

# BLACK BEAUTY

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

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

11 Every one may not know what breaking in is, therefore I will describe it. It means to  
12 teach a horse to wear a saddle and bridle, and to carry on his back a man, woman or  
13 child; to go just the way they wish, and to go quietly. Besides this he has to learn to  
14 wear a collar, a crupper, and a breeching, and to stand still while they are put on; then  
15 to have a cart or a chaise fixed behind, so that he cannot walk or trot without dragging  
16 it after him; and he must go fast or slow, just as his driver wishes. He must never start  
17 at what he sees, nor speak to other horses, nor bite, nor kick, nor have any will of his  
18 own; but always do his master's will, even though he may be very tired or hungry; but  
19 the worst of all is, when his harness is once on, he may neither jump for joy nor lie down  
20 for weariness. So you see this breaking in is a great thing.

21 I had of course long been used to a halter and a headstall, and to be led about in the  
22 fields and lanes quietly, but now I was to have a bit and bridle; my master gave me some  
23 oats as usual, and after a good deal of coaxing he got the bit into my mouth, and the  
24 bridle fixed, but it was a nasty thing! Those who have never had a bit in their mouths  
25 cannot think how bad it feels; a great piece of cold hard steel as thick as a man's finger  
26 to be pushed into one's mouth, between one's teeth, and over one's tongue, with the  
27 ends coming out at the corner of your mouth, and held fast there by straps over your  
28 head, under your throat, round your nose, and under your chin; so that no way in the  
29 world can you get rid of the nasty hard thing; it is very bad! yes, very bad! at least I  
30 thought so; but I knew my mother always wore one when she went out, and all horses  
31 did when they were grown up; and so, what with the nice oats, and what with my  
32 master's pats, kind words, and gentle ways, I got to wear my bit and bridle.

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

40 The next unpleasant business was putting on the iron shoes; that too was very hard at  
41 first. My master went with me to the smith's forge, to see that I was not hurt or got any  
42 fright. The blacksmith took my feet in his hand, one after the other, and cut away some  
43 of the hoof. It did not pain me, so I stood still on three legs till he had done them all.  
44 Then he took a piece of iron the shape of my foot, and clapped it on, and drove some  
45 nails through the shoe quite into my hoof, so that the shoe was firmly on. My feet felt  
46 very stiff and heavy, but in time I got used to it.



## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 1** What information is suggested from reading the first paragraph?
- A** The narrator is hardworking
  - B** The narrator is intelligent
  - C** The narrator is young
  - D** The narrator caring
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- 2** What is not mentioned as a reason why the narrator considers themselves handsome?
- A** A mark on their forehead
  - B** Soft fur
  - C** A different colour foot
  - D** A sweet looking face
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- 3** Why was the narrator not sold until they were four years old?
- A** Making young horses work too early can be bad
  - B** The buyer did not have enough money
  - C** The seller was attached to his handsome horse
  - D** The narrator is only allowed to work after four years old
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- 4** What was the purpose of Squire Gordon examining the narrator?
- A** To check if the horse is healthy and of good quality
  - B** To ensure the horse is exactly as the master stated
  - C** To see the horse for himself
  - D** All of the above

- 5** Why did the master want to 'break in' the narrator?
- A** If someone new did it, the narrator might be aggressive to them
  - B** Somebody new might be too gentle on the narrator
  - C** The master is worried someone else might hurt the narrator
  - D** A new person would try to upset the narrator
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- 6** Which one definition best describes what 'breaking in' means?
- A** Teaching a horse to take instructions and carry weight on their back
  - B** Teaching a horse how to do tricks and perform on command
  - C** Teaching a horse that when its master calls, it must return from wherever it is
  - D** Teaching a horse how it must act if it wants to live in society
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- 7** What pair of items or tasks were not mentioned as training for 'breaking in'?
- A** Not jumping for joy when the harness is on nor kicking
  - B** No biting nor lying down when tired
  - C** Carrying people on their back and not speak to other horses
  - D** Wearing a collar and wearing a chain
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- 8** What was the narrator already used to as a colt?
- A** Drinking alcohol
  - B** The temperature
  - C** The ground being comfortable
  - D** Being up all night
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- 9** How did the master get the narrator to wear the bit and bridle?
- A** By being caring, gentle and rewarding with oats
  - B** By forcing it on the narrator
  - C** By threatening the narrator that he would get rid of him
  - D** By persuading the narrator cleverly
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- 10** What does “till I began to look for the oats and the saddle” (line 40-41) suggest about the narrator?
- A** The narrator became greedy for the oats
  - B** The narrator eventually wanted the saddle for the oats
  - C** The narrator was searching to find the oats and saddle that were hidden
  - D** The narrator was tricked to wear the saddle because of the oats
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- 11** Which one option best describes the relationship between the master and the narrator?
- A** They care deeply for each other
  - B** They are best friends
  - C** The narrator cares for the master more
  - D** The master is just using the colt
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- 12** How did the narrator feel about carrying his master around?
- A** He was immediately proud
  - B** It was bizarre and absurd
  - C** First it was strange then pleasing
  - D** Unfamiliar but then exciting
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[illegible]