

Version for an 8 year old reader

Enbarr the Speedy Horse

John Moffett loved his horse, Enbarr, very much. Enbarr was a beautiful and fast horse. She had shiny fur and a long, flowing mane. John took very good care of her. He brushed her, fed her yummy hay, and let her run in the fields.

Enbarr loved to run! John would ride her, and she would go so fast it felt like flying. John would laugh and cheer, and Enbarr loved making him happy.

One evening, John heard loud, sad noises from the stable. Enbarr was upset! A mean man had jumped on her back and was making her run away. John was very angry and worried. He loved Enbarr like she was part of his family. He had to get her back!

So, John decided to follow them. He didn't have a horse, so he had to walk. He walked and walked for a very long time. He was very tired, but he wouldn't give up. He thought about Enbarr and how much he missed her.

Finally, John reached a city called Dublin. He asked the police for help. They told him that sometimes horses are brought to the river to drink water. So, John went to the river to look for Enbarr.

And there she was! John saw Enbarr drinking water with other horses. He was so happy he cried. Enbarr was safe!

The next night, John and the police came back to the river. They took Enbarr away from the mean man. Enbarr was so happy to see John! She rubbed her head on him and ate an apple from his hand.

John and Enbarr traveled home together. John talked to Enbarr in a soft voice, telling her how brave and special she was. He promised her that they would always be together.

When they got close to home, everyone in town came out to see them. They cheered and welcomed John and Enbarr back. Enbarr was so excited she ran very fast! John's hat even fell off! 1

As they neared those outskirts of the townland, the familiar smells and sights accelerated her plodding trot to a cantor, propelling her back homeward to her 'true place'. The townspeople came from their homes to gather along the roadside to offer choruses of 'céajd míle fáilte (a hundred thousand welcomes) to the victorious heroes and to celebrate their triumphant return with her John Moffett. The sight of her barn and their family increased her speed two-fold, enough to loosen the hat off John's head. It fluttered in the roadway and a cry went up, as John tugged her reins to turn 'round. His whisper in her ear perked her for this chance to exhibit their teamwork. They had practiced this trick and it was time to show her talents.

John told Enbarr to stop and go back for his hat. Enbarr was so well-trained, she did it perfectly. Everyone cheered even louder! They were so happy to have John and his amazing horse back home.

And so, John and Enbarr lived happily ever after, the best of friends in all of Ballybay.

Version a 12-year-old can read and enjoy:

Enbarr of Ballybay

John Moffett heard loud, upset sounds from the stable. The horse, Enbarr, was definitely not happy! It was past her bedtime, and she wanted to be sleeping and dreaming of running free in fields with the wind in her mane.

Enbarr had a great life. She had yummy hay, fresh air, and a kind owner named John who took care of her since she was a baby. Every morning, John would come to the barn with food and brush her shiny coat. He'd tell her how pretty she was, and Enbarr would happily agree. John trained her and knew she was super fast. He would ride her to the far end of the fields, and they'd race like the wind. John would laugh with joy, and Enbarr loved making him happy.

One day, John was at home when he saw another man on Enbarr, whipping her to go fast. They zoomed out of the field towards the road. Enbarr's scared sounds made John really angry. He didn't know the rider but knew that only a horse thief would steal the fastest horse in the area. John didn't have a gun, and now his precious Enbarr was gone.

John had planned to race Enbarr, because she was so good, but now they were both disappearing in the distance. He knew the roads well because he had helped build them years ago. That's how he came to live in Ballybay with his wife, Elisabeth, and they had three kids: James, Nancy, and John.

With a family to feed, John was always looking for ways to make money. When Enbarr came into their lives, John's father-in-law suggested he take care of her. The kids loved Enbarr and riding on her back. John named her after a magical horse from stories, hoping it would make his kids believe that anything is possible. But now, something impossible had happened: Enbarr was stolen!

John loved Enbarr like family and had to get her back. So, he grabbed some things and set off on foot to find her. He was worried about Enbarr, who wasn't used to being treated badly. He walked for hours, thinking about her.

As night fell, the moon and stars came out, and John thought he saw Enbarr in the distance. He wasn't sure if he really saw her, but he kept going. He figured the thief would take her to Dublin to sell her. It would take him a whole day to get there on foot. John was tired, but he loved Enbarr and wouldn't give up.

At sunrise, John was halfway to Dublin. The morning was beautiful, and it reminded him of his rides with Enbarr. He hoped Enbarr was being brave. He remembered the stories he told his kids about Enbarr's namesake, a magical horse that could run over land and sea and protect its rider. John wished those stories were real so Enbarr could protect herself.

When John finally got to Dublin, he went to the police to report the theft. He didn't want to get in trouble himself! The police told him to go to the river where horses were brought to drink in the evening. So, John spent the day looking for Enbarr, hoping to find her safe.

That evening, he went to the river, and there she was! John was so happy he cried. Enbarr was okay, just a little scared and confused. John had found her!

The next night, John and the police came back and took Enbarr from the stable boys. Enbarr was so happy to see John! She followed him like a puppy, afraid to lose him again.

The next day, John and Enbarr rode home. It was a long ride, but John talked to Enbarr the whole way, telling her how brave she was and how much he missed her. He promised her they would forget about the bad man and have many more happy rides.

As they got closer to home, Enbarr started to trot faster. When they arrived, all the townspeople were there to welcome them back! Enbarr was so excited that John's hat flew off his head! John told Enbarr to go back and get it, and they did, showing everyone how amazing they were as a team. Everyone cheered for the fastest and best horse in all of Ballybay!

Version more suitable for a 15-year-old reader:

Enbarr of Ballybay

John Moffett heard the distressed sounds coming from the stable. The high-pitched squeals were definitely Enbarr, his horse, letting everyone know she was not happy about her routine being disturbed. It was past sundown, time for her to rest and dream of running free in open fields.

Enbarr's life had been great. She got plenty of fresh hay, fresh air, and exercise, and John, a kind man, had taken great care of her since she was a yearling. She used to sleep in another barn with her mom when she was little, but that was a long time ago. Every morning, John would come to the barn with food, ready to start the day. He always made sure to brush the hay from her mane and pet her shiny coat, telling her what a good and beautiful girl she was. Enbarr would happily nicker and nod in response. She felt loved and knew she was pretty.

John treated her like the thoroughbred she was, and she knew she was fast. He trained her to run to the far end of the pastures, and she loved stretching out and running faster than the wind. He'd whisper in her ear that she could be even faster, and she always proved him right. They both felt the thrill of speed and power, and John would always laugh in triumph, which made Enbarr just as happy.

One day, John rushed out of the house and saw another man on Enbarr's back, snapping a switch at her. They took off from the paddock at top speed, heading towards the road as the sun set. Enbarr's whinnies were full of fear and distrust, a sound John had never heard from her before. But man, was she fast!

John was instantly filled with rage and a sense of loss as he watched them disappear down Carrickmacross Road. He didn't recognize the rider but knew that any horse thief would go for the fastest horse in County Monaghan. Anyone who knew horses could see Enbarr's potential. She was always near the front at the end of a race, and John had big plans for her. Now, those plans were fading into the distance along with Enbarr.

John knew the road they were taking like the back of his hand. He had even helped build it years ago when it led him to Ballybay, where he met his wife, Elizabeth. Her father let them get married as long as they settled down on her dowry, which was a piece of land he owned. Their family grew, with kids named James, Nancy, and John.

With a growing family to feed, John was always looking for opportunities. That's when Enbarr came into their lives. His father-in-law encouraged him to take ownership of her, and his kids loved their new pet and the occasional rides she gave them. They named her after a horse from Celtic myths, hoping to fill their imaginations with magic and wonder. Imagination was important, but now, something impossible had happened. All his hard work and training were being used by a thief as Enbarr galloped away.

John had to follow the road to find Enbarr. Elizabeth understood his determination to get her back. Since he didn't have a horse, he had to walk. His anger and the unfairness of the situation drove him forward, and he was worried about Enbarr, who wasn't used to being mistreated. He could still hear her sad cries in the stable as he walked. He walked faster, imagining what the thief might do to her. He hoped that even the thief would let her rest and give her water.

John was getting tired, but he kept going. The moon and stars came out, and he thought he saw Enbarr in the distance. He wasn't sure if it was real or just his imagination, but he kept going. If the thief was planning to sell her, Dublin was the most likely place. John figured it would take him a full 24 hours to get there on foot.

John's devotion to Enbarr, and his family's belief in him, were about to be tested. He pushed himself on, despite being tired and heartbroken.

When he reached Slane at dawn, he knew he was halfway to Dublin. The morning light made the dew in the fields sparkle like fallen stars. John remembered his and Enbarr's early morning rides back home. She was always full of energy then, excited to start the

day.

He hoped Enbarr was still fighting back in her own way. He remembered the stories he told his children about Enbarr's namesake, Aonbharr, who was "quicker than the naked cold wind of spring" and could "travel over land or sea with equal ease." The kids loved those stories, especially the one about how Aonbharr protected whoever rode her. These tales were meant to comfort them, making them believe their dad would always be safe.

Walking down that lonely road, John cursed the thief. But then he remembered the myth – Enbarr, named after a horse of protection, was carrying that thief. John felt like his anger was useless.

Finally reaching Dublin, John went straight to the local police to report the crime. He wanted to make sure they knew he was the owner, not another thief. He had enough problems already and didn't need any more.

The police told him to check out the River Liffey in the evening, where horses were brought to drink. They said if he could positively identify Enbarr, they would help him. Impatient, John spent the rest of the day searching stables, hoping to find her and end his worries. Every neigh and snort made his heart jump as he looked at all the different horses. No luck. But he swore he could feel her nearby.

As evening came, the city quieted down. Families went home for dinner, and John found a spot by the river to watch for Enbarr. Soon, stable boys began bringing horses to drink, and there she was! To John, she was the most beautiful horse there. His heart soared, and tears of joy ran down his face. All his exhaustion and worry were worth it.

Enbarr was alive and unharmed, though a bit lost among the unfamiliar horses. Despite being confused, she drank and behaved cautiously. John had found her and now had the proof he needed to get help from the police.

The next night, John returned with some officers to take Enbarr back from the stable boys. Finally free, Enbarr sniffed the air, perked up her ears, and walked straight to John, nickering and snorting a greeting to her loyal friend. She nuzzled his shoulder and ate the juicy apple he offered. "There's my girl, there's my Enbarr," John said.

They walked slowly to a stable to feed and groom her, getting her ready for the ride home in the morning. Without a lead, she followed John like a puppy, watching his every move, afraid of losing him again.

On horseback, the trip back to Crievagh would take less than half a day. But there was no rush. John wanted to take his time, comforting Enbarr and helping her recover from the trauma. He whispered to her about her bravery and how glad he was to have her back. He promised her that the bad experience would soon be forgotten, replaced by happy rides together. And that she would reclaim her title as the best horse in all of Ballybay.

As they approached their town, the familiar sights and smells made Enbarr speed up. Soon she was cantering, eager to get home. The townspeople came out to the roadside, cheering and welcoming John and Enbarr back like heroes.

The sight of her barn and their family made Enbarr so excited that John's hat flew off his head! As it fluttered to the ground, John turned Enbarr around. He whispered in her ear, and she knew it was time to show off their teamwork.

With all her speed, Enbarr raced back, and John scooped up his hat as they passed it. The crowd roared with cheers, celebrating the glorious return of the fastest, most loved horse in Ballybay.