

Animal Farm

George Orwell

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Animal Farm, written in 1945, is an allegorical piece about the Soviet Union and communism, using animals and the farm as the representation instead. This farm is run by a man named Mr. Jones, an alcoholic who neglects his animals. The animals, tired of their lack of freedom and abuse, come together for a meeting, where an old boar named Old Major leads them and tells them they need to overthrow Mr. Jones. After Old Major dies, two pigs, Snowball and Napoleon, lead a revolt against Mr. Jones and the animals now have control over the farm, which they now call "Animal Farm". They develop several rules, the most important one being that all animals are equal, and they set off running the land on their own with Snowball and Napoleon in charge of overseeing the farm. But when Snowball starts developing ideas and pulling animals towards his side, Napoleon has dogs chase him off of the farm, and with help from a pig named Squealer, tells the animals that Snowball's ideas were really his own, and that they should act on "his" ideas for the sake of an easier future. With Napoleon now in complete control, he starts to purge animals he believes were associated with Snowball, while the other animals are becoming overworked, but are soothed when told they are better off than they were with Mr. Jones. After a period of working and fighting with humans, a working horse named Boxer is injured and cannot do any work anymore, leading Napoleon to send him to "the hospital in Willingdon", when in actuality, Boxer is going to be killed. Years after Boxer is killed, the regular animals barely have enough for themselves and the pigs are becoming more and more like humans, actually forming alliances with other humans when that was against their beliefs in the beginning. The rule stating that all animals are equal was changed to "all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others", and the book ends with the working animals not being able to distinguish the pigs from the humans.

I read this book back in middle school, and reading it again now, it still remains one of the better books I have ever read. Having real people like Stalin and Trotsky represented as pigs Napoleon and Snowball, respectively, makes things easier to understand for a younger audience and represents the real people better to an older audience. I would recommend this book to teenagers 13 and older for violence and alcohol mentions.

Recommended Titles

1984 by George Orwell

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Lord of the Flies by William Golding