

5. A Canary for One

The story takes place on a train in France. An American lady is talking about a canary she has bought for her daughter. Between stops at Marseilles and Avignon, the train passes a burning farmhouse. At night the American lady cannot sleep, because she is afraid the train will have an accident in the dark.

The next morning they are approaching Paris. The American lady tells the narrator and his wife that she thinks American girls should always marry American men. She explains that her daughter was in love with a Swiss in Vevey two years ago. She took her daughter away to America, but the girl has remained broken-hearted. That is why the lady has bought a canary to sing for her. After they talk about buying clothes in Paris, she repeats that Americans are the best husbands. The train passes some wrecked cars. In Paris the travellers leave the train and say goodbye. The narrator comments that he and his wife have come to Paris to begin their preparations for divorce. (Cook's = a famous travel agency)

Questions

1. Explain the title of the story.
2. What is so ironic about the last line?
3. What is your opinion of the American lady? What do you think of the present she has bought for her daughter?

19. ANIMAL FARM (1945)

by George Orwell

Author

George Orwell, whose real name was Eric Blair, was born in India in 1903, but studied in England. He was with the police in Burma, where he learned to hate colonialism. When he returned to Europe he became an active socialist. Orwell wrote many essays and books; most famous are *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He died in 1950.

Genre

Animal Farm is a *beast fable*, a story in which animals talk and act like certain types of human beings. The purpose of a fable is always to teach something about human behaviour.

Animal Farm is also an *allegory*, a story that has two levels (*niveaus*). In the first place it is a story about animals running their own farm. But at a deeper level, it is a satire on Soviet Russia. The farm is Russia and the Revolution is the Russian Revolution of 1917. There are many parallels between the story of *Animal Farm* and the history of the Russian Revolution.

Characters

Mr Jones, owner of the Manor Farm.

Mr Pilkington and *Mr Frederick*, neighbouring farmers.

Mr Whymper, a lawyer.

Old Major, a 12-year old boar (male pig).

Boxer and *Clover*, strong work horses.

Muriel, a white goat.

Benjamin, a donkey, the oldest animal on the farm.

Mollie, a mare (female horse), pretty but foolish.

Moses, a tame raven.

Napoleon and *Snowball*, pigs who become the leaders of *Animal Farm*.

Squealer, a pig who becomes Napoleon's propagandist.

Bluebell, *Jessie*, *Pincher*, dogs.

The Story

1. Mr Jones, the owner of Manor Farm, is drunk as usual. As soon as he has gone to bed, the animals all meet in the barn because Major, an old pig, wants to tell them about a dream he has had. He first talks about their miserable life: they get little to eat and have to work hard for the human beings. The only way to make things better, he says, is to start a rebellion. Then he tells them about a song called 'Beasts of England'. It is an old, forgotten song, but the words of it have come back to him in his dream.

The song is about a time when England will belong to the animals; there will be no people to treat them badly. The animals get very excited and learn the song by heart.

2. Old Major dies, but his ideas about the rebellion live on. The pigs, the most intelligent animals on the farm, prepare the other animals for the great day. They turn Major's ideas into a philosophy called Animalism. During secret meetings at night they teach the other animals and answer all their questions. Moses, Jones' pet raven, says there is a wonderful country called Sugarcandy Mountain, where all animals will go when they die. But the other animals, especially the horses Boxer and Clover, believe everything the pigs say. They accept them as their leaders and teachers.

The Rebellion takes place one day when Jones and his men forget to feed the animals. The animals break into the store shed where their food is kept. Then they chase Jones and his men, who attack them with whips, off the farm. The pigs, who have taught themselves to read and write, change the name Manor Farm into Animal Farm and paint Seven Commandments (*geboden*) on the barn wall.

3. Now that the farm is theirs, the animals work happily. They harvest the hay under the supervision of the pigs. The animals do not mind working hard now, and Boxer works hardest of all. Every Sunday they meet to plan the work of the coming week. In the debates Snowball and Napoleon do most of the talking, but can never agree. By the end of the summer, most of the animals can read a little. Even the sheep, who are quite stupid, learn Snowball's slogan: Four legs good, two legs bad. All the animals accept the fact that only the pigs get milk to drink and apples to eat because their work is most important.

4. Mr Jones and his neighbours are always quarrelling, but now they decide to work together. They are afraid that the animals on other farms will start a rebellion, too. They try to recapture the farm, but the animals are prepared, and Snowball has a battle plan carefully worked out. After a short fight the men are driven off. The animals have won the 'Battle of the Cowshed', thanks to Snowball's strategy, and medals are awarded to Snowball, Boxer and a sheep killed in the battle.

5. Mollie, the pretty mare who loves to wear bright ribbons and eat lumps of sugar, runs away from the farm. The differences of opinion between Snowball and Napoleon dominate the Sunday meetings. Snowball makes brilliant speeches, but Napoleon is more successful at getting support in secret. Snowball wants to build a windmill to supply the farm with electrical power, but Napoleon is against it. When Snowball is about to win the argument, he is suddenly attacked and chased off the farm by nine big, fierce dogs that Napoleon has trained in secret.

Now Napoleon is in charge alone. All the animals listen to him because they are afraid of the dogs. Hardly anyone dares to protest when Napoleon announces that there will be no more meetings to make decisions. Three weeks later it is announced that the windmill will be built after all. Squealer, who is always sent to explain the pigs' policies to the other ani-

mals, says that Napoleon only pretended to be against the windmill in order to get rid of Snowball.

6. Now the animals have to work very hard. They have to build the stone walls of the windmill in addition to their regular work. Yet they feel happy, although they get no more food than in Jones' days. Napoleon, with the help of a Mr Whymper, begins to trade with the neighbouring farmers, because the animals need goods that they cannot produce themselves. The pigs move into the farmhouse and sleep in the beds. The other animals are surprised, but Squealer explains to them that the pigs need a quiet place for their responsible work. When the windmill falls down in a storm, Napoleon declares that it was Snowball, the enemy, who destroyed it.

7. That winter the animals get little to eat and are always cold. Napoleon sells 400 eggs a week so that he can buy extra food. His dogs see to it that the protesting hens are kept under control. It becomes the custom on the farm to blame Snowball for everything that goes wrong. Napoleon even declares that Snowball played the role of a traitor (*verrader*) in the Battle of the Cowshed.

Four days later a number of animals confess that they have worked together with Snowball. They are killed by the dogs. This impresses the animals very much. The only way they can find to express their unhappiness and disappointment about what has happened to the farm is by singing 'Beasts of England'. But Squealer comes to tell them that the song is now forbidden; it has been replaced by a new song.

8. The pigs change the Seven Commandments one by one so that everything they do is legal. The animals have to work even harder than the year before. The windmill has to be rebuilt. Sometimes they realize they are not better off than in Jones' days, but every Sunday morning Squealer tells them that the production of food has increased greatly. Napoleon is now addressed as 'Our Leader, Comrade Napoleon'. He behaves more and more like a king, rather than a fellow-animal. His actions and speeches confuse the animals, but Squealer's explanations set their minds at ease.

After Napoleon sells some valuable wood to Mr Frederick, it turns out that the bank notes received for the wood are false. Then Mr Frederick and his men attack the farm, but the animals, with the help of Napoleon's dogs, succeed in defending the farm. Although the windmill is blown up and many animals are dead or wounded, Napoleon proclaims a great victory celebration.

9. During the cold winter the animals again have little to eat. Still they believe Squealer when he tells them they are much better off than before the Rebellion. The pigs keep the best food for themselves and their dogs, and even drink whisky and beer. Most of the animals enjoy the 'Spontaneous Demonstrations' often held in honour of Napoleon. In the spring Animal Farm becomes a republic and Napoleon is elected President. One day Boxer falls ill. His old age and long working hours have become too much for him. The animals are told that he is being taken to a hospital, but actually he is sold to a horse slaughterer.

10. Many years pass, until only a few animals remember the days before the Rebellion. The farm is prosperous and the windmill has been completed. But only the pigs and dogs live in luxury. The other animals have to work hard and are always hungry. Yet the animals are proud to be on the only farm in England owned by animals. Therefore they are shocked when the pigs suddenly behave like human beings: they walk on their hind legs, wear clothes and carry whips. The Seven Commandments are replaced by a single Commandment: *All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.*

There is a friendly relationship between the pigs and the neighbouring farmers now. One evening the pigs invite six farmers to see the farm and have a party. In an important speech Napoleon says that the name Animal Farm has been changed back to Manor Farm, and that all memories of the Rebellion will be suppressed. The other animals, who are outside looking in through the windows, can no longer see any difference between the pigs and the farmers.

Questions (The numbers refer to the chapters.)

1. Why is Man the great enemy of the animals, according to Major?
2. a. Describe the characters of Napoleon, Snowball and Squealer.
b. Why is Mollie not allowed to wear ribbons after the Rebellion?
3. Why is the harvest the biggest that the farm has ever seen?
4. What daily task is given to the pigeons by Snowball and Napoleon?
5. How do the sheep help Napoleon during meetings?
6. How is the fourth Commandment changed?
7. Why does Napoleon want to convince Mr Whymper that the animals have plenty of food?
8. How is the sixth Commandment changed? The fifth?
9. How do the pigs spend the money they get for Boxer?
10. What is it about Animal Farm that impresses the neighbouring farmers most?

General:

1. What is Orwell's opinion of Russia after the Revolution?
2. See if you can find the parallels in the book to:
 - a. the Czar of Russia
 - b. the Church
 - c. Communism
 - d. the secret police
 - e. the dictator (Lenin-Stalin)
 - f. the banished leader (Trotsky)
 - g. heavy industry
 - h. capitalist countries

20. TREASURE ISLAND (1883)

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Author

Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850. He studied law but preferred to write novels. His first success came with *Treasure Island*, a story he wrote to entertain his stepson. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) was even more successful. Stevenson suffered all his life from tuberculosis and travelled a great deal for his health. After many adventures in the South Seas, he died in 1894.

Genre

Treasure Island is an adventure novel. Exciting and unexpected events are more important than what people think or feel. Characters in an adventure novel are usually either quite good or quite bad. Or they have a few outstanding characteristics (*kenmerken*), so that you can get to know them quickly.

Setting

Part 1 is set in the Admiral Benbow Inn on the West Coast of England. The rest of the story takes place on Treasure Island, an island in the Pacific.

Characters

Jim Hawkins (15), the boy who is telling the story.

Dr Livesey, a doctor, a good man.

Squire Trelawney, a country squire (*landedelman*) who loves adventure but is not always careful.

Captain Smollett, captain of the *Hispaniola*, stern but capable.

Billy Bones, a pirate who once sailed with the famous Captain Flint.

Long John Silver (Barbecue), one-legged ship's cook on the *Hispaniola*, leader of the pirates, intelligent and likeable.

Captain Flint, Silver's parrot, named after the famous pirate.

Pew, *Black Dog*, *Israel Hands*, *George Merry*, *Tom Morgan*, pirates who (like Bones and Silver) once sailed with Captain Flint.

Ben Gunn, pirate who was left behind by shipmates and has lived alone on Treasure Island for three years.

Arrow, first mate on the *Hispaniola*.

Redruth, *Joyce*, *Hunter*, Trelawney's servants.

Gray, a sailor who joins Trelawney's group.

