

Black Beauty

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Chapter 13 Going for the Doctor

One night after James had left, I was lying down in the straw fast asleep when I was suddenly awakened by a loud bell. I heard the door of John's house open as he ran up the hall. He was back in a few minutes. He unlocked the stable door and cried:

"Wake up, Beauty! You will have to run as fast as you can!"

Before I knew what was happening, he had the saddle on my back and the bridle on my head. He threw on his coat and took me to the hall door. The butler was standing there with a lamp in his hand.

"Now, John," he said, "ride as fast as you can. Our mistress' life depends upon it. There is not a moment to lose. Give this note to Dr. White and be sure to rest the horse at the inn. Return as soon as you can."

When we reached the road, John said softly:

"Black Beauty, do your best. We must try to save our mistress' life."

After I heard this, I did not need the whip or the spur. I galloped as fast as I could for two miles. When we came to the bridge, John pulled me up a little and patted my neck. "Well done, Beauty," he said. He would have let me go slower, but my spirit was up, and I was off again as fast as before.

It was three in the morning as we arrived at Dr. White's house. John rang the bell twice and then pounded on the door. Finally, Dr. White threw open the window and asked John what he wanted. After John explained that our mistress was very ill and needed him immediately, he told us to wait there until he came down.

In a few minutes the doctor was at the door, and John handed him the note. Doctor White then explained that his own horse was ill and asked if he could ride back with me. John knew I was overheated and tired, but he realized how important it was for the doctor to reach our mistress. I will not describe the ride back home. The doctor was an elderly man and not a very good rider. But I did my best, and we soon reached Birtwick Park. Joe was waiting for us at the gate. My master led the doctor into the house, and Joe walked me to the stable. I was glad to be home. My legs were shaking, and I could only stand and pant. I was soaking wet, and my whole body was steaming. Joe rubbed my legs and

chest, but he did not put my warm cloth on me. He thought I was too hot and would not like it. He gave me some cold water and some hay and corn. He thought he had done all the right things, and he closed the stable door as he left me for the night. Soon I began to shake and tremble. I got very cold. My legs and chest ached, and I felt sore all over. Oh, how I wished I had my warm blanket. I wished John was at my side, but he still was walking home from the doctor's house, so I lay down in the straw and tried to sleep.

After a long while, I heard John at the door. I gave a low moan, for I was in great pain. He was at my side in a moment. I could not tell him how I felt, but he seemed to know anyway. He covered me up with two or three warm blankets and then ran to the house for some hot water. I heard him complain under his breath about Joe Green. He called him a stupid boy for not covering me or giving me something warm to eat and drink.

I was very ill. A strong inflammation had attacked my lungs, and I could not breathe without pain. John nursed me day and night. My master came to see me many times.

"My Poor Beauty," he said one day. "you saved your mistress' life, and now you are the one who is so sick."

It made me feel proud that I had saved her life, and I heard John say that he had never seen a horse run so fast in his whole life.

After what seemed like a long time, I began to feel better. The horse doctor came to see me several times, and his medicine helped the fever and inflammation to go away.

John was very angry at Joe Green for quite a while, but he finally came to see that the boy hadn't meant me any harm. He simply had not known any better.

Chapter 14 Leaving Home

I had lived in Birtwick Park for three happy years, but I felt that something very sad would be happening soon. We heard from time to time that our mistress was ill. The doctor came to the house several times a week, and our master looked grave and worried. Then we heard that our mistress must leave home at once and move to a warm climate for a few years. The news fell upon the household like the tolling of a death bell. Everyone was unhappy, and the master

began to make the arrangements for the move. Everything had to be done quickly.

John went about his work, but hardly talked or smiled, and Joe was silent. We soon learned where we would be going next. Master had sold Ginger and me to an old friend who he felt would give us a good home. He gave Merrylegs to the local priest, who had wanted a pony, but he did it only on the condition that Merrylegs would never be sold, and when he couldn't work any longer, he would be shot and buried.

When the last sad day came, Ginger and I brought the carriage up to the hall door for the final time. The servants brought out rugs and many other household things. When everything was arranged, master came down the steps carrying mistress in his arms. He said good-bye to each of the servants and thanked them all for their loyalty.

We rode slowly to the railroad station. When we finally got there, mistress said; "Good-bye, John. We shall never forget you. God bless you always."

I felt the rain twitch, but John did not answer; perhaps he could not speak. As soon as Joe had taken the things out of the carriage, John called him to stand by the horses while he went on the platform. Poor Joe! He stood close to our heads to hide the tears. Very soon the train came puffing up to the station. In a few minutes the doors closed, the guard whistled, and the train glided away, leaving behind clouds of white smoke and our heavy hearts.

When the train was out of sight, John came back.

"We will never see them again-never," he said. He took the reins, and with Joe alongside him, he drove slowly home. But it was not our home now.

