

her. 'The thing is that Ginger has a bad habit. She bites people,' he said. 'She bit James, the stable boy, on the arm and now the children are afraid to come to the stables. They used to bring me nice apples and carrots to eat. I miss them!'

'Why does she bite people?' I asked.

'Ginger's old master was unkind to her, and that's why she bites,' said Merrylegs. 'But everyone here is very kind. There is no reason to bite! Squire Gordon doesn't use whips; John Manly is an excellent groom and James the stable boy is very kind too! Ginger has no reason to bite.'

The next day I met the groom, John Manly, again. He brushed my coat and made me look very handsome. He put a saddle and bridle on my back and took me for a ride. He was a very good and careful rider, and I enjoyed galloping with him. As we were returning to the stables, we met the Squire and Mrs Gordon, who were walking together.

John pulled the reins and we stopped. 'Well, John, how is he?' asked the squire.

'He is a good horse, Squire! He is fast, obedient and gentle, too,' said John. 'He isn't scared of sudden noises and he is careful and quiet. From what it seems, they taught him well and treated him with kindness.'

'Very well,' said Squire Gordon. 'I'll ride him tomorrow.'

The next day Squire Gordon rode me just as he promised. I remembered my mother's important advice and tried hard to please my new master. He was a good rider and thoughtful about me, too.

When we got home, Mrs Gordon was waiting for us. 'What is he like, dear? Did you enjoy your ride?' she asked.

'He's exactly as John says,' said Squire Gordon. 'I couldn't hope for a better horse.'

'What shall we call him?' he asked.

Mrs Gordon looked at me. 'Well, he is really very handsome,' she said. 'Let's call him Beauty. And look at his shiny black colour. Why don't we call him Black Beauty?'

'Yes, that's a very good name,' he said.

A few days later, I had to pull the large carriage with Ginger. I was worried about how we would work together, but I was surprised to

