

## **The Character of Napoleon - Transcript**

**Narrator:** 'When he did appear, he was attended by not only his retinue of dogs but a black cockerel who marched in front of him and acted as a kind of trumpeter...'

**Presenter:** Napoleon the pig started out like any other member of the farm and now look at him: acting superior and living separately from the rest of the animals.

He's described as 'Terror of Mankind' even whilst he takes on more of the human characteristics that he once fought and despised.

But just how did he get there?

At the start of Animal Farm, Napoleon and the rest of the animals are treated badly by the farmer, Mr. Jones, and Napoleon is part of an uprising that chases the humans away from the farm: he's treated as a war hero...victory for the animals!

However, the author hints that Napoleon will become a cruel and oppressive leader with small, threatening moments, like when he...

**Narrator:** '...said very quietly that the windmill was nonsense and that he advised nobody to vote for it, and promptly sat down again.'

**Presenter:** The sinister way he says this 'very quietly' hinting he is planning something wicked.

As he takes on more of a leadership role, there are also moments where he's hypocritical, contradicting himself and the rules of 'Animalism' that the farm animals had agreed on.

For example, he announces that the animals would have to work Sunday afternoons, adding that:

**Narrator:** 'This work was strictly voluntary, but any animal that absented himself from it would have his rations reduced by half.'

**Presenter:** Hardly voluntary, if your rations are reduced by half by not working.

Napoleon is clearly contradicting the core principle of Animalism - equality - creating inequality as his power over the farm increases.

Napoleon's character serves as an allegory for the Soviet dictator, Joseph Stalin.

Stalin was involved in the Russian Revolution, which overthrew the monarchy that was in power.

He later went on to rule the Soviet Union for around a quarter of a century, an era marked by violence against those who opposed him, and widespread famine.

George Orwell's Napoleon shows clear parallels to Stalin's dictatorial rule when he finds four pigs guilty of conspiring against him.

His dogs turn on the pigs - they...

**Narrator:** '...promptly tore their throats out, and in a terrible voice Napoleon demanded whether any other animal had anything to confess.'

**Presenter:** Napoleon displays increasingly human characteristics, looking and behaving more and more like the tyrannical old farmer whose rule he helped to bring down.

By the end of the book, he appears in human clothes, standing 'majestically upright', holding a whip to show who's boss.

What then, do you think the author is using the character of Napoleon to suggest about the dangers of abuse of power?