

NAXOS  
AudioBooks

Anna Sewell  
**BLACK BEAUTY**

Read by **Jonathan Keeble**

JUNIOR  
CLASSICS



NA216512D

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1	A large, pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water	6:34
2	Four years old – ready to be ‘broken in’	4:39
3	A new home with Squire Gordon, near Birtwick	8:07
4	Ginger’s story	5:55
5	Cropping, blinkers and other indignities	5:39
6	The good master	2:29
7	Wise Black Beauty	4:14
8	James gets promotion	3:02
9	Fire!	5:44
10	Advice from John	3:24
11	Galloping in an emergency	5:44
12	Ginger, Merrylegs and I are sold	3:13
13	To Earlshall Park – and an introduction to a bearing rein	4:32
14	Ginger rebels...	2:45

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15	Reuben Smith – a sad tale	5:55
16	Sold again – to a livery stables in Bath	5:33
17	Sold once more – to Mr Barry	4:31
18	Working for a London cab driver – Jeremiah Barker	4:29
19	Captain's story	4:09
20	London work...	6:57
21	The good and the bad	4:08
22	A shock – and a death	2:23
23	Election Day	3:59
24	A crash – and a new partner	2:37
25	Christmas and New Year	5:37
26	A new owner – a corn dealer and baker	1:07
27	A new master	3:55
28	Luck at the sale	4:12
29	New owners – three ladies	6:29

**Total time: 2:14:11**

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# Anna Sewell

## BLACK BEAUTY

There never was a more good tempered, handsome or courageous horse than Black Beauty. From the time kind Squire Gordon took him in hand as a foal, to his last, quiet home with the Misses Blomefield and Ellen, Black Beauty never did less than his best. But it was not always an easy life from a horse's point of view, as Black Beauty himself describes.

Passing from one owner to another, he learns of the drunken cruelty of masters, ladies determined to follow the fashion, whatever the hurt to their carriage horses, and cab-men who would run their horses into the ground, rather than treat them well. Yet whatever misfortune comes to him, Black Beauty bears it nobly.

Black Beauty's tale is not just a well-told story. He offers an insight into a past that is difficult to imagine today. In those days, once you left the train, there were only two ways to get around, on foot and by horse. The hill that you speed up in a car had to be conquered step by step, and if you were a horse, going down the other side with a heavy load was not much easier.

In real life the sufferings of harness horses in Victorian times could be far worse than those Black Beauty and Ginger experienced. Victorian newspapers were full of stories about atrocities committed by half-witted stable boys and bad-tempered grooms. The newspapers might well have reported the suffering inflicted by their employers. Those magnificent carriage horses strutting through Hyde Park held their heads high not through pride, but because they were forced to do so by a savage bit attached to a bearing rein. Stamping feet, foaming mouths and rattling harnesses were all proofs that the horses were suffering from ceaseless pain. One of the cruellest whims against which the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals conducted a long campaign was the barbaric practice of docking the tail, depriving the horse of its natural fly swat.

Horse dealers were mostly reputable men with an interest in caring for their horses, but some were 'copers' who would use a range of tricks to deceive the gullible – at the expense of the horse. A lively animal

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which might be a dangerous runaway was given the 'ginger', a sound thrashing for a few minutes to make it appear quiet and gentle when displayed before the victim. If the horse was a jade, dull and listless, it would be kept in a dark stall and only when the buyer arrived brought out into the bright light, startled and looking frisky.

Anna Sewell's classic story informs us as much today as it did in 1877, when it first appeared. She died at an early age, and did not live to see its success, not only in terms of its popularity but in the effect it had on animal welfare. Even the horses of her funeral train benefited. Her mother insisted that their painful bearing reins be removed. Few books can have been as important in 'inducing kindness, sympathy and an understanding treatment of horses' as hers.

**Notes by Benedict Flynn**



**THE BROUGHAM**  
A popular Victorian carriage.



**THE LANDAU**  
Used for drives in parks.



**THE CURRICLE**  
The elegant travel  
solution for the  
fashionable man.



**THE DOG CART**  
For those short  
country journeys.



**THE HORSE-DRAWN BUS**

With its two-man crew. Note the advertising...



Cab drivers with their hansom cabs.



**KENDALL'S  
OMNIBUS**

At Islington  
Green, 1848.  
(JAMES POLLARD)

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The old hackney coach, 1886.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

For a comprehensive account of the history of coaches in Victorian and Edwardian times see *Carriages at Eight* by Frank E. Huggett (Scribners).

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## The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

<b>VAUGHAN WILLIAMS</b> THE LARK ASCENDING English Northern Philharmonia, David Lloyd-Jones, conductor	8.553955
<b>HUMPERDINCK</b> SLEEPING BEAUTY ETC. Czecho-Slovak RSO (Bratislava), Martin Fischer-Dieskau, conductor	8.223369
<b>SULLIVAN</b> MASQUERADE FROM THE MERCHANT OF VENICE RTE Concert Orchestra, Dublin, Andrew Penny, conductor	8.223461
<b>ELGAR</b> ELEGY Capella Istropolitana, Adrian Leaper, conductor	8.550331
<b>KARAMANOV</b> SYMPHONY NO. 3 Moscow Symphony Orchestra, Antonio de Almeida, conductor	8.223796

**Music programming by Nicolas Soames**

Cover picture: Black Beauty by Hemesh Alles.

Anna Sewell

# BLACK BEAUTY

Read by **Jonathan Keeble**

Black Beauty, the friendly, patient stallion with a white blaze upon his forehead, is one of the most familiar figures in childrens' literature.

After the first lively, carefree years in the fields, Black Beauty learns to accept the saddle and bridle and the rule of his masters. But a succession of misfortunes shows that the life of a horse can be harsh and painful.

This touching portrait, full of drama and sadness, is as moving now as when it was first written in 1877.



**Jonathan Keeble** – After training at the Central School of Speech and Drama, Jonathan appeared at many leading repertory theatres including Coventry, Liverpool and a season at Manchester's Royal Exchange. Now an established voice actor, he has narrated several books and performed over 150 radio plays for the BBC. Favourites include: *Bomber*, *Dr Who*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *The Barchester Chronicles*, *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*. He also performs *The Devil in Stravinsky's The Soldier's Tales* for Naxos AudioBooks.

CD ISBN:

978-962-634-165-0

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Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Recording.

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Total time  
2:14:11