

## Extended Read 2

Remember  
to annotate  
as you read.

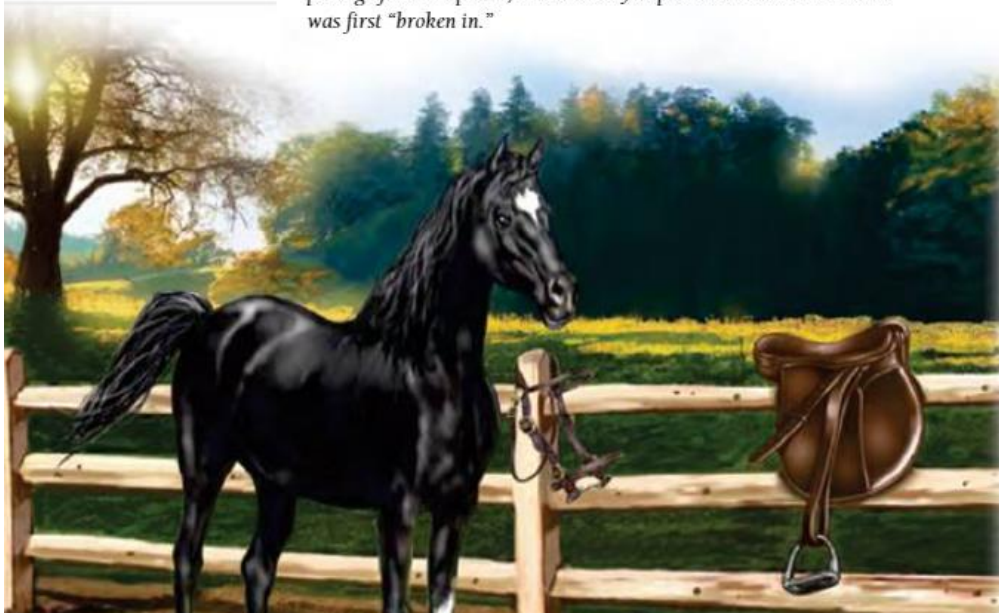
# My Breaking In

An excerpt from *Black Beauty*

by Anna Sewell

*Black Beauty is a story about the life of a horse, told by the horse himself. The book was written by Anna Sewell and published in 1877. Sewall uses the first person point of view to give readers a firsthand account of a horse's life in England in the late 1800s. As Black Beauty is passed from one owner to another, he describes how some people treat him with kindness while others are very cruel. The author believed strongly in the humane treatment of animals and she wanted to communicate that idea to her readers. In this passage from chapter 3, Black Beauty explains to the reader how he was first "broken in."*

Notes



- 1 I was now beginning to grow handsome. My coat had grown fine and soft, and was bright black. I had one white foot and a pretty white star on my forehead. I was thought very handsome; my master would not sell me till I was four years old. He said lads ought not to work like men, and colts ought not to work like horses till they were quite grown up.
- 2 When I was four years old Squire Gordon came to look at me. He examined my eyes, my mouth, and my legs. He felt them all down. And then I had to walk and trot and gallop before him. He seemed to like me, and said, "When he has been well broken in he will do very well." My master said he would break me in himself, as he should not like me to be frightened or hurt. He lost no time about it, for the next day he began.
- 3 Every one may not know what breaking in is, therefore I will describe it. It means to teach a horse to wear a saddle and bridle. And to carry on his back a man, woman or child; to go just the way they wish, and to go quietly. Besides this he has to learn to wear a collar, a crupper, and a breeching, and to stand still while they are put on. Then to have a cart or a chaise fixed behind, so that he cannot walk or trot without dragging it after him. And he must go fast or slow, just as his driver wishes.

Notes



- 4 He must never start at what he sees, nor speak to other horses, nor bite, nor kick, nor have any will of his own, but always do his master's will, even though he may be very tired or hungry. But the worst of all is, when his harness is once on, he may neither jump for joy nor lie down for weariness. So you see this breaking in is a great thing.
- 5 I had of course long been used to a halter and a headstall, and to be led about in the fields and lanes quietly, but now I was to have a bit and bridle. My master gave me some oats as usual, and after a good deal of coaxing he got the bit into my mouth. Then he got the bridle fixed, but it was a nasty thing! Those who have never had a bit in their mouths cannot think how bad it feels. It is a great piece of cold hard steel as thick as a man's finger to be pushed into one's mouth, between one's teeth, and over one's tongue, with the ends coming out at the corner of your mouth.

- 6 And it is held fast there by straps over your head, under your throat, round your nose, and under your chin so that no way in the world can you get rid of the nasty hard thing. It is very bad! Yes, very bad, it is! At least I thought so; but I knew my mother always wore one when she went out. And all horses did when they were grown up so, what with the nice oats, and what with my master's pats, kind words, and gentle ways, I got to wear my bit and bridle.
- 7 Next came the saddle, but that was not half so bad. My master put it on my back very gently, while old Daniel held my head. He then made the girths fast under my body, patting and talking to me all the time. Then I had a few oats, then a little leading about. This he did every day till I began to look for the oats and the saddle. At length, one morning, my master got on my back and rode me round the meadow on the soft grass. It certainly did feel odd, but I must say I felt rather proud to carry my master. And as he continued to ride me a little every day I soon became accustomed to it.



Notes



- 8 The next unpleasant business was putting on the iron shoes. That too was very hard at first. My master went with me to the smith's forge to see that I was not hurt or got any fright. The blacksmith took my feet in his hand, one after the other, and cut away some of the hoof. It did not pain me, so I stood still on three legs till he had done them all. Then he took a piece of iron the shape of my foot, and clapped it on. Next, he drove some nails through the shoe quite into my hoof so that the shoe was firmly on. My feet felt very stiff and heavy, but in time I got used to it.
- 9 And now having got so far, my master went on to break me to harness. There were more new things to wear. First, a stiff heavy collar just on my neck, and a bridle with great sidepieces against my eyes called blinkers. And blinkers indeed they were, for I could not see on either side, but only straight in front of me. Next, there was a small saddle with a nasty stiff strap that went right under my tail. That was the crupper.

- 10 I hated the crupper. To have my long tail doubled up and poked through that strap was almost as bad as the bit. I never felt more like kicking, but of course I could not kick such a good master. And so in time I got used to everything, and could do my work as well as my mother.

Notes





- 11 I must not forget to mention one part of my training, which I have always considered a great advantage. My master sent me for a fortnight to a neighboring farmer's, who had a meadow which was skirted on one side by the railway. I shall never forget the first train that ran by. I was feeding quietly near the pales which separated the meadow from the railway, when I heard a strange sound at a distance. Before I knew whence it came—with a rush and a clatter, and a puffing out of smoke—a long black train of something flew by. It was gone almost before I could draw my breath. I turned and galloped to the further side of the meadow as fast as I could go. There I stood snorting with astonishment and fear.

- 12 For the first few days I could not feed in peace. But as I found that this terrible creature never came into the field, or did me any harm, I began to disregard it. Very soon I cared as little about the passing of a train as the cows and sheep did.
- 13 Since then I have seen many horses much alarmed and restive at the sight or sound of a steam engine. Thanks to my good master's care, I am as fearless at railway stations as in my own stable.

