

Animal Farm: Mr. Frederick

Matthew Williams • English Literature • May 11, 2026

Mr. Frederick is the hard-nosed, shrewd farmer who owns Pinchfield, a smaller but better-run farm on the other side of Animal Farm. He is described as tough, cunning, and perpetually involved in lawsuits with his neighbours. It is rumoured that he treats his animals badly. He is Nazi Germany given a face.

Who He Is

Frederick is the opposite of Pilkington in manner but identical in self-interest. Where Pilkington is genial and easy-going, Frederick is calculating and aggressive. He drives hard bargains, cheats when he can, and is known to use violence against his animals. He wants the timber from Animal Farm and will obtain it by any means available to him.

He has no ideological position: he is not hostile to Animal Farm because it is revolutionary but because it is a neighbour who might be useful or inconvenient, depending on circumstances.

His Arc

Initial hostility: Frederick and Pilkington both spread rumours about Animal Farm in its early years, though they cannot agree on what the rumours should say because they cannot agree on anything. Frederick spreads stories about the animals being tortured and the farm being in permanent chaos.

The timber negotiations: Napoleon plays Frederick and Pilkington against each other for an extended period. Frederick wants the timber badly and eventually succeeds in buying it, outbidding Pilkington. He pays in cash, in bank notes, which Napoleon inspects and accepts with satisfaction.

The forgeries: Three days after the timber is carted away, a local merchant brings news that the banknotes are forgeries. Napoleon immediately announces that Frederick is sentenced to death and that the farm is on a war footing. The forged banknotes parallel the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, in which Stalin and Hitler signed a non-aggression agreement and Stalin received trade concessions that proved worthless when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941.

The Battle of the Windmill: Frederick and fifteen armed men attack Animal Farm. The animals cannot resist the guns and are forced to retreat. The men gather around the windmill. Benjamin observes that they are not attempting to knock it down but to blow it up. They do. The windmill

is destroyed. The enraged animals charge and eventually drive the men out, but at significant cost. Napoleon claims the engagement as a great victory. Boxer, more honestly, points out that they have won back only what they had before.

Key Quotes

Quote	Chapter	Significance
Napoleon's response to the forged banknotes: he announces Frederick is sentenced to death	8	The rage of betrayal; also the gap between the announcement and Napoleon's actual powerlessness to enforce it

Narrative Techniques


The forged banknotes as structural irony: Napoleon has spent months apparently negotiating with Pilkington, then abruptly sells to Frederick. The animals are confused by the reversal; Squealer explains it. Then the notes prove fake. The sequence shows Napoleon's strategic intelligence and its limits: he is outmanoeuvred by someone more cynical than himself.

The Battle of the Windmill: Frederick's men carry guns; the animals cannot stand up to them. The windmill, representing years of the animals' labour, is destroyed by explosives in minutes. The animals' victory in driving the men out afterwards is real but costly and pyrrhic. Orwell is precise about this: winning back what you had before is not the same as progressing.

Thematic Significance

Frederick represents Nazi Germany and Hitler in the allegory. The timber sale and the forged banknotes correspond to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact: an agreement between apparent rivals that produced a worthless return for one party and then ended in invasion. The Battle of the Windmill corresponds to Operation Barbarossa, Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.

Frederick's treachery illustrates one of Orwell's recurring points: that authoritarian regimes make themselves vulnerable to exactly this kind of betrayal because they have destroyed the institutions (free press, independent advisers, opposition parties) that might have warned them. Napoleon has no one around him capable of telling him that Frederick cannot be trusted. He has arranged it that way.

 **Exam Tip**

Mr. Frederick is most useful for questions about the allegorical level of the novel, or about the specific events of Chapters 7 and 8. For allegory: connect him to Hitler and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. For narrative: the forged banknotes show Napoleon being outmanoeuvred, which complicates any reading of him as simply all-powerful. For the windmill: note Boxer's honest assessment that winning back what they had before is not a victory, against Squealer's claim that it is.

Study Vault