



Children's Stories That Never Grow Old.

BLACK BEAUTY

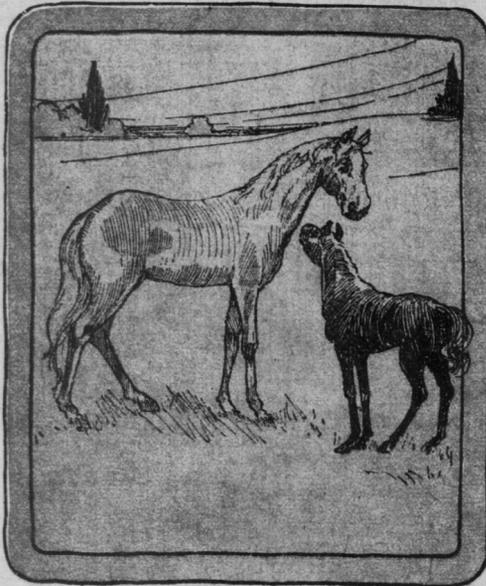
ONE day my mother whinnied, and said: "You are very well bred, my boy, for your grandfather won the cup two years ago at the Newmarket races. Be always gentle and good. Lift your heels high when you trot, and never kick or bite."

We were feeding in the lower part of the field, and just then I heard the baying of dogs. My mother pricked up her ears, and said: "The hounds!" We galloped together to the upper part of the field, and saw the dogs running down the field yelping "Yo! Yo! O. O!" with their noses on the ground. A number of men in red coats sped after on galloping horses.

"They have lost the scent," said my mother. "Perhaps the hare will escape."

Presently the dogs began their "Yo! Yo! O. O!" again, and the men and horses came back at full speed straight for our meadow.

"Now watch for the hare," said my mother.



JUST then a poor frightened hare rushed by us toward the woods. On came the dogs pell mell, leaping the stream and dashing across the field, followed by the huntsmen. The hare tried to get through the fence, but just then the dogs pounced upon her, and one of the hunters, whipping off the dogs, held it up. But, alas! one of the horses lay struggling in the stream, and another groaned on the grass beside his rider, who lay quite still.

"His neck is broken," my mother said.

The beautiful black horse had broken his leg. He was soon quiet, too, for he was shot to end his misery.

When I was four years old my coat became glossy black, and I grew very handsome. I had a white star on my forehead and one white foot. My master sold me to Squire Gordon, who proved to be a kind master, for he broke me in without the use of a whip.



ONE day the Squire said: "Good-bye, Darkie; be a good horse," and I left my first home to go to Birtwick Park, where my new stable was fine and big. In the stall next to mine there was a little fat gray pony.

"How do you do; what is your name?" I said to him.

"My name is Merrylegs. Are you going to live here?" he replied.

"Yes," I said.

Just then a tall, ill-tempered chestnut mare said to me:

"So it's you who turned me out of my stall."

"I had nothing to do with it," I said. "The man put me here."

When she went out in the afternoon Merrylegs told me that she was called "Ginger" because of her bad habits.



JOHN, the coachman, took me out for a ride next morning, and we met the Squire with his wife.

"How does he go, John?" he asked.

"He is as fleet as a deer, and has a fine spirit."

"He is a perfect beauty," said the lady. "Let us call him 'Black Beauty.'"

"Yes," said the Squire, "'Black Beauty' shall be his name."

I made fast friends with Ginger and Merrylegs, and I was very happy.

One day in the autumn my master and mistress decided to pay a visit to some friends who lived a long way off, and John was to drive them. We reached a town at sundown, and they stopped at the hotel for the night. Ginger and I were taken to the stable, where there were six or eight other horses. John fed us, and we soon went to sleep, as we were very tired after our long drive.

I AWOKE suddenly to find the air was full of smoke. I could see nothing, and could scarcely breathe. Ginger was coughing, and the other horses seemed very restless. The trapdoor was open, and I heard something crackling and snapping. I did not know what it was, and trembled all over in fear. All the horses were now pulling at their halters and stamping. At last a man burst into the stable and tried to lead the horses out. The first would not go with him, nor the second or third. In fact, none of us would stir a foot. No doubt we were foolish, but danger seemed all around us, and we were afraid to leave the stables. Soon a red light flickered on the wall, and some one cried "Fire!" Next thing I heard was John's voice, quiet and cheery: "Come, Beauty, on with your bridle, my boy. We will soon be out of this." He tied a scarf lightly over my eyes, and, patting and coaxing, he led me out.



"HERE, somebody! Take this horse while I go back for the other!" shouted John. In a few moments John came through the smoke leading Ginger.

We continued our journey next day without any more excitement.

Three years later Ginger and I were sold to Master's old friend, Lord W——, where our lives were far from happy. Early in the spring I was turned out into the meadow, for I was gone in the knees. One morning some days later the gate opened and who should come in but Ginger.

When I trotted up to her I soon saw that she, too, had been ruined by hard driving.

"And so," she said, "here we are, ruined in our youth and strength; you by a drunkard and I by a fool!"



I WAS soon sold after this to a livery stable man as a job horse, but he did not keep me long, and I fell into the hands of a London cab driver. One day, while our cab was waiting at one of the parks, a shabby old cab, drawn by a thin, worn-out horse, drove up beside us. The horse looked at me and said: "Black Beauty, is that you?" It was Ginger, but so changed I scarcely knew her.

She told me how she had gone from bad to worse, until she wished she could die. Just then her driver came up, and, with a tug at her mouth and a lash of the whip, drove off.

A short time after this a cart with a dead horse in it passed our cab, and I saw it was poor Ginger.



ONE day during the summer I was groomed with more care than usual, and some ladies came to see me. The next day I was led to a new home and placed in a comfortable stable owned by these same ladies. When the groom was cleaning my face he said: "Why, this is just like the star Black Beauty had." He stood and looked at me, and then said, "It must be Black Beauty! Why, Beauty, do you know me? I am Joe, Squire Gordon's under groom." I put my nose up to him and whinnied.

"Well, Beauty, it will not be my fault if you haven't a good time now," said he.

Here I have lived a year in happiness, and hope to spend the rest of my life in the place where I am called by my own name, "Black Beauty."

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