

CHAPTER 1

M^Y FIRST HOME WAS A LARGE FARM WITH A POND IN THE middle of it. There were tall trees for shade and enough space for me to run around in. I played in a green field with lots of grass.

At first, I was too little to eat grass so I drank my mother's milk. Later when I started to eat grass, my mother was able to go to work every day. She pulled a carriage for my master and I played in the field with the other young colts while she was away with him.

I had fun as I galloped with the other young horses. We used to run round and round as fast as we could go. Some of the colts liked to kick and bite as they played. One day, my mother saw us and called me to go to her. 'The young colts that kick and bite are going to be carthorses when they grow up,' she said. 'I hope you will be a good horse that has manners like the other horses in our family. You have never seen me kick or bite and I want you to do the same.'

I have never forgotten my mother's advice. My mother's name was Duchess and she was good and gentle. She loved our master and ran to him whenever she saw him.

'Hello, Duchess. How is your little Darkie?' he asked my mother with a smile every time he saw us together. He called me Darkie because I was a dull black colour. As I grew older, my fluffy hair became a shiny coat and, with the white star on my forehead and my one white foot, it made me look very handsome.

When I was four years old, Squire Gordon came to the field to look at me. He looked at my mouth and eyes. He felt my legs and then I had to walk, trot and gallop for him. Then Squire Gordon turned to my master and said, 'I want to buy him!'

'I will break him in for you first,' said my master. I knew what that meant! It isn't easy for a horse to be broken in. A young horse needs to learn how to wear a saddle, how to carry a rider and how to pull a carriage in the way his master wants.

I had never carried a rider on my back before so I had a lot to get used to. My master gently put a bridle round my neck and a metal bar that is called a 'bit' into my mouth. The bit felt uncomfortable

