

Lesson 20



LANGUAGE DETECTIVE

Talk About the Writer's Words

Adjectives are words that describe how something looks, tastes, feels, sounds, or smells. Work with a partner. Find the Vocabulary words that are adjectives. What are your clues? Tell what each adjective describes in the sentence.

Vocabulary in Context

1

piercing

The wind made a high, **piercing** sound as it whipped through the palms.



2

descended

The surfer **descended** on the face of the wave and turned sharply to continue riding.



3

savage

The **savage** snarl of a leopard is something no explorer wants to hear!



4

quivered

At the first sound of thunder, the wild horses **quivered** and bolted across the prairie.



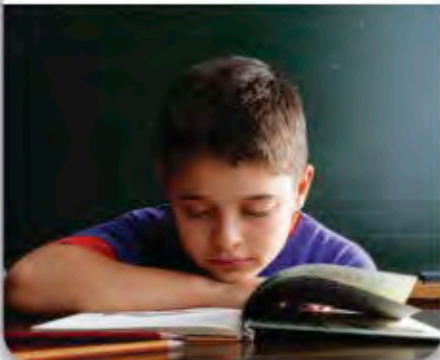
- ▶ Study each **Context Card**.
- ▶ Use the context of each sentence to clarify the meaning of the Vocabulary word.

5 delicacy

Fruit would have been a **delicacy** for the crew, but none could be found on the island.

**6 fitful**

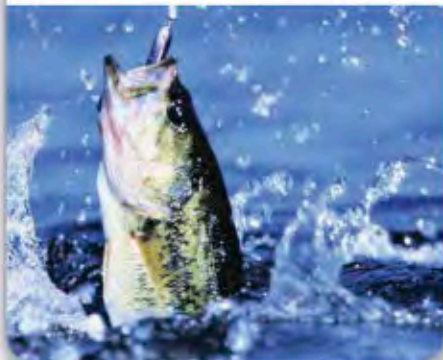
This boy had a **fitful** sleep after reading an adventure story last night. He is very tired.

**7 heave**

Divers often **heave**, or lift up, at least one large artifact as proof of their discovery.

**8 diminishing**

Overfishing is **diminishing**, or decreasing, the supply of fish.

**9 rhythmic**

The **rhythmic** sound of waves continuously beating the shore is relaxing.

**10 marveling**

For centuries, people have been **marveling** at the beauty of dramatic sunsets.





Read and Comprehend

✓ TARGET SKILL

Story Structure As you read “The Black Stallion,” identify the setting and the main character. Then look for the **conflict** (the central problem faced by the main character), important plot events, and the **resolution** of the conflict. Use a graphic organizer like the one shown below to help you chart the overall structure of the story.

Setting	Character
Plot	
Conflict: Events: Resolution:	

✓ TARGET STRATEGY

Question As you read “The Black Stallion,” ask yourself **questions** about the story structure. Where does the story take place? What is the main character’s problem? What does he do to solve his problem? If you are unsure of the answers, reread the text to find the information.

PREVIEW THE TOPIC

Human-Animal Interaction

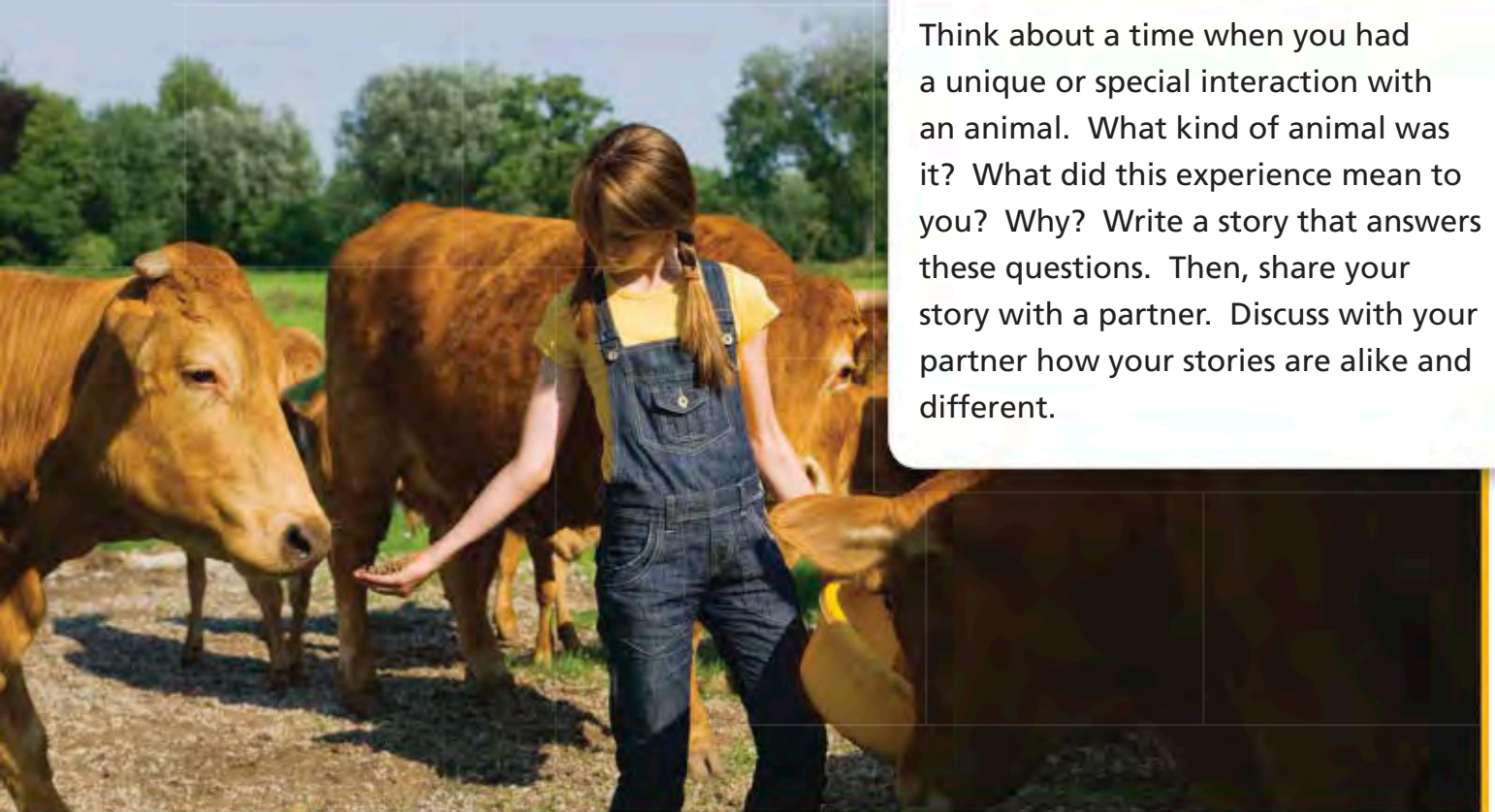
On any neighborhood street, you may see dogs walking with their owners and cats lounging in sunny windows. These animals and many others have a long history of interacting with humans. Thousands of years ago, people realized how animals could help them. Sheep, cows, and goats could supply them with wool and milk. Horses and oxen could pull carts and plows. Dogs could herd sheep. Cats could catch mice and other pests. In return, people could provide the animals with food, shelter, and protection.

“The Black Stallion” is a story about the interaction between a boy and a wild horse. Both the boy and the horse can benefit from the relationship, but first the boy must earn the horse’s trust.



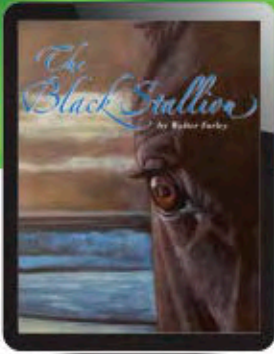
Think Write Pair Share

Think about a time when you had a unique or special interaction with an animal. What kind of animal was it? What did this experience mean to you? Why? Write a story that answers these questions. Then, share your story with a partner. Discuss with your partner how your stories are alike and different.



Lesson 20

ANCHOR TEXT



✓ GENRE

Adventure stories include exciting action that takes place in unusual settings. As you read, look for:

- ▶ a mood of excitement or suspense
- ▶ an ongoing conflict or multiple conflicts
- ▶ characters who show strong personal qualities

MEET THE AUTHOR

Walter Farley

Walter Farley turned a childhood love of horses into his life's work. He began writing *The Black Stallion* when he was just sixteen years old. The novel was published ten years later while he was still in college. From there, Walter Farley went on to raise horses and write over thirty books during his lifetime. Many of those books are part of the popular *Black Stallion* series.

MEET THE ILLUSTRATOR

Robert Barret

In addition to being an incredibly talented painter, muralist, and illustrator, Robert Barret is also an award-winning college art professor. He has studied painting in Europe and exhibited his work in several museums and galleries.



The Black Stallion

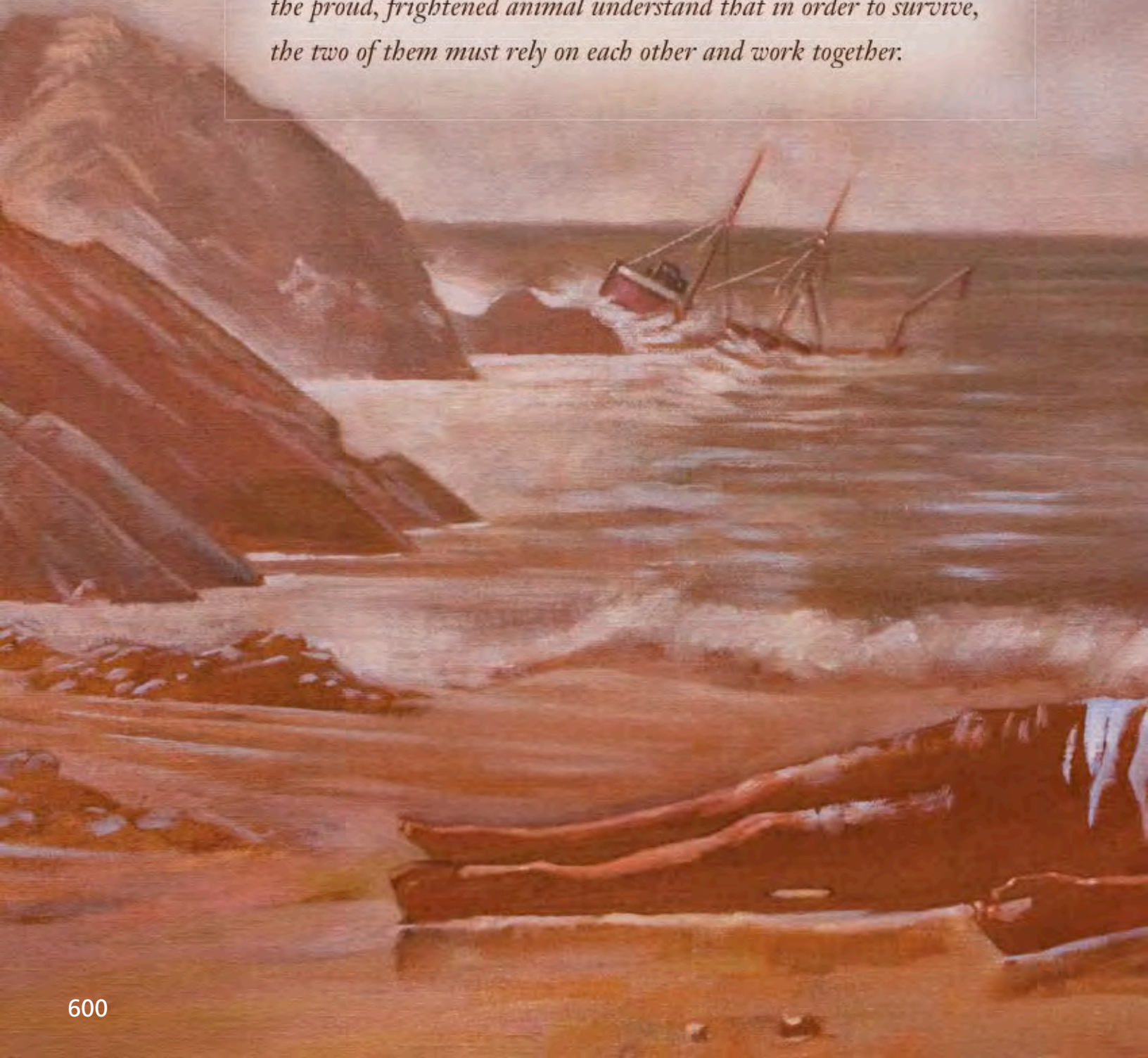
by Walter Farley

illustrations by Robert Barret

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

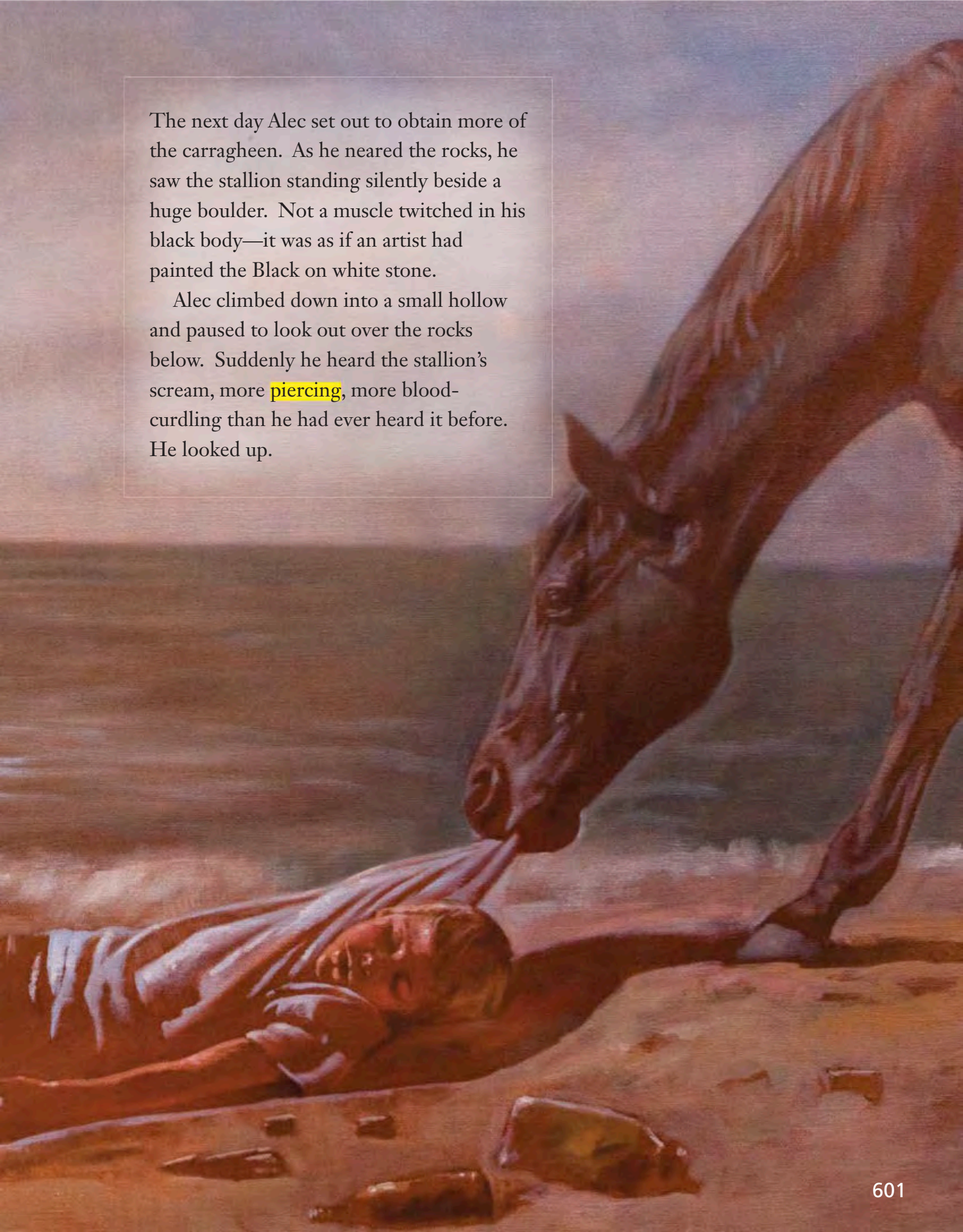
What can a person learn by building a relationship with an animal?

After being caught in a terrifying shipwreck, Alec Ramsay is pulled safely to shore by a wild black stallion that was also aboard the ship. They are the only two survivors, and they are stranded on a deserted island with only a seaweed-like plant called carragheen and the occasional fish to keep them from starving. Alec has been working hard to gain the horse's trust and to help the proud, frightened animal understand that in order to survive, the two of them must rely on each other and work together.



The next day Alec set out to obtain more of the carragheen. As he neared the rocks, he saw the stallion standing silently beside a huge boulder. Not a muscle twitched in his black body—it was as if an artist had painted the Black on white stone.

Alec climbed down into a small hollow and paused to look out over the rocks below. Suddenly he heard the stallion's scream, more **piercing**, more blood-curdling than he had ever heard it before. He looked up.



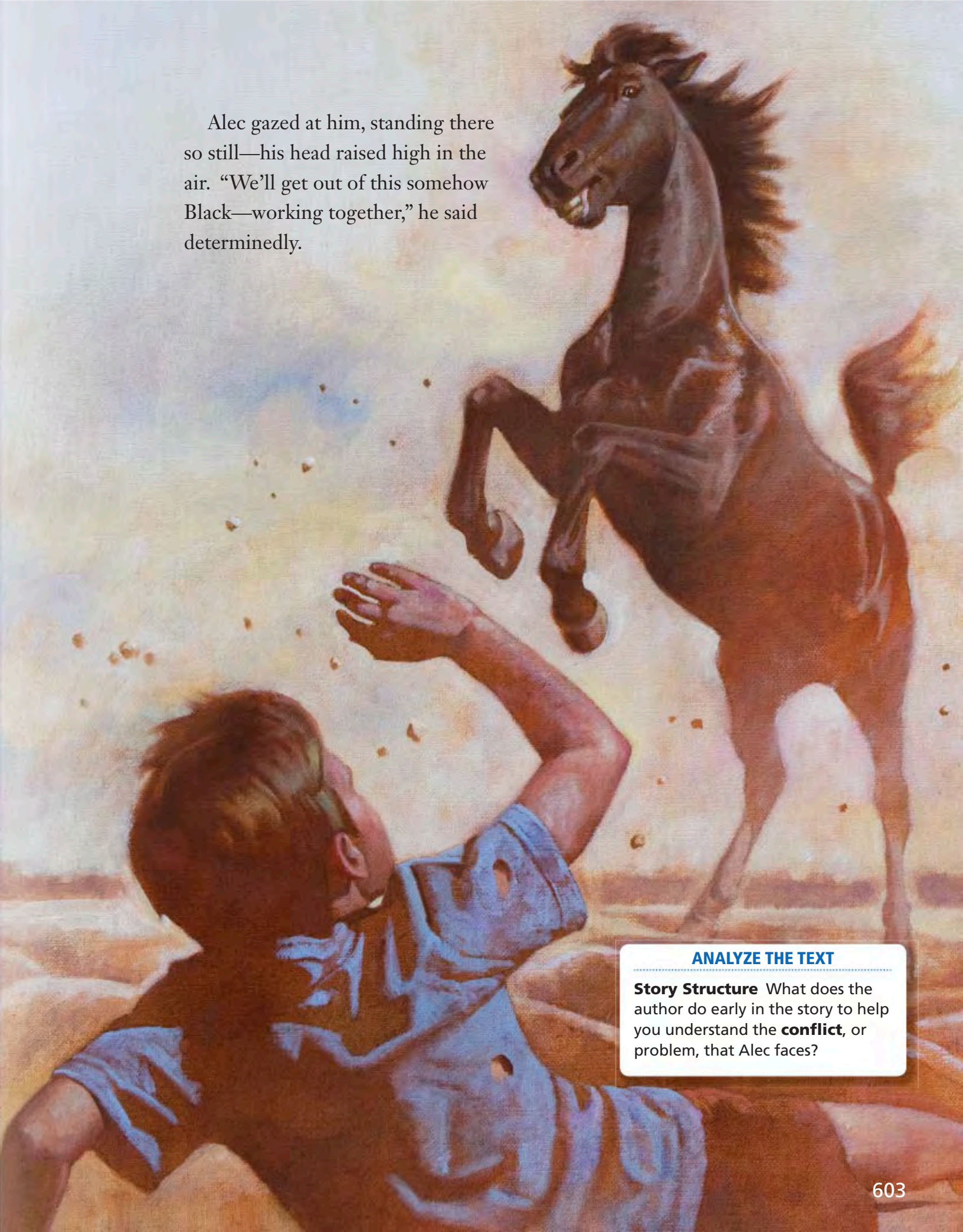
The Black was on his hind legs, his teeth bared. Then with a mighty leap, he shot away from the boulder toward Alec. Swiftly he came—faster with every magnificent stride. He was almost on top of him when he thundered to a halt and reared again. Alec jumped to the side, tripped on a stone and fell to the ground. High above him the Black's legs pawed the air, and then **descended** three yards in front of him! Again he went up and down—again and again he pounded. The ground on which Alec lay shook from the force of his hoofs. The stallion's eyes never left the ground in front of him.

Gradually his pounding lessened and then stopped. He raised his head high and his whistle shrilled through the air. He shook his head and slowly moved away, his nostrils trembling.

Alec regained his feet and cautiously made his way toward the torn earth, his brain flooded with confusion. There in front of him he saw the strewn parts of a long, yellowish-black body, and the venomous head of a snake, crushed and lifeless. He stood still—the suddenness of discovering life, other than the Black and himself on the island, astounding him! Sweat broke out on his forehead as he realized what a poisonous snake bite would have meant—suffering and perhaps death! Dazed, he looked at the stallion just a few feet away. Had the Black killed the snake to save him? Was the stallion beginning to understand that they needed each other to survive?

Slowly the boy walked toward the Black. The stallion's mane swept in the wind, his muscles twitched, his eyes moved restlessly, but he stood his ground as the boy approached. Alec wanted the horse to understand that he would not hurt him. Cautiously he reached a hand toward the stallion's head. The Black drew it back as far as he could without moving. Alec stepped closer and to the side of him. Gently he touched him for an instant. The stallion did not move. Again Alec attempted to touch the **savage** head. The Black reared and shook a little. Alec said soothingly, "Steady, Black fellow, I wouldn't hurt you." The stallion **quivered**, then reared again and broke. One hundred yards away he suddenly stopped and turned.

Alec gazed at him, standing there so still—his head raised high in the air. “We’ll get out of this somehow Black—working together,” he said determinedly.

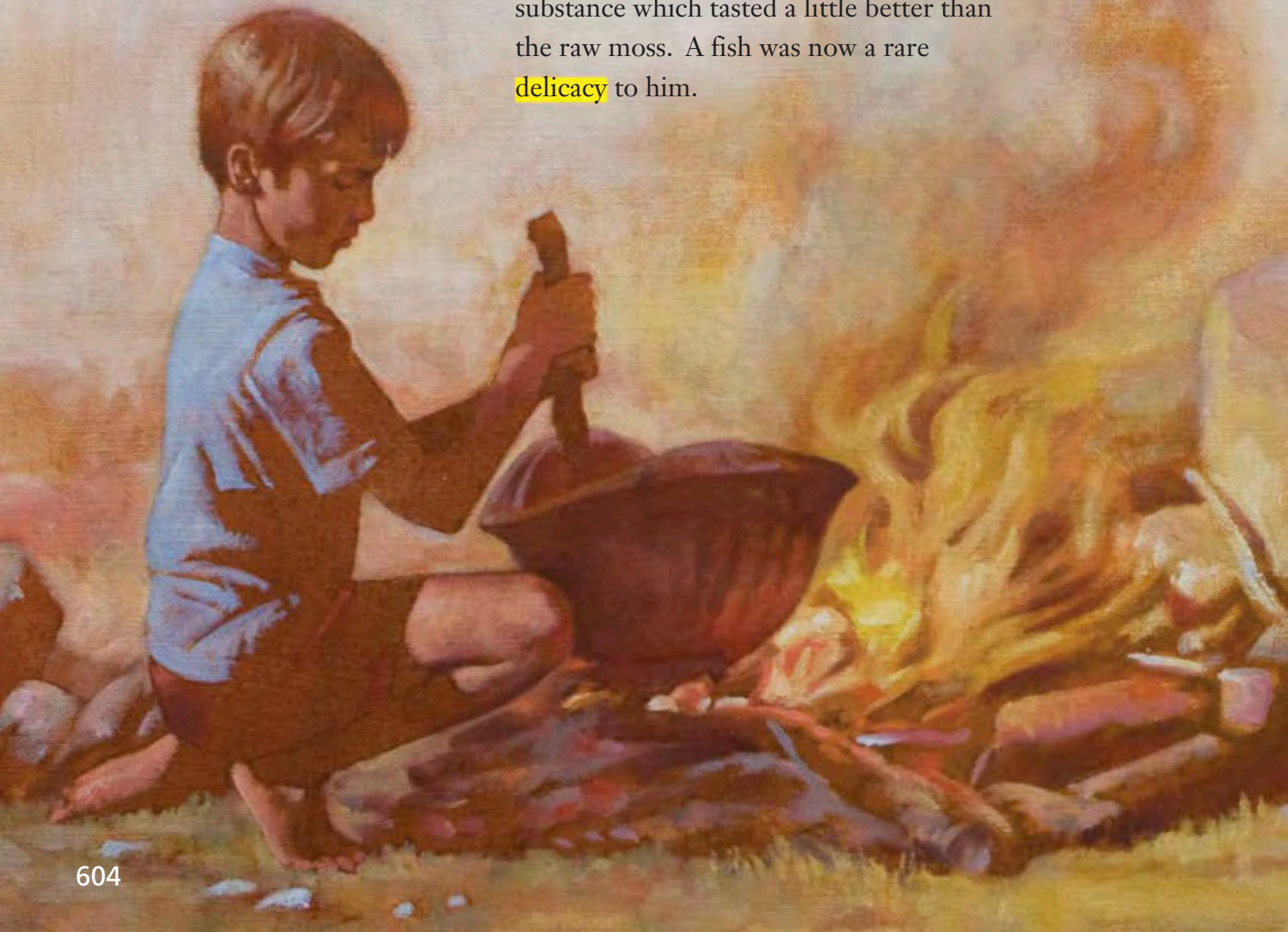


ANALYZE THE TEXT

Story Structure What does the author do early in the story to help you understand the **conflict**, or problem, that Alec faces?

Alec walked back to the top of the rocks and again began his descent. He made his way carefully down to the water level. Cautiously he looked before he stepped—where there was one snake there might be more. Reaching the bottom, he once again filled his shirt full of the moss and made his way back. High above him he could see the Black looking out over the cliffs, his mane whipping in the wind. When he reached the top the stallion was still there. He followed a short distance behind as Alec went back to the spring.

Days passed and gradually the friendship between the boy and the Black grew. The stallion now came at his call and let Alec stroke him while he grazed. One night Alec sat within the warm glow of the fire and watched the stallion munching on the carragheen beside the pool. He wondered if the stallion was as tired of the carragheen as he. Alec had found that if he boiled it in the turtle shell it formed a gelatinous substance which tasted a little better than the raw moss. A fish was now a rare delicacy to him.

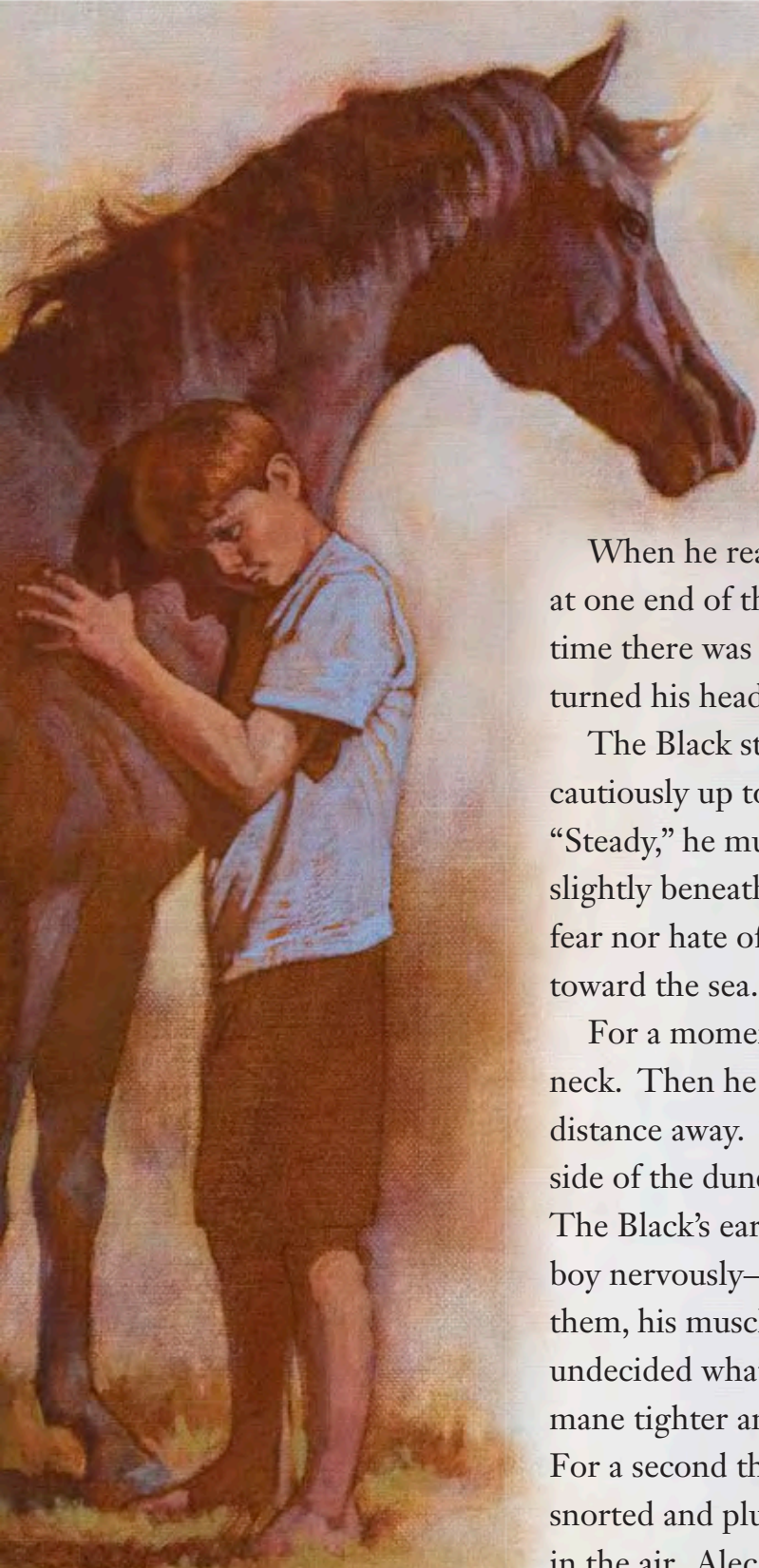


The flame's shadows reached out and cast eerie ghostlike patterns on the Black's body. Alec's face became grim as thoughts rushed through his brain. Should he try it tomorrow? Did he dare attempt to ride the Black? Should he wait a few more days? Go ahead—tomorrow. *Don't do it!* Go ahead—

The fire burned low, then smoldered. Yet Alec sat beside the fire, his eyes fixed on that blacker-than-night figure beside the spring.

The next morning he woke from a **fitful** slumber to find the sun high above. Hurriedly he ate some of the carrageen. Then he looked for the Black, but he was not in sight. Alec whistled, but no answer came. He walked toward the hill. The sun blazed down and the sweat ran from his body. If it would only rain! The last week had been like an oven on the island.






When he reached the top of the hill, he saw the Black at one end of the beach. Again he whistled, and this time there was an answering whistle as the stallion turned his head. Alec walked up the beach toward him.

The Black stood still as he approached. He went cautiously up to him and placed a hand on his neck. “Steady,” he murmured, as the warm skin quivered slightly beneath his hand. The stallion showed neither fear nor hate of him; his large eyes were still turned toward the sea.

For a moment Alec stood with his hand on the Black’s neck. Then he walked toward a sand dune a short distance away. The stallion followed. He stepped up the side of the dune, his left hand in the horse’s thick mane. The Black’s ears pricked forward, his eyes followed the boy nervously—some of the savageness returned to them, his muscles twitched. For a moment Alec was undecided what to do. Then his hands gripped the mane tighter and he threw himself on the Black’s back. For a second the stallion stood motionless, then he snorted and plunged; the sand went flying as he doubled in the air. Alec felt the mighty muscles **heave**, then he was flung through the air, landing heavily on his back. Everything went dark.

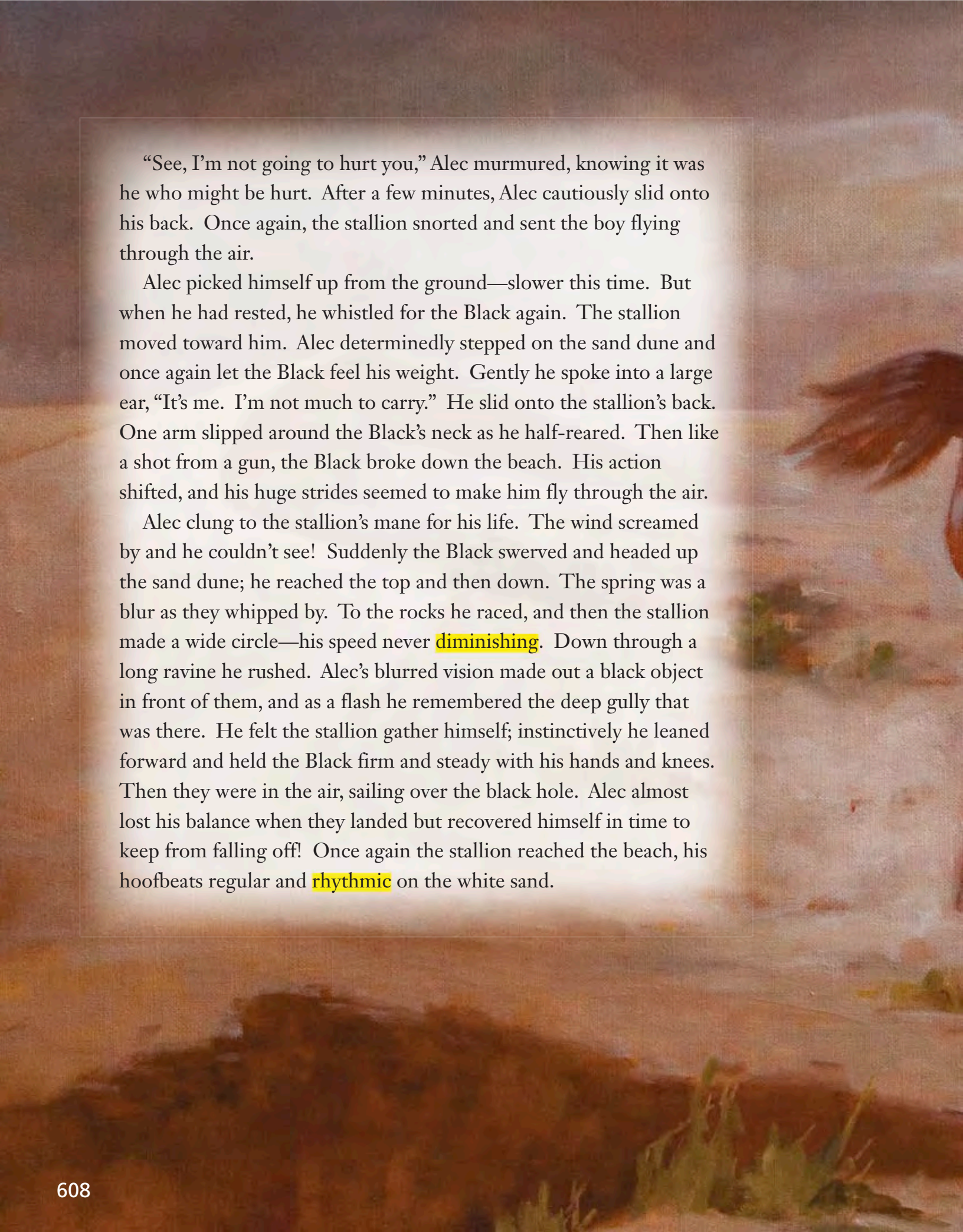


Alec regained consciousness to find something warm against his cheek. Slowly he opened his eyes. The stallion was pushing him with his head. Alec tried moving his arms and legs, and found them bruised but not broken. Wearily he got to his feet. The wildness and savageness had once more disappeared in the Black; he looked as though nothing had happened.

Alec waited for a few minutes—then once again led the stallion to the sand dune. His hand grasped the horse's mane. But this time he laid only the upper part of his body on the stallion's back, while he talked soothingly into his ear. The Black flirted his ears back and forth as he glanced backward with his dark eyes.

ANALYZE THE TEXT

Characterization Alec survives a shipwreck, lives alone on an island, and bonds with a wild stallion. What does his survival reveal about his character and traits?



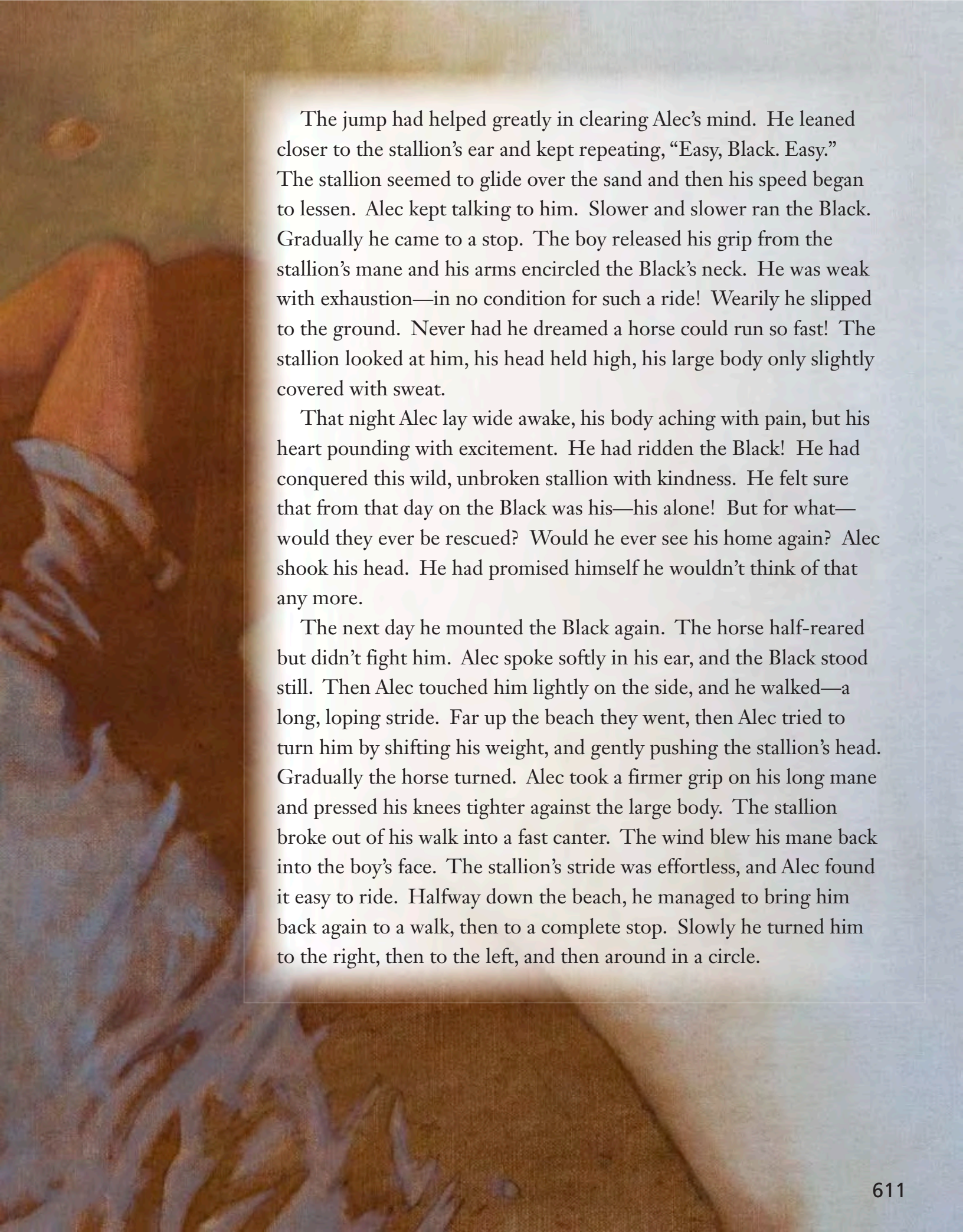
“See, I’m not going to hurt you,” Alec murmured, knowing it was he who might be hurt. After a few minutes, Alec cautiously slid onto his back. Once again, the stallion snorted and sent the boy flying through the air.

Alec picked himself up from the ground—slower this time. But when he had rested, he whistled for the Black again. The stallion moved toward him. Alec determinedly stepped on the sand dune and once again let the Black feel his weight. Gently he spoke into a large ear, “It’s me. I’m not much to carry.” He slid onto the stallion’s back. One arm slipped around the Black’s neck as he half-reared. Then like a shot from a gun, the Black broke down the beach. His action shifted, and his huge strides seemed to make him fly through the air.

Alec clung to the stallion’s mane for his life. The wind screamed by and he couldn’t see! Suddenly the Black swerved and headed up the sand dune; he reached the top and then down. The spring was a blur as they whipped by. To the rocks he raced, and then the stallion made a wide circle—his speed never **diminishing**. Down through a long ravine he rushed. Alec’s blurred vision made out a black object in front of them, and as a flash he remembered the deep gully that was there. He felt the stallion gather himself; instinctively he leaned forward and held the Black firm and steady with his hands and knees. Then they were in the air, sailing over the black hole. Alec almost lost his balance when they landed but recovered himself in time to keep from falling off! Once again the stallion reached the beach, his hoofbeats regular and **rhythmic** on the white sand.





A painting of a boy riding a black stallion on a beach. The boy is wearing a white shirt and a brown hat, and is holding the reins. The stallion is black and is running. The background is a sandy beach with a blue sky and a blue sea.

The jump had helped greatly in clearing Alec's mind. He leaned closer to the stallion's ear and kept repeating, "Easy, Black. Easy." The stallion seemed to glide over the sand and then his speed began to lessen. Alec kept talking to him. Slower and slower ran the Black. Gradually he came to a stop. The boy released his grip from the stallion's mane and his arms encircled the Black's neck. He was weak with exhaustion—in no condition for such a ride! Wearily he slipped to the ground. Never had he dreamed a horse could run so fast! The stallion looked at him, his head held high, his large body only slightly covered with sweat.

That night Alec lay wide awake, his body aching with pain, but his heart pounding with excitement. He had ridden the Black! He had conquered this wild, unbroken stallion with kindness. He felt sure that from that day on the Black was his—his alone! But for what—would they ever be rescued? Would he ever see his home again? Alec shook his head. He had promised himself he wouldn't think of that any more.

The next day he mounted the Black again. The horse half-reared but didn't fight him. Alec spoke softly in his ear, and the Black stood still. Then Alec touched him lightly on the side, and he walked—a long, loping stride. Far up the beach they went, then Alec tried to turn him by shifting his weight, and gently pushing the stallion's head. Gradually the horse turned. Alec took a firmer grip on his long mane and pressed his knees tighter against the large body. The stallion broke out of his walk into a fast canter. The wind blew his mane back into the boy's face. The stallion's stride was effortless, and Alec found it easy to ride. Halfway down the beach, he managed to bring him back again to a walk, then to a complete stop. Slowly he turned him to the right, then to the left, and then around in a circle.

Long but exciting hours passed as Alec tried to make the Black understand what he wanted him to do. The sun was going down rapidly when he walked the stallion to the end of the beach. The Black turned and stood still; a mile of smooth, white sand stretched before them.

Suddenly the stallion bolted, almost throwing Alec to the ground. He picked up speed with amazing swiftness. Faster and faster he went. Alec hung low over his neck, his breath coming in gasps. Down the beach the stallion thundered. Tears from the wind rolled down Alec's cheeks. Three-quarters of the way, he tried to check the Black's speed. He pulled back on the flowing mane. "Whoa, Black," he yelled, but his words were whipped away in the wind.

Swiftly the stallion neared the end of the beach, and Alec thought that his breathtaking ride of yesterday was to be repeated. He pulled back harder on the mane. Suddenly the Black's pace lessened. Alec flung one arm around the stallion's neck. The Black shifted into his fast trot, which gradually became slower and slower, until Alec had him under control. Overjoyed he turned him and rode him over the hill to the spring. Together they drank the cool, refreshing water.

ANALYZE THE TEXT

Theme How does Alec respond when faced with challenges? How do his actions and responses help you determine the story's theme?

With the days that followed, Alec's mastery over the Black grew greater and greater. He could do almost anything with him. The savage fury of the unbroken stallion disappeared when he saw the boy. Alec rode him around the island and raced him down the beach, **marveling** at the giant strides and the terrific speed. Without realizing it, Alec was improving his horsemanship until he had reached the point where he was almost a part of the Black as they tore along.





Dig Deeper

Use Clues to Analyze the Text

Use these pages to learn about Story Structure, Characterization, and Theme. Then read “The Black Stallion” again to apply what you learned.

Story Structure

The term **story structure** refers to the important parts of a story. These parts include the **setting, characters, conflict**, events, and **resolution**. The conflict, or problem, is usually introduced near the beginning of the story. The setting may play a major part in causing this conflict. The characters’ efforts to resolve the conflict may lead to further challenges. The story becomes more and more exciting, until finally the conflict is resolved.

The setting, main character, and conflict of “The Black Stallion” are introduced in the note on page 600. The events that follow, woven into story scenes, fit together to provide the overall structure of the text.

Setting	Characters
Plot	
Conflict: Events: Resolution:	

Characterization

The author of an adventure story reveals characters' qualities through what they do, say, and think. This process is called **characterization**. In "The Black Stallion," Alec is shipwrecked on a deserted island with only a wild horse for company. The way he responds to this challenge reveals his inner qualities. As you reread the story, think about Alec's actions and what they show about him.



Theme

The **theme** of a story is the message about life or human nature that the author shares with readers. This message is brought out through the characters' actions, especially in response to conflict. How a character changes or the way a character interacts with others may also suggest a theme. What theme or message do Alec's actions and experiences convey to you?



Your Turn

RETURN TO THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Turn and Talk

Review the selection to prepare to discuss this question: *What can a person learn by building a relationship with an animal?* In a small group, share your ideas, supporting them with text evidence and your own experiences.



Classroom Conversation

Continue your discussion of “The Black Stallion” by using text evidence to answer these questions:

- 1 How does the author make the incident with the snake exciting and suspenseful for readers?
- 2 How does bonding with the horse help Alec survive on the island?
- 3 What do you think is the most important first step in building an animal’s trust?

TALK ABOUT WORDS

List It What words and phrases help you “see” the black stallion in your mind? How does the author bring Alec’s relationship with the horse to life? With a partner, list words and phrases that help you visualize the story’s action and characters. Include powerful verbs and sensory language. Share your list with your classmates.

“he thundered to a halt and reared again”



Performance Task

WRITE ABOUT READING



Response In what ways does Alec's last ride on the stallion differ from his first attempt? What does this difference show about the relationship between the boy and the horse? Write a paragraph in which you explain how Alec's relationship with the stallion changes over the course of the selection. Support your explanation with details from each major interaction Alec has with the horse. Use direct quotations and other text evidence.



Writing Tip

State your main idea in the first sentence of your paragraph. Then connect your ideas by using transitional words, phrases, and clauses.