

# Animal Farm

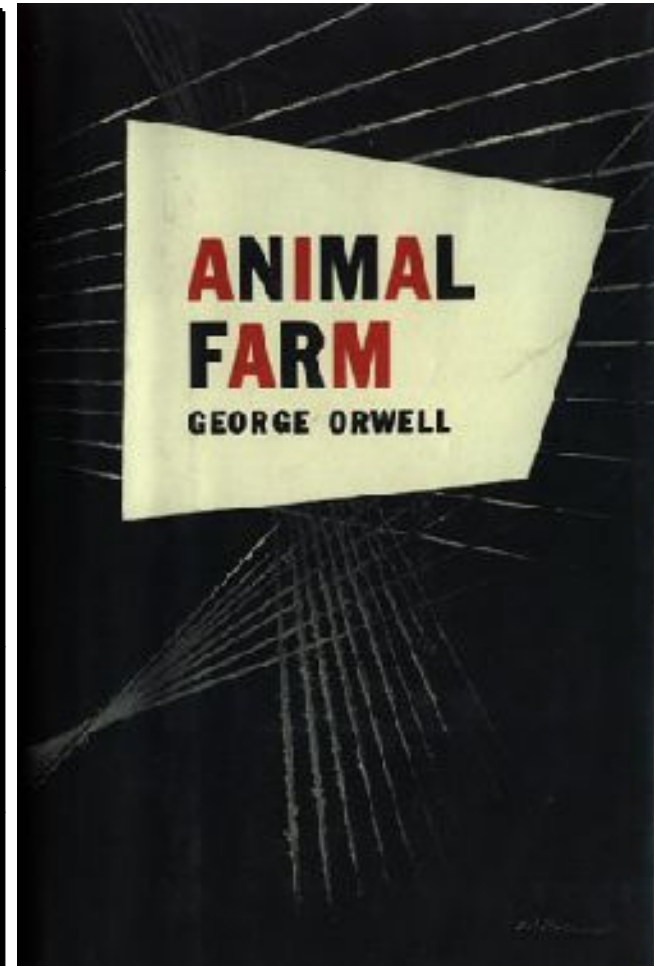


By George Orwell  
(Verardo Damiano – 5B)



# Identity card

Title	Animal Farm
Author	George Orwell (pen-name for E.A. Blair)
Genre	Satire (Modern Fable or Allegory)
Country	United Kindom
Publication date	17 August 1945
Publisher	Secker and Warburg (London)





# What really is *Animal Farm*

*Animal Farm* is a satirical novella about a group of animals on a farm that organize themselves and set up against humans.

It is a satirical allegory of Soviet totalitarianism, and the writer based the major events in the book on facts from the Soviet Union during the Stalin era.

Orwell was suspicious of Stalin, even if he was a socialist and a member of the Labourist Party. In Spain during the Civil War, where he fought in the POUM, based on the ideas of Trotsky, persecuted by the Stalinist wing.

The book, written during WWII, did not reach success until the late 1950s, when the Cold War had already begun.



# Characters

Characters are not casual in *Animal Farm*, everyone has his role and almost everyone is the mirror of a character of the Second World War or the Russian Revolution.

The choice of a particular animal for a specific role is not casual, these beasts have the characteristic that the author wants to emphasise.

**Old Major**

**Boxer**

**Mr Jones**

**Napoleon**

**Clover**

**Mr Frederick**

**Snowball**

**Mollie**

**Mr Pilkington**

**Squealer**

**Moses**

**Mr. Whymper**

**Dogs and sheep**

**Benjamin**



# The suppressed preface

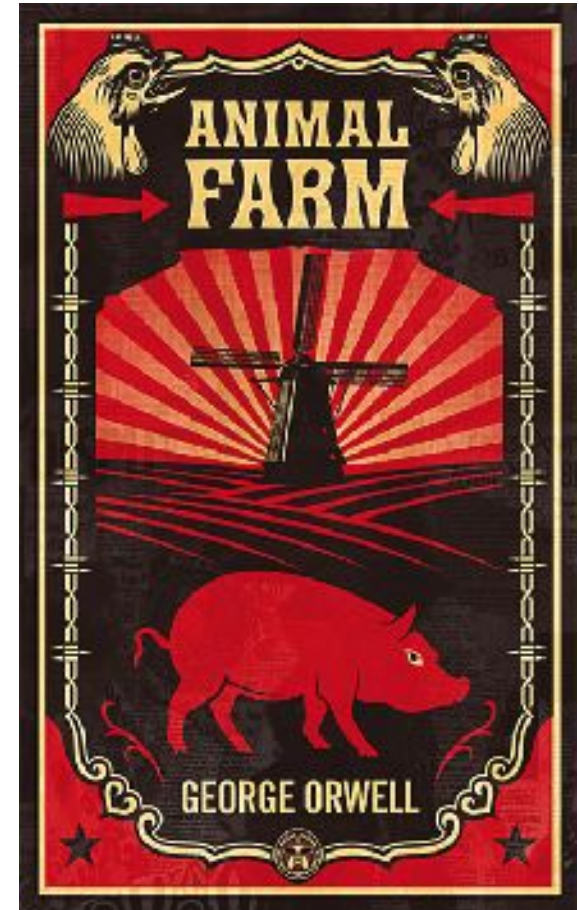
*Animal Farm* was a book against Russian Communism, and during the WWII that could be a problem, because Russia was allied with UK.

Orwell had problems publishing the novel, as a matter of fact many editors refused him.

So Orwell prepared a preface against the self-imposed British censorship:

“ [Things are] kept right out of the British press, not because the Government intervened but because of a general tacit agreement that ‘it wouldn’t do’ to mention that particular fact.”

Ironically, when the book was finally published the preface was censored, and it is difficult to find it in the first copies.





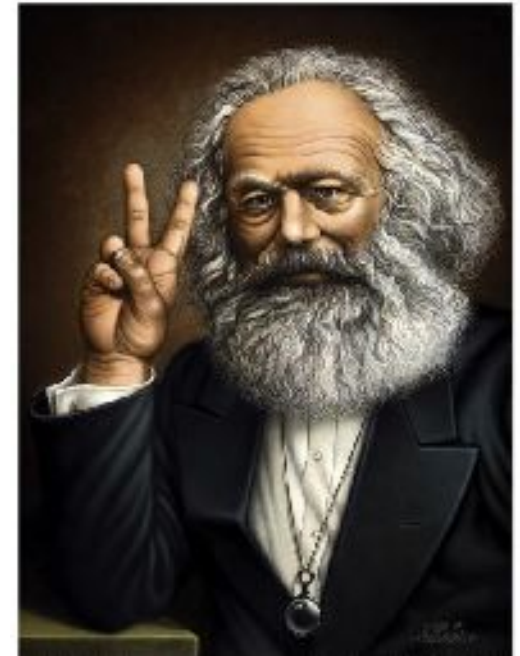
# Old Major

**Old Major** is based upon both the figures of Lenin and Marx.

As a socialist, Orwell agreed with some of Karl Marx's politics, and respected Vladimir Lenin, so satire in *Animal Farm* is not on Marxism or Lenin's revolution, but on the corruption that occurred later.

Old Major also represents the rule of speech and his power of inspiration on people. It is interesting that neither Napoleon nor Snowball are mentioned in Old Major's great speech, which could be an attack to Stalin, too far from Marx's ideas.

His faith in the revolution underlines that no society can be perfect: there will always be someone who manages to make his own interests, ignoring other people's needs.





# Napoleon

**Napoleon** is inspired by Joseph Stalin.

He uses force and fear to cement his power, and has no doubt to execute everyone tries to oppose to him. He is a cruel dictator, just like Stalin.

He banishes Snowball from the Farm and he steals him the idea of the windmill, just like Stalin did with the Five Year Plan of Trotsky, after his escape in 1927 .





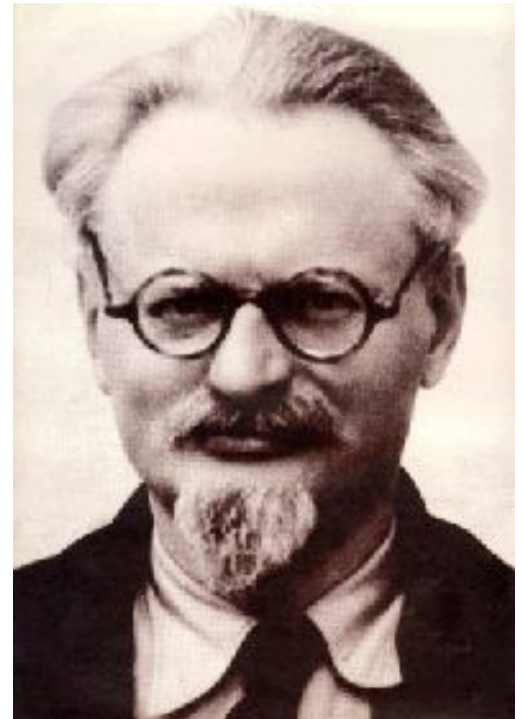
# Snowball

**Snowball** is inspired by Leon Trotsky. Snowball is an intellectual and is far more honest than Napoleon, even if he agrees to steal the apples.

The animals like him, he fights bravely at the Battle of the Cowshed, but he is driven out by Napoleon's attack dogs, just like Trotsky's exile to Mexico.

After that, he becomes a scapegoat of the system. In fact he is called traitor and Squealer convinces everyone that he is the leader of the enemy (humans).

Like Trotsky, Snowball tries to export the revolution to other farms by means of the pigeons.



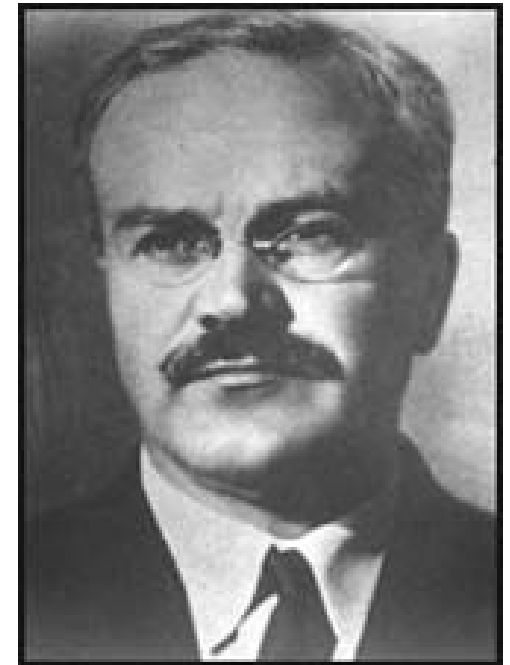


# Squealer

**Squealer** represents both Vyacheslav Molotov and the Russian newspaper *Pravda*.

He is the symbol of propaganda; he is Napoleon's public speaker and is extremely good at it: he confuses and disorients, he uses statistics, precise figures to convince the animals that life is getting better.

Orwell, in the book, wrote: "He could turn black into white", in fact he is responsible for the revision of the Seven Commandments.





# Dogs and sheep

**Dogs** stand for the KGB, they never talk in the novel, they are just like robots.

They are essential for Napoleon to maintain his power, as it happens with any dictator in the world.

**Sheep** are the stupid masses that always follow the leader, without raising any doubt or question.

They are the other pillar of the pigs' power, because they interrupt assemblies and support their masters among other animals.





# Mr Jones

**Mr. Jones**, as an incompetent and autocratic capitalist, he is probably based on Czar Nicholas II.

Orwell wrote that he had been a capable master, but in recent years the farm has fallen on harder times (Symbol of the Great Depression of the '30s). Like the Czars, he lost his power and started drinking.





# Mr Frederick

**Mr. Frederick** represents the Nazi Germany of Adolf Hitler. Mr. Frederick is a neighbour of the farm, he pays Napoleon with false bank notes, as Hitler betrayed Russia at the beginning of WWII.





# Mr Pilkington

**Mr. Pilkington** is a metaphor for the Allies, the UK and the USA.

After the attack on Germany, Russia decided to ally with the UK and the USA, just like Napoleon when he decides to become a friend of Mr. Pilkington after Mr. Frederick's false bank notes.

Mr. Pilkington congratulates himself for the efficiency of the farm, just like the Allies did after the War and before the Cold War.



# Mr. Whympers

**Mr. Whympers** is George Bernard Shaw, who visited the U.S.S.R. in 1931 and praised what he saw.

In the novel he is the man who represents the farm in the human world.





# Boxer

**Boxer** is the avatar of the working class, or proletariat: a loyal, kind, dedicated, and strong horse, he could also represent a Stakhanovite. His name is inspired to the Boxer revolution in China.

His mottos are "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right" (very similar to the Italian "Mussolini is always right"). He works as hard as he can, and he never sees corruption, he really believes in Animal Farm.

His death serves to show just how far the pigs are willing to push themselves: he is sent to the knackers' yard to be slaughtered in exchange for a case of whiskey for the pigs.





# Clover

**Clover** represents the educated middle-class people who acquiesce to the subversion of principles by those in power.

She is a kind horse, she always helps Boxer, but she never tries to set up against the regime, also because she does not seem to have the capability of doing that. In fact she cannot remember the Seven Commandments after Squealer has rewritten and changed them.





# Mollie

**Mollie** represents upper-class people, the Bourgeoisie who fled from the U.S.S.R. after the Revolution.

She is the character which opposes the regime the most, even if she does not care much about politics.

She hates that system, in fact she escapes to another farm: socialism is not perfect, it does not work for everyone.



# Moses

**Moses**, the raven, represents the Orthodox Church, and maybe he is a little inspired by Grigori Rasputin. Firstly he is hated by the pigs, because of his tales of the Sugarcandy Mountain, and he is described as “Mr. Jones’ favourite pet”. Later he finds his place again in the farm. He is used, just as governments use religion, to keep people calm and make them work harder. So *Animal Farm* is not only a critique of communism, but also an attack to any authoritarian government (that uses religion cynically) and the Church (that, to him, creates only illusions)





# Benjamin

**Benjamin** represents the skeptical people who believe that Communism will not help people. More specifically, he represents the Russian Jewish population.

He is wise, but he does not oppose because he is a cynic, so he thinks that there is no difference between Napoleon and Mr. Jones.

He cares only once, when his friend Boxer is going to be killed, he tells the others the truth.

The donkey has good memory and longevity (he often says “you have never seen a dead donkey”), but his indifference and his belief that the revolution will be a flop make him decide not to oppose the system.

