



## Chapter I

Mr. Jones, of the **Manor Farm**<sup>1</sup>, locked the hen-houses for the night. But he was too drunk to remember to shut the **pop-holes**<sup>2</sup>. He drew himself a last glass of beer from the barrel in the scullery, and made his way up to bed, where Mrs. Jones was already snoring.

As soon as the light in the bedroom went out there was a fluttering all through the farm buildings. They said during the day that old Major, the prize boar, had a strange dream and wished to communicate it to the other animals. The animals will all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones is gone. Old Major (so he was always called, though his name was Willingdon Beauty) was so highly re-

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<sup>1</sup> **Manor Farm** — ферма «Усадьба»

<sup>2</sup> **pop-holes** — дыры в стене

garded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to listen to him.

At one end of the big barn, on a raised platform, Major was already ensconced on his bed of straw, under a lantern which hung from a beam. He was twelve years old and was stout, but he was still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance in spite of his **tushes**<sup>1</sup>. Soon the other animals began to arrive and make themselves comfortable. First came the three dogs, Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher, and then the pigs, who settled down in the straw immediately in front of the platform. The hens perched themselves on the window-sills, the pigeons fluttered up to the rafters, the sheep and cows lay down behind the pigs and began to chew the cud.

The two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover, came in together, walking very slowly and setting down their vast hairy hoofs with great care. Clover was a stout motherly mare. Boxer was an enormous beast, nearly eighteen hands high, and as strong as two ordinary horses. A white stripe down his nose gave him a stupid appearance, and in fact he was not very intelligent. But he was universally respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work.

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<sup>1</sup> **tushes** — КЛЫКИ

After the horses came Muriel, the white goat, and Benjamin, the donkey. Benjamin was the oldest animal on the farm, and the worst tempered. He seldom talked, and when he did, it was usually to make some cynical remark. For instance, he said:

“God gave him a tail to keep the flies off, but I prefer to have no tail and no flies”.

Among the animals on the farm he never laughed. He said he saw nothing to laugh at. Nevertheless, he was devoted to Boxer. They usually spent their Sundays together in the small paddock beyond the orchard, grazing side by side and never speaking.

The two horses lay down when a brood of ducklings, which lost their mother, filed into the barn, cheeping feebly and wandering from side to side to find some place. Clover made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg, and the ducklings nestled down inside it and promptly fell asleep.

At the last moment Mollie, the foolish, pretty white mare who drew Mr. Jones’s trap, came daintily in, chewing at a lump of sugar. She took a place near the front and began flirting her white mane, hoping to draw attention to her red ribbons.

Last of all came the cat, who looked round, as usual, for the warmest place, and finally squeezed herself in between Boxer and Clover. There she purred contentedly throughout Major’s speech without listening to a word of what he was saying.

All the animals were now present except Moses, the tame raven, who slept on a perch behind the back door. When Major saw that they all made themselves comfortable and were waiting attentively, he cleared his throat and began:

“Comrades, you heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. But I will come to the dream later. I have something else to say first. I do not think, comrades, that I shall be with you for many months longer. Before I die, I feel it my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired. I have had a long life, I have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall, and I think I may say that I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as any animal now living. It is about this that I wish to speak to you.

Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, they give us food just to keep the breath in our bodies. Those of us who are capable of it must to work to the last atom of our strength. The very instant that our usefulness has come to an end they slaughter us with hideous cruelty. No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth.

But is this simply part of the order of nature? Is it because this land of ours is so poor that it cannot afford a decent life to those who dwell upon it? No, comrades, a thousand times no! The soil of England is fertile, its climate is good, it is capable of affording food in abundance to an enormously greater number of animals than now inhabit it. This single farm of ours can support a dozen horses, twenty cows, hundreds of sheep — and all of them can live in a comfort and a dignity that we can't imagine at the moment. Why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because human beings steal nearly the whole of the produce of our labour. There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. The key is a single word — Man. Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever.

Man is the only creature that consumes and does not produce anything. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals. He **sets them to work**<sup>1</sup>, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving. The rest he keeps for himself. Our labour tills the soil, our dung

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<sup>1</sup> **sets them to work** — гонит их на работу

fertilises it, and yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare skin. You cows that I see before me, how many thousands of gallons of milk did the man give you last year? And what has happened to that milk which was for the sturdy calves? Every drop of it has gone down the throats of our enemies.

And you hens, how many eggs have you laid in this last year? How many of those eggs ever hatched into chickens? The rest have all gone to market to bring in money for Jones and his men. And you, Clover, where are those four foals you bore, who could be the support and pleasure of your old age? Each was sold at a year old — you will never see one of them again. In return for your four confinements and all your labour in the fields, what have you ever had except your bare rations and a stall?

And even the miserable lives we lead are not allowed to reach their natural span. For myself I do not grumble, for I am one of the lucky ones. I am twelve years old and have had over four hundred children. Such is the natural life of a pig. But no animal escapes the cruel knife in the end.

You young porkers who are sitting in front of me, every one of you will scream your lives out at the block within a year. To that horror we all must come — cows, pigs, hens, sheep, everyone. Even the horses and the dogs have no better fate. You, Boxer, the very day that those great muscles of

yours lose their power, Jones will sell you to the knacker. And the knacker will cut your throat and **boil you down for the foxhounds**<sup>1</sup>. As for the dogs, when they grow old and toothless, Jones ties a brick round their necks and drowns them in the nearest pond.

Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings? Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour will be our own! Almost overnight we can become rich and free. What then must we do? Why, work night and day, body and soul, for the overthrow of the human race! That is my message to you, comrades: Rebellion! I do not know when that Rebellion will come, in a week or in a hundred years, but I know, as surely as I see this straw beneath my feet, that sooner or later justice will be done. Fix your eyes on that, comrades, throughout the short remainder of your lives! And above all, pass on this message of mine to those who come after you, so that future generations will carry on the struggle until it is victorious.

And remember, comrades, your resolution must never falter. No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you that Man and the

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<sup>1</sup> **boil you down for the foxhounds** — сварит из тебя собачью похлёбку



animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others. It is all lies. Man serves the interests of no creature except himself. And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship in the struggle. All men are enemies. All animals are comrades!”

At this moment there was a tremendous uproar. While Major was speaking four large rats crept out of their holes and were sitting on their hindquarters, listening to him. The dogs suddenly caught sight of them, and it was only by a swift dash for their holes that the rats saved their lives. Major raised his trotter for silence.

“Comrades,” he said, “here is a point that must be settled. The wild creatures, such as rats and rabbits — are they our friends or our enemies? Let us put it to the vote. I propose this question to the meeting: Are rats comrades?”

They voted. It was agreed by an overwhelming majority that rats were comrades. There were only four dissentients, the three dogs and the cat. Afterwards it was discovered that the cat voted on both sides.

Major continued:

“I have little more to say. I merely repeat, remember always your duty of enmity towards Man and all his decisions. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has

wings, is a friend. And remember also that in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him. Even when you conquer him, do not adopt his vices. No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in trade. All the habits of Man are evil. And, above all, no animal must ever tyrannise animals. Weak or strong, clever or simple, we are all brothers. No animal must ever kill any other animal. All animals are equal.

And now, comrades, I will tell you about my dream of last night. I cannot describe that dream to you. It was a dream of the earth as it will be when Man vanishes. But it reminded me of something. Many years ago, when I was a little pig, my mother and the other sows sang an old song. Last night, it came back to me in my dream. And what is more, the words of the song also came back. The animals of long ago sang these words, I am certain. I will sing you that song now, comrades. I am old and my voice is hoarse. But when I teach you the tune, you can sing it better for yourselves. It is called 'Beasts of England.'"

Old Major cleared his throat and began to sing. He sang well enough, and it was a wonderful tune, something between 'Clementine' and 'La Cucaracha'. The words ran:

*Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,  
Beasts of every land and clime,  
Hearken to my joyful tidings  
Of the golden future time.*

*Soon or late the day is coming,  
Tyrant Man will be overthrown,  
And the fruitful fields of England  
Will be trod by beasts alone.*

*Rings will vanish from our noses,  
And the harness from our back,  
Bit and spur will rust forever,  
Cruel whips no more will crack.*

*Riches more than mind can picture,  
Wheat and barley, oats and hay,  
Clover, beans, and **mangel-wurzels**<sup>1</sup>  
Will be ours upon that day.*

*Bright will shine the fields of England,  
Purer will its waters be,  
Sweeter yet will blow its breezes  
On the day that sets us free.*

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<sup>1</sup> **mangel-wurzels** — кормовая свёкла

*For that day we all must labour,  
Though we die before it break;  
Cows and horses, geese and turkeys,  
All must toil for freedom's sake.*

*Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,  
Beasts of every land and clime,  
Hearken well and spread my tidings  
Of the golden future time!*

The singing of this song threw the animals into the wildest excitement. Almost before Major reached the end, they began to sing it for themselves. Even the stupidest of them picked up the tune and few words, and as for the clever ones, such as the pigs and dogs, they had the entire song by heart within a few minutes. And then, after a few preliminary tries, the whole farm burst out into 'Beasts of England' in tremendous unison. The cows lowed it, the dogs whined it, the sheep bleated it, the horses whinnied it, the ducks quacked it. They were so delighted with the song that they sang it five times in succession.

Unfortunately, the uproar awoke Mr. Jones, who sprang out of bed. He was sure that there was a fox in the yard. He seized the gun which always stood in a corner of his bedroom, and shot six times into the darkness. The pellets buried themselves in

the wall of the barn and the meeting broke up hurriedly. Everyone fled to his own sleeping-place. The birds jumped on to their perches, the animals settled down in the straw, and the whole farm was asleep in a moment.