

Animal Farm

'All animals are equal - but some are more equal than others'





George Orwell (1903 - 1950)

- Real name : Eric Blair born from English parents in India
- After his father retired they moved back to England
- Studied at Eaton and was often humiliated as he was granted a scholarship
- At eighteen, he passed the Empire's Civil Service Exam and became a **police officer** in **Burma**.
- In 1927 he returned in Europe
- He chose to live in poverty because he felt guilty for the job he had done in Burma for having been a part of an oppressive government





- He saw **poverty as a way to understand the problems of the oppressed** and helpless by becoming one of them.
- He became a socialist
- He wished for a society:
 1. With no social injustice and political lying
 2. In which separate classes would not exist
- Fought in the Spanish Civil War
 - *"I've come to fight against Fascism"*
 - Fought against the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia (a wing of the Spanish Communist Party)
- Unable to serve in WWII because of weak lungs, Orwell applied for civilian work, but was denied.





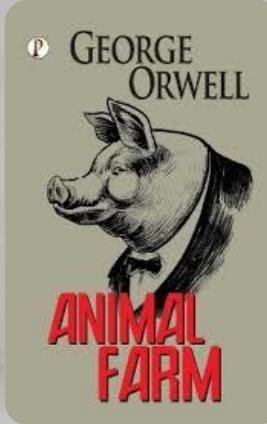
Anti Stalin

- Orwell began writing for the American Partisan Review which connected him to other anti-Stalinists.
- Orwell **disliked the idea that people supported Stalin** despite his crimes against Russia and the greater world.
- *"One could not have a better example of the moral and emotional shallowness of our time, that the fact that we are now all more or less pro Stalin. This disgusting murderer is temporarily on our side, and so the purges, etc./ are suddenly forgotten."*
 - Orwell's in his war-time diary in July 1941



Writing Animal Farm

- Orwell's experiences in the Spanish Civil War initially triggered the idea for the novel.
 - In the preface of a 1947 Ukrainian edition of the novel, he explains how escaping the communist purges in Spain showed him *"how easily totalitarian propaganda can control the opinion of enlightened people in democratic countries."*
- Orwell described the idea of setting the book on a farm:
 - *"... I saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge carthorse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat."*



Publishing Animal Farm



- Orwell was prepared to publish *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* in 1944 but no publishing company would take it because the Soviets were a strong ally in WWII.
- One publisher who denied the manuscript said:
 - "... the fable does follow, as I see now, so completely the progress of the Russian Soviets and their two dictators that it can apply only to Russia, to the exclusion of the other dictatorships. Another thing: it would be less offensive if the predominant caste in the fable were not pigs. I think the choice of pigs as the ruling caste will no doubt give offence to many people, and particularly to anyone who is bit touchy, as undoubtedly the Russians are."
- *Animal Farm* was eventually published in August of 1945 shortly after the United States dropped the atomic bomb in Japan ending all fronts of WWII.



The Plot

- Animal Farm begins with Old Major, a prize-winning pig, having had a dream which has inspired him to give a speech to the rest of the animals on Manor Farm to rise up against the humans. Old Major points out that all the animals work harder than Mr. Jones but they are neglected: Jones forgets to feed them, and they aren't taken care of.





'Comrades , you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. But I will come to the dream later. I have something else to say first. I do not think, comrades, that I shall be with you for many months longer, and before I die, I feel it my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired. I have had a long life, I have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall and I think I may say that I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as any animal now living. It is about this that I wish to speak to you.

'Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: **our lives are miserable, laborious, and short**. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, and those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength; and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty . No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free.

The life of an animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth.

'**But is this simply part of the order of Nature**? Is it because this land of ours is so poor that it cannot afford a decent life to those who dwell upon it ?





No, comrades,
a thousand times no! The soil of England is fertile, its climate is good, it is capable of affording food in abundance to an enormously greater number of animals than now inhabit it. This single farm of ours would support a dozen horses, twenty cows, hundreds of sheep - and all of them living in a comfort and a dignity that are now almost beyond our imagining. 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.** There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in a single word - Man. **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.** (...)





'Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings? Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could become rich and free. What then must we do? Why, work night and day, body and soul, for the overthrow of the human race! That is my message to you, comrades: **Rebellion!** I do not know when that Rebellion will come, it might be in a week or in a hundred years, but I know, as surely as I see this straw beneath my feet, that sooner or later justice will be done. Fix your eyes on that, comrades, throughout the short remainder of your lives! And above all, pass on this message of mine to those who come after you, so that future generations shall carry on the struggle until it is victorious.

'And 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**





- This philosophy promoting equality among animals is defined "**Animalism**". Inspired by Old Major's vision, the animals rise in rebellion against Mr. Jones, forcing him off the farm. They rename it "Animal Farm" and establish the "Seven Commandments" to guide their new society. These commandments emphasize equality, such as "**All animals are equal**" and "**No animal shall drink alcohol.**" Initially, life on Animal Farm improves as the animals work collectively to cultivate their own food. The pigs, particularly Snowball and Napoleon, took on leadership roles. They plan to build a windmill to make their lives better.





However, conflicts emerge between Snowball and Napoleon, leading to Snowball's expulsion from the farm by a pack of dogs Napoleon raises. Napoleon seizes control and alters the commandments to suit his interests. As time passes, the farm becomes more oppressive.

The pigs indulged in luxuries while the other animals work tirelessly. Squealer, the propagandist pig, manipulates the truth to maintain control. The animals toil relentlessly to complete the windmill, facing hardship and hunger. Napoleon forms alliances with humans, breaking the original commandments.

The animals are too exhausted to protest. A dark day arrived when animals confess to conspiring with Snowball and are brutally executed. The windmill, after much effort, is destroyed in a storm, and Napoleon falsely blames Snowball. Over time, the pigs become indistinguishable from the humans they once despised. They walk on two legs, consume alcohol, and betray the principles of Animalism.

The animals realize they had traded one tyranny for another.



Characters

- **Old Major - Karl Marx & Lenin**

An aged prize boar provides the inspiration that fuels the Rebellion in the book. He is an allegorical combination of Karl Marx, & Lenin, the communist leader of the Russian Revolution & the early Soviet nation in that he draws up the principles of the revolution. His skull being put on revered public display recalls Lenin, whose embalmed body was put on display.

- **Napoleon - Joseph Stalin**

- Napoleon is the main villain of the story.

- **Snowball - Leon Trotsky**

Napoleon's rival & original head of the farm after Jones' overthrow. He is mainly based on Trotsky but also combines elements of Lenin.

- **Squealer - The Soviet Press**

Napoleon's second-in-command and minister of propaganda





- **Mr. Jones - Tsar Nicholas II**

Former owner of the farm, Jones is an alcoholic. The animals revolt against him after he drinks so much that he does not feed or take care of them. He is an allegory of Russian Tsar Nicholas II, who abdicated following the February Revolution of 1917 & was murdered, along with the rest of his family by the Bolsheviks.

- **Mr. Frederick - Adolf Hitler**

The tough owner of Pinchfield, a small but well-kept neighboring farm, who briefly enters into an alliance with Napoleon. He is an allegory of Adolf Hitler who enters into a neutrality pact with Stalin only to later break it by invading the Soviet Union.

- **Boxer - Working class**

A loyal, kind, dedicated, hard working, and respectable cart-horse, although quite naive & gullible. Boxer does a large share of the physical labor on the farm adhering to the simplistic belief that working harder will solve all the animals' problems. He believes any problem can be solved if he works harder. However he is betrayed by Napoleon in the end.



- **The puppies - KGB (Secret Police)**

Taken away at birth by Napoleon and reared him to be his security force. They used force, often killed entire families for disobedience.

- **Moses - Established Religion**

He regales the animals with tales of a wondrous place beyond the clouds called "Sugar candy Mountain, that happy country where we poor animals shall rest forever from our labors!" Orwell portrays religion as "the black raven of priestcraft -- promising pie in the sky when you die, and faithfully serving whoever happens to be in power."



What is Animal Farm?



- **A Fable**

Most fables have **two** levels of meaning. On the surface, the fable is about **animals**. But on a second level, the **animals stand for types of people or ideas**. The way the animals interact and the way the plot unfolds says something about the nature of people or the value of ideas

- **An Allegory**

An **Allegory** is a literary device in which characters or events in a literary, visual, or musical art form represent or symbolize ideas or concepts.

- **A Satire**

A works which makes fun of something, usually political.



Reception

- *Animal Farm* was published in 1945 and its first printing of 4500 copies was sold out in two weeks.
- The reviews were all glowing and its favourable reception was in direct contrast to the difficulties Orwell had in getting it published. It has, basically, been seen in four ways :
 1. a 'lighthearted tale' (Christopher Hollis, 1956),
 2. 'a cry of despair' (Stephen Greenblatt, 1965),
 3. 'a clever satire on the betrayal of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalin' (Stephen Greenblatt, 1956),
 4. 'a backward work' (Isaac Rosenfeld, 1946) or a fable that 'misses the point' (Northrop Frye, 1946).

