

The Velveteen Rabbit, or How Toys Become Real (1922)

text by Margery Williams (Margery Williams Bianco), 1880-1944; ill. by [Sir William Nicholson](#), 1872-1949

Class Discussion Questions

1. Who were the main characters in this book?
2. How did the little boy treat the Rabbit throughout the story? How do you think it made the Rabbit feel?
3. What does the Velveteen Rabbit learn in this book?
4. What do you think the Rabbit was most fearful of? Why?
5. DO you think the Rabbit was very real?
6. What was the most important thing to the Velveteen Rabbit? Why? What are some of the most important things to you in your life?
7. What do you think the real message was in this book? (amount of love is what makes toys (or people) real.)

2 Art Project Suggestions

- A. If you had a velveteen rabbit, what would it look like? how would it be different than other rabbits? what makes it so special?
- B. IF you had an imaginary friend or animai, and it was very special to you, what would it look like and was was very special about it? Have them draw it or color and then discuss what is so special about it.....every kid thinks about this sometime in their life and this is the chance for them to express it!

Other topics for Class discussion

- Main issue, fear of abandonment, makes it similar to *Toy Story*.
- Being an outsider, the velveteen rabbit has to struggle to fit in. This is an oft-repeated theme in children's literature.
- **Message: amount of love is what makes toys (or people) real.**
- Imagination helps develop empathy, because first one must be able to imagine someone else's point of view.
- Belief in Santa Claus is not to be condemned as a lie. It provides emotions (thrill, anticipation) essential to the life of the child.
- Belief in Santa Claus also useful for the parent as a distancing device. Deflects the child's demands (toys, entertainment) when they cannot be satisfied by the parent: "Ask Santa".

- Transition from believing in Santa to not believing. "Theological" arguments between believer and non-believer siblings (with heated exchanges regarding evidence pro/con).
- Dealing with experience of loss in the book (where loss is mitigated by sweet, reassuring tone) serves as practice for dealing with real-life loss.
- The book deals with issues of illness and recovery.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Velveteen_Rabbit