

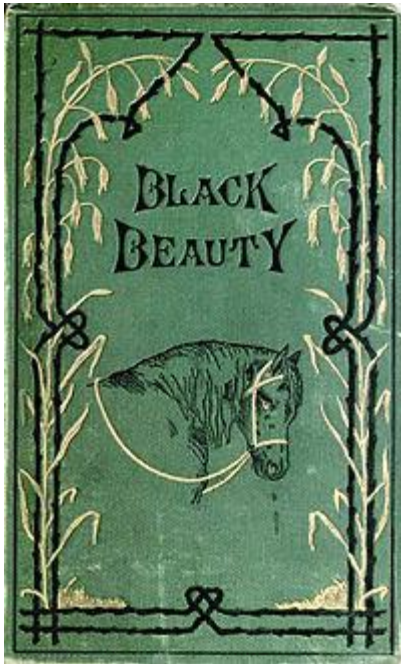
Black Beauty

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jump to: [navigation](#), [search](#)

For other uses, see [Black Beauty \(disambiguation\)](#).

Black Beauty



First Edition, F.M. Lupton Publishing Company, New York City, New York

Author(s)	Anna Sewell
Country	United Kingdom
Language	English
Genre(s)	Novel
Publisher	Jarrold & Sons
Publication date	24 November 1877

Black Beauty is an [1877](#) novel by English author [Anna Sewell](#). It was composed in the last years of her life, during which she remained in her house as an invalid.^[1] The novel became an immediate bestseller, with Sewell dying just five months after its publication, long enough to see her first and only novel become a success. With fifty million copies sold, *Black Beauty* is one of the [best-selling books](#) of all time.^[2] While forthrightly teaching animal welfare, it also teaches how to treat people with kindness, sympathy, and respect. *Black Beauty* became a forerunner to the [pony book](#) genre of [children's literature](#).^[3]

Contents

[\[hide\]](#)

- [1 History](#)
- [2 Plot introduction](#)
- [3 Characters](#)
 - [3.1 Horses](#)
 - [3.2 Beauty's owners](#)
 - [3.2.1 Part 1](#)
 - [3.2.2 Part 2](#)
 - [3.2.3 Part 3](#)
 - [3.2.4 Part 4](#)
- [4 Film adaptations](#)
- [5 Theatrical Adaptations](#)
- [6 Influence upon other works](#)
- [7 References](#)
- [8 External links](#)

[[edit](#)] History

".... there is no religion without love, and people may talk as much as they like about their religion, but if it does not teach them to be good and kind to man and beast, it is all a sham...."

—*Black Beauty*, Chapter 13, last paragraph.

Anna Sewell was born in Norfolk, England and had a brother named Philip, who was an engineer in Europe. At the age of 14, Anna fell while walking home from school in the rain and injured both ankles. Through mistreatment of the injury, she became unable to walk or stand for any length of time for the rest of her life. Disabled and unable to walk since she was a young child, Anna Sewell began learning about horses early in life, spending many hours driving her father to and from the station from which he commuted to work. Her dependence on horse-drawn transportation fostered her respect of horses.^[2] The local estate of [Tracy Park](#), now a golf club, was said to be the inspiration for *Black Beauty*'s "Birtwick Park." Sewell's introduction to writing began in her youth when she helped edit the works of her mother, [Mary Wright Sewell](#) (1797–1884), a deeply religious, popular author of juvenile best-sellers. By telling the story of a horse's life in the form of an [autobiography](#) and describing the world through the eyes of the horse, Anna Sewell broke new literary ground.^[4]

She never married or had children. In visits to European spas, she met many writers, artists, and philanthropists. Her only book was *Black Beauty*, written between 1871 and 1877 in their house at [Old Catton](#). During this time, her health was declining, and she could barely get out of bed. Her dearly-loved mother often had to help her in her illness. She sold it to the local publishers, [Jarrold & Sons](#). The book broke records for sales and is the "sixth best seller in the English language."^[5]

Sewell died of [hepatitis](#) or [tuberculosis](#) on 25 April 1878, only 5 months after the novel was published, but she lived long enough to see its initial success. She was buried on 30 April 1878 in the [Quaker](#) burial-ground at Lammas near [Buxton, Norfolk](#). In Norwich, England, not far from her resting place, is a wall plaque marking her resting place. Her birthplace in Church Plain, [Great Yarmouth](#) is now a museum.

Sewell did not write the novel for children. She said that her purpose in writing the novel was "to induce kindness, sympathy, and an understanding treatment of horses"^[1]—an influence she attributed to an essay on animals she read earlier by [Horace Bushnell](#) (1802–1876) entitled "Essay on Animals".^[6] Her sympathetic portrayal of the plight of [working animals](#) led to a vast outpouring of concern for animal welfare and is said to have been instrumental in abolishing the cruel practice of using the checkrein (or "[bearing rein](#)", a strap used to keep horses' heads high, fashionable in [Victorian England](#) but painful and damaging to a horse's neck).^[4] *Black Beauty* also contains two pages about the use of [blinkers](#) on horses, concluding that this use is likely to cause accidents at night due to interference with "the full use of" a horse's ability to "see much better in the dark than men can."

[\[edit\]](#) Plot introduction

The story is narrated in the [first person](#) as an autobiographical memoir told by a horse named Black Beauty—beginning with his carefree days as a colt on an English farm with his mother, to his difficult life pulling cabs in London, to his happy retirement in the country. Along the way, he meets with many hardships and recounts many tales of cruelty and kindness. Each short chapter recounts an incident in Black Beauty's life containing a lesson or moral typically related to the kindness, sympathy, and understanding treatment of horses, with Sewell's detailed observations and extensive descriptions of horse behaviour lending the novel a good deal of [verisimilitude](#).^[1]

The book describes conditions among London horse-drawn [taxicab](#) drivers, including the financial hardship caused to them by high licence fees and low, legally fixed [fares](#). A page footnote in some editions says that soon after the book was published, the difference between 6-day taxicab licences (not allowed to trade on Sundays) and 7-day taxicab licences (allowed to trade on Sundays) was abolished and the taxicab licence fee was much reduced.

[\[edit\]](#) Characters

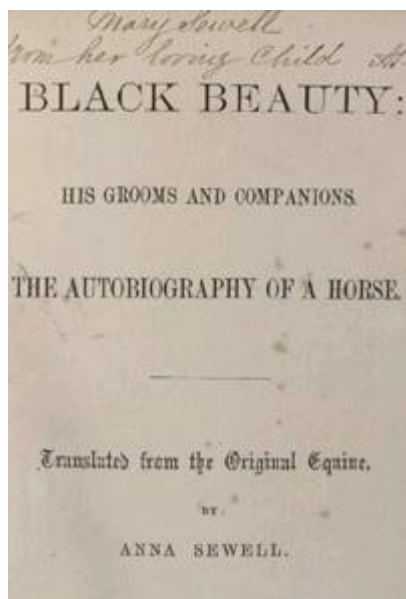
[\[edit\]](#) Horses

- Darkie/Black Beauty/Black Auster/Jack/Blackie/Old Crony—The narrator of the story, a handsome black horse. He begins his career as a carriage horse for wealthy people but when he "breaks his knees" (i.e. develops scars on his knees after a bad fall) he is no longer considered presentable enough and is put to much harder work. He passes through the hands of a series of owners, some cruel, some kind. He always tries his best to serve humans despite the circumstance.
- Duchess (nicknamed "Pet")—Beauty's and Rob Roys mother, who encourages Beauty to be good from a young age.
- Rob Roy—A fellow black horse from Beauty's original farm, who is killed in a hunting incident (along with his rider, Squire Gordon's only son). It is later learned that he was Beauty's half-brother, an older son of Duchess.
- Lizzie—A high-strung, nervous mare who Lady Anne rides one day and is spooked until Black Beauty comes to her aid with his rider.
- Ginger—A companion of Beauty's at Birtwick Park, she is named for her chestnut colour and her habit of biting, which is often how the spice, [ginger](#), is described. Ginger is a more aggressive horse due to her traumatic upbringing. After being ridden by Lord George in a [steeplechase](#) her [back](#) is strained. Beauty meets Ginger for the

last time as broken-down cab horses in London, and later a cart with a dead horse (whom Beauty believes is Ginger), passes by Beauty.

- Merrylegs—A short, dappled grey, handsome pony who is polite to humans and horses alike. He is ridden by the young daughters at Birtwick Park, then sent to live with a vicar who promises never to sell him.
- Sir Oliver—An older horse who had his tail [docked](#), to his great annoyance and discomfort.
- Rory—A job horse usually paired with Black Beauty. Became a coal carting horse after getting hit in the chest by cart driven on the wrong side of the road.
- Peggy—A hired horse who cannot run very fast due to her short legs. When pulling a carriage she often gets whipped for not keeping up with a faster horses. Sold to two ladies who wanted a safe horse.
- Unnamed horse—paired with Beauty after Peggy leaves. Often frightened by things he cannot see as he doesn't know whether they are dangerous or not.
- Captain—A former army horse who witnessed horrific incidents in the [Crimean War](#), although he was well treated and received no serious wounds. He lost his beloved master in the [Charge of the Light Brigade](#). He became a cab horse for Jerry, where he works with Black Beauty. After he is injured due to a collision with a drunk driver Jerry has him shot rather than send him to work as a cart horse.
- Hotspur—A five year old horse bought to replace Captain. Jerry sells him to Grant when he leaves London.
- Justice—A calm, peaceful horse Beauty meets at Birtwick Park.

[\[edit\]](#) Beauty's owners



This copy of the first edition of the book was dedicated by the author to her mother. It was auctioned off at [Christie's](#) in London in June 2006 for £33,000.

[\[edit\]](#) Part 1

- Farmer Grey – Beauty's first owner, a good kind man who trains him well.

- Mr Douglas Gordon (Squire Gordon) – A very kind and loving master who was also the squire. Lives in Birtwick Park. Has to sell Beauty when he leaves the country because of his wife's illness.
- Mr John Manly – Black Beauty's groom at Squire Gordon's.
- Mr James Howard - John Manly's assistant at Squire Gordon's. He leaves to work as a coachman for Sir Clifford Williams.
- Mr Joseph Greene (Joe) – A kind boy who replaces James at Squire Gordon's hall. Beauty becomes seriously ill when he doesn't put a blanket on Beauty after Beauty was exhausted from a long gallop.

[\[edit\]](#) Part 2

- Earl of W - Purchases Beauty and Ginger from Squire Gordon. Lives in Earls Hall Park.
- Lord W - He is kind to the horses.
- Lady W - Wife of Lord W. Demands that Beauty and Ginger wear bearing reins to hold their heads up high. When York tries to comply with Lady W's order Ginger lashes out, kicking everything around her.
- Mr York - Earl of W's coachman. He treats the horses kindly.
- Reuben Smith - A first rate driver who can treat a horse as well as a [farrier](#), due to spending 2 years with a veterinary surgeon. Unfortunately he occasionally drinks heavily. Though York tries to hide this problem the Earl finds out and fires Reuben. York later convinces the Earl to rehire him. After taking Colonel Blantlyre to town Reuben gets drunk in the [White Lion](#), then rides Beauty back to Earls Hall Park. Due to a loose nail in Beauty's [shoe](#), which Reuben was too drunk to care about, Beauty's shoe comes off. Reuben then makes Beauty gallop over sharp stones injuring Beauty's hoof and causing him to stumble. Beauty falls and scrapes his knees, while Reuben is flung off Beauty and dies from the impact.
- Master of the livery stables - Buys Beauty and hires him out to people in [Bath](#) who wish to rent a horse. Some of the people who rent Beauty are good drivers, most are not.
- Mr Barry – Buys Beauty from the livery stables after renting him several times as his doctor advised him to get more horse exercise. He tries to treat horses well, but hires two bad grooms (a [thief](#) and a [humbug](#)) due to his lack of knowledge on horse care. Decides to sell Beauty at a horse fair and rent horses when he needs them.

[\[edit\]](#) Part 3

- Mr Jeremiah (Jerry) Barker – A kind owner and religious man who uses Beauty and Captain as cab horses. After Captain is injured he buys Hotspur to replace him. Refuses to work on Sunday or force his horses to go beyond a 'jog-trot' through London for customers with poor timekeeping. Though he will break these rules for a good cause. One New Year's Eve, Jerry is kept waiting in blizzard conditions by inconsiderate young men who stay too long playing cards, contracts [bronchitis](#), and nearly dies. Jerry's doctor tells him he must not return to cab work. Jerry takes a job with Mrs Fowler as her coachman.
- Mrs Polly Barker – Wife of Jerry. Always waits up for her husband.
- Mstr Harry Barker – Son of Jerry. Helps his father look after the horses.
- Ms Dorothy (Dolly) Barker – Daughter of Jerry. Often brings food to her father.

- Mr (Grey / Governor) Grant - a respected and long serving cab driver. When Jerry is ill he takes out Hotspur and gives Jerry half the money he makes.

[\[edit\]](#) Part 4

- Corn dealer / baker - Uses Beauty as a work horse. Works him fairly but due to the poor lighting in Beauty's stable Beauty nearly goes blind.
- Foreman - Has Beauty overloaded so that fewer journeys are required to deliver goods.
- Mr Jakes – A carter who works for the baker. Dislikes overloading Beauty but cannot go against the foreman. Made Beauty work with the bearing reign up until a lady showed him that Beauty would find it easier to pull the cart without the bearing reign.
- Mr Nicholas Skinner – A ruthless cab horse owner who charges a high fee for renting cab horses. As a result the only way the drivers who rent his horse can make money is by overworking the horse, usually by whipping the horse to make it move even when tired. When Beauty collapses from overwork Skinner plans to send Beauty to a [knacker](#) but a farrier convinces him to rest Beauty and sell him at a horse fair. Seedy Sam used to rent horses from him.
- Farmer Thoroughgood – A kind owner who cares for Black Beauty when he is at his weakest.
- The three ladies – Beauty's final home where he spends the rest of his days very well treated. The ladies are Miss Blomefield, Miss Ellen, and Miss Lavinia and are most likely sisters.
- Joseph (Joe) Greene - Coachman for the three ladies. Recognises Beauty as the horse that used to belong to Squire Gordon.

[\[edit\]](#) Film adaptations

The book has been adapted into film and television several times, including:

- [Black Beauty \(1921\)](#) at the [Internet Movie Database](#), directed by [Edward H. Griffith](#)
- [Black Beauty](#) (1946), directed by [Max Nosseck](#)
- [Black Beauty](#) (1971), directed by [James Hill](#)
- [The Adventures of Black Beauty](#) (TV series) (1972)
- [Black Beauty](#) (1978) by [Hanna-Barbera](#)
- [Black Beauty \(1994 film\)](#); see also [Docs Keepin Time](#), the horse that starred as Black Beauty.
- Additionally, in 1966 [Walt Disney Productions](#) produced an [LP](#) adaptation on its Disneyland Records label with music by Disney's musical director at the time, [Tutti Camarata](#), complete with narration similar to an [old-time radio](#) program; Disney has never made an animated or live-action version and it is not known whether one was ever planned by Disney.

[\[edit\]](#) Theatrical Adaptations

- *Black Beauty Live* (2011), adapted by James Stone and directed by Chris Ford

For the first time in the novel's history *Black Beauty* was adapted for the stage in 2011 by playwright James Stone. The play was performed at the Broughton Hall Estate, North Yorkshire and Epsom Racecourse, Surrey. The production was a critical success and will be performed around the UK in 2012. ^[7]

[edit] Influence upon other works

- *Beautiful Joe* was a best-selling 1893 novel about a dog that was directly influenced by *Black Beauty* and followed a similar path to fame through awareness of cruelty to animals.
- *The Strike at Shane's: A Prize Story of Indiana* is an anonymous American novel that won a monetary award and national publication in 1893 in a contest sponsored by the American [Humane Society](#), and was reprinted several times commercially thereafter. Described in the introduction as a "Sequel to "Black Beauty," it tells the story of good and bad treatment of farm animals and local wildlife, especially songbirds, in the America Midwest. The novel is generally attributed as the first published work of the novelist [Gene Stratton Porter](#), and bears a remarkable textual similarity to her other books.
- One of the most popular of the interwar pony stories for children, *Moorland Mousie* (1929), by '[Golden Gorse](#)' (Muriel Wace), is heavily influenced by *Black Beauty*.
- Phyllis Briggs wrote a sequel called *Son of Black Beauty*, published in 1950.
- The [Pullein-Thompson sisters](#) wrote several stories concerning relatives of Black Beauty. They are *Black Ebony* (1975; by Josephine), *Black Velvet* (1975; by Christine), *Black Princess* (1975; by Diana), *Black Nightshade* (1978; by Josephine), *Black Romany* (1978; by Diana), *Blossom* (1978; by Christine), *Black Piper* (1982; by Diana), *Black Raven* (1982; by Josephine) and *Black Pioneer* (1982; by Christine). The book *Black Swift* (1991) by Josephine is not about a Black Beauty relative. These were published in several compilations as well as some of them being available separately. Each compilation was subsequently republished, sometimes with a change of name.
- [Spike Milligan](#) wrote a parody of the novel called *Black Beauty According to Spike Milligan* (1996).

[edit] References

1. [^] ^{[a](#)} ^{[b](#)} ^{[c](#)} Merriam-Webster (1995). "Black Beauty". *Merriam Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature*.
2. [^] ^{[a](#)} ^{[b](#)} [The Times](#) on *Black Beauty*: "Fifty million copies of Black Beauty have been sold in the years since Anna Sewell's publisher paid her £20 for the story." (29 February 2008)
3. [^] ['Pony Books: A Brief Introduction by Clarissa Cridland'](#) web page on collectingbooksandmagazines.com website, viewed 2011-12-11
4. [^] ^{[a](#)} ^{[b](#)} [Anna Sewell](#), by Prof. Waller Hastings, [Northern State University](#), 2004. [Archive.org copy](#).
5. [^] E.B. Wells and A. Grimshaw, *The annotated 'Black Beauty'*, 1989)
6. [^] [Gentle Heart: The Story of Anna Sewell](#), by Jen Longshaw.
7. [^] <http://www.peelheritage.com/case-studies/black-beauty-at-broughton-hal/>

[edit] External links



Wikisource has original text related to this article:
[Black Beauty](#)



Wikimedia Commons has media related to: ***[Black Beauty \(scan of the first edition\)](#)***

- *[Black Beauty](#)* at [Internet Archive](#) (scanned books original editions color illustrated).
- *[Black Beauty](#)* at [Project Gutenberg](#) (plain text and HTML)
- *[Black Beauty](#)*, Penguin Readers Fact Sheet.
- [Books on Black Beauty in English And Indian Languages](#)

[\[hide\]](#)

- [v](#)
- [t](#)
- [e](#)

Black Beauty by **[Anna Sewell](#)**

TV [The Adventures of Black Beauty](#) • [The New Adventures of Black Beauty \(1990\)](#)

Film [1946 film](#) • [1978 film](#) • [1994 film](#)

View page ratings

Rate this page