



## George Orwell & His “Animal Farm”

Lecture by Dr. Sudesh B. Bhowate  
Head, Dept. of English  
Dr. M.W. P.W.S. Arts and Commerce College,  
Nagpur-26

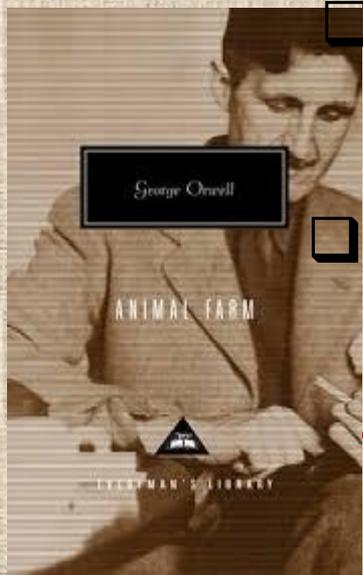
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- ❑ George Orwell was one of the greatest writers of the 20th century.
  - ❑ He was born Eric Arthur Blair on 25 June 1903 in India to a colonial civil servant
  - ❑ However when Orwell was only a year old his mother moved back to England.
  - ❑ In 1911 George went to St Cyprian's School in Eastbourne.
  - ❑ In 1917 he won a scholarship to Eton but in 1921 he joined the British police in Burma but resigned in 1927 out of dissatisfaction.
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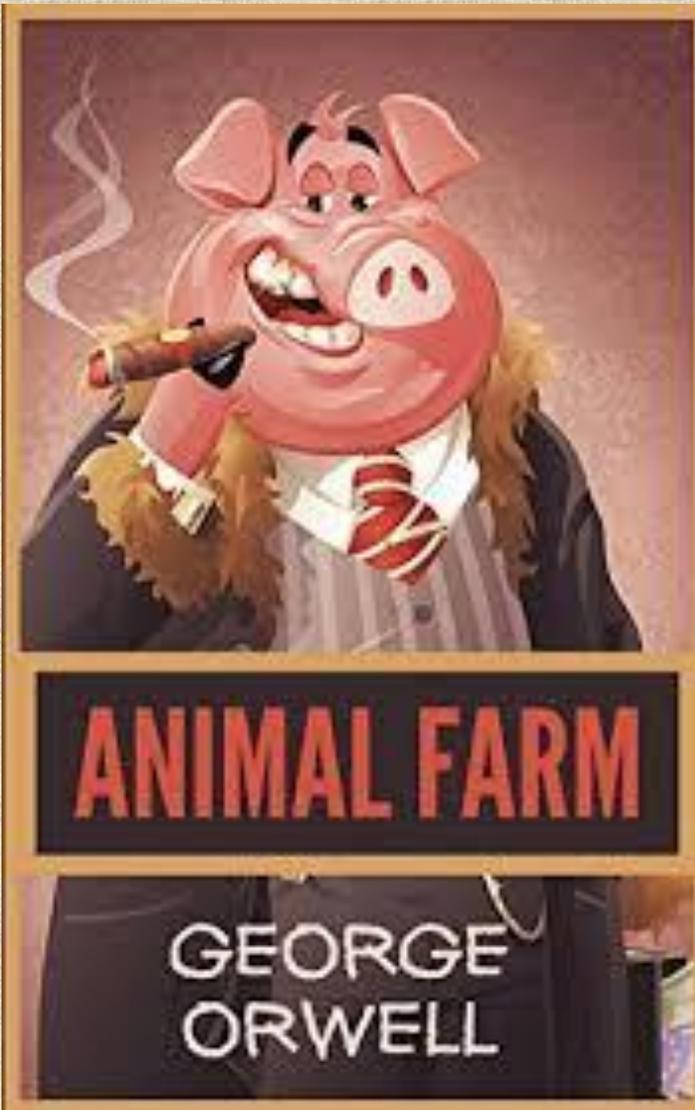
- ❑ George Orwell decided to become a writer so began living among the poor.
  - ❑ In 1928 he journeyed to Paris. For a short time in 1932-1933 Orwell worked as a teacher in a small private school.
    - ❑ In 1934 Orwell got a part time job in a second hand bookshop. Meanwhile in 1933 his first book was published *Down and Out* in Paris and London.
  - ❑ In 1934 his first novel *Burmese Days* was published. In 1935 George Orwell had another novel published. It was called *A Clergyman's Daughter*. It was followed in 1936 by *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. Also in 1936 Orwell married Eileen. (She died in 1945).
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- ❑ In 1936 George Orwell was commissioned to write a book about poverty in northern England. *The Road to Wigan Pier* was published in 1937.
  - ❑ Meanwhile Orwell, a Socialist left for Spain in December 1936 to fight in the *Spanish Civil War*. (The civil war was between the left wing Republicans and the Fascist Nationalists. Some foreign volunteers took part).
  - ❑ While there he was wounded in the throat. Meanwhile Communists began to arrest dissenters and Orwell was forced to flee from Spain. After arriving in Britain he wrote *A Homage to Catalonia*, published in 1938.
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- ❑ However by 1938 Orwell was suffering from tuberculosis. He spent the winter of 1938-1939 in Morocco.
- ❑ In 1939 another novel, *Coming Up For Air* was published. At the beginning of the Second World War George Orwell was rejected for military service but from 1941 to 1943 he worked for the BBC.
- ❑ In 1943 he became literary editor for the *Tribune* a left wing magazine.
- ❑ Then in 1945 his great satire *Animal Farm* was published.
  - ❑ In 1949 his masterpiece *1984* was published.
- ❑ But his health was failing. In October 1949 George Orwell married his second wife Sonia. George Orwell died on 21 January 1950. He was only 46.



# George Orwell's Animal Farm



## Novel Structure

- ❖ To convey his political message, Orwell employs the literary forms of allegory, satire, and fable.
  - ❖ An **allegory** is a story that can be read on two distinct levels. Characters and events in an allegory represent something else, and are used by the writer to convey a moral or philosophical message.
- ❖ Many of the characters in *Animal Farm* represent political leaders of the Russian Revolution.
- ❖ As an **allegory** the story presents the Russian Revolution, the early Soviet Union, and attempts by the Western Allies to overthrow it.



- ❖ A **satire** uses ridicule to make certain people, events, or institutions appear foolish.
- ❖ Surprising ironic reversals enhances the satiric nature of the novel. Orwell makes extensive use of dramatic, verbal, and situational irony
  - ❖ A **fable** is a brief, often humorous, tale that presents a moral or message.
- ❖ As in the familiar Aesop's Fables, the characters in the *Animal Farm* are animals whose thought and behaviors mirror those of human beings.
- ❖ Orwell satirizes political machinations and human responses to them. By using animals as characters, Orwell creates a detachment that allows the readers to see the issues in a new light.



## ❖ Russian Revolution of 1917:

- ❖ The **Russian Revolution of 1917** was a political movement in Russia that climaxed in 1917 with the overthrow of the Provisional Government as a result of **communism**.
- ❖ **Communism** is when the government controls everything, and everything is equally distributed to the people. Overall, it is a dictatorship.
- ❖ However, the people of Russia did not feel as if they were being treated fairly, thus a **revolution** erupted.



## General Causes of the Revolution:

- The economic causes of the Russian Revolution were based largely on Czar Nicholas's mismanagement and decision to go to war with Japan.
- Over fifteen million men joined the army, which left an insufficient number of workers in the factories and on the farms.
- The result was widespread shortages of food and materials. Factory workers had to endure terrible working conditions, including twelve to fourteen hour days and low wages.
- Many riots and strikes for better conditions and higher wages broke out. Although some factories agreed to the requests for higher wages, wartime inflation nullified the increase. There was one protest to which Czar Nicholas responded with violence; in response, industrial workers went on strike and effectively paralyzed the railway and transportation networks.
- Overall, Nicholas's failure to solve his country's economic suffering and communism's promise to do just that comprised the core of the Revolution.

## Russian Leaders that various animals in the novel will represent:

### 1. Czar Nicholas II-

When Czar Nicholas II began his reign in 1894, Russia was buzzing with ideas of a new government. The peasants grew tired of the labor imposed on them, and the discontentment among factory workers also increased. Czar II ruled at a time that would have been challenging for anyone. Unfortunately, he was not a strong ruler. He refused to institute the reforms desired by the people. He made the disastrous decision to go to war with Japan, thus Russia suffered humiliating defeats. The result? The Russian Revolution of 1917.

### 2. Karl Marx-

Marx and his associate, Frederick Engels, were both active in various revolutionary groups and together worked out the theory and tactics of Communism, thus Marx “invented” Communism. He died before the Revolution began.

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### 3. Leon Trotsky-

In 1905 Trotsky returned to Russia, where he participated in the first Russian Revolution. However, He and several other individuals were soon arrested, and after a trial, they were deported.

### 4. Joseph Stalin-

Stalin gained control of the Soviet Union shortly after Trotsky was deported. He disliked and opposed Trotsky's beliefs. Stalin was known to be a horrible public speaker who did not follow Marx's ideas on Communism. Also, he would literally kill for power. People became scared of him and his beliefs, so as a result, they followed his ideas out of fright.

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## Overall...

- ❖ The Russian Revolution was supposed to fix problems from Czar Nicholas II;
- ❖ People wanted Communism, but feared those in power would corrupt the idea;
- ❖ In order for Communism to work, there must be a revolution...much like this one.



## **Conflict:**

The narrative is driven by the external conflict between the animals, such as the disagreements between Napoleon and Snowball, between the animals and the humans, and between the animals and the elements. Internal conflict is minimal; in fact, one of Orwell's points is the lack of internal conflict among the animals whose doubts and disillusionments are so easily smoothed over by Squealer. The practical lesson of the fable is most clearly illustrated by external struggles.



## **Allegory:**

Critics see *Animal Farm* as an allegory of the corruption and abuse of power founding all totalitarian regimes and specifically in Russia, which endured totalitarianism under the czars and, later, under Joseph Stalin, who was in power in Russia when the novel was written.

The allegory is neither an exact nor a chronological representation of people or events; however, parallels can be drawn between characters and historical figures/events/institutions.

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- ❑ Mr. Jones, Czar Nicholas II
  - ❑ Old Major, Karl Marx or Marxist
  - ❑ Napoleon, Joseph Stalin/ Leninist thought
  - ❑ The pigs, the Bolsheviks
  - ❑ Snowball, Leon Trotsky or Reds Mollie, the White Russians
  - ❑ The Rebellion, the (the opposition to the October Revolution Bolsheviks or Reds)
  - ❑ the farmhouse, the Kremlin
  - ❑ Mr. Frederick, Germany
  - ❑ Mr. Pilkington, Britain
  - ❑ Squealer, Pravda, the official newspaper of Communist propaganda.
  - ❑ Boxer, the loyal workers, also known as the proletariat
  - ❑ “Beasts of England,” “L’Internationale”
  - ❑ the wild animals, Russian peasants
  - ❑ Moses, the Russian Orthodox Church
  - ❑ hoof and horn flag, hammer and sickle flag of the Soviet Union
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## Characters:

The dimensions of the animal characters are developed to the point necessary for them to convey their allegorical function. Old Major, a prize Middle White boar, is the visionary whose dream incites the rebellion. The major protagonists are a pig triumvirate: Napoleon, is a huge Berkshire boar who eventually bests another boar, Snowball, to become dictator. Squealer, is a porker who handles propaganda first for the rebellion, then for the regime. Other significant characters are:

- Boxer, a huge horse, loyal
- Clover , a matronly mare and plow horse
- Muriel ,a goat
- Benjamin, a stubborn donkey
- Moses, a raven
- Mollie, a silly white mare
- Mr. Whymper, a solicitor (lawyer)
- Mr. Jones, the farm's original owner
- Mr. Frederick and Mr. Pilkington, the owners of the adjoining farms.

## Themes:

- ❑ **The corruption nature of power:** In *Animal Farm*, Orwell shows how both the leaders and the followers of a society can act in ways that destroy freedom and equality. Corruption through power reaches its zenith when Napoleon becomes a tyrant more oppressive than Mr. Jones.
- ❑ **The oppressed tightening the noose of oppression:** Orwell illustrates the limiting of individual freedom through the ignorance, inertia, or misplaced loyalty of the animals. This is exemplified by Boxer who blindly proclaims “If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right.”



- ❑ Animal Farm is a satirical dystopian novella
  - ❑ An allegorical tale, Animal Farm tells a literal story - of the animals on the farm - that is intended to be representative of another situation - Stalin's rise in the Soviet Union
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## Plot and Summary

Animal Farm opens on *Manor Farm*, where animals are subservient to their human master, a farmer named *Jones*. One night an aged boar called *Old Major* calls a meeting of his fellow animals, and puts forth the call that they should one day rise up in rebellion against the humans who *enslave* them. *Old Major* suggests that once humans have been overthrown, no animal should act like a human by sleeping in a bed, wearing clothes, drinking alcohol, or engaging in trade. The meeting is concluded with old Major teaching the animals a song called *Beasts of England*, which becomes their anthem. When old Major dies, the pigs Napoleon, Snowball and Squealer take leadership roles, and develop old Major's teachings into a system called Animalism.

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The rebellion occurs one day when Jones and his men neglect to feed the animals for an entire day, prompting the cows to break into the store shed. When the men come in with whips, the animals fight back, and manage to chase all the humans away and bar the gate behind them. The newly liberated animals rename the farm Animal Farm, and paint the Seven Commandments of Animalism on the barn wall. Assuming leadership roles, the pigs Napoleon and Snowball argue and disagree on almost everything, while Squealer is used as their mouthpiece, justifying policies that provide special treatment for the pigs.

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With news of the successful rebellion reaching the outside world, animals across England are heard singing Beasts of England, and other farmers are concerned their own animals may attempt the same thing. Jones makes an attempt to recapture the farm, but the animals are led to victory by Snowball, in what becomes known as the Battle of the Cowshed. Tensions between Snowball and Napoleon worsen over their disagreement in policy. Snowball wants to build a windmill to create electrical power, but Napoleon unleashes a pack of dogs he has been secretly raising, and they chase Snowball away from the farm. Following Snowball's expulsion, Napoleon uses Squealer to convince the other animals that Snowball is a criminal and a traitor, and Napoleon assumes control. Eventually revealing that the animals will indeed begin construction on the windmill, Napoleon uses his pack of enforcing dogs and Squealer's propaganda to begin disobeying the Seven Commandments. He engages in trade with men through a go-between named Whymper, and the pigs take up residence in the farmhouse, where they sleep in beds.



When the windmill is midway through construction, a storm causes it to collapse overnight. Napoleon blames this destruction on Snowball, and circulates rumours that Snowball visits at night to cause mischief, distracting the animals from their lack of food and long hours of heavy labour. Wanting to quash any voices of dissent, Napoleon orders an assembly in which his dogs execute four pigs who have vocally opposed him in the past, and drags confessions out of other animals - all claiming to have been in league with Snowball - who are also executed.

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After the windmill is completed, neighbouring farmer Frederick invades the farm with armed men, and the animals retreat to the buildings. While hiding, the men use blasting powder to destroy the windmill, inspiring the animals to attack and eventually drive them away with heavy casualties on both sides. When construction is resumed again, the large horse Boxer takes on the majority of the work, taking a toll on his aging body. After being found collapsed one day, the pigs arrange to have him treated by a veterinarian in town, but the wagon that comes to take him reads "horse slaughterer". Reading this, Benjamin the donkey raises alarm, but the other animals are unable to save Boxer, and he is too weak to escape. Several days later Squealer announces that Boxer has died peacefully in the hospital, with Squealer there at his side. He assures the animals the horse slaughterer sign was simply because the wagon used to belong to one.

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Years pass, and Animal Farm has become profitable, but the animals continue to work very hard for minimal rations. Only the oldest among them remember the rebellion, and it seems a distant memory. The pigs begin walking on their hind legs, wearing clothes, and carrying whips. When Clover and Benjamin are confused by these developments, they go to read the Seven Commandments, and see that they now simply read: **ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL, BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.**

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In the novella's final scene, the neighbouring farmers come to tour Animal Farm and congratulate Napoleon on his treatment of the lower animals: they do more work and receive less food than on any other farm in the country. When the pigs and men sit down to play cards, an argument ensues when Napoleon and farmer Pilkington simultaneously play the ace of spades, revealing someone to be a cheater. The other animals look on through the windows, and see that the men and pigs have become so similar, they can't tell them apart.

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Being an allegorical novella, the characters and incidents in *Animal Farm* are meant to symbolize those of Stalin's rise to power in the Soviet Union. Old Major, who inspires the rebellion and the idea of all animals living free from human control, is representative of both Karl Marx, the father of Communism, and Lenin, key architect of the Russian Revolution. As Orwell was himself a socialist, Old Major is written favourably, as his dreams and ideas are based on freedom and equality. Napoleon and Snowball are respectively representative of Stalin and Trotsky, both potential successors of Lenin. Trotsky was known for making impassioned speeches, while Stalin quietly made plans to drive Trotsky away and rise to power. As cruel leader ousted from power, Jones represents the rule of Russian royalty, and the other farm animals are the working classes who end up exploited in all scenarios. The windmill, a source of backbreaking labour that never ends up benefitting the working animals, is ~~symbolic of Stalin's industrialization and collectivization policies, which had~~ disastrous effects on the lives of the working class.



These parallels all serve to highlight the novella's major theme, which is not anti-socialism or communism, but how these ideals become corrupted by those in power. Following the rebellion, the pigs quickly establish themselves as rulers who are given special privileges. Napoleon's violent elimination of all who voice opposition to his rule represents the tactics that Stalin used to gain total control as dictator of the Soviet Union, all while hypocritically claiming to be a communist leader.

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Animal Farm also deals with themes surrounding the tendency for class disparities to exist in societies. Both before and after the rebellion, there is a working class exploited by a ruling class. In the final chapter, neighbouring farmer Pilkington commends Napoleon on how much work he gets out of his "lower animals", and directly compares them to the "lower classes" of people. In particular, the animals represent a naive working class who are often confronted with evidence of their own exploitation, but decide to accept propagandized explanations - represented by Squealer's constant dispensing of misinformation.

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# Animal Farm: Characters

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## **Napoleon**

Napoleon emerges as an utterly corrupt opportunist.

never makes a single contribution to the revolution—not to the formulation of its ideology, not to the bloody struggle that it necessitates, not to the new society's initial attempts to establish itself.

He never shows interest in the strength of Animal Farm itself, the only project he undertakes with enthusiasm is the training of a litter of puppies. He doesn't educate them for their own good or for the good of all, however, but rather for his own good: they become his own private army or secret police, a violent means by which he imposes his will on others.

Modeled on the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, Napoleon represents, the political tyrants

His namesake is not any communist leader but the early-eighteenth-century French general Napoleon, who betrayed the democratic principles on which he rode to power, arguably becoming as great a despot as the aristocrats whom he supplanted..

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## Snowball

As a parallel for Leon Trotsky, Snowball emerges as a fervent ideologue who throws himself heart and soul into the attempt to spread Animalism worldwide and to improve Animal Farm's infrastructure. His idealism, however, leads to his downfall. Relying only on the force of his own logic and rhetorical skill to gain his influence, he proves no match for Napoleon's show of brute force.

Snowball basically accepts the superiority of the pigs over the rest of the animals. Moreover, his fervent, single-minded enthusiasm for grand projects such as the windmill might have erupted into full-blown megalomaniac despotism had he not been chased from Animal Farm. Indeed, Orwell suggests that we cannot eliminate government corruption by electing principled individuals to roles of power; he reminds us throughout the novella that it is power itself that corrupts.

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## Boxer

Boxer epitomizes all of the best qualities of the exploited working classes: dedication, loyalty, and a huge capacity for labor. He also, however, suffers from what Orwell saw as the working class's major weaknesses: a naïve trust in the good intentions of the intelligentsia and an inability to recognize even the most blatant forms of political corruption. Exploited by the pigs as much or more than he had been by Mr. Jones, Boxer represents all of the invisible labor that undergirds the political drama being carried out by the elites. Boxer's pitiful death at a glue factory dramatically illustrates the extent of the pigs' betrayal. It may also, however, speak to the specific significance of Boxer himself: before being carted off, he serves as the force that holds Animal Farm together.

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## Squealer

The silver-tongued pig Squealer abuses language to justify Napoleon's actions and policies to the proletariat by whatever means seem necessary. By radically simplifying language—as when he teaches the sheep to bleat “Four legs good, two legs better!”—he limits the terms of debate. By complicating language unnecessarily, he confuses and intimidates the uneducated, as when he explains that pigs, who are the “brainworkers” of the farm, consume milk and apples not for pleasure, but for the good of their comrades. In this latter strategy, he also employs jargon (“tactics, tactics”) as well as a baffling vocabulary of false and impenetrable statistics, engendering in the other animals both self-doubt and a sense of hopelessness about ever accessing the truth without the pigs' mediation. Squealer's lack of conscience and unwavering loyalty to his leader, alongside his rhetorical skills, make him the perfect propagandist for any tyranny. Squealer's name also fits him well: squealing, of course, refers to a pig's typical form of vocalization, and Squealer's speech defines him. At the same time, to squeal also means to betray, aptly evoking Squealer's behavior with regard to his fellow animals.

## Old Major

As a democratic socialist, Orwell had a great deal of respect for Karl Marx, the German political economist, and even for Vladimir Ilych Lenin, the Russian revolutionary leader. His critique of *Animal Farm* has little to do with the Marxist ideology underlying the Rebellion but rather with the perversion of that ideology by later leaders. Major, who represents both Marx and Lenin, serves as the source of the ideals that the animals continue to uphold even after their pig leaders have betrayed them.

Though his portrayal of Old Major is largely positive, Orwell does include a few small ironies that allow the reader to question the venerable pig's motives. For instance, in the midst of his long litany of complaints about how the animals have been treated by human beings, Old Major is forced to concede that his own life has been long, full, and free from the terrors he has vividly sketched for his rapt audience. He seems to have claimed a false brotherhood with the other animals in order to garner their support for his vision.



## **Clover -**

A good-hearted female cart-horse and Boxer's close friend. Clover often suspects the pigs of violating one or another of the Seven Commandments, but she repeatedly blames herself for misremembering the commandments.

## **Moses -**

The tame raven who spreads stories of Sugarcandy Mountain, the paradise to which animals supposedly go when they die. Moses plays only a small role in *Animal Farm*, but Orwell uses him to explore how communism exploits religion as something with which to pacify the oppressed.

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## **Mollie -**

The vain, flighty mare who pulls Mr. Jones's carriage. Mollie craves the attention of human beings and loves being groomed and pampered. She has a difficult time with her new life on Animal Farm, as she misses wearing ribbons in her mane and eating sugar cubes. She represents the petit bourgeoisie that fled from Russia a few years after the Russian Revolution.

## **Benjamin -**

The long-lived donkey who refuses to feel inspired by the Rebellion. Benjamin firmly believes that life will remain unpleasant no matter who is in charge. Of all of the animals on the farm, he alone comprehends the changes that take place, but he seems either unwilling or unable to oppose the pigs.

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**Muriel** - The white goat who reads the Seven Commandments to Clover whenever Clover suspects the pigs of violating their prohibitions.

**Mr. Jones** - The often drunk farmer who runs the Manor Farm before the animals stage their Rebellion and establish Animal Farm. Mr. Jones is an unkind master who indulges himself while his animals lack food; he thus represents Tsar Nicholas II, whom the Russian Revolution ousted.

**Mr. Frederick** - The tough, shrewd operator of Pinchfield, a neighboring farm. Based on Adolf Hitler, the ruler of Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, Mr. Frederick proves an untrustworthy neighbor.

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**Mr. Pilkington** - The easygoing gentleman farmer who runs Foxwood, a neighboring farm. Mr. Frederick's bitter enemy, Mr. Pilkington represents the capitalist governments of England and the United States.

**Mr. Whymper** - The human solicitor whom Napoleon hires to represent Animal Farm in human society. Mr. Whymper's entry into the Animal Farm community initiates contact between Animal Farm and human society, alarming the common animals.

**Jessie And Bluebell** - Two dogs, each of whom gives birth early in the novel. Napoleon takes the puppies in order to "educate" them.

**Minimus** - The poet pig who writes verse about Napoleon and pens the banal patriotic song "Animal Farm, Animal Farm" to replace the earlier idealistic hymn "Beasts of England," which Old Major passes on to the others.

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