

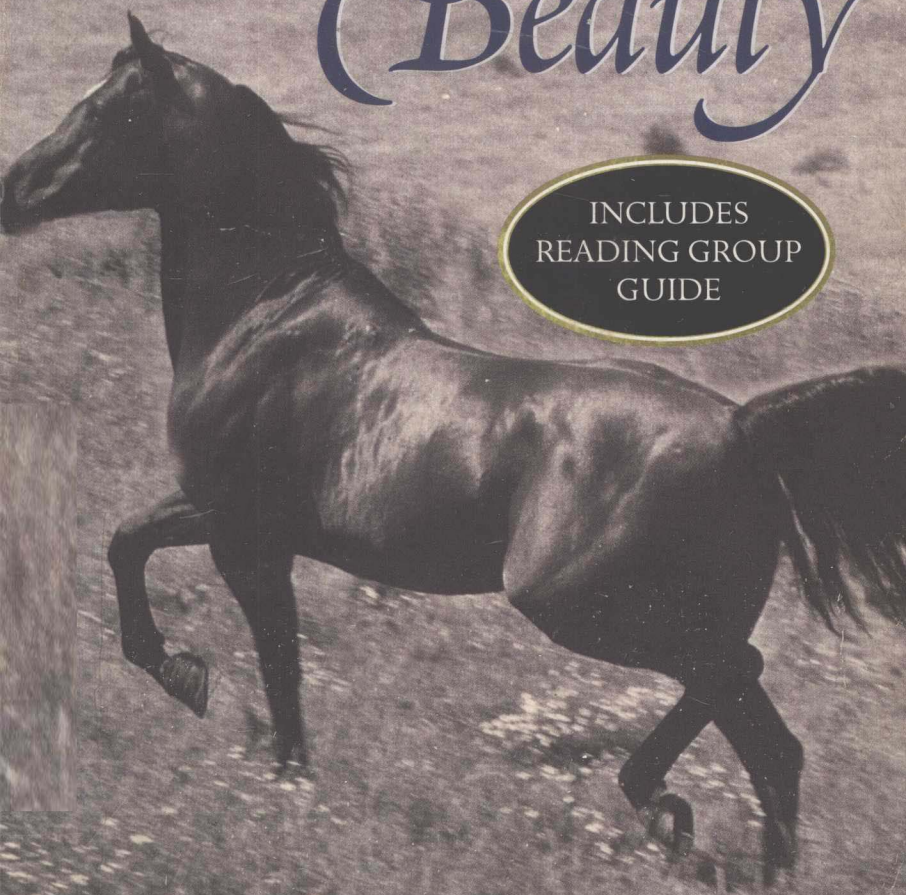


L A D D I N  C L A S S I C S

 ANNA SEWELL 

# Black (Beauty)

INCLUDES  
READING GROUP  
GUIDE



With a foreword by Carol Fenner

ANNA SEWELL

*Black  
Beauty*

A L A D D I N  C L A S S I C S  
New York London Toronto Sydney Singapore

If you purchased this book without a cover you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as "unsold and destroyed" to the publisher and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this "stripped book."

First Aladdin Paperbacks edition June 2001

Foreword copyright © 2001 by Carol Fenner

Aladdin Paperbacks  
An imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division  
1230 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10020

All rights reserved, including the right of  
reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

CIP data for this book is available from the Library of Congress.  
ISBN: 0-689-842554

## FOREWORD

The relationship between humans and horses has been much the same for six thousand years. Mankind found early on that the horse could provide excellent transportation for humans and goods. The horse—this fleet and powerful, alert animal—was used as private and public conveyances; in commerce, farming, war, sport, and competition; and, typical to our species, as a status symbol.

Over the years there have been many who mistreated or brutalized the horse, and there have been some who instinctively dealt generously with the animal. It is the rare handler, over these thousands of years, who learned or sensed how to deal with horses in a manner that created artful and willing service.

As long ago as three hundred years before Christ, a Greek cavalry officer named Xenophon wrote a book called *The Art of Horsemanship*, which is still relevant today. Xenophon stated that you must be firm but not harsh with a horse, and never lose your temper: “. . . if your horse shies at an object and is unwilling to go up to it, he should be shown that there is nothing fearful in it. . . .” Xenophon, a man of war, was not bellicose with the mounts under his care.

Today, among the mediocre, ignorant, and just plain bad handlers, there are many fine ones. We learn; we have good teachers. Books are written. People who have studied horses share their expertise. Vicky Hearne understands the importance of both horses and riders talking to each other (*Adam's Task, Calling Animals by Name*); Henry Blake

discovered that a horse performs best if his own sense of enjoyment is increased (*Talking with Horses*); and our own remarkable horse whisperer, Monty Roberts (*The Man Who Listens to Horses*), has the rare gift of deeply listening to horses.

But in the late nineteenth century came a surprising book—written by a Victorian gentlewoman. Not only did she know how to tell a thrilling tale, but the lady knew about horses—how they grew, and thrived, how they naturally behaved, how badly they were usually treated, and how often they suffered and were killed. The book was not meant for children. It made a deep impression on men and women alike. It was an unusual thing for a Victorian woman to know so much about horses.

Most people don't know her name. "Anna . . . something," said a young librarian this spring. But everyone has heard of *Black Beauty*, the best-known, longest-selling, perpetually popular horse book ever written. Over thirty million copies have been sold, more than any book in the genre—even outdistancing today's phenomenon, the Harry Potter books. *Black Beauty* has been in print since 1877.

The author was born Anna Sewell in England, in 1820, into a Quaker family. Her father, Isaac Sewell, a devoted and hardworking man, was engaged in a series of struggling business enterprises. Her mother was educated and principled, with enormous energy and drive.

Isaac Sewell did not do well in the early years of supporting a growing young family. They lived in modest circumstances, in a succession of sparsely furnished homes, amid a series of financial mishaps. Businesses did not succeed: Once an inept partner caused their efforts to fail, another time a dishonest hired hand reduced the family to

poverty by stealing all the money in their milk enterprise. Sometimes it was back luck, sometimes naiveté and honesty, sometimes lack of experience. They did not prosper, the Sewells, but the family was loving and persevering.

As she grew, Anna was drawn to all living creature—from birds and insects, including the lowly silverfish and maybugs with their scaly backs and copper-colored legs, to larger animals like dogs and horses, the latter for which she carried a special love. Because she was not afraid or horrified by natural life, she noticed details and patterns and behavior among creatures, tucking them into her observant mind. She was also bewildered over the misery and death caused unnecessarily by cruel people. Horses were the most visible domesticated creatures, they did so much for mankind and were so rarely repaid. Anna must have identified with their skill and spirit—and how helpless they were against their fate.

To earn money for books for her children's education, Mary Sewell, began to write a long series of children's works, called "Walks with Mamma," using simple one-syllable words. Easy for children to understand, the books were apparently well thought of as teaching aids and moral instruction.

At nine years old Anna was a candid and truthful child, both a joy and a trial to her mother. She did well in some lessons, idled over others, and tended to be too untidy and lackadaisical in her work habits to please her perfectionist mother. She loved to paint. She told tales on her younger brother, Philip. She daydreamed. Like a young colt she might ignore rain, galloping through it, soaking her clothes and ruining the cardboard brim inside her bonnet. She had a temper, especially when animals were uselessly abused,

and would think nothing of berating the abuser.

When Anna was fourteen years old (1834), the direction in which her life might have headed changed forever. Hurrying home from school during a rainstorm, she slipped and fell in the carriage drive and twisted both her ankles. Later she was to observe, "My ankles are twisted like the leg of the wagon horse who fell on the frozen cobbles last year and had to be shot." Whether the lack of proper medical attention caused her ankles not to heal properly, or as a result of some other medical complication, Anna never walked again without assistance except for a short period in her late twenties. She was no longer the adventurous, spontaneous explorer she had once been, although her alertness of observation and deduction remained keen. Her mother wrote, "Her sufferings never made a gloom or a cloud in the house. She never brooded over her loss of power, or the loss of the changes or amusements which others enjoy. Her own mind was always a storehouse of refreshment to herself; it was a rich garden which circumstances never allowed to be fully cultivated, but it was full of thoughts and ready appreciation of the genius and talents of others."

In 1836, two years after Anna's accident, Isaac Sewell was offered the post of Manager of the London and County Joint Stock Bank. Family fortunes became considerably more comfortable, and they moved to Brighton. Anna's brother, Philip, trained as an engineer. He became engaged to a young Quaker girl. Years later in 1846, after a long visit for therapy in Marianbad, Germany, Anna enjoyed a year or so when she could walk freely. She spent hours strolling with her mother. Philip married in 1849 and Anna traveled to Spain to visit him and his wife. However,

this reprieve did not last. The lameness returned and once again Anna was confined to assistance or crutches.

By 1858, Anna had taken over the managing of the household and garden duties, though sometimes in considerable pain. The same year she also began copying her mother's work, which now included ballads and poetry. Anna developed into a valuable editor and critic for Mary as her reputation increased. Anna and her mother also collaborated on a "Working Man's Evening," teaching local miners and laborers three nights a week.

Despite having to walk with a crutch, Anna became a skillful rider and driver. She had a sixth sense with horses. A friend noted that Anna would guide a horse with a light, gentle voice; that she didn't use the reins, and the horse seemed to understand what she wanted. Her father depended upon Anna to drive him the ten miles to the train station every day in a chaise pulled by a pony. It was a two-hour trip during which Anna studied her pony well, and established ties with the strong little animal.

This was a period when England was labeled "a hell for horses," but many dreadful conditions were recognized as standard treatment in other countries as well, including the United States. Horses were the main mode of transportation. Most city horses, wagon and cab pullers, suffered badly in the hands of their human keepers. They were underfed, they grew lame and sore, and they worked with overloaded carts in burning heat or freezing cold-over ice and mud. They were beaten to get the most out of them with very little thought to their misery. Many died in the harness.

Anna seemed to forget her own pain in the endless suffering of the cab horses. She also was angered by the



current fashion, which also played a role in the mistreatment of horses. Tails were docked to make them stand up elegantly short and straight, a painful procedure which led to the agony of being unable to brush away stinging flies. Some horses were placed in harnesses which forced their heads and necks into an unnatural and painful arch. This caused respiratory problems and made pulling loads difficult.

She and her mother would admonish cabmen and others they found abusing the animals. Anna would shame some, but she angered others. Once, she and her mother were threatened with horsewhipping themselves. The inspiration came to Anna, long before she wrote *Black Beauty*, to tell the story of a horse.

"I believe the idea must have been in the back of my head for a long time. I think it really started one day when I was driving Mrs. Bayly to the station, after she had paid us a visit. She told me, as we were driving, about an Essay on Animals that a Mr. Bushnell had written. . . . So today . . . it seemed to me that I might write the life story of a horse. Perhaps it might help people to understand what gentle and devoted friends horses can be. Perhaps it might make men a little kinder to their faithful horses." The idea of a book stayed tucked in her mind for many years. Anna was not thinking of a book for children. She was thinking of a book for men who handled horses; ignorant, downtrodden men themselves, or impatient men whose only concerns were the convenience and prestige of a stable of fine horses.

The idea for a book stayed with Anna as she took care of the house and worked in the gardens. It stayed in her mind as she drove her father and guests; it lay dormant,

developing, as she taught the illiterate. It stayed as Anna grew weaker. Her mother wrote, "The disease which the doctors expected would have worn her out by this time from extreme suffering, is not manifestly worse, but little by little the strength keeps wasting, and her capacity for any effort decreases."

By 1871 Anna was confined to her home by her disability and under constant care of her mother. She was in her fifties. She began to write. "I am getting on with my little book, *Black Beauty*," she wrote in her diary. Later she wrote, "I have for six years been confined to the house and to my sofa and have from time to time, as I was able, been writing what I think will turn out a little book, its special aim being to induce kindness, sympathy, and an understanding treatment of horses. In thinking of cab-horses, I have been led to think of cabmen, and I am anxious, if I can, to present their true condition, and their great difficulties, in a correct and telling manner."

The book was published in 1877. Anna lived long enough to see her work cause the almost immediate attention she longed for in the horse world. She died a year later little realizing she had also created a classic that would be enjoyed by generations.

Powerful though this book may be, it carries flaws. Beauty's first-person narrative may at times seem too sophisticated and moral for a horse. In many instances the writing slips into over-sentimentality, a combination of the style of the period and Anna's zeal. Anna had a message, a potent one, and she tended to pound it home, italicizing to emphasize her point. But under the fervor of her conviction, her straightforward telling of the story of *Black Beauty* is almost incidental. Anna Sewell very simply told

a fertile tale, and herein lies the greatness of her gift. Like all fine writers, Anna takes us into the life of her story. We grow with a young colt; we are trained—patiently, painfully; we wince when a bit tears through our tender mouth; we run through fields, develop closeness with other horses—with people.

Anna Sewell's genius lay in the characterization of both animal and human, in true dialogue, in the clarity of surroundings, and in the accurate detailing of both animal care and nineteenth-century English life. Her sense of movement and drama is rich. The people and horses live with the reader long after the book has been read. *Black Beauty* continues to earn respect and arouse compassion for horses, and is still changing attitudes in the twenty-first century.

—CAROL FENNER

## CONTENTS

### PART ONE

1	My Early Home	3
2	The Hunt	6
3	My Breaking In	10
4	Birtwick Park	15
5	A Fair Start	18
6	Liberty	22
7	Ginger	24
8	Ginger's Story Continued	29
9	Merrylegs	33
10	A Talk in the Orchard	36
11	Plain Speaking	42
12	A Stormy Day	46
13	The Devil's Trade Mark	50
14	James Howard	53
15	The Old Ostler	56
16	The Fire	59
17	John Manly's Talk	63
18	Going for the Doctor	67
19	Only Ignorance	71
20	Joe Green	74
21	The Parting	77

### PART TWO

22	Earlshall	81
23	A Strike for Liberty	86
24	The Lady Anne	90
25	Reuben Smith	97

26	How it Ended	101
27	Ruined and Going Downhill	104
28	A Job-horse and His Drivers	107
29	Cockneys	111
30	A Thief	118
31	A Humbug	121

### PART THREE

32	A Horse Fair	125
33	A London Cab Horse	129
34	An Old War Horse	133
35	Jerry Barker	139
36	The Sunday Cab	146
37	The Golden Rule	151
38	Dolly and a Real Gentleman	155
39	Seedy Sam	160
40	Poor Ginger	164
41	The Butcher	167
42	The Election	170
43	A Friend in Need	172
44	Old Captain and His Successor	177
45	Jerry's New Year	182

### PART FOUR

46	Jakes and the Lady	190
47	Hard Times	194
48	Farmer Thoroughgood and His Grandson Willie	199
49	My Last Home	204

❧ PART ONE ❧



*MY EARLY HOME*

The first place that I can well remember was a large pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it. Some shady trees leaned over it, and rushes and water-lilies grew at the deep end. Over the hedge on one side we looked into a ploughed field, and on the other we looked over a gate at our master's house, which stood by the roadside; at the top of the meadow was a plantation of fir trees, and at the bottom a running brook overhung by a steep bank.

Whilst I was young I lived upon my mother's milk, as I could not eat grass. In the day time I ran by her side, and at night I lay down close by her. When it was hot, we used to stand by the pond in the shade of the trees, and when it was cold, we had a nice warm shed near the plantation.

As soon as I was old enough to eat grass, my mother used to go out to work in the day time, and came back in the evening.

There were six young colts in the meadow besides 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 and round the field, as hard as we could go. Sometimes we had rather rough play, 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 very good colts, but they 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. Her name was Duchess, but he often called her Pet.

Our master was a good, kind man. He gave us good food, good lodging, and kind words; he spoke as kindly to us as he did to his little children. We were all fond of him, and my mother loved him very much. 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, which was very good, 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 the town on a market day in a little gig.

There was a ploughboy, 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,