

CHAPTER 9

MY SECOND EXPERIENCE OF A HORSE FAIR WAS VERY DIFFERENT from the first one. This time, I wasn't in a stall with the strong horses but in another stall surrounded by horses that looked tired, thin and sick.

Most buyers walked by without even noticing me. Few people seemed interested in buying a horse from our stall. After all, what good is a horse with so many problems?

Later in the day, a man with a kind face stood near us with his grandson. The man looked carefully at me.

I still had a thick mane and nice tail that made me look quite handsome. I held my head high and stood as tall and still as I could while the man looked at me.

'Do you see that horse, Willie?' said the farmer. 'He looks like he came from a good home. I am sure he was special when he was young.'

'Do you suppose that he was ever a carriage horse?' asked young Willie.

'Yes, my boy!' said the grandfather. 'Look at his nose, neck and shoulders. Look at the way he stands. He has manners. Horses like this one belong with squires and wealthy people.'

'He doesn't look like a rich man's horse now,' said his grandson. 'I wonder what happened to him.'

'I suppose he had some hard times,' said the man. 'Perhaps he was just unlucky.'

'Poor horse!' said Willie. He put his hand on my neck and patted me. I put my nose in his hand. 'Look, Grandpa! He understands kindness. Let's buy him and make him young again, just as we did with Ladybird!'

The horse seller walked to us. 'Hello, Farmer Thoroughgood,' he said. 'You should listen to your grandson. That young boy knows what he is talking about!'

Farmer Thoroughgood laughed. Then opened my mouth and gently examined me. He lifted my tail and carefully patted my legs. 'Please, will you buy him?' asked Willie.

