

Chapter 9 Animal Farm - George Orwell

BOXER'S **split hoof** was a long time in healing. They had started the rebuilding of the windmill the day after the victory celebrations were ended. Boxer refused to take even a **day off** work, and made it a point of honour not to let it be seen that he **was in pain**. In the evenings he **would admit** privately to Clover that the hoof **troubled him a great deal**. Clover treated the hoof with **poultices of herbs** which she prepared by **chewing them**, and both she and Benjamin **urged** Boxer to work less hard. "A horse's **lungs do not last for ever**," she said to him. But Boxer **would not** listen. He had, he said, only one real ambition **left** - to see the windmill well **under way** before he reached the age for **retirement**.

At the beginning, when the laws of Animal Farm were first formulated, the retiring age had been fixed for horses and pigs at twelve, for cows at fourteen, for dogs at nine, for sheep at seven, and for hens and geese at five. Liberal old-age pensions had been agreed upon. **As yet** no animal had **actually** retired on pension, but **of late** the subject had been discussed more and more. Now that the small field **beyond** the orchard had been **set aside for barley**, it was rumoured that a corner of the large pasture was to be **fenced off** and turned into a grazing-ground for **superannuated** animals. For a horse, it was said, the pension would be five pounds of corn a day and, in winter, fifteen pounds of hay, with a carrot or possibly an apple on public holidays. Boxer's twelfth birthday **was due** in the late summer of the following year.

Meanwhile life was hard. The winter was as cold as

lo zoccolo spaccato / guarire

un giorno libero

aveva un dolore

soleva ammettere

gli dava moltissimo fastidio

poltiglie di erbe

masticandole

raccomandavano

polmoni non durarano per sempre

non voleva

che rimaneva / in marcia

pensionamento

siccome ancora / in effetti

ultimamente

oltre / riservato per orzo

recintato

vecchi

sarebbe stato

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the last one had been, and food was even **shorter**. **Once again** all rations were reduced, except those of the pigs and the dogs. A too rigid equality in rations, Squealer explained, would have been contrary to the principles of Animalism. **In any case** he had no difficulty **in proving to** the other animals that they were not in reality short of food, whatever the appearances **might be**. **For the time being**, certainly, it had been found necessary to make a readjustment of rations (Squealer always spoke of it as a "readjustment," never as a "reduction"), but in comparison with the days of Jones, the **improvement** was enormous. Reading out the **figures in a shrill**, rapid voice, he **proved to them** in detail that they had more **oats**, more **hay**, more **turnips** than they had had in Jones's day, that they worked **shorter** hours, that their drinking water was of better quality, that they lived longer, that a larger proportion of their **young ones** survived infancy, and that they had more straw in their stalls and suffered less from **fleas**. The animals believed every word of it. **Truth to tell**, Jones and all he **stood for** had almost **faded out** of their memories. They knew that life nowadays was **harsh** and **bare**, that they were often hungry and often cold, and that they were usually working when they were not asleep. But **doubtless** it had been worse in the old days. They were glad to believe so. **Besides**, in those days they had been slaves and now they were free, and that made all the difference, as Squealer **did not fail to point out**.

There were many more **mouths to feed** now. In the autumn the four **sows** had all **littered** about simultaneously, producing thirty-one young pigs between them. The young pigs were **piebald**, and as

scarso

ancora una volta

ad ogni modo

a dimostrare

potrebbero essere / per adesso

miglioramento

numeri con uno stridulo

dimostrò loro

avena / paglia / rape

meno

figli

pulci

a dire il vero

rappresentava / svanito

dura

nuda

senza dubbio

inoltre

non smetteva di osservare

bocche da sfamare

scrofe / figliato

pezzati

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Napoleon was the only **boar** on the farm, it was possible **to guess** at their **parentage**. It was announced that later, when **bricks and timber** had been **purchased**, a schoolroom would be built in the farmhouse garden. For the time being, the young pigs were given their instruction by Napoleon himself in the farmhouse kitchen. They took their exercise in the garden, and were discouraged from playing with the other young animals. About this time, too, it was **laid down** as a **rule** that when a pig and any other animal met on the **path**, the other animal must **stand aside**: and also that all pigs, of **whatever degree**, **were to have** the privilege of wearing green **ribbons** on their tails on Sundays.

The farm had had a **fairly** successful year, but was still **short of money**. There were the bricks, sand, and **lime** for the schoolroom to be purchased, and it would also be necessary to begin saving up again for the machinery for the windmill. Then there were **lamp oil** and candles for the house, **sugar** for Napoleon's own table (he **forbade** this to the other pigs, **on the ground** that it **made them fat**), and all the usual replacements such as **tools, nails, string, coal, wire, scrap-iron**, and dog biscuits. A **stump** of hay and part of the potato crop were sold off, and the contract for eggs was increased to six hundred a week, so that that year the hens **barely hatched** enough **chicks** to keep their numbers at the same level. Rations, reduced in December, were reduced again in February, and lanterns in the stalls were **forbidden** to save Oil. But the pigs seemed comfortable enough, and in fact **were putting on weight if anything**. One afternoon in late February a warm, rich, **appetising scent, such as** the animals

*maiale (maschio)
indovinare / parentela
mattoni e legname
comprati*

*emessa / regolamento
sentiero / mettersi da parte
qualsiasi grado
dovevano avere / nastri*

*abbastanza
poco denaro
calce*

*lampade ad olio / zucchero
proibiva
con la scusa / li ingrassava
arnesi, chiodi, lacci, carbone
fil di ferro, ferro vecchio / balla
appena covavano
pulcini*

*proibite
stavano mettendo peso
anzi
appetitoso odore / tale come*

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had never **smelt** before, **wafted** itself across the yard from the little **brew-house**, which had been **disused** in Jones's time, and which stood beyond the kitchen. Someone said it was the **smell** of cooking **barley**. The animals sniffed the air hungrily and **wondered whether** a warm **mash** was being prepared for their **supper**. But no warm mash appeared, and on the following Sunday it was announced that from now onwards all barley would be reserved for the pigs. The field beyond the orchard had already been **sown** with barley. And the news soon **leaked out** that every pig was now receiving a ration of a pint of beer daily, with half a gallon for Napoleon himself, which was always served to him in the Crown Derby **soup tureen**.

But if there were **hardships to be borne**, they were partly **offset** by the fact that life nowadays had a greater dignity than it had had before. There were more songs, more speeches, more processions. Napoleon had commanded that once a week there should be held something called a Spontaneous Demonstration, the object of which was to celebrate the **struggles** and **triumphs** of Animal Farm. **At the appointed time** the animals would leave their work and march round the precincts of the farm in military formation, with the pigs leading, then the horses, then the cows, then the sheep, and then **the poultry**. The dogs **flanked** the procession and at the head of all marched Napoleon's black cockerel. Boxer and Clover always carried between them a green banner marked with the hoof and the horn and the **caption**, "Long live Comrade Napoleon! " Afterwards there were recitations of poems composed in Napoleon's honour, and a speech by Squealer giving particulars

*odorato / aleggiava
distilleria / non usata*

*odore / orzo
si chiedevano
se / pastone
cena*

*seminato
trapelò*

zuppiera

*privazioni da essere sopportate
compensate*

*lotte / trionfi
al momento stabilito*

*il pollame
affiancavano*

scritta

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of the latest increases in the production of foodstuffs, and on occasion a shot was fired from the gun. The sheep were the greatest **devotees** of the Spontaneous Demonstration, and if anyone **complained** (as a few animals sometimes did, when no pigs or dogs were near) that they wasted time and meant a lot of standing about in the cold, the sheep were sure to silence him with a tremendous **bleating** of "Four legs good, two legs bad!" But **by and large** the animals **enjoyed** these celebrations. They found it comforting **to be reminded** that, after all, they were **truly their own masters** and that the work they did was for their own **benefit**. So that, what with the songs, the processions, Squealer's lists of figures, the thunder of the gun, the crowing of the cockerel, and **the fluttering of the flag**, they were able to forget that their **bellies were empty**, at least part of the time. MC

In April, Animal Farm was proclaimed a Republic, and it became necessary to elect a President. There was only one candidate, Napoleon, who was elected unanimously. On the same day it **was given out** that **fresh** documents had been discovered which revealed **further details** about Snowball's complicity with Jones. It now appeared that Snowball had not, as the animals had previously imagined, **merely attempted to lose** the Battle of the Cowshed **by means of** a stratagem, but had been openly fighting on Jones's **side**. In fact, it was he who had **actually** been the leader of the human forces, and had charged into battle with the words "Long live Humanity!" on his **lips**. The **wounds** on Snowball's back, which a few of the animals still remembered to have seen, had been inflicted by Napoleon's teeth.

appassionate

si lamentava

belare

in linea di massima / godevano

che gli si ricordasse

veramente i padroni di se stessi

beneficio

l'ondeggiare della bandiera

pance erano vuote

fu propagato

nuovi

ulteriori dettagli

semplicemente

cercato di perdere

per mezzo di

parte / in realtà

labba / ferite

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In the middle of the summer Moses the raven suddenly reappeared on the farm, after an absence of several years. He was quite unchanged, still did no work, and talked in the same strain as ever about Sugarcandy Mountain. He would perch on a stump, flap his black wings, and talk by the hour to anyone who would listen. "Up there, comrades," he would say solemnly, pointing to the sky with his large beak—"up there, just on the other side of that dark cloud that you can see—there it lies, Sugarcandy Mountain, that happy country where we poor animals shall rest for ever from our labours!" He even claimed to have been there on one of his higher flights, and to have seen the everlasting fields of clover and the linseed cake and lump sugar growing on the hedges. Many of the animals believed him. Their lives now, they reasoned, were hungry and laborious; was it not right and just that a better world should exist somewhere else? A thing that was difficult to determine was the attitude of the pigs towards Moses. They all declared contemptuously that his stories about Sugarcandy Mountain were lies, and yet they allowed him to remain on the farm, not working, with an allowance of a gill of beer a day.

After his hoof had healed up, Boxer worked harder than ever. Indeed, all the animals worked like slaves that year. Apart from the regular work of the farm, and the rebuilding of the windmill, there was the schoolhouse for the young pigs, which was started in March. Sometimes the long hours on insufficient food were hard to bear, but Boxer never faltered. In nothing that he said or did was there any sign that his strength was not what it had been. It was only his appearance that was a little altered; his hide was

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less shiny than it had used to be, and his great haunches seemed to have shrunken. The others said, "Boxer will pick up when the spring grass comes on"; but the spring came and Boxer grew no fatter. Sometimes on the slope leading to the top of the quarry, when he braced his muscles against the weight of some vast boulder, it seemed that nothing kept him on his feet except the will to continue. At such times his lips were seen to form the words, "I will work harder"; he had no voice left. Once again Clover and Benjamin warned him to take care of his health, but Boxer paid no attention. His twelfth birthday was approaching. He did not care what happened so long as a good store of stone was accumulated before he went on pension.

Late one evening in the summer, a sudden rumour ran round the farm that something had happened to Boxer. He had gone out alone to drag a load of stone down to the windmill. And sure enough, the rumour was true. A few minutes later two pigeons came racing in with the news: "Boxer has fallen! He is lying on his side and can't get up!"

About half the animals on the farm rushed out to the knoll where the windmill stood. There lay Boxer, between the shafts of the cart, his neck stretched out, unable even to raise his head. His eyes were glazed, his sides matted with sweat. A thin stream of blood had trickled out of his mouth. Clover dropped to her knees at his side.

"Boxer!" she cried, "how are you?"

"It is my lung," said Boxer in a weak voice. "It does

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not matter. I think you will be able to finish the windmill without me. There is a pretty good store of stone accumulated. I had only another month to go in any case. To tell you the truth, I had been looking forward to my retirement. And perhaps, as Benjamin is growing old too, they will let him retire at the same time and be a companion to me."

"We must get help at once," said Clover. "Run, somebody, and tell Squealer what has happened."

All the other animals immediately raced back to the farmhouse to give Squealer the news. Only Clover remained, and Benjamin⁷ who lay down at Boxer's side, and, without speaking, kept the flies off him with his long tail. After about a quarter of an hour Squealer appeared, full of sympathy and concern. He said that Comrade Napoleon had learned with the very deepest distress of this misfortune to one of the most loyal workers on the farm, and was already making arrangements to send Boxer to be treated in the hospital at Willingdon. The animals felt a little uneasy at this. Except for Mollie and Snowball, no other animal had ever left the farm, and they did not like to think of their sick comrade in the hands of human beings. However, Squealer easily convinced them that the veterinary surgeon in Willingdon could treat Boxer's case more satisfactorily than could be done on the farm. And about half an hour later, when Boxer had somewhat recovered, he was with difficulty got on to his feet, and managed to limp back to his stall, where Clover and Benjamin had prepared a good bed of straw for him.

For the next two days Boxer remained in his stall.

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The pigs had sent out a large bottle of pink medicine which they had found in the medicine chest in the bathroom, and Clover administered it to Boxer twice a day after meals. In the evenings she lay in his stall and talked to him, while Benjamin kept the flies off him. Boxer professed not to be sorry for what had happened. If he made a good recovery, he might expect to live another three years, and he looked forward to the peaceful days that he would spend in the corner of the big pasture. It would be the first time that he had had leisure to study and improve his mind. He intended, he said, to devote the rest of his life to learning the remaining twenty-two letters of the alphabet.

However, Benjamin and Clover could only be with Boxer after working hours, and it was in the middle of the day when the van came to take him away. The animals were all at work weeding turnips under the supervision of a pig, when they were astonished to see Benjamin come galloping from the direction of the farm buildings, braying at the top of his voice. It was the first time that they had ever seen Benjamin excited-indeed, it was the first time that anyone had ever seen him gallop. "Quick, quick!" he shouted. "Come at once! They're taking Boxer away!" Without waiting for orders from the pig, the animals broke off work and raced back to the farm buildings. Sure enough, there in the yard was a large closed van, drawn by two horses, with lettering on its side and a sly-looking man in a low-crowned bowler hat sitting on the driver's seat. And Boxer's stall was empty.

The animals crowded round the van. "Good-bye, Boxer!" they chorused, "good-bye!"

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"Fools! Fools!" shouted Benjamin, prancing round them and stamping the earth with his small hoofs.

"Fools! Do you not see what is written on the side of that van?"

That gave the animals pause, and there was a hush. Muriel began to spell out the words. But Benjamin pushed her aside and in the midst of a deadly silence he read:

" 'Alfred Simmonds, Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler, Willingdon. Dealer in Hides and Bone-Meal. Kennels Supplied.' Do you not understand what that means? They are taking Boxer to the knacker's! "

A cry of horror burst from all the animals. At this moment the man on the box whipped up his horses and the van moved out of the yard at a smart trot. All the animals followed, crying out at the tops of their voices. Clover forced her way to the front. The van began to gather speed. Clover tried to stir her stout limbs to a gallop, and achieved a canter. "Boxer!" she cried. "Boxer! Boxer! Boxer!" And just at this moment, as though he had heard the uproar outside, Boxer's face, with the white stripe down his nose, appeared at the small window at the back of the van.

"Boxer!" cried Clover in a terrible voice. "Boxer! Get out! Get out quickly! They're taking you to your death!"

All the animals took up the cry of "Get out, Boxer, get out!" But the van was already gathering speed and drawing away from them. It was uncertain whether Boxer had understood what Clover had said. But a

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moment later his face disappeared from the window and there was the sound of a tremendous drumming of hoofs inside the van. He was trying to kick his way out. The time had been when a few kicks from Boxer's hoofs would have smashed the van to matchwood. But alas! his strength had left him; and in a few moments the sound of drumming hoofs grew fainter and died away. In desperation the animals began appealing to the two horses which drew the van to stop. "Comrades, comrades!" they shouted. "Don't take your own brother to his death! " But the stupid brutes, too ignorant to realise what was happening, merely set back their ears and quickened their pace. Boxer's face did not reappear at the window. Too late, someone thought of racing ahead and shutting the five-barred gate; but in another moment the van was through it and rapidly disappearing down the road. Boxer was never seen again.

Three days later it was announced that he had died in the hospital at Willingdon, in spite of receiving every attention a horse could have. Squealer came to announce the news to the others. He had, he said, been present during Boxer's last hours.

"It was the most affecting sight I have ever seen!" said Squealer, lifting his trotter and wiping away a tear. "I was at his bedside at the very last. And at the end, almost too weak to speak, he whispered in my ear that his sole sorrow was to have passed on before the windmill was finished. 'Forward, comrades!' he whispered. 'Forward in the name of the Rebellion. Long live Animal Farm! Long live Comrade Napoleon! Napoleon is always right.'

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Those were his very last words, comrades."

Here Squealer's demeanour suddenly changed. He fell silent for a moment, and his little eyes darted suspicious glances from side to side before he proceeded.

It had come to his knowledge, he said, that a foolish and wicked rumour had been circulated at the time of Boxer's removal. Some of the animals had noticed that the van which took Boxer away was marked "Horse Slaughterer," and had actually jumped to the conclusion that Boxer was being sent to the knacker's. It was almost unbelievable, said Squealer, that any animal could be so stupid. Surely, he cried indignantly, whisking his tail and skipping from side to side, surely they knew their beloved Leader, Comrade Napoleon, better than that? But the explanation was really very simple. The van had previously been the property of the knacker, and had been bought by the veterinary surgeon, who had not yet painted the old name out. That was how the mistake had arisen.

The animals were enormously relieved to hear this. And when Squealer went on to give further graphic details of Boxer's death-bed, the admirable care he had received, and the expensive medicines for which Napoleon had paid without a thought as to the cost, their last doubts disappeared and the sorrow that they felt for their comrade's death was tempered by the thought that at least he had died happy.

Napoleon himself appeared at the meeting on the following Sunday morning and pronounced a short

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oration in Boxer's honour. It had not been possible, he said, to bring back their lamented comrade's remains for interment on the farm, but he had ordered a large wreath to be made from the laurels in the farmhouse garden and sent down to be placed on Boxer's grave. And in a few days' time the pigs intended to hold a memorial banquet in Boxer's honour. Napoleon ended his speech with a reminder of Boxer's two favourite maxims, "I will work harder" and "Comrade Napoleon is always right"-maxims, he said, which every animal would do well to adopt as his own.

On the day appointed for the banquet, a grocer's van drove up from Willingdon and delivered a large wooden crate at the farmhouse. That night there was the sound of uproarious singing, which was followed by what sounded like a violent quarrel and ended at about eleven o'clock with a tremendous crash of glass. No one stirred in the farmhouse before noon on the following day, and the word went round that from somewhere or other the pigs had acquired the money to buy themselves another case of whisky.