

Lesson 1 –Reading focus

An extract from *The racehorse who wouldn't Gallop* by Clare Balding

Charlie knew that she could be a top- class rider if she was given the chance, but so far she had only ever ridden a cow. Her dad told her it was the same thing, but she knew that it wasn't. Charlie couldn't imagine a life that wasn't surrounded by cows and chickens and pigs and large muddy fields. Her family lived on a farm at the end of a long and bumpy drive in the middle of nowhere. They were five miles from the nearest village, twenty miles from the nearest town and it was so dark at night that the stars were bright and clear.

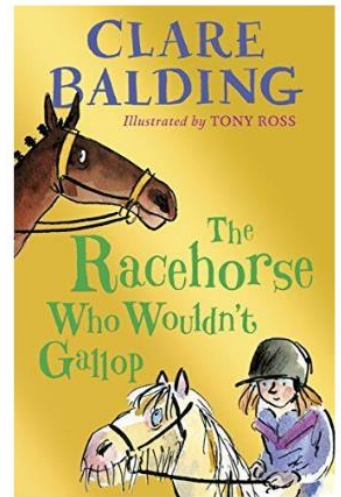
Boris licked her again and Charlie ruffled his head, sniffing. He had clearly been rolling in the muck heap again.
'Come on, Boris, you stinky boy, let's get going,' she said. 'We've got eggs to find and pigs to feed.'

Charlie had been christened Charlotte Elizabeth Bass, but her father thought that sounded a bit formal, so had called her Charlie from day one. Along with her older brothers, Harry and Larry, Charlie worked on the farm before and after she went to school.

Charlie's mother Caroline was copy-editor for a major publishing firm. It meant that she read the first drafts of non-fiction books, checking them for spelling, grammar and factual errors. She read at least a book a day, sometimes two, and was a mine of information on subjects from bee-keeping to Buddhism, trees to trampolines, ancient mythology to modern art.

She had fallen in love with Charlie's dad, Bill Bass, at the Three Counties Show, where he was showing a cow. It didn't win the main prize (in fact, it came last), but, when Charlie's mum went to commiserate with him afterwards, she was bowled over by his charm.

'I realized it was your dad who should've won first prize. He was gorgeous,' Charlie's mum had told her once.



- 1) How far away was the nearest town?
- 2) What is Charlie's name?
- 3) Read the statements below and say whether they are true or false.
Charlie had only ever ridden a cow.
The farm was at the end of a short drive.
Charlie only worked on the farm after school.
Mr Bass' cow finished in last place.
- 4) What are Charlie's siblings called?
- 5) What is Charlie's mother's job?
- 6) Where did Mr and Mrs Bass meet?

