George Orwell: **ANIMAL FARM**

George Orwell was born in India in 1903 (real name Eric Blair), and was educated at Eton. From 1922 to 1928 he served in Burma in the Indian Imperial Police. For the next two years he lived in Paris, and then came to England as a s&1001 teacher. Later he worked in a bookshop. In 1937 he went to Spain to fight for the Republicans and was wounded. During the Second World War he was a member of the Home Guard and worked for the B. B. C. In 1943 he joined the staff of a newspaper and was sent to France and Germany as a special correspondent. He suffered very much sickness and poverty during his life and died of tuberculosis in 1950. His works include: Down and Out in Paris and London, Burmese Days, The Road to Wigan Pier, Coming Up For Air, Keep the Aspidistra Flying and Homage to Catalonia. Animal Farm made Orwell famous when it was published in 1945; Nineteen Eight-Four had a similar success later.

After Mr. Jones, the drunken owner of Manor Farm, has gone to bed, Major, the oldest and wisest pig, calls all the other animals into the barn to tell them of a strange dream he had the previous night. After the dogs, the hens, sheep and cows, the cart-horses Boxer and Clover, Mollie the frivolous mare, Muriel the goat, Benjamin the donkey and the cat all settle down he begins to speak. Only Moses, the tame raven, is not present. Major explains that Man is their enemy; he is the only creature that consumes without producing, yet he keeps the animals in misery and slavery, exploiting and slaughtering them. Major's message is rebellion: to work day and night for the overthrow of the human race. He teaches them a song "Beasts of England", describing a dream of the earth as it will be when Man has vanished and the animals are happy and free. The animals are wildly excited and all burst into song. The noise awakes Mr. Jones who, thinking a fox is in the yard, fires into the darkness. The animals flee to their places and settle down to sleep.

Three nights later old Major dies. There is much secret activity during the next three months. The work of teaching and organizing the rebellion falls on the pigs, the cleverest of the animals. Pre-eminent among them are Napoleon, a young strongwilled boar, Snowball, who is more vivacious and inventive, and Squealer, a brilliant and persuasive talker. These three develop old Major's teachings into a complete system of thought — Animalism. At the beginning they meet with stupidity and apathy and Mollie, especially, is hard to convince. They have an even harder struggle to counteract the lies spread by Moses, the raven. He tells the animals of a wonderful country in the sky called Sugarcandy Mountain to which animals go when they die. The animals hate him because he is a tale-bearer and does not work, but some believe in Sugarcandy Mountain and the pigs have to argue hard to persuade them there is no such place, Their most faithful disciples are the cart-horses, Boxer and Clover. The Rebellion is achieved earlier than anyone has expected. One Saturday in June Mr. Jones goes out and gets so drunk that he does not come back till Sunday, then lying down and falling asleep at once. His men have gone out for the day without feeding the animals. In the evening the animals are still unfed and can stand it no longer. They break into the store shed and begin to help themselves. Mr. Jones and his four men rush in with whips but the hungry animals fling themselves on their tormentors and chase them from the farm. Mrs. Jones slips away followed by Moses. The animals gallop joyfully round the boundaries of the farm; then they destroy the last traces of Jones's hated reign, the harness, the knives and whips. The next day they make an ecstatic inspection of the farm and rename it Animal Farm. In the big barn the Seven Commandments of Animalism are inscribed on the wall by Snowball, who then calls on the animals to get in the harvest. The three cows need to be milked and the pigs manage to do this. When the animals return from the hayfield in the evening it is noticed that the milk has disappeared.

They toil and sweat to get the harvest in, every animal working as hard as possible with the pigs directing and supervising the others. All through the summer the work of the farm goes well — the animals meet with many difficulties but the pigs with their cleverness and Boxer with his great strength always pull them through. Nobody shirks except Mollie and the cat. Old Benjamin remains cynical. On Sundays there is no work but there is a flaghoisting and a General Meeting at which the work of the coming week is planned. Resolutions are put forward by the pigs and Snowball and Napoleon are the most active in the debates but never in agreement. Reading and writing classes are organized. The pigs can read and write perfectly but Clover and Boxer can hardly manage to learn the alphabet. Many of the other animals cannot get further than the letter A, and the stupider ones, such as sheep, hens and ducks, cannot learn the Seven Commandments by heart. So, Snowball teaches them a single maxim: "Four legs good, two legs bad", which the sheep now continually bleat. Napoleon thinks that the education of the young is more important and he takes nine puppies from their mother and keeps them in seclusion in a loft. It is found that the milk is mixed every day into the pigs' mash. They also take all the apples. Squealer explains to the other animals that the pigs are the brain-workers and therefore need these extra rations. The management and organization of the farm depend on them and if they failed in their duty, Jones would come back.

The news of the successful rebellion is carried to other farms by the pigeons, and the neighbouring farmers, Pilkington and Frederick, become frightened by the growing restlessness among their animals. One day Jones and his men with others from the neighbouring farms approach Animal Farm. The attack is expected and Snowball, who has studied a book of Julius Caesar's campaigns, cleverly directs the defensive operations. The men are driven out, Snowball wounded and one sheep killed. The battle is later called the Battle of the Cowshed and celebrated annually, like the anniversary of the Rebellion, by the firing of Mr. Jones's captured gun.

Mollie becomes more and more workshy. She is accused by Clover of allowing a human being to stroke her nose. Sugar and ribbons are found hidden in her stall. Finally, she runs away to work for a publican and is never mentioned again. In January the weather is bitterly hard and no work can be done in the fields. Many meetings are held at which Snowball and Napoleon disagree more and more. Snowball's idea is to build a windmill to supply the farm with electric power, while Napoleon thinks it more important to increase food production. Snowball works out all the plans for a windmill in a shed and all the animals except Napoleon are enthusiastic. Finally, the question is put to the vote. Just as all are about to vote in favour of the windmill, Napoleon gives a sign and nine ferocious dogs (the secretly trained puppies) dash in and chase Snowball from the farm. Napoleon announces there will be no more Meetings, all important questions will be settled by a special committee of pigs, presided over by himself. The animals are dismayed but are too stupid to voice their protests. Only four young porkers jump up but are frightened into silence by the dogs. Squealer persuades the animals that Snowball was a criminal and that Napoleon is making a sacrifice in taking the leadership upon himself. Three weeks after Snowball's expulsion Napoleon announces that the windmill is to be built after all. Squealer spreads the story that the whole idea was Napoleon's, he only seemed to oppose it as a manoeuvre to get rid of Snowball, who was a dangerous character and a bad influence.

All the year the animals, especially Boxer, work like slaves, not only doing the work of the farm but building the windmill. Working hours are lengthened and rations cut. Many things are needed that cannot be produced on the farm. Napoleon announces that from now onwards Animal Farm will engage in trade with the neighbouring farms. Again, the animals are dismayed as this new policy is against one of their fundamental principles. Napoleon explains that their intermediary will be Mr. Whymper, a solicitor. Squealer makes a round of the farm, setting the animals' mind at rest by assuring them that a resolution against trade with humans only existed in their imaginations. The pigs move into the farmhouse and sleep in the beds. Clover remembers a definite ruling against beds, but the Fourth Commandment has been altered to: No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets. By the autumn the animals are tired but happy, they have had a hard year but the windmill is almost half built. Boxer has worked harder than anyone, even coming out to work at nights by the light of the moon. In November there is a violent gale and the next morning they are horrified to find the windmill in ruins Napoleon puts the blame on Snowball, the public enemy, and urges them to begin rebuilding at once.

It is a bitter winter and rations are again cut. Napoleon now rarely appears in public, always guarded by ferocious dogs. Squealer announces that the hens must give up their eggs, which will be sold to procure grain. They try to protest but their rations are stopped until they capitulate. A pile of timber is to be sold and Napo le0n is hesitating between Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick as buyers. About this time Snowball is rumoured to have secret agents on Animal Farm and if anything goes wrong it is attributed to Snowball. One day an assembly is called and the dogs seize the four young pigs that protested earlier. They confess to being Snowball's agents and are at once killed by the dogs. Some hens, a goose and a sheep also make public confessions and are slaughtered. The remaining animals are horrified, both at the treachery of these animals and the cruel retribution they have just witnessed. Clover, especially, is very sad: these scenes of terror are not what they had looked forward to when old Major first stirred them to rebellion. As she cannot express her thoughts she begins to sing "Beasts of England" and the other animals join in sadly. Squealer appears and announces that Napoleon has forbidden the singing of this song. The animals, worried about the executions, find that the Sixth Commandment has been changed to: No animal shall kill another animal without *cause*. Throughout the year they work even harder than before but their suspicions are lulled by Squealer's statistics. Napoleon becomes more and more remote and is called the Leader and given credit for every successful achievement. He is still negotiating with Frederick and Pilkington about the sale of timber. The animals fear and hate Frederick as stories of his cruelty and a planned attack on Animal Farm are circulated. Snowball is thought to be on his farm. In the autumn the windmill is at last completed and named Napoleon Mill. Three days later the animals are astonished to learn that Napoleon has sold the timber to Frederick. Napoleon assures them that all the rumours about him were untrue and probably originated with Snowball and his agents. By seeming to be friendly with Pilkington Napoleon forced Frederick to raise his price. He insists on being paid in five-pound notes instead of a cheque. But three days later it turns out that

the bank-notes are forgeries. The death sentence is pronounced on Frederick and the animals prepare for his long-expected attack. The next morning it begins and fifteen men with guns drive the animals back. The windmill is blown up, and enraged by this sight, the animals' courage returns to them and they chase Frederick and his men away. But in this bitter battle some animals are killed and Boxer is wounded. Napoleon, however, congratulates the animals on their victory and there are two days of celebrations. The pigs find a case of whisky and get drunk in the farmhouse. After recovering from a bad hangover Napoleon instructs Whymper to buy books on brewing and distilling, and barley is sown in a small field, previously reserved for retired workers. At night Squealer changes the Fifth Commandment to: No animal shall drink alcohol to excess.

The next winter is cold, life is hard and food even shorter than before. Only the pigs and dogs are well fed. But the animals believe all Squealer's statistics and cannot remember another sort to life. Many young pigs, (Napoleon's), are born and are given special privileges. A school house has to be built for them, and more barley is sown to be made into beer for the pigs. The animals are provided with demonstrations and processions to keep their minds off their empty bellies. One day Moses returns, still talking of Sugarcandy Mountain. Many animals now believe him as their lives are hungry and laborious, and the pigs allow him to remain On the farm. Boxer works harder than ever and is looking forward to retirement, but collapses one day and cannot get up. Squealer tells the distressed animals that Napoleon has arranged for him to be treated in the town hospital. It is only when Boxer is being driven away in a van that Benjamin reads the terrible words on it: "Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler". The horrified animals follow the van but it is too late. Squealer calms their fears by more lies and after the news comes of Boxer's death (in hospital) a memorial banquet is given in his honour. Singing is heard in the farmhouse that night and word goes round that from somewhere the Pigs have got the money to buy themselves another case of whisky.

Years pass and the short animal lives flee by. Now only Clover, Benjamin, Moses and some pigs can remember the Old days before the Rebellion. The farm is prosperous now and the windmill has been completed. But life for the animals continues to be hard and frugal; only the pigs and dogs are richer, neither of them produce food by their own labour but are always busy, as Squealer explains, with "supervision" and "organization". Though for the others life is as it has always been, they have never lost their sense of honour and privilege in being members of Animal Farm; no creature calls any other creature "Master". All animals are equal. One day in summer Squealer takes the sheep to an outlying field and trains them there for a whole week. One day the animals are horrified to see the pigs, including Napoleon carrying a whip walking on their hind legs. Just as they are about to protest the sheep burst out into a loud bleating of their new slogan: "Four legs good, two legs better". Old Clover and Benjamin go into the barn to read the Seven Commandments again. There is now only one: All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others. After this the pigs carry whips in their trotters and wear clothes. A deputation of neighbouring farmers is invited to inspect the farm. Laughter and singing comes from the farmhouse in the evening. The animals creep into the garden to look through the window. Men and pigs are sitting round the table, having played cards. Pilkington drinks a toast to the prosperity of Animal Farm, but Napoleon replies that this name has been abolished and that henceforward it is to be known as Manor Farm. There is cheering and drinking, but later, when they resume their game of cards, the sound of violent quarrelling. "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".

Main theme: *In this biting satire on dictatorship Orwell describes the revolution that went wrong. Cruelly treated and exploited by their masters, Men, the animals are justified in rising in rebellion, but are finally just as cruelly oppressed by the pigs, their new masters. As the pigs are the cleverest of the animals they find it only too easy to dupe and exploit their more stupid and gullible fellows. They are corrupted by their power and become just as ruthless as their former masters. One by one the original commandments, developed from Old Major's utopian dream, are amended and distorted, but the animals are too stupid or too frightened to protest. Thus, the author shows that a revolution, carried out by the uneducated, however idealistic they may be, is doomed to failure because a group of the cleverest and most ruthless will rise to power and continue to exploit them for their own ends. The reader can find many parallels with the situation in Russia under Stalin (the absolute power of the Leader, the secret police the expulsion of Public Enemy Nr. I, the mock trials and confessions, the purges and executions, the Leader's dealings with Hitler-Frederick).* ***Comment*** *: The animals have human characteristics and typify certain groups or individuals: the dictator Napoleon, a Stalin figure, Snowball like Stalin's rival Trotsky, Squealer' the cunning Minister of Propaganda, Mollie the pleasure loving materialist who defects from the communist paradise, Boxer and Clover the plodding honest workers, Benjamin the cynic, Moses, representing the Church, the dogs who are the secret police and the sheep, the stupid, easily swayed masses.*