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# BLACK BEAUTY



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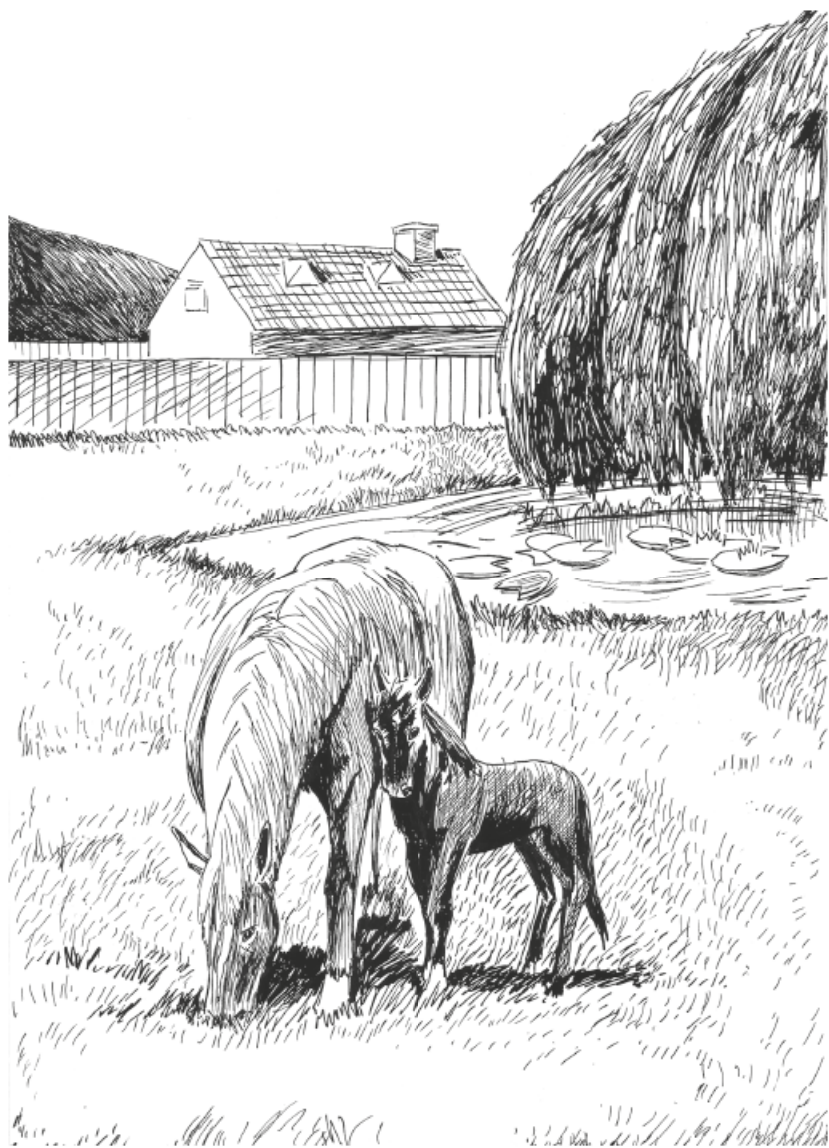
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*I don't know much about my early days. I just remember a big beautiful meadow.*

## MY FIRST HOME

I don't know much about my early days. I just remember a big beautiful **meadow**. There was a small pond in the middle of it. There were **shady** trees around the pond. And there were beautiful water **lilies** in it. On one side of the meadow, there was a field and on the other side, there was a big gate. It was the gate to my master's house. I was too young to eat grass, so I **fed** on my mother's milk. My mother took good care of me. At daytime, I ran by her side and at night, I lay next to her. When the weather was hot, we stood by the pond, under the trees. And on cold days, we stayed in a warm **shed** on the farm.

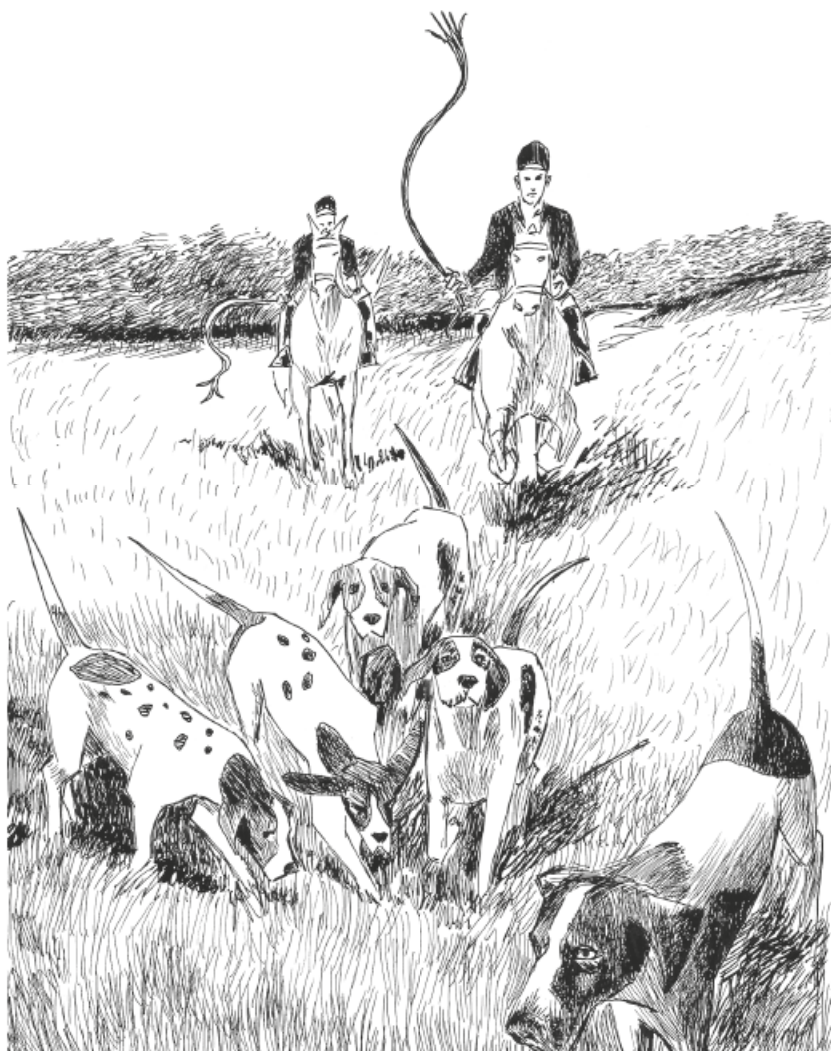
Then I was old enough to eat grass, and my mother began to work for our master, Farmer Grey. Sometimes he rode her and sometimes, she pulled his carriage. I often played with the other **colts** in the meadow. We **galloped** around the pond and had lots of fun. One day, while I was playing, my mother called me and gave me some advice.

'You are a very good colt,' she said. 'Your friends are good, too. But they are **cart** horse colts. You come from a very good family. Your father has a very good name in this area. Your grandfather was Lord Westland's best horse. The horses in our family never kick or bite. I hope you will be gentle like them. You must not have bad habits. Never kick or bite and always obey your master.'

I never forgot my mother's advice. She was a wise horse, and our master liked her very much. Her name was Duchess, but he called her Pet. Farmer Grey liked me very much, too. My mother and I were his favourite horses. He called me Darkie because I was black. He often came to the stable and **patted** us. He gave us our favourite foods like bread, apples or carrots.

In fact, Farmer Grey was kind to all of his horses. He gave us good food, and a pleasant place to live in. He spoke to each of us very kindly and softly. We all liked him. My mother loved him. When she saw him at the gate, she always **neighed** happily and ran toward him.

Something **memorable** happened when I was two years old. I was feeding in the meadow. My mother was standing by me. Suddenly we heard dogs barking loudly. My mother recognized the sound. She said it was a hunt. She led me to the gate. 'I think the dogs saw a rabbit. They will come this way now. They want to catch the rabbit,' she said. I was very curious and excited because I didn't know anything about hunting.



*Then the dogs began to run in many directions with their noses close to the ground.*

My mother was right. The dogs were near the gate in a few seconds. They were running faster and barking more loudly. And some men on horseback were following them. Their horses were galloping very fast. Then the dogs began to run in many directions with their noses close to the ground. 'They are **sniffing** the ground. They are trying to find the rabbit,' my mother explained. Then she said, 'Oh, look! The poor rabbit is trying to pass through the gate. I hope she can escape.'

But she couldn't. And the dogs all jumped on it and killed it. Then the gentlemen on horseback arrived and **whipped** all the dogs off the rabbit. Then they picked up the rabbit's bloody **carcass**. They seemed very happy.

When the dogs and the riders were leaving, we saw a horse in the brook. He was trying to get out. And there was another horse lying on the grass, without moving. I also saw two riders. One of them was injured. The other rider was lying **still**. Some men came running towards him. My master raised his body from the ground. The rider's head fell back, and his arms hanged down. Everyone was sad and quiet. There was something wrong. One man cried out, 'It is George Gordon, the Squire's son! He is dead!' Then some men went near the horse lying on the grass. They examined him. One of the horse's legs was broken. A man went into my master's house and came out with a gun. I heard a bang and the **shriek** of the horse.

My mother said very sadly, 'Oh they **shot** Rob Roy. I loved him. He was a very good horse. Poor Roy!'

A few days later, I heard the church bells ringing for a long time. Then I saw many black carriages with black horses on the way to the church. My mother said, 'They are taking young George to the churchyard. They will **bury** him. He is gone forever. He was Squire Gordon's only son.'



I didn't understand my mother's words at that time. I knew only one thing. A terrible thing happened to Rob Roy, and to the young gentleman and to the rabbit.

As I got older, everyone said I was a handsome horse. I had a soft, bright black coat. One of my feet was white, and there was a white star on my **forehead**.

When I was four years old, Squire Gordon came to look at me one day. He examined my eyes, mouth, and legs. He made me walk, **trot**, and gallop.

'Darkie is in very good form. Now, he must learn to work,' he said to Farmer Grey. 'You should start training him for work'.

That night, my mother **whispered** to my ear, 'A horse must learn how to move a cart or carriage and how to handle the equipment. He should be quiet. He must not talk to the other horses when he is carrying passengers.

'I promise I will be a good, **obedient** horse,' I told her.

'And remember this. When your **harness** is on, you cannot jump for fun. You cannot lie down, even when you are very tired.'

The next day, my master began to train me. He started with the **bit**. The bit is the worst part a horse's harness. It is a cold, hard iron thing. They place it in your mouth, and it hurts. You can't move it because a **strap** keeps the bit over your tongue all the time. The strap goes over your head, under your mouth, and across your nose.

My mother and other horses always had a bit in their mouth. I knew that. So, I stood patiently and quietly when Farmer Grey placed the bit in my mouth. He did so very gently, so I didn't kick or bite. It hurt at first. But later, I didn't mind it. Then they put a **saddle** on my back. Luckily, it did not hurt.

They put the bit in my mouth and the saddle on my back every day, and Farmer Grey walked with me around the meadow. After each walk, he gave me some oats, patted me, and said nice things. So, I was not afraid of the bit or the saddle any longer. Then one day, he got on my back and sat on the saddle. He made me walk slowly around the field. It was difficult to walk with a man on my back. But I didn't mind it. I was happy to carry this kind man on my back. After that, he rode me for an hour every day.

One day, my master took me to the **blacksmith's** shop. The blacksmith took my feet in his hand one after the other and cut away some of the **hoof**. Then he made four pieces of iron in the shape of my feet. He firmly put them on my feet. My feet became very heavy and hard with these iron shoes. In time, I began to like the shoes because they protected my feet from the stones.

Then my master taught me to wear the carriage harness. It had many parts. First, he put a stiff, heavy **collar** around my neck. Then he put **blinkers** at the sides of my face, next to my eyes. I couldn't see the things on the left or right. I could only look straight ahead. Also, there was a small saddle with a strap. The strap went right under my tail. I wanted to kick, but I couldn't do such a bad thing to my master. After some time, these things became like a part of my body. I hated them, but I had to wear them when I was working

My master trained me to drive a carriage, too. I pulled the carriage together with my mother. She taught me to follow the driver's orders. She also gave me some new advice. She said, 'I hope you will have good drivers. And I hope your masters will be nice and kind. Some men can be very cruel and bad at driving. But, you should do your best and protect our family name.'

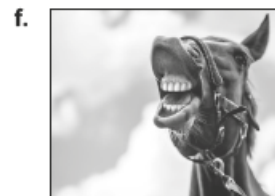
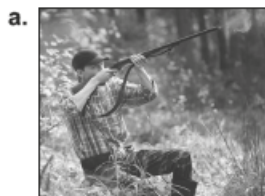


*My master trained me to drive a carriage, too. I pulled the carriage together with my mother.*

ACTIVITIES

A. Match the words (1-8) with the pictures (a-h). Write the letter of the picture next to the correct word.

1. \_\_\_ sniffing    2. \_\_\_ whipping    3. \_\_\_ feeding    4. \_\_\_ shooting  
5. \_\_\_ neighing    6. \_\_\_ galloping    7. \_\_\_ whispering    8. \_\_\_ patting



B. Write the correct words under the pictures.

shed  
saddle

hoof (hooves)  
forehead

blacksmith  
bit

collar  
blinkers



1. \_\_\_\_\_



2. \_\_\_\_\_



3. \_\_\_\_\_



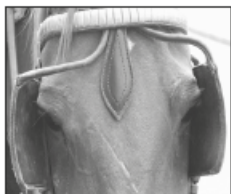
4. \_\_\_\_\_



5. \_\_\_\_\_



6. \_\_\_\_\_

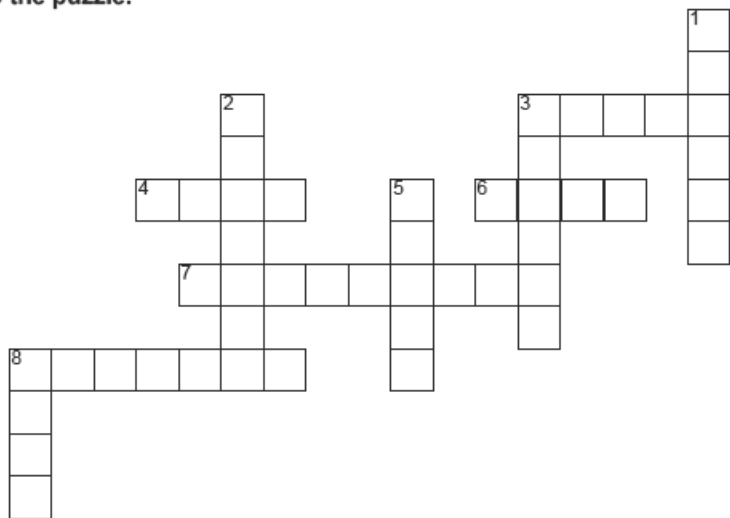


7. \_\_\_\_\_



8. \_\_\_\_\_

C. Do the puzzle.



**ACROSS**

- 3. not moving; with no movement
- 4. to put a dead body in a grave
- 6. to move faster than walking (horses)
- 7. important to remember
- 8. the body of a dead animal

**DOWN**

- 1. to run very fast (for horses)
- 2. a set of straps on a horse
- 3. a short, loud cry or sound
- 5. giving or producing shade
- 8. young male horse

D. Answer the questions with 1-3 words.

- 1. What is Black Beauty's mother's name? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Who is Farmer Grey? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. What did they do to Rob Roy when his leg was broken? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. What happened to young Gordon? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. How many sons did Squire Gordon have? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Who made iron shoes for Black Beauty? \_\_\_\_\_

## GLOSSARY

### Chapter 1 - My First Home

**bit** (n) a piece of metal that is put in a horse's mouth to control its movements

**blacksmith** (n) someone who makes and repairs things made of iron

**blinkers** (n / pl) pieces of leather that are put at the sides of a horse's eyes so that it can only see forward; blinders

**bury** (v) to put someone who has died in a grave, or to put something under the ground  
burial (n); buried (adj)

**carcass** (n) the body of a dead animal

**cart** (n) a vehicle with either two or four wheels that is generally pulled by a horse and used for carrying heavy things

**collar** (n) a narrow band of leather fastened around the neck of an animal

**colt** (n) a young male horse

**feed** (v) to give food to a person or an animal

**forehead** (n) the part of the face above the eyebrows

**gallop** (v) if a horse gallops, it moves very fast with all its feet leaving the ground together

gallop (n)

**harness** (n) a set of straps and belts that is used to control an animal

harness (v)

**hoof** (n) the hard part on the bottom of the feet of some animals

**lily** (n) a plant with a slender stem and fragrant flowers

**meadow** (n) a field with grass and wild flowers

**memorable** (adj) very good or unusual, and worth remembering; unforgettable  
memory (n)

**neigh** (v) if a horse neighs, it makes a long loud noise

neigh (n)

**obedient** (adj) always doing what you are told to do

obey (v)

**pat** (v) gently touch someone or something with your hand to give comfort; to stroke

pat (n)

**saddle** (n) a leather seat that is put on a horse for riding

saddle (v)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anna Sewell (1820-1878) was a British novelist who had published only one book, *Black Beauty*, in her lifetime.

Sewell's introduction to writing began at an early age when she helped edit the works of her mother, Mary Wright Sewell, who was an author of popular children's books. When Anna was 12 years old, she fell and broke her ankles. She became dependent on horse-drawn carriages to get around since she was unable to stand without a crutch, or walk for very long. This experience led her develop an empathy for horses.

Sewell wrote *Black Beauty* near the end of her life when her health was declining. She was hardly able to leave her bed, and she dictated the novel to her mother. She died five months after the publication of the novel. Sewell said that she wrote the novel to generate sympathy for the horses and enable their better treatment. However, the novel went beyond its original purpose, and it became one of the classics of children's literature. *Black Beauty* inspired other novels, and it had television and feature film adaptations.

### Sources

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<http://www.online-literature.com/anna-sewell/>