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Grasshopper Classic Readers

Black Beauty

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CHAPTER 1

Black Beauty Gets His Name

Preview
Questions

- Take a look at the pictures. What do you think this story will be about?
- Have you ever gone horseback riding before?
- Do you think Black Beauty is a strange name for a horse?

My first master was a kind man. My mother and I had a happy life. We lived on his farm.



My mother worked during the day. I played with the other young horses.

One day, my master sold me to Squire Gordon. He lived with his family in a big house.

"You're a beautiful horse," he said. "You have a beautiful black coat. I shall call you Black Beauty."

I learned to carry my master on my back and pull a **cart**. I learned to wear **reins** and a **bit** in my mouth. I did not like them, but all horses had to wear them.

My master had two other horses. One of them was Merrylegs. He was very friendly. The other was Ginger. She was not friendly. She bit and kicked people.

Ginger and I pulled a **coach** together. The coachman's name was John. Ginger and I worked very hard. We became friends.

Ginger told me about her life when she was young.

"My life was very unhappy," she told me. "My master was not kind to me. My reins and bit hurt me. My master did not care."

Squire Gordon and his men felt sorry for Ginger. They were always kind to her. She soon stopped being afraid. She stopped

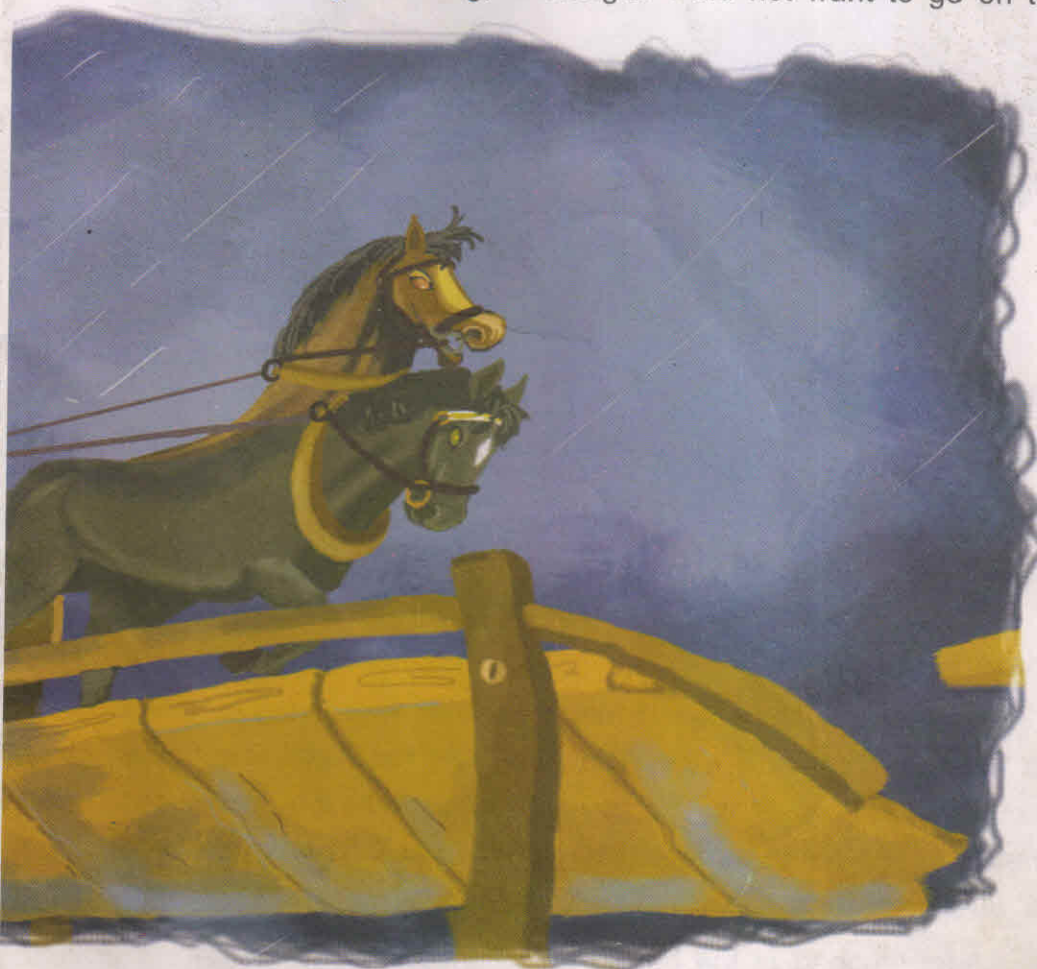


biting and kicking people. She became a happy horse.

One day, Ginger and I carried some boys and girls on our backs. We liked doing this, and we were very happy.

One day, Mr. Gordon and John had to go on a long journey. I pulled the coach for them. The weather was bad. There was a lot of rain. Mr. Gordon and John could not see well in the rain. We came to a bridge. I stopped.

"Something is wrong," I thought. I did not want to go on to





the bridge.

Mr. Gordon and John wanted me to go on to the bridge. I did not move. Then a man ran up.

"Don't go on the bridge!" he shouted. "It is broken!"

"You're a good horse, Black Beauty," Mr. Gordon said. "You have saved our lives."

Another day, John and I met a boy. He was trying to make a horse jump over a gate. The gate was too high. The horse could not jump over it. The boy was angry with the horse, and he hit it. The horse threw the boy off his back. The boy fell into a **bush** and began to cry. The horse ran off home.

John laughed at the boy in the bushes.

"That will teach you not to hit a horse," he said.

We left the boy in the bushes. John told Squire Gordon about the boy and the horse.

"We know about that boy," the Squire said. "He is a bully at school. No one likes him."

A young boy helped John with the horses. His name was James. One morning, he drove Mr. and Mrs. Gordon into town in the coach. They stayed in a hotel. There was a **stable** for horses behind the hotel.

There were other horses in the stable. There were men looking after them. One of the men smoked a pipe. He put it down and forgot about it.

During the night, there was a fire. Ginger and I could not get out of the stable.

James was very **brave**. He ran into the stable. He led all the horses out of the fire.



Review Questions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did Ginger bite and kick? • How did Black Beauty save his master's life? • What made the stable catch fire?

CHAPTER 2

Sold!

Preview
Questions

- Can you describe what is happening in the picture?
- Do you think Black Beauty will help anyone in this chapter?
- What do you think will happen next?

One night, John had to take a letter to a doctor. The Squire's wife was very ill.

"Wake up, Beauty!" he said to me. He jumped onto my back.



"Run as fast as you can," he said. "Mrs. Gordon is very sick. She needs a doctor."

I ran as fast as I could. We soon came to town. John woke up the doctor.

He gave him the letter. The doctor said, "I will come, but I haven't got a horse."



"Ride Black Beauty," John said. "He is tired, but he will run as fast as he can."

The doctor was heavier than John, but I did my best.

I carried the doctor to the house. Then I lay down. I could not breathe. I was in pain. Joe, the young stable boy, did not know what to do.

Many hours later, John came home. He was tired, but he looked after me.

I was very sick for a long time. A horse doctor came to see me. He gave me some medicine. John sat with me day and night.

Mr. Gordon often came to see me. "My beautiful horse," he said to me. "You saved Mrs. Gordon's life."

A few days later, Joe and I saw a cart stuck in the mud. The cart was too heavy. Its wheels could not move.

The carter was shouting at the horses. He was hitting them.

The horses were pulling the cart as hard as they could.

"Stop hitting the horses," Joe shouted at the man.

The man did not listen. He kept on hitting the horses. Joe was too little. He could not stop the man. We rode on.

Joe later told John about the man. John told Mr. Gordon.

"I am a **magistrate**," Mr. Gordon said. "I will **punish** the man. People must not be **cruel** to horses." Mr. Gordon kept his promise and punished the man for hitting his horses.

Mrs. Gordon did not die, but she did not get better. Mr. Gordon sold his house and went to live in a warmer place. He gave Merrylegs to a friend. He sold Ginger and me to a lord.

John took us to the lord's home. "These are good horses," he said, "but they do not like a **tight** rein."

"My wife likes her horses with their heads up," the lord said. "Tighten the reins."

"Tight reins will hurt them," John said. "My stable man, York, will get them used to it," the lord said.

John left. He went to work for another man.

The next day, the lord's wife said, "The new horses can pull my coach," she said. "I want their heads up."

"They are not used to a tight rein," York said. "Let me tighten it only a little every day."

"No!" the lord's wife said. "Tighten the reins very tight now."

York pulled the reins very tight. The reins pulled up our heads.

Ginger was very angry. She hated a tight rein. She began to kick and jump. She kicked me. She kicked York. Stable boys ran out and pulled Ginger down. They took me back into the stable.

York told the lord about Ginger.

"She's a good horse," he said, "but she hates a tight rein."

The lord gave Ginger to his son. A new horse pulled the coach with me. His name was Max. We talked about tight reins.

"The horse doctors know they are bad for us," he said. "They shorten our lives." Then why must we have "I asked Max. People think we look smart with our heads up high," he said.

For many months, I had to have a tight rein. The lord's wife did not care about our pain. She cared only about how smart we looked.

Review Questions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why did Mr. Gordon go to live in a warmer place?• What did Ginger hate?• Why did the lord's wife want her horses to have a tight rein?

CHAPTER 3

Anne Is Saved

Preview Questions

- Do you think the lord's son will treat Ginger well?
- Do you think Black Beauty will be happy living at the lord's house?
- What do you think will happen next?

The lord had two daughters. One, Harriet, was always sick. She never left the house. The other, Anne, loved riding. She liked to ride me, and I liked carrying her. She was kind and gentle.



One day, she wanted to ride one of the new horses. Her name was Lizzie.

"Don't ride Lizzie," Anne's friend said. "She's not safe. You are not strong enough for her."

Anne didn't listen.

"Don't worry about me," she said. "I can ride any horse. You ride Black Beauty."

She rode away on Lizzie. Her friend followed her on me.

Anne's friend went into a shop. Anne waited outside. She was sitting on Lizzie.

Suddenly, a boy walked toward us. He was leading some horses. They were young and wild. One of them ran into Lizzie. She was afraid. She began to run. Anne could not stop her.

"Help! Help!" she shouted.

Anne's friend ran out of the shop. He jumped on my back.

"Come on, Beauty," he said. "We must stop her."

I ran after Lizzie as fast as I could.

Soon we were getting nearer to Lizzie and Anne. Then Lizzie tried to jump a gate. She fell. Anne fell, too.

A man was working nearby.

"Get the doctor!" Anne's friend shouted to him. "Take my horse!"

The man jumped onto my back. I ran back to town as fast as I could.

The man told the doctor about the **accident**. The doctor rode off to help Anne.



He brought her back to the house in a coach. She was not dead, but her eyes were closed. She did not speak.

She was sick for many weeks, and then she got better.

"You must always ride Beauty," her father told her. "You must never ride another horse. You can always trust Beauty."

I was very **proud**.

One of the stablemen was Reuben Smith. One day, Reuben drove the coach home from another house. He was very **drunk**. He could not hold the reins.

"You cannot work for me any more," the lord told him. "I'm



sorry, but you must go."

Later, York went to see the lord.

"Please give Reuben another chance," he said. "He is the best man we have with the horses."

"Very well," the lord said. "But he must never be drunk again."

Reuben promised never to be drunk again.

Sadly, Reuben did not keep his promise. One day, he rode me into town. He went into an **inn**. I had to wait for him. When he came out, he was drunk. He got onto my back.

"Go!" he shouted.

I began to walk **forward**, but there was a stone in my shoe. It hurt me. I could not move quickly. Reuben was angry with me. He hit me with his **whip**.

"Faster, faster!" he shouted at me.

I moved as fast as I could. Then the shoe came off my **hoof**. I could not walk without pain.

Reuben hit me again and again with his whip.

I tried to move quickly, but I could not. Then I fell. Reuben fell off my back. He lay on the ground. He did not move.

Many hours later, some people came. They were looking for Reuben. They saw him lying on the ground. They saw me lying there, too.

They looked at Reuben.

"Reuben's dead," a man said.

"Did Beauty throw Reuben?" another man asked, "Why? Beauty is always a good horse."

He looked at my hoof.

"She's lost a shoe," he said. "That's why she threw Reuben. He didn't know because he was drunk."

The men did not **blame** me for Reuben's death.

Review Questions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was Lizzie the wrong horse for Anne? • Why was the lord angry with Reuben? • Why did Black Beauty fall?

CHAPTER 4

Bad Times

Preview Questions

- Do you think Black Beauty will continue to live with the lord's family?
- What will happen to Black Beauty's shoe?
- What do you think will happen next?

My hoof was badly hurt. I could not work. I stayed in a field. One day, Ginger came into the field. She was sick and angry.

"You can't walk," she said, "and I can't breathe."

"What happened to you, Ginger?" I asked.

"The lord's son made me race," she said. "He is very



heavy, and I am too old to race. He kept whipping me. I nearly died."

"What will happen to you?" I asked Ginger.

"They will let me rest for a year," she said. "Then I must work again. What about you?"

"I don't know," I said. "I still cannot walk well."

A week later, the lord and York came into the field. They watched me move.

"That horse is useless," the lord said. "We cannot keep him here. We must sell him."

"We will not get a good price," York said.

"Find him a good home," the lord said. "Don't worry about the price."

"I'll write to a friend," York said. He and the lord walked away.

Ginger said, "They will soon take you away. I will lose my only friend. We shall never see each other again."

A week later, York led me away. York's friend bought me. I



was very sad and so was Ginger. York's friend lived in another town.

My new owner had many horses and coaches. Many of the drivers were not very good. Some of them made us wear tight reins. Other drivers were careless.

One evening, I was pulling a coach with another horse. His name was Rory. We often worked together.

We came to a corner. I heard the sound of another horse and coach. It was coming toward us. Its driver was careless. This coach hit Rory. Rory was badly hurt.

He was sick for a long time.

I now worked with Peggy. She was a beautiful horse, but she walked strangely.

"I walk strangely," she told me, "because my legs are short. My first owner did not worry about this. He did not make me move quickly. Then he sold me to a farmer. Some farmers are good owners. This one was not. He did not care about me. He cared only about going quickly. He was always whipping me. One day, I fell. He also fell and was badly hurt."

"Are you happy here?" I asked her.

"No," she said. "They want me to go quickly. I can't because my legs are short." Peggy did not work with me for very long. My owner sold me.

My next owner was Mr. Barry. The name of his stableman was Fletcher.

At first, Fletcher gave me good food. Then he stopped giving me good food. He gave me only **grass**. He took my food

away. He gave it to his rabbits.

One day, Mr. Barry's friend came to see him.

"Your horse doesn't look well," he said. "He's too thin. He's not getting enough to eat."

"I buy a lot of good food for him," Mr. Barry said.

"Perhaps your stableman is **stealing** your horse's food,"

Mr. Barry's friend said. Mr. Barry found out the truth. He sent for the **police**. They took Fletcher away.

Alfred Smirk was the new stableman. He was very **lazy**. He never cleaned the stable. Smirk did not care. He covered old, dirty **straw** with clean straw. Mr. Barry did not see the dirty straw. However, Mr. Barry could smell the stable.

"What is causing the bad smell, Smirk?" Mr. Barry asked.

"The **drains**," Smirk said.

The dirt and the bad smell made me sick. I didn't want to eat.

At last, Mr. Barry sent for the horse doctor.

"Your horse is ill because the stable is dirty," he said.

"I can't trust stablemen," Mr. Barry said. "I shall not keep a horse."

Review Questions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did the lord sell Black Beauty? • Which of Black Beauty's owners had a stableman who did not feed her well? • What did Fletcher do?

CHAPTER 5

Black Beauty Works for a Cab Driver

Preview Questions

- What do you think Mr. Barry will do with Black Beauty?
- Who do you think the new owner will be?
- What do you think will happen next?

Mr. Barry sold me to Mr. Jerry Barker. He was a **cab** driver. He had another horse. His name was Captain.

Jerry lived with his wife and two children. Their names were Harry and Dolly. Harry was twelve years old. Dolly was eight. The children liked to give me food and look after me.

I did not like the first week of my life as a cab horse. The work was hard and the hours were long. I did not like all the



traffic. However, Jerry kept our stable clean and gave us lots of good food. He was also a good driver. He never whipped me.

Jerry was always happy. He never **argued** with people. He liked to sing.

Harry helped with the stable work. Jerry had a wife named Polly. She and little Dolly cleaned the cab every morning. Jerry cleaned us and the stable. Harry cleaned and **polished** my reins. There was a lot of laughing and happiness in the family.

(However, Jerry did not like lazy people. He did not like to waste time. And he did not like people who were late for work. These people wanted him to drive fast. He did not want to do this.

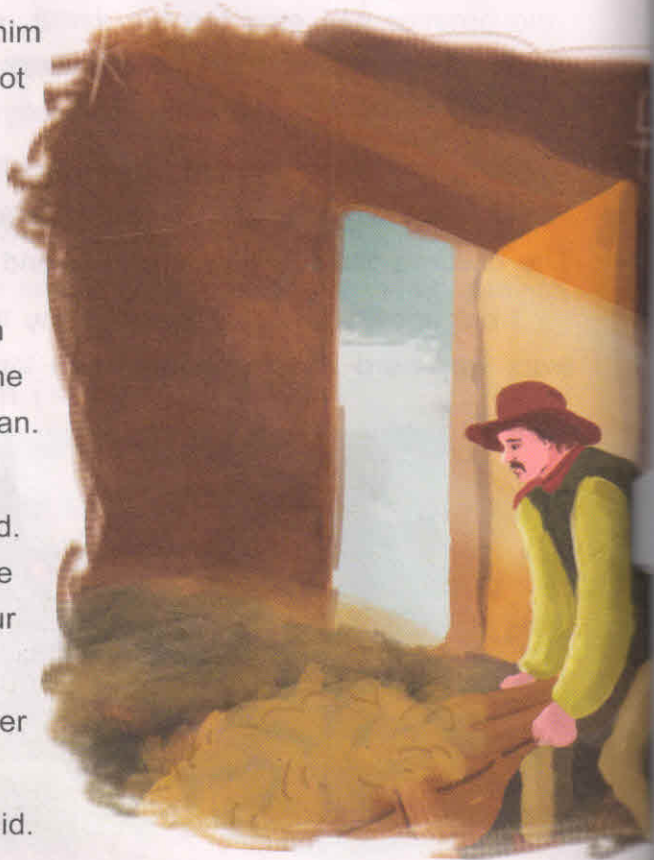
One day, two young men ran up to Jerry.

"We have to catch a train!" one of them shouted. "Take us to the station as fast as you can. We'll pay you extra!"

"I'm sorry," Jerry said. "I won't make my horse work too hard. Keep your extra money."

Another cab driver heard this.

"I'll take you," he said.



The young men got into the cab. The driver whipped his horses. The cab raced away.

Jerry did not care about extra money. He cared about his horses. The other cab drivers laughed at him.

One of Jerry's best **customers** asked him to work on a Sunday.

"I want you to take my wife to church. Then wait for her and bring her home."

"I'm sorry," Jerry said. "I don't work on Sundays. I need a



day to rest and so do my horses."

Many cab drivers were happy to work seven days a week. They didn't give their horses a rest day. The man soon found a driver to take his wife to church. He never used Jerry's cab again.

"You're a fool to lose your best customer," one of the drivers said. Jerry did not agree and neither did we.

On one Sunday, however, Jerry did work. Our neighbor, Dinah Brown's mother, was very sick.

"My mother is going to die," she told Jerry. "Please take me to her."

Jerry did not want us to work on a Sunday, but he wanted to help Dinah.

"I don't want to use my cab," he said. "It's too heavy for the horses to pull every day of the week. I'll **borrow** a small cart." He borrowed a small cart, and we went to Dinah's mother's house.

Dinah's mother lived on a farm. We waited at the farm for several hours. Jerry let us wait in the field. We were very happy there.

Review Questions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did Black Beauty not like about his work as a cab horse? • Why didn't Jerry make his horses work on Sundays? • Why did one of the cab drivers think Jerry was a fool?

CHAPTER 6

Hard Work for Horses

Preview Questions

- Do you think Black Beauty will continue to live with Jerry's family?
- How long can Black Beauty be a cab horse?
- What do you think will happen next?

The winter was very cold and wet. The cab drivers tried to keep warm with hot soup. Little Dolly liked to bring soup to Jerry. One cold day, a customer arrived. Jerry gave his soup to Polly.

"Where to?" Jerry asked the man. "Finish your soup first, driver," the man said. "You are cold and need something warm inside you."

Jerry said, "Thank you, sir." Then he said to Dolly, "Here is a good man. He does not think only of himself."

Most customers did not care about the health of the **carters** or horses. But this nice customer cared. His name was Mr. Grant.

One day, Mr. Grant and his friend were in our cab.

He saw a carter whipping his horse. He shouted at the carter to stop.

The name of the carter's employer was on the side of the cart. Jerry wrote down the name of the carter's employer.

Mr. Grant's friend said, "This is none of our business. Why worry about other men's horses?"

"Do you know why there are so many problems in the world?" Mr. Grant asked his friend.

His friend did not answer.

"It's because too many people look after only their own business," Mr. Grant said.

I was happy to have nice customers like Mr. Grant. I was also happy that I worked for Jerry, because other owners often hurt their horses.

One day, I was waiting for Jerry in town. A horse came by. She was pulling a cart. The horse was Ginger.



She looked very sick. She couldn't walk well. She looked very sad.

"Hello, Black Beauty," she said. "You're the only friend I ever had."

I wanted to talk to her, but she couldn't stop. The carter whipped her to make her keep moving.

Later that day, I passed a dead horse on the side of the road.

That horse was Ginger. I was very sad.

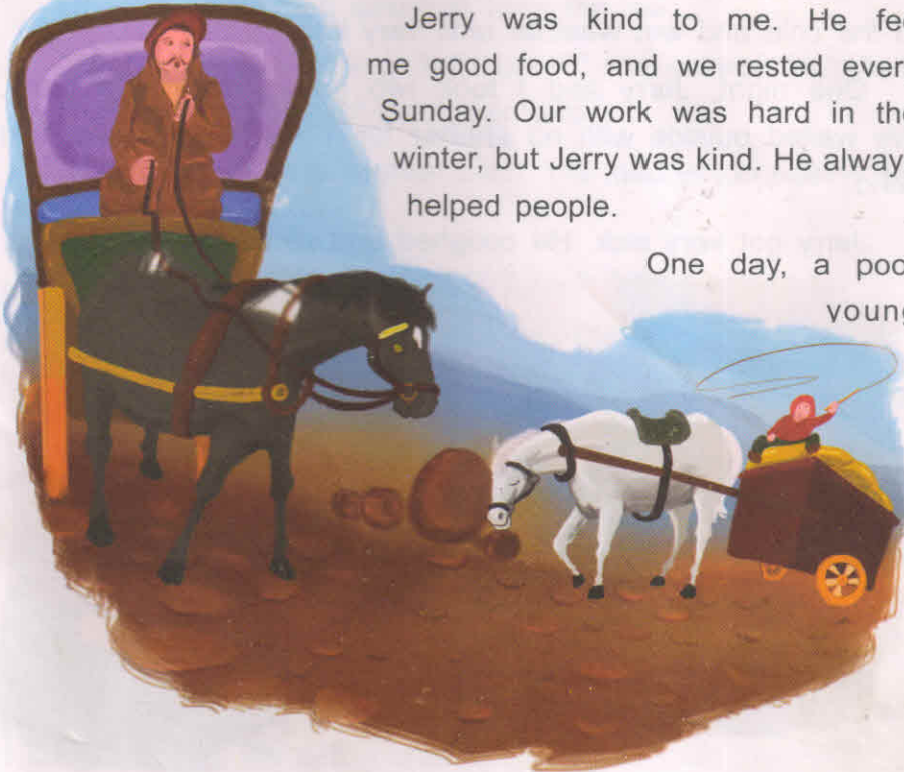
"That poor horse had a hard life," I thought.

Many horses had difficult lives. Jerry owned me, but some carters did not own their horses. These drivers had to work the horses hard to pay back the owners.

Other jobs were hard, too. **Butcher's** horses had to go very fast. The customers wanted their meat to be fresh, so they didn't like to wait. Baker's horses carried a lot of weight. The horses would become very weak.

Jerry was kind to me. He fed me good food, and we rested every Sunday. Our work was hard in the winter, but Jerry was kind. He always helped people.

One day, a poor young



woman came up to us. She was carrying a heavy child.

"Please help me," she said to my driver. "I must take my child to the hospital."

"It's a long way to the hospital," Jerry said. "You can't carry that child all that way."

Take a cab."

"I have no money for a cab," the woman said.

Jerry drove them for free. We took the mother and her child to the doctor. The doctor helped them, and the child got better.

At Christmas and New Year, the work was hard. We worked in the cold and wet weather until very late.

One night, Jerry and I took two young men to a party. We waited outside with no **shelter** for many hours in the cold wind.

Jerry got very sick. He coughed and could not keep warm.



The two men came out of the party very late. They were laughing. They did not care about Jerry.

Jerry was so sick, that he could not speak. His **cough** was very bad. He was very sick for many months.

"You'll get better," the doctor told Jerry, "but you must find different work. You will die if you work again in wet and cold weather." Jerry could not **afford** to pay for my food and shelter without working. He had to sell me.

A few months after this, my master sold me. My new owner was a baker. He **loaded** the cart with sacks of **flour**. He made me pull very heavy loads.

One day, a woman saw him whipping me.

"Why are you whipping that horse?" she asked. "He's lazy. He won't go up the hill," the baker said.

"He's not lazy," the woman said. "His load is too heavy, and the reins are too tight."

"A loose rein doesn't look good," the baker said.

"**Loosen** the rein," the woman told him. "It will help him."

The baker loosened the rein. I was able to pull the load up the hill.

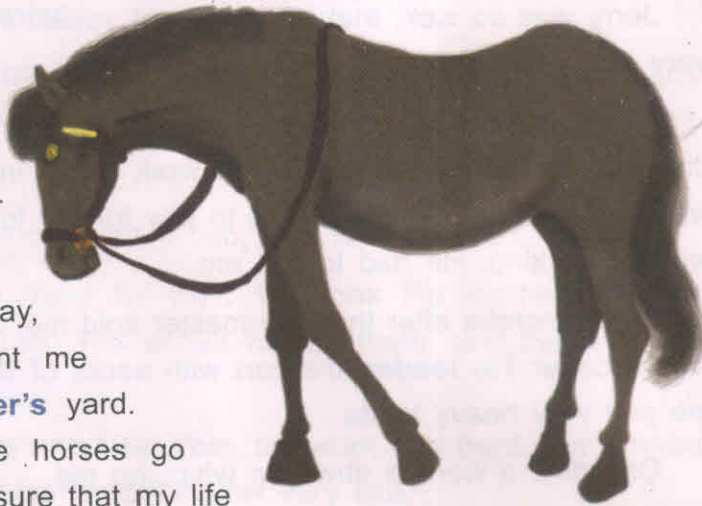
I was now too old and weak to pull a heavy cart.

The baker sold me to a cab driver. He was a very cruel man. He whipped me all the time. I became weaker and weaker. I wanted to die.

One day, a man, his wife, and two children got into the cab. I could not pull the cab. I was too weak.

The driver whipped me very hard. I did my best, but I could not pull the cab. I fell down.

The driver said, "He's going to die. You'll have to get another cab."



The next day, the driver sent me to the **knacker's** yard. This is where horses go to die. I was sure that my life was over.

Review Questions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did some men make horses do?• In what ways were some men cruel to horses?• Why was Black Beauty sent to the knacker's yard?

CHAPTER 7

The Last Homes of Black Beauty

Preview
Questions

- What happened to Black Beauty after he fell down?
- Do you think Black Beauty will die?
- How can Black Beauty get stronger?

I didn't die. I was still very weak, but I could stand and walk. The horse doctor gave me good medicine. Later, I was sent back to the knacker's yard. A knacker buys old and sick horses to kill and sell the meat and **bones**.

A nice old man and a young boy looked interested in me. "I like this horse, granddad. Can we buy him?" The old man looked at me carefully.

"He is 14 or 15 years old. With good food and rest, he will get stronger," he said. "He'll be able to do a little

work. Then, we can sell him again for more money." I lived on their farm and got stronger.

One day, two ladies came to the farm. They wanted to buy a horse. Their **groom** was with them. The groom very carefully looked at me for a long time. "I think I know this horse," he said to the ladies. "Do you see the star on his **forehead**? Do you see his one white foot? This horse is Black Beauty! He is old now, but he is a good horse, ladies." The man was Joe Green.

He was older now and very happy to see me.

The two ladies bought me and took me to their home. I give them rides, and I am gentle with them. They promised never to sell me again. I am at **peace** living at their small farm. Joe takes good care of me, and I can end my story here.



Review Questions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who was Joe Green?• Why did he want the two ladies to buy Black Beauty?• Where will Black Beauty live until he dies?