

ORWELL'S
ANIMAL FARM

AN ILLUSTRATED EDITION with CSEC® Study Guide



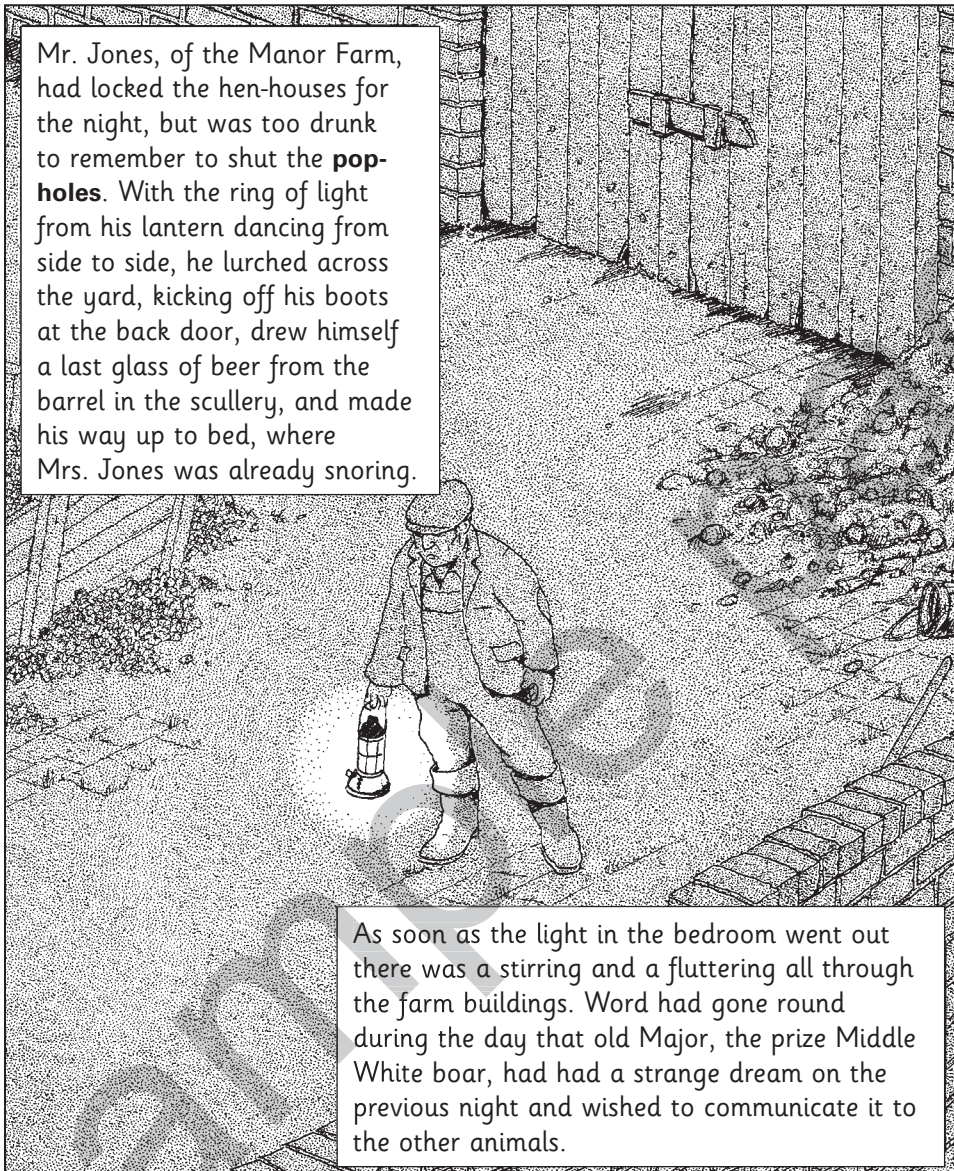
**SAMPLE
PAGES**

Study Guide by **Sherice Blair**

 **HODDER**
EDUCATION

Chapter 1

Old Major tells the animals to prepare for a rebellion against humans. He gives them a set of rules and a song to sing about a land without human beings.



pop-holes – small doors for hens

Think about it

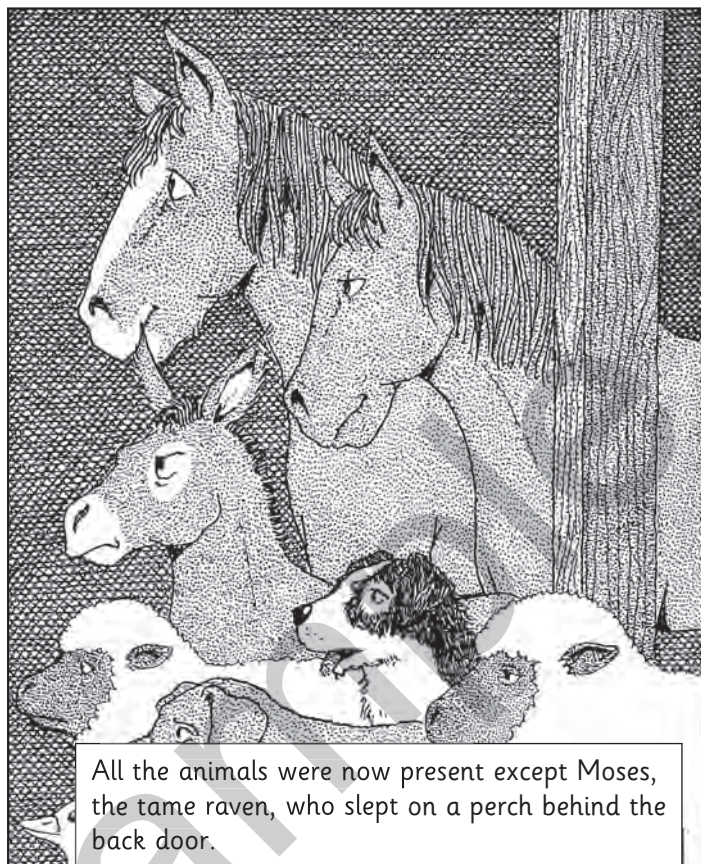
- What is your first impression of Mr. Jones? How good a farmer do you think he is?





At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already ensconced on his bed of straw, under a lantern which hung from a beam. He was twelve years old and had lately grown rather stout, but he was still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance in spite of the fact that his tusches had never been cut. Before long the other animals began to arrive and make themselves comfortable after their different fashions. First came the three dogs, Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher, and then the pigs, who settled down in the straw immediately in front of the platform. The hens perched themselves on the window-sills, the pigeons fluttered up to the rafters, the sheep and cows lay down behind the pigs and began to chew the cud. The two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover, came in together, walking very slowly and setting down their vast hairy hoofs with great care lest there should be some small animal concealed in the straw. Clover was a stout motherly mare approaching middle life, who had never quite got her figure back after her fourth foal. Boxer was an enormous beast, nearly eighteen hands high, and as strong as any two ordinary horses put together. A white stripe down his nose gave him a somewhat stupid appearance, and in fact he was not of first-rate intelligence, but he was universally respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work. After the horses came Muriel, the white goat, and Benjamin, the donkey. Benjamin was the oldest animal on the farm, and the worst tempered. He seldom talked, and when he did, it was usually to make some cynical remark – for instance, he would say that God had given him a tail to keep the flies off, but that he would sooner have had no tail and no flies. Alone among the animals on the farm he never laughed. If asked why, he would say that he saw nothing to laugh at. Nevertheless, without openly admitting it, he was devoted to Boxer; the two of them usually spent their Sundays together in the small paddock beyond the orchard, grazing side by side and never speaking.

The two horses had just lain down when a brood of ducklings, which had lost their mother, filed into the barn, cheeping feebly and wandering from side to side to find some place where they would not be trodden on. Clover made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg, and the ducklings nestled down inside it and promptly fell asleep. At the last moment Mollie, the foolish, pretty white mare who drew Mr. Jones's **trap**, came mincing daintily in, chewing at a lump of sugar. She took a place near the front and began flirting her white mane, hoping to draw attention to the red ribbons it was plaited with. Last of all came the cat, who looked round, as usual, for the warmest place, and finally squeezed herself in between Boxer and Clover; there she purred contentedly throughout Major's speech without listening to a word of what he was saying.

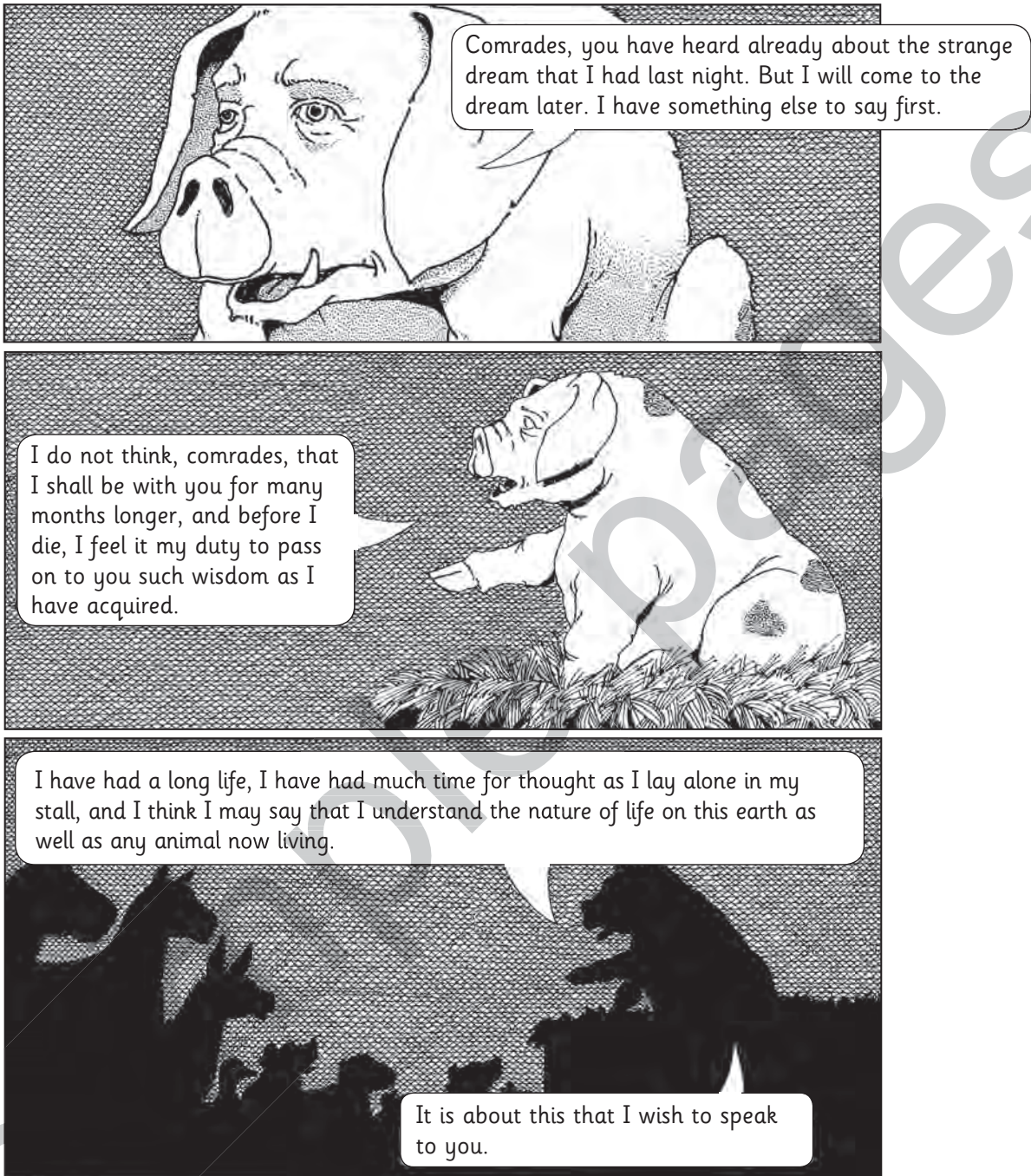


trap – small carriage or cart

Think about it

- Why has Major chosen this time in his life to talk to the rest of the animals?
- Why do you think Moses was not at the meeting?





Think about it

- Major says that he will share his dream with the others. Can you think of other figures or prophets who have done this?



'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. 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. Our labour tills the soil, our dung fertilises it, and yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare skin. You cows that I see before me, how many thousands of gallons of milk have you given during this past year? And what has happened to that milk which should have been breeding up sturdy calves? Every drop of it has gone down the throats of our enemies. And you hens, how many eggs have you laid this year, and how many of those eggs ever hatched into chickens? The rest have all gone to market to bring in money for Jones and his men. And you, Clover, where are those four foals you bore, who should have been the support and pleasure of your old age? Each was sold at a year old – you will never see one of them again. In return for your four confinements and all your labour in the field, what have you ever had except your bare rations and a stall?

'And even the miserable lives we lead are not allowed to reach their natural span. For myself I do not grumble, for I am one of the lucky ones. I am twelve years old and have had over four hundred children. Such is the natural life of a pig. But no animal escapes the cruel knife in the end. You young porkers who are sitting in front of me, every one of you will scream your lives out at the block within a year. To that horror we all must come – cows, pigs, hens, sheep, everyone. Even the horses and the dogs have no better fate. You, Boxer, the very day

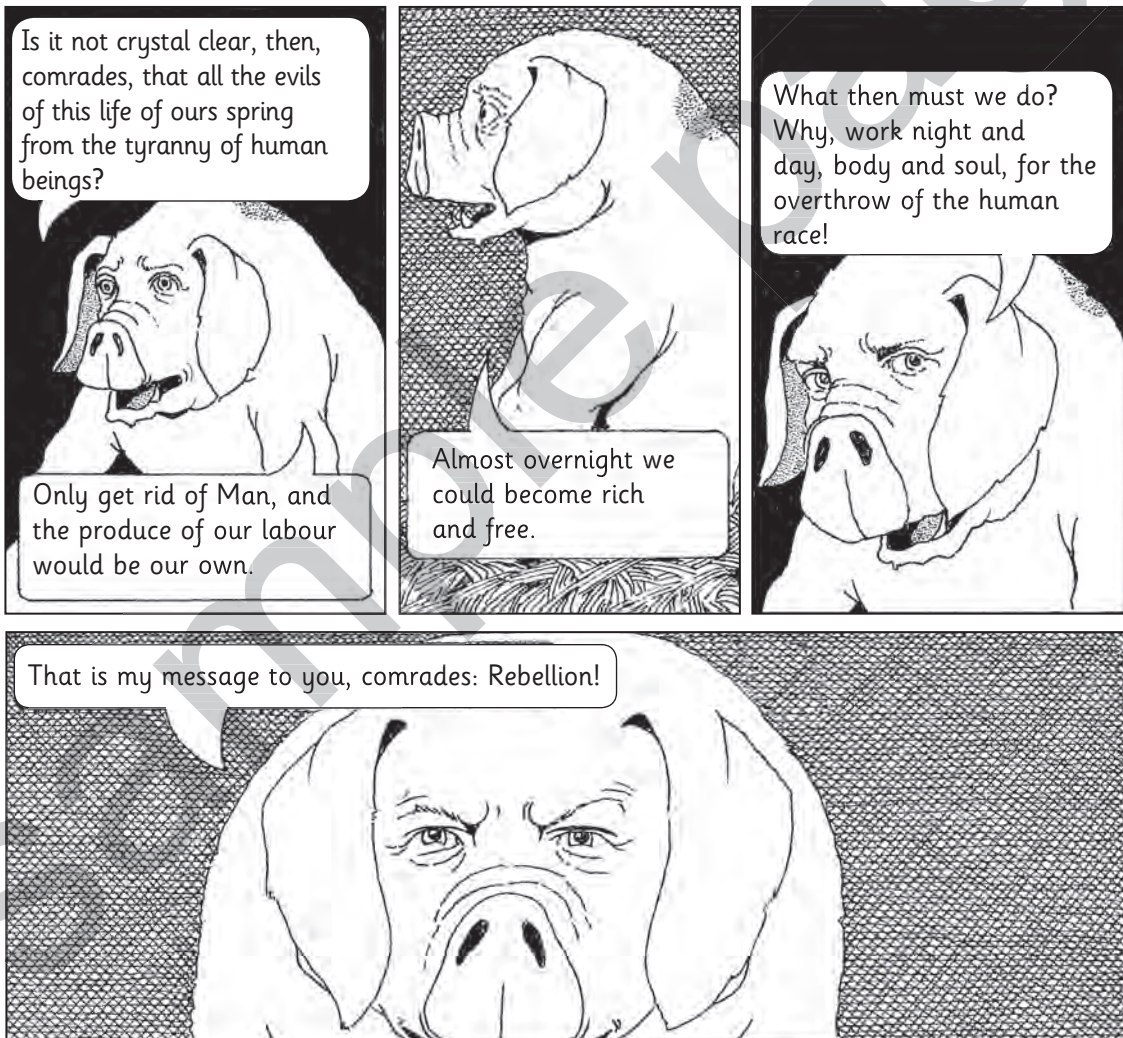
laborious – hardworking

knacker – someone who buys horses to kill

that those great muscles of yours lose their power, Jones will sell you to the **knacker**, who will cut your throat and boil you down for the foxhounds. As for the dogs, when they grow old and toothless, Jones ties a brick round their necks and drowns them in the nearest pond.'

Think about it

- What is your reaction to what Major says about how animals are treated? Would Major have thought differently if Jones had been a better, kinder farmer?
- Major uses repetition and questions to make his message more powerful. Find examples of these techniques in this speech and look out for them in other speeches in the story.
- Do you agree with old Major's suggestion that only humans are capable of evil?



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 its victorious.



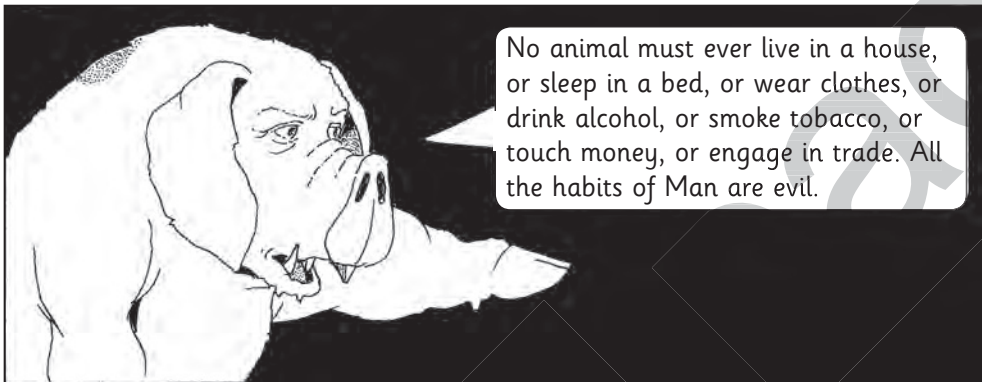
‘And remember, comrades, your resolution must never falter. No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you that Man and the animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others. It is all lies. Man serves the interests of no creature except himself. And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship in the struggle. All men are enemies. All animals are comrades.’

At this moment there was a tremendous uproar. While Major was speaking four large rats had crept out of their holes and were sitting on their hindquarters listening to him. The dogs had suddenly caught sight of them, and it was only by a swift dash for their holes that the rats saved their lives. Major raised his trotter for silence.

‘Comrades,’ he said, ‘here is a point that must be settled. The wild creatures, such as rats and rabbits – are they our friends or our enemies? Let us put it to the vote. I propose this question to the meeting: Are rats comrades?’

The vote was taken at once, and it was agreed by an overwhelming majority that rats were comrades. There were only four dissentients, the three dogs and the cat, who was afterwards discovered to have voted on both sides. Major continued:

‘I have little more to say. I merely repeat, remember always your duty of enmity towards Man and all his ways.’



Think about it

- What are the nine things animals must not do?
- Which of Major's instructions do you think is the most important?
- Is Major saying that animals are Man's equals or superiors? Why?



And now, comrades, I will tell you about my dream of last night. I cannot describe that dream to you.



It was a dream of the earth as it will be when Man has vanished.



But it reminded me of something that I had long forgotten. Many years ago, when I was a little pig, my mother and the other sows used to sing an old song of which they knew only the tune and the first three words. I had known that tune in my infancy, but it had long since passed out of my mind. Last night, however, it came back to me in my dream. And what is more, the words of the song also came back – words, I am certain, which were sung by the animals of long ago and have been lost to memory for generations.

I will sing you that song now, comrades. I am old and my voice is hoarse, but when I have taught you the tune, you can sing it better for yourselves. It is called 'Beasts of England'.



Old Major cleared his throat and began to sing. As he had said, his voice was hoarse, but he sang well enough, and it was a stirring tune, something between 'Clementine' and 'La Cucaracha'. The words ran:

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,
Beasts of every land and **clime**,
Hearken to my joyful tidings
Of the golden future time.
Soon or late the day is coming,
Tyrant Man shall be o'erthrown,
And the fruitful fields of England
Shall be trod by beasts alone.

Rings shall vanish from our noses,
And the harness from our back,
Bit and spur shall rust forever,
Cruel whips no more shall crack.

clime – climate

hearken – listen



Riches more than mind can picture,
Wheat and barley, oats and hay,
Clover, beans, and mangel-wurzels
Shall be ours upon that day.

Bright will shine the fields of England,
Purer shall its waters be,
Sweeter yet shall blow its breezes
On the day that sets us free.

For that day we all must labour,
Though we die before it break;
Cows and horses, geese and turkeys,
All must toil for freedom's sake.

Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,
Beasts of every land and clime,
Hearken well and spread my tidings
Of the golden future time.

The singing of this song threw the animals into the wildest excitement. Almost before Major had reached the end, they had begun singing it for themselves. Even the stupidest of them had already picked up the tune and a few of the words, and as for the clever ones, such as the pigs and dogs, they had the entire song by heart within a few minutes. And then, after a few preliminary tries, the whole farm burst out into 'Beasts of England' in tremendous unison. The cows lowed it, the dogs whined it, the sheep bleated it, the horses whinnied it, the ducks quacked it. They were so delighted with the song that they sang it right through five times in succession, and might have continued singing it all night if they had not been interrupted.

Unfortunately, the uproar awoke Mr. Jones, who sprang out of bed, making sure that there was a fox in the yard. He seized the gun which always stood in a corner of his bedroom, and let fly a charge of number 6 shot into the darkness. The pellets buried themselves in the wall of the barn and the meeting broke up hurriedly. Everyone fled to his own sleeping place. The birds jumped on to their perches, the animals settled down in the straw, and the whole farm was asleep in a moment.

Think about it

- Find the words to other 'revolutionary' songs like 'La Marseillaise' and 'The Red Flag'. What do they have in common with 'Beasts of England'?



Summary

Chapter 1

The novel starts with Mr. Jones locking away the animals for the night. This is symbolic because it highlights that the animals have no control over their lives at this point. It also hints at the hardships the animals face because of the mismanagement of their owner, Mr. Jones: he did not remember to shut the pop-holes because he was too drunk.

This is offset by hope because of the speech that old Major gives, which is based on his dream. Old Major is a pig who is 'highly regarded' by the other animals on the farm because of his wisdom. The importance of old Major's role in this chapter is reinforced by the fact that his speech is made from a 'raised platform'.

There is a political tone to old Major's message to the animals when he greets them at the beginning with 'Comrades'. This alludes to the parallel that the novel has with the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Old Major speaks to the animals about the hardships of their lives and the fact that these hardships are a result of the callousness of man: 'all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings'.

After this, he encourages the animals to rebel against the status quo. Old Major confidently tells the animals that, once the animals are not under the tyranny of Man, they will prosper. He goes on to give the animals a number of tenets, or principles, to live by. These include: whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy; animals must not come to resemble Man; no animals must ever live in a house, wear clothes, drink alcohol, smoke or touch money; animals should not engage in trade; all animals are equal; no animal must ever tyrannise over his kind; and no animal must kill another animal.

Old Major finishes his speech by teaching the animals the song 'Beasts of England'. The animals become excited while learning and singing the song. Old Major's comments about Man's tyranny are reinforced by Mr. Jones when he silences the animals with a warning shot from his bedroom. One can imagine that this was in an effort to quiet the animals as they might have been rambunctious in their singing.

Guided reading questions

- 1 Describe the conditions under which the animals live on Manor Farm.
- 2 Examine the character traits of Mr. Jones.
- 3 What role does old Major play in this chapter?
- 4 What evidence is there in the chapter that shows old Major was well regarded by the other animals?
- 5 Pretend you are one of the animals in the audience listening to old Major's speech.
 - a Summarise old Major's speech in your own words.
 - b How do you feel about old Major's speech?
 - c What devices are used by old Major in his speech to convince/persuade the other animals?
- 6
 - a What kind of society does old Major describe without humans?
 - b Do you think this kind of society is possible? Why?
- 7 Do you agree that the animals should rebel? Explain your answer.
- 8 List the rules old Major gives the animals.
- 9 What do you think 'Beasts of England' represents?

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