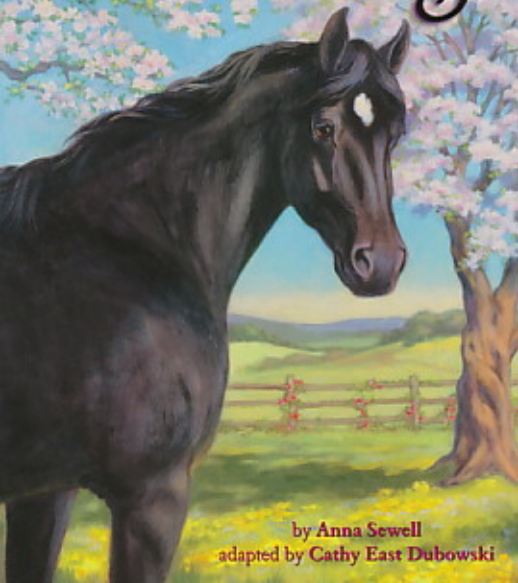


STEPPING STONES™

a chapter book

CLASSIC

# Black Beauty



by Anna Sewell  
adapted by Cathy East Dubowski

## Chapter One

# My First Home

The first place I can remember was a large pleasant meadow.

I lived on my mother's milk, as I could not yet eat grass. In the daytime I ran by her side. At night I lay close beside her. When it was hot, we stood in the shade of the trees. When it was cold, we slept in a warm shed near the master's house.

We were very fond of our master, Farmer Grey. He called my mother Duchess, and I think she was his

favorite. He was a good kind man, so we were well off.

When I was old enough to eat grass, my mother went to work in the daytime. But she always came home at night.

There were six other young colts in the meadow. They were all older than I. Oh, how I loved to run with them! But sometimes they would bite and kick.

One day my mother told me, "The colts who live here are good colts, but they have not learned good manners.

"You come from a fine family. Your father has a good name in these parts, and I think you have never seen me bite or kick. So I hope you will grow up gentle and well-

mannered. Do your work with a good will and never learn bad ways."

I never forgot my mother's words for I knew she had seen many things.

One day we heard the sharp cry of dogs.

"They have found a hare," said my mother. "Now we shall see the hunt."

A pack of howling dogs chased a frightened hare across the fields. Many men followed on horseback. The hare tried to get through our fence, but it was too late. The dogs were upon her.

One of the men rode up and whipped off the dogs. He held the hare up by the leg. She was torn and bleeding. All the gentlemen seemed pleased.

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**B**lack Beauty is a kind and gentle horse. His handsome coat and sweet nature have made him a favorite at Birtwick Park. Beauty thinks he will always be happy and safe. But an unexpected twist of fate suddenly places Black Beauty in the hands of cruel masters. They work him too hard and they feed him too little. Someone must rescue Black Beauty . . . before it's too late!