

find that she was a hard worker. We both trotted well and it was easy for us to pull the carriage together. We soon became great friends. She told me all about her difficult past and the years she spent at the hands of cruel people. It was no wonder that she was angry all the time.

But with the passing of time Ginger stopped biting. She was becoming kinder. The master said that it was 'Birtwick kindness'. There was no reason for her to bite or show bad manners because she was treated with kindness. I guess old Merrylegs is right when he says, 'Good places make good horses'.



CHAPTER 3

ONE AUTUMN DAY, JOHN MANLY TIED ME TO THE SMALL carriage. Squire Gordon came out of the house and John helped him to his seat so that we could take him into town for business.

I usually enjoyed pulling the small carriage but on that day it wasn't much fun; the ground was muddy and the wind had blown leaves in front of us, making it even more difficult to walk.

It began to rain again as we came to a little wooden bridge. The river was almost at the height of the bridge. 'Be careful,' said a man at the bridge. 'The weather is getting worse and the water in the river is rising very quickly.'

'I'll try and finish my business quickly,' said Squire Gordon as we arrived in the town. He left us outside an office as he went inside to do his business. We waited in the rain and cold wind.

'I'm sorry my business took me so long, John,' he said when he finally came outside. 'Come on, Beauty; let's go home as fast as we can.'

The weather was worse now. In the woods it was scary because the wind blew around big tree branches. The sound was terrifying.

'We must get out of these woods fast,' said Squire Gordon.

'Yes, sir,' said John. 'These branches seem very dangerous!'

Just then, we heard a crack and a crashing sound as one of the trees fell right in front of us. I stood still, even though I was frightened because I knew that I should not run away.

'That was close!' said Squire Gordon. 'What should we do now?'

'Well, sir, we can't go over the tree and we can't go round it; we must go back and try crossing the bridge again,' said John. 'We will be late, but it is the only thing we can do.'

Once we got to the bridge we saw that the water had reached the height of the bridge. 'Come on Beauty,' said John. 'Let's cross over fast!'

As soon as my hoof touched the first part of the bridge, I knew that something was wrong. I stood still. John touched me with the whip but I still refused to move.



‘Go on, Beauty,’ said Squire Gordon.

John got off the cart and tried to pull me, but again I did not move. ‘Come on, Beauty. What’s the matter?’ he asked.

Just then, a man ran to us. ‘Stop! Stop!’ he called, jumping up and down. ‘That bridge is broken in the middle. If you cross it, you’ll fall in the river!’

Both Squire Gordon and John turned the cart around and we continued on our way back home along another road which meant the journey was much longer, but safer. For a while, nobody spoke as I trotted quietly in the dark. All we could hear were the wheels of the cart sliding on the soft road.

After a while, Squire Gordon spoke. ‘People are smart, John. They can learn how things work, and make things,’ he said. ‘But animals are more clever! They can feel things and understand them in ways that can save people’s lives.’

When we got home, Mrs Gordon ran to the gates of Birtwick Park immediately. ‘My dear, I was so worried,’ she said. ‘Why are you late? Did you have an accident?’



‘No, my dear,’ said Mr Gordon. ‘We are safe. Black Beauty saved our lives.’

John led me to the stables; he dried me, gave me a wonderful dinner and made my bed of straw thick and comfortable. I was so tired that I fell asleep instantly.

Another time, James Howard, Ginger and I took Squire Gordon and Mrs Gordon on a long journey to visit some friends. Squire Gordon wanted to test James so that he could become the new groom at Clifford Hall, so he didn’t ask John to drive him that day.

‘Sir Clifford is a good master, and it is a great opportunity for James to work as a groom,’ said Squire Gordon to John before we left.

‘I’m sure he can do the job,’ said John. ‘He is the best stable boy I know.’

Ginger and I found that James was a great carriage driver. He made sure that we kept our hooves on the smooth part of the road so that we would be comfortable. When we went uphill, he moved the carriage to the side so it was easier for us, and when we went

downhill, he never forgot to put on the brake. James knew that these little things helped us save our energy and we were very thankful to him.

On the first day of the journey we travelled a great distance but it was getting dark so we had to stay at a hotel. James took us to the stables and made sure we were comfortable for the night.

Later, another young stable boy brought in a horse. He had a pipe in his mouth and talked to the other stable boys for a while.

The next thing I can remember was a burning smell that woke me up. It was dark and the stable was full of thick smoke. I could hardly breathe. I heard Ginger coughing and the other horses stamping their hooves uneasily. As I looked up, I saw flames.

'Fire!' I heard a man shouting as he came into the stables. He ran around untying the horses and then he pulled one horse with a rope. The horse did not move. He tried to pull out another horse but it didn't move either. He came to me, but I was so frightened that I could not follow him.

An older man came in. He was calm and this made us feel more relaxed so he was able to pull three horses out of the stables. Then I heard a voice I knew. 'Come on, Beauty,' said James and covered my eyes with a scarf. This made me feel more comfortable because I couldn't see the flames. He patted me and talked quietly to me as we walked out of the burning stables.

James gave the rope to a man outside and ran back in to get Ginger.

Suddenly I heard Squire Gordon's voice. 'James Howard! James Howard! Are you there?' he called. A long time passed before James came out of the burning stables with Ginger.

'You brave boy! James, you saved my best horses! Are you OK?' said Squire Gordon.

James couldn't talk and he just nodded his head.

The next day everybody was talking about the fire.

'How did the fire start?' asked a man, and another answered. 'One of the stable boys went into the stables with a pipe in his mouth.'

'John Manly always says that pipes are not allowed in the stables,' said James. Everyone agreed that this was a wise rule.



CHAPTER 3

Comprehension

1 Correct the following statements.

1. It was a beautiful day when Black Beauty took Squire Gordon into town for business.

2. In town, John Manly went with Squire Gordon into an office.

3. As they went through the woods, a tree fell into the river.

4. Black Beauty crossed the bridge as fast as he could.

5. Squire Gordon told his wife that John Manly had saved Black Beauty's life.

6. Ginger was the first horse to leave the stables during the fire.

7. The fire started because an older man lit his pipe in the stables.

2 Put the following events in the order which they happened. Write 1-6 in the boxes.

- a. James took Black Beauty and Ginger out of the burning stables. ☐
- b. James Howard drove Mr and Mrs Gordon to some friends. ☐
- c. The smell of smoke woke Black Beauty up. ☐
- d. The squire and Mrs Gordon decided to visit some friends. ☐
- e. A fire started in the stables. ☐
- f. On their way to Clifford Hall, they stopped for the night at a hotel. ☐

Vocabulary

3 Complete the sentences with expressions in the box.

save energy get dark stand still be allowed to take long make sure

1. Will we _____ take photographs inside the museum?
2. Please turn the lights off when you leave the building. We must try

to _____.

3. Can you wait for me here? I won't _____.
4. My dad told me to _____ while he took the photograph.
5. It's raining again, so if you go out, _____ you have an umbrella with you.
6. It's beginning to _____; we should go home.

4 Choose the correct word.

1. It's not very **brave** / **wise** to use your phone when you are driving.
2. What's the **business** / **matter**? Why are you crying?
3. Take your shoes off. They're **muddy** / **scary** from the garden.
4. It's very hot in here. I can't **breathe** / **cough**.
5. Will we have the **accident** / **opportunity** to visit the zoo when we go to London?
6. Linda thinks that this hotel is very expensive and I **agree** / **nod**.

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

1. The fire in the stables was dangerous for both the horses and the people. Can you think of any other situations where people's lives can be in danger?
2. Bad weather caused a lot of problems for Black Beauty, Squire Gordon and John Manly. Has bad weather ever caused problems for you or someone you know?
3. Squire Gordon says that animals can be clever. Which animals do you think are clever and why?
4. James Howard was brave to go into the burning stables to save the horses. Have you, or anyone you know, done anything brave to help other people?
5. Everyone agreed that it was a wise rule that pipes are not allowed in the stables. What rules are there in your school, house or place of work? What are you allowed and not allowed to do?

6 Imagine that you are James Howard and that you have a diary. Write a page in your diary describing the fire. What happened and what did you do? (80-100 words)