

# Animal Farm: Mollie

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Mollie is described as the foolish, pretty white mare who draws Mr. Jones's trap. She comes to Old Major's meeting eating sugar and flirting her white mane, hoping to draw attention to the red ribbons plaited into it. Her first question after Old Major's speech concerns whether there will still be sugar after the Rebellion. Her second is whether she will still be able to wear ribbons in her mane.

She is a minor character, but precisely placed. She represents those who will not commit to the revolution because the revolution asks them to give up material comforts they value more than freedom.

## Who She Is

Mollie is not cruel or stupid. She is simply self-interested in a way that is incompatible with the demands of a revolutionary society. She has no ideology, no attachment to Animalism, and no investment in the collective project. What she wants is a comfortable life with sugar and ribbons and being petted by humans. When Animal Farm can no longer provide these things, she leaves.

Orwell's treatment of her is gently satirical rather than condemnatory. She is shallow, but her shallowness is at least honest: she does not pretend to believe in Animalism while secretly undermining it. She simply exits. This distinguishes her from the pigs, who exploit Animalism's language while destroying its substance.

## Her Arc

**During and after the Rebellion:** Mollie participates minimally. When the animals tour the farmhouse after driving Jones out, she is found playing with Mrs. Jones's hair ribbons. Snowball reprimands her. He explains that ribbons are the mark of a human being and that wearing them means accepting human ways. She appears unconvinced.

**Signs of defection:** Clover notices Mollie talking with a man from Foxwood over the hedge and allowing him to stroke her nose. When confronted, Mollie denies it and cannot look Clover in the eye. Clover goes to Mollie's stall and finds a hoard of ribbon pieces and a lump of sugar. Mollie says nothing and shortly afterwards disappears. A few weeks later, pigeons report seeing her in Willingdon, pulling a dogcart and wearing ribbons, with a fat red-faced man giving her pieces of sugar. She is not spoken of on the farm again.

## Key Quotes

Quote	Chapter	Significance
"Will there still be sugar after the Rebellion?"	1	Her first question; establishes her priorities immediately and economically
"Ribbons should be considered as clothes, which are the mark of a human being. If you wear ribbons in your mane, you are as good as accepting the ways of Man." (Snowball to Mollie)	2	The ideological case against her preferences, which she finds entirely unpersuasive

## Narrative Techniques

**Placement before the corruption:** Mollie defects in Chapter 5, before Napoleon has revealed the full extent of what he is doing. This means her departure cannot be interpreted as principled resistance to tyranny. She is not leaving because the revolution is being betrayed; she is leaving because the revolution requires sacrifice she is unwilling to make. Orwell places her early to distinguish her from characters who might have better reasons for leaving later.


**The ribbons as image:** Ribbons recur from the novel's opening to Mollie's disappearance. They represent the small material comforts of a comfortable life and, for Snowball, the mark of human domination. Mollie does not experience them as signs of slavery; she experiences them as pleasure. The gap between her reading of the ribbons and the ideology's reading is the gap that makes her departure inevitable.

**Structural function:** Her departure reduces the farm's horse population and removes a character who might have asked inconvenient questions about ribbons and sugar when the pigs eventually acquire their own luxuries. She is neatly expelled from the story before the embarrassing parallels can arise.

## Thematic Significance

Mollie represents those who refuse political commitment because politics asks them to sacrifice personal comfort. This is a broader satirical target than just the Russian bourgeoisie who emigrated after the Revolution: it includes anyone who prioritises private material wellbeing over collective solidarity.

She also represents, more specifically, the Russian middle class who left the Soviet Union in the 1920s, choosing life in Paris or London over the uncertainty and austerity of the new state. Her ribbons are their possessions; her sugar is their standard of living.

 **Exam Tip**

Mollie is a minor character but a useful one for questions about class, revolution, or commitment. For class: she represents those whose material comfort makes revolution personally unattractive. For revolution: her departure illustrates that not everyone is willing to sacrifice for collective gain, and Orwell treats this with satire rather than condemnation. For allegory: connect her to the Russian bourgeoisie who emigrated rather than submit to Bolshevik rule.

Study Vault