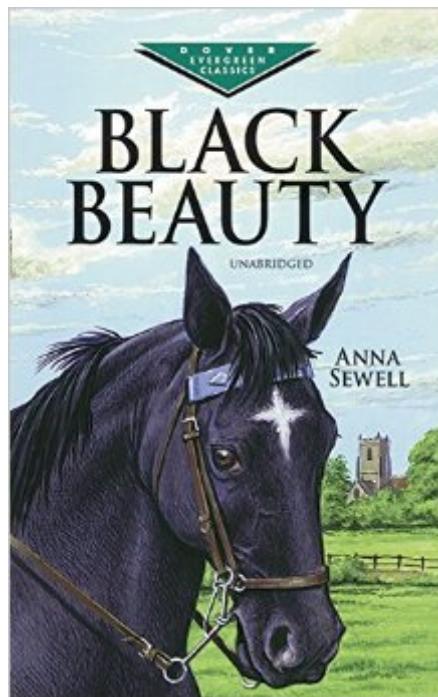


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# Black Beauty (Dover Children's Evergreen Classics)



## **Synopsis**

Perhaps the most celebrated animal story of the nineteenth century, Black Beauty is the suspenseful and deeply moving account of a horse's experiences at the hands of many owners — some, sensitive riders who treated him gently; others, cruel drivers who thoughtlessly inflicted lasting damage. Written as the animal's autobiography, and as an appeal for the humane treatment of horses, Anna Sewell's beloved classic reveals as much about human conduct and the social ills of the time as it does about the treatment of animals. Scenes from the lives of both the landed gentry and the impoverished working class offer a subtle but well-rounded perspective of social conditions in England during the late nineteenth century. Animal lovers of all ages will cherish this memorable story, now available in this unabridged, modestly priced edition.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 450 (What's this?)

Series: Dover Children's Evergreen Classics

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (June 23, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486407888

ISBN-13: 978-0486407883

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (534 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #17,101 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Horses #341 in Books > Children's Books > Classics

Age Range: 9 and up

Grade Level: 4 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

We often talk about teaching children values, but in most cases children's literature is insipid and of no lasting value. BLACK BEAUTY, however, is both valuable as art and valuable for the virtues it teaches: kindness, common sense, and helping those who cannot help themselves. The book is well written in clean prose. It does not over reach the "reading child," nor does it talk down to him. And although it is touching and occasionally sad, it is not in the least sentimental. The story, of course, is about Black Beauty, a handsome horse who is born and raised in happy circumstances.

But in Victorian England horses were used much as we use cars today: they were things to be bought and sold and then gotten rid of when they were no longer useful. Black Beauty is first sold to a good home, but as time passes he is sold again and again--and not always to people who treat him kindly or even to those who give him common care. There are adventures aplenty, like a stable fire and a dangerous bridge; there are many memorable characters, like the horse Ginger and the kind cabbie Jerry. All of them are seen from Black Beauty's point of view, and beautifully, perfectly described. My mother read this book to me, and as soon as I could I was anxious to read it myself; now, some thirty years later I have stumbled once more upon it. And I can honestly say that it lives up to my memory: it is a fine book, and one that every parent should place in the hands of their children. Strongly recommended. GFT, Reviewer

This is a beautiful chapter book for a child who is reading at around a 5th grade level to read alone. Black Beauty is a classic. We all know that it tells the life story of an English riding horse from his own point of view. What can be harder to remember is how deftly it teaches children about the importance of kindness to their fellow creatures. During the course of his lifetime, Beauty experiences the best and the worst humanity has to offer its companion animals. Children old enough to read this book will just be developing the kind of empathy skills necessary to understand how important kindness is, even, and perhaps especially, to those who cannot verbalize their gratitude. The book teaches kids to notice how they and their peers treat others, and I have been buying it for all of the kids in my life for as long as I can remember. I particularly like this edition because it is unabridged (the story is perfect), and because the illustrations are enchanting. I'd give it a hundred stars if I could.

Being a typical horse-loving 10 year old girl (way, way back in the day..), it almost goes without saying that of course I read Black Beauty by Anna Sewell. The story of the gentle black horse in Victorian England is simple and perfect. It's a true classic for kids, proven over several generations that have grown up reading it just as I did. With this in mind, I went looking to buy a copy at a bookstore yesterday as a birthday present for a 10 year old young lady. Now as far as I know, kids today are no less intelligent, and they do still teach them to read starting in Kindergarten. So imagine my horror at discovering that the attractively bound, hardback of Black Beauty that I picked up was, uh, \*paraphrased\* (actually there are more accurate terms for it, but for the sake of the censors I'd better stick to the less graphic ones). Comparing selections of this version side by side with the original, the so-called "Classic Starts" Black Beauty plot is stripped down; worse, the lovely

language of the original has been replaced with, ahem, simplified text and dialog that could have been written by the author of the Judy Moody books. This left little sense of the turn of the century England setting, and completely obliterated the spirit and style of Anna Sewell. Is this the publisher's idea of a quality introduction to children's lit? What I really want to know is, why change it at all? As I said, kids today aren't less smart, they should be able to read the real Black Beauty well enough by the time they are in the 9-12 suggested age range. The reason it's a classic is because IT WORKED JUST AS IT WAS. Sorry, I had to put that in large type for the publishers, who evidently believe that the rest of the population matches their literary fluency. I hope other parents who are planning on purchasing this and other classics for their kids will catch the difference between the CS paraphrased/heavily edited/oh what the heck, dumbed down versions and the real books. Apparently the School Library Journal agrees with me on this, if you care to read their review above the customer reviews on the product page. -Andrea, aka Merribelle

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