

CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY

In the bitter cold of winter, the animals struggle to rebuild the windmill. In January, they fall short of food, a fact that they work to conceal from the human farmers around them, lest Animal Farm be perceived to be failing. The humans refuse to believe that Snowball caused the destruction of the windmill, saying that the windmill's walls simply weren't thick enough. The animals deem this explanation false, but they nevertheless decide to build the walls twice as thick this time. Squealer gives ennobling speeches on the glory of sacrifice, but the other animals acquire their real inspiration from the example of Boxer, who works harder than ever. In order to feed the animals, Napoleon contracts to sell four hundred eggs a week. The other animals react with shock—one of Old Major's original complaints about humans focused on the cruelty of egg selling, or so they remember. The hens rebel, and Napoleon responds by cutting their rations entirely. Nine hens die before the others give in to Napoleon's demands. Soon afterward, the animals hear, to their extreme dismay, that Snowball has been visiting the farm at night, in secret, and sabotaging the animals' efforts. Napoleon says that he can detect Snowball's presence everywhere, and whenever something appears to go wrong by chance, Snowball receives the blame. One day, Squealer announces that Snowball has sold himself to Mr. Frederick's farm, Pinchfield, and that the treacherous pig has been in league with Mr. Jones from the start. He recalls Snowball's attempts at the Battle of the Cowshed to have the animals defeated. The animals hear these words in stupefied astonishment. They remember Snowball's heroism and recall that he received a medal. Boxer, in particular, is completely baffled. But Napoleon and Squealer convince the others that Snowball's apparent bravery simply constituted part of his treacherous plot. They also work to convince the animals of Napoleon's superior bravery during that battle. So vividly does Squealer describe

Napoleon's alleged heroic actions that the animals are almost able to remember them.

Four days later, Napoleon convenes all of the animals in the yard. With his nine huge dogs ringed about him and growling, he stages an inquisition and a purge: he forces certain animals to confess to their participation in a conspiracy with Snowball and then has the dogs tear out these supposed traitors' throats. The dogs, apparently without orders, even attack Boxer, who effortlessly knocks them away with his huge hooves. But four pigs and numerous other animals meet their deaths, including the hens who rebelled at the proposal to sell their eggs. The terrible bloodshed leaves the animals deeply shaken and confused. After Napoleon leaves, Boxer says that he would never have believed that such a thing could happen on Animal Farm. He adds that the tragedy must owe to some fault in the animals themselves; thus, he commits to working even harder. Clover looks out over the farm, wondering how such a glorious rebellion as theirs could have come to its current state. Some of the animals begin to sing "Beasts of England," but Squealer appears and explains that "Beasts of England" may no longer be sung. It applied only to the Rebellion, he says, and now there is no more need for rebellion. Squealer gives the animals a replacement song, written by Minimus, the poet pig. The new song expresses profound patriotism and glorifies Animal Farm, but it does not inspire the animals as "Beasts of England" once did.