

# Lessons on Love & Eternity from The Velveteen Rabbit

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**T**he Velveteen Rabbit nurtures our imagination to experience love and eternity in our relationships with others and God.

“What is REAL?” asked the Rabbit. “When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real,” said the Skin Horse, a wise toy.

Being real for the Rabbit meant something more than just being a toy. Have you ever wondered what your purpose is and why you are alive?

“Does being real hurt?” the Rabbit asked. “Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse. “When you are Real you don’t mind being hurt.”

Has anyone you’ve loved hurt your feelings, let you down, or misunderstood you? In life we should expect disappointment but we can look to God who “heals the brokenhearted and binds up our wounds.”

“Once you are Real,” the Skin Horse said, “you can’t become unreal again. It lasts for always.” The Rabbit sighed. He longed to become Real, to be truly loved.

Have you ever longed to be loved? Is there someone you loved more than anyone else or never felt as loved by? Selfless love is a genuine virtue. It can’t be taken back once given. Even greater though, is God’s eternal love from which nothing can separate us.

Nearly every night the Boy only wanted to sleep with the Rabbit. Over time, his velveteen fur became shabbier, his tail unsewn, and all of the pink on his nose where he was kissed, was gone.

Do you remember the first time you felt truly loved by someone? Have you ever been loved so much that despite your outward shabbiness you were still loved anyway? True love covers over a multitude of imperfections.

One day the Rabbit heard the Boy tell his Nanny that he was REAL. He was overjoyed. The next morning she noticed a look of wisdom and beauty in his boot-button eyes despite their long-lost shine.

Being loved by another person, and by God, changes our countenance, the outward expression of what's in our heart. Are you joyful? Are you glowing?

As the Rabbit grew older, his whiskers fell off, his ears lost their pink lining, and his shape was lumpy. He scarcely looked like a rabbit at all. But the Boy loved him even more. He was beautiful because he was Real.

Have you ever cared about someone so much it didn't matter how they looked? God's love renews, "Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed daily."

One day all of the toys were put in a pile to be burned because of scarlet fever, including the Rabbit. A great sadness came over him as he remembered such great happiness with the Boy.

"Of what use was it to be loved and lose one's beauty and become Real if it all ended like this?" he thought. "And a tear, a real tear, trickled down his little shabby velvet nose and fell to the ground."

Do you remember when you first felt loved by someone and then they were gone? Death is final; we can't change or prevent it. But death for Christians is not the end. It's the beginning.

A flower grew from where the Rabbit's tear fell. It blossomed and opened and a fairy stepped out. She kissed the Rabbit and said, "Little Rabbit. I take care of all the playthings that the children have loved. When they are old and worn out and the children don't need them anymore, then I come and take them away with me and turn them into Real."

The Good News is our earthly bodies are transformed into new ones that will never die. Because of Christ, "We will not die, but we will be transformed! For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever."

“Wasn’t I Real before?” asked the Rabbit. “You were Real to the Boy,” she said, “because he loved you. Now you shall be Real to everyone.”

Then the Rabbit became a real rabbit. His whiskers grew to touch the grass, his tail moved, and his fur was lustrous. He hopped and played in the grass and joined the other rabbits.

Who we are today is a shadow of who we will become. Our shabby bodies and lost whiskers will be no more. Through Christ, our mourning will turn into rejoicing.