



## THE SOLDIER AND THE HORSE

A long time ago there was a brave soldier. He had a great, faithful horse that had been his friend for many years. They served together in the war, and fought together on the battlefield, overcoming all the challenges and dangers that they encountered. The soldier knew very well that it was mainly his horse's courage that helped him get home from the battle safe and sound every time, and so he did all he could to give him the best life.

He fed him the best food three times a day, and there was always plenty of straw to snack on whenever he felt like it. He drank litres and litres of water and the soldier refilled it several times a day. He combed his mane and cared for his coat to keep it soft and shiny. And even the blacksmith visited them regularly to keep the horse's hooves healthy.

In short, the soldier did everything for the horse, he pampered him and cared for him. The horse was always fit and lively and he neighed happily in his stable, which was so clean you wouldn't find a single fly in it. And the horse repaid his master with his good service in battle and became his inseparable companion. After some time, the war was over, and the soldier no longer needed a horse for the battlefield. He became a farmer and started using his horse for very hard work. Every day, the horse had to help his master plough the field, dragging

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a very heavy plough behind him. Sometimes, the master made him drag some wood from the forest or bring a heavy load from town. The horse had to work very hard every day and he no longer got such delicious food as before. The master only fed him ordinary weeds and gave him no special care at all. The horse became weaker and thinner. Soon, this strong and noble steed became a poor, fragile animal.

But as fate would have it, after some time, the country went to war again. When the soldier got the news, he started taking better care of the horse right away. He thought that if he started treating him better, his strength would come back, and he would be a reliable and faithful friend to him on the battlefield again. Well, it was too late. And they had to go to war in only a few days...

The day he left for the battlefield, the soldier clad in heavy armour and carrying various weapons put a saddle on his sickly horse and got on his back. The horse could not carry such a heavy load and he fell to the ground under all that weight. When the tired horse tried to get up again, he said to his master sadly: "Now you have to go to battle alone, because your bad treatment changed me from a horse to a donkey. I cannot carry you like I used to."

Let this be a lesson that you should always think about others and never forget about your friends.