

Animal Farm

George Orwell

UNIT 2

Preview

Totalitarianism

“Absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

This famous quote highlights the ways in which power can change an otherwise trustworthy and honorable individual. In section two of *Animal Farm*, we will watch the power dynamic on the farm slowly shift and see how the concentration of power in the hands of one disrupts the equality and peace the animals want to achieve.

Totalitarianism is a political system in which the state (the government) holds complete control over its citizens and does whatever it can to control both their hearts and their minds. Developed in the 1920s as part of the building of the German state (which would later become Nazi Germany, instigator in World War II and responsible for the Holocaust), totalitarianism is not thought upon favorably within politics or international relations. George Orwell took on totalitarianism as a subject of critique in many of his books, including *Animal Farm* and *1984*.

As you read through these next few chapters, ask yourself how is power slowly concentrated in the hands of one, and what must that character do ensure that the minds and the hearts of other animals do not stray?

Vocabulary

Monstrous (adj.)	Having the ugly or frightening appearance of a monster or something else scary
Cannibalism (n.)	A person who eats people or an animal who eats another animal of its own species
Tractable (adj.)	Easy to control or influence

Savage (adj.)	Fierce, violent, and uncontrolled
Fortnight (n.)	Two weeks
Vengeance (n.)	Punishment for an injury or wrongdoing
Ignominious (adj.)	Causing or deserving of public disgrace or shame
Impromptu (adj./adv.)	Done without having a plan or being organized
Dynamo (n.)	A machine that convert mechanical energy into electrical energy
Restive (adj.)	Stubborn or difficult to control
Eloquence (adj.)	Fluent or persuasive speaking or writing
Sordid (adj.)	Involving immoral actions or motives
Cunning (adj.)	skillful at getting what one wants through deceit or evasion
Tactic (n.)	Action or strategy carefully planned to achieve a specific end
Toiling (v.)	To work extremely hard or incessantly