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Dramatic Publishing

George Orwell's
ANIMAL FARM

Adapted by
IAN WOOLDRIDGE



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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For the invisible cat,
wher ever she is!

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PRODUCTION NOTES

When I adapted *Animal Farm* for the stage, I was working as Artistic Director of a small-scale touring company, based in Glasgow. In the first production, the Commandments were written on a blackboard, and the animals existed in a world that was part playground, part circus, but most of all, a farmyard of the imagination. Audiences were made up mainly of young people, many of whom knew little or nothing about Soviet history, yet they immediately identified with the story, characters, their relationships and situation. In discussions after the show, the leading pigs were readily identified with politicians of the day, and subsequent productions in the UK and abroad have provoked audiences to similar reactions of amusement and shock. Nothing stays the same, but, as *Animal Farm* reminds us, one thing remains constant—the pigs will always be there, snouts in the trough, looking up every now and then, and eyeing the farmhouse greedily.

Staging

This adaptation was written for a company with limited resources and a commitment to touring in theatres and schools. This meant that the challenge of presenting the “set-piece” events of the story—in particular the Revolution, the Battle of the Cowshed, Snowball’s expulsion, the building of the windmill and Boxer’s departure—had to be met with solutions that were imaginative, simple, yet theatrically effective. Subsequent productions have involved a rich variety of presentation. For the Revolution, a puppet was used for Mr. Jones, wrapped in red silk and tossed into oblivion, or savagely beaten and almost drowned in a bath of water. The windmill has been a towering edifice of suitcases, umbrellas and wooden pallets, a shining silver construction of air-conditioning ducts, and large children’s building blocks piled high by the actors using only their fists

and feet. Generally the set-pieces have been underscored with music, both live and recorded.

Ultimately it is for each company to decide how they will stage these spectacles. Directors, designers, actors, musicians, technicians, composers and choreographers will all have input to determine what works best in a given set of circumstances. Simplicity is the key, and people plus imagination, rather than elaborate resources, will always produce the best results. When the going gets tough, as it inevitably will, when the trial and error process of rehearsal doesn't seem to be getting anywhere, that is the time to go back to the original story for ideas and inspiration.

Costume and Movement

Depending on the style of the production, costumes should be minimal, in order to allow maximum movement, freedom and physical expression. What the actors wear does not have to represent the animals in any way. Masks and “tails” are not necessary. Each actor has to create and express the essence of their animal in movement and sound. So, for example, the pigs might move on their toes whilst the horses are more flat-footed. Arms and hands become wings and tails. Animal sounds, which can have much in common with those of humans, are expressed freely throughout—the horses snort and whinny, the raven squawks, the donkey brays and the pigs grunt. When Napoleon and Squealer walk on “two legs” and the Pigs/Men emerge for the final encounter with Pilkington, costume may be used to create the right image—they can walk on stilts, or in high platform boots, and wear elaborate or ridiculous “human” clothes, unseen before. The moment should be truly shocking and it is for the actors, using their physical skills, to find its comic menace.

Ultimately, observation and practice are the best methods for realizing the animals. Plus, of course, constantly returning to the original fairy story in search of clues.

Casting

This version of *Animal Farm* was originally written for a company of six actors, but it can accommodate many more according to the needs of each production.

For a company of six, the division of parts could be as follows:

Actor 1	Major / Boxer / Young Animal
Actor 2	Squealer
Actor 3	Napoleon
Actor 4	Snowball / Benjamin
Actor 5	Clover
Actor 6	Moses / Mollie / Minimus / Pilkington

All other parts—sheep, dogs, pigeons, geese and hens—can be played by members of the company or, with larger numbers, by individual actors. The types of animals spreading rumours about Snowball (page 32-33) are entirely the decision of the company. The Young Animal has frequently been played as a puppy but other choices will work just as well.

The Storyteller can be divided amongst all the actors. Mr. Jones does not speak, and in the original production was represented by a life-sized puppet. However, he can be performed by an actor, who might then play Pilkington at the end.

Whilst it is probably a good idea to have Boxer played by a man, and Clover and Mollie by women, all the other parts can be played by actors of either sex.

Thanks to Alan Lyddiard of Northern Stage, Newcastle, and Ivan Heng of Wild Rice Theatre Company, Singapore, for believing in it and making it happen; to the schools and youth theatres who staged it with imagination and flair; and to Nick Hern and Nicki Stoddart for getting it on the page.

I.W.

This adaptation of *Animal Farm* was first performed by TAG Theatre Company at the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow, in March 1982. The cast was Tam Dean Burn, Steve Owen, Patricia Ross, Robin Sneller, Vari Sylvester and Laurie Ventry.

Directed by Ian Wooldridge

Animal Farm was revived by Northern Stage at the Gulbenkian Studio Theatre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in February 1993, and subsequently toured throughout the UK and Europe. The cast was Janine Birkett, Maria Carrigan, Alan Lyddiard, Tony Neilson, Derek Walmsley, David Whitaker and Tracey Wilkinson.

Directed by Alan Lyddiard

Designed by Cath Heatt

Lighting by Peter Barlow

Music by Test Department, Billy Bragg, David Whitaker

Choreography by Frank McConnell

Animal Farm was also performed by Wild Rice Theatre Company in Singapore in April 2002, directed by Ivan Heng.

ANIMAL FARM

A Fairy Story

CHARACTERS

STORYTELLER

The Pigs

MAJOR

NAPOLEON

SQUEALER

SNOWBALL

MINIMUS

The Horses

BOXER

CLOVER

MOLLIE

BENJAMIN, *a donkey*

MOSES, *a raven*

YOUNGANIMAL

The Farmers

MR JONES (*non-speaking*)

PILKINGTON

As sorted PIGS, PI GEONS, DOGS, GEESE, SHEEP, HENS

ANIMAL FARM

STORYTELLER. Mr. Jones of the Manor Farm locked the hen-houses for the night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the pop-holes. With the ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side, he lurched across the yard, drew himself a last glass of beer from the barrel in the scullery, and fell asleep in his armchair, alongside Mrs. Jones.

As soon as the light went out there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the farm. Word had gone round during the day that old Major the prize Middle White boar had had a strange dream on the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals.

MAJOR. Comrades, you have 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, and 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 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, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies. Those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength, and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end, we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty.

No animal 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!

Why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings. There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in 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 forever.

Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. 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 the lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving and the rest he keeps for himself.

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 labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could 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. Revolution!

I do not know when the Revolution will come, it might be in a week or in a hundred years, but I know 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 shall 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 animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the other. 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 animals are comrades.

I have little more to say. I merely repeat, remember always your duty of enmity towards Man and all his ways. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs or has wings is a friend. And remember also that infighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him. Even when you have conquered 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 tyrannize over his own kind. 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 last night. I cannot describe that dream to you. It was a dream of the earth as it will be when Man has vanished. But it reminded me of something that I had long forgotten. Many years ago my mother used to sing an old song of which she knew only the tune and the first three words. I had known that tune in my infancy, but it had long since passed out of my mind. Last night, however, it came back to me in my dream—and what is more, the words of the song also came back—words, I am certain, which were sung by animals of long ago and have been lost to memory for generations. I will sing you that song now, comrades, and when I have taught you the tune you can sing it better for yourselves. It is called “Beasts of England.”

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 shall be o’erthrown,
And the fruitful fields of England
Shall be trod by beasts alone.

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

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 ANIMALS learn the song. The sound of JONES's gun interrupts the singing.)

STORYTELLER. Three nights later old Major died peacefully in his sleep.

During the next three months there was much secret activity. The work of teaching and organising everybody was done by the pigs, who were the cleverest of the animals. The three most important pigs were Snowball, Napoleon and Squealer who began to develop a system of thought based on what old Major had said. They called it Animalism. And then there was Moses, the tame raven, who was Mr. Jones's special pet.

MOSES. Yeah, hallelujah, gather round, brothers and sisters. We're all gonna live on Sugarcandy Mountain. Up there, friends, up there, just on the other side of the dark clouds, there lies Sugarcandy Mountain, that happy country where we poor animals shall rest forever from our labours. After we die, I say after we die, we gonna live in that land, where it's Sunday seven days a week, clover is in season all the year round and lump sugar and linseed cake grow on the hedges.

STORYTELLER. And of late Mr. Jones had taken to drinking more than was good for him, so that he sat all day in his chair in the kitchen reading the newspapers and neglecting the animals.

(The Revolution takes place. MR JONES is expelled from Manor Farm.)

SQUEALER. Silence for Comrade Napoleon!

NAPOLEON. Comrades. Comrades. Jones has gone. The Revolution marks our first step on the road to freedom. The farm, our farm, hitherto known as Manor Farm is now to be called Animal Farm!

SQUEALER. Silence for Comrade Snowball!

SNOWBALL. Comrades, during the past three months we have taught ourselves to read and write, and have succeeded in reducing the principles of Animalism to Seven Commandments which from now on will form the law by which we all shall live.

The Seven Commandments are as follows:

(The Commandments are revealed at the back. SNOWBALL reads out the Commandments and the ANIMALS recite them.)

1. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
2. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.
3. No animal shall wear clothes.
4. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
5. No animal shall drink alcohol.

6. No animal shall kill any other animal.

7. All animals are equal.

SNOWBALL. Now, comrades, to the hayfield. Let us make it a point of honour to get in the harvest more quickly than Jones and his men could do.

(A bucket of milk arrives.)

MOLLIE. What is going to happen to all that milk? Jones used to mix some of it in our food.

NAPOLEON. Never mind the milk, comrades. That will be attended to. The harvest is more important. Comrade Boxer will lead the way. I shall follow in a few minutes. Forward, comrades!

STORYTELLER. So the animals trooped down to the hayfield to begin the harvest. And when Mollie came back in the evening:

MOLLIE. Where's the milk gone?

STORYTELLER. Mollie—the white mare who drew Mr. Jones's trap.

MOLLIE. Will there still be sugar now that the Revolution has happened?

SNOWBALL. No, we have no means of making sugar on this farm. Besides, you do not need sugar, you will have all the oats and hay you want.

MOLLIE. And shall I still be allowed to wear ribbons?

SNOWBALL. Comrade, those ribbons that you are devoted to are the badge of slavery. Can you not understand that liberty is worth more than ribbons?

MOLLIE. But can't I keep this pretty blue ribbon I found in the farmhouse?

SNOWBALL. Ribbons should be considered as clothes which are the mark of a human being.

(BOXER flings his hat away.)

STORYTELLER. Boxer the carthorse—his personal motto:

BOXER. I *will* work harder!

MOLLIE. And what hap pened to the milk? And what's going to happen to the apples from the orchard that you have said are for your use only?

NAPOLEON. Squealer!

SQUEALER. Comrades, you do not imagine, I hope, that we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege? Many of us actually dislike milk and apples, I dislike them myself. Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples, this has been proved by science, comrades, contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brain-workers. The whole management and organisation of this farm depends on us. Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink the milk and eat the apples.

Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! Surely, comrades—surely there is no one among you who would want Jones to come back.?

BOXER. What happened at the meeting?

MOLLIE. Why weren't you there?

BOXER. I was working hard at getting the harvest in. I for got about the meet ing and I did n't realise you had all gone.

MOLLIE. Well, that's a pity. You'll just have to try and be on time in future.

CLOVER. Mollie...

STORYTELLER. Clover the mare—Boxer's workmate.

BOXER. So, tell me what happened. Did Comrade Napoleon speak?

MOLLIE. No, Squealer did.

BOXER. And what did he say? Oh, please, you must tell me.

CLOVER. Mollie asked about the milk and the apples, which the pigs are keeping for themselves.

MOLLIE. And the lumps of sugar from the farmhouse.

CLOVER. And Squealer said the pigs need those things to help them run the farm better.

BOXER. Is that true?

MOLLIE. No, of course it isn't. It's absolute rubbish.

BOXER. No, really, is that what Squealer said?

CLOVER. Yes, if they don't have the milk and apples they won't be able to think properly, and then Jones might come back.

MOLLIE. He always gives me sugar.

BOXER. Oh, we don't want that.

MOLLIE. And he let me wear pretty ribbons.

CLOVER. No. So we all agreed that it was best if all the milk and apples were saved for the pigs.

MOLLIE. One blue, one red, one green...

BOXER. And do you think that's right, Clover?

CLOVER. Well, everyone agreed so it must be.

BOXER. Was Comrade Napoleon there?

CLOVER. Yes.

BOXER. And did he agree?

CLOVER. Yes, he asked Squealer to speak in the first place.

BOXER. Oh, well, if Comrade Napoleon says it then it must be right.

MOLLIE. Honestly, Boxer, you are stupid, why do you have to agree with everything he says?

BOXER. Well, he's the cleverest animal on the farm, isn't he? So he must...

MOLLIE. Who says so? Benjamin's clever, Moses was clever, and so was Mrs. Jones, she used to let me have ribbons all the time.

CLOVER. Oh, Mollie, stop going on about your ribbons. You looked silly in them anyway.

MOLLIE. I did not. I'm not silly. At least I'm better at reading and writing than you are, Boxer, and you, Clover.

CLOVER. Boxer works harder than any of us. He doesn't have much time to learn to read and write.

MOLLIE. How much of your A.B.C. can you say, Boxer? I bet you can't get as far as I can. I can get up to M which starts my name.

BOXER. I can say a bit.

MOLLIE. Go on then, let's hear it.

BOXER. A.B.C.

MOLLIE. There you are see...

CLOVER. Give him a chance, let him have a think.

BOXER. A.B.C. ...

MOLLIE. A.B.C.D.E.F.G. ...

CLOVER. Mollie, Mollie!

SNOWBALL. Comrades, since some of you have had difficulty in learning to read and write, we have decided to reduce the Commandments of Animalism to a single easily remembered maxim—FOUR LEGS GOOD, TWO LEGS BAD