

EXPLORERS 5



Black Beauty



MACMILLAN ENGLISH EXPLORERS

Black Beauty

A classic story by Anna Sewell

Adapted by Gill Munton

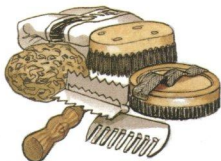
Series Editor: Louis Fidge





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Birtwick Park

My first home was a large field with a pond in the middle of it. There were tall trees and there was a little stream. I lived in the field with my mother.

When I was very young, I drank my mother's milk. But when I was older, I learnt how to eat grass.

My mother went to work every day. She pulled a carriage for our master. I stayed in the field with the other young horses. We all galloped round the field together. It was fun, but some of the other horses liked to kick and bite.



‘Those horses have no manners. When they grow up they will be cart-horses,’ my mother told me. ‘When you grow up, you will be gentle and kind. You will never kick or bite. Your grandfather was a champion racehorse and your grandmother was a good-tempered animal.’

My mother’s name was Duchess. She was a wise old horse and she loved our master. When she saw him at the gate, she always trotted up to him and let him stroke her. Sometimes he gave her a carrot. Sometimes he gave me some bread, too.

When I grew older, my woolly fur turned into a fine, shiny coat. I was a handsome horse, with one white foot and a white star on my forehead.

When I was four years old, a man called Squire Gordon came to the field with our master. He looked at my legs, my mouth and my eyes. Then I had to walk, trot and gallop for him.

‘He’s a fine horse. I would like to buy him,’ said Squire Gordon.

‘I will break him in for you first,’ said our master. I knew what that meant – he wanted to teach me how to pull a carriage and how to carry a rider on my back.

I was used to wearing a halter – a simple sort of bridle. But I had never carried a rider before. First, my master gently put on a proper bridle. It had a metal bar, called a bit. This went in my mouth. The reins were attached to the bit. I hated the bit at first, but I slowly got used to it. Next, my master placed a saddle on my back. He talked softly to me as he pulled up the straps.

One morning, my master got on my back and rode me round the field. He did this every day until I was used to it.

Next he took me to the blacksmith in the village. The blacksmith nailed heavy metal shoes to my feet. It did not hurt. The shoes felt strange at first, but I knew that I needed them to protect my feet when I walked on the roads.

Then I learnt to wear a harness. This was a bridle with blinkers. The blinkers only let me look straight ahead. The harness also had a heavy collar and a strap which went under my tail.



I soon got used to all these new things. Then I began to work with my mother.

One day, a groom came to take me to my new home with Squire Gordon.

'Goodbye,' said my master, and he patted me. 'Be a good horse and always do your best.' And so I left my first home. It was a very sad day.

Squire Gordon lived at Birtwick Park. His groom took me through a large iron gate and we trotted along the road that led to the house. When we came to the stables, the groom jumped off my back and took off my saddle. He led me into a loose box – a stable in which the horse is not tied up – and took off my bridle. He gave me some oats to eat and some water to drink. He patted me kindly and went to do some work.

I looked out of the stable door. I saw that Squire Gordon had many horses and carriages. In the loose box next to mine, there was a fat grey pony. He looked at me with interest.

'Good morning,' I said to him. 'What is your name?'

'Merrylegs,' he replied. 'The children ride me – Miss Jessie and Miss Flora – and sometimes I pull Mrs Gordon's small carriage. Are you going to live next door to me?'

'I think so,' I said.

'Then I hope you have good manners. I don't like horses who bite,' Merrylegs said.

A tall brown mare glared at me. 'I'm Ginger,' she said in a nasty voice. 'And you're in my box. They moved me to make room for you!'

'I'm sorry,' I said. 'This is where the groom put me.'



Later, Ginger went out. Then Merrylegs told me about her.

'Ginger bites people,' he said. 'Once she bit James, the stableboy, on the arm. Now the children are afraid to come to the stables. Perhaps they will come now you're here.'

'I don't understand why some horses bite people,' I replied.

'Ginger says that before she came here, her master was unkind to her. That's why she bites. But this is a lovely place. Squire Gordon never uses a whip and James is very kind. So is John, the groom,' Merrylegs said.

The next morning, John brushed my coat and then put a saddle and bridle on me. He was a good rider and I enjoyed galloping with him on my back.

On our way home, we met Squire Gordon and his wife. John pulled on the reins and I stopped next to them.

'How is our new horse, John?' asked the squire. 'Did you have a good ride?'

'He's a fine horse, sir,' said John. 'He's fast, but he obeys the lightest touch on the reins. I think he was treated well before he came to us.'

'Good,' said the Squire. 'I will ride him tomorrow.'

In the morning, the Squire came to ride me. As we trotted along, I tried to do exactly what he wanted. When we came home, Mrs Gordon was waiting at the door.

'Do you like our new horse, dear?' she asked.

'I like him very much,' he said. 'What shall we call him?'

'He's beautiful,' his wife replied. 'And he has a shiny black coat. I like the name Black Beauty.'

'That's a good name! Let's call him Black Beauty,' said the Squire.

A few days later, Ginger and I pulled the Squire's large carriage. I was worried about working with Ginger, but we trotted together very well.



I was happy in my new home. I became good friends with little Merrylegs, but I missed my first home. There, I lived in a field. I loved to gallop around the field. Now I lived in a stable. When John rode me, I wanted to gallop all the time. But John was kind to me. He let me gallop a lot.

On Sundays, when Squire Gordon and his wife stayed at home, we were put in a field next to the house. There, we galloped about as much as we wanted. The grass was cool and soft, and the air smelled sweet. When we finished galloping, we stood together under a chestnut tree and talked about our lives.

Ginger

One day, Ginger and I were standing under the chestnut tree. I told her about my old master and how kind he was to me. Ginger snorted and then she told me her story.

‘My first years were very different,’ she said. ‘When I began to eat grass, two men came into the field and took me away from my mother. They had a bridle and a whip. One of them was my master, Samson. He held my mane and the other man pushed the bit into my mouth very roughly. I was shocked – it hurt so badly. Then Samson started to pull me along by the bridle. The other man whipped me.

‘I hated Samson. His father was a kind man, but he was very old so Samson did most of the work on the farm. One day, he made me trot round the field until I was so tired that I nearly fell. The next day, he put a bridle on me and threw a saddle on to my back.

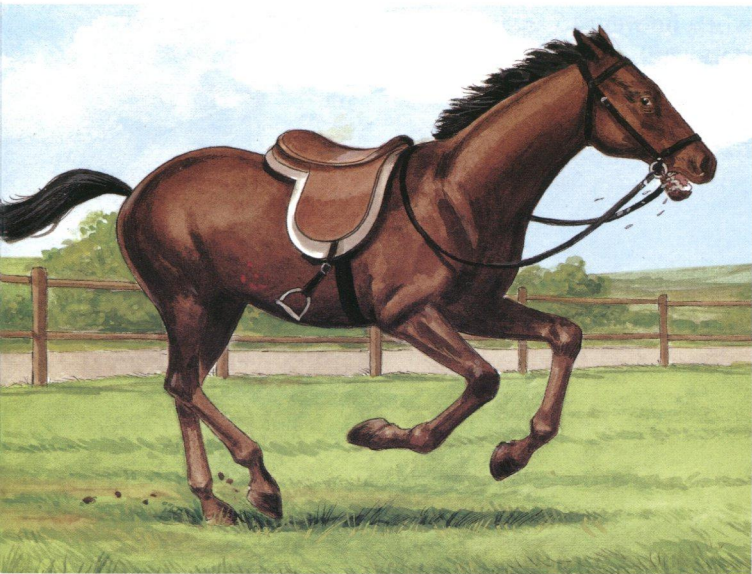
‘Samson told people that he was an excellent rider. That day, I made a plan to teach him a lesson. He got on my back and pulled hard on the reins. I reared up on my back legs and Samson started to whip me. I kicked and bucked and reared. I tried everything to throw this terrible man off my back. He held my mane and dug his sharp metal spurs into my sides. The spurs cut me badly.

'But at last, I threw him off my back!' Ginger went on. 'I galloped to the other end of the field and stood still. I was breathing hard and sweating. Samson got up and limped through the gate.'



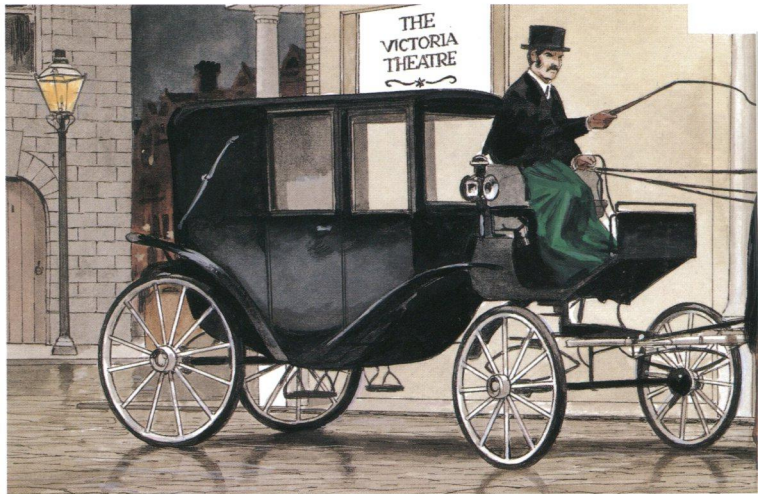
'I stood there for a long time. It was a hot day. Flies buzzed around me. I was hungry and very thirsty. Then, as the sun went down, Samson's father came into the field and walked up to me. He patted me and fed me some oats. "Poor Ginger!" he said. Then he led me to the stables. He gently took off my saddle and bridle and filled my bucket with cold water.

As he washed the blood from my sides, Samson came into my stable. The old man shook his head at him and said, "Look at poor Ginger! If you treat a horse badly, it will treat you badly too!"



'I didn't see Samson again. A groom looked after me, and the old man came to see me every day. When my sides got better, the old man sold me to a smart man from London. He had one brown horse to pull his carriage and he wanted another one. I hoped he was a kind man. But when he put on my harness, he made me wear a special rein called a bearing rein.

'I hope you never have to wear one, Beauty. It is so tight that it pulls your head up very high. The pain is terrible. I had to wear a very sharp bit, too, and it made my mouth bleed. I hated my work. Some days we were out with the carriage for hours. We had to stand and wait for our master when he went to a party or to the theatre. If we didn't stand still, the coachman whipped us.

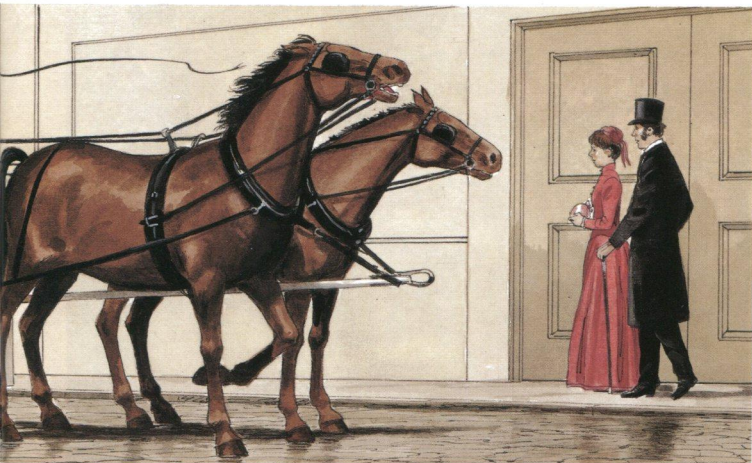


'Our master didn't care about us at all. He just wanted his horses to look smart so that all the fashionable people admired them.

'The other horse said that he soon got used to the bearing rein, but I never did. Then, one day, I ran away. I was caught and then sold again. The groom at the new place was as bad-tempered as Samson. He often hit me with his broom. In the end, I bit him and I was sold again. That's when I came here, to Birtwick Park. Everyone is kind here, but I will never trust a man. All men are my enemies.'

I felt very sorry for Ginger. But as the weeks passed, she grew happier.

'Ginger needs kindness, the poor thing,' said John the groom to Squire Gordon. 'She'll soon be as good as Black Beauty.'



A few days later, some children came to play with Miss Flora and Miss Jessie. The children rode on Merrylegs the pony. When John brought him back in the evening, he said, 'Behave yourself in future, Merrylegs. Or you will be in trouble with the squire.'

I asked Merrylegs what happened.

'The children rode me for a long time,' Merrylegs explained. 'One of them wanted me to go faster and faster, and he hit me with a stick. But I was tired, so I stopped suddenly and the child fell off.'



'Merrylegs! It wasn't Miss Flora or Miss Jessie, was it?' I cried.

'Oh, no, they are always kind to me. It was one of the boys. He hit me with a stick. He wanted me to go faster. When John saw the stick, he was angry.'

'Good for you!' said Ginger. 'Did you kick the boy, too?'

'No. I never kick,' replied Merrylegs. 'It's my job to look after those children. Squire Gordon trusts me. If I start to kick, they will sell me, and I like it here!'

Squire Gordon was never cruel to his horses. If he saw anyone being cruel to a horse, he became very angry and upset. One day, he was riding me home when we saw a pony pulling a small cart. When the pony came to Birtwick Park, he turned to go in the gates. The man pulled him back so roughly that the pony nearly fell. Then he began to whip the little horse. The man was called Sawyer, a builder who sometimes worked at Birtwick Park.

Squire Gordon shouted at him to stop.

'I didn't want him to turn!' cried Sawyer. 'I wanted him to go straight on. He deserves a good whipping!'

'Your pony often brings you to Birtwick Park,' said the Squire. 'He was very clever to remember the way. You must never be so cruel to a little pony.'

We walked back to the stables. Squire Gordon patted my neck as he handed the reins to James the stableboy. His face was very sad and I knew he was thinking about Sawyer and his poor little pony.

The storm

A few weeks later, John hitched me to the small carriage. Squire Gordon came out of the house and John helped him up into the seat.

I always enjoyed pulling the small carriage. It was a light carriage and the high wheels sang as we drove along the road. It was a wet autumn day and the wind blew dead leaves in front of us.

It began to rain again. Soon we came to a little wooden bridge and I could see that the river was almost level with it.

‘We’ve had a lot of rain, John,’ said Squire Gordon.

‘Yes, sir,’ replied John. ‘Look at the fields.’

Some of the lower fields were completely under water. We crossed the bridge but part of the road was under water, too. It came up to my knees.

‘I’ll be as quick as I can, John. We must get back home before the rain gets worse,’ the Squire said.

The road went through a small wood and at last we arrived at the town. We stopped outside an office and Squire Gordon went in.

He was in the office for a long time. As we waited, it started to rain heavily on my back and the cold wind blew against me. When the Squire came out, it was almost dark.

‘Sorry I was a long time, John,’ he said. ‘Come on, Beauty – let’s go home.’

John shook the reins lightly and we set off.

The weather was much worse now. When we came to the small wood, the trees were moving in the strong wind. 'What a bad storm, John!' Squire Gordon said. 'Let's get out of this wood.'

'Yes, sir. We don't want a tree to fall on top of us,' John replied.

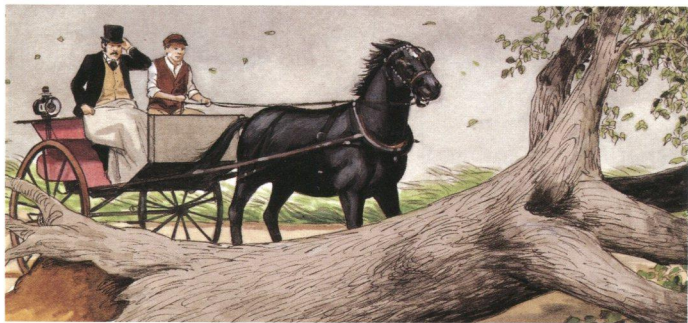
As he spoke, there was a strange sound and then we heard something tearing and breaking. A huge oak tree crashed to the ground in front of us. I stopped immediately. I was very frightened but I didn't run away with the carriage. John jumped down from the driving seat and stroked my head.

'The tree is blocking the road, sir. We will have to go back to the crossroads and go the other way,' he shouted.

'But that will take hours!' replied Squire Gordon.

'It's the only thing we can do, sir. It's a long way, but Beauty can do it.'

I rubbed my nose against John's shoulder and then he jumped back into the driving seat.



We went back to the crossroads and then down a long, winding lane. When at last we reached the little wooden bridge, we saw that there was water across its middle.

John called out, 'The river is very high, sir. There's water on the bridge. But that sometimes happens in heavy rain.' He pulled the reins and spoke to me. 'Go on, Beauty. Take us over the bridge.'

As soon as I stepped on to the bridge, I felt that something was wrong. I stopped straight away.

John jumped down again and tried to lead me across the bridge. 'Come on, Beauty!' he said.

But I refused to move.

Then a man from a nearby cottage came running towards us.

'Stop! Stop!' he cried. 'The bridge isn't safe – it's broken in the middle! If you try to cross, you will all fall in the river!'

John put his arms round my neck. 'You Beauty!' he whispered. 'You saved our lives.' Then he climbed back into his seat.

As we trotted along the river bank, the wind died down and the rain stopped. Squire Gordon and John were quiet for a long time.

Then the Squire said, 'Men are very clever, John. But sometimes an animal is cleverer. Black Beauty saved our lives tonight. We must respect our animals and be kind to them.'



When we got back to Birtwick Park, Mrs Gordon ran out of the house to meet us.

‘Are you all right, my dear?’ she cried. ‘Did you have an accident? I was so worried about you – the weather was terrible and you are so late!’

‘Thanks to Beauty, we did not have an accident,’ her husband replied. ‘Black Beauty saved our lives.’

Then Squire Gordon and his wife went up to the house, and John led me to my stable. He rubbed me dry and gave me lots of oats. Then he spread the straw thickly on the ground so I could lie down and rest.

One morning in December, Squire Gordon came to the stables with a letter in his hand. John put down his hay fork and went to meet him.

‘I want to talk to you about James, your stableboy. Is he a good worker?’ he asked John.

‘Oh, yes, sir,’ John replied.

‘And does he do as you tell him?’ Squire Gordon asked.

‘Always,’ John said. ‘And the most important thing, if I may say so, sir, is that he loves the horses.’

‘Very good, John,’ said Squire Gordon.

At that moment James came into the stables.

‘Put down your bucket, James, and come here,’ said the Squire. ‘I have got a letter from my wife’s brother, Sir Clifford Williams. He is looking for a new groom – a young man who can run his stables and drive his carriage. His old groom is too ill to carry on. So I thought of you, James.’

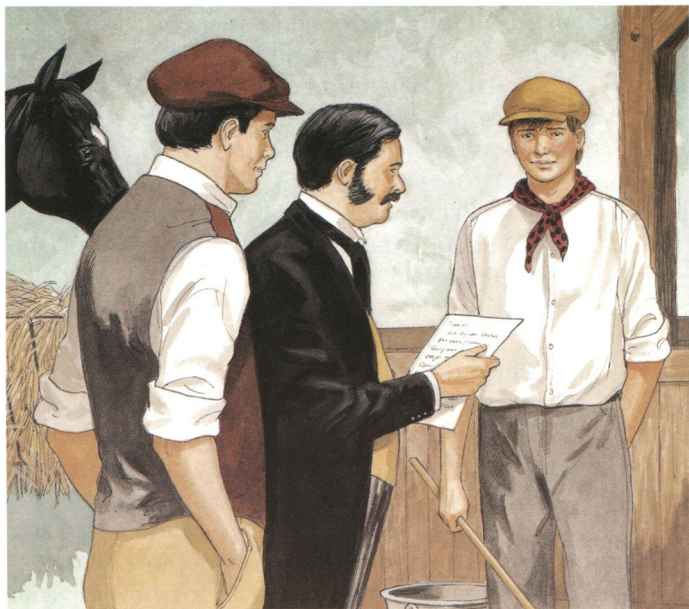
'Me, sir?' said James. His face turned bright pink in embarrassment.

'Yes, why not? How old are you, lad?'

'Almost nineteen, sir,' James replied.

'Mmm. You're still quite young. What do you think, John?' the squire asked.

'He may be young, but he's the best stableboy I know,' John replied. 'He's as strong as a man and he's very good with the horses. I'm sure Sir Clifford will be pleased with him.'



'You must decide, James,' said Squire Gordon. 'Go home and think about it. It's a chance for you to show what you can do.'

For the next few weeks, James learnt how to drive the carriage. John sat next to him and told him what to do. We went into the town and James learnt how to drive on busy roads. I helped him as much as possible. One day, as he put on my harness, James whispered to me, 'It's just you and me today, Beauty! I don't need John any more.'

The fire

‘James! Get Beauty and Ginger ready!’ John shouted. ‘And be quick about it. The squire and Mrs Gordon are going to visit some friends and they live a long way away.’ James immediately stopped what he was doing and went to fetch our harnesses.

When we were ready, Squire Gordon helped his wife into the carriage, and James jumped up into the driving seat.

John handed James his whip. ‘Now remember, James. Don’t go too fast. And do as the master tells you!’

Then we set off. Ginger and I knew it was the first long journey for coachman James and we wanted to behave well for him.

After a long time, we arrived at a small town. We stopped outside an inn in the market square. Squire Gordon and his wife went inside for their dinner. Two stablemen came out and led us into the stables. James watched as they unhitched the carriage and rubbed down our coats.

‘You’re a quick worker!’ he said to the older man.

‘I began to work with horses when I was twelve years old,’ the man replied. ‘It’s good to see two animals who are so well looked after. Who is your master, young man?’

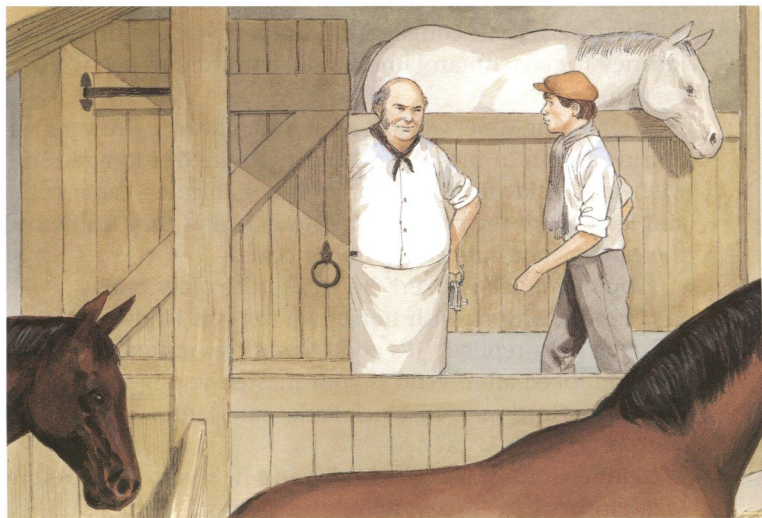
‘Squire Gordon of Birtwick Park,’ said James. I knew he was proud of us.

‘Squire Gordon is a good rider and he’s very kind. You’re lucky to work for such a man,’ the older stableman said.

Later, the younger stableman brought another horse into the stables. He began to rub the horse down. Then another young man came in. He was smoking a pipe. The two young men chatted together. Then the stableman said, 'Towler, will you do something for me? We're busy tonight, and I still have to feed all these horses. Will you go up to the hay loft and bring me a bundle of hay?'

His friend puffed on his pipe and frowned. 'I'm not paid to work here, you know!' he said. But he started to climb the wooden ladder to the hay loft.

When we were all clean and dry, and eating our oats, James came to check that we were comfortable. Then he went out and the old stableman locked the stable door.



The next thing I can remember was a strong, burning smell. It was dark but I knew that the stable was full of smoke. I heard Ginger cough and stamp her feet. Another horse neighed. Then I heard a crackling sound in the hay loft above my head and saw tall red flames.

'Ginger!' I whispered. 'The stables are on fire! We can't get out. The doors are locked!'



At last, we heard footsteps. Then someone unlocked the stable door. The young stableman ran in with a lamp and began to untie the horses. He tried to pull one horse out of the stable with a rope. But the horse was frightened and he refused to move. The stableman tried to untie another horse, and then another, and then he came to me. I was terrified. My legs were shaking. I stood quite still as the flames spread along the wooden walls of the stable.

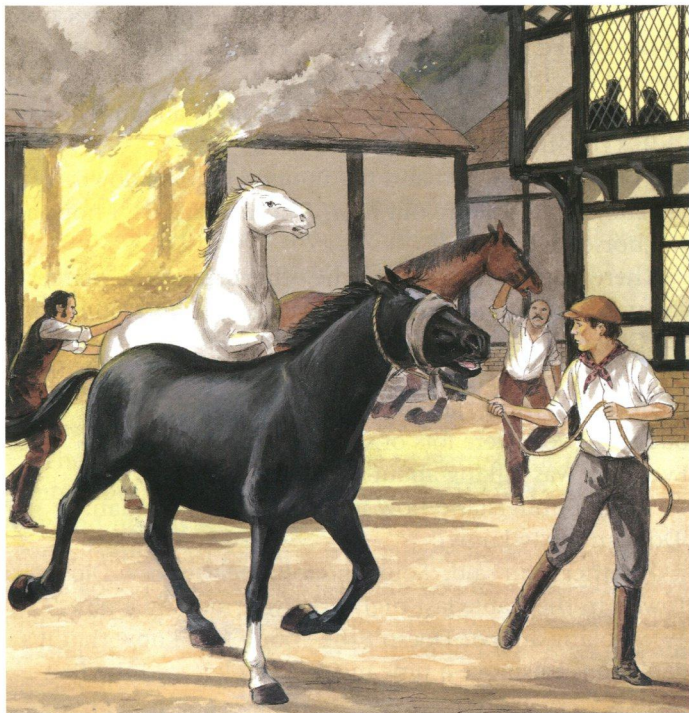
The crackling sound turned into a loud roar. I heard a man crying, 'Fire! Send for the fire engine!'

Then the old stableman came in. He was quiet and calm. This made the horses feel calmer, too. One by one, he led three horses out of the stable, away from the fire. But Ginger and I were still inside. We thought that we were going to die in this terrible fire.

But then I heard another voice. 'Come on, Beauty! We'll soon be out in the fresh air.' It was James! He took off his scarf and tied it round my eyes. I was not able to see the flames and the smoke and so I felt calmer. He stroked me and talked quietly to me as he led me out.

Outside in the stable yard, James pulled off the scarf and handed my rope to a man who was standing nearby. 'Take this horse and I'll go back for the other one!' he shouted. I stood and waited for him to come back with Ginger.

Some of the inn's windows were open now. People were looking out of them at the fire and shouting. Then I heard the squire's voice. 'James Howard! James Howard! Are you in there?'



There was no answer. I saw thick smoke coming out of the stable door. And then I saw James! He was leading Ginger out of the stable. She had the scarf over her eyes. She was shaking with fear.

Squire Gordon put his arms round James' shoulders. 'You brave boy!' he said. 'You saved my two best horses. Are you hurt?'

James shook his head. He was not able to speak because of the smoke in his throat. Tears ran down his face as he stroked us.

Soon we heard the sound of wheels and galloping horses.

'It's the fire engine!' someone cried.

The horses stopped and the firemen jumped down.

'They'll put the fire out now,' said the Squire. 'I hope all the horses are safe.'

There was another inn on the other side of the market square. The Squire led me across the square and James led Ginger. They settled us into the stables with the other horses.

In the morning, James fed us and filled our water buckets. There were lots of stablemen and grooms. Everyone was talking about the fire.

'I don't understand how it started!' said one man. 'Does anybody know?'

Another man said, 'Someone told me they saw Dick Towler in the stable last night. He was smoking a pipe.'

'Smoking a pipe? Doesn't the young fool know that it's dangerous to smoke a pipe inside a stable?' said the first man.

'Dick went up to the hay loft to get some hay. I think he left his pipe up there and it set fire to the hay,' the second man said.

Then the Squire and Mrs Gordon came to see us.

'Are you all right, Beauty?' the Squire asked and he gently stroked my neck. Then he turned to James. 'Thank you, my boy,' he said. 'We're both very proud of you.'

Joe Green

A few weeks after the fire, I heard John and James talking while they were cleaning the harnesses.

'I am going to begin my new job at Clifford Hall soon,' said James. 'Who will the new stableboy be?'

'A boy called Joe Green,' replied John.

'Little Joe Green? I know him. But he's much too young!' cried James.

'He's fourteen,' said John. 'But he's a quick learner and he loves horses.'

The next day, Joe Green came to learn about the job from James. I liked him straight away. He was a cheerful boy and he was very kind to us.

On James's last day at Birtwick Park, he was very sad. 'It's a good job at Clifford Hall,' he said to John. 'But I'm happy here with you and Beauty and the other horses. The master and mistress are good to me and I will miss you all.'

'You'll soon make new friends,' said John. 'And I'm sure you'll do well at Clifford Hall. We will all be proud of you.'

Soon after James began his new job, I heard footsteps in the night. John ran into the stable with a lamp and put on my saddle and bridle.

'Come on, Beauty!' he said. 'We must go to get Dr White – the mistress is very ill.'

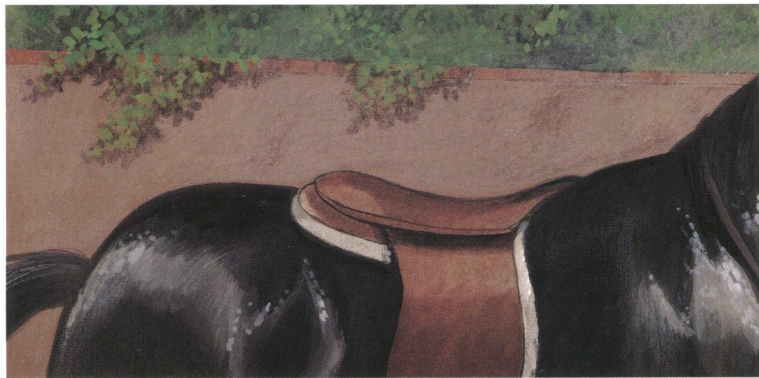
Squire Gordon was standing outside the stable door. In

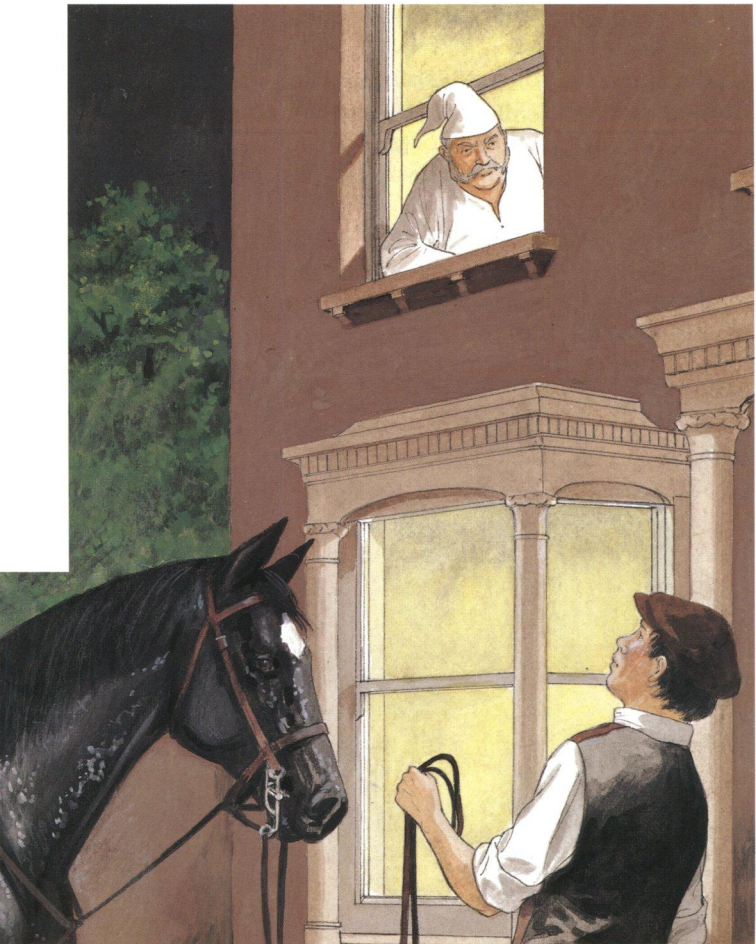
the light of the lamp his face looked very white. 'Go as fast as you can, John,' the Squire said. 'Give this note to Dr White and then you and Beauty can rest at the local inn. Come back tomorrow morning.'

We hurried out of the park, through the village and down the hill. Then we reached a long stretch of grass, and John made a noise with his teeth. He did this when he wanted me to go faster. 'Do your best, Beauty,' he whispered. I galloped faster and faster.

We went through a village and then the road went through a dark wood. I galloped up a big, steep hill and down again. At last we came to the town.

'Well done, Beauty!' said John. We stopped outside Dr White's house and John jumped off. I was breathless and my coat was wet with sweat. John knocked on the door and rang the bell, too. The doctor's head appeared at an upstairs window. He was wearing a nightcap.





‘What do you want?’ the doctor shouted. ‘It’s the middle of the night!’

‘I’m sorry, sir,’ John explained. ‘But my mistress, Mrs Gordon, is very ill. My master wants you to go to her.’

Two minutes later, the doctor opened the door.

‘Can I take your horse?’ he asked John. ‘My horse is very tired.’

‘Black Beauty is tired, too,’ said John. ‘He galloped nearly all the way here. I wanted to take him to the inn for a rest. But he is a very good horse and he will do whatever we ask him to.’

John helped the doctor to jump on my back. Then he looked at the doctor’s whip. ‘You won’t need that, sir,’ he said with a smile. ‘Beauty will go as fast as he can. But look after him, please.’

The doctor was a heavy man. He was not such a good rider as John. But I did my best, and at last we came to the gates of Birtwick Park. The doctor jumped off and handed my reins to Joe Green. Joe was waiting near the stables. The doctor hurried off to see the Squire’s wife.

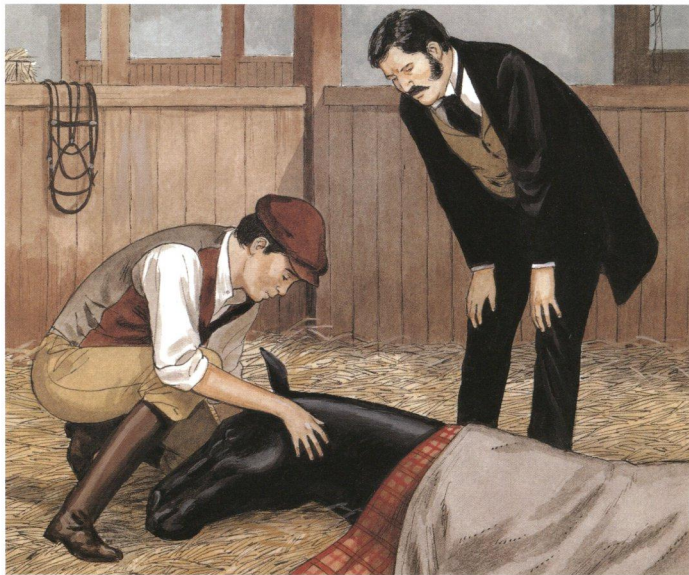
Joe led me into the stables. My legs were shaking and I was still breathing hard. Sweat was running down my sides. Joe rubbed me down and gave me some hay and some water. ‘I won’t put a rug on you, Beauty,’ he said. ‘It will make you too hot.’

Soon after Joe left the stable, I felt very cold and started to shiver. My legs and my chest hurt. I needed the rug to keep me warm. I lay down in the straw and tried to sleep.

When I woke up, John was at my side. I couldn't stand up. John knew how bad I felt. He put two thick rugs on me and then gave me some warm food.

'Poor Beauty!' he whispered. 'Joe Green tried his best, but he didn't know what to do. The silly boy has made you ill. He didn't give you a rug and he only gave you cold water to drink!'

It was very painful to breathe and I shivered all the time. John stayed with me and Squire Gordon came to see me. 'You saved your mistress's life, Beauty,' the Squire said. 'And now we must save your life.'



Joe Green's father was a vet. The next day, he came to help John give me some medicine.

'Please say something kind to Joe,' he said. 'He knows he did the wrong thing and he is very unhappy. But he tried his best, John.'

'I'll talk kindly to him,' said John. 'But this horse is my favourite – and he's the master's favourite, too. If Black Beauty dies, I will be very upset.'

The medicine made me fall asleep. I slept for a very long time. When I woke up, I felt much better.

Joe learnt quickly and John began to trust him. One day, the Squire told him to put on my saddle and take a note to his friend in another village. On our way back, we saw two horses. They were pulling a cart full of heavy bricks. The wheels of the cart were stuck in the mud, and the man with the cart was whipping the horses.

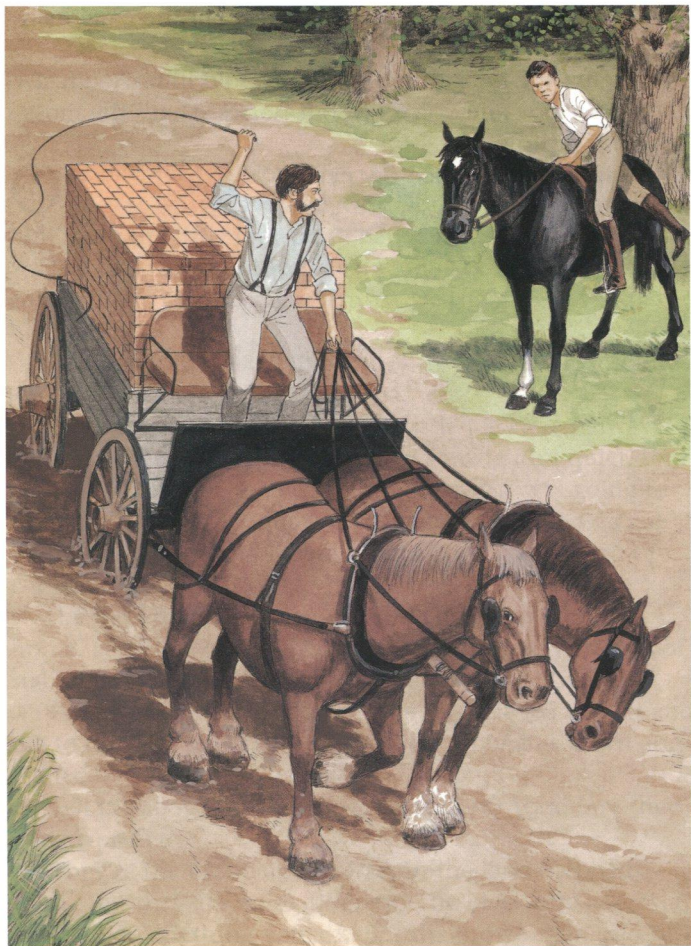
Joe jumped off my back and ran up to the man. 'Stop it, stop it!' he cried. 'The horses are trying their best, but the wheels are stuck! Let me help you to unload some of the bricks.'

'Mind your own business, you rude boy!' shouted the man. Then he raised the whip again.

Joe was very angry. He jumped on my back and we galloped to the brickmaker's house.

'One of your men is whipping your horses,' Joe told the brickmaker. 'Please go and tell him to stop! He won't listen to me.'

'Thank you,' said the brickmaker. 'I hate anyone being cruel to my horses.' Then he ran to get his hat.



When we got home, Joe told John about the cruel man in the cart.

'You did the right thing, Joe,' John told him. 'You're a good stableboy and you love your horses. That's the most important thing.'

Joe smiled and patted my neck.

Earlshall Park

One day, Joe led Merrylegs out to the paddock to give rides to Miss Jessie and Miss Flora. When Joe brought him back, the little grey pony had some news for us.

'The mistress is not well again. She and the master are going to live in a warmer country. He is going to sell all his horses!'

I felt very sad. I liked living at Birtwick Park. The squire and his wife were very kind to me.

That day, John was very quiet. Little Joe Green always whistled cheerfully, but the sad news made him quiet, too.

A few days later, we heard that Merrylegs was going to live with a friend of Squire Gordon, and that Joe was going with him. Ginger and I were sold to Lord Westerleigh of Earlshall Park.

The next day, John took me and Ginger to our new home. Earlshall Park was very grand and there were lots of stables. A tall man came out and shook John's hand.

'I'm Mr York, the coachman,' he said. He led Ginger and me to our new loose boxes, where he rubbed us down and fed us.

'Tell me about these two, John,' said Mr York. 'Are they good workers?'

'They're the best pair of horses in the land,' replied John. 'But they are quite different. The black one is gentle and will do anything you ask. But the brown mare can be

difficult. I think she was badly treated before she came to Birtwick Park. But she is happy now and they both work very well together. We have never used a bearing rein on them.'

'They will have to wear a bearing rein now,' said Mr York. 'The mistress will ask for it. She's a very fashionable lady. She wants her horses to be fashionable, too.'

Then John patted us both. He looked sad as he said goodbye. I was very sorry to see him go.

In the morning, Lord Westerleigh came to the stables.

'Lady Westerleigh will go out in the carriage today, York,' he said.

'Yes, sir. But the horses have never worn a bearing rein. Can I leave it off?' Mr York asked.

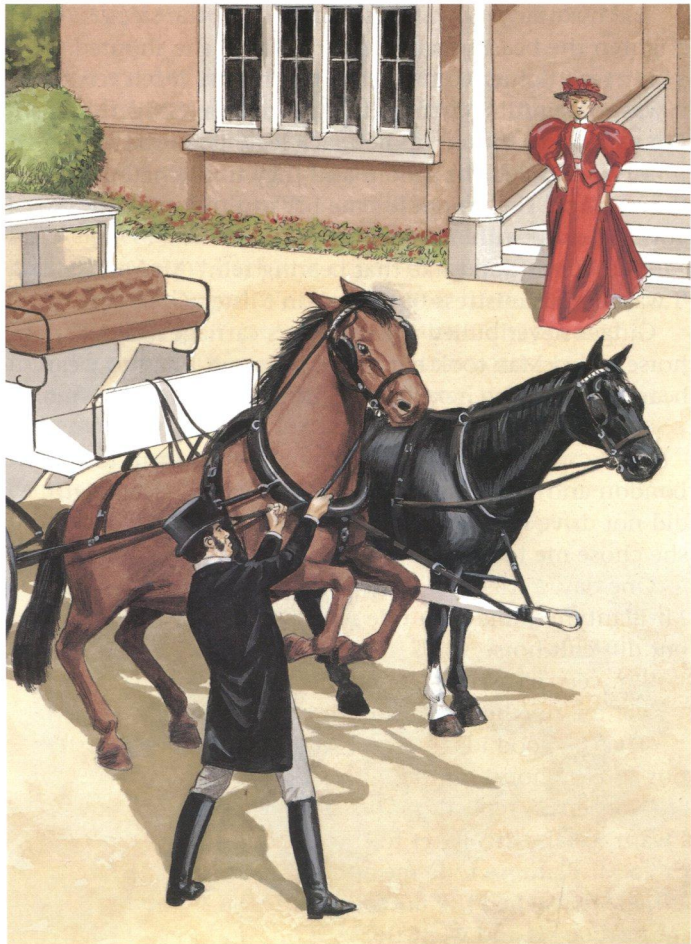
'They must wear it,' replied Lord Westerleigh. 'But don't put it on too tight at first.'

Mr York put on our harnesses and hitched Ginger and me to the carriage. Then he led us round to the front door of the house. Our new mistress Lady Westerleigh came out and looked at us unhappily. But she said nothing and stepped into the carriage.

I didn't like the bearing rein because I couldn't put my head down or stretch my neck. But that first day wasn't too bad. Ginger and I tried our best.

The next day, the bearing rein was much tighter. My neck hurt and the sharp bit cut into my mouth.

'Now you know what it's like, Beauty!' said Ginger. 'If they make the bearing rein any tighter, I will make them sorry.'



The next day, our mistress came down the steps. 'Tighten the bearing reins at once, York!' she shouted.

Mr York tightened my bearing rein first. It felt terrible – it was so painful. When he tried to tighten Ginger's reins, she reared and kicked up her back legs. Then she fell down.

Mr York called the groom and they unhitched us from the carriage. The groom led me back to the stable and Mr York followed with Ginger.

'The horses don't like that bearing rein!' Mr York said. 'I warned our mistress but she didn't listen.'

Ginger never pulled the mistress's carriage again. A new horse called Max took her place. Max and I had to wear bearing reins. The next few months were terrible for me.

In the spring, Lord Westerleigh went on a trip to London and Mr York went with him. Lady Westerleigh did not drive her carriage. She went riding every day and she chose me to be her riding horse. I enjoyed these rides.

One day, a friend of Lord and Lady Westerleigh, Mr Blantyre, came on a ride with us. He rode Lizzie, a fast but difficult horse.

'I'm very pleased with her,' he told our mistress.

'Let me ride her, then,' our mistress said.

'That's a good idea, Anne,' said Mr Blantyre. 'But she's not an easy horse to ride.'

'Nonsense!' replied our mistress. 'Help me up, now. I want to take this letter to the doctor's house.'

So Mr Blantyre rode me and our mistress rode Lizzie. When we reached the doctor's house, Mr Blantyre jumped down and went through the gate with the letter.

Our mistress waited for him on Lizzie. I stood next to them.

On the other side of the road, I saw some cart-horses in a field. A boy was driving them through the gate and whipping them. Suddenly, one of the horses ran across the road. He ran straight into Lizzie. She kicked up her back legs and galloped off with our mistress on her back.

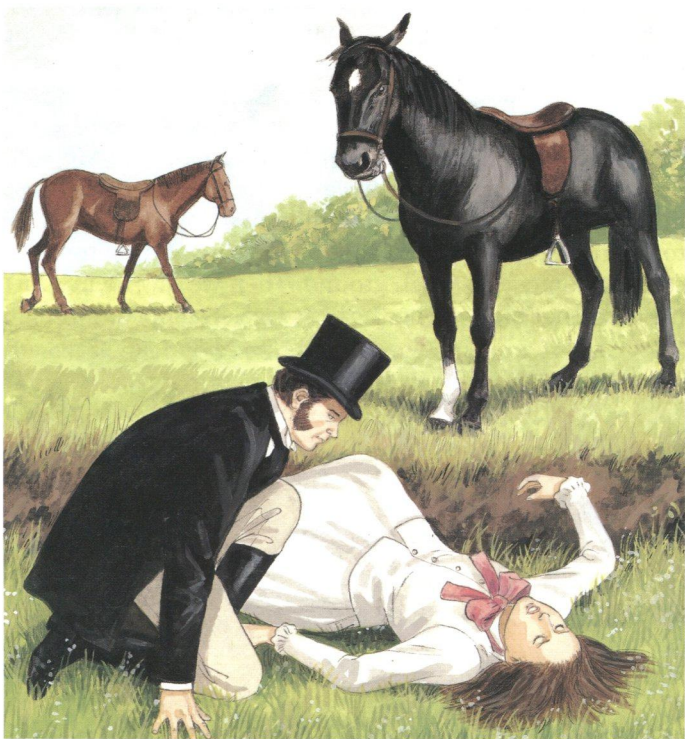
I neighed, and Mr Blantyre ran out of the house. He jumped on to my back and cried, 'Come on, Beauty! Your mistress is in danger! We must go after them!'

I galloped fast. Lizzie and our mistress disappeared round a corner. Then we came to a crossroads and Mr Blantyre didn't know which way to go. Luckily, a lady was in her garden. She saw Lizzie gallop past and pointed us to the right road. I started galloping again, and we soon came to some very rough ground. Then we saw them. Our mistress's hat blew off her head as Lizzie galloped.



They came to a wide ditch. Lizzie jumped over it and crashed to her knees on the other side. Our mistress fell on to the hard ground. She lay quite still.

Mr Blantyre jumped off my back and knelt beside her. 'Speak to me, Anne!' he said. There was no reply. Her face was white and her eyes were closed.



Then a man ran up to us. 'What can I do to help?' he asked.

'Ride this horse to the doctor's house as fast as you can!' said Mr Blantyre. 'You will be quite safe with Beauty. Tell the doctor to come and then go to Earlshall Park. Tell someone to bring a carriage.'

The man jumped into my saddle and we set off.

We delivered Mr Blantyre's messages and a groom led me back to the stables. He led me into my box and rubbed me down. Then he threw a rug over my back.

Two days later, Mr Blantyre came to see me. He stroked my nose and said, 'Well done, Beauty! You saved your mistress's life.'

Reuben Smith

Mr York stayed in London for a long time. While he was away, a man called Reuben Smith looked after the stables. He was a bad-tempered man and all the horses wanted Mr York to come back soon.

One spring day, I heard Lord Westerleigh talking to Reuben.

'The small carriage needs painting, Reuben. I want it to be smart enough for Lady Westerleigh when she feels better. Take it to the carriage maker's in town and then you can ride Black Beauty back.'

Reuben put on my harness and hitched me to the small carriage. Then he jumped up on to the driving seat. Mr Blantyre came out of the house.

'I want to go to the station, Reuben,' he said, and he stepped into the carriage.

When we arrived at the station, Mr Blantyre jumped out and said to Reuben, 'I'm going away for a short time. Take care of your mistress and don't let anyone else ride Beauty.'

We took the carriage to the carriage maker's and left it there. Then Reuben rode me to an inn.

'Feed my horse,' he said to the stableman. 'I will be back for him at four o'clock.'

I knew I had a loose shoe but the stableman didn't notice it until quarter to four.



When Reuben arrived, the man showed him my shoe. 'You must replace that shoe before you ride home,' he said. 'Loose shoes are dangerous. Your horse could fall.'

'Oh, it will be all right,' replied Reuben. 'I'll take him to the blacksmith tomorrow. I'm going to meet some old friends now. I'll be back here at six o'clock.'

But Reuben didn't come back at six o'clock, or seven o'clock, or eight o'clock. At nine o'clock, he rushed into the stables. I could see he was in a bad temper. He put on my saddle quickly and jumped on to my back.

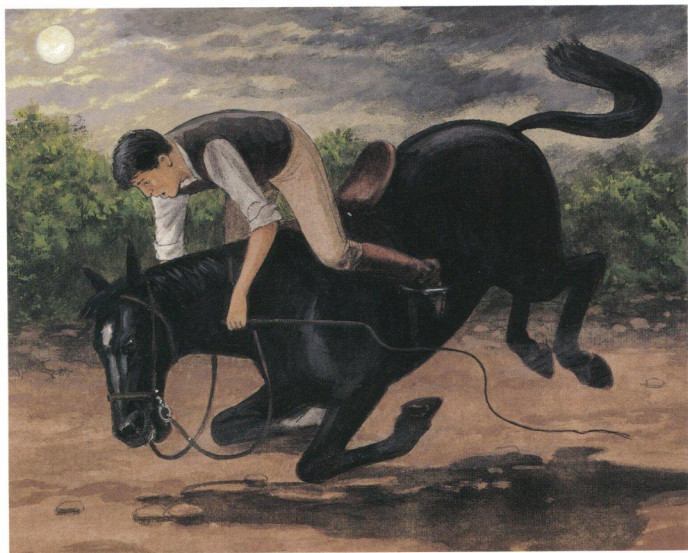
It was dark when we set off for home. I went as fast as I could but Reuben used his whip on me.

'We're late, Beauty! Hurry up!' he shouted.

The road was rough with lots of stones. Soon my loose shoe came off. Reuben didn't notice and we continued at a fast pace. My hoof was now split and broken. It hurt badly.

Suddenly, I stood on a large stone and dropped to my knees. Reuben fell to the ground and lay quite still. I stood up slowly. My hoof was very painful.

Reuben tried to get up, but then he fell back to the ground again with a groan. Then there was silence.



Hours later, I heard the sound of a horse's hooves on the road and men's voices. I neighed to the horse. When she replied, I knew it was Ginger. After a few minutes, she brought the little cart to the place where Reuben lay. There were two men in the cart. One of the men jumped down and took Reuben's hand.

'He's dead,' he said.

The other man came over to me with his lamp. He looked at my cut knees and my painful hoof.

'The poor horse is not wearing a shoe on this hoof,' he said. 'I think he fell. When the horse fell, Reuben came off and hit his head on the road.'

He led me home slowly and left the other man to tell people the sad news about Reuben.

In a few weeks my knees got better but Lord and Lady Westerleigh did not think I looked handsome enough to ride. When Mr York came back from London he came to my stable and led me away. I saw Ginger watching and we said goodbye sadly.

A man called Mr Barry bought me. He didn't know much about horses, but he was a kind man and he gave me a comfortable stable with plenty of oats and hay. His groom, Filcher, looked after me well, and at first I was happy in my new home.

But one day, when Filcher gave me my supper, I saw that it was not oats, but bran. I liked bran, but I knew that horses needed oats to make them strong. The same thing happened the next day, and the next.

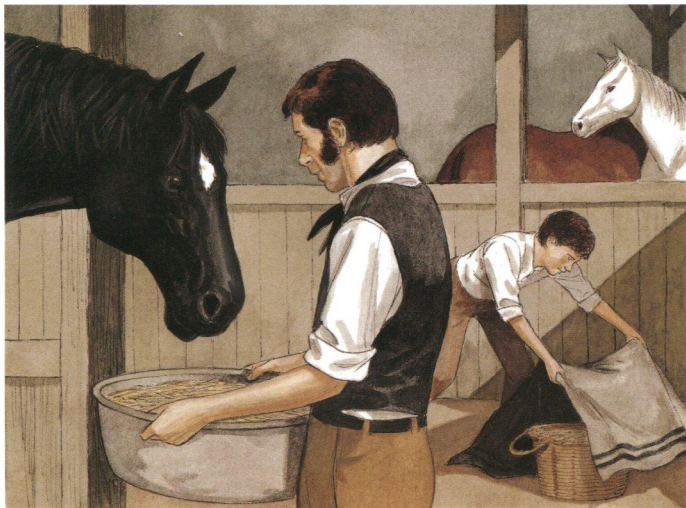
About two months later, Mr Barry rode me to see a friend of his. This man was a farmer. He knew a lot about horses.

'Is your horse ill?' he asked Mr Barry. 'His coat looks dull and he's quite thin.'

'Do you think so?' asked Mr Barry. 'My groom looks after him well.'

'Something's wrong, I'm sure of it. I think your groom is not feeding him properly,' replied the farmer.

By this time, I knew what the problem was. Every day, Filcher brought his son to the stables. While Filcher gave me my bran, the boy filled his basket with the oats and took them home.



One day, Mr Barry hid in the stable and watched Filcher and his son. The next day, two policemen came to the stables. They looked in the boy's basket.

'You bad boy! The oats are for the horse! They're not for you! You are stealing the horse's oats and replacing them with bran!' said one of the policemen.

The policemen took Filcher away with them and I found out later that he was sent to prison for two months.

Mr Barry found another groom, but he was not much better than Filcher. He was lazy and did not give me clean straw every day. My hooves soon began to hurt.

Mr Barry was very cross. 'Both the grooms have harmed my horses!' he cried. 'I won't keep horses any more. I am going to sell them all!'

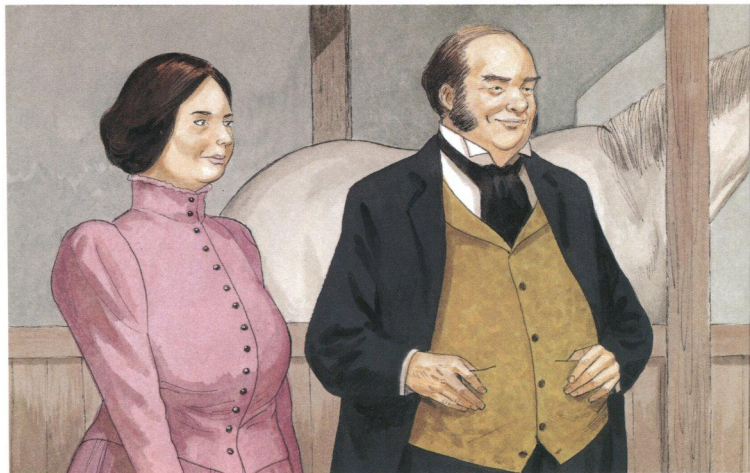
This time, I was bought by a London cab driver called Jerry Barker.

A London cab horse

I liked my new master, Jerry Barker. He knew a lot about horses and he was always kind to me. His wife was called Polly, and he had a son called Harry and a daughter called Dolly. Harry was twelve and he sometimes helped his father with the cab. Dolly was eight.

Jerry had another horse called Captain. He was tall and white.

On my second day at Jerry's stable, Polly, Dolly and Harry came to see me. Dolly gave me an apple.



‘What shall we call the new horse, Father?’ Dolly asked. ‘He must have a name.’

I already had a name, but I was not able to tell her that.

‘The old horse was called Jack,’ said Jerry. ‘That’s a good name. Let’s call him Jack.’

‘It’s a very good name,’ said Polly. ‘What do you think, Jack?’ Of course, I was not able to answer her!



Captain pulled Jerry's cab in the mornings and I pulled it in the afternoons. Luckily, Jerry didn't make us wear a bearing rein.

On my first afternoon, Jerry hitched me to the cab and drove me to the cab stand. This was where all the cabs waited for customers. We stood in a line and waited for our turn. While we waited, other cab drivers came to see me. Some of them laughed at Jerry.

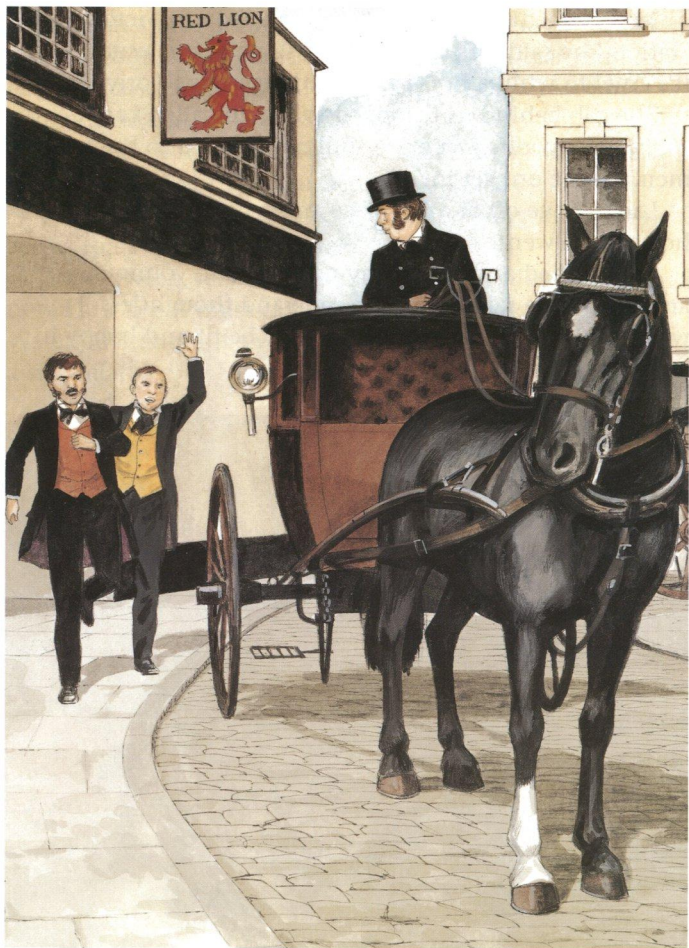
'A black horse, Jerry? That's not very cheerful!' said one man.

Then the oldest driver came up. His name was Grant. He wore a long grey coat and a grey hat. He looked at me very carefully and said, 'He's a good one, Jerry. You will be very happy with him.'

Life in London was very different from life in the countryside. There were always crowds of people everywhere, and carts, and carriages, and lots of noise. But Jerry helped me to learn about being a cab horse. I wanted to work hard and to please him. Jerry never used his whip on me. He and Harry brushed Captain and me every day, and gave us lots of food and water.

One afternoon, when we were waiting for our first job, two young men rushed out of a nearby inn. One of them called to Jerry, 'Cabby! Cabby! We're late!'

'We want to go to Victoria Station!' cried the other man. 'Our train leaves at one o'clock. If you go as fast as you can, we will give you an extra shilling! Whip your horse to make him go faster!'



Jerry looked at the men. 'I will take you to Victoria Station,' he said quietly. 'But we will go at our usual speed. It's cruel to whip a horse and it's dangerous to drive fast.'

The cab behind us belonged to a man called Larry.

'I'll take you for an extra shilling!' he said to the young men. 'Come on, get in.'

Larry drove off at a fast pace and whipped his poor horse as he went.

Jerry sighed and patted my neck. 'Those young men annoy me,' he said. 'They are rude and thoughtless. I won't whip my horses. I want you to be fit and happy in your work, Jack.'

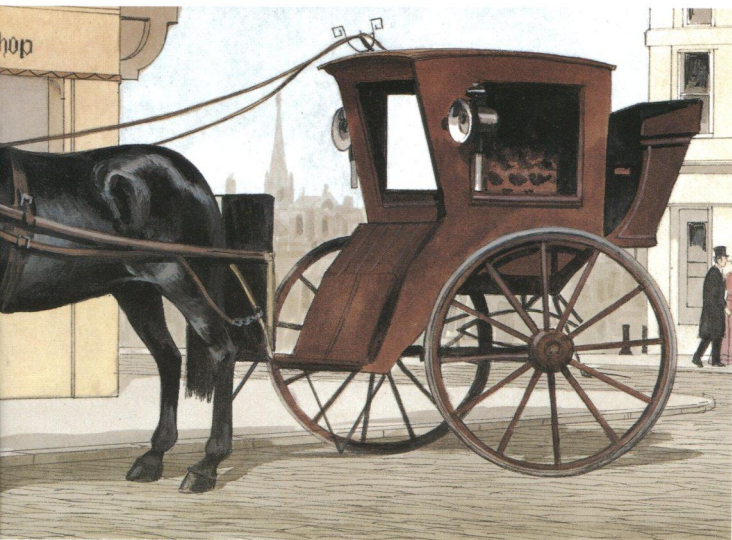


Later that afternoon we were waiting at the cab stand when a young man came towards us. He was carrying a large suitcase. Suddenly the man slipped on a piece of orange peel and fell to the ground.

Jerry ran to help him. He took him into a shop. The man sat down until he felt better.

When he came out of the shop, the young man limped across to us with his suitcase.

'You've been very kind to me,' he said to Jerry. 'But now I am late. I must catch the three o'clock train from Waterloo Station. It's very important – I am going to visit a sick relative.'

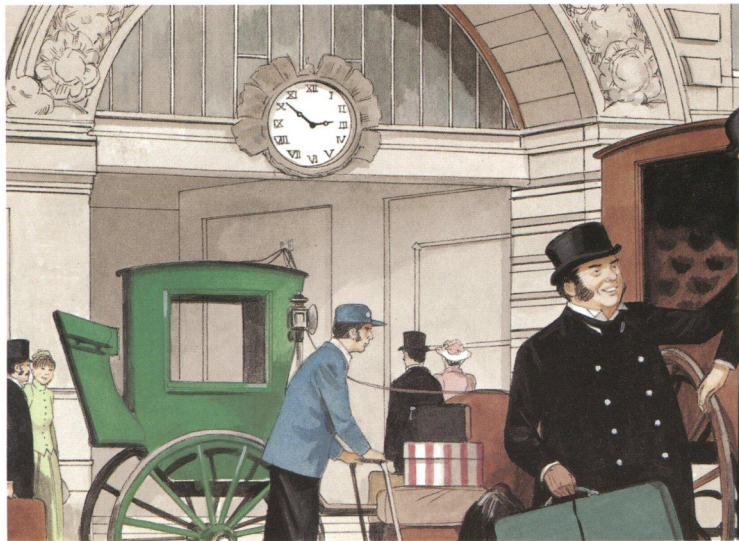


Jerry felt sorry for the young man. 'Don't worry,' he said. 'My horse and I will do our best to get you to the station by three o'clock.'

It was the middle of the afternoon and the roads were very busy. But Jerry and I knew a quick way and we both wanted to help this man.

As we trotted up to Waterloo Station, I saw that the big station clock said eight minutes to three. Jerry helped the man out of the cab with his suitcase.

'Thank you very much,' said the man. 'And thank you, horse.' He stroked my nose gently. 'Let me give you some extra money.'



'I don't want it,' Jerry replied. 'I was glad to help you, and that's enough for me. Now go and catch your train, sir.'

When we got back to the cab stand, one of the other drivers called out, 'Jack looked like a racehorse, Jerry! You went so fast! How much did the man pay you?'

'The gentleman wanted to give me some extra money,' said Jerry. 'But I didn't take it. Jack and I wanted to help him because he was polite. That's how we like to behave, isn't it, Jack?'



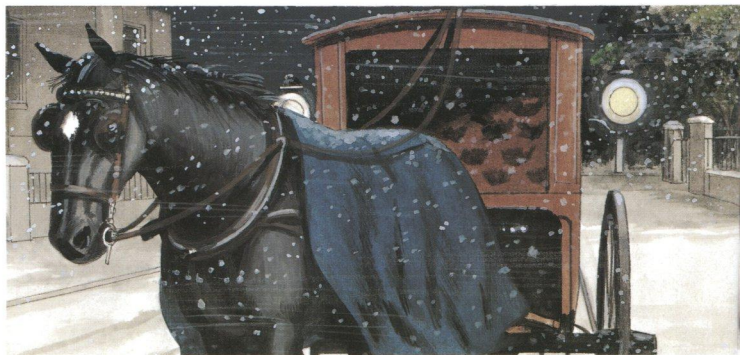
Hard times

Winter came, and all the London cab horses were very busy. I often heard Jerry coughing as we waited for customers on cold, dark nights. One night, I heard Polly talking to Jerry.

'Your cough is getting worse. Please take a day off!' she said.

'No, Polly,' he replied. 'I don't want a day off. What would I do? I'm happy with my cab and my horses. I'll be better soon, so don't worry.'

On New Year's Eve, we took two gentlemen to a party in a grand house. As they climbed out of the cab, one of them turned to Jerry. 'Come back at eleven o'clock,' he said. 'And don't be late!'



Jerry was never late. At exactly eleven o'clock we pulled up outside the house to wait for the gentlemen. But they didn't come. It was a very cold night. There was a strong wind and it began to snow. Jerry put a rug on my back to keep me warm, and then he walked up and down. He stamped his feet and rubbed his hands. He was coughing and coughing.

At last, at a quarter past one, the door of the house opened and the gentlemen came out. They didn't thank Jerry for waiting and they didn't give him any extra money.



When we got home, Jerry was very ill. But he rubbed me down and gave me lots of straw for my bed. He told Polly to bring some hot oats for my supper.

In the morning, Harry came to the stables. He often whistled as he worked but he did not whistle today. He fed me and Captain and changed our straw, and then he went back to the house.

In the evening, Dolly came with him. As they brought our hay, I could see that the little girl was very upset.

‘Do you think Father will die, Harry?’ she cried.

But Harry said nothing.



Three days later, Grant, the old cab driver, came to see Harry. 'How is your father?' he asked.

'He's a little better,' Harry replied. 'But the doctor says that he mustn't work in the cab any more. It's not good for him.'

The next morning, Dolly came to the stables to speak to her brother.

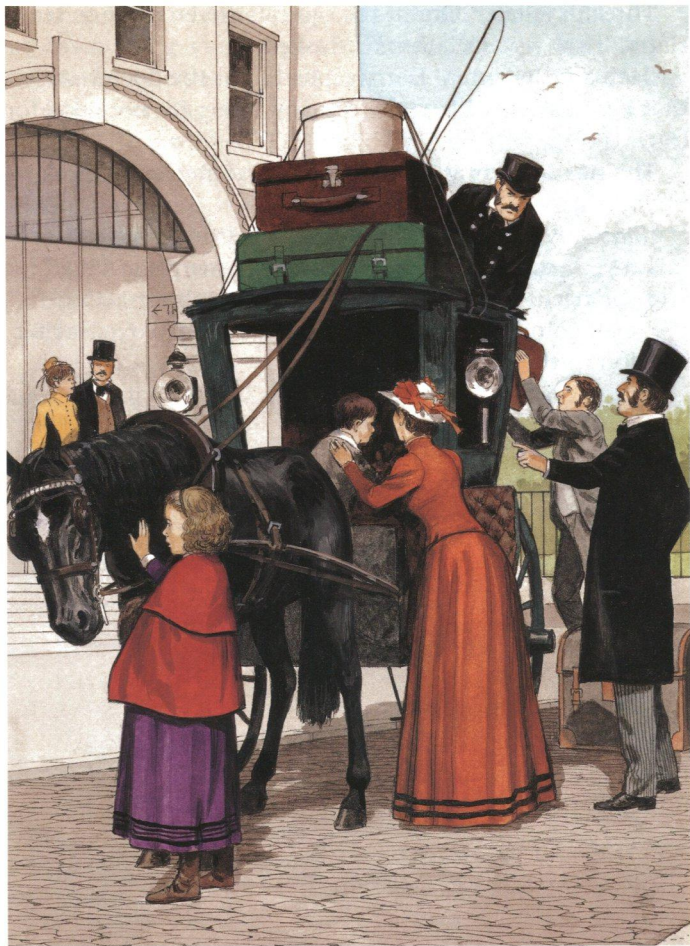
'Mother's had a letter!' she said. 'It's from her old mistress, Mrs Fowler. Mrs Fowler's coachman is leaving and she needs a new one. It's the perfect job for Father! We're all going to live in the country, Harry! We're leaving London in the spring!'

When I heard this, I felt sad. I was happy that Jerry was better but I loved my home and my life with Jerry and his family.

One spring morning, Polly and the children came to say goodbye to Captain and me.

'Dear Jack!' said Dolly. 'I'm sorry you can't come with us! Jerry was still in bed and I never saw him again.'

I was sold to a baker, and then to a cab owner called Mr Skinner. Mr Skinner was cruel to his cab drivers, and they were cruel to their horses. We worked every day with no rest and we pulled heavy loads. My driver whipped me all the time. I always tried my best, but my life was so unhappy that I wished I was dead.



One day, we picked up a family of four from the train station. I could see that they had a lot of bags and cases. While the father told the driver where to put everything, the mother and the son climbed into the cab. The little girl came round to look at me.

She smiled and patted my neck. Then she looked worried.

'Father!' she called. 'This poor horse is exhausted! He can't pull such a heavy load. Can we take two cabs?'

'It's all right, Miss. He's a strong horse,' the driver said as another case was thrown on to the back of the cab.

'But it's cruel! He's so weak and tired!' the little girl cried.

'Get into the cab quickly, Grace!' shouted her father. 'Let the driver do his job.'

The driver whipped me very hard. The sharp bit hurt my mouth as we set off.

I tried my best. But when we came to a hill, my feet slipped from under me and I fell to the ground. I thought I was going to die.

I heard loud voices and crashing sounds as the driver took the cases off the cab. I heard the little girl's voice: 'It's all our fault! The poor, poor horse is hurt!'

Someone took off my harness and then poured water over my face. Another person threw a rug over my back.

I don't know how long I lay there in the road. But at last someone helped me to stand and then slowly led me to a nearby stable.

Later that day, I was taken back to Mr Skinner's yard. The blacksmith came to look at me and Mr Skinner watched him angrily.

Then the blacksmith stood up and said, 'This horse is exhausted, Skinner! He's thin and weak, and almost dead. You nearly killed him!'

Mr Skinner started to shout. 'I can't keep him, then! I don't have the time or the money to look after sick horses!'

The blacksmith thought for a moment. He looked at me, then he said, 'He was a fine horse at one time. He deserves a good home. There's a horse sale in two weeks' time. Feed him well and let him rest, and you may get quite a good price.'

So Mr Skinner fed and rested me. When he led me out of his yard for the last time, I felt much better.

My last home

There were lots of horses at the sale, but they all looked tired and ill. Many of them had scars on their legs and they were very thin.

Then a man came to look at me. There was a little boy at his side.

'Look at this horse, Willie,' said the man. 'He looks tired but I think he's a good horse. Perhaps he was once a carriage horse.'

The man stroked my neck and I rested my head on his shoulder. The little boy said, 'Poor old horse! But he likes you, Grandpa! Please, will you buy him?'

'He's a good horse, sir,' said Mr Skinner as he came forward. 'He's still quite young – he's just tired, that's all. If you feed him well and let him rest, you can sell him for a good price.'

'I like him,' said the man. 'I want to give him a chance. I'll give you five pounds for him.'

Willie clapped his hands and laughed. 'Thank you, Grandpa,' he cried.

And so I went to live on Mr Thoroughgood's farm.

'Give him oats twice a day,' Mr Thoroughgood told his groom. 'And he must go out in the field during the day to eat some good fresh grass.' Then he turned to Willie. 'And you can look after him,' he said.

Willie came to see me every day and we became good friends. Slowly, I began to feel better.

‘Look at him, Willie,’ said Mr Thoroughgood. ‘His coat is shining and his legs are getting stronger.’

When spring came, Mr Thoroughgood harnessed me to a light carriage. It felt strange to work after such a long rest.

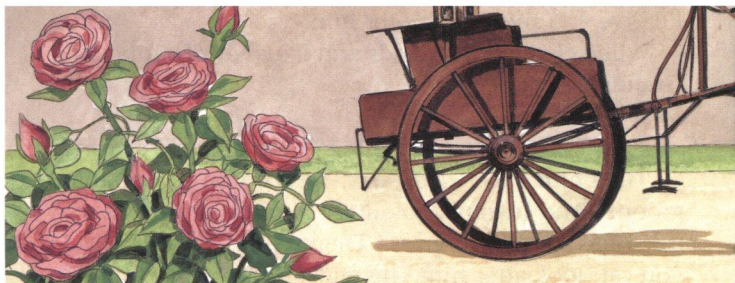
‘He looks well,’ Mr Thoroughgood told Willie when we came back. ‘We must find a good home for him now.’

One day in the summer, the groom brushed me carefully and cut my mane and tail. Then Mr Thoroughgood hitched me to the carriage and climbed into the driving seat with Willie.

‘I hope the ladies will like him, Grandpa,’ said Willie.

‘I’m sure they will. He’s a good-looking horse and he’s kind and gentle,’ replied Mr Thoroughgood.

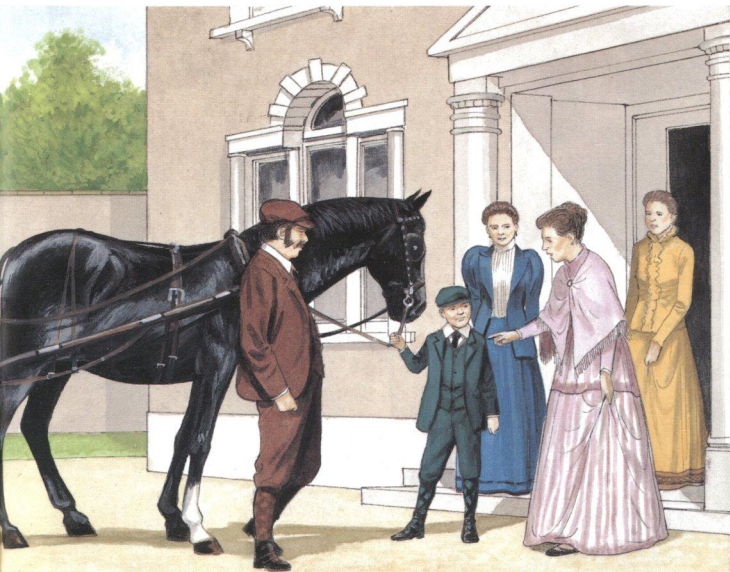
We were a couple of miles out of the village when we came to a house with a pretty garden. Mr Thoroughgood went to ring the doorbell. Then he went into the house and left Willie with me.

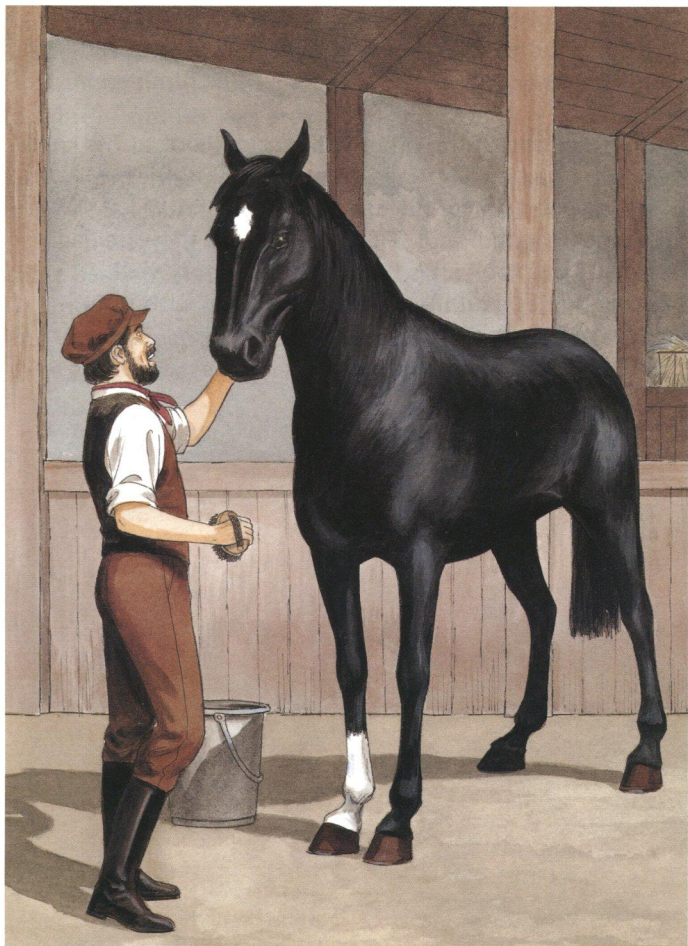


After about ten minutes, Mr Thoroughgood returned with three ladies. The youngest lady looked at me and said, 'He has a kind, handsome face! I like him very much.'

But then one of the other ladies said, 'Look at his knees! He's had a bad fall. Perhaps he will have another!'

'Many good horses have scars on their knees,' Mr Thoroughgood said. 'They fall because they are badly treated. If you look after him, he will do very well. Try him, ladies, and if you are not pleased with him, I will take him back.'





In the morning, a young groom came to ride me to the ladies' house. He put me in a comfortable stable and gave me some hay.

The next morning, the groom came to brush my coat. As he worked, he talked to himself.

'He has a white star on his face,' he said. 'It's just like the one Black Beauty had! I wonder where Beauty is now ... This horse has one white foot too – just like Beauty!'

The groom stood back and stared at me. Then he said, 'It is Black Beauty! It's good to see you again, my old friend. Do you remember me? I'm little Joe Green. I was the boy who nearly killed you!'

Joe looked different now. He was a man, not a boy. He had a black beard and a deep voice. But I remembered him.

I put my nose into his hand and he patted me and stroked me.

'Someone was cruel to you in the past, Beauty,' said Joe. 'But you're here now and I will look after you.'

That afternoon, Joe harnessed me and hitched me to a light carriage. The youngest lady came out of the house and Joe helped her into the driving seat. Then he climbed up to sit beside her.

'I'm going to see what you are like,' she said to me. She picked up the reins and we set off.



She was a good driver and she told Joe that she was pleased with me. Then Joe told her that I was called Black Beauty and that I was Squire Gordon's old carriage horse.

When we got home, the other ladies came to ask about me.

'He did very well,' said the youngest lady. 'I'm very pleased with him and I think I will keep him. Joe told me all about him. He belonged to Squire Gordon and his name is Black Beauty! I'm going to write to Mrs Gordon and tell her that we have her favourite horse!'

After this, I went out with the carriage every day. All three ladies rode in it. They were very pleased with me and said that they were happy to keep me.

It is a year since the ladies bought me. I love it here. Joe Green is the best and kindest groom, I have plenty to eat and my work is light. My strength is slowly coming back and at last I am happy again.

Willie often comes to see me and he treats me as his special friend. The three ladies promised that they will never sell me and so I have nothing to worry about. My troubles are all over and my story ends here.

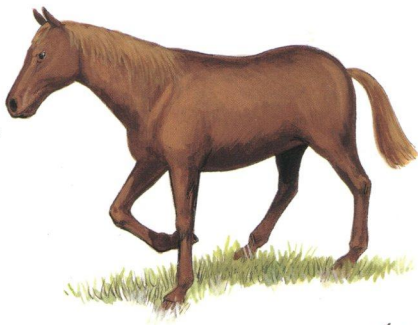
But some mornings, when I am still half-asleep, I still think that I am with my friends Ginger and Merrylegs standing under the chestnut tree at Birtwick Park.

My horse

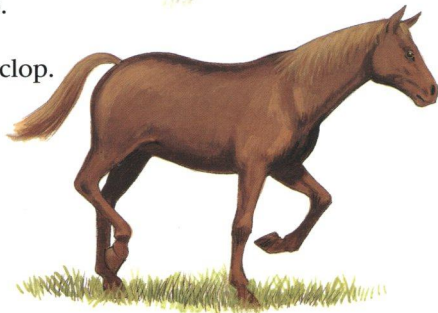
Eat, horse, eat,
I'll tell you when you may.
Eat, horse, eat,
Enjoy your bag of hay.

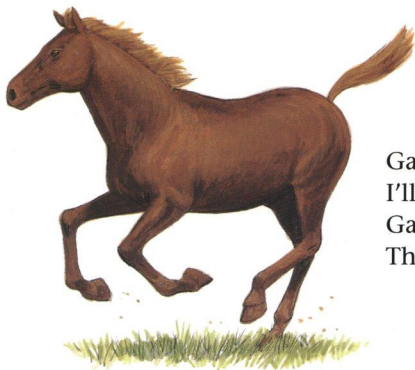


Walk, horse, walk,
I'll tell you when to go.
Walk, horse, walk,
Walk along nice and slow.



Trot, horse, trot,
I'll tell you when to stop.
Trot, horse, trot,
Clip clop, clip clop, clip clop.





Gallop, horse, gallop,
I'll tell you when to go fast.
Gallop, horse, gallop,
The trees are flying past!

Rest, horse, rest,
When you can work no more.
Rest, horse, rest,
Sleep on your bed of straw.



The Brooke Hospital for Animals

Black Beauty by Anna Sewell was published in 1877 – more than a hundred years ago. In the story we read about how some people treated horses cruelly. Unfortunately, animals still suffer today. In 1934 the Brooke Hospital for Animals was set up in Cairo. It helps 700,000 working horses, donkeys and mules every year.

Where are the animals?

The animals work for some of the poorest people in the world, in these areas:

- Africa
- Central and South America
- Asia
- the Middle East



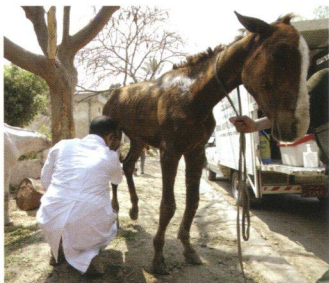
What is wrong with the animals?

- They are exhausted because they work too hard.
- The loads they pull or carry are much too heavy.
- They don't have enough food.
- They don't have enough water.
- They suffer from diseases and injuries.



How does the Brooke Hospital help?

- It provides vets to treat the animals. Treatment is free.
- It teaches people how to look after the horses, donkeys and mules properly. In this way, the animals are happier and they are able to do more work.



How can I help?

The Brooke Hospital is a charity. It relies on the money that people give. To find out how you can help, go to www.thebrooke.org



About the author – Anna Sewell



Anna Sewell was born in 1820, in the seaside town of Great Yarmouth, England.

When she was fourteen, she hurt her ankle badly. She also had a bone disease, and so she couldn't walk properly. In those days there were no cars or buses, so she used a horse to pull her along in a carriage.

She noticed that many working horses were treated cruelly and she decided to write a book about it. She began to write *Black Beauty* when she was fifty-one. It took her five years. She was so weak that she had to stay in bed. She was only able to write a few lines at a time and her handwriting was poor. There were no computers then and her mother had to copy the words out neatly for her.

Black Beauty was Anna's only book. It was published in 1877 and it was a huge success. It did help to change people's views about how to treat animals.

Anna died in 1878. At her funeral, the horses that pulled her carriage did not wear bearing reins.