

Classic Readers

Black Beauty

Anna Sewell

retold by Jenny Dooley &
Virginia Evans



Express Publishing

My Early Years

When I was a young colt, I lived with my mother on a big farm. I remember a big green field with a pond in the middle of it and beautiful green trees all around. There was a small wood and a brook, too. On one side of the field, past the gate, was our master's house.

My mother and I ran together in the field, and when it was hot we stood under the trees where it was cool. Sometimes I ran with the other young colts in the field and we had great fun together. Some of them were almost as big as grown-up horses. But one time, when we kicked a little as we played, my mother whinnied to me to come to her.

"Listen to what I say to you. The colts here are good colts, but they do not have good manners. You do have good manners and I don't want you to learn bad ways. Do your work well and lift your feet high when you trot, and remember: never bite or kick – even when you are playing."

My mother, Duchess, was a wise horse, and we were the master's favourites. He called me Darkie because my colour was black, even though I had one white foot and a white star on my forehead. We had a fine and happy life in those days.

When I was four years old, my master sold me to Squire Gordon. He lived near our farm, and early in May a man came and took me there. My master said goodbye to me.

"Be a good horse, Darkie, and always do your best."

Then my mother said her last words to me.

"Remember, my dear son, there are good men like our master, and there are cruel men. I hope you will always have a good master, but a horse can never know who will buy him. Just do your best."

Squire Gordon's home was near the village of Birtwick. It was a great big house with a big iron gate in front of it and lots of apple trees. A long road went up to the house and gardens, and there was a big field where we horses could run and play.

John, the coachman, put me in a nice bright stable where I could talk to the other horses and see outside, too. In the box next to me, there was a fat little grey pony with a thick mane and tail, a very pretty head and a cute little nose. I said,

"Hello, how do you do? What is your name?"

He looked at me and held up his head.

"My name is Merrylegs. I carry the young ladies and sometimes I take our mistress out, too. If you are going to live next door to me, I hope you do not bite."

Then I saw a tall chestnut mare with a beautiful long neck. Her name was Ginger, and when she looked at me and spoke, she was angry.

"So it is you they gave my box to. It isn't very nice for a colt to send a lady from her home."

I was a little surprised.

"Excuse me, but I did not send you from your home and I do not like angry words. A man brought me here and put me in this box. And I am not a colt; I am four years old and quite grown-up."

In the afternoon, when Ginger went out, Merrylegs told me about her.

"I think she is unhappy, because she bites sometimes. Perhaps someone hurt her before she came here – you know, maybe they used a whip on her. But John is very kind to her and our master never uses a whip, so she shouldn't say anything."

The next day the squire rode me. He was a good rider, and kind, too. When we came home, Mrs Gordon was at the front door.





A Job Horse and Jerry Barker

Comprehension

Read or listen to Chapter 5 and match the characters to the events.

- | | | | | |
|---|-------|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | ..... | Black Beauty | a | fought with his master in the war. |
| 2 | ..... | Jerry Barker | b | don't stay together for a long time. |
| 3 | ..... | Captain | c | come back home and don't find Captain there. |
| 4 | ..... | Captain and Black Beauty | d | goes to work at a livery stable. |
| 5 | ..... | Captain and Jerry Barker | e | fall down when another cart hits them. |
| 6 | ..... | Black Beauty and Harry | f | buys Black Beauty at a horse fair. |

What do you think?

- 1 How does Black Beauty's life change when his master takes him to the horse fair? Discuss.
- 2 What kind of people do you think Jerry Barker and his family are? Refer to the text to explain.
- 3 Does Jerry Barker care about Captain? How can you tell?

Language Practice

1 Match the words to the definitions.

- | | | | | |
|---|-------|--------|---|---|
| 1 | ..... | battle | a | a piece of metal you shoot from a gun |
| 2 | ..... | wicked | b | an event where people buy and sell things |
| 3 | ..... | bullet | c | a group of people that fights in a war |
| 4 | ..... | pat | d | a fight in a war |
| 5 | ..... | army | e | sb who hates you and wants to hurt you |
| 6 | ..... | fair | f | to hit lightly and gently |
| 7 | ..... | enemy | g | very bad |

11 Refer to the text to match the words and make collocations.

country
cab
deeply
livery
autumn
gentle
horse

fair
stable
voice
road
cut
morning
driver

QUIZ

How much do you remember about the story so far? Try to answer the following questions.



- 1 What does Black Beauty have that the other colts do not have?
- 2 What other horses does Black Beauty meet at Squire Gordon's farm?

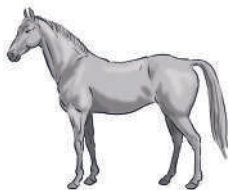
- 3 How does Black Beauty get sick?
- 4 What happens in the brickmaker's yard?



- 5 What do Ginger and Black Beauty have to wear at Earls Hall Farm because it is the fashion?
- 6 Why is Black Beauty happy with Jerry Barker?

Design your own horse

There are many breeds and colours of horses. Black Beauty was a handsome black horse with a white star on his face and one white foot. What kind of horse would you like to have?



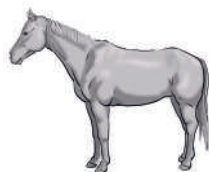
Thoroughbred

A fearless and lively riding horse from the UK. He's a great race horse!



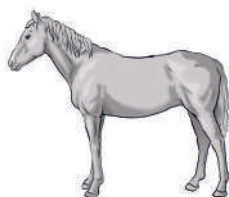
Arabian

A fast horse from the Arabian desert. He makes a good friend!



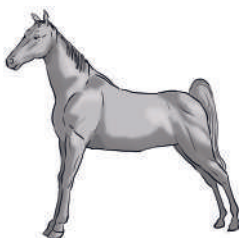
Quarter Horse

A short, fast American horse that works on ranches and in rodeos!



Mustang

A wild American horse that's tough and strong. Catch him if you can!



Tennessee Walking Horse

A handsome, gentle horse. He's friendly and quiet, and so easy to ride!



Falabella

The world's smallest horse. He is very playful and comes from Argentina!

Choose your colour



Chestnut



Palomino



Black



Bay



Dapple grey

Black Beauty

A horse's life can be happy and free, or it can be hard and full of sadness. Follow Black Beauty through his carefree early years, until a deadly accident sends him into the hands of many owners – some kind, some cruel. Will he survive long enough to be happy again? Ride along on Anna Sewell's moving tale of a beautiful black horse.



Level 1



Level 2



Level 3



Level 4



Level 5



Level 6

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