

CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY

Three nights later, Old Major dies in his sleep, and for three months the animals make secret preparations to carry out the old pig's dying wish of wresting control of the farm from Mr. Jones. The work of teaching and organizing falls to the pigs, the cleverest of the animals, and especially to two pigs named Napoleon and Snowball. Together with a silver-tongued pig named Squealer, they formulate the principles of a philosophy called Animalism, the fundamentals of which they spread among the other animals. The animals call one another "Comrade" and take their quandaries to the pigs, who answer their questions about the impending Rebellion. At first, many of the animals find the principles of Animalism difficult to understand; they have grown up believing that Mr. Jones is their proper master. Mollie, a vain carriage horse, expresses particular concern over whether she will be able to continue to enjoy the little luxuries like eating sugar and wearing ribbons in the new utopia. Snowball sternly reminds her that ribbons symbolize slavery and that, in the animals' utopia, they would have to be abolished. Mollie halfheartedly agrees.

The pigs' most troublesome opponent proves to be Moses, the raven, who flies about spreading tales of a place called Sugarcandy Mountain, where animals go when they die—a place of great pleasure and plenty, where sugar grows on the hedges. Even though many of the animals despise the talkative and idle Moses, they nevertheless find great appeal in the idea of Sugarcandy Mountain. The pigs work very hard to convince the other animals of the falsehood of Moses's teachings. Thanks to the help of the slow-witted but loyal cart-horses, Boxer and Clover, the pigs eventually manage to prime the animals for revolution.

The Rebellion occurs much earlier than anyone expected and comes off with shocking ease. Mr. Jones has been driven to drink after losing money in a lawsuit, and he has let his men become lazy, dishonest, and neglectful. One day, Mr. Jones goes on a drinking binge and forgets to feed the

animals. Unable to bear their hunger, the cows break into the store shed and the animals begin to eat. Mr. Jones and his men discover the transgression and begin to whip the cows. Spurred to anger, the animals turn on the men, attack them, and easily chase them from the farm. Astonished by their success, the animals hurry to destroy the last remaining evidence of their subservience: chains, bits, halters, whips, and other implements stored in the farm buildings. After obliterating all signs of Mr. Jones, the animals enjoy a double ration of corn and sing "Beasts of England" seven times through, until it is time to sleep. In the morning, they admire the farm from a high knoll before exploring the farmhouse, where they stare in stunned silence at the unbelievable luxuries within. Mollie tries to stay inside, where she can help herself to ribbons and gaze at herself in the mirror, but the rest of the animals reprimand her sharply for her foolishness. The group agrees to preserve the farmhouse as a museum, with the stipulation that no animal may ever live in it.

The pigs reveal to the other animals that they have taught themselves how to read, and Snowball replaces the inscription "Manor Farm" on the front gate with the words "Animal Farm." Snowball and Napoleon, having reduced the principles of Animalism to seven key commandments, paint these commandments on the side of the big barn. The animals go to gather the harvest, but the cows, who haven't been milked in some time, begin lowing loudly. The pigs milk them, and the animals eye the five pails of milk desirously. Napoleon tells them not to worry about the milk; he says that it will be "attended to." Snowball leads the animals to the fields to begin harvesting. Napoleon lags behind, and when the animals return that evening, the milk has disappeared.