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Animal Farm

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by George Orwell

18 Mr. Jones, of the Manor Farm, had locked the hen-houses for the
34 night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the pop-holes. With the ring of
48 light from his lantern dancing from side to side, he lurched across the yard,
64 kicked off his boots at the back door, drew himself a last glass of beer from
80 the barrel in the scullery, and made his way up to bed, where Mrs. Jones was
82 already snoring.

98 As soon as the light in the bedroom went out there was a stirring and a
110 fluttering all through the farm buildings. Word had gone round during the
125 day that old Major, the prize Middle White boar, had had a strange dream on
139 the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals. It had
155 been agreed that they should all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones
170 was safely out of the way. Old Major (so he was always called, though the
182 name under which he had been exhibited was Willingdon Beauty) was so
196 highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's
206 sleep in order to hear what he had to say.

221 At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was
235 already ensconced on his bed of straw, under a lantern which hung from a
250 beam. He was twelve years old and had lately grown rather stout, but he was
263 still a majestic-looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance in spite
278 of the fact that his tushes had never been cut. Before long the other animals
288 began to arrive and make themselves comfortable after their different
300 fashions. First came the three dogs, Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher, and then
314 the pigs, who settled down in the straw immediately in front of the platform.
326 The hens perched themselves on the window-sills, the pigeons fluttered up

341 to the rafters, the sheep and cows lay down behind the pigs and began to
354 chew the cud. The two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover, came in together,
367 walking very slowly and setting down their vast hairy hoofs with great care
381 lest there should be some small animal concealed in the straw. Clover was a
393 stout motherly mare approaching middle life, who had never quite got her
405 figure back after her fourth foal. Boxer was an enormous beast, nearly
418 eighteen hands high, and as strong as any two ordinary horses put together.
431 A white stripe down his nose gave him a somewhat stupid appearance, and
445 in fact he was not of first-rate intelligence, but he was universally respected
457 for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work. After the
468 horses came Muriel, the white goat, and Benjamin, the donkey. Benjamin
481 was the oldest animal on the farm, and the worst tempered. He seldom
495 talked, and when he did, it was usually to make some cynical remark--for
512 instance, he would say that God had given him a tail to keep the flies off, but
527 that he would sooner have had no tail and no flies. Alone among the animals
542 on the farm he never laughed. If asked why, he would say that he saw
553 nothing to laugh at. Nevertheless, without openly admitting it, he was
566 devoted to Boxer; the two of them usually spent their Sundays together in
578 the small paddock beyond the orchard, grazing side by side and never
579 speaking.

592 The two horses had just lain down when a brood of ducklings, which
604 had lost their mother, filed into the barn, cheeping feebly and wandering
619 from side to side to find some place where they would not be trodden on.
633 Clover made a sort of wall round them with her great foreleg, and the
645 ducklings nestled down inside it and promptly fell asleep. At the last
657 moment Mollie, the foolish, pretty white mare who drew Mr. Jones's trap,
672 came mincing daintily in, chewing at a lump of sugar. She took a place near

686 the front and began flirting her white mane, hoping to draw attention to the
701 red ribbons it was plaited with. Last of all came the cat, who looked round,
713 as usual, for the warmest place, and finally squeezed herself in between
723 Boxer and Clover; there she purred contentedly throughout Major's speech
733 without listening to a word of what he was saying.

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

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