

January 3, 2021

Dear Anna Sewell,

As long as I can remember, I've loved reading more than anything else. I love being able to escape from my own problems and into someone else's. Your book, *Black Beauty* is hands down one of my favorites. I love horses, and the way you describe the things that *Black Beauty* experiences, it's so vivid, and it's definitely made me look at the world a different way.

I used to ride horses a few times a week, rode competitively in competitions, and was even involved in the training process of a horse. I loved them so much. Personally I would rather be in the barn and around horses than around other people. They seem to understand me, and I them. Even though I felt this way, I never pondered what they truly felt like, or what they thought. One day, when I went to stay with my grandparents, I found my Grandma's old copy of your book, *Black Beauty*, and immediately dived in. I simply couldn't put it down. I was thrown into the world of being a horse in the 19th century, and I loved every minute of it. I started to think about what it would be like to be an animal. Next thing I knew, I would be looking at my dog, wondering what she was feeling, thinking, or how her days, nights, dreams, nightmares and memories were any different from mine.

*Black Beauty* helped me realize that just because an animal can't express their feelings the way we can, that doesn't mean they don't have them. And I never, ever want any animal to ever feel the same way about me as Beauty felt about Mr. Skinner, that it would be better to die than be under his care. Now, everything I do, I do with the animal in mind, because I would never do anything to hurt them in any way. The needs of my horses come ahead of my own needs to practice or my wish to win. The horse that I was helping to train, Joy, was more willing to listen to me as I learned how to listen to and see her cues. She trusted me more, and I trusted her more, too. Joy and I began to compete better as our

understanding of each other grew. Joy went on to live in another's barn, but during the time I spent with her she became one of my best friends.

Thank you for the amazing experiences that I found in your book, and the changed thought process that it brought about. You showed me how all things are connected, and that everything we do affects someone. Animals deserve our utmost respect, big or small. If you treat them well, they won't hold a grudge against you, and will always try their best. My only regret is that I haven't read and gotten lost in any of your other works...yet.

Sincerely,

*Liliana Riggle*

Liliana Riggle, Grade 7 (11 years)