

# BLACK BEAUTY

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A HORSE

*by Anna Sewell*

*With an introduction by*

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*Illustrated in Black and White*

*Color illustrations by Edward F. Cortese*



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it on, and drove some nails through the shoe quite into my hoof, so that the shoe was firmly on. My feet felt very stiff and heavy, but I got used to it.

And now having got so far, my master went on to break me to harness; there were more new things to wear. First, a stiff, heavy collar was placed on my neck, and a bridle with great sidepieces, called blinkers, against my eyes; and blinkers indeed they were, for I could not see on either side, but only straight in front of me. Next there was a small saddle with a nasty stiff strap that went right under my tail; that was the crupper. I hated the crupper—to have my long tail doubled up and poked through that strap was almost as bad as the bit. I felt like kicking, but of course I could not kick such a good master, and so in time I got used to everything, and could do my work as well as my mother.

I must not forget to mention one part of my training, which I have always considered a very great advantage. My master sent me for a fortnight to a neighboring farmer's, who had a meadow which was skirted on one side by the railway. Here were some sheep and cows, and I was turned in among them.

I shall never forget the first train that ran by. I was feeding quietly near the pales which separated the meadow from the railway, when I heard a strange sound at a distance, and before I knew whence it came,

head, under one's throat, round one's nose, and under one's chin, so that no way in the world can one get rid of the nasty, hard thing. It is very bad! At least I thought so; but I knew my mother always wore one when she went out, and so, what with the nice oats, and what with my master's pats, kind words, and gentle ways, I learned to wear my bit and bridle.

Next came the saddle, but that was not half so bad. My master put it on my back very gently while old Daniel held my head. He then made the girths fast under my body, patting and talking to me all the time. Then I had a few oats, then a little leading about; and this he did every day till I began to look for the oats and the saddle. At length, one morning, my master got on my back and rode me around the meadow on the soft grass. It certainly did feel queer; but I must say I felt proud to carry my master, and as he continued to ride me a little every day, I soon became accustomed to it.

The next unpleasant business was putting on the iron shoes; that, too, was very hard at first. My master went with me to the smith's forge to see that I was not hurt or got any fright. The blacksmith took my feet in his hand one after the other, and cut away some of the hoof. It did not pain me, so I stood still on three legs until he had done them all. Then he took a piece of iron the shape of my foot, clapped

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## *My Breaking In*

**I** WAS now beginning to grow handsome. My coat had grown fine and soft, and was bright black. I had one white foot, and a pretty white star on my forehead. My master would not sell me till I was four years old; he said lads ought not to work like men, and colts ought not to work like horses till they were quite grown up.

When I was four years old, Squire Gordon came to look at me. He examined my eyes, my mouth, and my legs; he felt them all down, and then I had to walk and trot and gallop before him. He seemed to like me, and said, "When he has been well broken in, he will do very well." My master said he would break me in himself, as he should not like me to be frightened or hurt, and he lost no time about it, for the next day he began.

Everyone may not know what breaking in is, therefore I will describe it. It means to teach a horse to

Not many days after, we heard the church bell tolling for a long time, and looking over the gate, we saw a long strange coach, covered with black cloth and drawn by black horses; after that came another and another and another, and all were black, while the bell kept tolling, tolling. They were carrying young Gordon to the churchyard to bury him. He would never ride again. What they did with Rob Roy I never knew; but 'twas all for one little hare.

Espino Jimenez Andree Fernando

more easily some other way. However, we are only horses, and don't know."

While my mother was saying this, we stood and looked on. Many of the riders had gone to the young man; but my master, who had been watching what was going on, was the first to raise him. His head fell back, and his arms hung down, and everyone looked very serious. There was no noise now; even the dogs were quiet, and seemed to know that something was wrong. They carried him to our master's house. I heard afterwards that it was young George Gordon, the Squire's only son, a fine, tall young man, and the pride of his family.

They were now riding in all directions—to the doctor's, to the farrier's, and to Squire Gordon's, to let him know about his son. When the farrier looked at the black horse that lay groaning on the grass, he felt him all over, and shook his head; one of his legs was broken. Then someone ran to our master's house and came back with a gun; presently there was a loud bang and a dreadful shriek, and then all was still. The black horse moved no more.

My mother seemed much troubled; she said she had known that horse for years, and that his name was Rob Roy. He was a good horse, and there was no vice in him. She never would go to that part of the field afterwards.

by the huntsmen. Six or eight men leaped their horses clean over, close upon the dogs. The hare tried to get through the fence; it was too thick, and she turned sharp around to make for the road, but it was too late; the dogs were upon her with their wild cries. We heard one shriek, and that was the end of her. One of the huntsmen rode up and whipped off the dogs, who would soon have torn her to pieces. He held her up by the leg, torn and bleeding, and all the gentlemen seemed well pleased.

As for me, I was so astonished that I did not at first see what was going on by the brook. When I did look, there was a sad sight, two fine horses were down; one was struggling in the stream, the other was groaning on the grass. One of the riders was getting out of the water, covered with mud; the other lay quite still.

“His neck is broken,” said my mother.

“And serves him right, too,” said one of the colts.

I thought the same, but my mother did not join with us.

“Well, no,” she said, “you must not say that. But though I am an old horse, and have seen and heard a great deal, I never yet could make out why men are so fond of this sport. They often hurt themselves, often spoil good horses, and tear up the fields, and all for a hare, or a fox, or a stag, that they could get

young wheat next to ours. I never heard such a noise as they made. They did not bark, nor howl, nor whine, but kept on a "Yo! yo, o, o! Yo! yo, o, o!" at the top of their voices. After them came a number of men on horseback, all galloping as fast as they could.

The old horses snorted and looked eagerly after them, and we young colts wanted to be galloping with them but they were soon away into the fields lower down; here it seemed as if they had come to a stand; the dogs left off barking and ran about every way with their noses to the ground.

"They have lost the scent," said the old horse, "perhaps the hare will get off."

"What hare?" I said.

"Oh, I don't know *what* hare; likely enough one of our own hares. Any hare they can find will do for the dogs and men to run after."

Before long the dogs began their "Yo! yo, o, o!" again, and back they came all together at full speed, making straight for our meadow at the part where the high bank and hedge overhang the brook.

"Now we shall see the hare," said my mother; and just then a hare, wild with fright, rushed by and made for the woods.

On came the dogs; they burst over the bank, leaped the stream, and came dashing across the field, followed



## *The Hunt*

**B**EFORE I was two years old, a circumstance happened which I have never forgotten. It was early in the spring; there had been a little frost in the night, and a light mist still hung over the woods and meadows. We colts were feeding at the lower part of the field when we heard, quite in the distance, what sounded like the cry of dogs. The oldest of the colts raised his head, pricked his ears, and said, "There are the hounds!" and immediately cantered off, followed by the rest of us, to the upper part of the field, where we could look over the hedge and see several fields beyond. My mother and an old riding horse of our master's were also standing near and seemed to know all about it.

"They have found a hare," said my mother, "and if they come this way we shall see the hunt."

Soon the dogs were all tearing down the field of

So we never saw Dick any more. Old Daniel, the man who looked after the horses, was just as gentle as our master; so we were well off.

Espino Jimenez Andree Fernando

When she saw him at the gate, she would neigh with joy and trot up to him. He would pat and stroke her and say, "Well, old Pet, and how is your little Darkie?" I was a dull black, so he called me Darkie. Then he would give me a piece of bread, and sometimes he brought a carrot for my mother. All the horses would come to him, but I think we were his favorites. My mother always took him to town on a market day in a light gig.

We had a plowboy, Dick, who sometimes came into our field to pluck blackberries from the hedge. When he had eaten all he wanted, he would have what he called fun with the colts, throwing stones and sticks at them to make them gallop. We did not much mind him, for we could gallop off; but sometimes a stone would hit and hurt us.

One day he was at this game and did not know that the master was in the next field, but he was there, watching what was going on. Over the hedge he jumped in a snap, and catching Dick by the arm, he gave him such a box on the ear as made him roar with the pain and surprise. As soon as we saw the master, we trotted up nearer to see what went on.

"Bad boy!" he said, "bad boy! to chase the colts. This is not the first time, nor the second, but it shall be the last. There—take your money and go home; I shall not want you on my farm again."

me. They were older than I was; some were nearly as large as grown-up horses. I used to run with them, and had great fun. We used to gallop all together round the field, as hard as we could go. Sometimes the play was rough, for they would frequently bite and kick as well as gallop.

One day, when there was a good deal of kicking, my mother whinnied to me to come to her, and then she said:

"I wish you to pay attention to what I am going to say to you. The colts who live here are cart-horse colts, and, of course, they have not learned manners.

"You have been well-bred and well-born; your father has a great name in these parts, and your grandfather won the cup two years at the Newmarket races. Your grandmother had the sweetest temper of any horse I ever knew, and I think you have never seen me kick or bite. I hope you will grow up gentle and good, and never learn bad ways. Do your work with a good will, lift your feet up well when you trot, and never bite or kick even in play."

I have never forgotten my mother's advice; I knew she was a wise old horse, and our master thought a great deal of her.

Our master was a good, kind man. He gave us good food, good lodging, and kind words. We were all fond of him, and my mother loved him very much.

*“Look—how round his straining throat  
Grace and shifting beauty float:  
Sinewy strength is in his reins,  
And the red blood gallops through his veins;  
Richer, redder, never ran  
Through the boasting heart of man.”*

—“The Blood Horse”  
BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

Espino Jimenez Andreo Fernando

The character qualities evidenced by Black Beauty and admired by his companions he attributes wholly to the kind and skilful treatment from those who trained him. The principles of behavior which he quotes from his mother who was his "pacemaker," and from his good groom, John, are as well adapted to human behavior as to that of horses. Black Beauty used his ears and his time to a good advantage. It is interesting how many times and in how many ways he tried to communicate his feelings to those about him. He did this by arching his neck when pleased, and by attempting to do what was expected even though his harness or trappings were unfit for the task. His fine behavior usually brought comfortable results.

The most inspiring part of this story is found "between the lines," where we read of the effort of this horse to maintain a high standard of service, even though he found himself "going downhill" because of various hard experiences.

Instead of the gallant showy service he enjoyed while young, he found himself obliged to perform menial tasks. Through it all he tried to keep his courage intact. Much was demanded of him, and his story of how he met those demands is an inspiration to human beings.

The story will never grow old. No story of jet plane or racing car can rival the appeal to the best in human nature which prompts kindness to all dependents and subordinates, whether man or beast. No machine can give the satisfactory intelligent response to kind treatment that Black Beauty returned to associates, whether human or animal. Nor can a lifeless mechanical device create the sympathy and companionship which nearly every human being feels for the horse and the dog.

Many boys and girls who live in cities have little or no knowledge of horses or other animals, so the story of Black Beauty provides them with worth-while information about animal life.

A happy surprise awaits you at the close of the story.

## Introduction

**T**HE STORY of BLACK BEAUTY was first published in 1877, and was written by Anna Sewell, an Englishwoman, from a sick bed. Her hope was to influence people to be kind to animals and to create a sympathy for them as well as for human beings.

If an animal could be gifted with powers of speech such as those attributed to Black Beauty, he could hardly make a more convincing appeal for kindness at the hands of his human masters. Possibly when we come to understand animals better, their acts and sounds may mean as much to us as did Black Beauty's when written into conversation and story by Miss Sewell. We enjoy music, art, and nature according to our power to appreciate, so when we become more sympathetic, more attuned to meanings as evidenced by animals, possibly we may know what they say. We already often know how they feel as shown by their actions as they respond to treatment given to them.

Black Beauty's own story of himself as a colt is skilfully handled. He played with other colts in pleasant pastures. The good advice given him by his mother, as occasion demanded, proved a guide to him and helped him to form habits which carried him through life and made him known among horses, hostlers, and owners as a fine character. Note how the suggestion was made as to why he should not kick or bite—because he was well-bred.

His first unpleasant contact with life was through observing a hare hunt and the English attitude toward this sport. The consequent death of a fine young man and a splendid horse seemed to Black Beauty a high price to pay for the capture of one little hare.

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