

CS LEWIS ON ANIMAL FARM VS. 1984

"when Orwell turns all his characters into animals he makes them more fully human. In *1984* the cruelty of the tyrants is odious, but it is not tragic...

Tragedy demands a certain minimal stature in the victim; and the hero and heroine of *1984* do not reach that minimum. They become interesting at all only in so far as they suffer. . . And the hero and heroine of this story are surely such dull, mean little creatures that one might be introduced to them once a week for six months without even remembering them.

In *Animal Farm* all this is changed. The greed and cunning of the pigs is tragic because we are made to care about all the honest, well-meaning, or even heroic beasts whom they exploit. The death of Boxer the horse moves us more than all the more elaborate cruelties of the other book. And not only moves, but convinces. Here, despite the animal disguise, we feel we are in a real world. This--this congeries of guzzling pigs, snapping dogs, and heroic horses--this is what humanity is like; very good, very bad, very pitiable, very honorable. If men were only like the people in *1984* it would hardly be worth while writing stories about them. It is as if Orwell could not see them until he put them in a beast fable.

Excerpts from C. S. Lewis's essay "George Orwell" from the collection *On Stories*.