

Animal Farm: Chapter 10 - The Final Scene

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Summary

Years pass. Many animals have died; even Boxer is now only dimly remembered. Only Clover, Benjamin, Moses, and some of the pigs remember the time before the Rebellion. The farm has expanded and is more prosperous and better organised than ever. But the animals are no richer. They do not understand precisely why, but they know that things have not turned out as Old Major described. They remind themselves that they are not slaves, that they own themselves and their farm, that this is better than before.

The windmill is completed and in use, but it mills flour and makes money rather than generating electricity as Snowball planned. Napoleon has redefined Animalism: it was never about electricity and a three-day week. It was always about hard work and frugal living.

One summer evening, Squealer leads the sheep to a remote part of the farm for a week, telling everyone he is teaching them a new song. Shortly after the sheep return, Clover neighs with shock. Coming out of the farmhouse on his hind legs is Squealer. Behind him, filing out on two legs, are all the pigs. Napoleon comes last, upright, carrying a whip in his trotter. The dogs bark and the cockerel crows. The animals consider saying something. The sheep bleat, very loudly: "Four legs good, two legs better! Four legs good, two legs better!" The pigs return inside.

Clover leads Benjamin to the barn to read her the Seven Commandments. Benjamin reads: "ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS." This is all that remains.

The pigs begin to carry whips. They purchase a radio and a telephone. Napoleon starts wearing Mr. Jones's clothes. The other farmers are invited to inspect Animal Farm. They admire the windmill and especially the discipline and order of the farm. That evening, the animals hear laughter from the farmhouse. They creep to the windows. Napoleon sits at the head of the table, surrounded by pigs and men, playing cards. Mr. Pilkington stands to speak. He says the era of hostility between Animal Farm and the human farms is over. He praises the productivity of the farm -- animals that work harder and eat less than any animals elsewhere in the county. His farmers intend to adopt the same methods. He ends with a joke: if Animal Farm has its "lower animals" to contend with, the humans have their "lower classes."

Napoleon responds. There will be changes: animals will no longer address each other as "Comrade"; the skull will no longer be marched past; the flag will be plain green. Most

importantly, the name "Animal Farm" is abolished. The farm will revert to its original name: Manor Farm.

Everyone drinks to Manor Farm. Then an uproar: Napoleon and Pilkington have each played an ace at the same time. There are loud voices. The animals outside shuffle away. They return to the window. Something strange is happening to the pigs' faces. "The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which."

Analysis

The final chapter is the novel's formal conclusion and the completion of every irony Orwell has been building since the first page. The last commandment is the most economical summary possible of the process of political corruption: the principle that made the revolution worth having has been preserved in form while being entirely destroyed in substance. It remains on the wall; it now means its opposite.

The pigs walking on two legs is the literal fulfilment of Old Major's warning that the animals must never come to resemble Man. The sheep's revised slogan -- "Four legs good, two legs better" -- is the final demonstration of how easily slogans are repurposed: the same mechanism that simplified revolutionary ideology is used to reverse it. The animals taught to chant one thing chant another, without noticing the contradiction, because slogans are not designed to be noticed.

Pilkington's speech is the chapter's allegorical climax. He praises Animal Farm for having animals that work harder and eat less than any animals in the county. From his perspective, this is the farm's achievement; from the animals', it is the precise description of their oppression. His joke about lower animals and lower classes makes the allegorical equation explicit: the exploitation of animals and the exploitation of the working class are the same system, operating under different names.

Napoleon's speech abolishes every remaining symbol of the revolution: the word "Comrade," the skull, the flag, the name "Animal Farm." The revolution is not reformed; it is erased. The farm is Manor Farm again. It was always going to end here.

The final sentence is perhaps the most famous in the novel. "The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which." It completes the novel's central argument: the revolution has produced not liberation but a new version of the oppression it replaced. The watchers outside the window are back exactly where they started.

Themes

- **The completion of the revolution's betrayal:** Every principle of Animalism has been violated. The final commandment is the summation: equality preserved as a word while being abolished as a reality. Napoleon's speech erases even the revolution's name.
- **The allegorical conclusion:** Pilkington's speech makes the allegorical equation explicit: the Soviet state and capitalist democracy are not opposites but mirror images. Both exploit those below them; both perform concern for those they exploit; both cheat at cards.
- **Language and its final collapse:** "Four legs good, two legs better" and "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" are the novel's two final demonstrations of what happens to language under totalitarianism. Both statements are grammatically coherent. Both are logically absurd. Both are accepted without question.
- **The view through the window:** The animals watching from outside are the novel's final image of the working class: observers of their own exploitation, unable to enter, unable to stop what they see, able only to watch. The impossibility of telling pig from man is the measure of how total the betrayal has been.