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Animal Farm, 50th Anniversary Edition



Synopsis

Animal Farm is the most famous by far of all twentieth-century political allegories. Its account of a group of barnyard animals who revolt against their vicious human master, only to submit to a tyranny erected by their own kind, can fairly be said to have become a universal drama. Orwell is one of the very few modern satirists comparable to Jonathan Swift in power, artistry, and moral authority; in Animal Farm his spare prose and the logic of his dark comedy brilliantly highlight his stark message. Taking as his starting point the betrayed promise of the Russian Revolution, Orwell lays out a vision that, in its bitter wisdom, gives us the clearest understanding we possess of the possible consequences of our social and political acts. (Book Jacket Status: Jacketed)

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a handsome republication of Orwell's two most renowned works, Animal Farm and 1984. Even if you're just looking for 1984, this edition is to be commended; it comes with a fine introduction by today's leading Orwell enthusiast, Christopher Hitchens, and the reward of including Animal Farm requires very little in the way of additional effort or expense on your part. At 80-odd pages, you may as well pick it up in the same volume, and you're virtually certain to be glad that you did. I'm not alone in being of a generation that was first required to read Orwell in my student days (Middle School, in my case.) It seems that there was a lot of literature churned out then, accessible to if not directly aimed at children, with the horrors of totalitarianism as its theme. In addition to reading Orwell, we were also reading Huxley, Bradbury, and Verne -- the youth-oriented John Christopher books being yet another example. The generation that lived through Nazism and Stalinism clearly wanted the younger set to be aware of the horrors that could be, and to remain on

guard against them. It doesn't seem to be quite that way anymore. Orwell's name is invoked today, but often in trivializing contexts: "Big Brother" is now a brain-numbing reality show, and "Orwellian" is a convenient and often hysterically-applied charge to political opponents. Some complacency does seem to be inevitable: we are now further removed from the days when the likes of Hitler and Stalin killed tens of millions. Still, regimes arise that are nearly as horrific on a local scale, from Pol Pot to Saddam Hussein to the Taliban, and are real enough that Orwell's book is no joke.

"Animal Farm" by George Orwell was never required reading for me when I was in school, so it took me some time to finally get around to reading it. I found it to be a complete and enjoyable read that had me hooked from the very first sentence. It is an excellent exercise in symbolism and creative imagination. While the book may be a very short read, it brings a whole lot to the table by giving you an interesting take on how history can be reenacted in the most imaginative ways. The animals on Mr. Jones' farm have had enough of what they deem to be slavery. They're tired of being ordered around by humans while they see no benefits in their daily work. This is all sparked by a dream that the boar, Major, had about a unique place where animals called the shots and never had to be ordered around by humans ever again. He tells them a revolution is very much needed. When Major dies, the animals act quickly and are able to overthrow the alcoholic farmer and his thugs from his very own farm. The pigs are in charge now, as they claim that they are much smarter than the others and know how to lead. What seems to be paradise quickly transforms into another form of slavery altogether enforced by propaganda and threats from the pigs. And yet, the animals do not know any better, as they are deceived by the new system that gives them the illusion that they are better off than they were with Mr. Jones calling the shots. The book is greatly inspired by real events that went down during the era of communism in Russia, using animals as the actual people. While it helps to know about that time period, the book is written so well that it is easily understood even if you only know a little about what happened during that time.

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