

The last sad day finally came. Our master and his family were taken to the railway station; and as their train glided away, we knew we would never see them again.

Chapter 4

Earlshall Park

The following day, John took me and Ginger to our new home at Earlshall Park. This was the home of a rich earl¹ who had a very fine house and many stables.

Our new groom was called Mr York, who promised John he would do his best to look after us. John told him that he had never used the check rein² with either of us, because it was too cruel a thing to use. But York replied that we would have to wear it here. 'I prefer not to use it myself,' he said, 'and his lordship is always very reasonable about horses; but my lady—that's another thing. She will have style, and if her carriage horses are not reined up tight she won't look at them.'

John was sorry for it, but could not argue. He patted us for the last time, and was gone.

¹ *earl*—a man of noble rank.

² *check rein*—a rein that pulls a horse's head back, making the horse look more noble; but it is very painful for the horse.

Our new master was very pleased with us, and when York told him what John had said about the check rein, the earl told him not to do it up too tight, so that we could get used to it gradually.

In the afternoon we were harnessed to the carriage and led round to the front of the hall. It was a very grand building. Our mistress came out in a fine silk dress and got into her carriage. This was my first experience of wearing a check rein, and York made sure it was not done up too tightly. It was uncomfortable to wear, and I could not put my head down to give it a rest, but it did not pull my head higher than I was used to carrying it. I was worried about Ginger, but she seemed to be all right for now. In her early days the check rein had been put very tightly on her and had hurt her badly; and this was partly why she did not trust people.

The next day we drew the carriage up to the door once more. The mistress came down the steps, but this time she said, 'York, you must put those horses' heads higher. They are not fit to be seen like they are.'

York got down, and said very respectfully, 'I beg your pardon, my lady, but these horses have not been reined up for three years, and my lord said it would be safer to give them time to get used to it. But, if your ladyship pleases, I can make them a little tighter.'

'Do so,' she said.

York came round to our heads and shortened the rein himself, one hole, I think. Every little hole makes a difference, and that day we had a steep hill to go up.