

The Velveteen Rabbit¹

The story is about a stuffed rabbit that inhabits a world of expensive and intricate toys, who believe themselves to be far superior to the rabbit. He makes friends eventually with a very old, wise horse who is made out of skin and very shabby. He has been there for many years and he knows that eventually the fanciest of the toys, the ones who have all the bells and whistles that made them popular, eventually become old and shabby and broken. The rabbit was fascinated by the Skin Horse because he alone knows which of the toys is REAL.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day... "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

"The Boy's Uncle made me Real," [the Skin Horse] said. "That was a great many years ago; but once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always."

¹ Williams, Margery, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, (Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc., New York: 1922 & 1991)