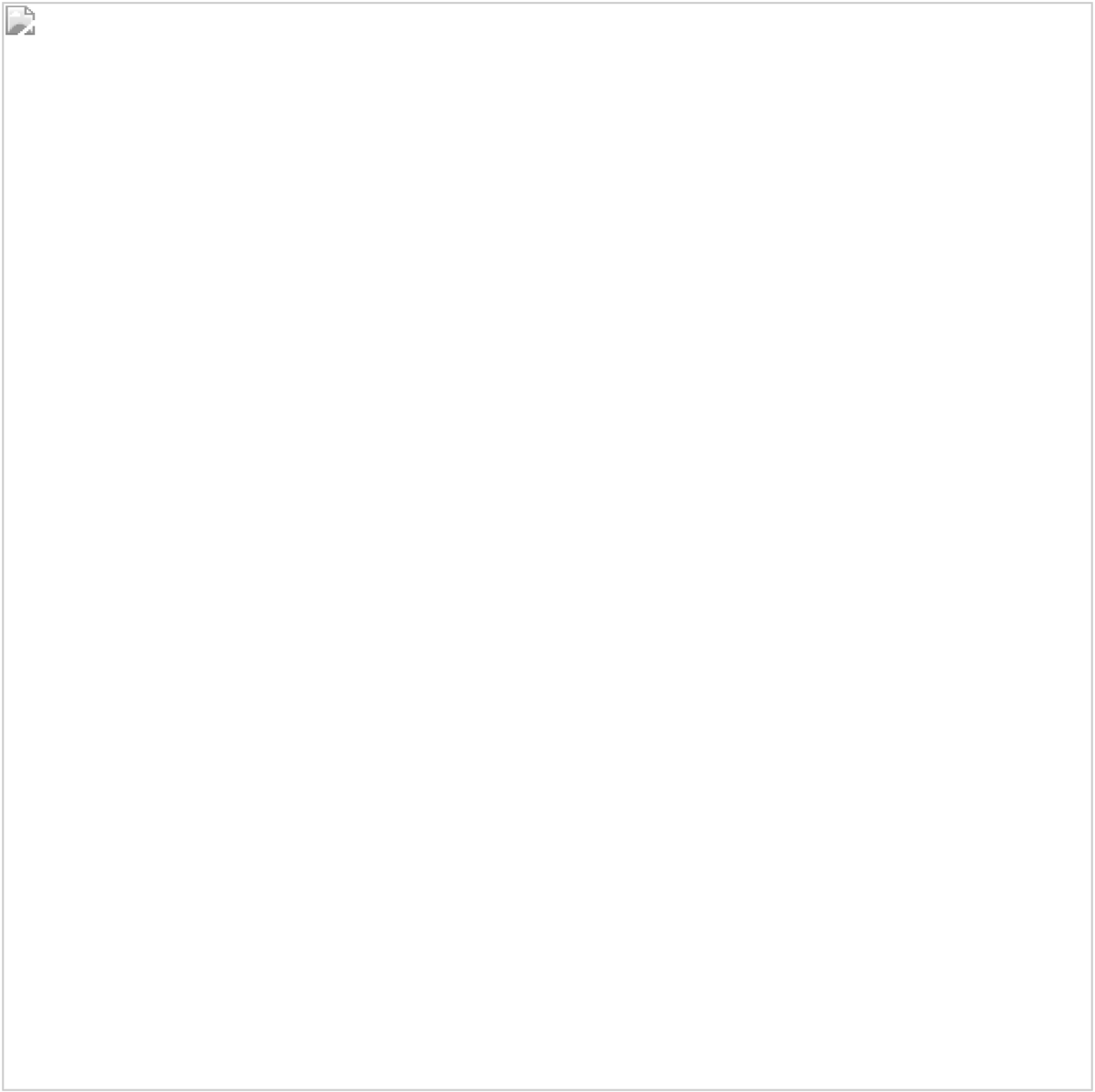
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Black Beauty

The Autobiography of a Horse



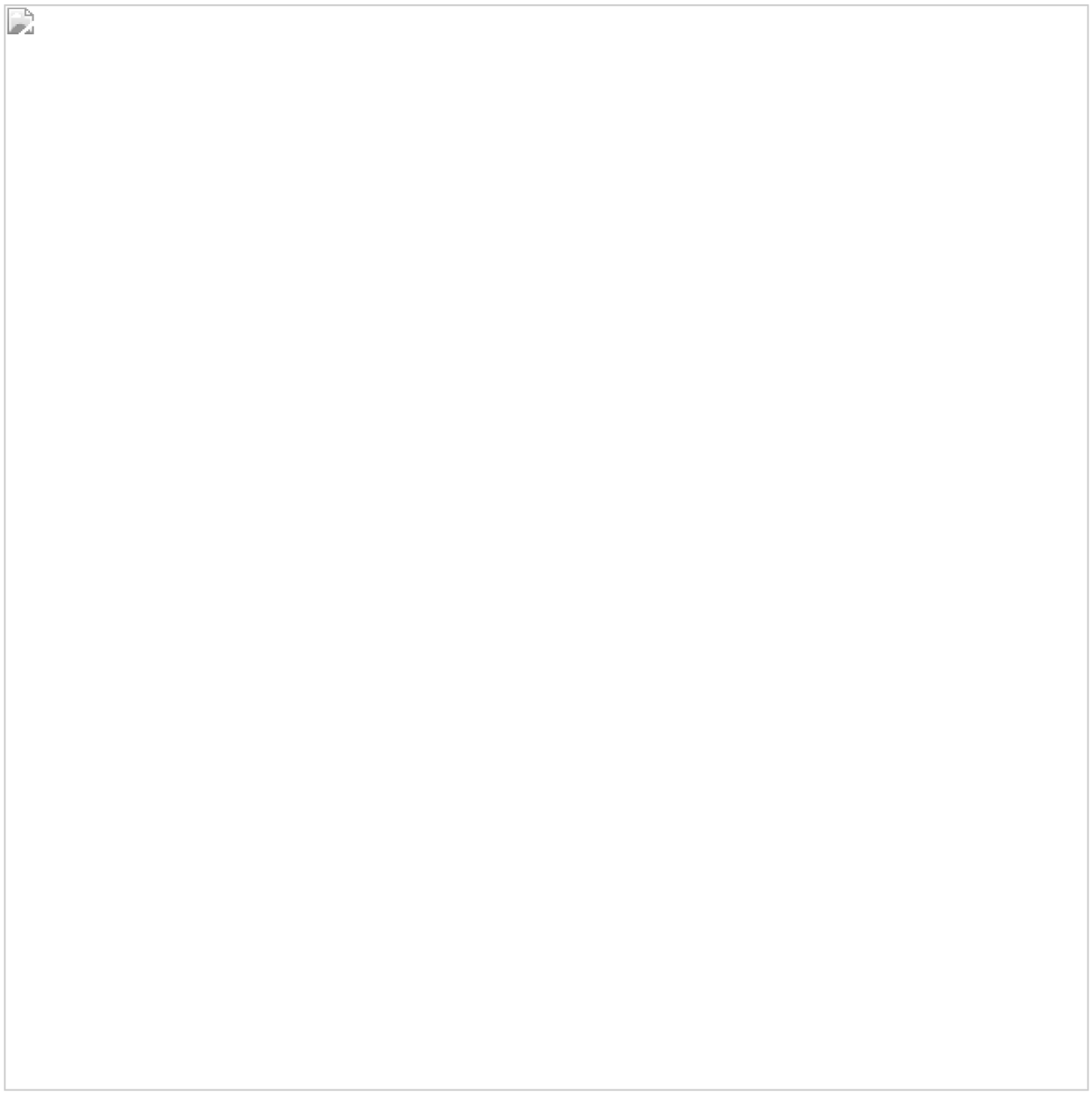
By Anna Sewell

TALK ABOUT IT

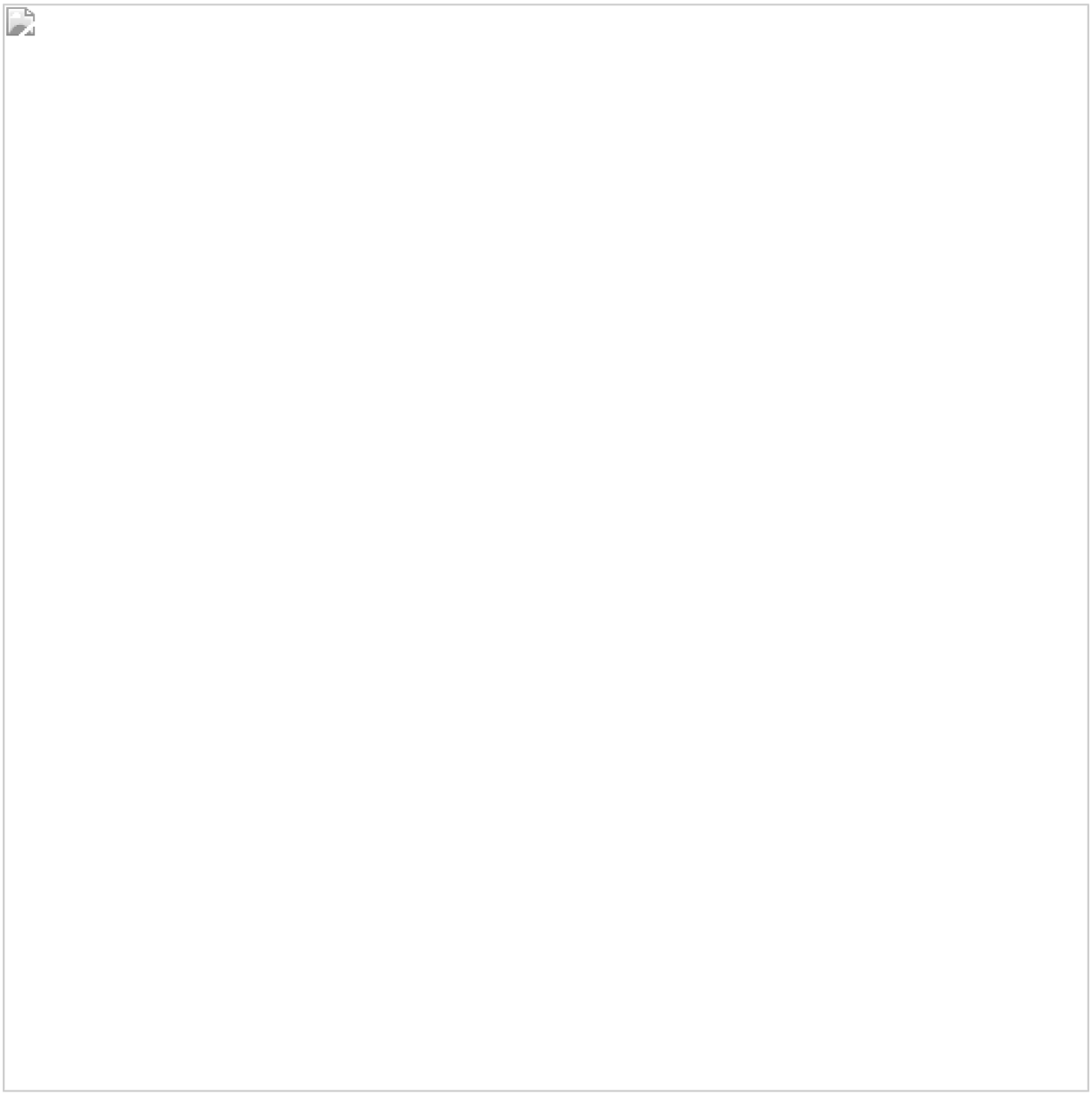
Do you know a horse, or another animal that is a friend to someone? What is that animal like?

This book belongs to _____

Black Beauty · another picture



The Meadow



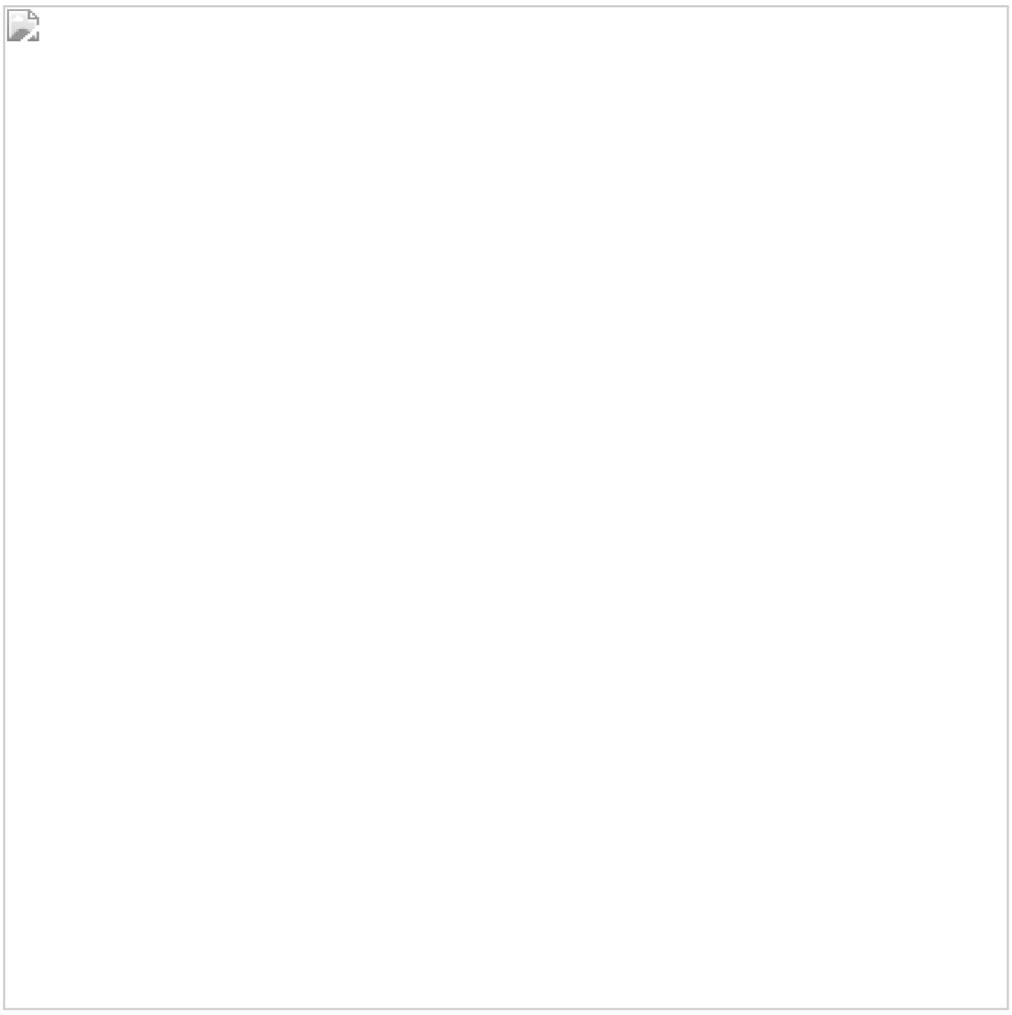
The first place I can well remember was a large, pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it. I lived there with my mother.

Our master was a good, kind man. I was a dull black, so he called me Darkie. “Well, old Pet, and how is your little Darkie?” he would say to my mother.

One day my mother called me to her. “I hope you will grow up gentle and good, and never learn bad ways; do your work with a good will, lift your feet up well when you trot, and never bite or kick even in play.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Is there someone whose advice you remember? What did they tell you?



Think about it

1. What did the master call the little black colt?

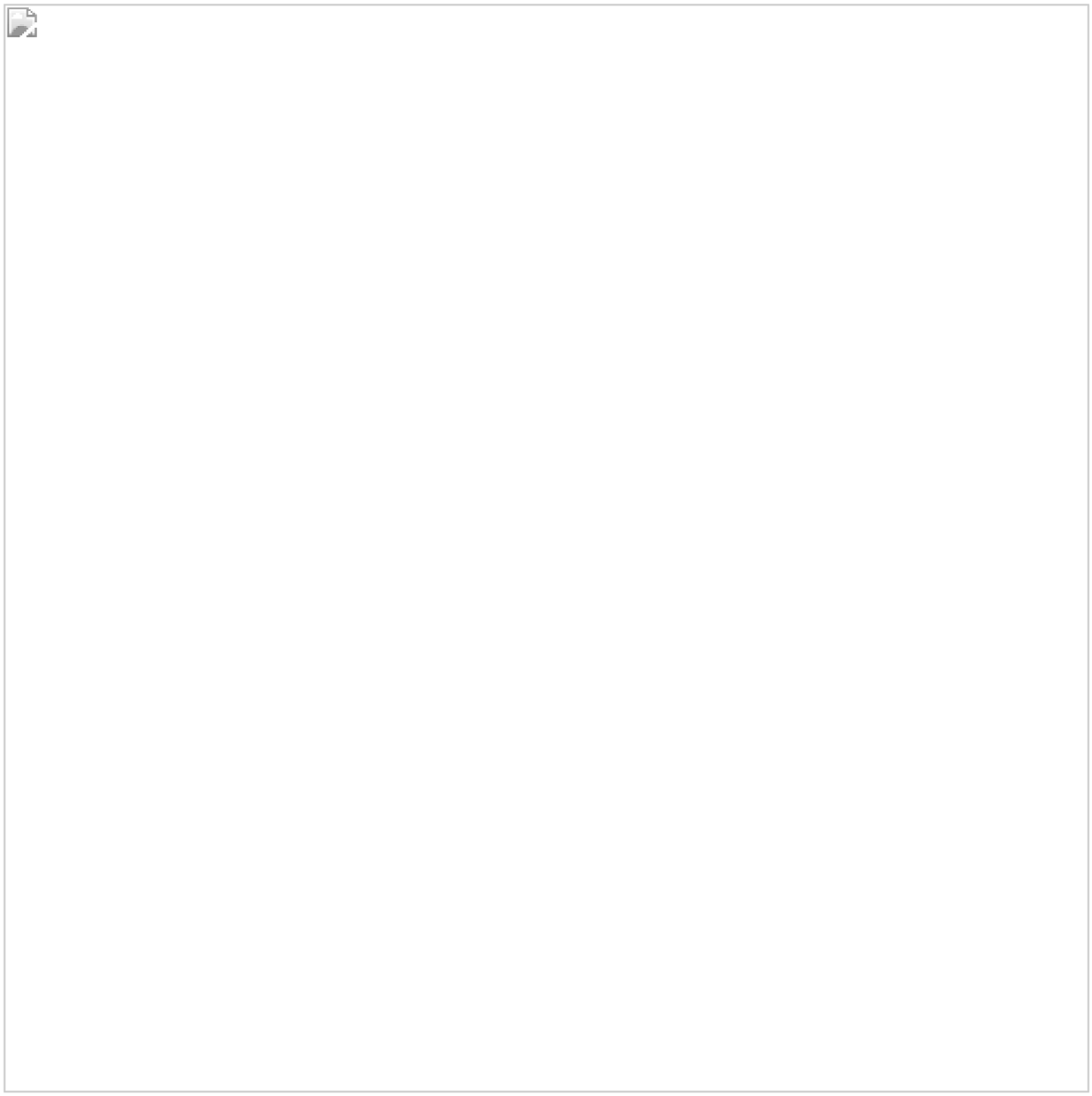
- ○ Darkie
- ○ Sunny
- ○ Chestnut

2. What did his mother tell him never to do, even in play?

- ○ Bite or kick
- ○ Eat grass
- ○ Run fast

3. What is one piece of advice you would give a young friend?

Learning to Work



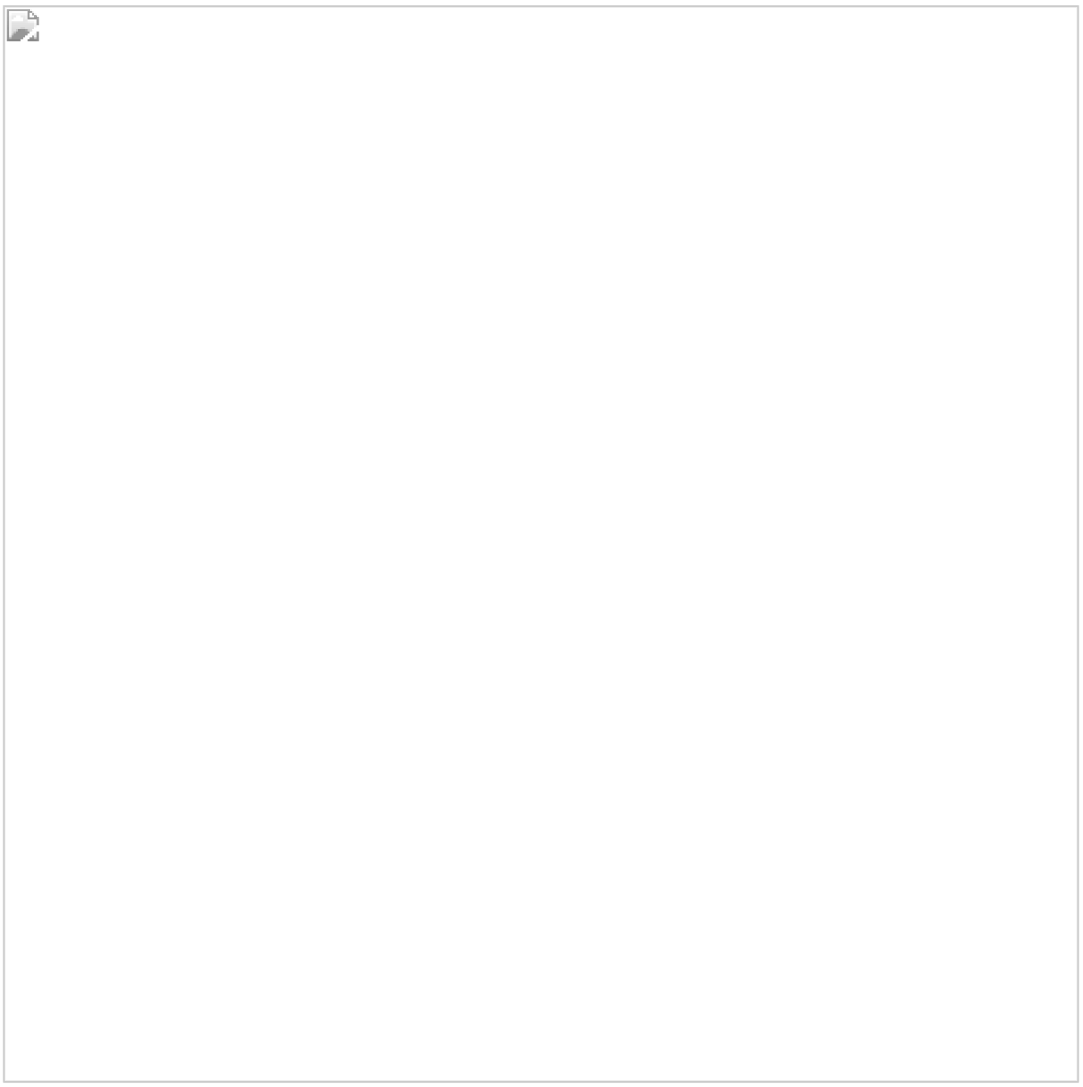
When I was four years old, my master taught me to wear a saddle and bridle himself, “as he should not like me to be frightened or hurt.” The bit was a cold, hard thing in my mouth. But with nice oats, pats and kind words, I got used to it, a little at a time.

Then came the saddle, iron shoes, a collar and a cart.

When the first train rushed by a meadow I was in, I galloped to the far side of the field, snorting. The cows just kept on eating, and soon I cared as little about trains as they did.

TALK ABOUT IT

What is something new you were scared of at first, and then got used to?



Think about it

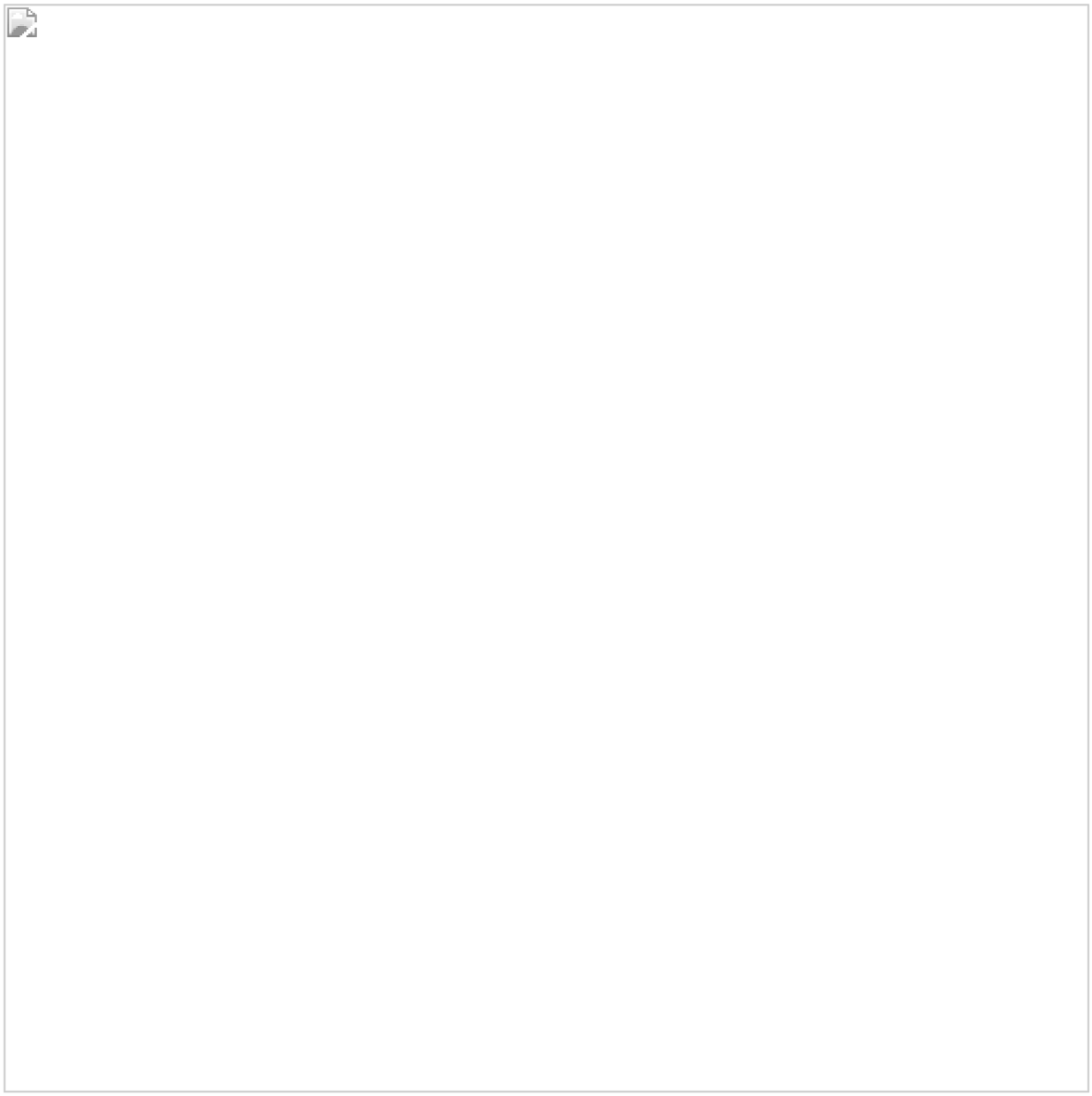
1. How did the master teach the young horse to wear a bit and saddle?

- ○ A little at a time, with oats and kind words
- ○ All in one day
- ○ By shouting

2. What did the horse do when the first train rushed by?

- ○ Galloped to the far side of the field
- ○ Ate his oats
- ○ Went to sleep

Birtwick Park



In May a man came from Squire Gordon's to take me to my new home. My master said, "Good-by, Darkie; be a good horse, and always do your best." I put my nose into his hand.

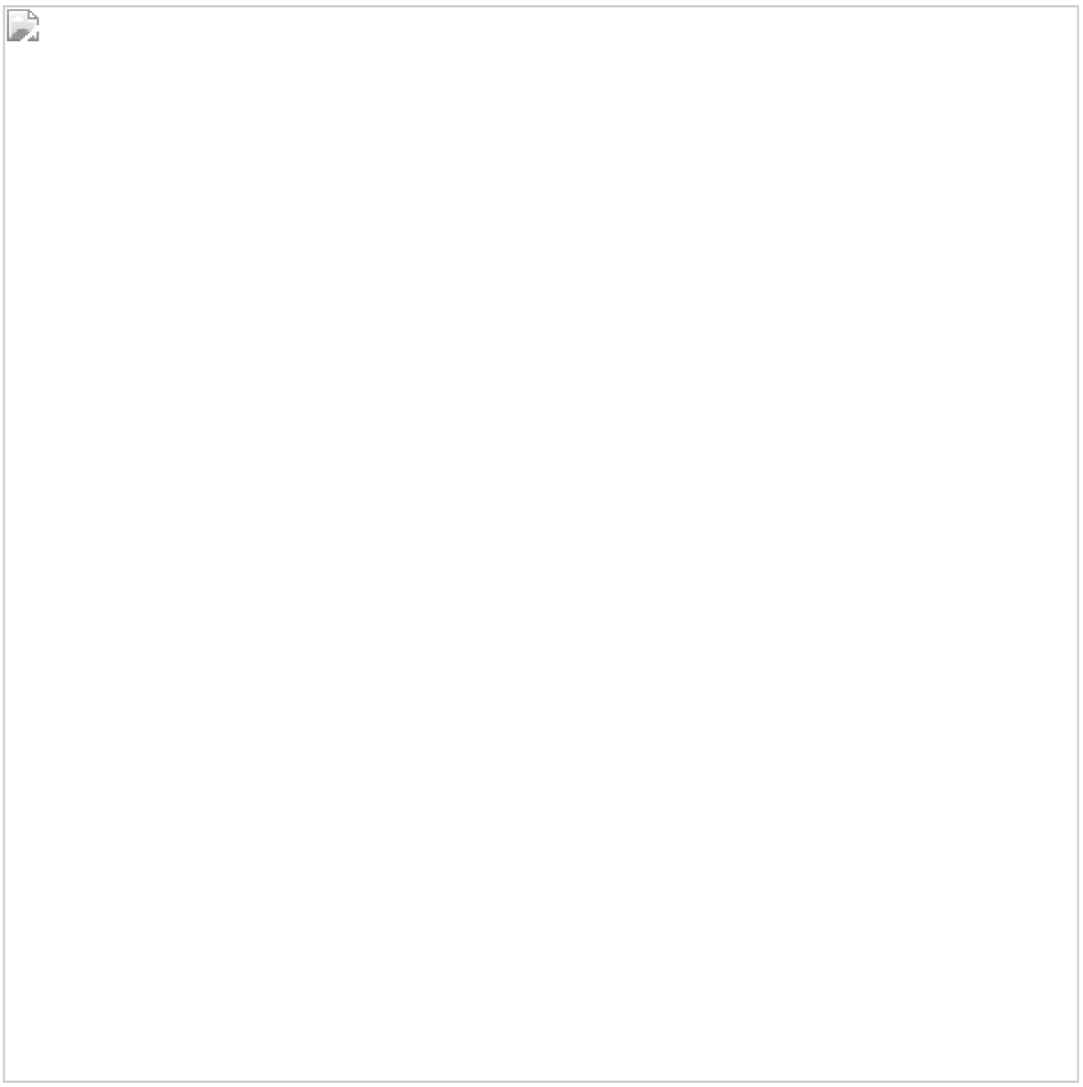
At Birtwick Park, in the next stall stood a little fat gray pony. "My name is Merrylegs. I am very handsome," he said.

Beyond him a tall chestnut mare looked over with her ears laid back. Her name was Ginger, and she did not like a new horse in her old box. Merrylegs told me she had a habit of snapping. "She says no one was ever kind to her," he said.

TALK ABOUT IT

Ginger snapped because no one had been kind to her. What do you think might help her?

Birtwick Park · another picture



Think about it

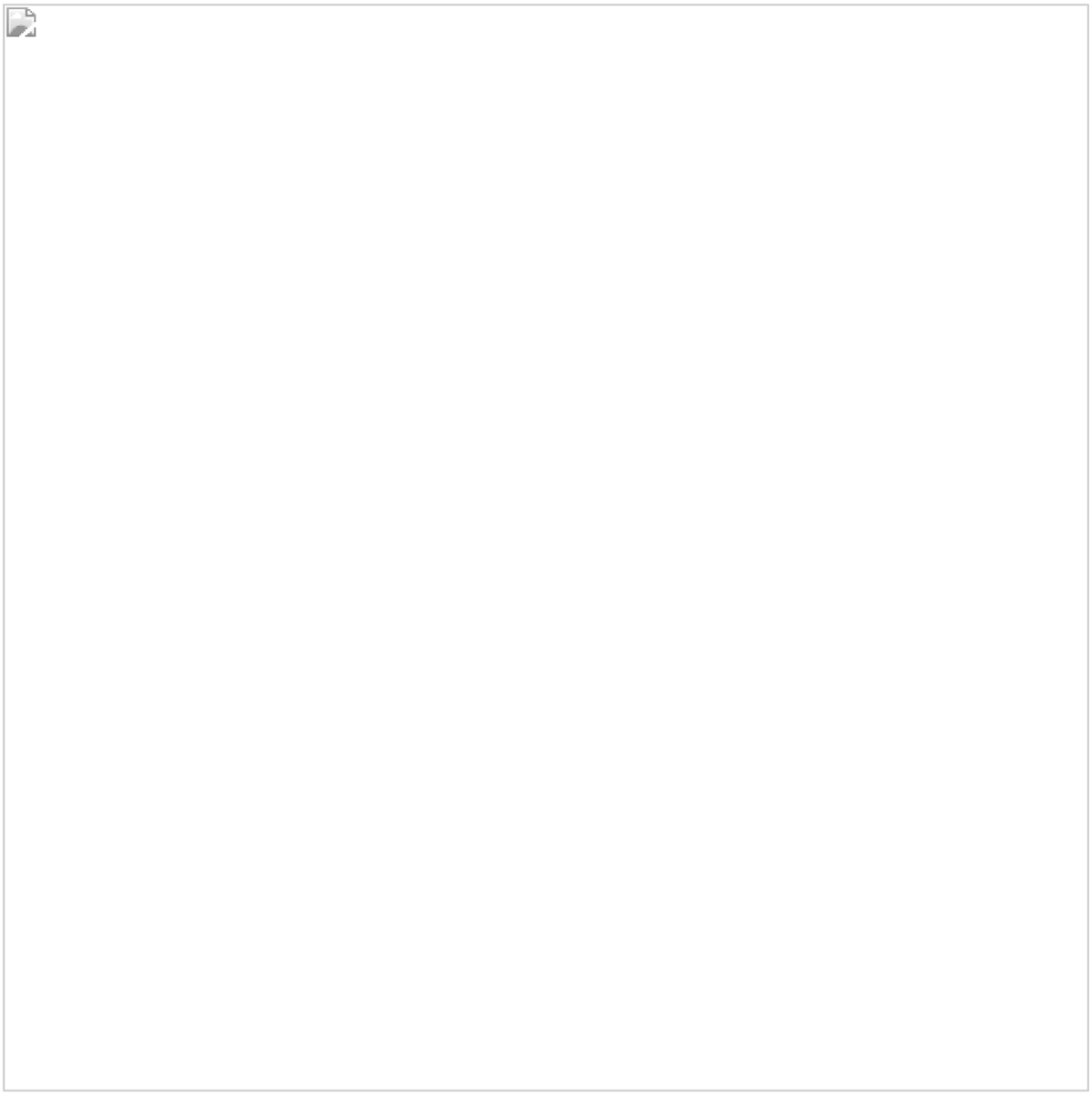
1. Who lived in the stall next to the black horse?

- ○ Merrylegs, a little gray pony
- ○ A cow
- ○ A big dog

2. What did Merrylegs say about Ginger?

- ○ That no one had ever been kind to her
- ○ That she was his sister
- ○ That she was a pony

A New Name



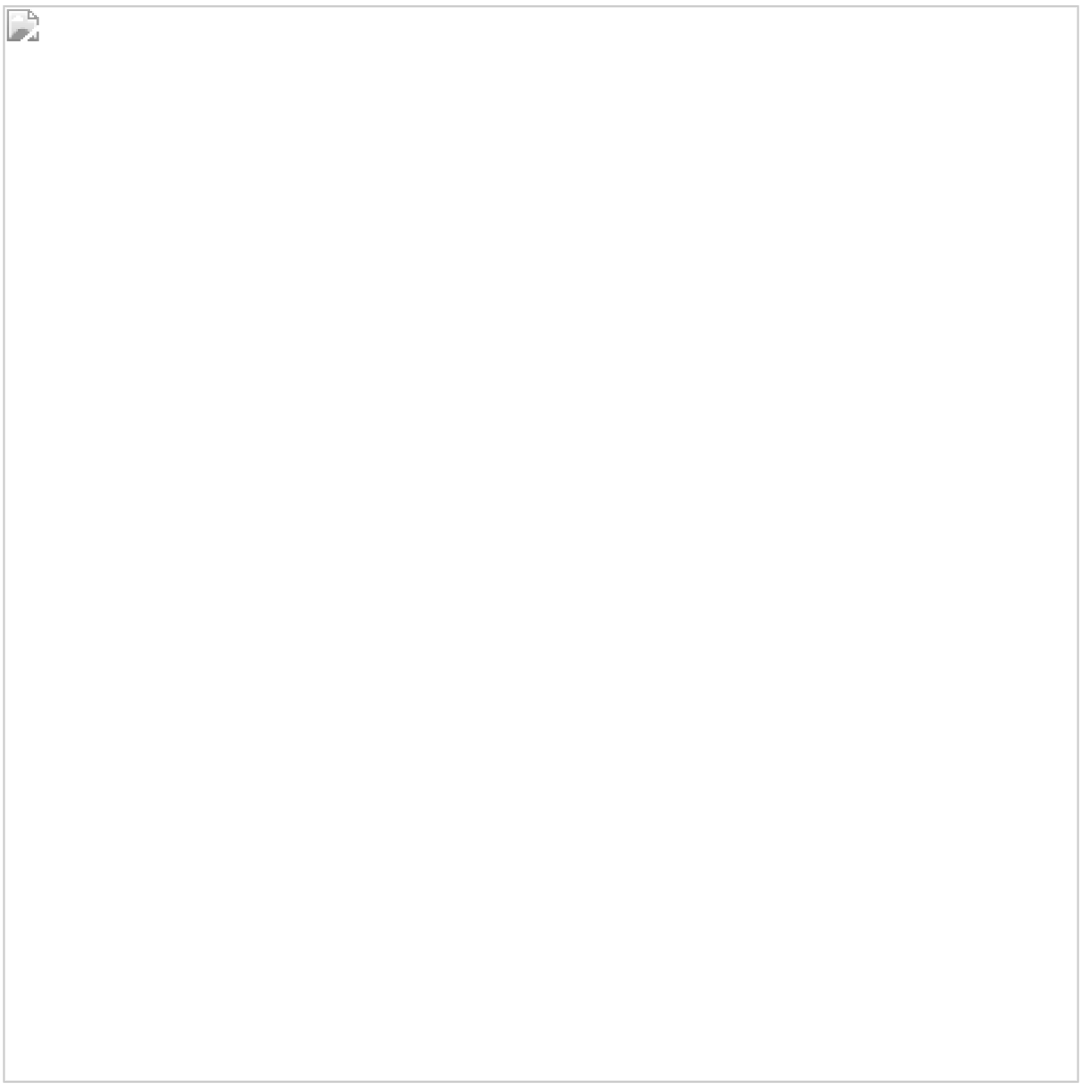
The coachman was John Manly. He took me for a trial ride, and he spoke so gently that I liked him at once. Even when a gun went off near us, I stayed quiet. “I just held the rein steady and did not hurry him,” John told the squire.

The mistress looked at me and said, “he has such a sweet, good-tempered face.” Then she asked, “what do you say to calling him Black Beauty?” And so I was.

John and the stable boy, James Howard, took good care of us. James was the kindest boy you ever saw.

TALK ABOUT IT

How did John show the horse he could be trusted? What do you do to show people you can be trusted?



Think about it

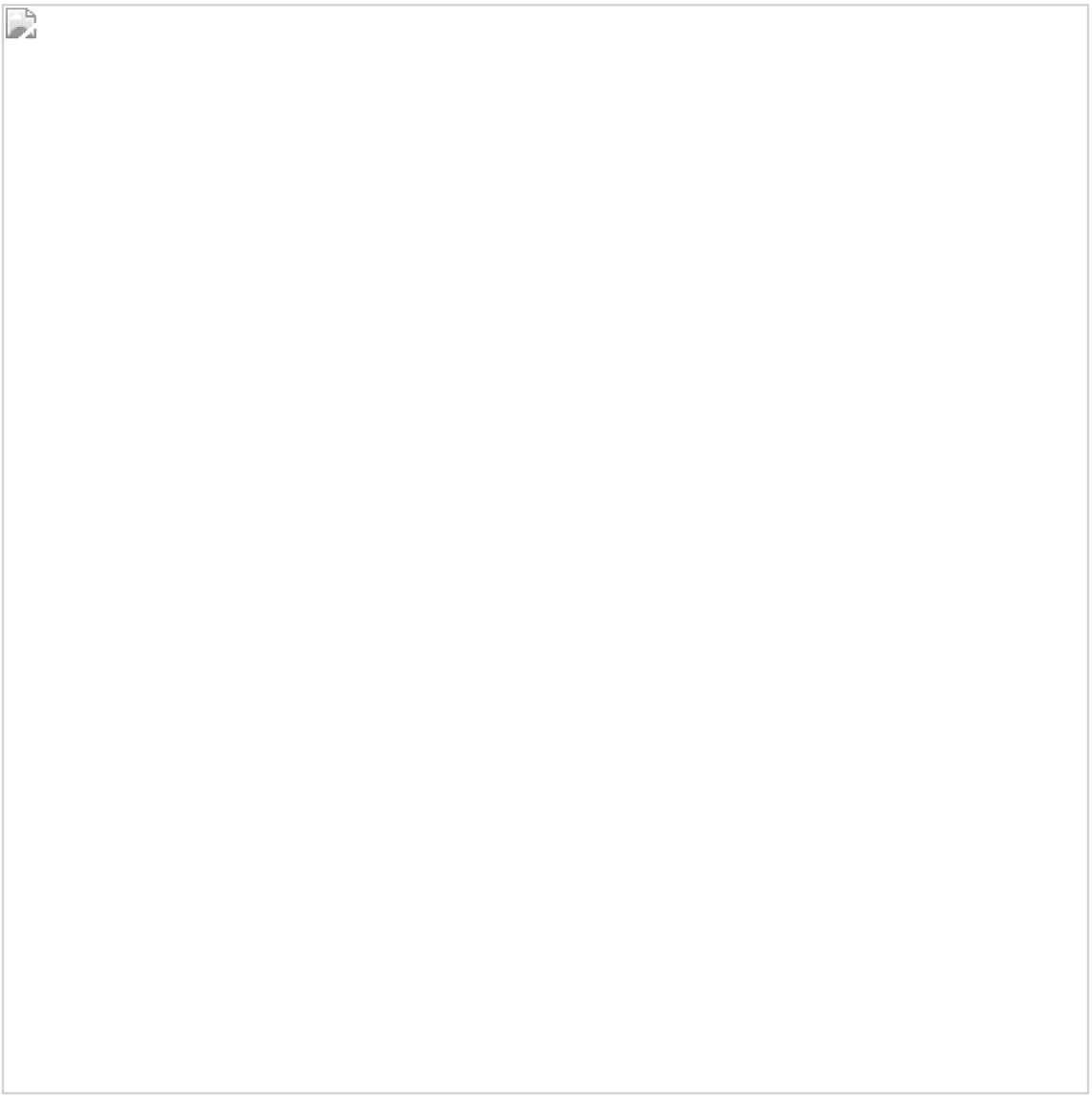
1. What new name did the horse get at Birtwick?

- ○ Black Beauty
- ○ Black Cloud
- ○ Midnight

2. Who looked after the horses in the stable?

- ○ John Manly and James Howard
- ○ Squire Gordon alone
- ○ Nobody

The Broken Bridge



One stormy autumn day I pulled the dog-cart to town with the master and John. On the way home a tree crashed down across the road, and we had to go round another way. It was nearly dark when we came to the wooden bridge.

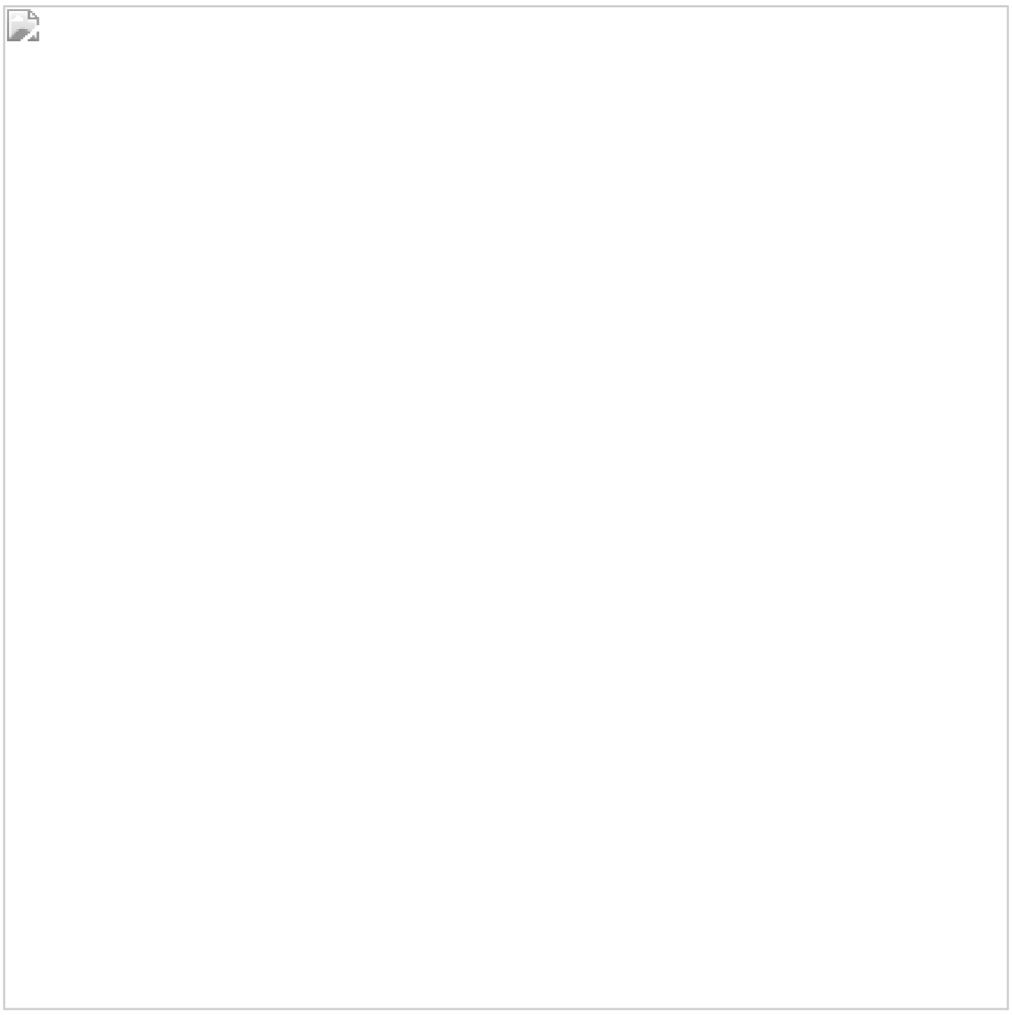
The moment my feet touched it, I felt that something was wrong, and I stopped. "Go on, Beauty," said my master, but I would not stir.

Then the man from the toll-gate ran out with a torch. "The bridge is broken in the middle," he cried, "and part of it is carried away." We would have fallen into the river.

TALK ABOUT IT

Beauty could not tell anyone what he knew. How else can someone show they know something is wrong?

The Broken Bridge · another picture



Think about it

1. Why did Beauty stop at the bridge?

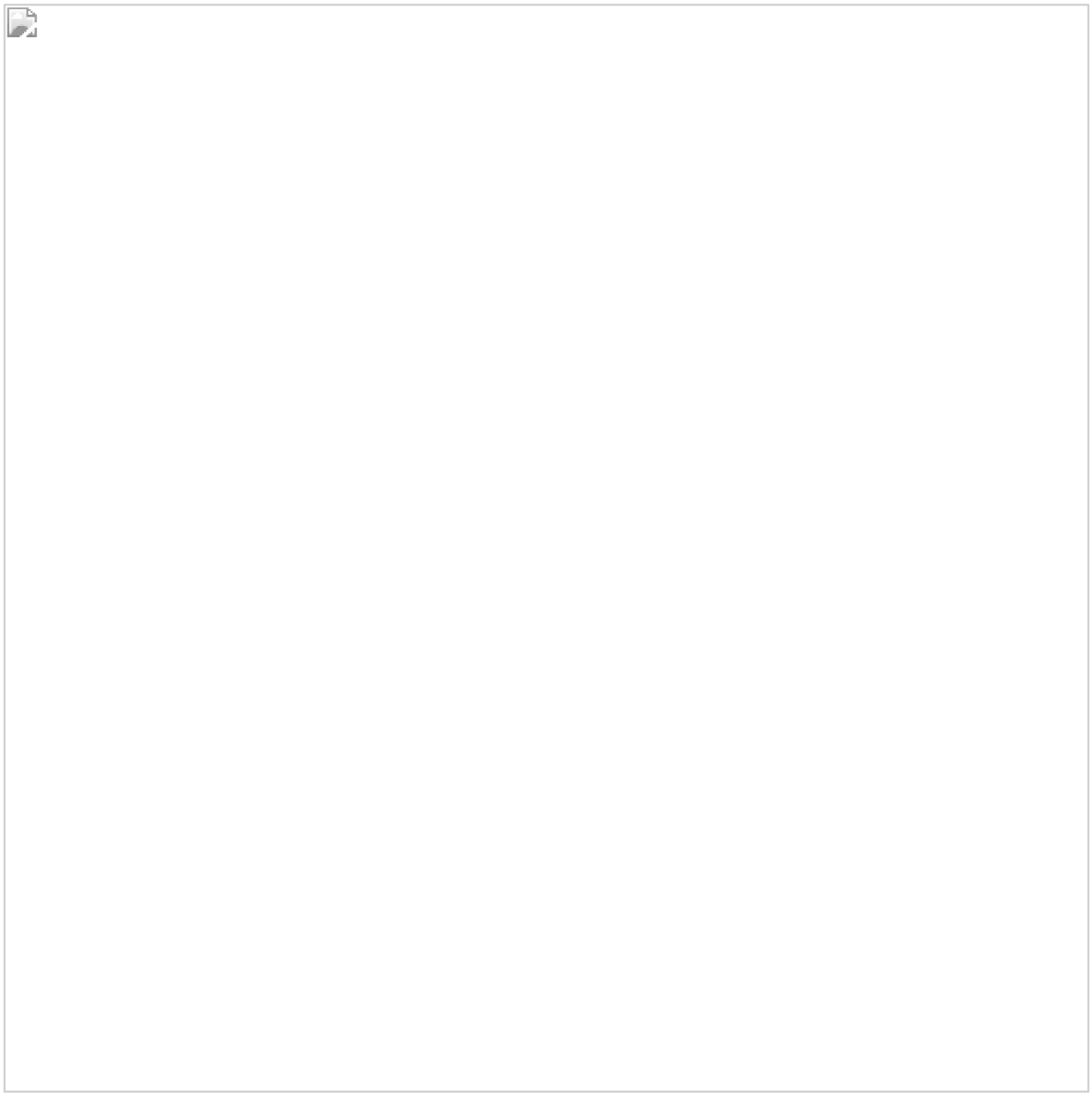
- ○ He knew it was not safe
- ○ He was tired
- ○ He saw a rabbit

2. Who ran out to warn them?

- ○ The man from the toll-gate
- ○ The doctor
- ○ James

3. Have you ever had a feeling that something was not right? What did you do?

The Fire



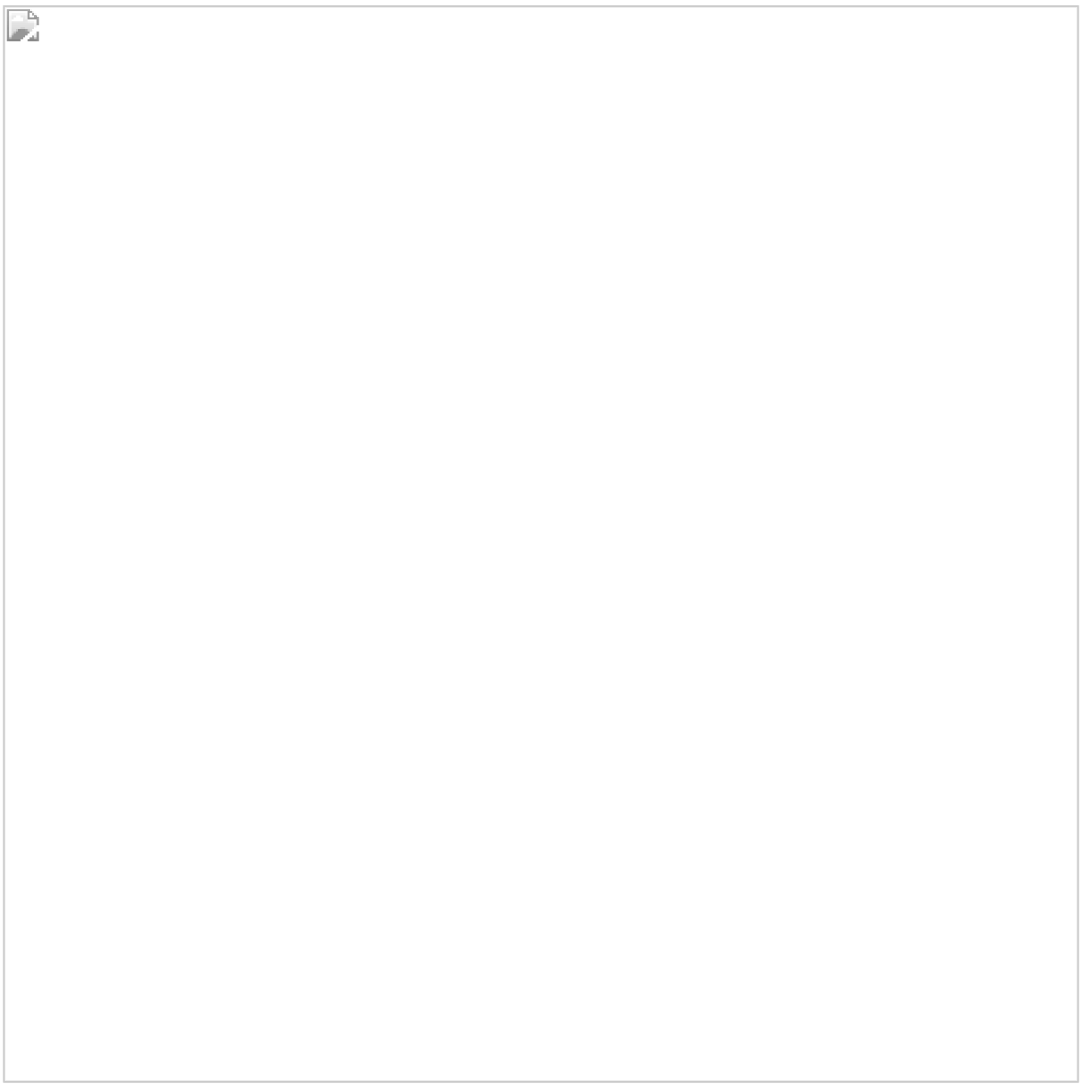
Some time later we stayed at an inn. In the night I woke, and the stable was full of smoke.

A man ran in to drag us out, but he was so frightened that none of us would go. Then I heard a quiet, cheerful voice. It was James. “Come, my beauties, it is time for us to be off, so wake up and come along.”

James tied his scarf lightly over my eyes and led me out. Then he went back in for Ginger. I whinnied until I saw him come out through the smoke with her. “My brave lad!” said the master.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the horses followed James, when they would not follow the other man?



Think about it

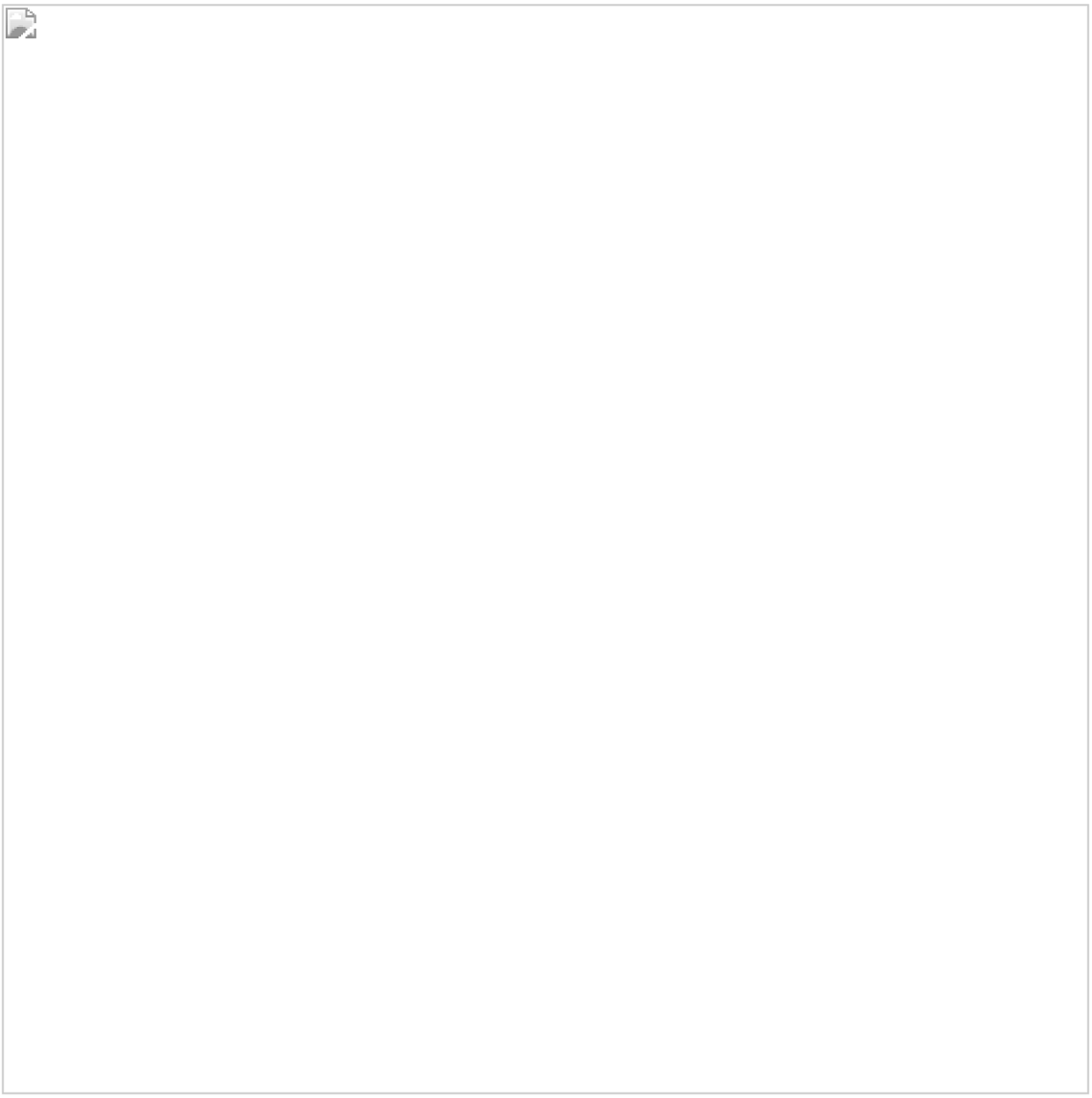
1. What did James tie over Beauty's eyes?

- ○ His scarf
- ○ A hat
- ○ A blanket

2. Who did James go back into the stable to get?

- ○ Ginger
- ○ Merrylegs
- ○ The master

The Night Ride



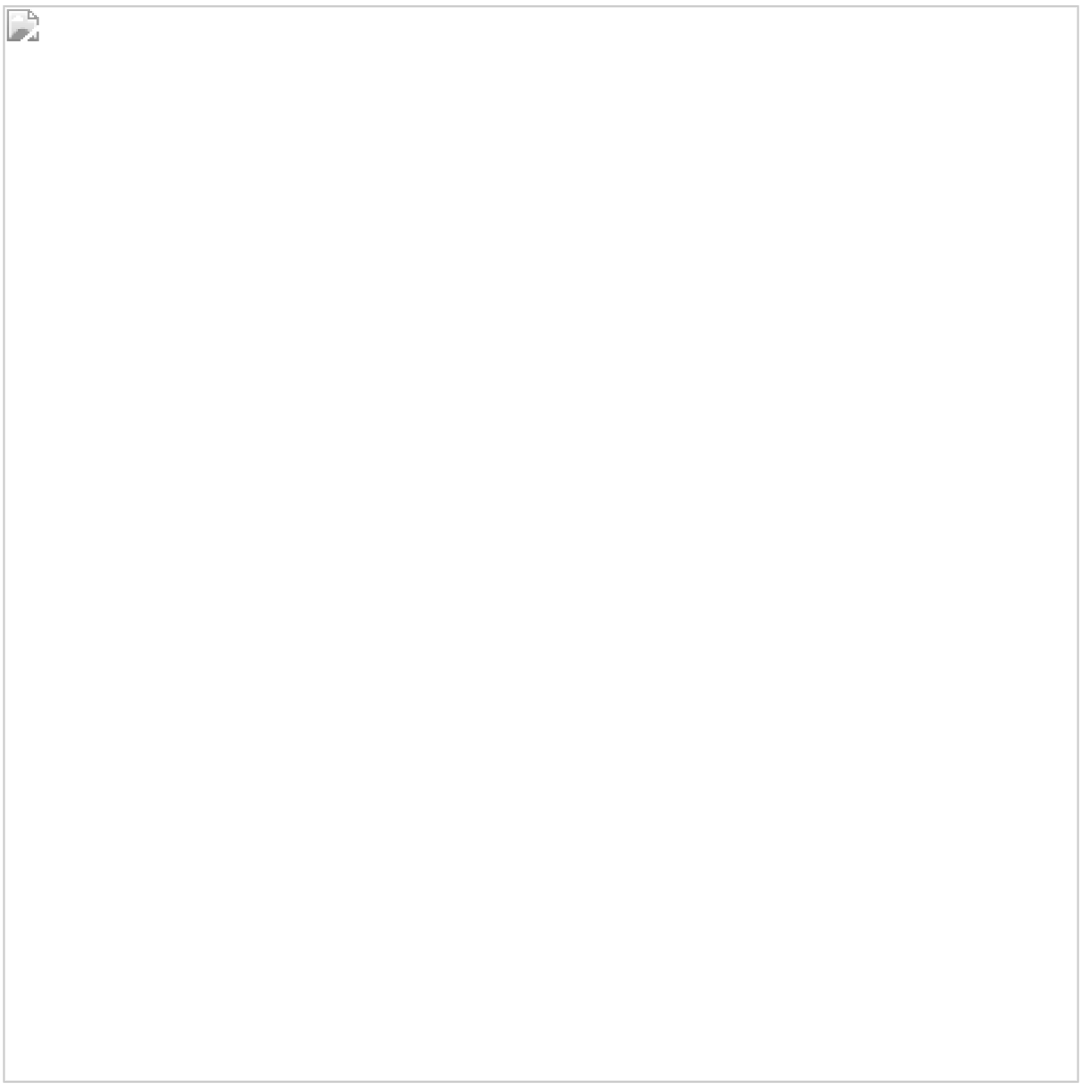
One night, after James had left, the stable bell rang very loud. My mistress was very ill. The squire said to John, “ride for your life.”

Away we went through the park, the village, and down the hill. John called, “Now, Beauty, do your best,” and I did. After eight miles, the church clock struck three as we stopped at Dr. White’s door.

The doctor rode me back. At home young Joe forgot to put my warm cloth on me, and I got very ill. John nursed me night and day, and the master said, “my good horse, you saved your mistress’ life, Beauty.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Beauty was tired and still did his best, for someone else. When have you done something hard to help someone?



Think about it

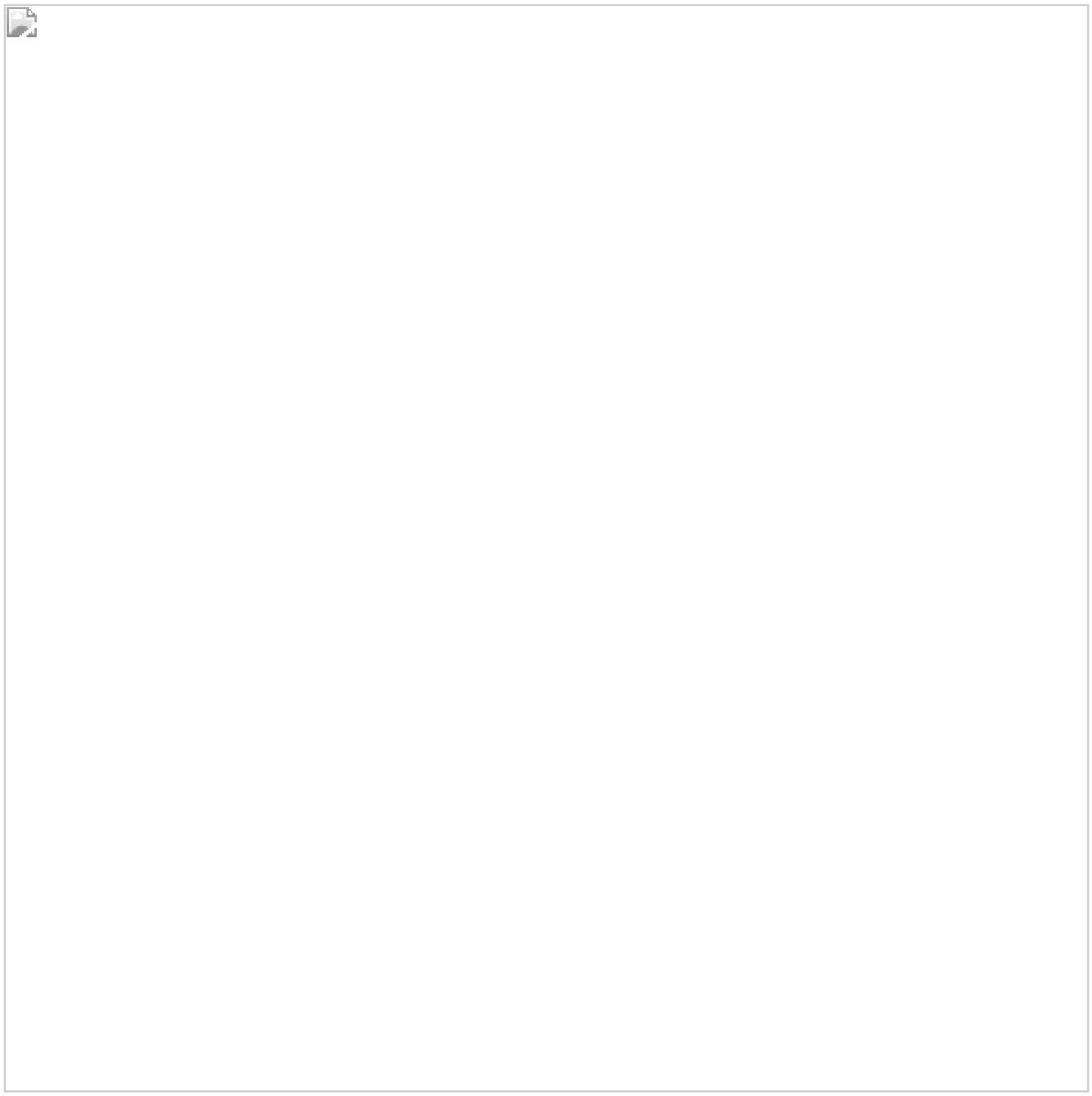
1. Who did John ride to fetch?

- ○ The doctor
- ○ The baker
- ○ The vicar

2. What did the master say Beauty had done?

- ○ Saved his mistress' life
- ○ Won a race
- ○ Found a lost dog

The Parting



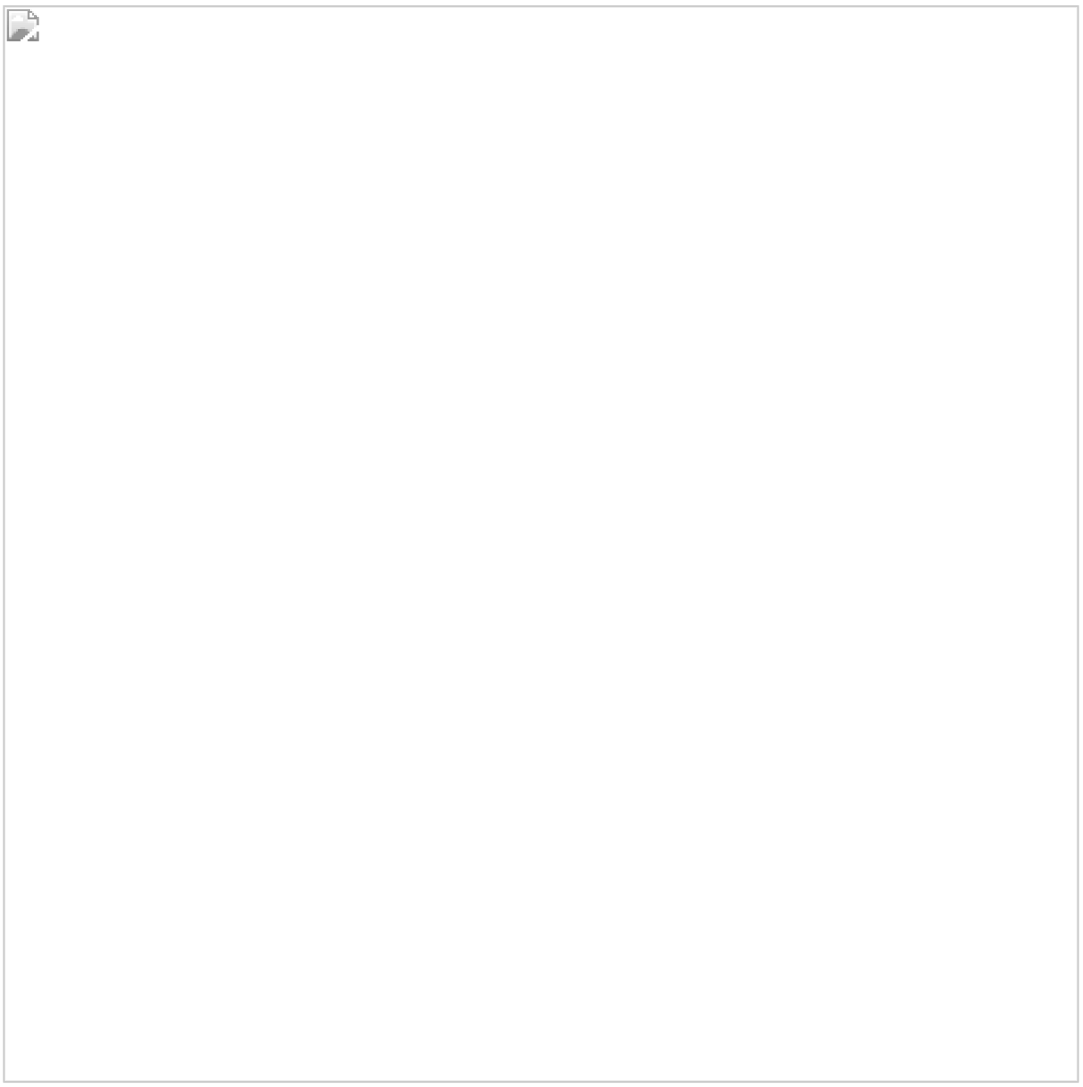
We lived three happy years at Birtwick. Then the mistress was ill and must go to a warm country for a long time. Everybody was sorry.

The master sold Ginger and me to his old friend, the Earl of W----. Merrylegs went to the vicar's, and Joe went with him. John said he wanted to be a trainer of young horses, to help them have a fair start.

On the last day the master said, "we shall not forget any of you." Then John rode us to Earlshall Park. I held my face close to him; that was all I could do to say good-by.

TALK ABOUT IT

Who is someone you have said good-bye to? What helped?



Think about it

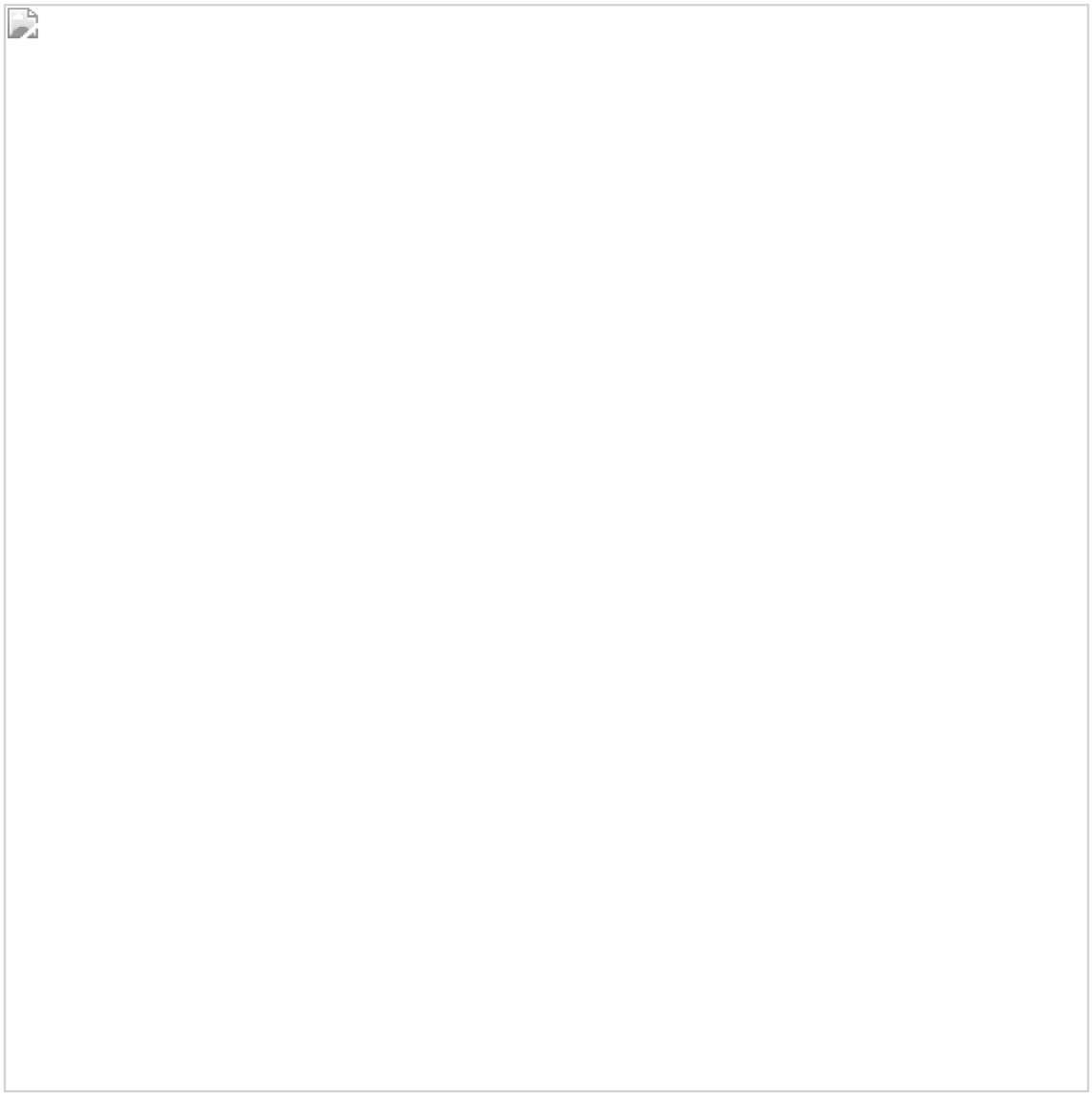
1. Where did Beauty and Ginger go from Birtwick?

- ○ To the Earl of W----
- ○ Back to the meadow
- ○ To the sea

2. What did John want to do next?

- ○ Train young horses kindly
- ○ Sail on a ship
- ○ Sell shoes

The Bearing Rein



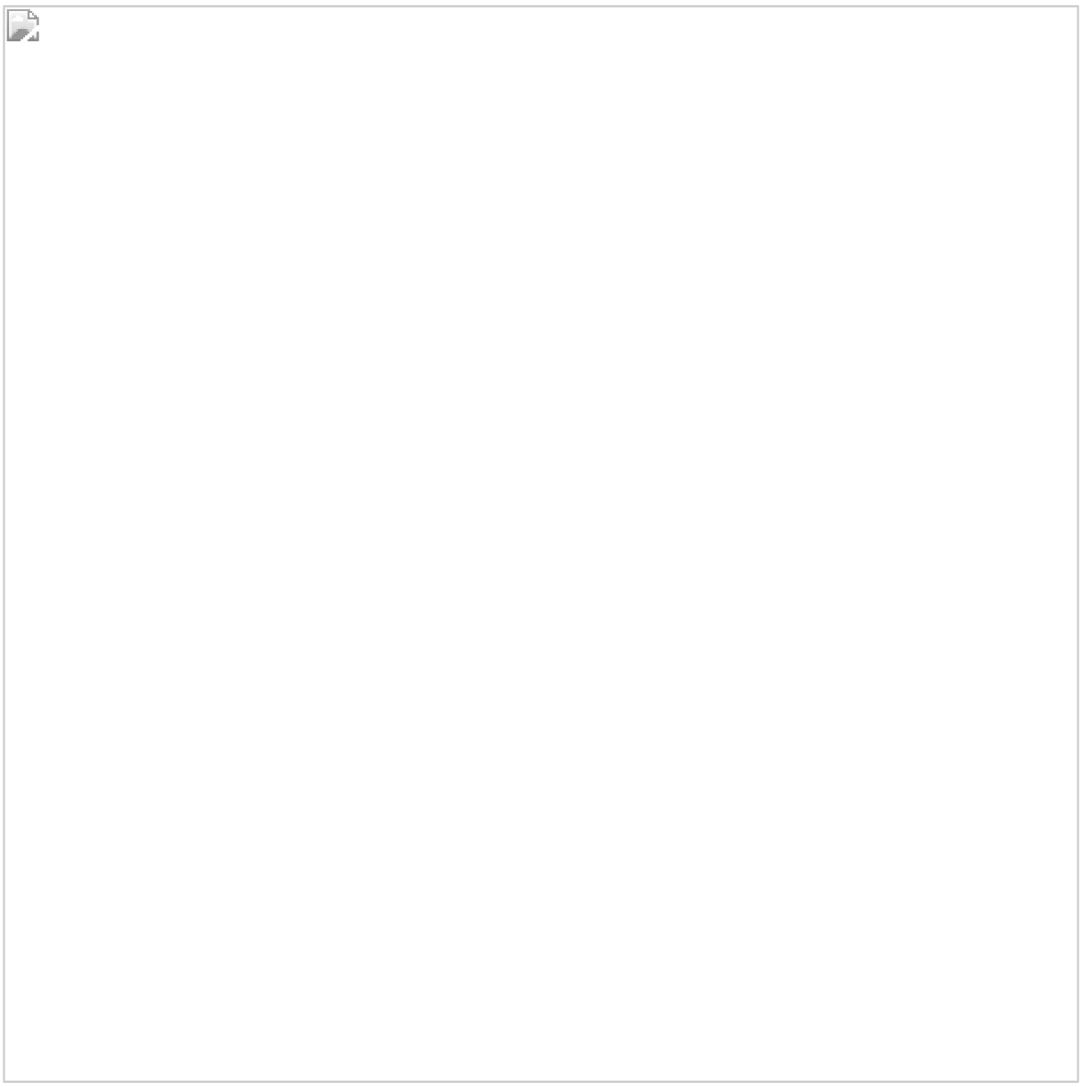
Earlshall was a grand house, “but not half so pleasant, if a horse may have an opinion.” The earl’s wife, my lady, wanted her carriage horses to hold their heads very high.

So we wore a bearing rein, which pulls the head back. “York, you must put those horses’ heads higher; they are not fit to be seen,” she told the coachman. The rein grew tighter, and I began to dread putting on my harness.

Ginger could not stand it. “I can’t bear it, and I won’t,” she said, and she was taken out of the carriage for good. I missed my old friends.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think some people wanted horses to hold their heads so high? Is there something that looks nice but is not kind?



Think about it

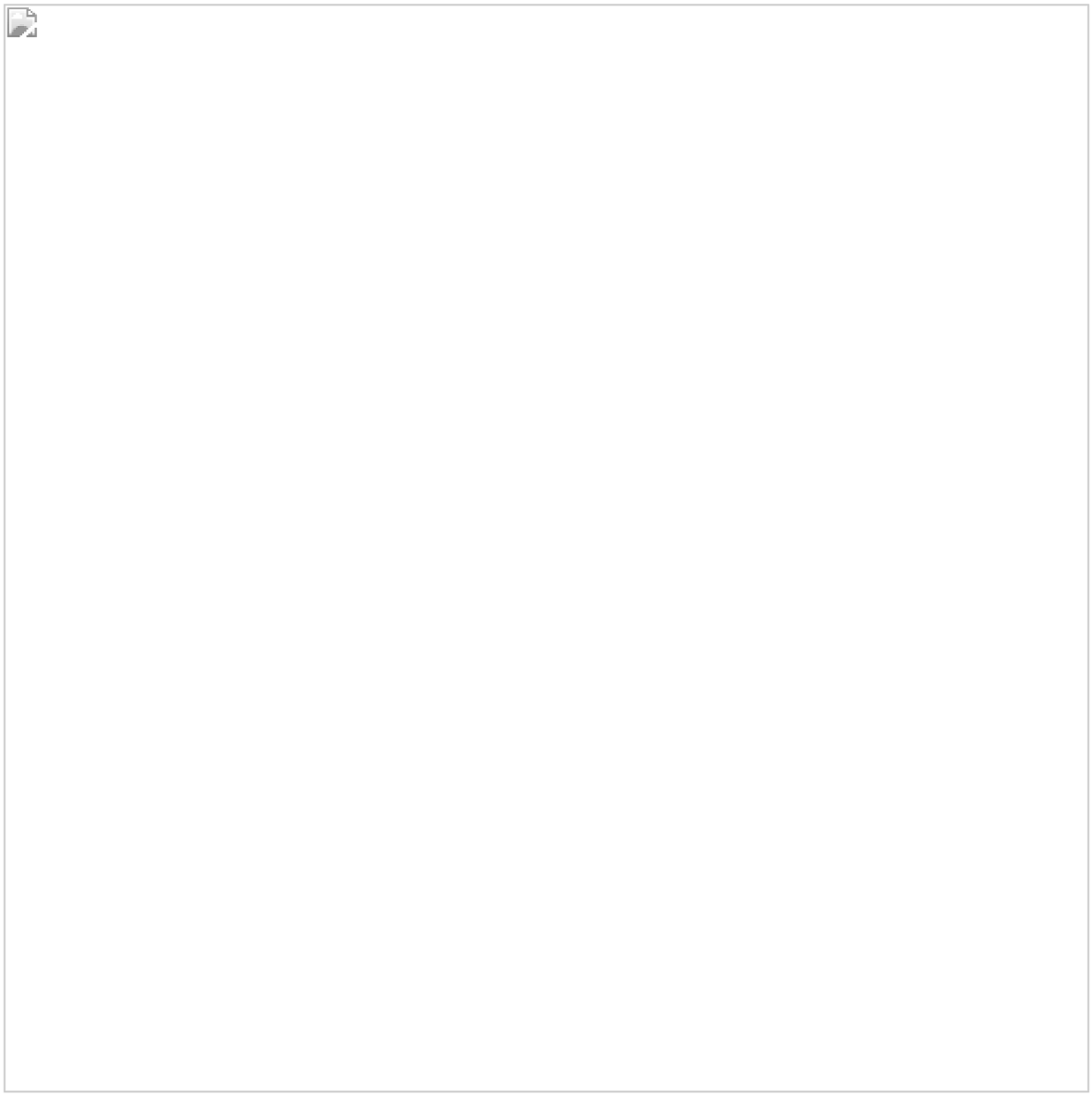
1. What did the lady want done to the horses' heads?

- ○ Held higher
- ○ Held lower
- ○ Covered up

2. How did Beauty feel about putting on his harness at Earlshall?

- ○ He began to dread it
- ○ He loved it
- ○ He did not notice

Sold On



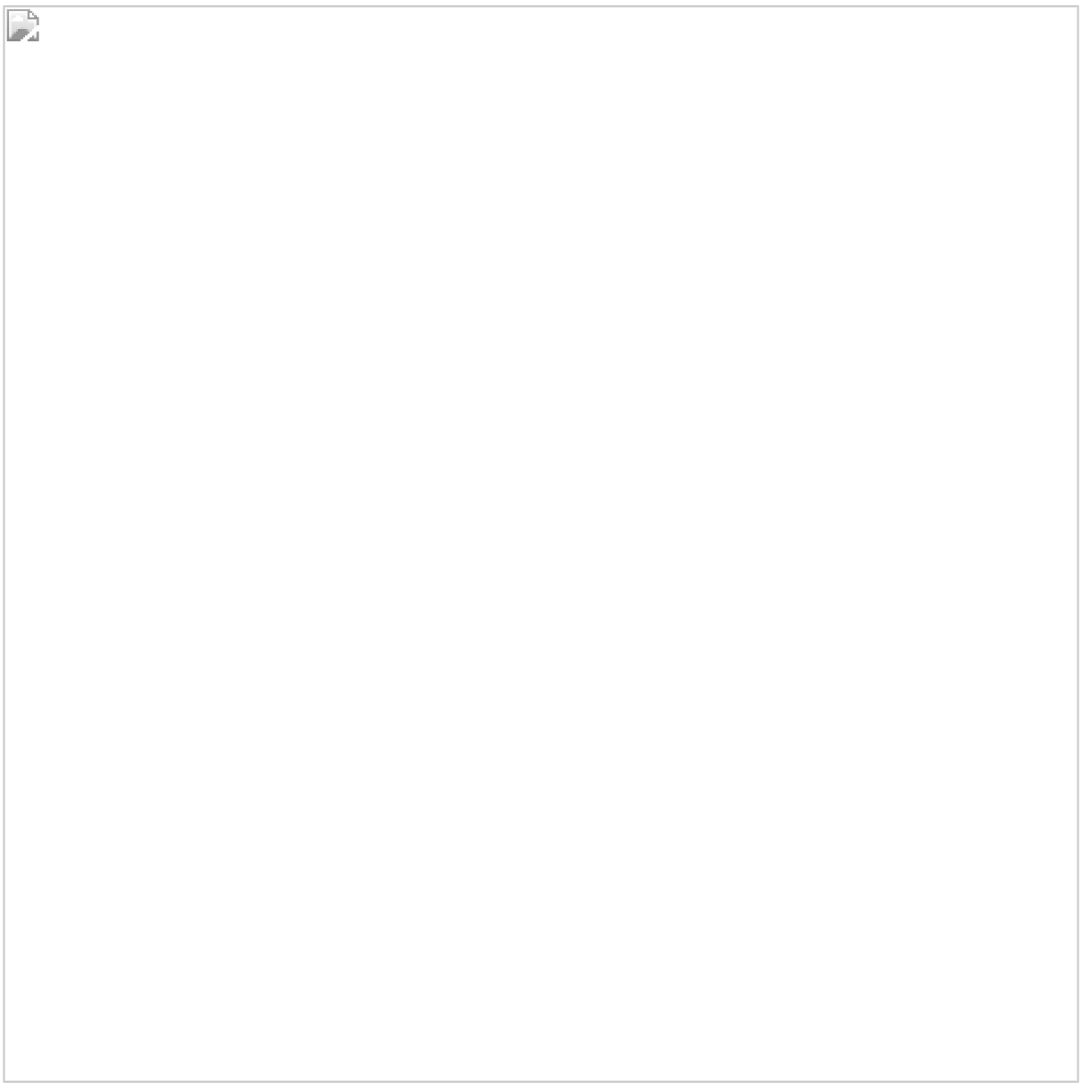
Later, one dark night, I fell on a stony road and cut both my knees badly. The scars never went away. I was turned into a small meadow to rest.

Then one morning the gate opened, and who should come in but dear old Ginger. She had been hurt by hard riding, and was sent to rest with me. We stood together under a shady tree.

But the earl said a horse with such knees could not stay in his stable. As a man led me away, Ginger trotted along the hedge, calling to me as long as she could hear my feet.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you do when you are far away from a friend you miss?



Think about it

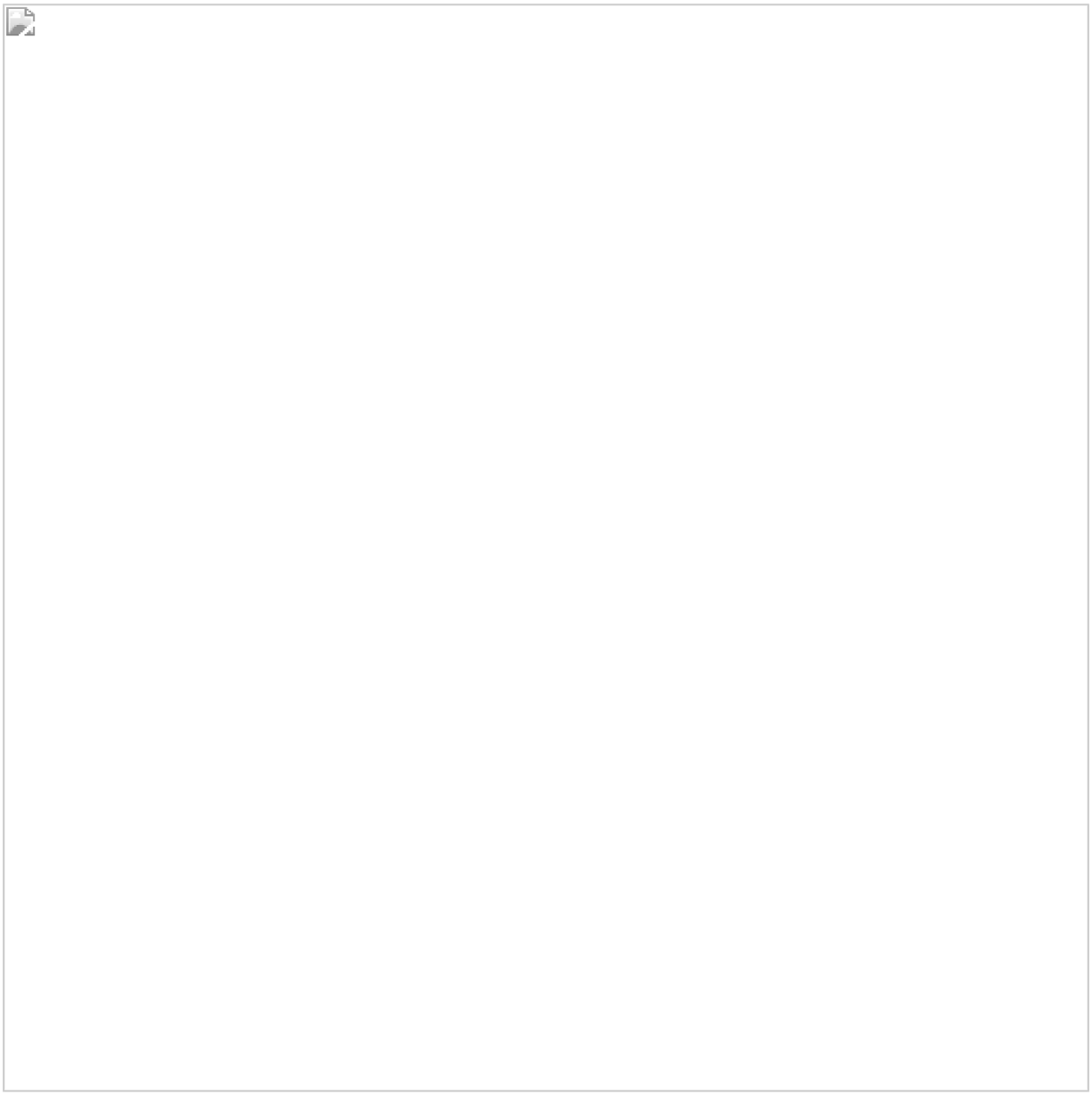
1. Who joined Beauty in the little meadow?

- ○ Ginger
- ○ Merrylegs
- ○ John

2. Why was Beauty to be sold?

- ○ His knees were scarred
- ○ He was too slow
- ○ He was too old

Jerry Barker



After some hard days with other masters, I was bought by a London cab man, Jeremiah Barker. Everyone called him Jerry. He had his wife Polly, a son Harry, and a little girl, Dolly, and I never knew a happier family.

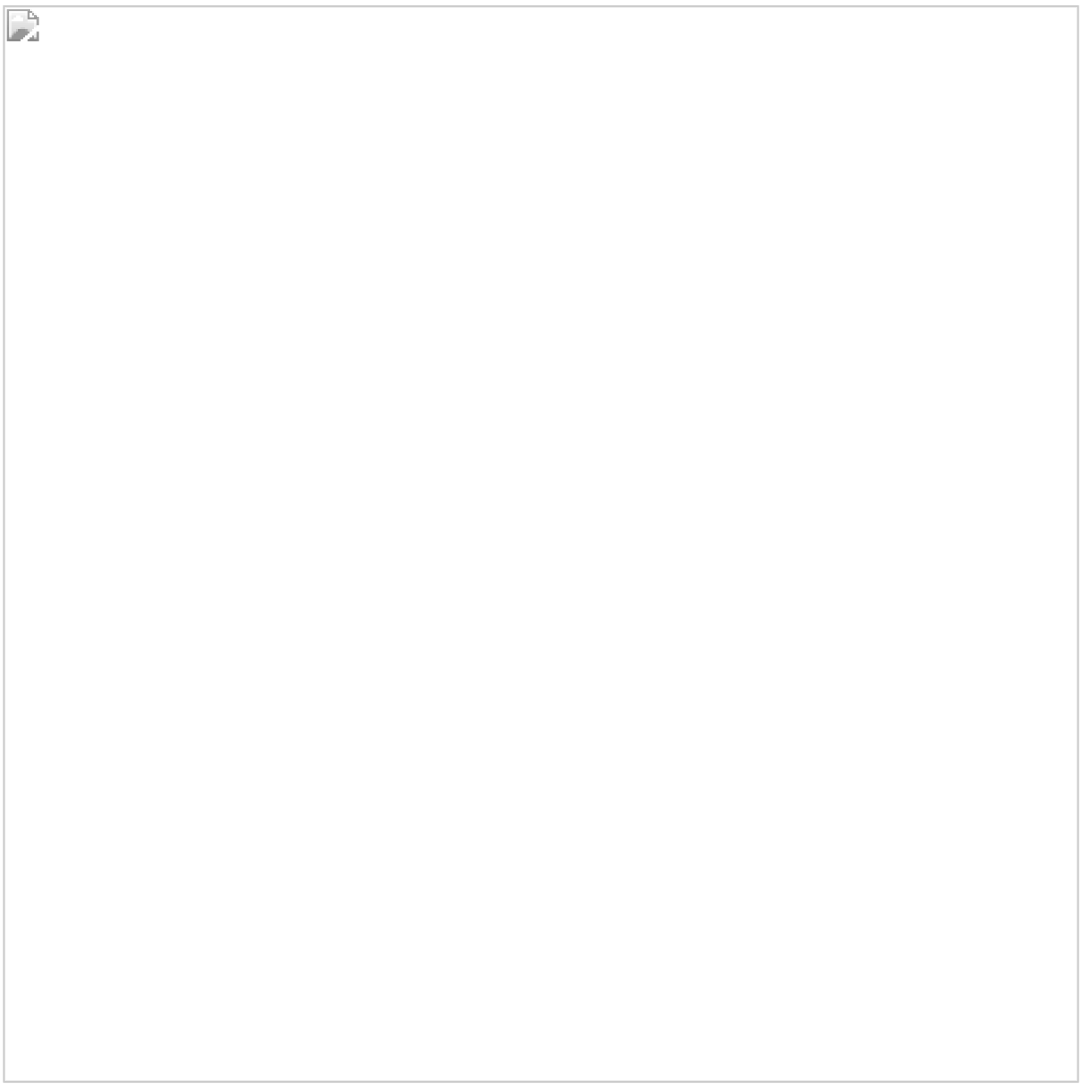
The morning after I came, Polly brought me a slice of apple, and Dolly a piece of bread. Jerry called me Jack, after the horse who had been there before me.

There was no check-rein, nothing but a plain ring snaffle. What a blessing that was! I pulled the cab with Captain, a tall old white horse.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think a family who is kind to a horse feels so happy to be around?

Jerry Barker · another picture



Think about it

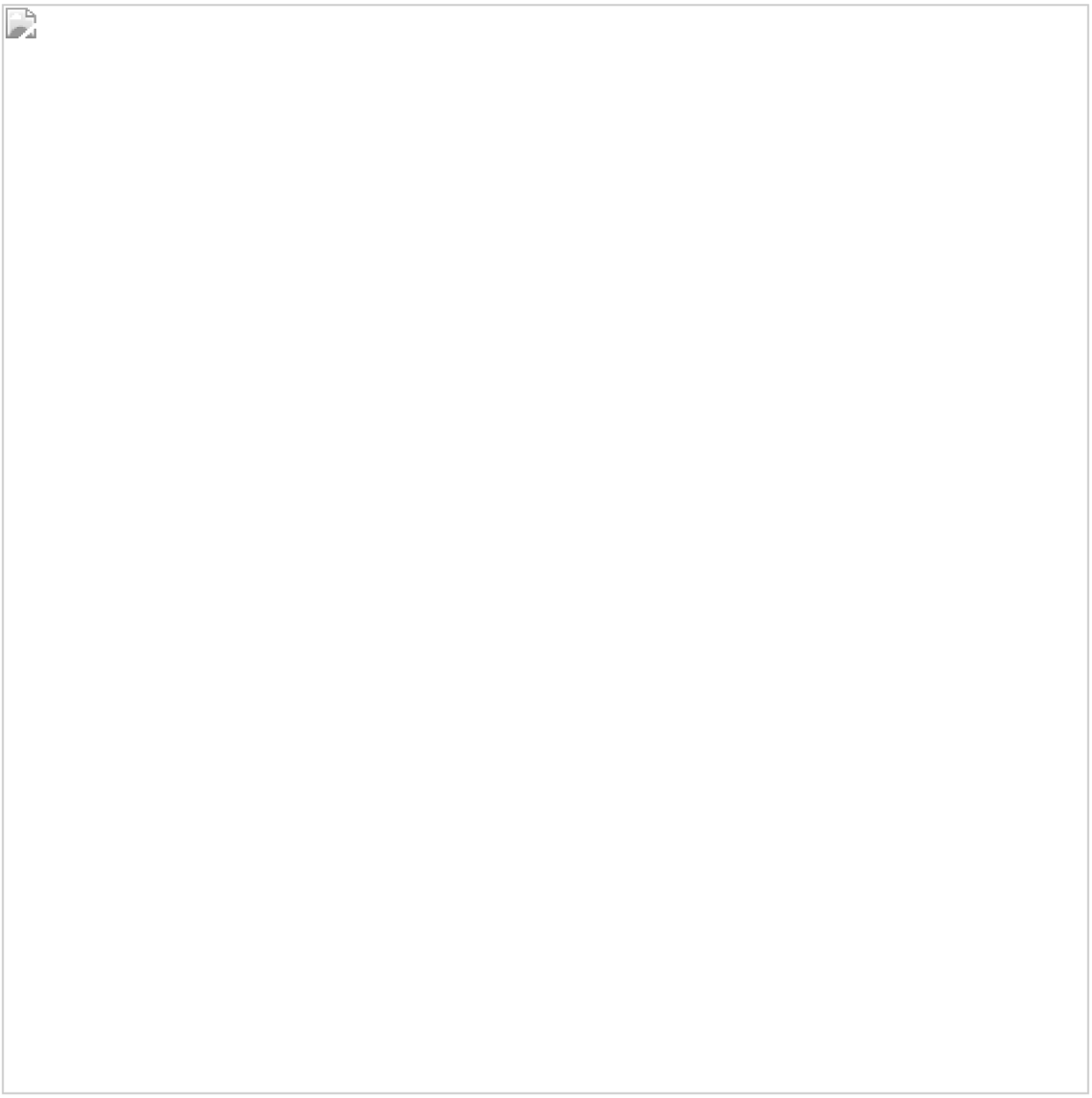
1. What did Jerry call the new horse?

- ○ Jack
- ○ Darkie
- ○ Blackbird

2. What did Beauty not have to wear for Jerry?

- ○ A check-rein
- ○ A collar
- ○ Shoes

Help One Another



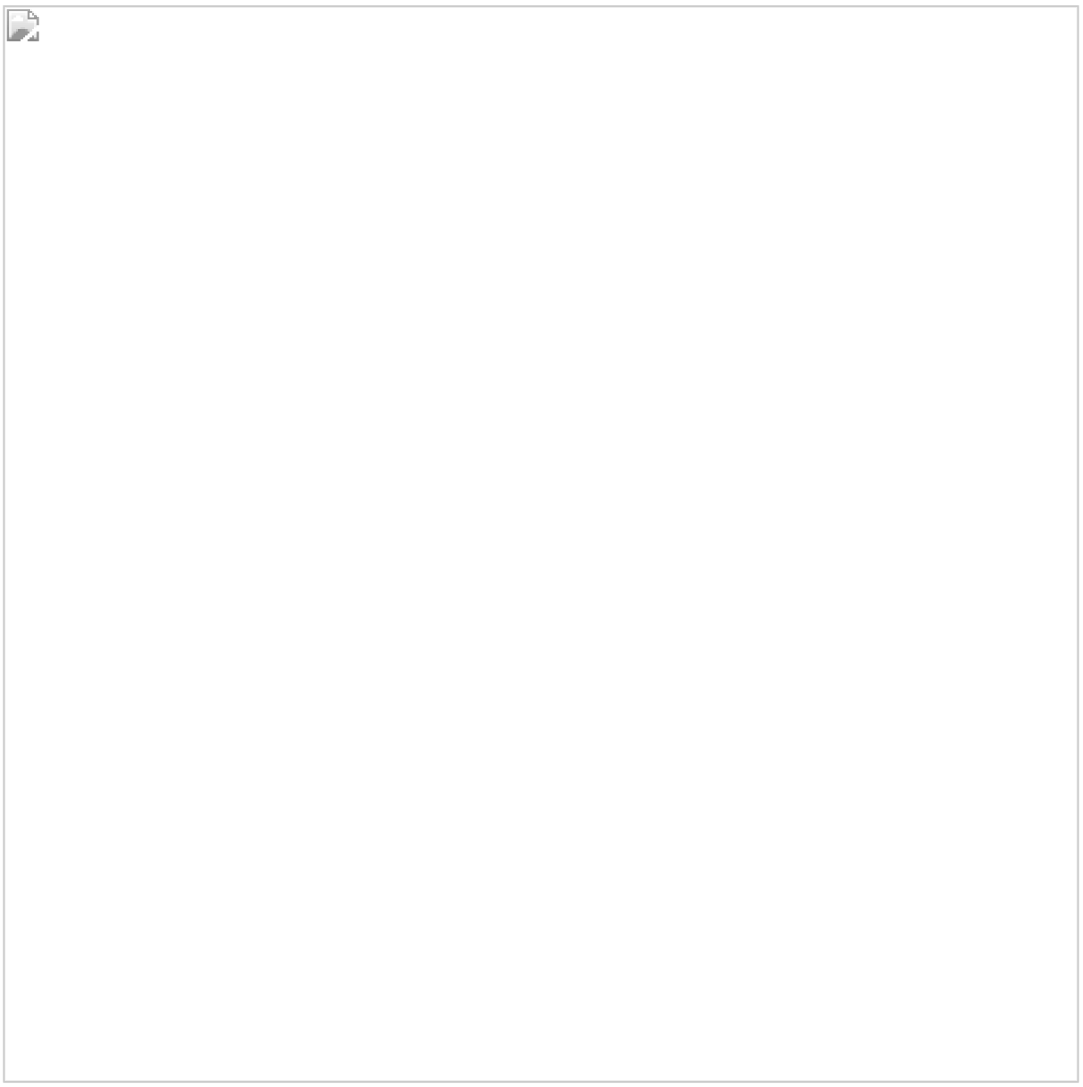
Jerry liked to sing, “Come, father and mother, And sister and brother, Come, all of you, turn to And help one another.” And they all helped.

One morning, a young man slipped on orange peel and fell hard. Jerry was the first to run and help him up. The young man looked white and ill, but he must not miss his train.

“Now then, Jack, my boy,” said Jerry, “spin along, we’ll show them how we can get over the ground, if we only know why.” And the young man was at the station in time.

TALK ABOUT IT

How did Jerry know when to hurry and when to take it easy? What do you think “if we only know why” means?



Think about it

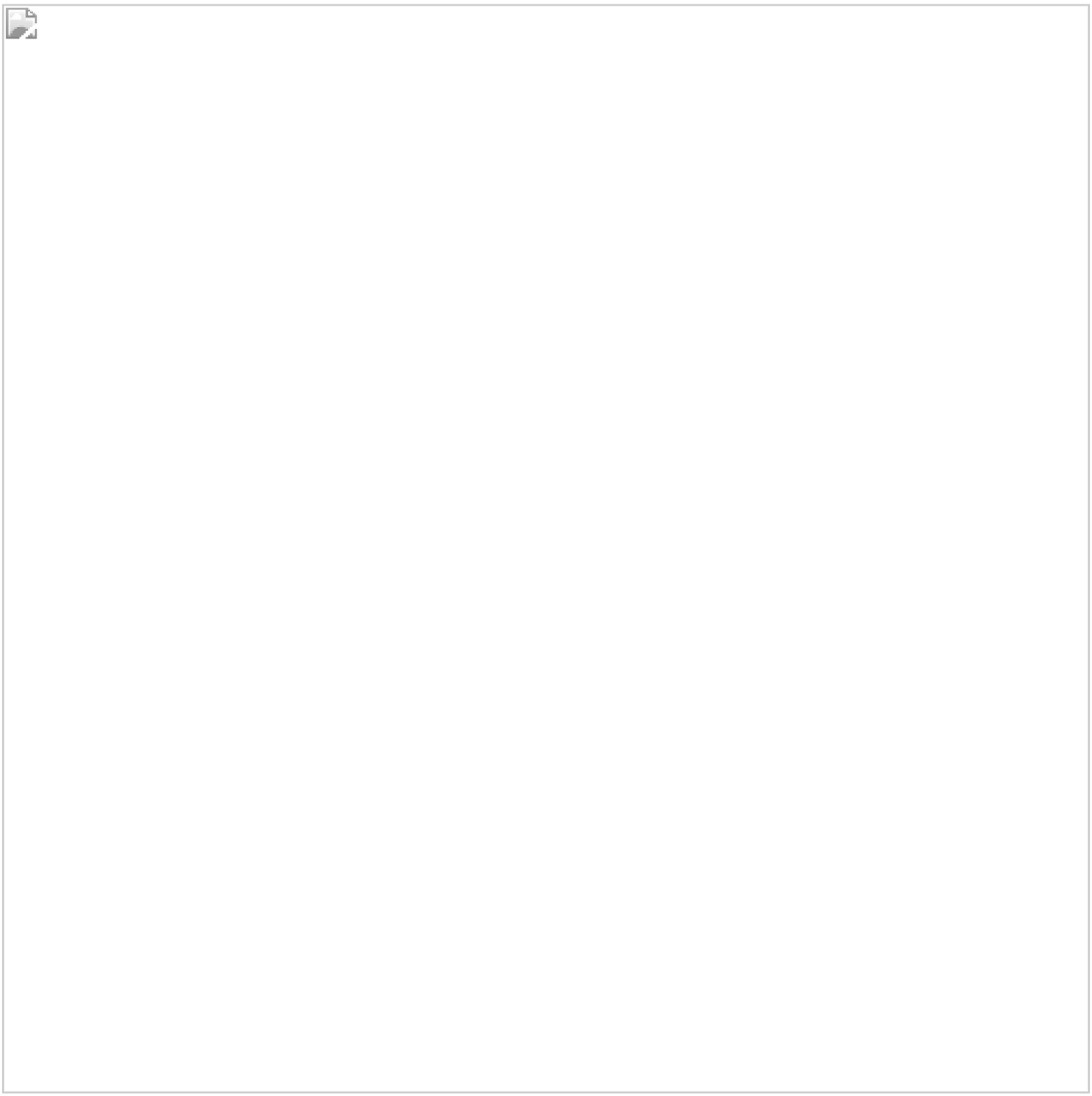
1. What did Jerry do when the young man fell?

- ○ Ran to help him up
- ○ Drove away
- ○ Laughed

2. Why did Jerry hurry that day?

- ○ The young man needed to catch his train
- ○ He was late for lunch
- ○ He liked to race

Saying Good-by to Jerry



In the Christmas week there was much late work, and Jerry's cough got worse, until he was ill for a long time. Polly's old mistress, Mrs. Fowler, had a cottage for them in the country, and a coachman's job for Jerry. So the cab and horses were sold.

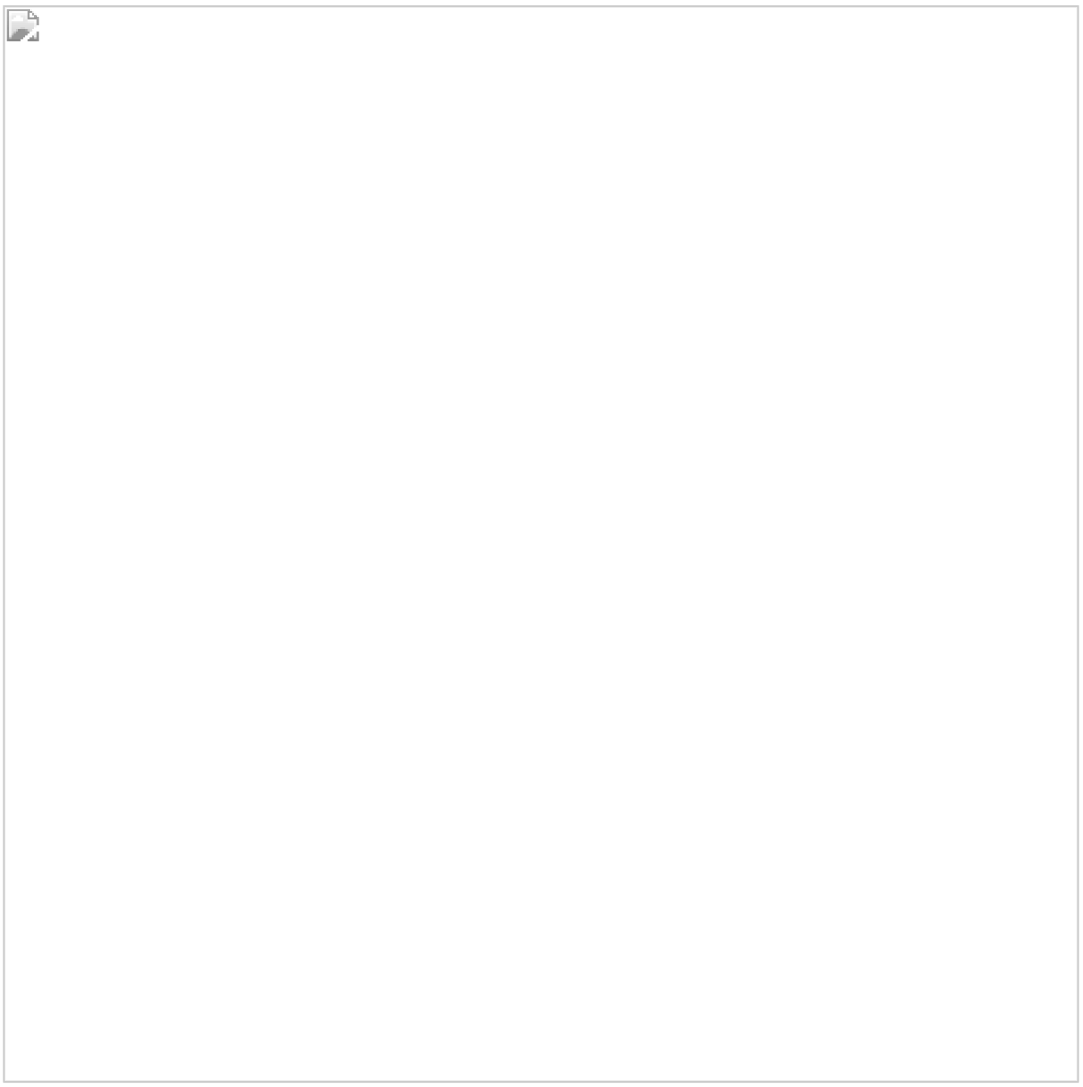
Polly came to say good-by. "Poor old Jack! dear old Jack! I wish we could take you with us," she said, and kissed me.

Next I pulled heavy loads for a corn dealer. On a steep hill a kind lady spoke to my carter. "Is it not better," she said, "to lead a good fashion than to follow a bad one?"

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you think Beauty felt when Polly kissed him good-by?

Saying Good-by to Jerry · another picture



Think about it

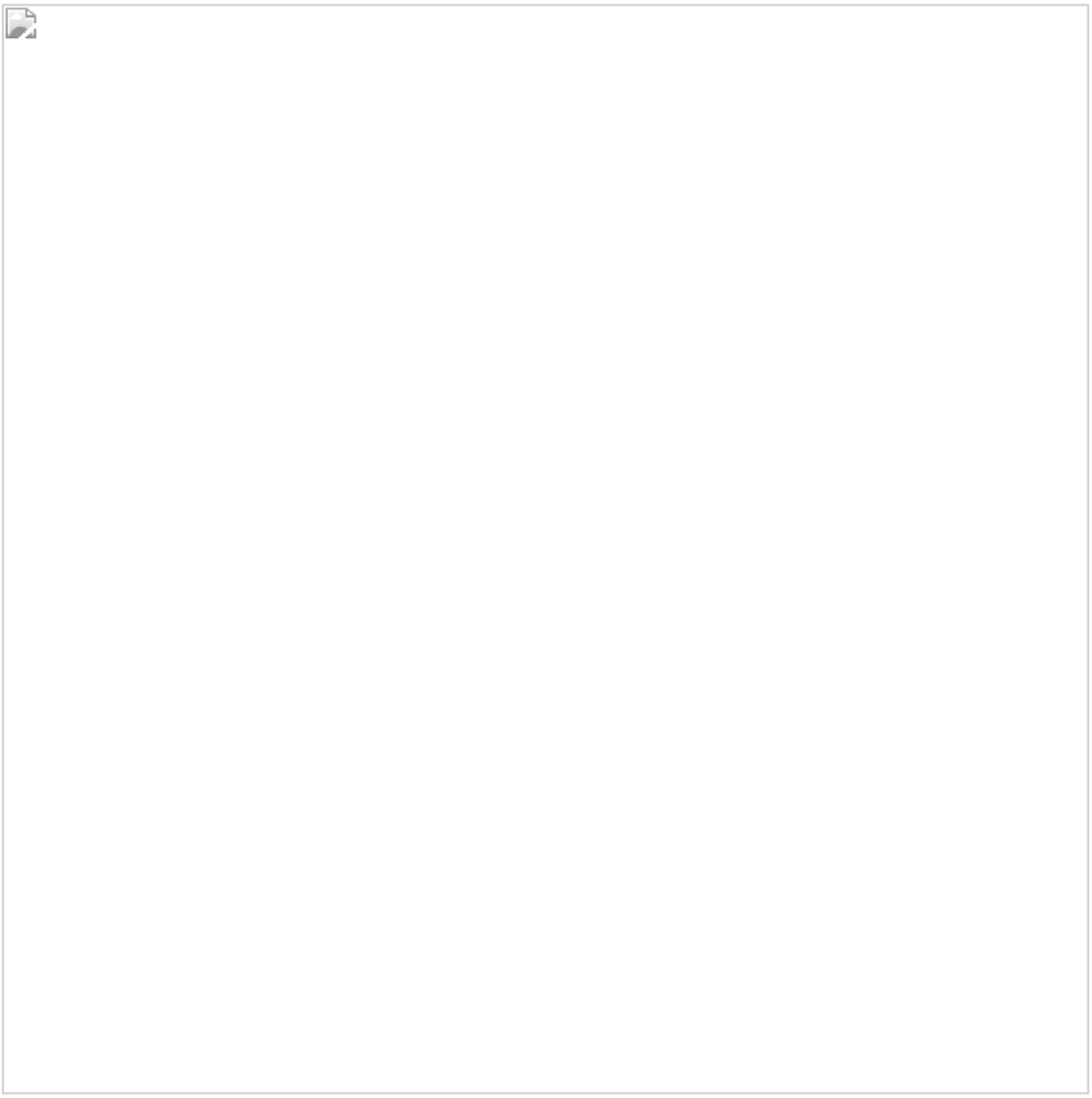
1. Why did Jerry's family leave the city?

- ○ Jerry was ill and a country home was waiting
- ○ They wanted a bigger cab
- ○ They did not like horses

2. Who spoke up for Beauty on the hill?

- ○ A kind lady
- ○ The baker
- ○ A policeman

Hard Times



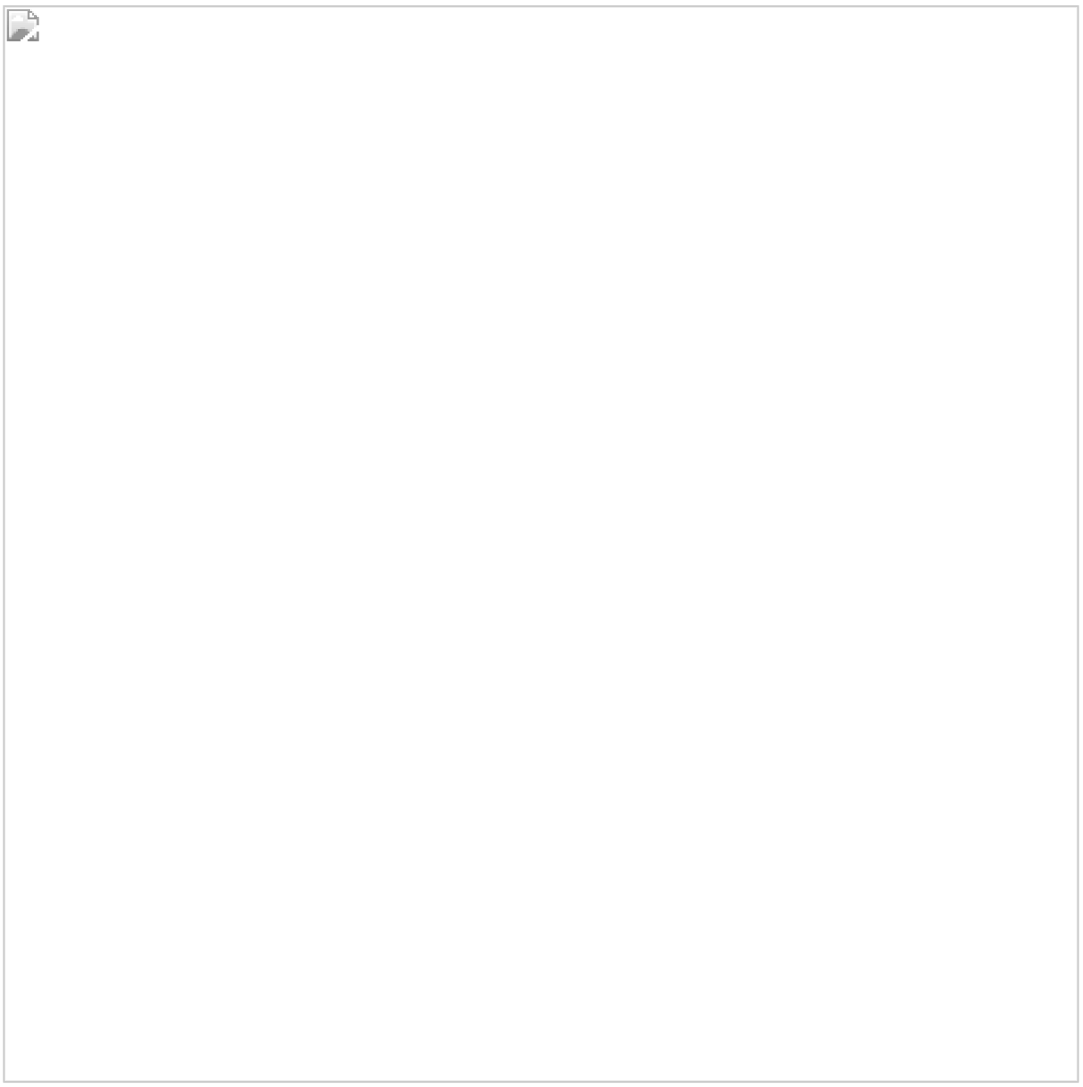
The loads were heavy, and I grew thin and weak. Then I was sold to a cab owner, Nicholas Skinner, who was hard on his horses.

One day a gentleman loaded our cab with great heavy boxes. A young girl looked at me. “Papa, papa, do take a second cab,” she said, “I am sure this poor horse cannot take us.” But he did not listen.

On Ludgate Hill the load was too much, and I fell to the ground. Kind people loosened my harness, gave me cold water, and helped me up. After ten days of rest and good food, I was taken to a horse sale.

TALK ABOUT IT

The girl spoke up for Beauty, even though her father did not listen. When is it hard to speak up for someone?



Think about it

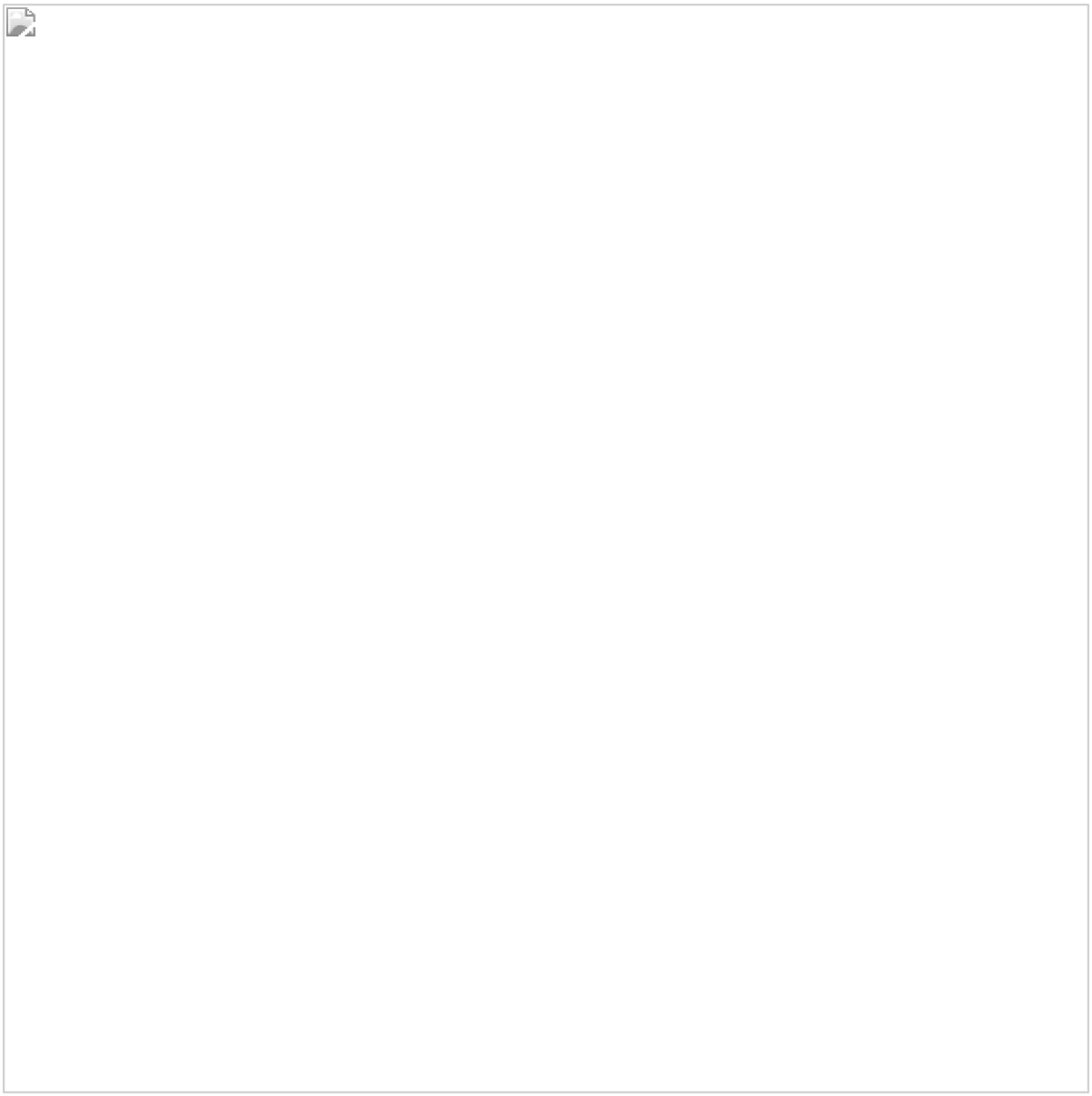
1. What did the young girl ask her father to do?

- ○ Take a second cab
- ○ Buy the horse
- ○ Go home

2. What helped Beauty get better?

- ○ Rest and good food
- ○ A long race
- ○ A cold night outside

Farmer Thoroughgood and Willie



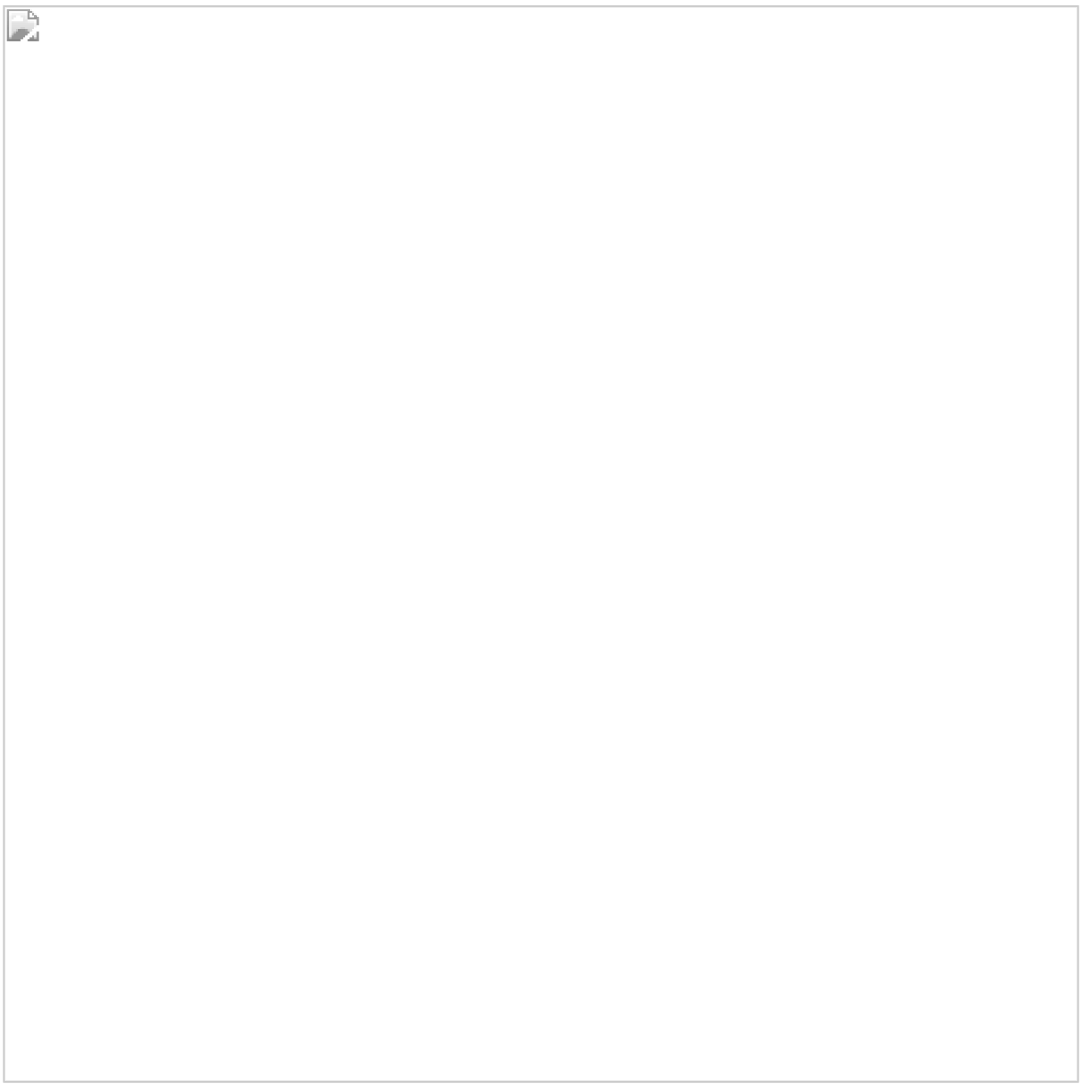
At the horse sale, a kind-faced farmer and a young boy walked by. “There’s a horse, Willie, that has known better days,” said the farmer. The boy patted my face. “I am sure he would grow young in our meadows.”

So the farmer, Mr. Thoroughgood, bought me. Willie came to see me every day, often with a carrot, and called me Old Crony. I had a big meadow, good oats and soft grass, and by winter I began to feel quite young again. In March Mr. Thoroughgood said, “He’s growing young, Willie.”

TALK ABOUT IT

What did Willie do to help the old horse? What could you do to help a creature that is tired or sad?

Farmer Thoroughgood and Willie · another picture



Think about it

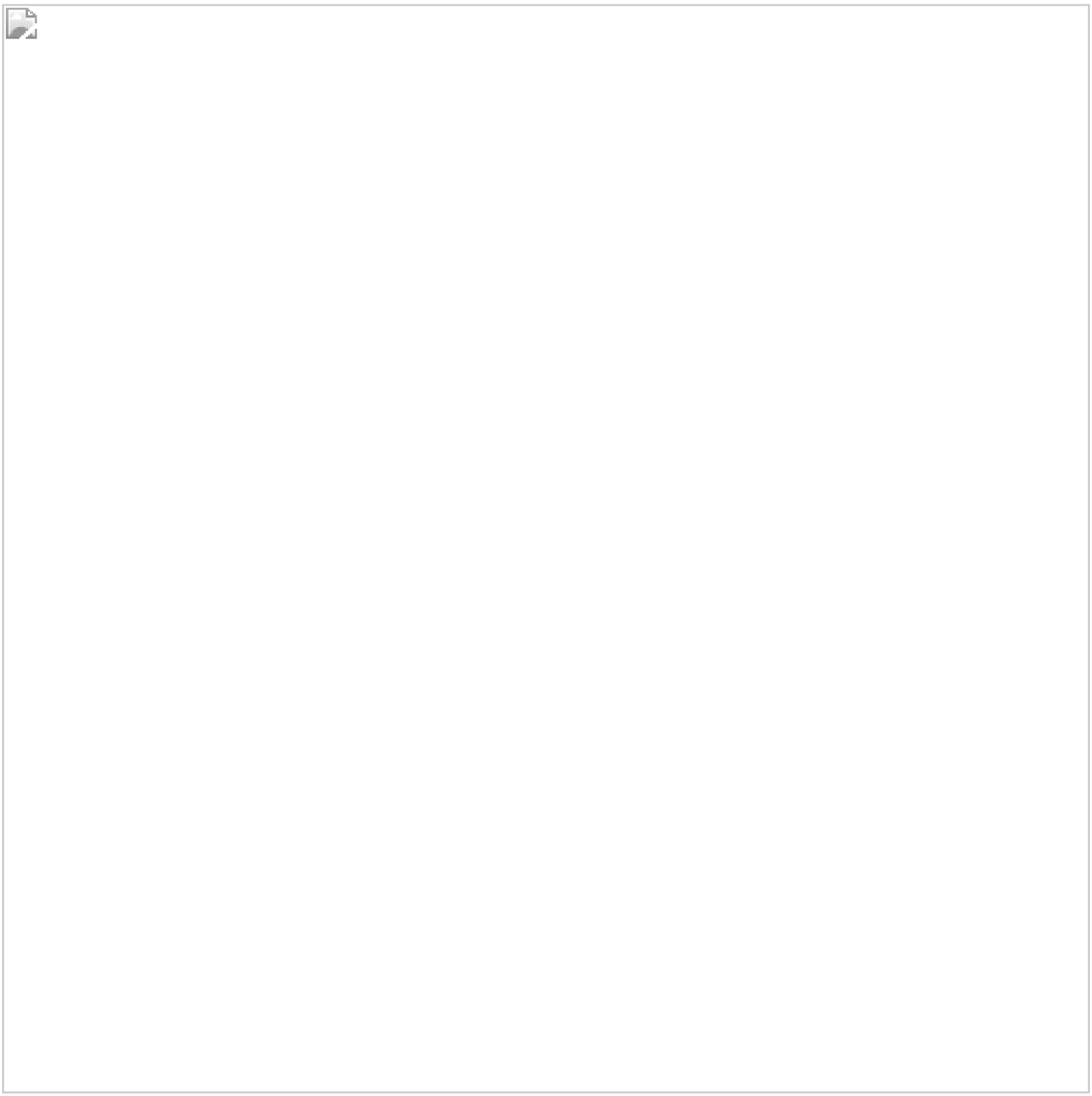
1. What did Willie name the horse?

- ○ Old Crony
- ○ Old Friend
- ○ Duke

2. What made the horse feel young again?

- ○ Rest, good food and a soft meadow
- ○ A new saddle
- ○ A long trip

My Last Home



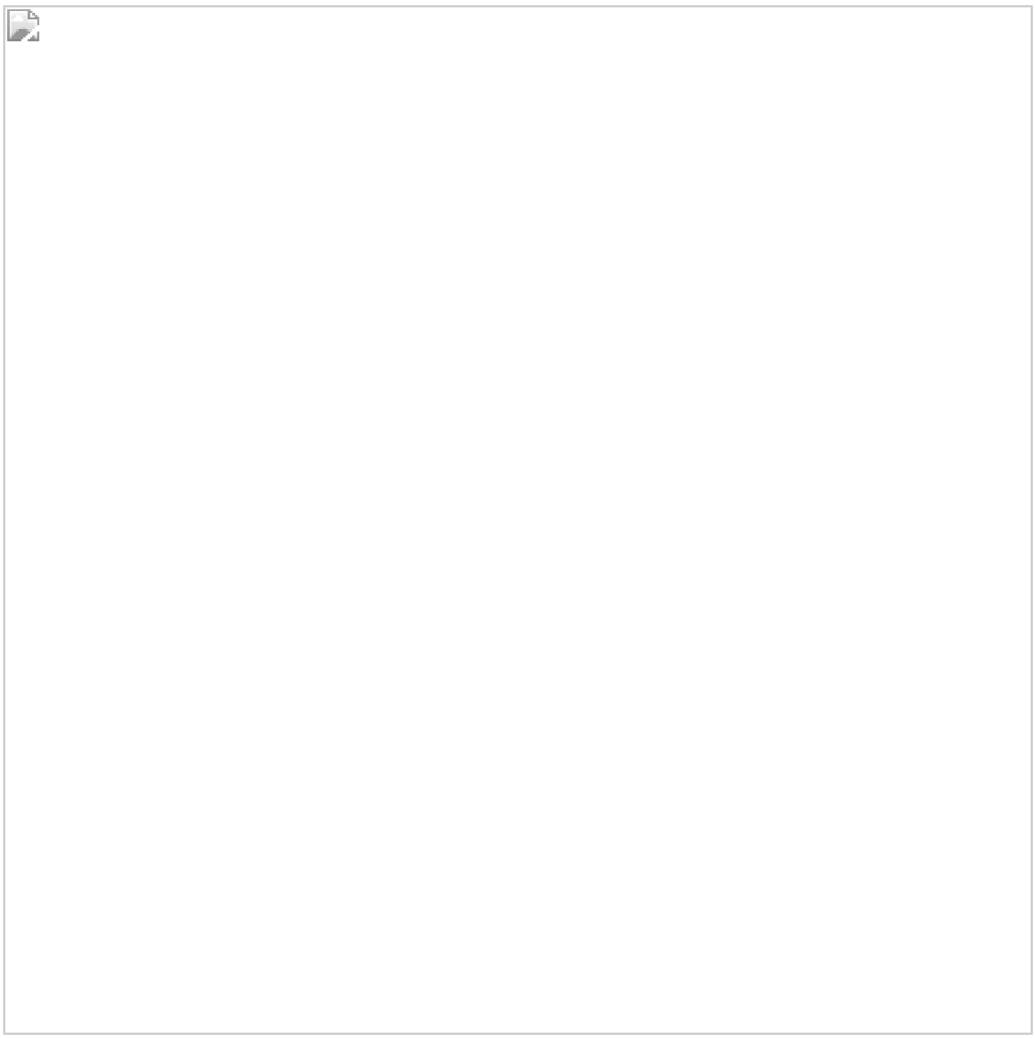
One summer day Mr. Thoroughgood and Willie took me to a pretty house, where three ladies kept me on trial.

As a young groom was cleaning my face, he looked closely. “White star in the forehead, one white foot on the off side,” he said. Then he found a little patch of white hair on my back. “Why, Beauty! Beauty! do you know me?” It was Joe Green, from Birtwick, now grown.

I was called by my old name, Black Beauty. “My troubles are all over, and I am at home; and often before I am quite awake, I fancy I am still in the orchard at Birtwick.”

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think Beauty dreams about, in the orchard with his old friends?



Think about it

1. How did the new groom know the horse was Black Beauty?

- ○ By a white star, a white foot and a white patch on his back
- ○ By his name tag
- ○ By his saddle

2. Who was the new groom?

- ○ Joe Green, from Birtwick
- ○ James Howard
- ○ Mr. York

3. What does Beauty say at the end of his story?

- ○ His troubles are all over and he is at home
- ○ He wants to go back to London
- ○ He is going on another trip

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

Free to read, color, and print in the Book Library

Made with love by Love is a Habit