

Horses of Destiny

Paul Brown and Fairfax Downey



This edition published 2023
by Living Book Press

ISBN: 978-1-922919-14-4 (hardcover)
978-1-922919-13-7 (softcover)
978-1-922919-23-6 (ebook)

This edition Copyright © 2023 by Living Book Press

Originally published in 1949 by Charles Scribner's Sons.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any other form or means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner and the publisher or as provided by Australian law.



A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
National Library of Australia

HORSES OF DESTINY

BY
FAIRFAX DOWNEY
AND
PAUL BROWN



WITH PEN-AND-INK ILLUSTRATIONS BY
PAUL BROWN

Living Book Press

CONTENTS

BUCEPHALUS	1
<i>CHARGER OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT</i>	
CAESAR'S HORSE	5
<i>THROW-BACK TO EOHIPPIUS</i>	
THE SEIAN HORSE	8
<i>BAD LUCK ON HIS BACK</i>	
INCITATUS	11
<i>NEARLY A ROMAN CONSUL</i>	
BROIEFORT	14
<i>TROPHY FROM THE SARACENS</i>	
BABIECA	18
<i>STEED OF EL CID</i>	
SHARATZ	21
<i>A VISION STORMED A CASTLE</i>	
JOAN OF ARC'S CHARGER	24
<i>HE BORE A MAID IN ARMOR</i>	
MORZILLO	27
<i>HORSE THAT BECAME A GOD</i>	
MAROCCO	31
<i>HIS TRICKS WERE HIS SALVATION</i>	
GODOLPHIN BARB	34
<i>CHANCE AND A FOUNDATION SIRE</i>	
BLACK BESS	38
<i>HIGHWAYMAN'S HORSE</i>	
ECLIPSE (English)	42
<i>TEMPER AND A WHIRLWIND</i>	
RANGER	45
<i>STUD WITH A LEGEND</i>	
MESSENGER	48
<i>AMERICAN PATRIARCH</i>	

JUSTIN MORGAN	52
<i>"GREATEST LITTLE HORSE IN THE WORLD"</i>	
LISETTE	56
<i>MARBOT'S FIGHTING MARE</i>	
COPENHAGEN	60
<i>WELLINGTON'S WAR HORSE</i>	
MARENGO	64
<i>NAPOLEON'S FAVORITE</i>	
TRUXTON	67
<i>DEBT AND A DUEL</i>	
ECLIPSE (American)	71
<i>HE CARRIED THE NORTH'S COLORS</i>	
STEELDUST	74
<i>QUARTER HORSE</i>	
OLD WHITEY	77
<i>TARGET IN TWO WARS</i>	
BLACK TOM	81
<i>DRAGOON'S LEAPER</i>	
HAMBLETONIAN	84
<i>SIRE OF TROTTERS</i>	
CRUISER	87
<i>A TERROR AND HIS MASTER</i>	
GOLDSMITH MAID	91
<i>GLAMOUR GIRL IN HARNESS</i>	
TWO-BITS	95
<i>VETERAN OF INDIAN WARS</i>	
WINCHESTER (RIENZI)	100
<i>"AND SHERIDAN TWENTY MILES AWAY"</i>	
TRAVELLER	104
<i>LEE'S BELOVED GRAY</i>	
BLACK KETTLE	108
<i>QUARRY OF HORSE HUNTERS</i>	
MAIDAN	112
<i>CAMPAIGNER AND STEEPLECHASER</i>	
COMANCHE	115
<i>SURVIVOR OF CUSTER'S LAST STAND</i>	

SLEEPY TOM	119
<i>HE RACED THROUGH DARKNESS</i>	
DANDY	123
<i>CAVALRY AND BUFFALOES</i>	
MARESA	126
<i>VICTORY FOR AUSTRIA</i>	
DAN PATCH	130
<i>SALESMAN ON THE HOOF</i>	
RODNEY	134
<i>FIELD ARTILLERY WHEELER</i>	
MANIFESTO	138
<i>SUPER-STEEPLECHASER</i>	
HANS	141
<i>LOVE OF LEARNING AND VICE VERSA</i>	
HEATHERBLOOM	144
<i>CHAMPION TIMBER-TOPPER</i>	
JIM	147
<i>HE RANG THE FIRE GONG</i>	
WEX	151
<i>A POLICE HORSE WENT TO SEA</i>	
BLACK GOLD	155
<i>UNDER A STAR OF ILL OMEN</i>	
MAN O' WAR	159
<i>BIG RED</i>	
GAY BOY	163
<i>DEATH FROM THE AIR</i>	
MIDNIGHT	166
<i>PRIDE OF RODEOS</i>	
ELKRIDGE	170
<i>HE WON BY A HEAD</i>	
CITATION	173
<i>TRIUMPH AND A THREE-YEAR-OLD</i>	

What form of life lower than our own has served humanity as the horse has served it? He has played bravely his part on a thousand fields of battle, facing war's appalling horror, and moved to his task by no hope of glory. He has helped build the world's great cities, their temples, their palaces, their libraries, their universities. He has toiled on the railways of the nations. He has been a partner in the rearing of our homes. He has been the swift messenger of joy and sorrow. He has carried us through many happy hours of recreation. He has stood ready to die in our service when we asked it.

Francis H. Rowley: THE HORSES OF HOMER

BUCEPHALUS

CHARGER OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

THE black yearling from Thessaly snorted and reared, dragging handlers who clung to his bridle off their feet. Their utmost efforts could not control the powerful horse, and cavalry inspectors reluctantly waved him away, rejected.

A boy, barely sixteen, shouted fiercely in protest, “I can ride him!”

Philip, the lame king of Macedon, stared at his son, Alexander. “If you can’t, will you pay his price of thirteen talents?” Philip demanded. The boy nodded, and his father promised, “By the same token, if you can ride him, he’s yours.”

Alexander took the bridle and turned the horse to face the sun. No longer did long, darting shadows—his own and the handlers’—terrify the black. He let the boy stroke the white blaze on his forehead, a blaze so broad that it had given him his name of Oxhead—Bucephalus. Alexander vaulted on to his back, and the horse sprang away in mighty leaps. The struggle ended with Bucephalus galloping smoothly around the course, responding to his rider’s every word and touch.

A soothsayer among the watching crowd called out: "Now can the oracle be fulfilled? It was foretold that when Alexander mastered a wild black horse, he would mount the throne of Macedon."

Before long, Philip lay dead beneath an assassin's knife, and his son and heir led an army across the Hellespont and southward on that extraordinary, years-long march which would end in his conquest of all the known world and gain for him the title Alexander the Great.

Always it was Bucephalus the King rode in combat, though lesser mounts served him for marches. While the spear-bristling Macedonian phalanx bored into the enemy's center, Alexander on his great black war horse launched the thundering cavalry charges that smashed in a flank. Darius and his host were routed on two hard-fought fields, and the mighty Persian Empire humbled in the dust. The rich cities of the Phoenicians fell, and the ancient land of Egypt bowed to the conqueror. Once at a desert camp, Bucephalus was stolen by nomads.

The furious Alexander sent warning he would scour the land with his entire army and leave no man alive, unless his beloved steed was restored. Trembling tribesmen hastened to return the horse.

Bucephalus grew old, as years of conflict hewed out the vast domain. He was eighteen, but still his master's favorite charger when Alexander rode him in the bloody battle that shattered the array of King Porus of India, and his armored elephants. In the midst of the fight, the black's aged heart gave way and, without a wound on his body, he dropped and died.

Alexander buried his gallant horse with ceremony in a splendid tomb of alabaster tiles, adorned with gold leaf, on the



banks of the Hydaspes River and there in his honor founded a city named Bucephala.

A tale declares that the great war horse's fame was also carried on for a time by his descendants. Marco Polo, in his journey through the East in the early fourteenth century, visited the province of Balaxiam in Tartary and wrote: "The Countrey itselfe is very cold. It hath many Horses, and those excellent, great, and swift, which have so hard and strong hoofes on their feet that they need no Iron Shoes, although they runne through Rockes. It is said that not long since there were Horses of the Race of Alexander's Bucephalus, all with his forehead-marke, in the possession of the Kings Uncle, who was slaine for denying the King to have them: whereupon his Widow in angry spite destroyed the whole Race."

CAESAR'S HORSE

THROW-BACK TO EOHIPPUS

SOOTHSAYERS watched the young Roman general breaking the colt he himself had bred. The horse was as wild as he was strong, and the struggle between him and his rider was long and exhausting. In spite of his rearing and kicking, the colt gradually was brought under control, for the man on his back was a consummate horseman. As the battle between wills came to an end, and the lathered animal obeyed the commands of reins and legs, the admiring soothsayers advanced and uttered a prediction:

“As you have Mastered this horse, Caius Julius Caesar, so will you one day gain mastery over the world.”

They ran no great risk with their prophecy. Already Caesar had won his reputation as Rome's foremost military leader and he held the highest political offices of the Republic. With his limitless, unscrupulous ambition, it was indeed safe to predict he would rise to the summit of power.

Every sight of Caesar's horsemanship reminded men of the soothsayers' words. An expert rider from childhood, he would drop his reins and gallop at full speed with his arms clasped

behind his back, or wield sword and javelin with perfection. No other could mount the horse he had trained and sat with such tireless ease.

Besides his swiftness and strength, Caesar's horse possessed an extraordinary feature. All his hoof's were divided so that they resembled toes. Thus he was a throw-back to the prehistoric ancestor of the horse, *eohippus*, whose feet, split into toes, four on the forefeet and three on the hindfeet, later developed into solid hoofs.

Horses always stood high among Caesar's interests. In addition to the bloody combats of gladiators and wild beasts which furthered his political fortunes with the Romans, he staged frequent riding and chariot races in the Circus Maximus. He revived the Trojan Games in which mounted troops of young noblemen engaged in mock combats which required the most accomplished horsemanship.

In campaigns described in his *Commentaries*, Caesar rode his toed steed. From the saddle he dictated to three or more mounted secretaries. For the long, rapid journeys he made—sometimes as far as one hundred miles a day—he spared himself and his horse by shifting to a light carriage. When his steed was brought to him to lead a charge, he was likely to dismount and head the assault on foot to inspire his legions. “When I have won this battle,” he would call out, “I will use my horse for the chase, but at present let us go against the enemy.” And it was his practice when the issue of a battle seemed doubtful to send all horses, including his own, to the rear, so that his troops must stand their ground with no opportunity for flight.

Some years before Caesar fell beneath the daggers of assassins, his horse died. Caesar caused a statue of the celebrated animal to be made and placed before the temple of Venus.



Paul Brown