The
Velveteen Rabbit

Adapted by
John Stephens

From the book of the same title by
Margery Williams

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STORY

A lonely boy receives a wonderful Christmas gift and a toy rabbit learns some valuable lessons about life and love. In this humorous and touching adaptation of the children's classic, the Velveteen Rabbit encounters the antics of toys and wild rabbits in his faithful quest to be "real." Premiered at the *Alliance Children's Theatre*, Atlanta Georgia. About an hour.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(18 characters. Much doubling possible.)

NARRATOR: May be as a voice over.
NANNY
BOY
VELVETEEN RABBIT*
SKIN HORSE
TIN SOLDIER
JACK IN THE BOX ONE
JACK IN THE BOX TWO
TOY BOAT
DANCER
BALL
SUNNY RABBIT
RUNNY RABBIT
HONEY RABBIT
LUNNY RABBIT
DUNNY RABBIT
DOCTOR
FAERIE

**VELVETEEN RABBIT (in caps) indicates the actor; velveteen rabbit (in lower case) indicates the prop. This also applies to all the other toy references.*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: A large bedroom situated on the upper floor of an English manor house. It is very much a little boy's room, the childish chaos prevailing despite the loving attention of the boy's nurse, Nanny. It is Christmas evening and the freshly opened presents of Christmas morning lay strewn about amongst their wrappings and boxes. There is a large door leading to the upstairs hallway, and a set of double doors overlooking the garden. There is a very large toy cupboard against one wall. A coal fire burns in the fireplace, and hanging from the mantle, almost as an afterthought to Christmas day, is a stocking filled with fruits, small insignificant gifts, and a large lumpy form stuffed into the very bottom.

Scene 2: The nursery. Later that same night.

Scene 3: The nursery. It is early spring and the sunlight shines brightly through the balcony doors.

Scene 4: The nursery. It is nighttime and the boy is sleeping soundly.

Scene 5: It is late summer and the bright afternoon sunshine is flooding through the open doors leading to the balcony. Then outside near the magic hawthorn bush.

Scene 6: The nursery. The boy is in bed.

Scene 7: The garden as before with its "magic" Hawthorn bush.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The bedroom. MUSIC up and over during the narration.)

NARRATOR: *(VO.)* There was once a velveteen rabbit, and in the beginning he was really splendid. He was fat and bunchy, as a rabbit should be; his coat was spotted brown and white, he had real thread whiskers, and his ears were lined with pink sateen. On Christmas morning, when he sat wedged in the Boy's stocking, with a sprig of holly between his paws, the effect was most charming.

(During the opening music and narration, the form in the bottom of the Christmas stocking begins moving. The form steadfastly makes its way up through the contents of the sock, spilling oranges and nuts, jingle bells and squeakey toys onto the floor. The velveteen rabbit [prop] emerges from the Christmas stocking and looks around. He attempts to climb out, and has balanced for a moment precariously on the mantelpiece. The door to the room opens startling the rabbit so he falls unceremoniously back into the stocking and wedges once again in the toe. The holly sprig fall to the floor. NANNY enters and ushers in the BOY. Nanny carries the remainder of the day's presents with her and sets them down. From the brightly lit rooms beyond, we can hear the sounds of a Christmas party - laughter and singing. Nanny crosses to the bed and begins taking down the bedcovers. The Boy lingers at the open door listening to the party noises.)

NANNY: I believe I know a little lad who has had just about his fill of Christmas day.
BOY: But Christmas is not over, Nan. Listen, they're singing still.
NANNY: Hmmmm. That they are. That they are.
BOY: They're angels. Angels singing of Christmas day.
NANNY: That there's your Uncle Albert, child, hardly an angel. And your mummy, and your daddy, and the rest.

(Offstage we hear an off key ending to the SONG followed by loud LAUGHTER.)

BOY: Listen. Do you hear! They're calling for me. They want me to come back to the party.

(HE starts for the door. NANNY scoops him up and deposits him on the bed.)

NANNY: Calling for you to stop this fiddling about and get into bed.
BOY: I want to go back downstairs. To Christmas.
NANNY: Christmas for little boys is done for this year. The party below is for big people now. You've been said good night to, young man, several times.
BOY: But...
NANNY: Now, good night, once again. And that's final.

(NANNY crosses to the door and pauses for a moment watching HIM. The Boy withdraws. He crosses slowly to the balcony doors and stares out into the night. The revelry from below continues.)

NANNY: *(Cont.)* What's this then? Haven't you had a grand Christmas day? Why, look at these presents strewn about. There's not a boy in all England, I would think, whose mother and father have given him such wonderful gifts. A world of toys to play with. What more could you wish for? *(The BOY says nothing. SHE wades through the presents.)* A veritable treasure trove this. A bouncing ball. *(Demonstrates.)* And don't it work nice. Oh, and this mechanical boat! Which winds up and sails you all the way to Zanzeebar. And a music box piano with a ballet dancer on top. Now, ain't she a love. This tin soldier. Stand to, laddie! Then there's this old horse that's been here longer than the two of us together has years. And what could be in this box! Let's see ... "From Mummy and Daddy"… says the jolly greeting ... and

End of Freeview

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