

CHAPTER 5

MR YORK FOUND ME A NEW HOME FAR AWAY. 'GOODBYE,' said Ginger as Mr York led me away to my new life as a job horse at a livery stable.

My new stall was comfortable and clean, and I was happy because I had all I needed. The food was good and the people of the livery stables took good care of me.

A job horse is a horse that people can rent. Each rider treated me in a different way; some of them liked to hold my reins tight and pulled so hard at my mouth that it hurt. Other riders did the opposite and left the reins too loose. Other riders had never owned an animal of their own and treated the horse they rented like machines. They would whip me because they thought that I could go as fast as a train, even if the roads were muddy or we were going uphill.

My favourite riders were the experienced ones because they made sure that I was on the smooth parts of the road. They were careful and encouraged me to do my best.

At the livery stables there were many different horses and each had a story to tell. I was often put to work with a mare named Peggy. She wasn't from a good family as I was, but she was sweet and tried very hard to keep up with me when we pulled the carriage.

'I notice that you trot and then jump. Why do you do that?' I asked her one day.

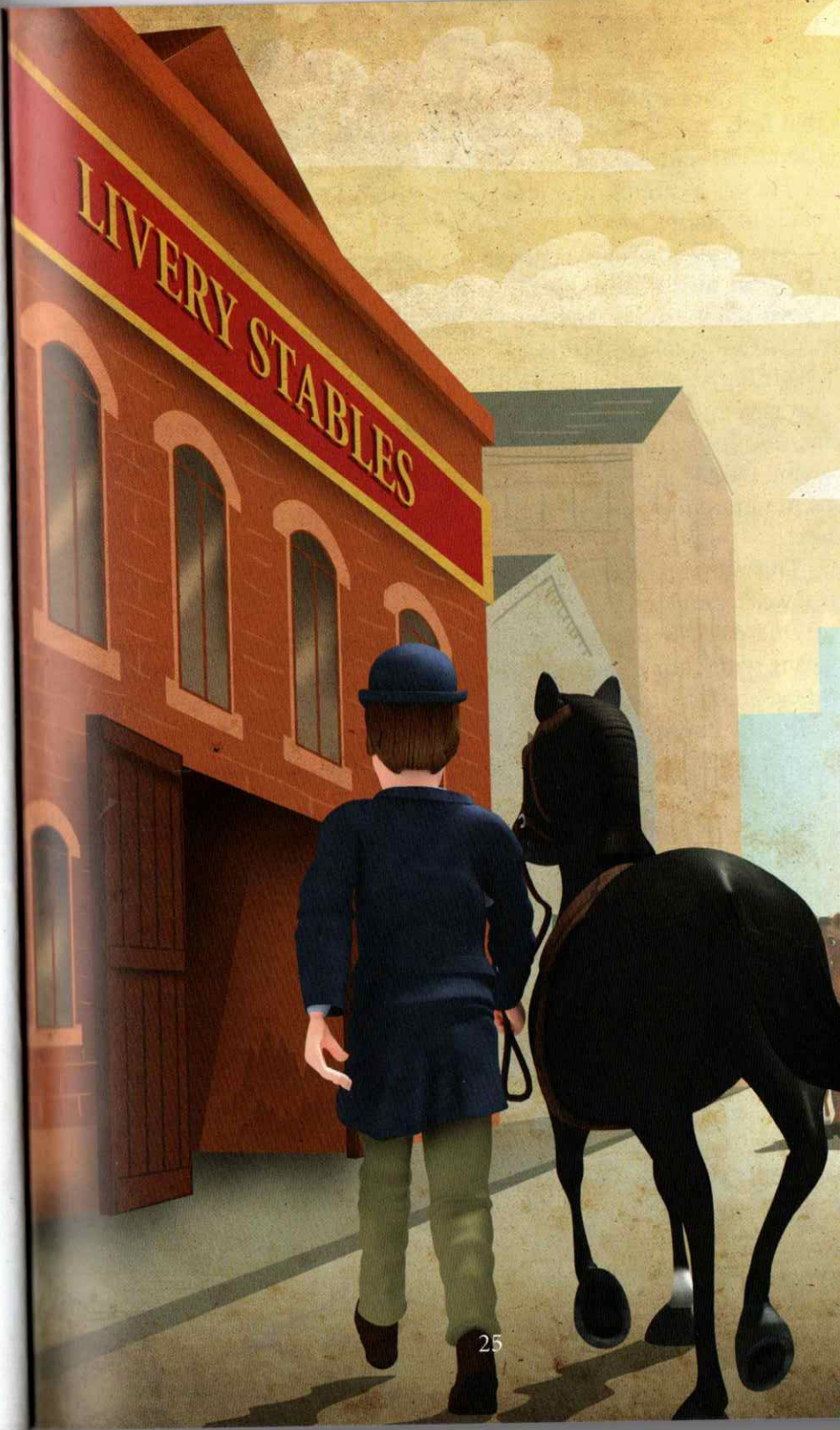
'Well, you see, my legs are short; not long like yours,' she said. 'Men want to go fast and when one horse can't keep up with the others the riders whip, whip, whip all the time... but I can't stand the whip so I try to do my best to keep up with you, even if it's difficult.'

The ladies liked Peggy because she was so gentle and kind. One day, two ladies bought her because they wanted a good, safe horse and I was very happy for her.

Not long after Peggy left, two gentlemen came to the stables. The taller of the two looked at me carefully. 'Why is he wearing a bearing rein?' he asked.

'We find that people like it,' said the stable boy.

'I don't like it,' said the gentleman. 'Please take it off; a horse



that feels comfortable is easier to ride on a long journey, isn't it, my friend?' he said and patted my back.

He was a careful rider and reminded me of John Manly and this made me happy.

The gentleman came back to the stables several times and always asked for me to be his horse. At the end of summer, the gentleman convinced the master of the livery stables to sell me to a friend of his. And so I was sold to Mr Barry.

Mr Barry didn't know much about horses but he was a kind man and gave me a good place to live. His groom, Filcher, looked after me well and at first I was comfortable. But one day, Filcher stopped giving me the good oats that Mr Barry was paying for and instead, he put bran in my food. He did the same thing the next day and the next.

This went on for about two months during which time I began to feel weaker and weaker.

One day, Mr Barry visited an old farmer friend of his. 'What's wrong with your horse?' asked the man when he saw me. 'His skin isn't as shiny as it was, and he looks skinny.'

'I don't know,' said Mr Barry. 'I give him the best oats!'

'Are you sure?' asked the farmer, and that made Mr Barry very suspicious.

He decided to hide and see what Mr Filcher was feeding me. When he realised that he had been tricked, he was very angry.

A few days later, a new groom came, Alfred Smirk. But he was not much better. Smirk was lazy and didn't do much work; he preferred to look in the mirror all day and comb his hair instead of cleaning the stables. My hooves began to hurt from all the dirt and I stumbled all the time.

'Alfred, these stables are smelly,' said Mr Barry one day. 'Do something about it, please.'

'Well, sir, I clean them all the time, but there may be something wrong with the drains,' said Mr Smirk.

Workers came to fix the drains, but of course they found nothing wrong.

Then one morning as we were going to the city, I almost fell twice. My master took me to the vet to have a look at me. When he



examined my legs and hooves, he found them in bad shape. He gave orders to keep the floor of the stables very clean, to give me special food and take me out for exercise every day. He also told Mr Barry that his groom was not doing a good job.

My hooves were soon well again and I felt strong, but my life was about to change once more; Mr Barry decided to sell me because he didn't want to be tricked by others anymore.



CHAPTER 6

MY NEW OWNER, JERRY BARKER, A CAB DRIVER, BOUGHT ME at a horse fair. Many buyers came to look at me but most of them turned away as soon as they saw my knees. Jerry was different. 'You're a gentle horse, aren't you?' he whispered to me. 'Well, I don't think that your injured knees were really your fault.'

He did not look like a rich man but I could tell that he knew about horses. I, in turn, especially liked him because he looked cheerful and kind, and he smelt nice and clean. However, when the salesman asked him for twenty-three pounds, Jerry said that it was very expensive. A while later, another man came and examined me. He looked hard and strict and I did not like him at all. He told the salesman that he would pay twenty-three pounds.

Jerry was passing by at that very moment. I turned my head to him, and he looked at me and smiled. 'OK, you,' he said. 'I'll give you twenty-four. Not a pound more.' And that's how I became his horse.

He took me home to meet his lovely wife, Polly. She was a very

CHAPTER 5

Comprehension

1 Answer the following questions.

1. How did Black Beauty feel in his new home, and why?

2. Which riders did Black Beauty like the best?

3. What happened to Peggy, and why?

4. Why did the gentleman tell the stable boy to take off the bearing rein?

5. What did Mr Barry's first groom do that was bad for Black Beauty?

6. What happened when Black Beauty went to the vet?

Vocabulary

2 Complete the sentences with the correct name.

Black Beauty Peggy Mr York John Manly Alfred Smirk Mr Filcher

1. _____ took _____ to his new home.
2. _____'s legs were longer than _____'s.
3. The gentleman was a good rider, and made _____ think of _____.
4. _____ worked as a groom for _____ at first.
5. Both _____ and _____ were not very good grooms and they tricked _____.

3 Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

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1. Last summer, my family _____ a house by the sea for a month.
2. At first, my brother did not want to run in the race, but

I _____ him to try.

3. I went to the bathroom, cleaned my teeth, _____ my hair and then left the house.
4. The little boy _____ his father's hand as we crossed the road.
5. The gentleman _____ me of my uncle; he had the same colour hair and eyes.
6. Andy and his friend didn't want to watch TV; they _____ to go for a ride on their bikes.

4 Complete the sentences with words from Chapter 5. The first letter has been given.

1. Robert felt very w_____ and tired after his long run.
2. Don't walk so fast! I can't k_____ up with you.
3. My dad is a very e_____ driver, and has never had an accident.
4. You need to eat more. You are so s_____!
5. I don't know if I can help you, but I will try my b_____.
6. Left is the o_____ of right.

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

1. How do you think Ginger felt when Black Beauty left for his new home? Why?
2. At first, Black Beauty found that the food in his new home was good. What food do you like and not like, and why?
3. Black Beauty lived in a time when there were no cars. What other things did people not have at that time? Would you like to have lived in that time?
4. Exercise is very important for both horses and people. What exercise do you get, and how often?
5. Mr Barry's two grooms tricked him and he felt very bad about it. Do you think he was right to feel this way?

6 Imagine you are Mr Barry and you are having a conversation with the vet you have taken Black Beauty to see. Write an imaginary dialogue between you and the vet, with Mr Barry explaining the problem and the vet giving advice. (80-100 words)