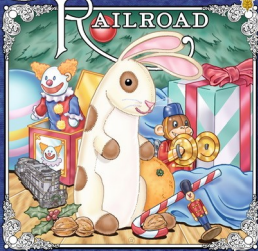


COLEBROOKDALE



RAILROAD



The Velveteen Rabbit Coloring Book

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There was once a velveteen rabbit, and in the beginning he was really splendid. He was fat and buncy, as a rabbit should be; his coat was spotted with brown and white, and his ears were lined with pink sateen.

He was naturally shy, and being only made of velveteen, some of the more expensive toys quite snubbed him.



The only person who was kind to him at all was the Skin Horse. He was very wise, for he had seen many mechanical toys, and knew that they were only toys and would never turn into anything else.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day.

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a long thing that happens to you when a child loves you for a long, long time. By the time you are Real, you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."



There was a person called Nana who went swooping about like a great wind and hustled the playthings away in cupboards. The tin ones hated it, but the Rabbit didn't mind it so much, for wherever he was thrown he came down soft.

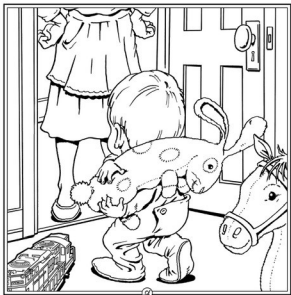
One evening, when the Boy was going to bed, he couldn't find the china dog that always slept with him.

"Here," Nana said, "take your old Bunny!"

That night, and for many nights after, the Velveteen Rabbit slept in the Boy's bed.



And so time went on, and the little Rabbit was very happy - so happy that he never noticed how his beautiful velveteen fur was getting shabbier, and his tail becoming unsewn, and all the pink rubbed off his nose where the Boy had kissed him.



2

Once, the Rabbit was left out after dusk, and Nana had to look for him with the candle because the Boy couldn't go to sleep unless he was there.

"Fancy all that fuss for a toy!" she said.

"You musn't say that," the Boy said. "He isn't a toy. He's REAL!"

When the little Rabbit heard that, he was happy, for he knew what the Skin Horse had said was true at last. He was Real. The Boy himself had said it.



Near the house there was a wood. One evening, while the Rabbit was lying there alone, he saw two strange beings. They were rabbits like himself, but quite furry and brand-new. They stared at him, and the little Rabbit stared back. And all the time their noses twitched.

"He hasn't got any hind legs! He doesn't smell right!" the wild rabbit exclaimed jumping backward. "He isn't a rabbit at all! He isn't Real!"

"I am Real!" said the little Rabbit. "The boy said so! Come back and play with me! I know I am Real!" But there was no answer.

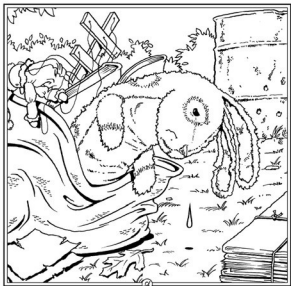


Weeks passed, and the little Rabbit grew very old and shabby, but the Boy loved him just as much. He loved him so hard that the pink lining to his ears turned grey, and his brown spots faded.



And then, one day, the Boy was ill.

His little body was so hot that it burned the Rabbit when he held him close. The Velveteen Rabbit lay there, hidden from sight under the bedclothes, and he never stirred, for he was afraid that if they found him someone might take him away, and he knew that the Boy needed him.



Presently the Boy got better. The room was to be disinfected, and all the the books and toys that the Boy had played with in bed must be burnt.

"How about his old Bunny?" Nana asked.

"That?" said the doctor. "Why, it's a mass of scarlet fever germs! - Burn it at once!"

And so the little Rabbit was put into a sack and carried out to the garden. The little Rabbit felt very lonely. A tear, a real tear, trickled down his shabby velvet nose and fell to the ground.



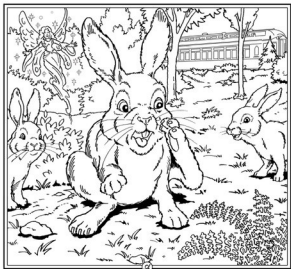
Where the tear had fallen a flower grew out of the ground. The blossom opened, and out of it stepped a fairy.

"I am the Nursery Magic Fairy," she said. "I take care of all the playthings that the children have loved. When they are old and worn out, I turn them into Real."

"Wasn't I Real before?" asked the little Rabbit.

"You were Real to the Boy because he loved you. Now you shall be Real to everyone."

"She flew with the little Rabbit into the wood where the wild rabbits danced.



"I've brought you a new playfellow," the Fairy said. "You must be very kind to him and teach him all he needs to know in Rabbitland." And she kissed the little Rabbit again and put him down on the grass.

But the little Rabbit sat quite still for a moment, for he didn't want them to see that he was made all in one piece. He did not know that the Fairy had changed him. Just then something tickled his nose, and before he thought what he was doing, he lifted his hind toe to scratch it.

He actually had hind legs! Instead of dingy velveteen he had brown fur, soft and shiny. He was a Real Rabbit at last!



The seasons passed, and in the Spring, the Boy went out to play in the wood and saw two rabbits. There was something familiar about the little soft nose and round black eyes of one of them, and the Boy thought to himself, "Why, he looks just like my old Bunny!"

But he never knew that it really was his own Bunny, come back to look at the child who had first helped him to be Real.