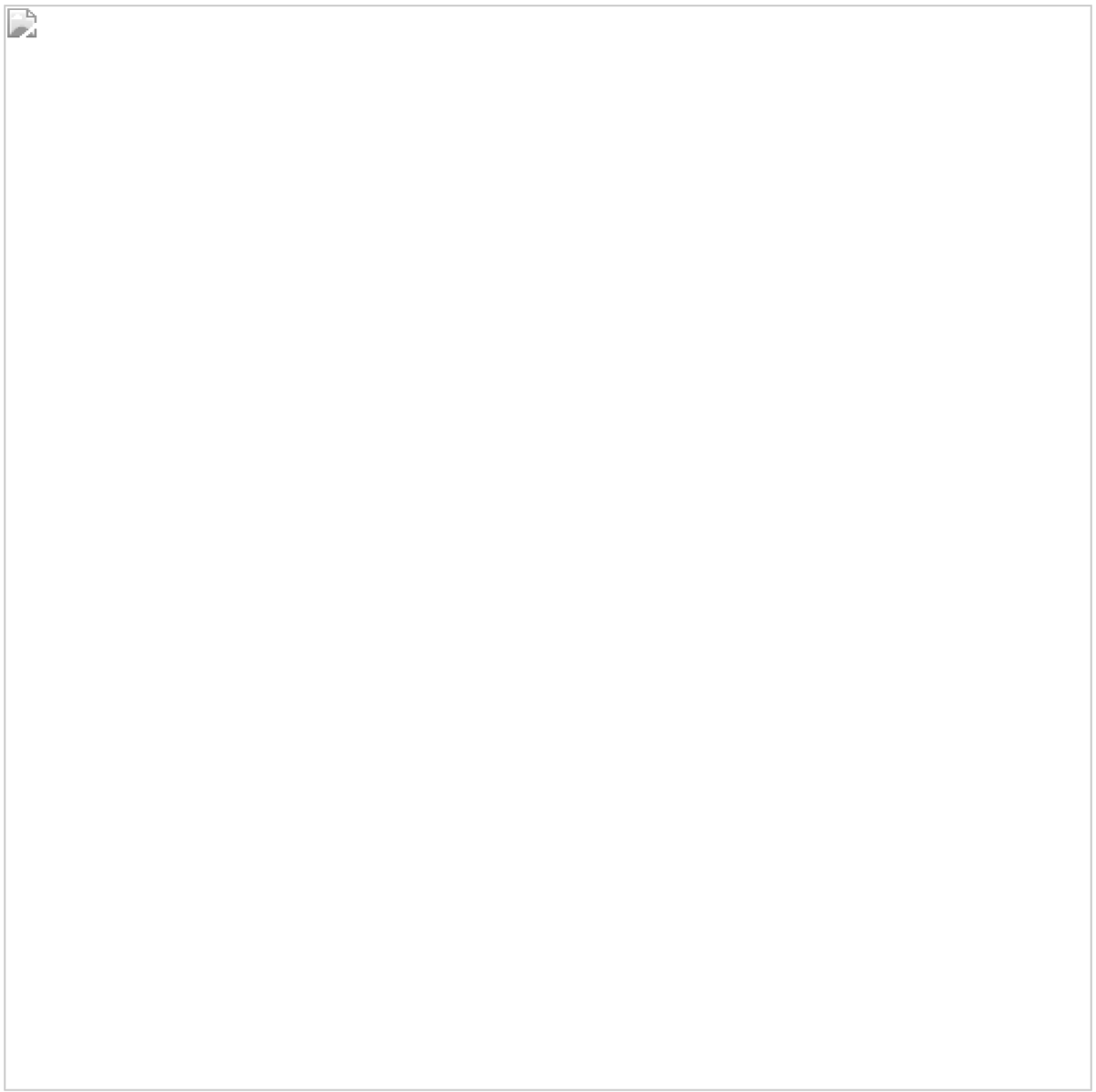
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Velveteen Rabbit

Or How Toys Become Real



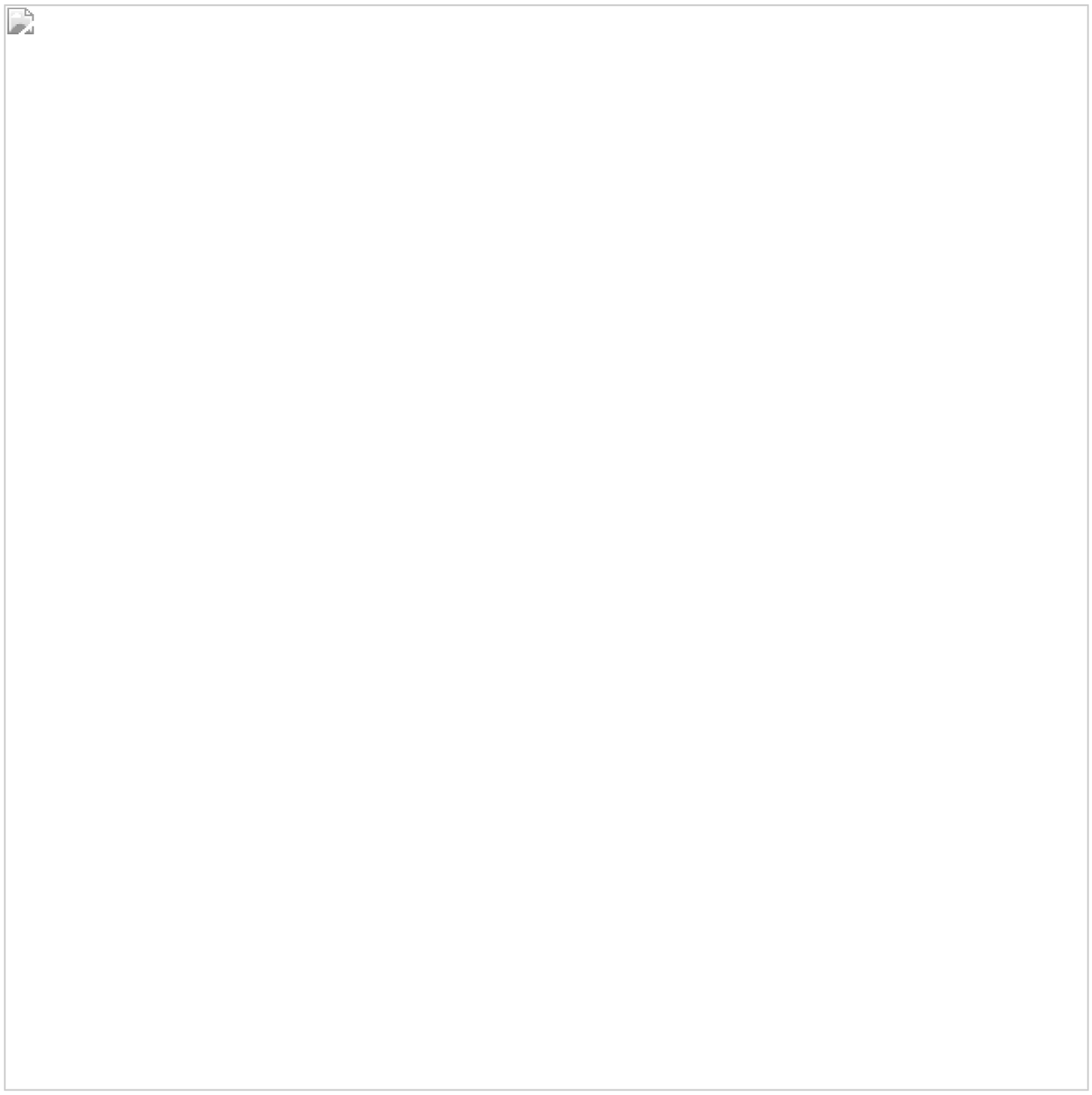
By Margery Williams

TALK ABOUT IT

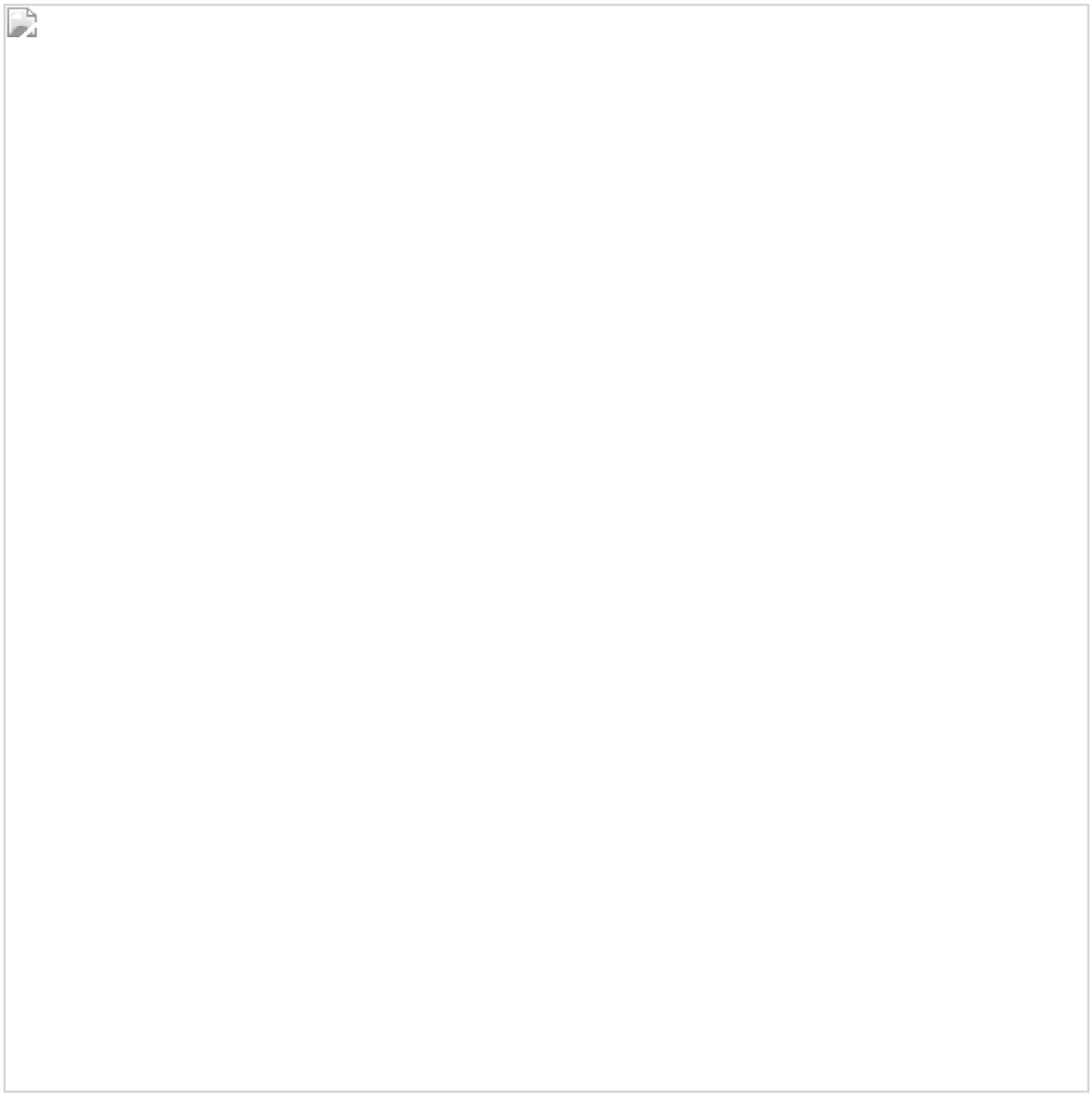
Do you have a toy that you love? What is it like?

This book belongs to _____

The Velveteen Rabbit · another picture



Christmas Morning



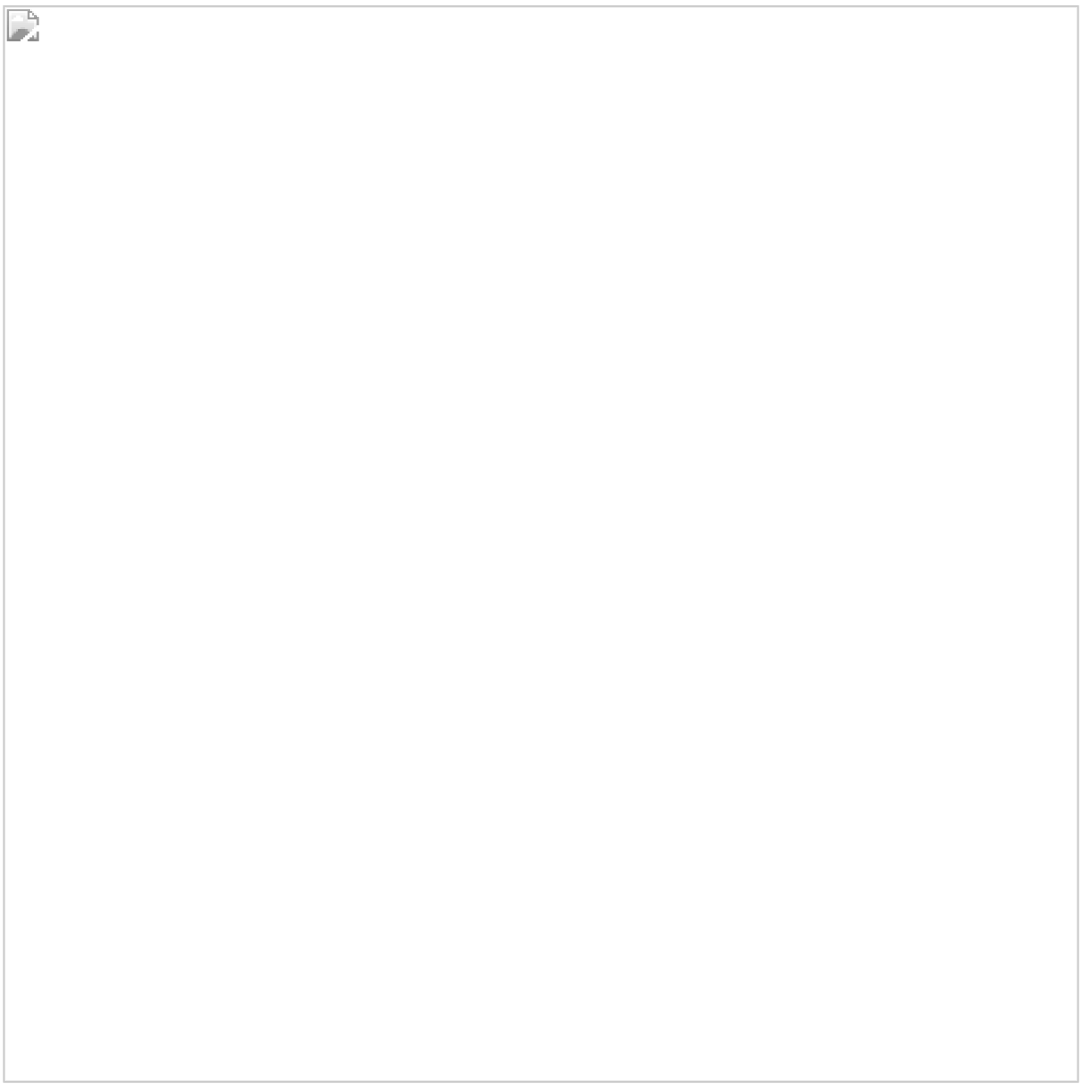
There was once a velveteen rabbit, and in the beginning he was really splendid. He was fat and bunchy, with a coat of spotted brown and white, real thread whiskers, and ears lined with pink sateen.

On Christmas morning he sat wedged in the top of the Boy's stocking, with a sprig of holly between his paws. For at least two hours the Boy loved him.

Then Aunts and Uncles came to dinner, and there was a great rustling of tissue paper and unwrapping of parcels. In the excitement of all the new presents, the Velveteen Rabbit was forgotten.

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever been left out while everyone looked at something new? What did you do?



Think about it

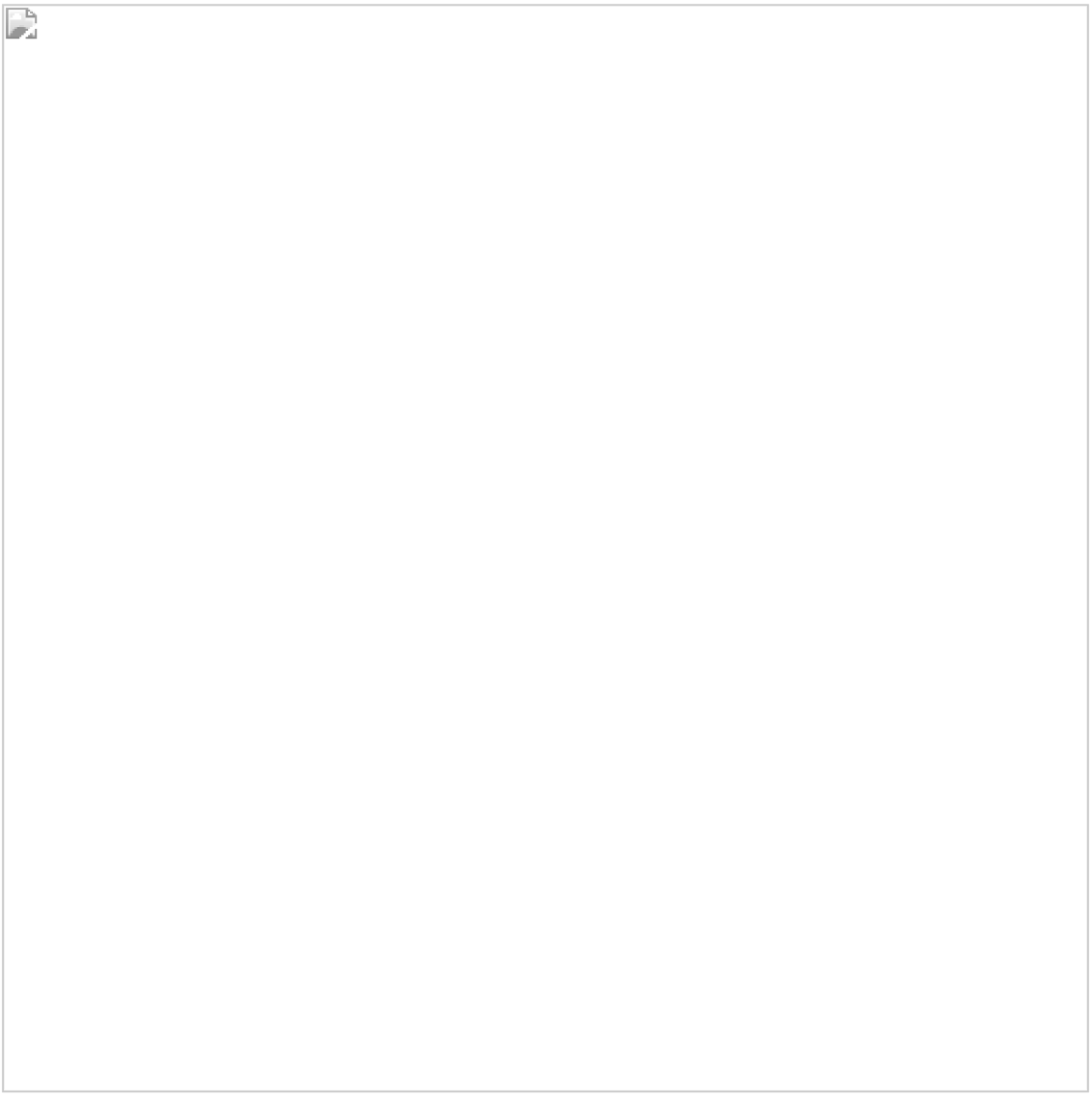
1. Where did the Rabbit sit on Christmas morning?

- ○ In the top of the Boy's stocking
- ○ On a high shelf
- ○ In a toy boat

2. Why was the Rabbit forgotten?

- ○ The Boy got lots of new presents
- ○ He was lost in the snow
- ○ The Boy did not like rabbits

The Toy Cupboard



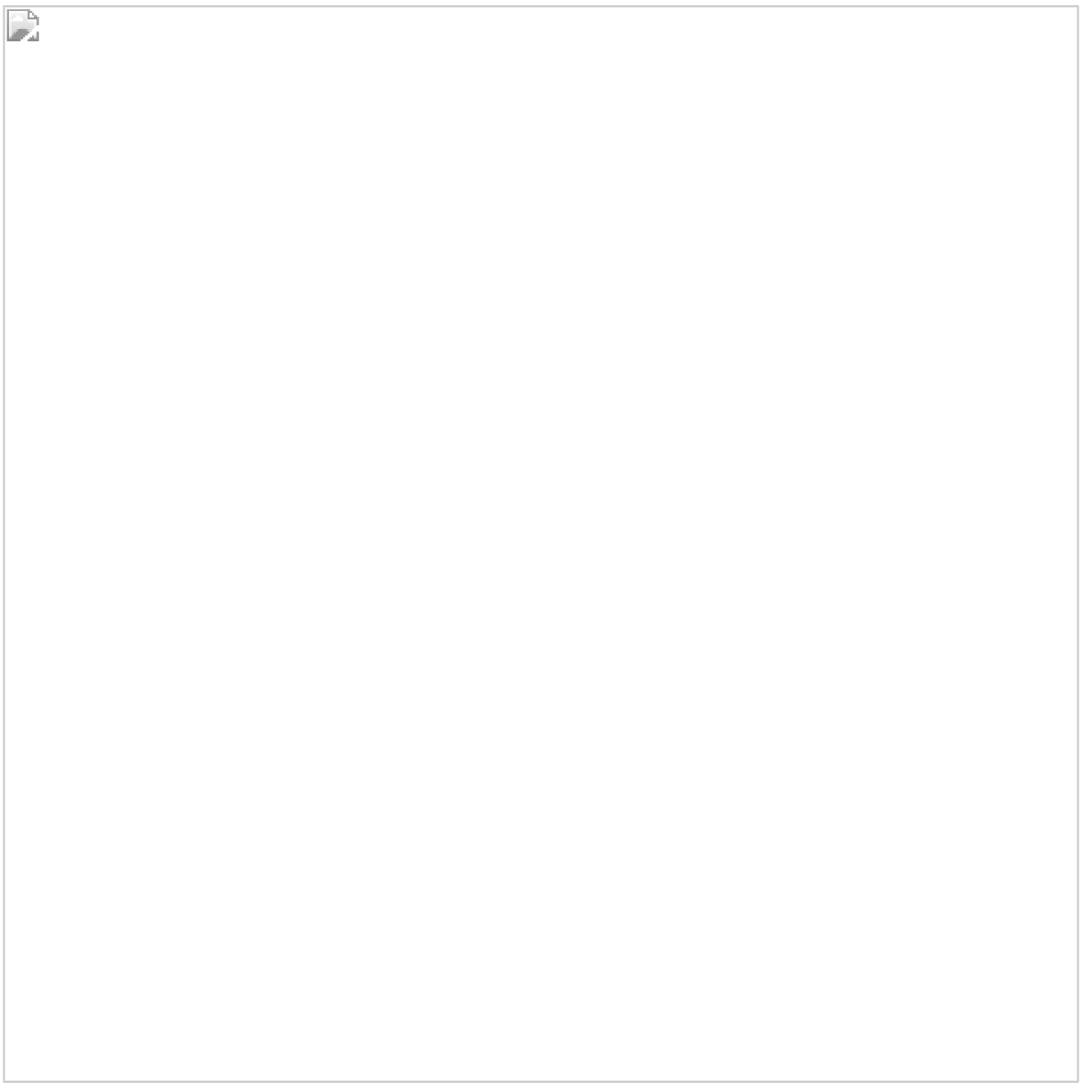
For a long time the Rabbit lived in the toy cupboard, and no one thought very much about him. He was shy. The mechanical toys looked down on everyone and pretended they were real.

The poor little Rabbit was made to feel very small and plain. He did not even know that real rabbits existed. He thought they were all stuffed with sawdust, like himself.

The only one who was kind to him was the Skin Horse, who had lived in the nursery longer than any of the others. His brown coat was bald in patches, and most of his tail-hairs had been pulled out to string bead necklaces.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Skin Horse was kind to the Rabbit. How can you be kind to someone who feels left out?



Think about it

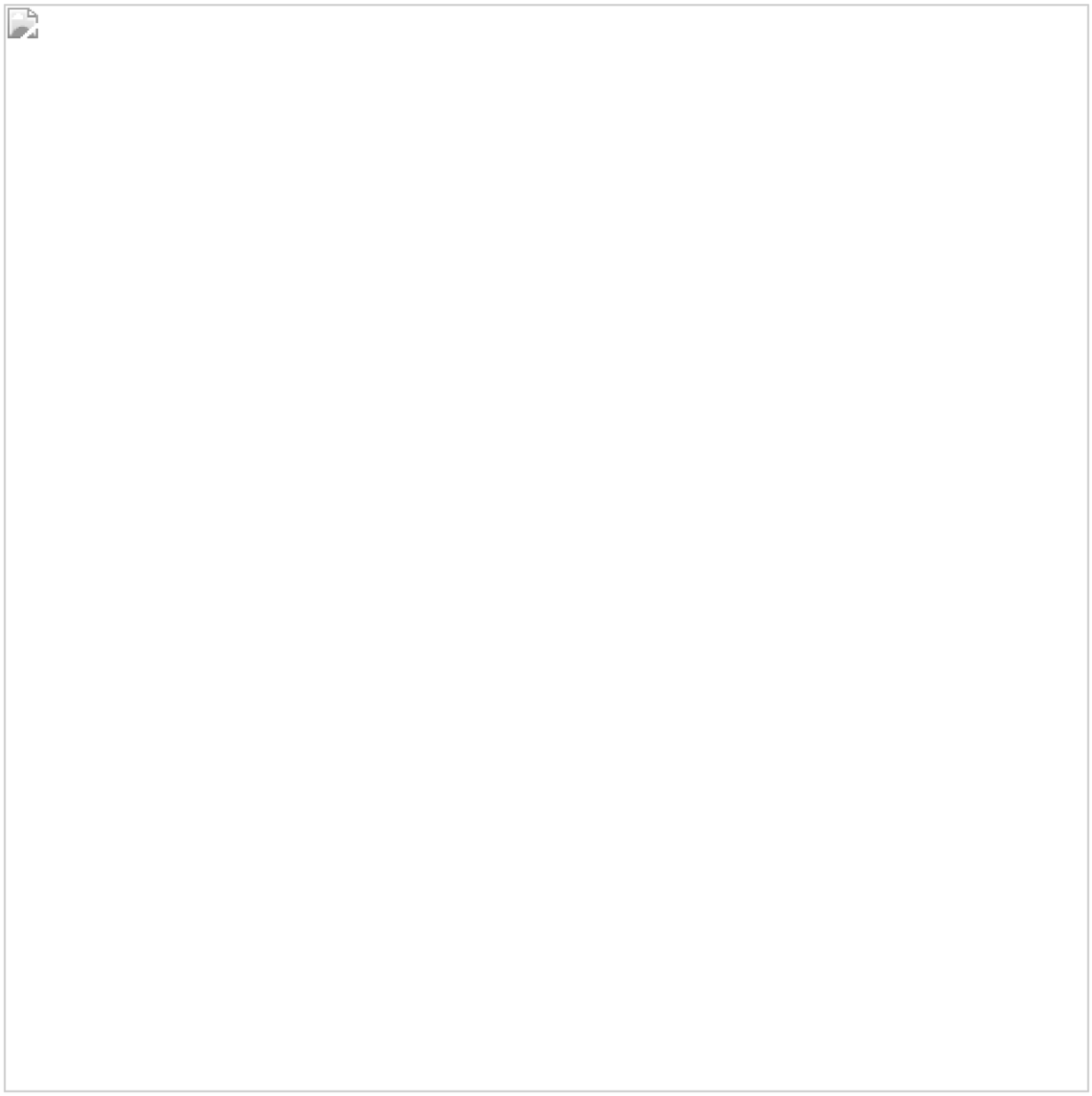
1. Who was kind to the Rabbit?

- ○ The Skin Horse
- ○ The model boat
- ○ The clockwork mouse

2. What did the Rabbit think real rabbits were stuffed with?

- ○ Sawdust
- ○ Feathers
- ○ Straw

What Is Real?



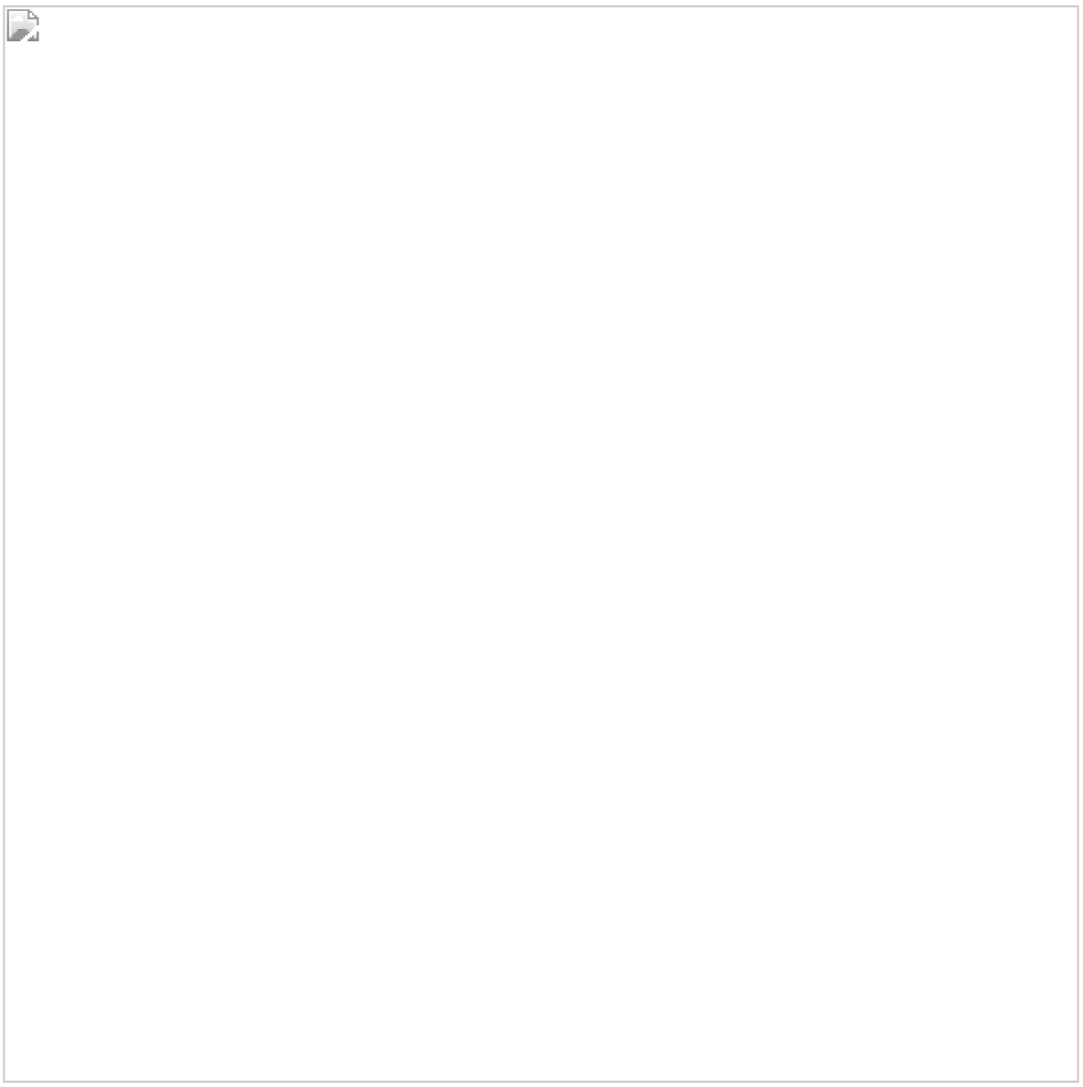
One day the two of them lay side by side near the nursery fender. “What is REAL?” asked the Rabbit. “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?”

“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.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The Skin Horse says being Real is something that happens when you are loved. What do you think about that?



Think about it

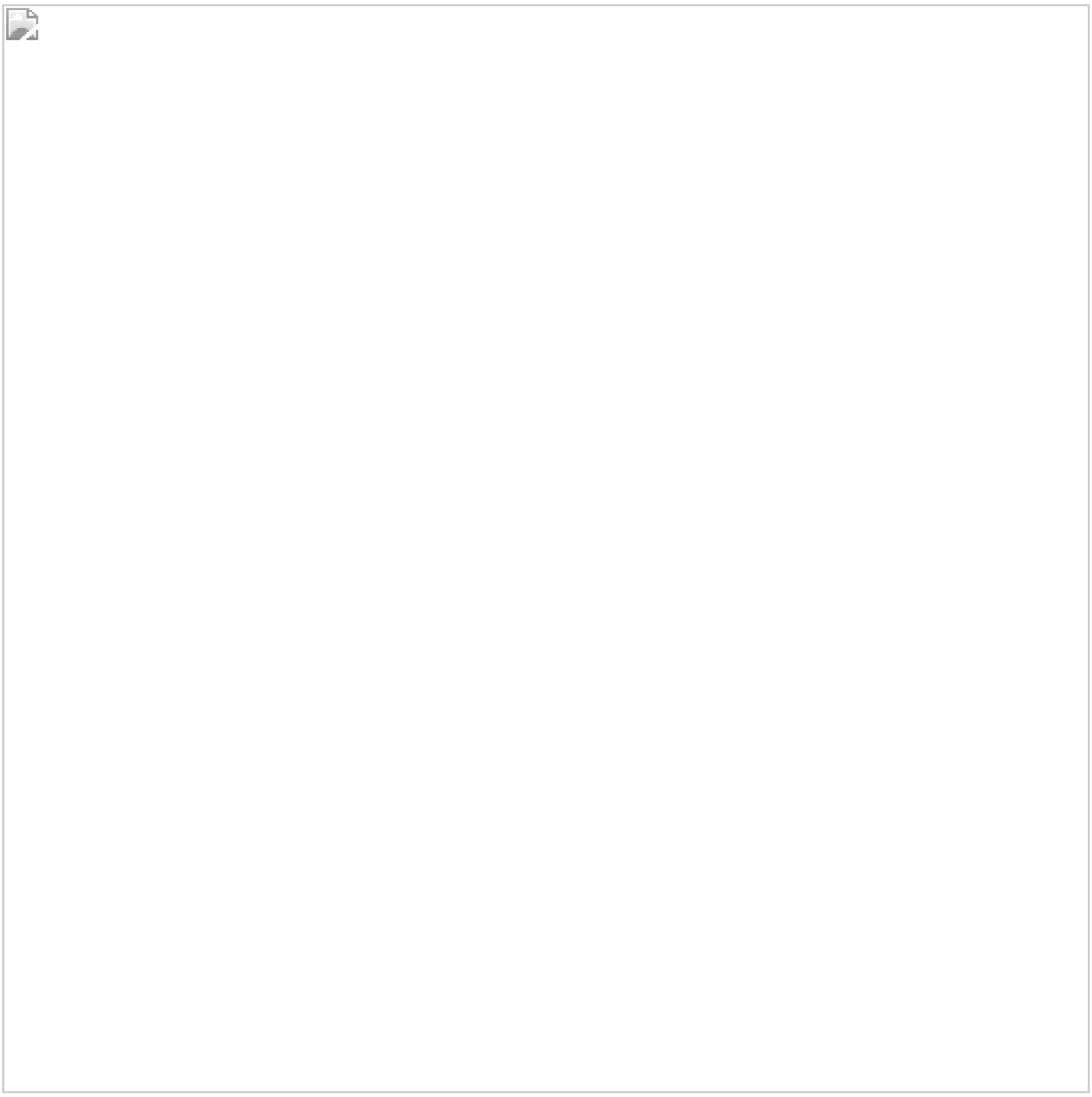
1. What does the Skin Horse say makes a toy Real?

- ○ A child loves it for a long, long time
- ○ Having a stick-out handle
- ○ Being brand new

2. Was the Skin Horse truthful?

- ○ Yes, even about the hard part
- ○ No, he told the Rabbit it never hurts
- ○ He would not answer

It Takes a Long Time



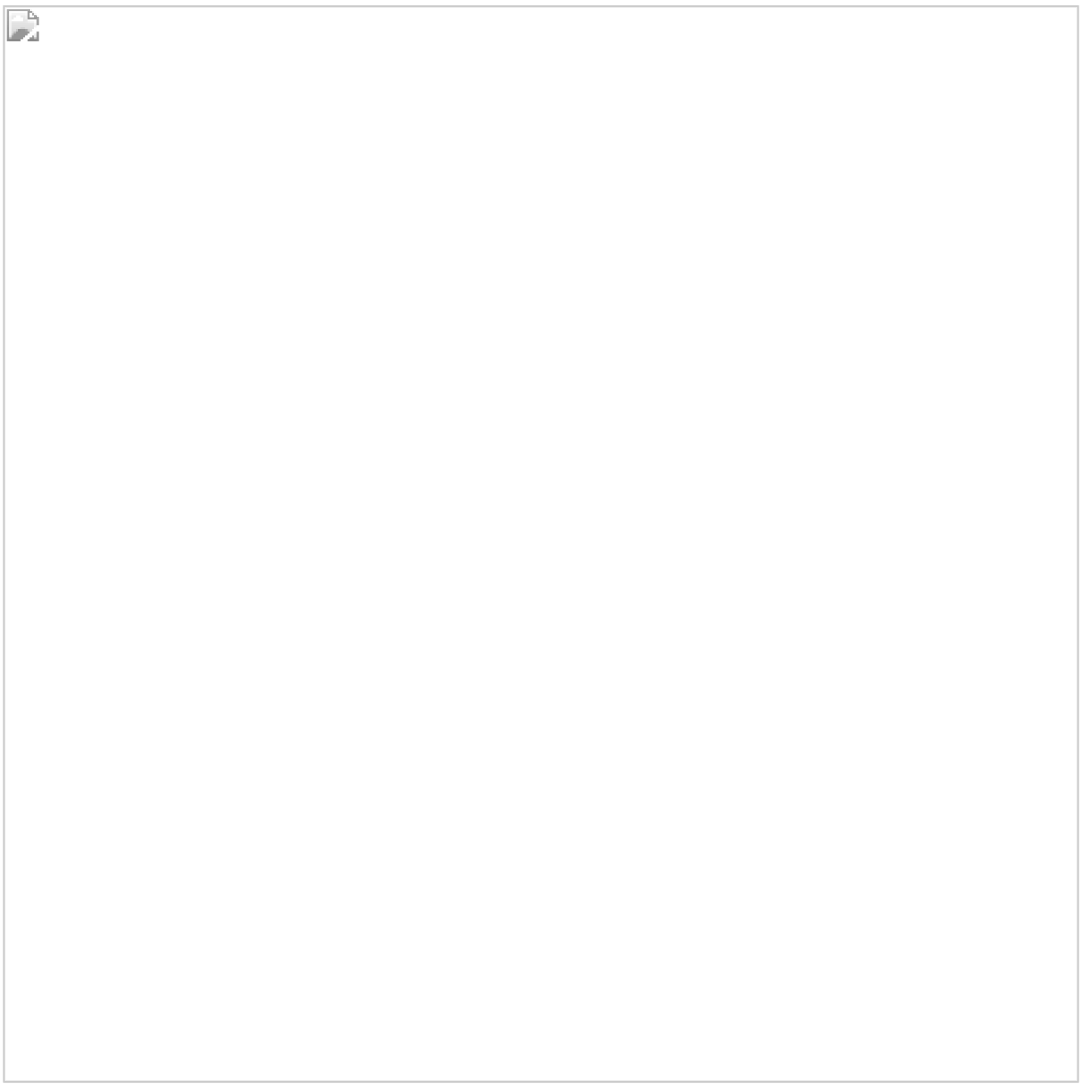
“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,” asked the Rabbit, “or bit by bit?” “It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time.”

By the time you are Real, he said, most of your hair has been loved off, 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.”

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

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think someone might look shabby to some people, and beautiful to the one who loves them?



Think about it

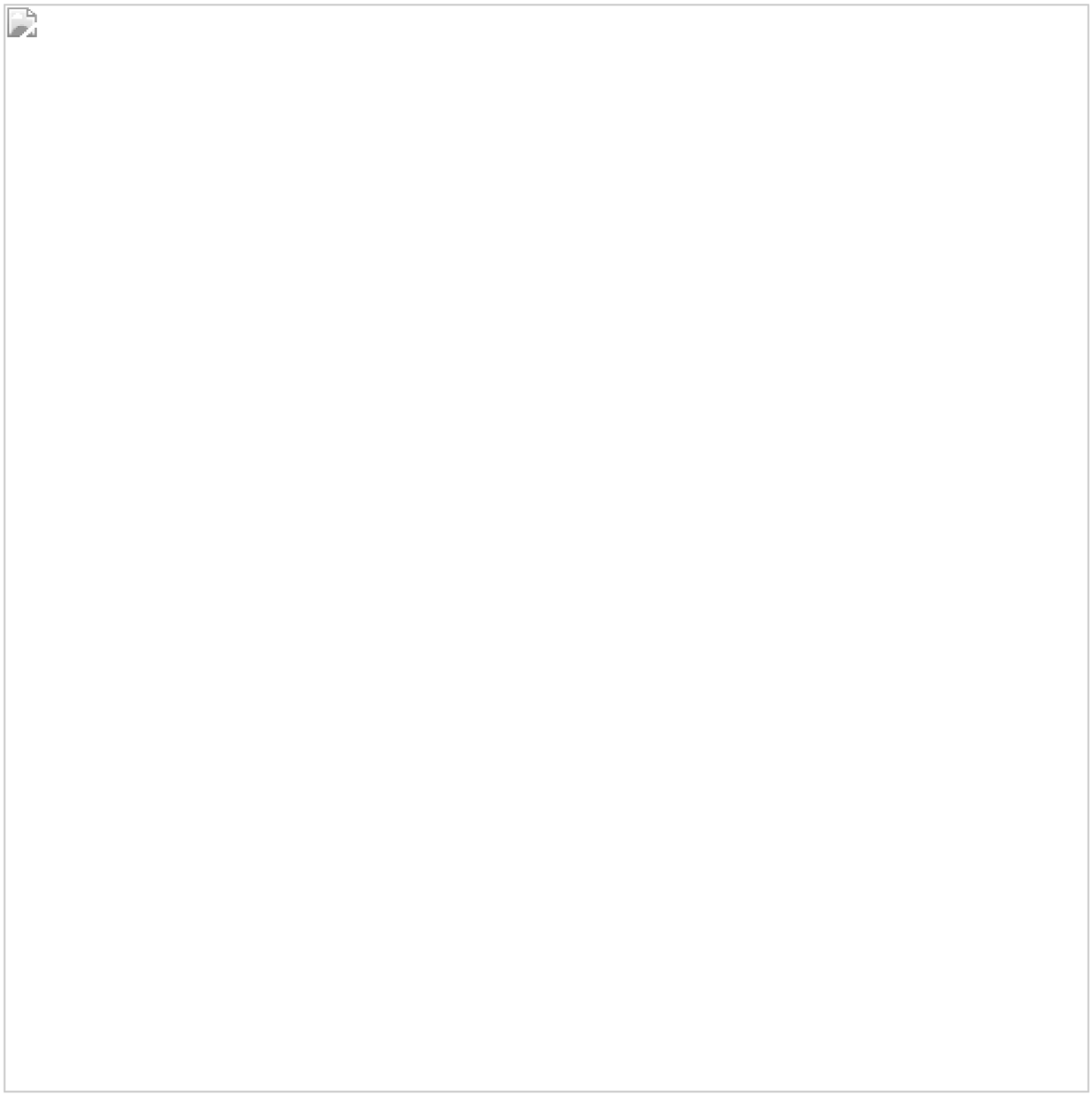
1. Does a toy become Real all at once?

- ○ No, it takes a long time
- ○ Yes, in one minute
- ○ Yes, at midnight

2. How long does Real last?

- ○ For always
- ○ Until Spring
- ○ Until the toy is put away

The Boy's Bed



One evening the Boy could not find the china dog that slept with him. Nana, in a hurry, dragged the Rabbit out of the cupboard by one ear. "Here," she said, "take your old Bunny! He'll do to sleep with you!"

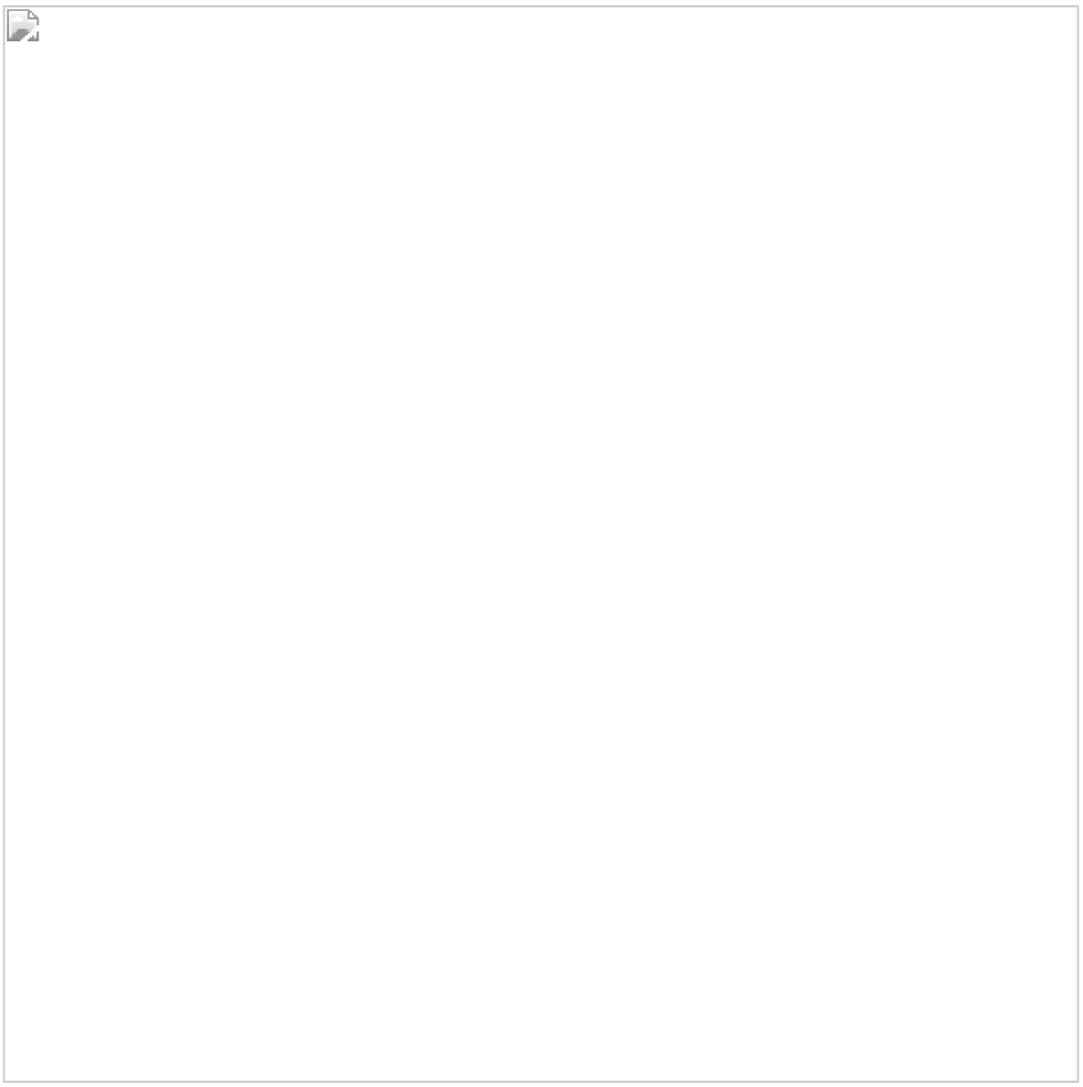
That night, and for many nights after, the Rabbit slept in the Boy's bed. The Boy made nice tunnels for him under the bedclothes, like the burrows real rabbits lived in. They had splendid games together, in whispers.

The Rabbit was so happy he never noticed his fur getting shabby, his tail coming unsewn, or the pink rubbed off his nose where the Boy had kissed him.

TALK ABOUT IT

What games do you play with a favorite toy?

The Boy's Bed · another picture



Think about it

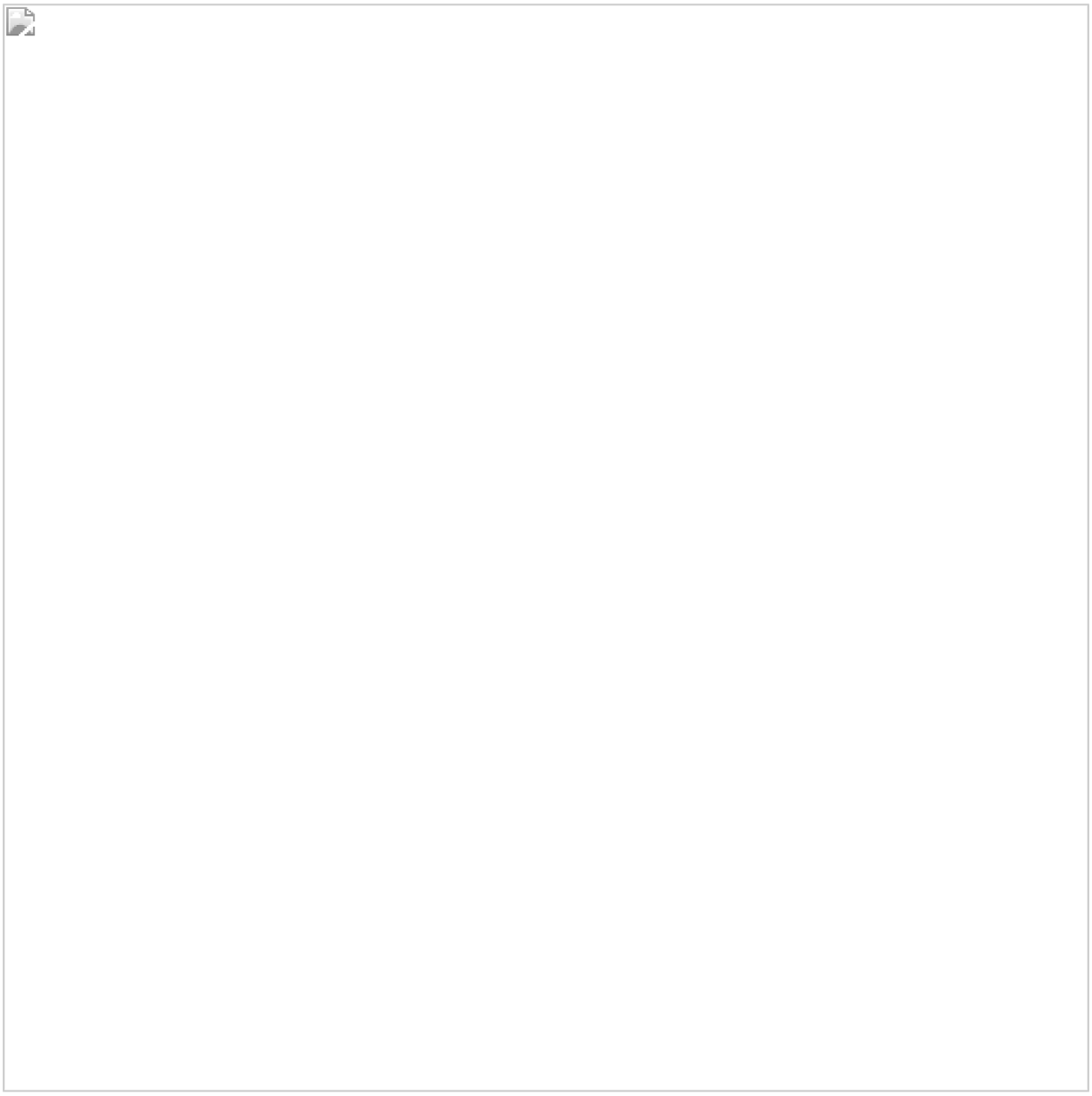
1. Who gave the Rabbit to the Boy for bedtime?

- ○ Nana
- ○ The Skin Horse
- ○ The doctor

2. What did the Boy make for the Rabbit under the bedclothes?

- ○ Tunnels, like burrows
- ○ A little boat
- ○ A tiny bed of hay

“He’s REAL!”



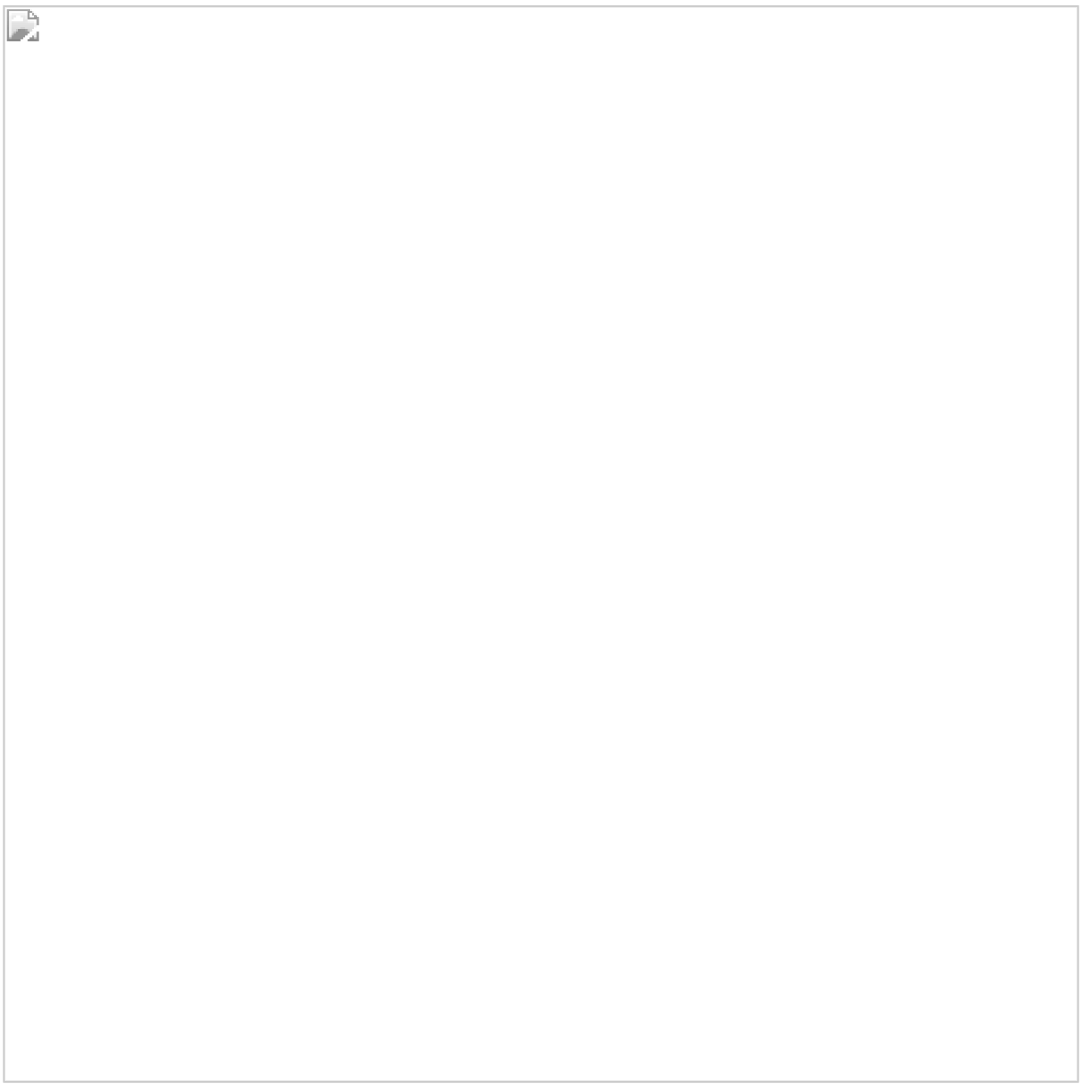
In Spring they had long days in the garden. Wherever the Boy went, the Rabbit went too, with rides in the wheelbarrow and picnics on the grass.

One evening the Rabbit was left out on the lawn until after dark, and Nana had to come looking for him with a candle. “Fancy all that fuss for a toy!” she said.

The Boy stretched out his hands. “Give me my Bunny! You mustn’t say that. He isn’t a toy. He’s REAL!” When the little Rabbit heard that, he was happy, for he knew that what the Skin Horse had said was true at last.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think it meant when the Boy said, “He isn’t a toy”?



Think about it

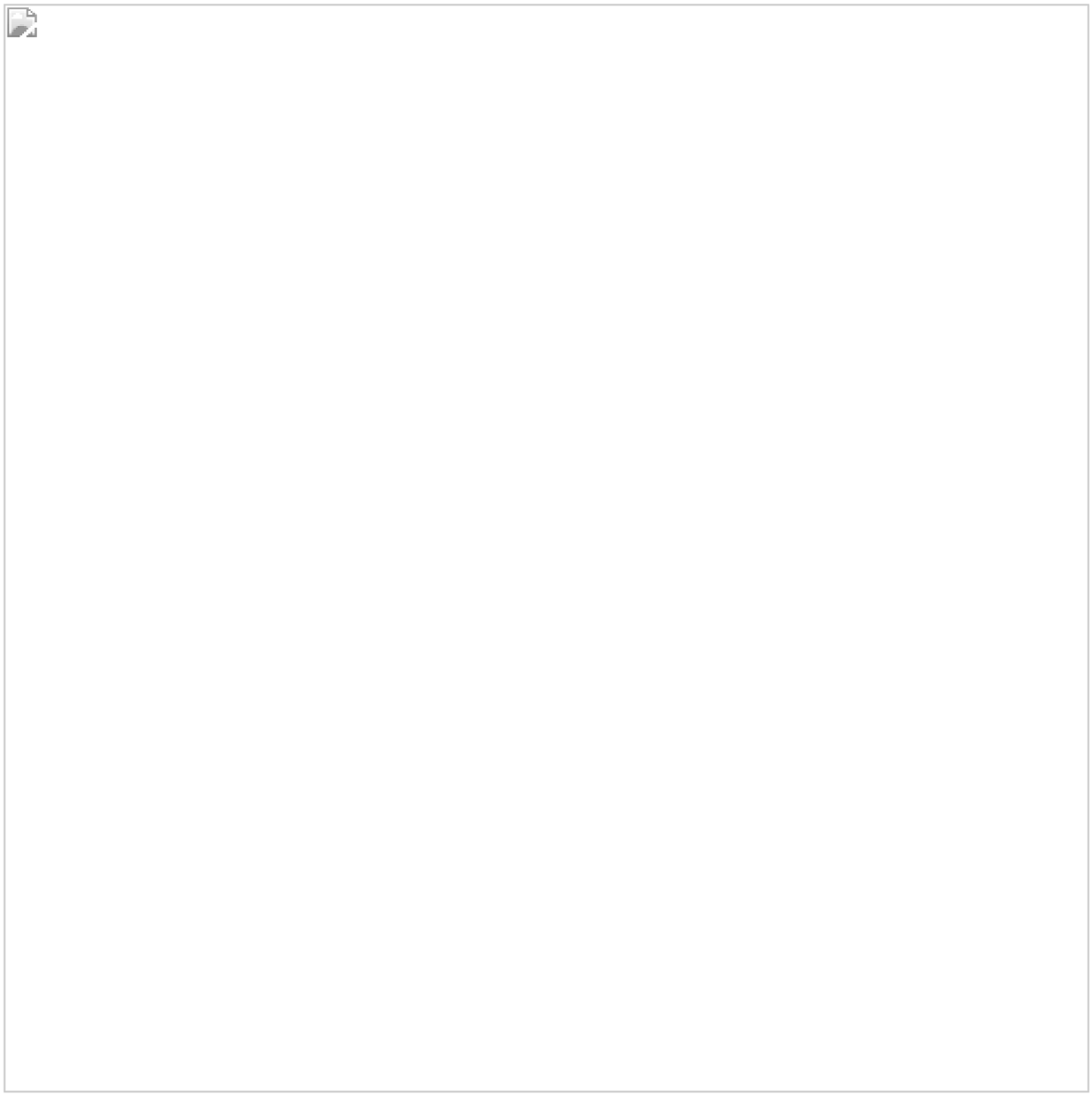
1. What did the Boy say about his Bunny?

- ○ He isn’t a toy. He’s REAL!
- ○ He is only a toy
- ○ He is lost

2. Where did the Rabbit get left one evening?

- ○ Out on the lawn
- ○ On the roof
- ○ At the seaside

The Wild Rabbits



That Summer the Boy often took the Rabbit to the wood and made him a cosy nest in the bracken while he picked flowers.

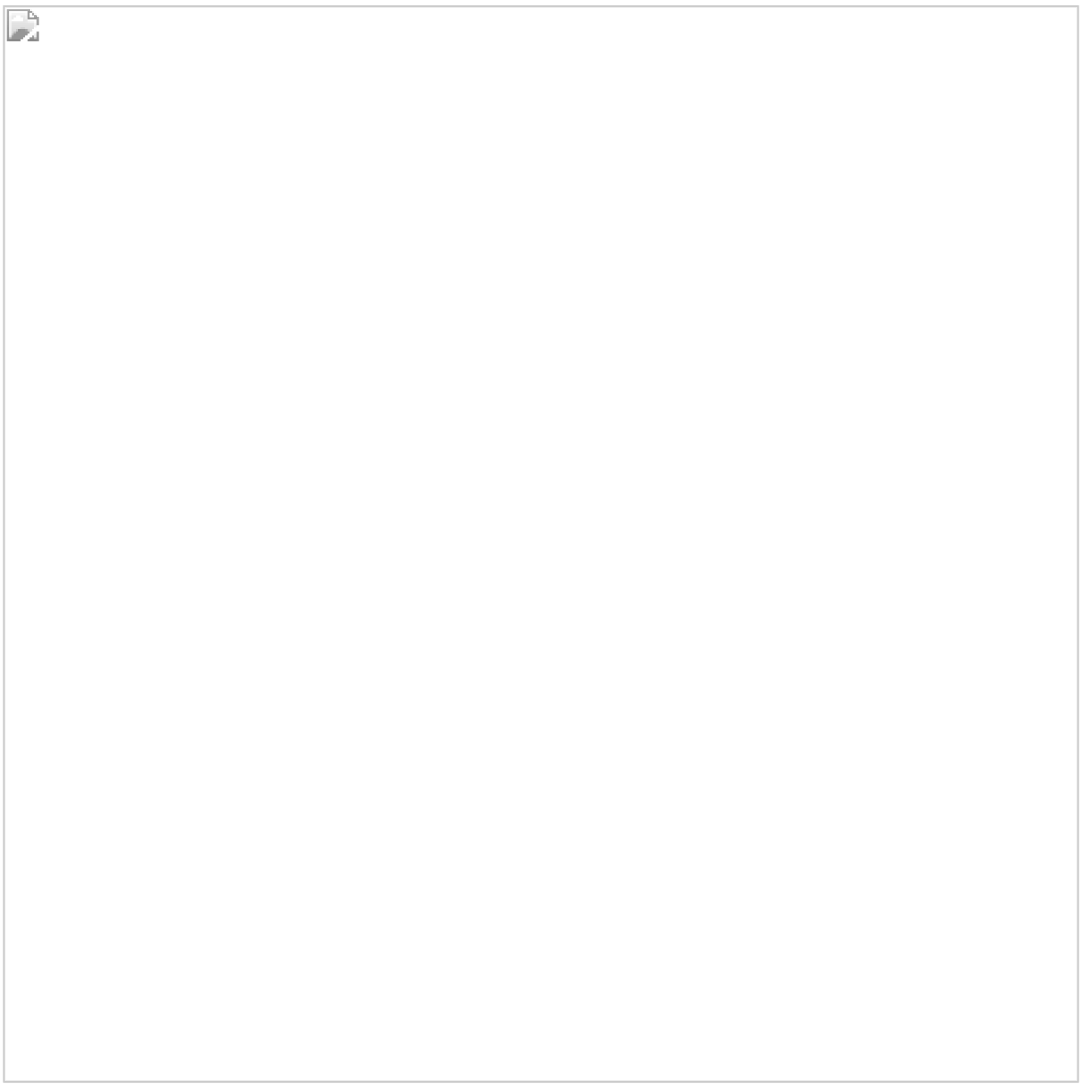
One evening two strange rabbits crept out of the bracken. “Why don’t you get up and play with us?” one asked. But the Rabbit had no hind legs. The back of him was all in one piece, like a pincushion.

The wild rabbit came close and sniffed. “He isn’t a rabbit at all! He isn’t real!” “I am Real!” said the little Rabbit. “I am Real! The Boy said so!” Then the Boy ran past, and they were gone.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Rabbit wanted to dance but sat still. What do you think was going on inside him?

The Wild Rabbits · another picture



Think about it

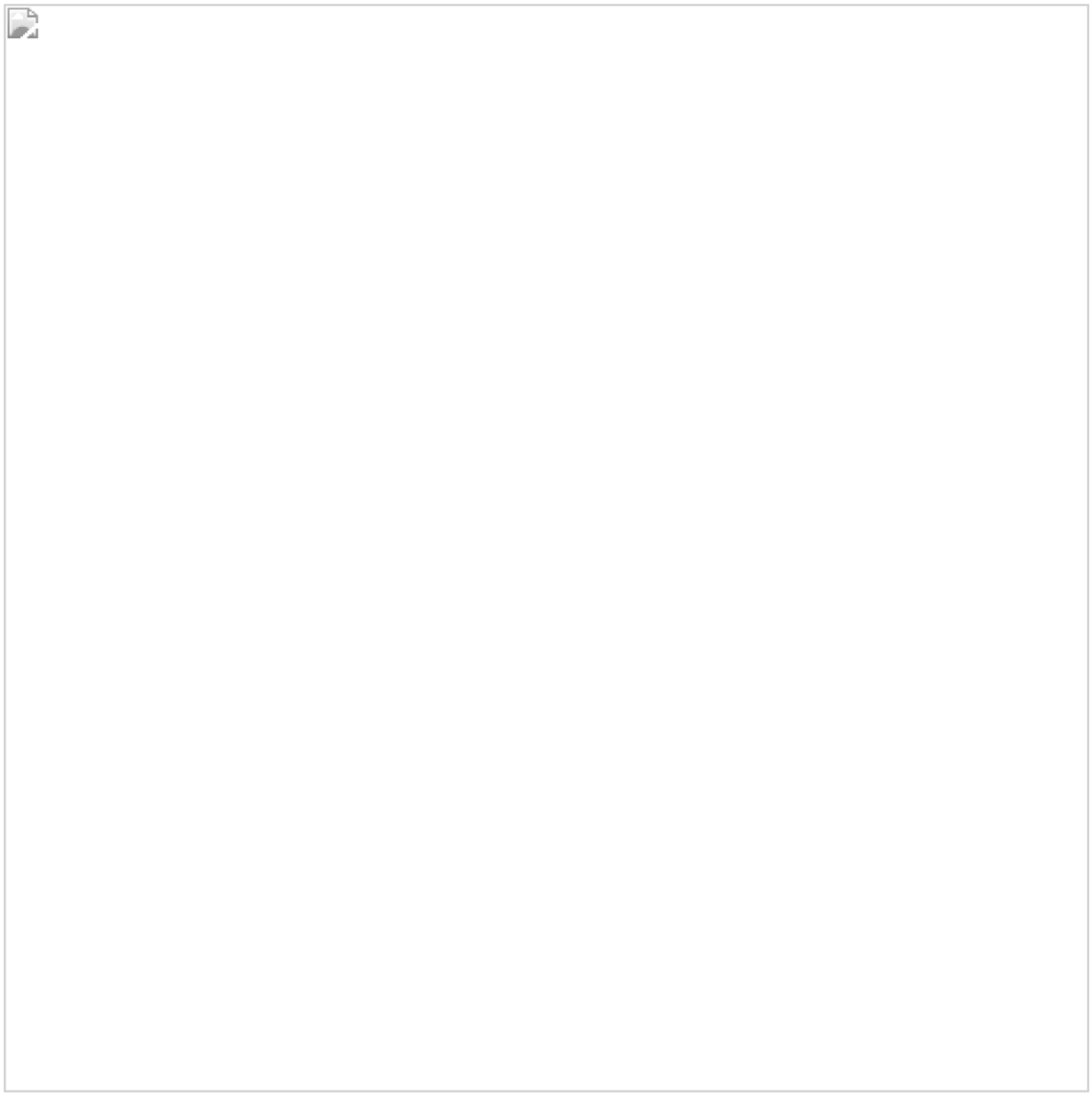
1. What did the wild rabbits do that the Rabbit could not?

- ○ Hop and dance on their hind legs
- ○ Swim
- ○ Fly

2. What did the Rabbit say when they told him he wasn't real?

- ○ "I am Real! The Boy said so!"
- ○ He agreed with them
- ○ Nothing at all

The Boy Is Ill



Weeks passed, and the Rabbit grew very old and shabby, but the Boy loved him just as much, so hard that he loved all his whiskers off. To the Boy he was always beautiful, and that was all the Rabbit cared about.

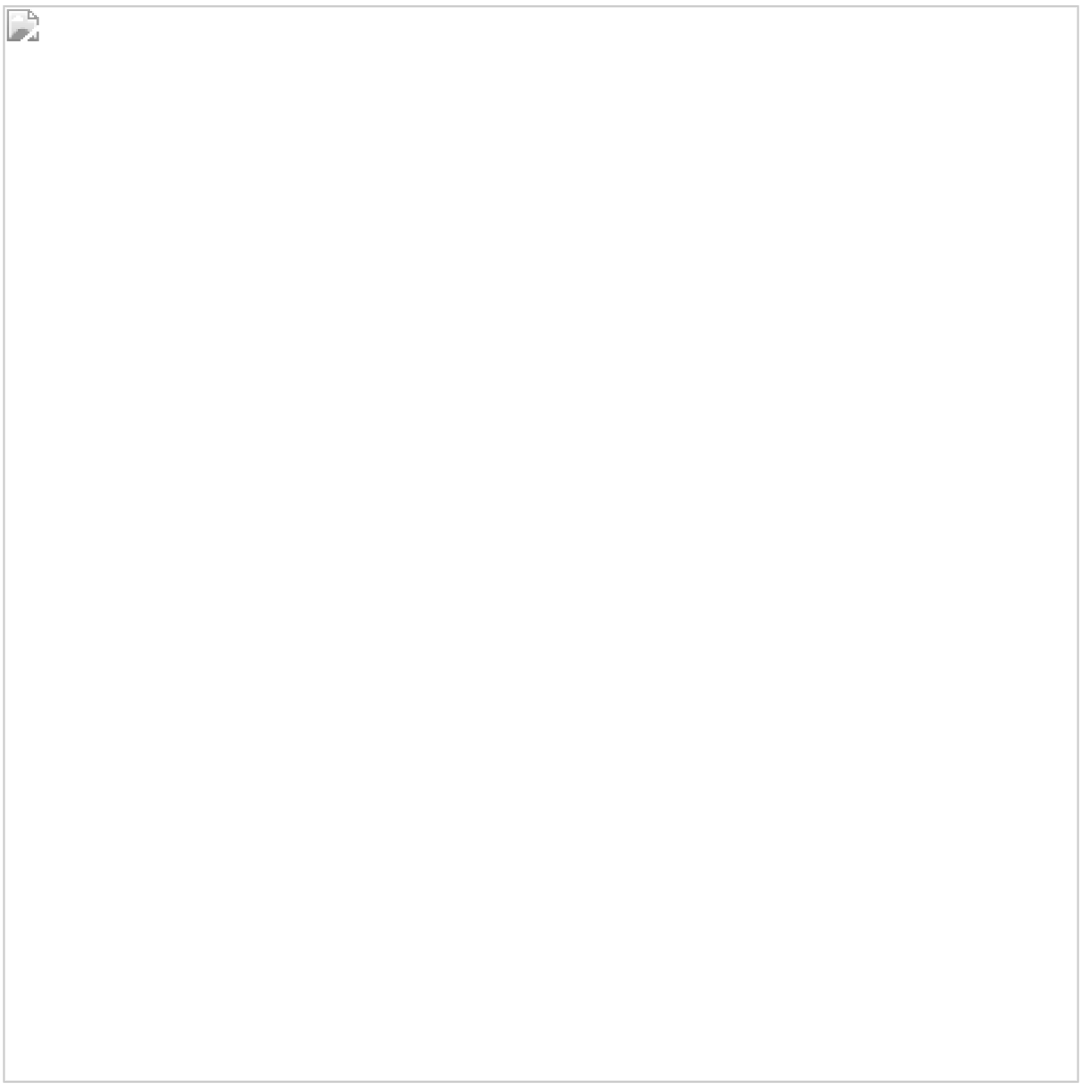
Then, one day, the Boy was ill. Strange people came and went, and a light burned all night. The little Rabbit lay hidden under the bedclothes and never stirred, for he knew that the Boy needed him.

It was a long, weary time. Then the fever turned, and the Boy got better. He could sit up and look at picture-books, with the Rabbit cuddled close.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Rabbit stayed close to the Boy while he was ill. How can we stay close to someone who is sick?

The Boy Is Ill · another picture



Think about it

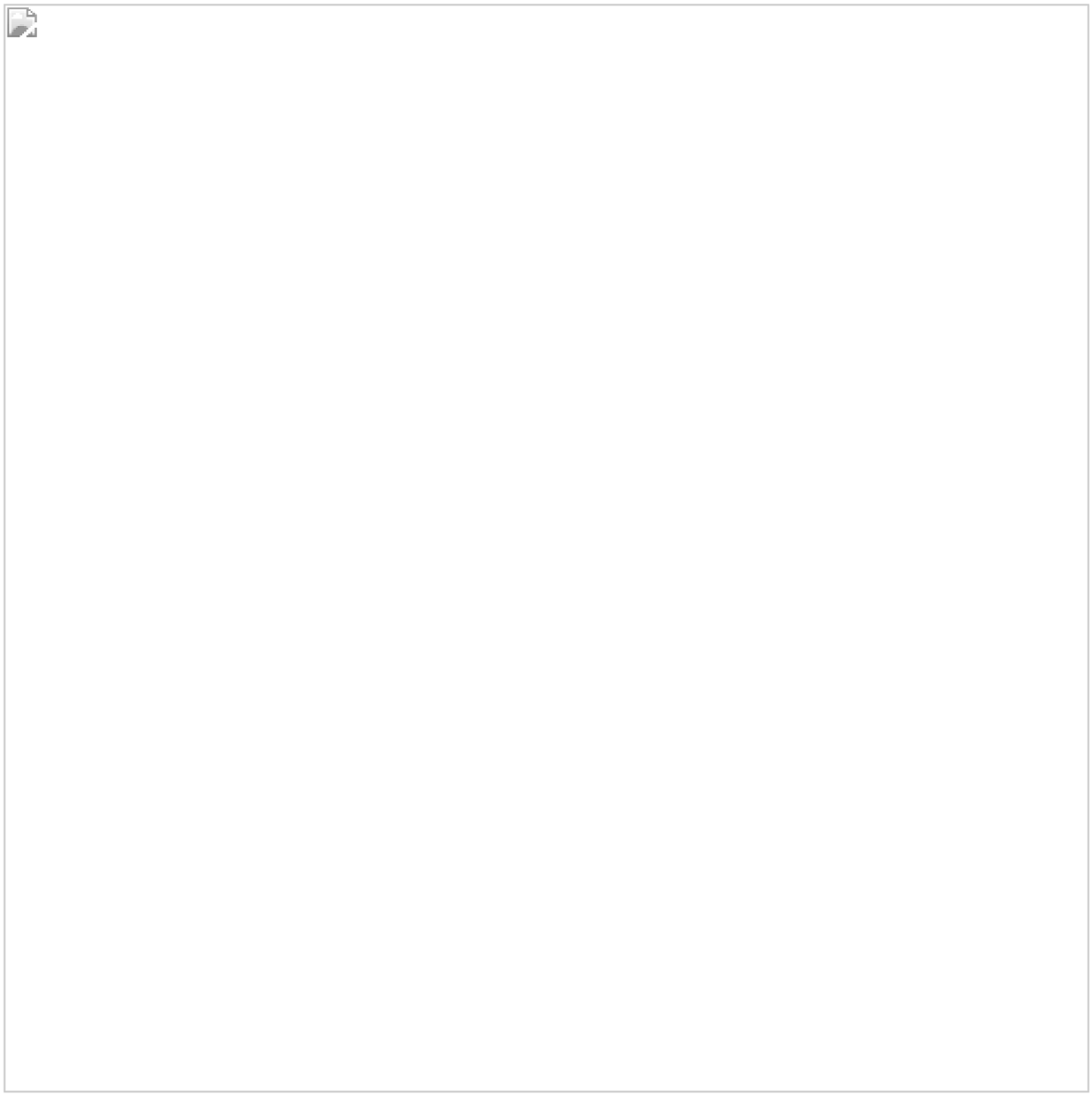
1. What did the Rabbit do while the Boy was ill?

- ○ Stayed close, hidden under the bedclothes
- ○ Ran away
- ○ Went to the wood

2. What happened at last?

- ○ The fever turned and the Boy got better
- ○ The Boy went to sleep forever
- ○ Nana went away

The Doctor's Orders



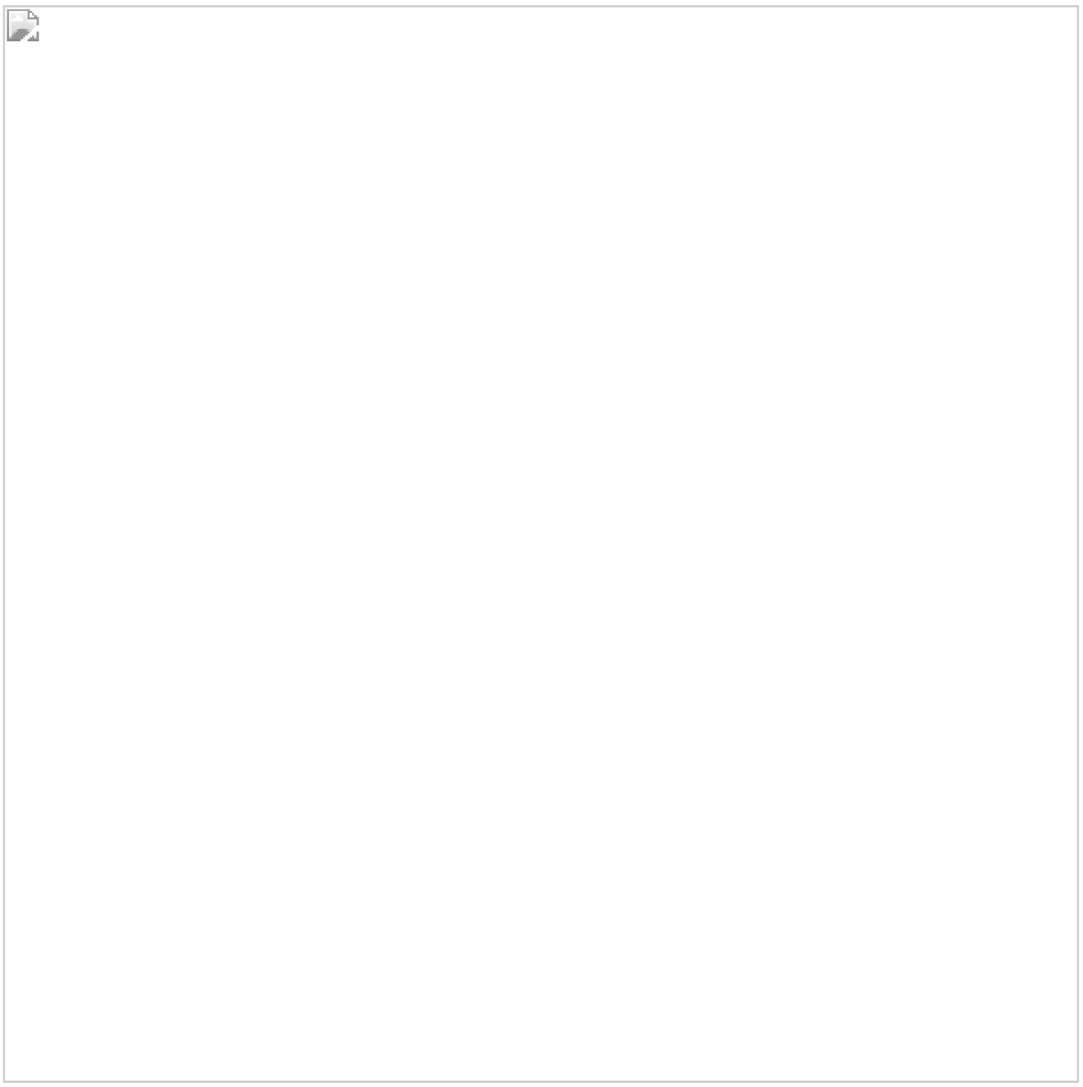
The Boy was going to the seaside tomorrow. The doctor said the room must be cleaned, and all the books and toys the Boy had played with in bed must be burned. "Hurrah!" thought the little Rabbit.

But Nana asked, "How about his old Bunny?" The doctor said the Rabbit had to go too, being so close to the sickness. "Get him a new one," he said.

So the Rabbit was put into a sack with the old picture-books and carried to the end of the garden, behind the fowl-house. The gardener was too busy to light the bonfire, but promised to come early in the morning.

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you think the Rabbit felt when he heard Nana's question?



Think about it

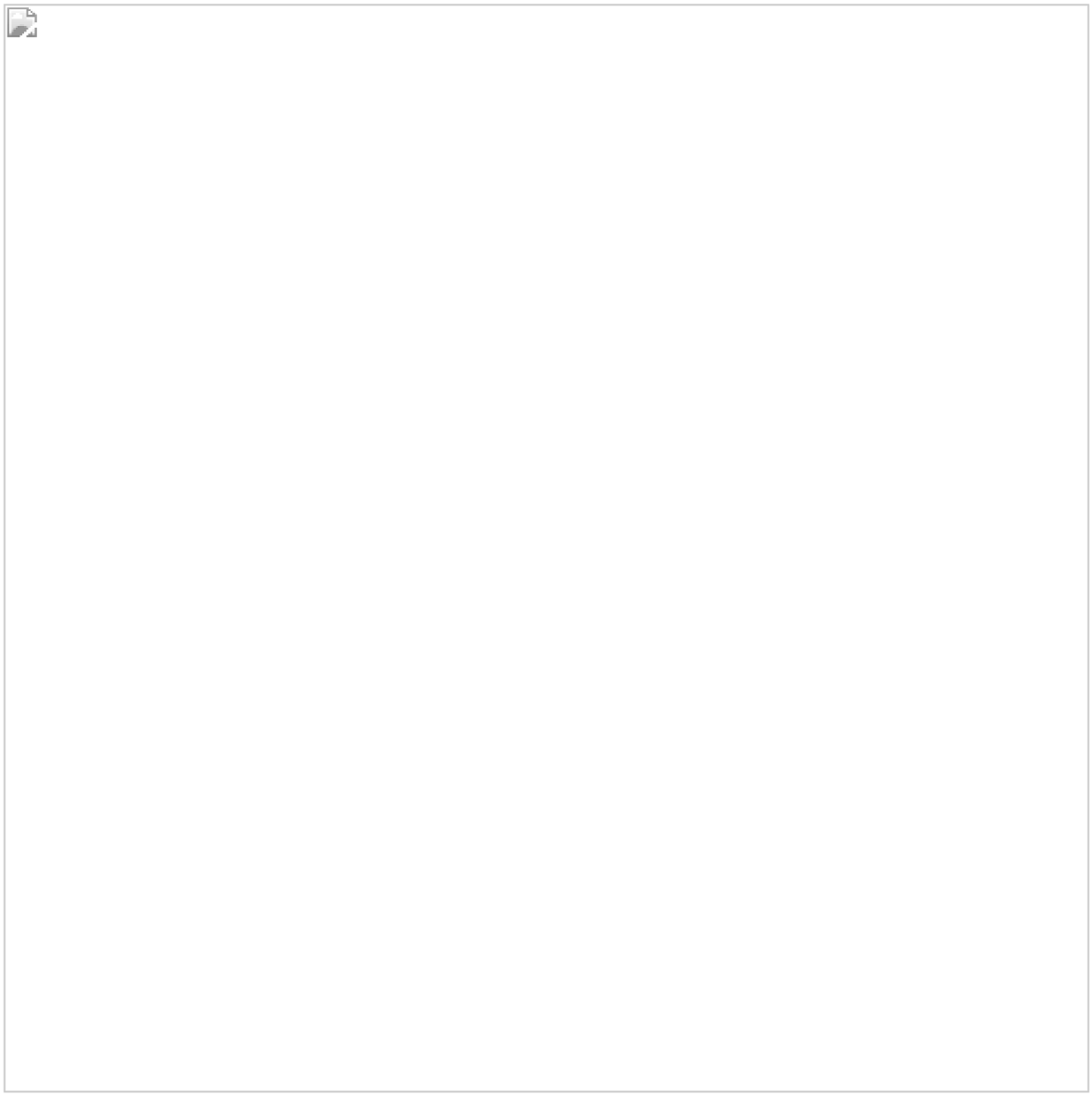
1. Where was the Boy going the next day?

- ○ To the seaside
- ○ To the wood
- ○ To school

2. Where was the Rabbit put?

- ○ In a sack behind the fowl-house
- ○ In the toy cupboard
- ○ In a new bed

The Tear and the Flower



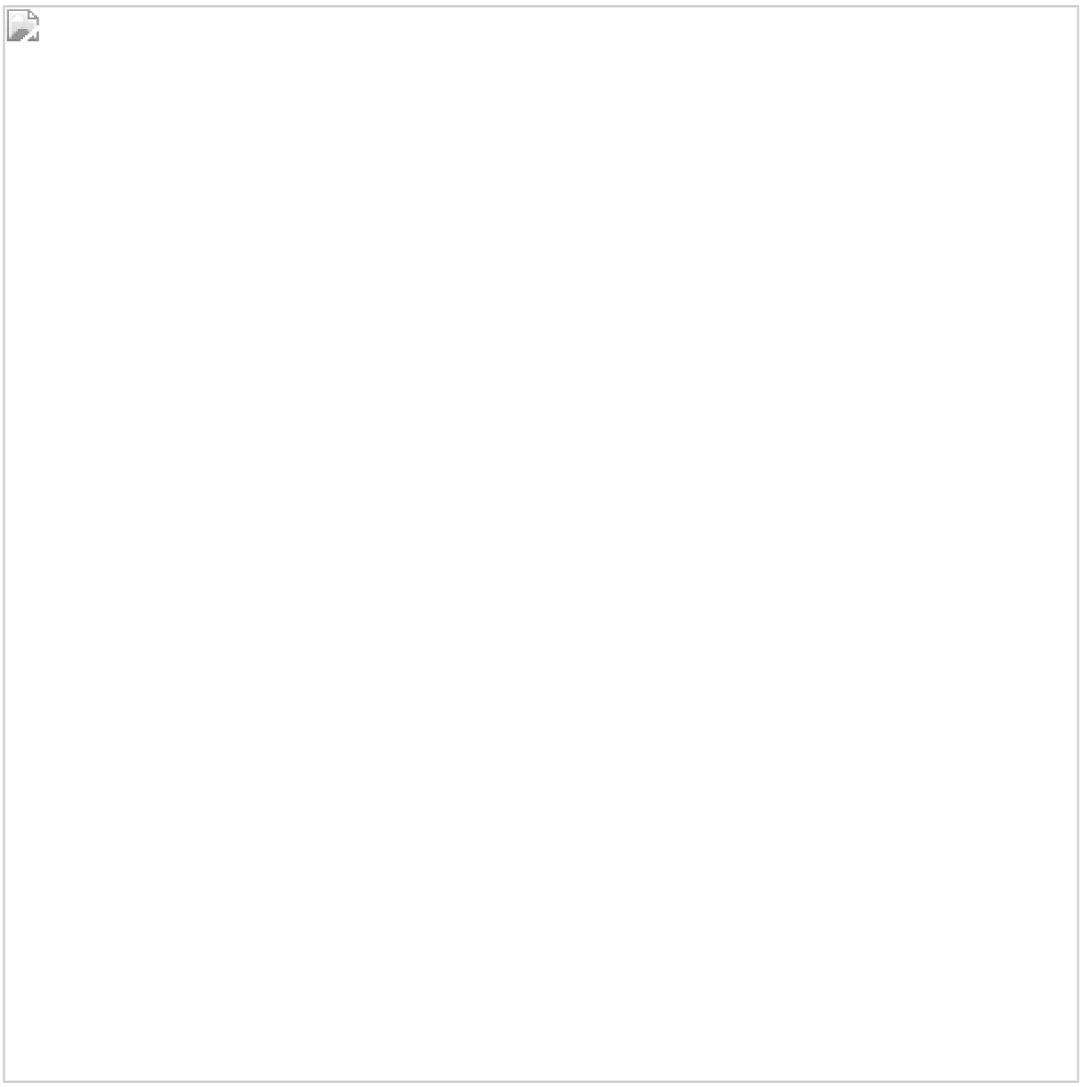
That night the Boy slept in a different bedroom with a new bunny, too excited about the seaside to care very much. The little Rabbit lay among the old picture-books, very lonely.

He wriggled his head out of the sack and looked at the raspberry canes where he had played with the Boy. He thought of the Skin Horse. 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, with a blossom like a golden cup. Then the blossom opened, and out stepped a fairy.

TALK ABOUT IT

Where do you think the flower came from? What would you want to ask the fairy?



Think about it

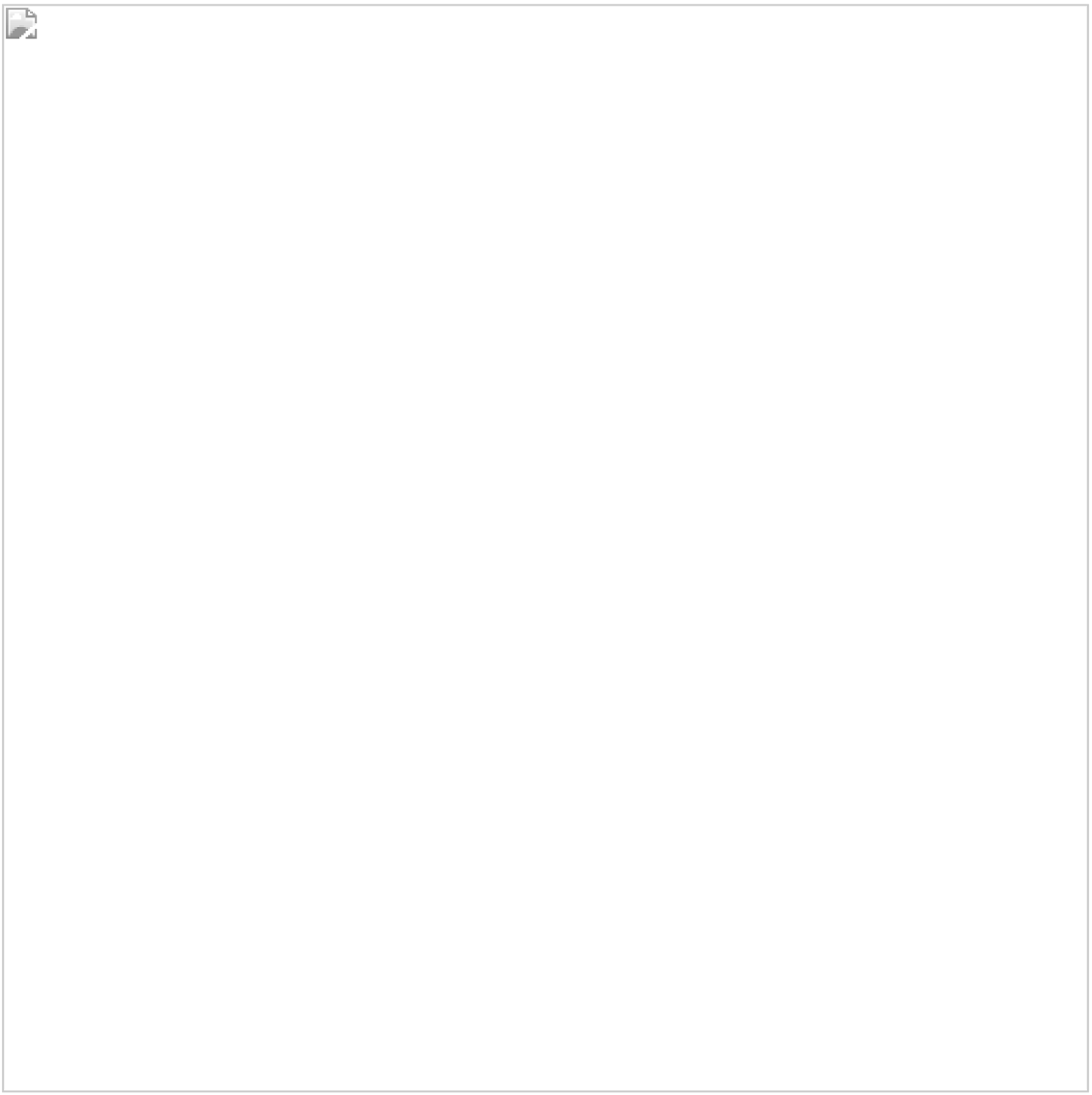
1. What fell to the ground from the Rabbit's nose?

- ○ A real tear
- ○ A button
- ○ A drop of rain

2. What grew where it fell?

- ○ A mysterious golden-cupped flower
- ○ A tall tree
- ○ A raspberry cane

The Nursery Magic Fairy



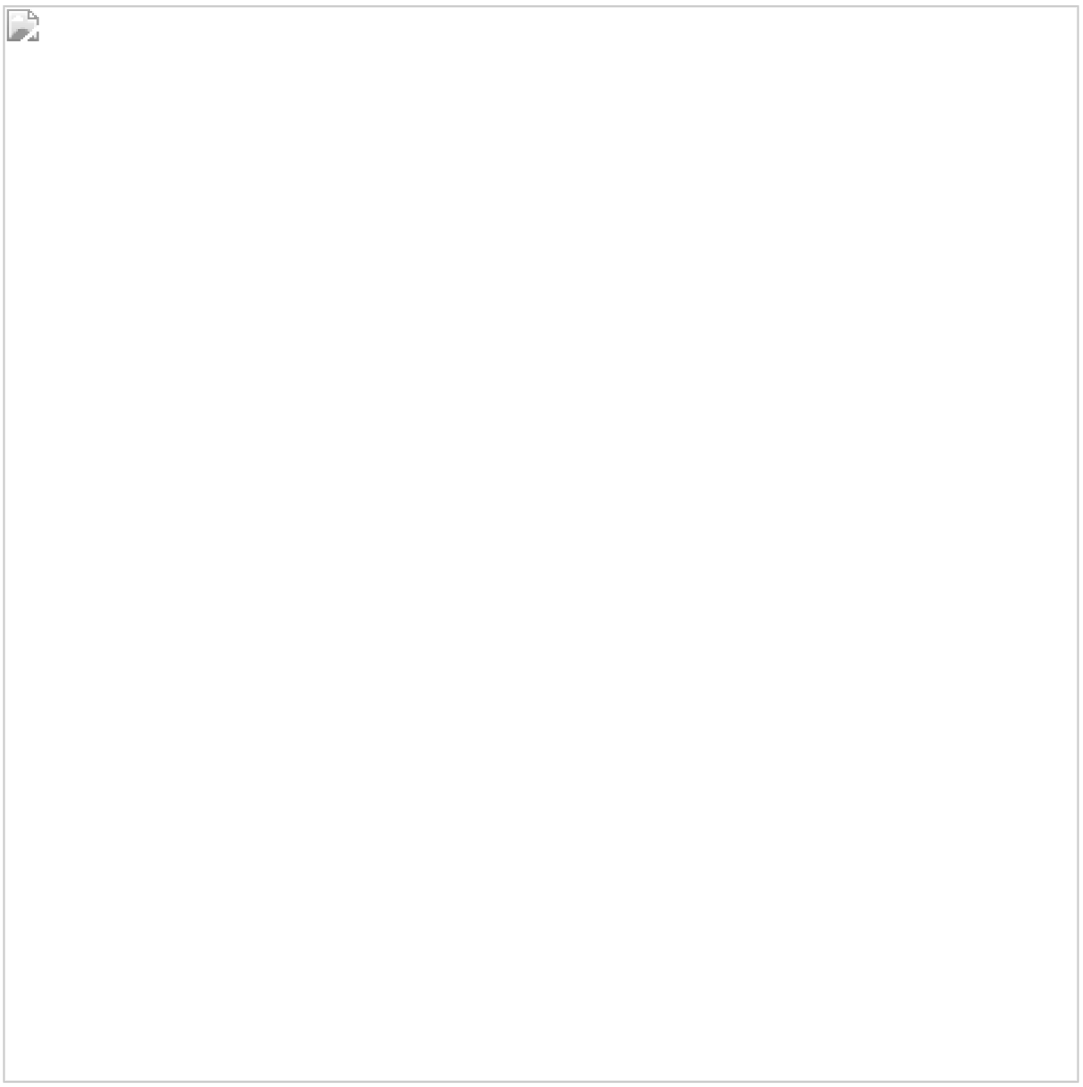
She was the loveliest fairy in the whole world. She gathered the Rabbit up and kissed his damp velveteen nose. “Little Rabbit,” she said, “don’t you know who I am?”

“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, she takes them away and turns them into Real.

“Wasn’t I Real before?” asked the little Rabbit. “You were Real to the Boy,” the Fairy said, “because he loved you. Now you shall be Real to every one.” And she flew with him into the wood.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Fairy said the Rabbit was already Real to the Boy. What do you think she meant?



Think about it

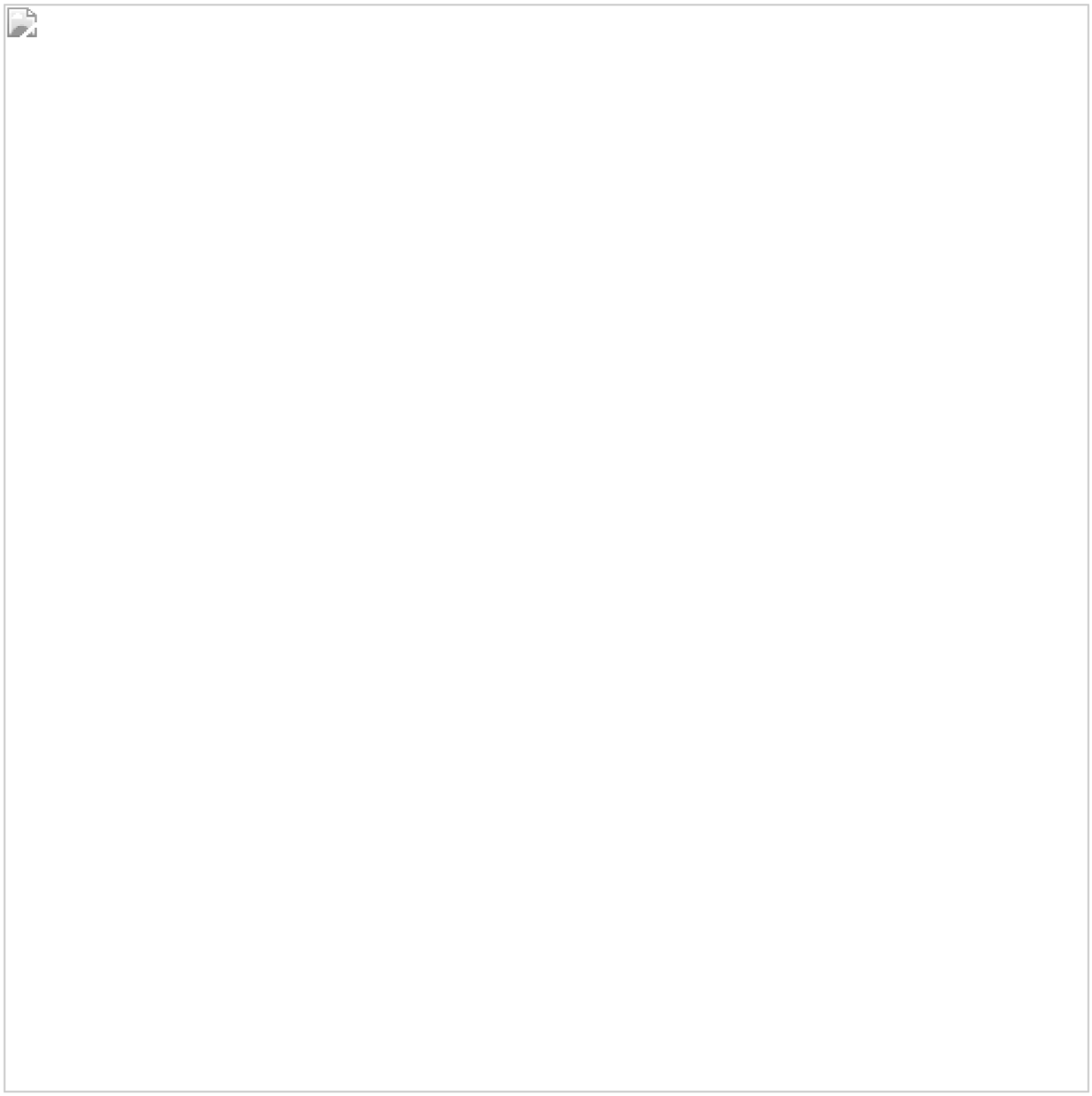
1. Who is the Fairy?

- ○ The nursery magic Fairy
- ○ The Tooth Fairy
- ○ Nana

2. What did the Fairy say about the Rabbit before?

- ○ He was Real to the Boy because the Boy loved him
- ○ He was never Real
- ○ He was only a toy

Hind Legs at Last



In the moonlight the wild rabbits were dancing. “I’ve brought you a new playfellow,” she said. “You must be very kind to him.” She put him down on the grass. “Run and play, little Rabbit!”

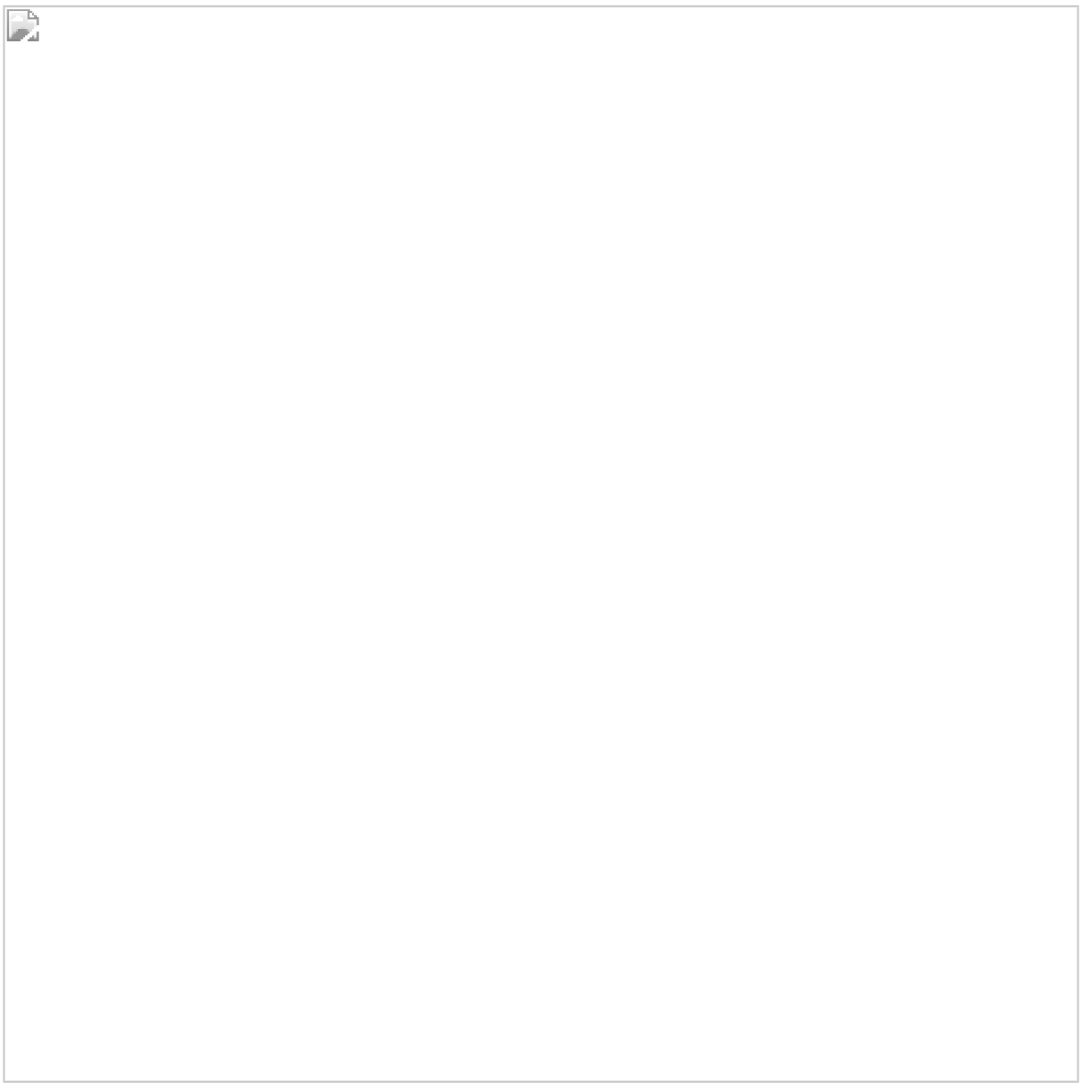
But he sat quite still, remembering his hind legs. He did not know her kiss had changed him. Then his nose tickled, and he lifted his hind toe to scratch it.

He had hind legs! Instead of dingy velveteen he had brown fur, soft and shiny. He gave one leap and went springing about the grass. He was a Real Rabbit at last.

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever been shy, and then found you could do the thing after all?

Hind Legs at Last · another picture



Think about it

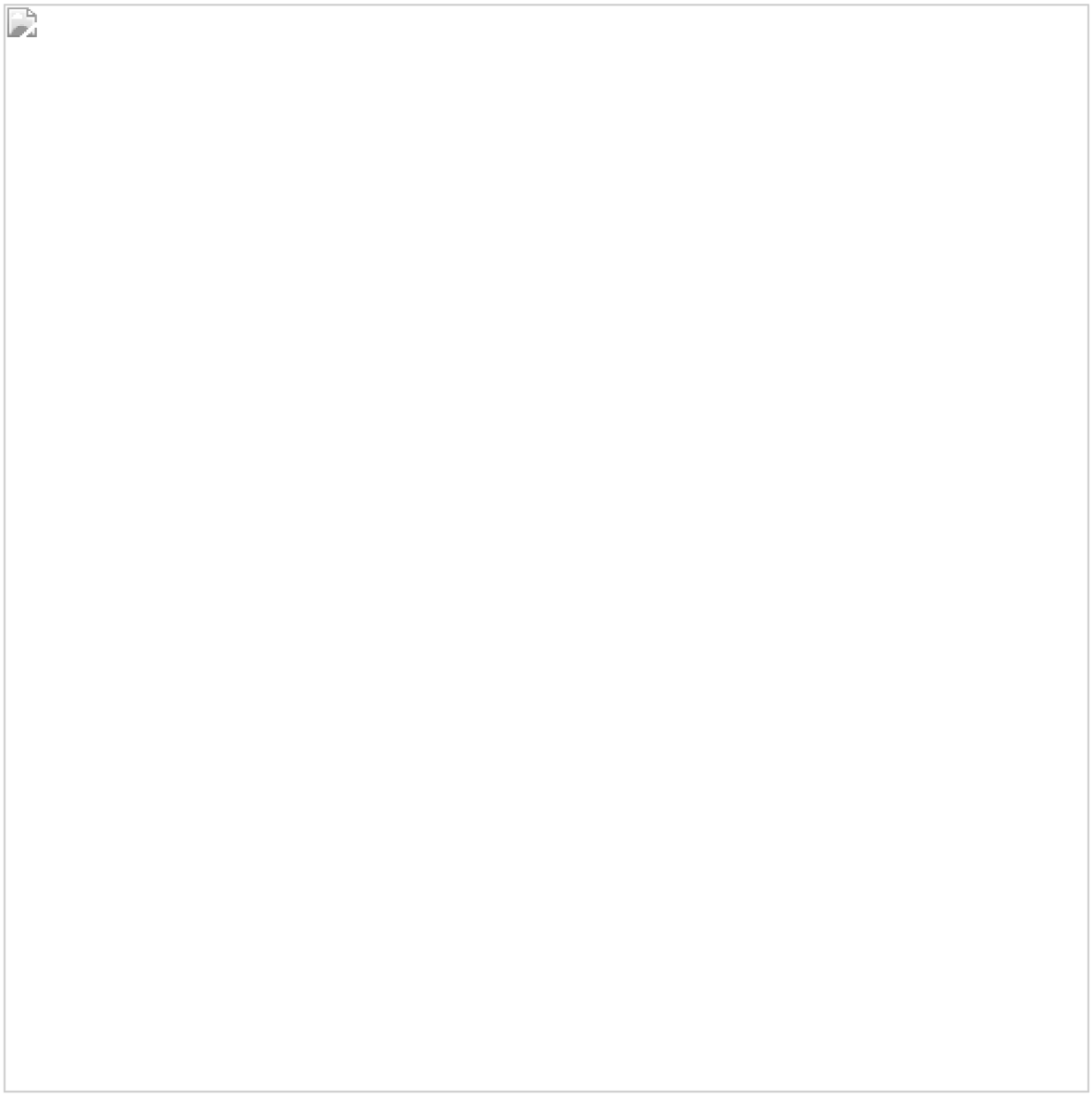
1. What did the Rabbit find when he scratched his nose?

- ○ He had hind legs
- ○ He had wings
- ○ He had a clockwork key

2. How did the Fairy tell the wild rabbits to treat him?

- ○ Very kindly
- ○ Like a stranger
- ○ Like a toy

Spring in the Wood



Autumn passed, and Winter, and in the Spring the Boy went out to play in the wood behind the house.

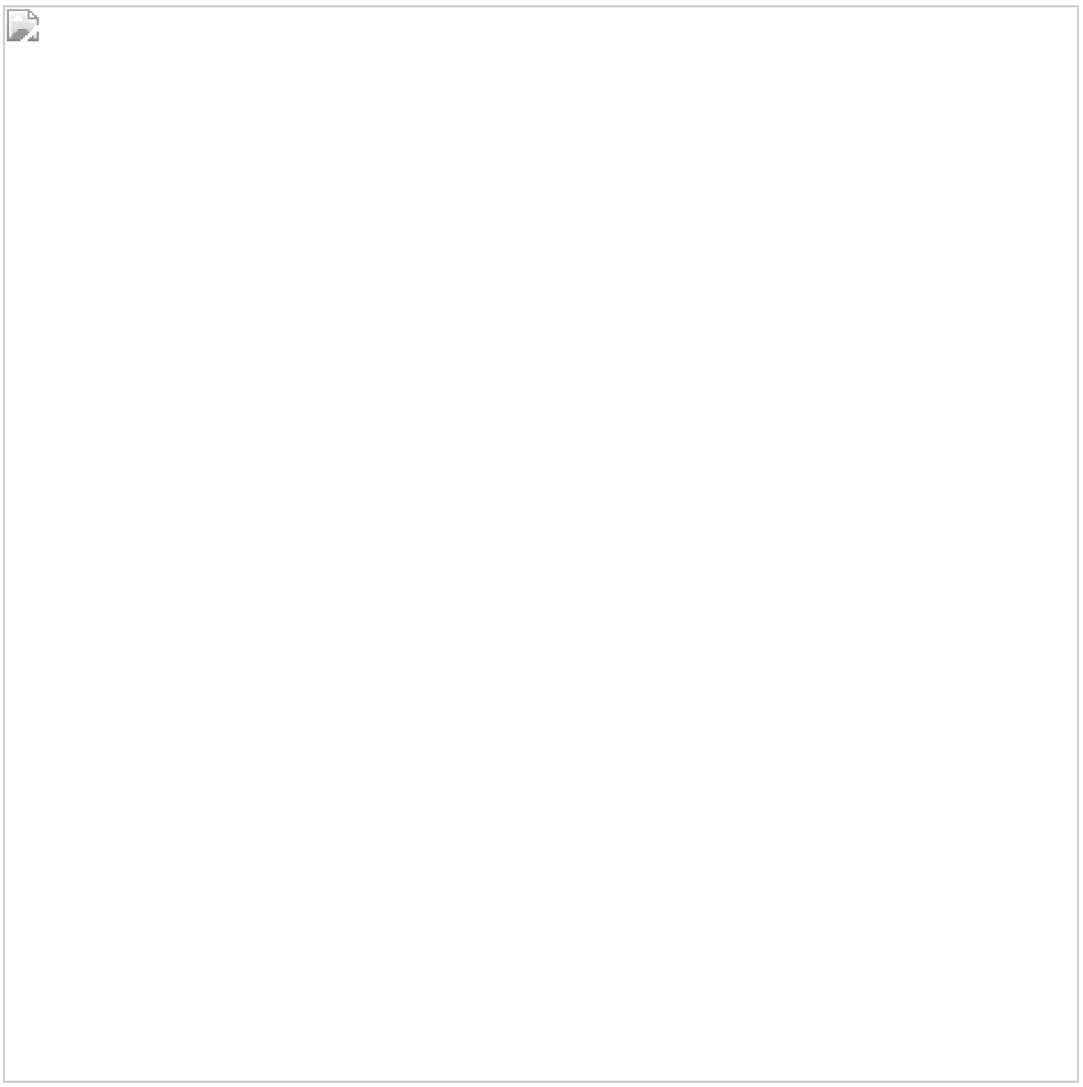
Two rabbits crept out from the bracken. One was brown all over. The other had strange markings under his fur, as though long ago he had been spotted. About his soft nose and round black eyes there was something familiar.

The Boy thought, “Why, he looks just like my old Bunny that was lost when I had scarlet fever!” 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.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think the Rabbit felt when he saw the Boy again?

Spring in the Wood · another picture



Think about it

1. What did the Boy think when he saw the rabbit?

- ○ He looks just like my old Bunny
- ○ He looks like a fox
- ○ He is a stranger

2. Did the Boy ever know it was really his Bunny?

- ○ No, he never knew
- ○ Yes, he said so at once
- ○ Yes, Nana told him

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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