down the door of the van with his hoofs. But he’s now too weak to escape.

Three days later, Squealer announces that Boxer died in the hospital, and that his last words were “Napoleon is always right.” In response to the “dark rumors” the animals had heard about the van, Squealer explains that the vet had just bought the van from the glue boiler and had not yet repainted it. A few days later the pigs buy a new crate of whiskey.

Chapter 9

Boxer still works harder than everyone else, but his strength begins to wane. He comforts himself with thoughts of retirement. In the first days of Animal Farm, it was decided that a horse could retire at age twelve and receive a pension.

Food during the winter is even scarcer than in the previous year, and the animals’ ration the animals are reduced. In contrast, the rations for pigs and dogs remain at their normal levels. Squealer continues to claim that they’re all better off than ever, and explains that a rigid equality in rations would be against Animalism.

As WW II approached, the Soviets negotiated with the Allies and Fascists intensified. When the Soviets leaned toward a treaty with the Allies, the Soviet propaganda machine quoted anti-German rhetoric, and vice versa.

Similarly, at the last minute the Soviets signed a Non-aggression Pact with the Germans, rather than the Allies. All the propaganda in the USSR changed immediately to favor the Germans over the Allies.

The Germans signed the Non-aggression Pact as a fake-out, a more intended to mass up the USSR. The Germans then invaded the USSR almost immediately.

About 25-30 million Soviets died while pushing back the Germans. The war annihilated Soviet infrastructure, symbolized in Animal Farm by the destruction of the windmill.

The pigs honor their citizens’ sacrifices to increase the power of the state—the state that forced them to sacrifice in the first place.

The pigs make a mockery of the animals’ sacrifice by indulging in alcohol. They reveal their inexperience (in comparison to the capitalist humans) by failing to distinguish Napoleon’s hangover from imminent death.

The pigs immediately resume rewriting Animalism for their own benefit. The animals are too beaten down and undeducated to realize the pigs’ deception even when the evidence makes it obvious. The pigs take power, but the animals let them.

Chapter 10

Years go by. Only Clover, Benjamin, Moses the raven, and some of the pigs remember the revolution. Animal Farm is more prosperous than ever. The pigs’ control over infor-
The next day, all the pigs start carrying whips and wearing clothes. A week later, they invite humans from nearby farms to look around and stay for dinner at Animal Farm. That night, the animals, led by Clover, sneak up and watch the pigs and humans through the window. Pilkington and Napoleon toast each other. Pilkington says he’s pleased to have their history of mistrust behind them. He expresses admiration that the pigs can feed their animals so little yet get so much work out of them. He adds that pigs and men have similar problems: pigs have lower classes.

**Important Quotes**

**Chapter 1 Quotes**

- 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.

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

- 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 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 Quotes**

THE SEVEN COMMANDMENTS

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

**Chapter 3 Quotes**

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

- I will work harder!

Four legs good, two legs bad.

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

**Chapter 4 Quotes**

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

**Chapter 5 Quotes**

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

**Chapter 9 Quotes**

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

**Chapter 10 Quotes**

Somewhere it seemed as though the farm had grown richer without making the animals think they were richer.

- All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.

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

Napoleon agrees wholeheartedly with Pilkington, and announces plans to eliminate all signs of Animal Farm’s revolutionary past, including its name. From now on it will be called by its original and proper name: Manor Farm.

The men and pigs return to a game of poker and the farm animals turn to leave, but a shout from within stops them. Napoleon and Pilkington have discovered each other cheating at cards. A fight has broken out. In the chaos, the animals can’t tell the pigs from the humans.

The similarity of all totalitarian governments is represented by the changing of the farm’s name back to its original name.

In their petty greed, the Animalist and Capitalist leaders are indistinguishable. The animals are back where they started enslaved by oppressive leaders.

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

Napoleon is always right.
**Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>- On Manor Farm, farmer <strong>Jones</strong> goes to sleep drunk, as usual.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Old Major</strong> calls together all the animals. He reveals that the animals are slaves to humans, says that all animals are comrades, and encourages the animals to revolt.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Old Major</strong> teaches the animals the revolutionary song “Beasts of England.”</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>- <strong>Old Major</strong> dies. <strong>Snowball</strong>, <strong>Napoleon</strong>, and <strong>Squealer</strong> develop and teach the tenets of Animalism.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Jones</strong> forgets to feed the animals. The animals drive Jones from the farm, and rename it Animal Farm.</td>
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<td>- The pigs write the Seven Commandments of Animalism on the barn.</td>
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<td>- The animals go to work with joy in their hearts. The milk disappears.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>- The harvest that year is the best ever on the farm. The pigs’ intelligence and <strong>Boxer</strong>’s strength seems to solve all problems. <strong>Benjamin</strong> remains cynical.</td>
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<td>- At the weekly Sunday meetings, only <strong>Snowball</strong> and <strong>Napoleon</strong> talk, but they seldom agree. Napoleon takes the puppies to “educate” them. Snowball forms committees and some animals learn to read. The sheep can’t learn to read, though, so Snowball invents the phrase “Four Legs Good, Two Legs Bad.”</td>
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<td>- The animals learn that the pigs have been taking all the milk. <strong>Squealer</strong> explains that the pigs must drink the milk so they can ensure that <strong>Jones</strong> never returns.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>- <strong>Pilkington</strong> and <strong>Frederick</strong> fear the revolution on Animal Farm will spread to their own farms. But they dislike each other too much to act in concert.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Jones</strong>, with some men from Pilkington and Frederick, attempts to retake the farm. The animals, led by <strong>Snowball</strong> and <strong>Boxer</strong>, defeat him at the Battle of the Cowshed.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>- <strong>Mollie</strong> deserts Animal Farm.</td>
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<td>- At the debate over the windmill, <strong>Napoleon</strong> has his attack dogs chase <strong>Snowball</strong> from the farm. Napoleon cancels the weekly meetings.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Squealer</strong> says <strong>Napoleon</strong> took power for the animals’ benefit and that <strong>Snowball</strong> was a traitor. The animals are unsure, but <strong>Boxer</strong> finally says, “Napoleon is always right.”</td>
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<td>- <strong>Napoleon</strong> decides to build the windmill after all.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>- The animals, especially <strong>Boxer</strong>, work long hours with reduced rations to build the windmill. Animal Farm runs into shortages. <strong>Napoleon</strong> hires <strong>Whymper</strong>.</td>
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<td>- The pigs start sleeping in beds. <strong>Clover</strong> thinks this is against the Commandments, but on reading them discovers that it is sleeping in beds with sheets that’s prohibited.</td>
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<td>- A storm destroys the windmill. <strong>Napoleon</strong> blames <strong>Snowball</strong>.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>- That winter, food supplies fail. <strong>Napoleon</strong> starves the hens until they agree to let him sell their eggs through <strong>Whymper</strong>.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Squealer</strong> warns the animals that the traitorous <strong>Snowball</strong>, who tried to betray the animals at the Battle of the Cowshed, has been sneaking onto the farm at night</td>
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<td>- <strong>Napoleon</strong> plays <strong>Frederick</strong> against <strong>Pilkington</strong> in negotiating the sale of the wood.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Napoleon</strong> “purges” the farm of his enemies. The song “Beasts of England” is outlawed.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>- The animals complete the second windmill.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Napoleon</strong> sells the wood to <strong>Frederick</strong>. Frederick pays with counterfeit money!</td>
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<td>- <strong>Frederick</strong> and his men attack. The animals succeed in fighting the men off, but the windmill is destroyed in the process.</td>
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<td>- The pigs discover whiskey, and get drunk. The animals catch <strong>Squealer</strong> in the process of rewriting the Commandment against alcohol, but only <strong>Benjamin</strong> understands what is going on and he won’t say.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>- The animals rations are tiny, while the pigs and dogs rations remain comfortable. Only the demonstrations that remind the animals that they are their own masters takes the edge off their hunger. <strong>Napoleon</strong> wins an election, as the sole candidate, to be the leader of the Republic of Animal Farm.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Moses</strong> the raven returns. The pigs give him beer.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Napoleon</strong> has children, who are discouraged from playing with non-pig children.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Boxer</strong> collapses. Under the guise of sending Boxer to a vet, the pigs sell him to the glue-maker and use the money to buy whiskey.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>- Years pass. The windmill is complete and the farm is rich, but only the pigs and dogs seem well off. Even so, the animals are still proud to be their own masters.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Squealer</strong> takes the sheep away to train them. The pigs start walking on their hind legs. The sheep bleat “Four legs good, two legs better!”</td>
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<td>- The pigs rewrite the Seven Commandments to say “All Animals Are Equal. But Some Are More Equal Than Others.”</td>
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<td>- The pigs start carrying whips and wearing clothes. The farm is renamed Manor Farm. <strong>Pilkington</strong> comes to visit. The animals can’t tell the pigs from the humans.</td>
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