Animal Farm – Book Review

Animal Farm, by George Orwell, has been on my list to read for a long time (though as I read, it seemed familiar so perhaps I read it at school). I find 1984 so interesting and well-written, and subsequently reread it last year, so I was keen to give this book a go as it has such high praise.

Most people will at least know of this classic, I am sure. It begins on a farm where the animals are mistreated and fed up. They take over ownership of the farm, deciding to create a place of equality, growth and pleasant living conditions. This leads to a satirical examination of the frightening happenings before, during and after a revolution, an event that has occurred countless times in history with alarming similarity to the one portrayed in this novel.

This story is told like a fairytale, which makes for an easier read than I had been expecting. There are many animals involved on the farm, each well-developed and interesting, and who, on closer inspection, can be likened to many people in history. Despite the simplistic style of writing, the message and overall tone is, of course, far from childlike. This is an important story and a reminder of what has happened and can happen under various forms of government.

Although this is an interesting story that kept me wanting to read on, I did find it almost list-like. What I mean by that is it is as if Orwell wrote down the progression of a revolution against tyranny as it has often occurred in real life, then just went through the motions of transferring that list of events into a farm yard setting. By the end, I found it quite monotonous and repetitive, and although the story is told through the eyes of animals, it seemed almost unimaginative.

However, I can definitely see why this story has the following

that it does. It is a powerful, fascinating read, at times bleak and striking, at times comical and endearing, and I do recommend you read it.

I gave it 3.5 out of 5 stars.