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Who Are The Animals In Animal Farm

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Introduction: Unpacking the Barnyard Allegory

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is far more than a simple story about rebellious livestock. Written in 1945, this novella serves as a biting allegory for the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalinist totalitarianism. However, to truly understand the political and social commentary Orwell embeds in the text, one must first answer a fundamental question: **who are the animals in Animal Farm**? Each creature on Manor Farm is not just an animal; they are carefully crafted representations of historical figures, social classes, and revolutionary archetypes. By identifying these characters and their real-world counterparts, readers gain a deeper appreciation for Orwell's critique of power, corruption, and idealism gone awry. This article will guide you through the farm's inhabitants, exploring their personalities, roles, and the complex symbolism that makes *Animal Farm* a timeless cautionary tale.

The Old Guard: Idealism and the Seeds of Revolution

Before the rebellion ever takes place, a few key animals lay the groundwork for the uprising. These characters represent the intellectual and moral foundations of the revolution itself.

Old Major: The Visionary Leader

Old Major is the aged, prize-winning boar who inspires the initial rebellion. He is not present for the actual overthrow of Mr. Jones, dying peacefully before the animals can seize power. However, his importance cannot be overstated. Old Major represents a combination of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin—the theoretical founders of communism. His stirring speech about the misery of animal life and his vision of a world free from human tyranny plants the seed of revolution in the minds of the other animals. Crucially, he introduces the song *Beasts of England*, which becomes the anthem of the revolution. Old Major symbolizes pure, uncorrupted idealism. He dreams of equality and freedom, but he does not live to see his dream twisted into a nightmare. His absence in the later chapters is telling; once the revolution begins, the practical (and often brutal) politics of leadership take over, leaving his noble vision behind.

Moses: The Opaque Corvid

Moses is the tame raven who is a special pet of Mr. Jones. He does not participate in the rebellion and is chased away by the pigs early on. Moses represents the Russian Orthodox Church or organized religion in general. He preaches about a mythical place called *Sugarcandy Mountain*, a paradise where animals go when they die, where they can do nothing but eat and sleep. This is a clear allegory for the concept of heaven—a promise of a better afterlife used to pacify the oppressed and keep them from rebelling against their earthly suffering. Moses also represents the passive acceptance of authority. Although he is not a revolutionary, the pigs eventually invite him back later in the story to use his tales for their own purposes, illustrating how totalitarian regimes often co-opt religion to control the populace.

The pigs are the most intelligent animals on the farm, and they assume leadership roles immediately after the rebellion. They represent the ruling class, the Communist Party, and the intellectual elite who seize power.

Napoleon: The Tyrant in the Making

Napoleon is a large, fierce-looking Berkshire boar and the primary antagonist of the story. He is widely accepted as an allegory for Joseph Stalin. Napoleon is ruthless, cunning, and utterly power-hungry. Unlike his rival Snowball, Napoleon does not believe in spreading the revolution or in democratic decision-making. He prefers to consolidate power through intimidation, propaganda, and violence. He uses the nine dogs he trained as a private police force to chase Snowball off the farm, effectively ending any pretense of collective leadership. From there, Napoleon systematically alters the Seven Commandments, forces the other animals to work harder for less food, and begins trading with humans—the very act the rebellion was meant to prevent. Napoleon's journey from revolutionary leader to tyrant mirrors the historical trajectory of Stalin, who betrayed the ideals of the Russian Revolution to establish a personal dictatorship. He is the embodiment of the corrupting nature of absolute power.

Snowball: The Idealist Exile

Snowball is Napoleon's rival and the other leading pig. He is vivacious, eloquent, and energetic. Snowball is a clear allegory for Leon Trotsky, the revolutionary who was a key leader in the Russian Revolution but was ultimately betrayed and exiled by Stalin. Snowball is the intellectual force behind the farm's initial successes. He organizes the defense of the farm during the Battle of the Cowshed, creates the "Animal Committees," and designs the blueprint for a windmill that would bring electricity and comfort to all animals. He genuinely believes in Animalism and the principles of the original rebellion. However, he is too focused on grand ideas for the future and is outmaneuvered by Napoleon's dirty tactics. When Napoleon's dogs attack him, Snowball is forced to flee, and he is later demonized by Napoleon's propaganda, blamed for every failure on the farm. Snowball represents the revolutionary who is too pure for the brutal world of realpolitik.

Squealer: The Minister of Propaganda

Squealer is a small, fat pig with very round cheeks and a squeaky voice. He is Napoleon's right-hand man and the primary propagandist of the regime. Squealer represents the Soviet press and the mechanics of propaganda, personified by figures like Vyacheslav Molotov. Squealer's talent is his ability to twist language and logic to justify the pigs' increasingly tyrannical behavior. He famously uses rhetoric like "Surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones back?" to silence dissent. He is responsible for gradually altering the Seven Commandments (for example, changing "No animal shall sleep in a bed" to "No animal shall sleep in a bed *with sheets*"). Squealer is a master of "doublethink" long before the term was popularized in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He shows how language can be weaponized to make oppression seem reasonable.

The Working Class: Horses, Donkeys, and the Silent Majority

While the pigs plot and scheme, the vast majority of the animals do the actual work of the farm. They represent the working class, the proletariat, and the general population who are the subjects of the revolution but rarely its beneficiaries.

Boxer: The Tragic Proletarian

Boxer is the most beloved character in the book. He is an enormous, incredibly strong carthorse, who is not exceptionally intelligent but possesses a heart of gold. His personal maxims are "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right." Boxer represents the exploited working class—the loyal, strong, and self-sacrificing laborers who build the revolution with their sweat and blood. He is the embodiment of the industrial Stakhanovite worker. Boxer works tirelessly for the farm, putting every ounce of his strength into building the

windmill, believing that his sacrifice is for the good of all. When he collapses from exhaustion, he trusts that the pigs will take care of him. Instead, Napoleon, in a coldly pragmatic decision, sells him to the knacker's (the glue factory) for a few bottles of whiskey. Boxer's fate is the most heartbreaking moment in the novel. It represents the ultimate betrayal of the working class by the revolutionary elite, who use the workers for their labor and discard them when they are no longer useful.

Clover: The Maternal Guardian

Clover is a stout, motherly mare, and Boxer's close companion. She represents the conscience of the working class. While Boxer works blindly, Clover often notices that things are going wrong. She is the one who sees the pigs walking on their hind legs and who suspects that the commandments have been changed. However, she cannot read well and is often unable to articulate her doubts clearly. Clover embodies the feelings of the exploited masses who sense they are being lied to but lack the tools (education, language, organization) to fully understand or resist the new system of oppression. She is a figure of quiet sorrow and helpless compassion.

Benjamin: The Cynical Donkey

Benjamin is the oldest animal on the farm and the most cynical. He is a donkeys who can read as well as any pig, but he never bothers to read the commandments out loud to others. Benjamin's favorite saying is that "Donkeys live a long time. None of you has ever seen a dead donkey." He represents the intelligent but apathetic intellectual who sees the truth but refuses to act on it. He understands from the beginning that the revolution will not change the fundamental nature of power. He recognizes Napoleon's tyranny immediately, but he believes that "life would go on as it had always gone on" regardless of who was in charge. His cynicism is a self-fulfilling prophecy; by refusing to engage, he allows the tyranny to flourish. Benjamin is a tragic figure of wasted potential—a warning that knowledge without action is complicity.

The Other Voices: Supporting Characters and Their Roles

The farm is populated by several other animals who, while not central, are essential to the story's texture and meaning.

The Sheep: The Mindless Mob

The sheep are the most undifferentiated group on the farm. They are unintelligent and easily led. Their primary function is to bleat out memorized slogans like "Four legs good, two legs bad!" at critical moments. They represent the masses who mindlessly follow propaganda without critical thought. They don't understand the nuances of the debate between Snowball and Napoleon; they simply react to noise and repetition. The sheep are the perfect tools of the dictatorship because they can be programmed to chant down any opposition. They are a warning about the dangers of a populace that does not think for itself.

The Dogs: The Secret Police

The nine puppies that Napoleon takes from their mothers and raises in secret are not minor characters: they are the keys to maintaining power. They represent the NKVD, the Soviet secret police (later the KGB). Trained to be fiercely loyal to Napoleon alone, these dogs are used to silence dissent, chase away opponents, and enforce the pigs' will through terror. They are the physical manifestation of state violence, a constant reminder that the revolution is maintained not by popular support, but by brute force.

The Cat: The Opportunist

The cat is a minor but telling character. She is aloof, graceful, and entirely self-interested. She participates in the rebellion only when it suits her, and she avoids work by pretending to be sick or by being too tired. She eventually disappears and is found to have taken up with some humans, living a comfortable life on the other side of the farm. The cat represents the apolitical bourgeois who just wants to be comfortable, regardless of the political system in power. She is an opportunist, not a revolutionary.

Mollie: The Bourgeois Holdout

Mollie is the foolish, pretty white mare who pulls the cart for Mr. Jones. She is more interested in ribbons, sugar, and attention than in freedom. She represents the aristocracy or the petty bourgeoisie who are unwilling to give up their privileges for the sake of equality. Mollie is quickly exposed as a traitor to the cause and leaves the farm to be pampered by another human. She is a symbol of those who prefer material comfort and personal vanity over collective struggle.

The Humans: The External Capitalist Threat

While the question of **who are the animals in Animal Farm**focuses on the farm's inhabitants, the human characters are essential to the allegory.

- Mr. Jones: The original owner, representing Tsar Nicholas II, the inefficient and cruel ruler overthrown by the revolution.
- Mr. Pilkington: The owner of Foxwood, representing the capitalist West (specifically the United Kingdom and the United States). He is an easygoing but untrustworthy neighbor.
- Mr. Frederick: The owner of Pinchfield, representing Nazi Germany. He is a tough, aggressive capitalist who eventually betrays Napoleon by paying for timber with counterfeit notes.

The interactions with these humans show how the pigs eventually become indistinguishable from the very humans they overthrew.

Conclusion: The Enduring Relevance of the Farm

So, when we ask **who are the animals in Animal Farm**, the answer is a complex map of historical figures, social classes, and universal human traits. From the tragic loyalty of Boxer to the ruthless ambition of Napoleon and the cynical passivity of Benjamin, each animal serves a specific purpose in Orwell's devastating critique. The animals are not just characters; they are mirrors held up to our own societies. They force us to ask uncomfortable questions: Who are the Boxers in our world, working themselves to exhaustion for a promise that never comes? Who are the Squealers, twisting language to serve power? And who are the silent sheep, following the loudest voice?

The genius of *Animal Farm* lies in its simplicity. By mapping

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