

Level III alternate

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Alexander J. Lin

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Dear Mr. Orwell,

Funny how life is so easily manipulated. I hate to be pessimistic, but I turn on the TV and immediately desire the newest clothes. I have to buy a new computer every two years because the *old model* needs to be updated. My life has been one sales pitch straight into the jaws of another. Some people call it pop culture. I find it unsatisfying and empty.

Before reading Animal Farm, it did not occur to me that I was utterly powerless to this manipulation. Powerless to wear what I wanted, to pick my own friends, or even to motivate myself to practice my violin. There was no scientific reason to explain my problem because the reason is spiritual. Power is the ability to live life as you want it. I now know power lies in knowledge of myself and being satisfied enough to express my individuality.

Still I did not know any other way to live besides the constant barrage of rap music, with its sexual and violent innuendoes, and being drawn to the commerciality of the world. I was lost amid the craziness of society, not knowing who I was. That is until I met the workhorse Boxer in Animal Farm. Boxer's simple approach to life was summed up in four words, "I will work harder". Boxer knew who he was and what he

wanted to do, earning the admiration and respect of the other animals. His strength in character was exactly what I had been searching for! The will to be an individual.

Mr. Orwell, your message throughout the book was the eventual demise of mindless mass obedience. This lesson seems obvious, but I have found it hard not to join the bandwagon at times. The pressure of pleasing my peers often kept me from discovering my own individuality. After reading about the consequences of this asinine behavior though, your message really made me stop and take the time to unveil my true self.

Boxer was not perfect. Boxer's one fault was in his other favorite axiom, "Napoleon is always right". I despaired when this axiom led to Boxer's death. No one will always be right, so I figure blind following only leads to trouble. Boxer taught me to do what he had difficulty doing: think. Think about how I'm influenced by society and decide if I am bettered or worsened. Boxer reminds me to keep in touch with myself and not to stray from my principles.

I loved Boxer. His consistent mannerism exuded trustworthiness. I hope to be the same. Before reading Animal Farm, I treated almost everybody different. I thought some people deserved more attention than others did because they were *more like me*, when in truth, I didn't even know who I was. I now really see my friends as people that have common interests as me. I really care about my friends because they care about me, not because they fit in more with pop culture.

Animal Farm guided me to the power of knowing myself. I have become an individual, separate from the masses. I am a lover of knowledge, of classical music, of nature in all its beauty. I am *not* a fan of Britney Spears or TV wrestling. Sure, I'm still

affected by the culture around me. But *I* decide what fits my ideals; I decide what elements of culture I accept into my life.

Sincerely,
Alexander J. Lin
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