

Cast



Narrator 1



Black Beauty



James



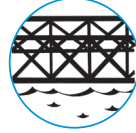
Mrs. Gordon



Narrator 2



Mr. Gordon



Man



Ginger

Non-speaking roles



Merrylegs



Joe



Dick

Work with the children to allocate characters and prepare a short performance. Discuss the stage directions in advance and make sure the children understand how to follow the script.

(The black horse has a new owner.)

Narrator 1:

In May, the horse was sold to Mr. Gordon. He was put in a big stable with four stalls. The groom was called James Howard. In the next stall there was a horse called Merrylegs, who Mr. Gordon's children rode.

Narrator 2:

The next day, the horse's new master rode him for the first time. He was very pleased with him.

Mr. Gordon:

What shall we call him?

Mrs. Gordon:

He has a very handsome face. How about Black Beauty?

Narrator 1:

There was another horse in the stable called Ginger, who told Black Beauty about her life before she was bought by Mr. Gordon.

Ginger:

My first owners made me wear a bearing rein which made my neck very stiff. I became angry and jumped and kicked—so they sold me. It's better here, of course, but that might change.

Narrator 2:

Luckily, Ginger was wrong. Their new owner, Mr. Gordon, was kind, and he never made them wear a bearing rein.

Narrator 1: One day in the autumn, the master and James had to go on a long journey. Black Beauty pulled a small cart, and they went along the road until they came to a bridge. The bridge was flat, and because the water in the river was quite high, it nearly reached it.

Narrator 2: They returned home late that evening. It was very windy—a storm was coming, and it was nearly dark when they reached the bridge again. Black Beauty could see that the water was now covering the middle of the bridge. Suddenly, he felt strange, so he stopped.

Mr. Gordon: Go on, Beauty.

Narrator 1: But the horse would not move.

Narrator 2: At that moment, they heard a voice shout.

Man: Stop! Don't cross!

Narrator 1: It was a man from the village.

Man: The bridge is broken. You can't cross it.

Mr. Gordon: Thank you, Beauty!

Narrator 2: That night he was given a warm dinner, and a thick bed of straw. This made him happy, because he was very tired.

Narrator 1: The master and mistress decided to visit some friends who lived about fifty miles away. It was a long journey, but James drove Ginger and Beauty carefully, and as evening came, they arrived at the town where the friends lived.

Narrator 2: Ginger and Beauty were taken to a rented stable where many other horses were staying. Beauty was very tired and quickly went to sleep.

When he woke up, his nose was full of smoke, and he couldn't breathe. There was a strange noise, which frightened him.

Narrator 1: The groom, Dick Towler, tried to pull the horses from their stalls, but they were all too afraid to move. Then, James came in.

James: Come with me, Beauty.

Narrator 2: He tied his scarf over Beauty's eyes. Beauty let him lead him out of the stable, because he trusted him. A man took Beauty, and James went back to get Ginger.

Narrator 1: One by one, the horses slowly came out of the stalls. The fire engine came soon after, and the fire was stopped. No horses died, but some of them were hurt.

Narrator 2: Later, they learned that Dick Towler was smoking a pipe when the fire started. After that, pipes were never allowed in Mr. Gordon's stable again.

Narrator 1: Ginger and Beauty were glad to get home, but the next day they heard some bad news. James was going to leave them.

Narrator 2: A new groom called Joe Green came to take his job. At first the horses weren't sure about Joe, but he was gentle and kind, and they soon started to like him.

Narrator 1: Finally, the morning came when James had to leave. The horses were all very sad as they watched him walk out of the gate.