



Veronica's Velvet

1 Veronica's mother made velvet cushions. She made them in bright colours and sewed big love hearts onto the centre. Sometimes she added golden tassels.

Veronica loved the way the velvet felt on her face and she adored every different tone and shade. She especially loved the purple. The purple velvet seemed special. It felt magical.

Veronica kept the leftover scraps of fabric and tassel in her treasure box.

"I'm keeping them for something special," she told people. Veronica wasn't sure what she would do with the velvet but she knew it had a purpose.

2 Gradually, as Veronica grew older, the treasure box was pushed further and further under her bed. It made way for new things such as rollerblades, secret diaries, spy outfits, romance novels and trendy boots.

Veronica found the box years later. She was cleaning out her room with her friend Ruth.

"The colours of those fabric scraps are gorgeous!" said Ruth.

"Yes," answered Veronica. "I've never really known what to do with them, though."

"Let me make them into a skirt for you," Ruth offered. "It will be just beautiful."

3 And so Ruth made the most beautiful skirt that Veronica had ever seen. It was multicoloured and soft with gold tassels. It looked great with Veronica's latest pair of boots.

Both friends thought the skirt was fantastic. They took it in turns to wear it on special nights out. They loved how the skirt made them feel happy and confident. They loved how no one else had one like it.

Years later, Ruth left for a new life of adventure overseas. Veronica gave her the skirt. "To remind you of me," she told Ruth through hugs and tears at the airport.

4 And so the skirt spent several years travelling the world with Ruth. Then one day Ruth returned home with the skirt in her backpack and a baby in her belly.

When Ruth's baby, Bella, turned three, the skirt became her favourite piece of dress up. Little Bella loved how soft the skirt was and she adored all the pretty colours. Bella insisted on wearing the skirt shopping and to preschool. At these times she pulled it up under her armpits, wearing it like a dress. She often wore it with a crown and princess jewellery. It made her feel like the queen of the world.

5 When Bella outgrew her dress-up collection it was passed on to her five cousins. They soon adopted the skirt as a favourite between them. They played fairy games and made wands and wings in colours to match the skirt. They named each other after flowers: Daisy, Rose, Violet and Bluebell. Whoever wore the velvet skirt was called Lily of The Valley.

6 In time, Bella's cousins outgrew their fairy world and the skirt was given to an op-shop. The skirt hanging in the store, looked very different to the dazzling creation Ruth had made years earlier. The tassels were falling off, the colours had faded, the seams were tearing and some of the velvet was stained. Yet when Tanya saw the skirt she loved it instantly. She loved the soft feel of the velvet and she adored its once bright shades.

7 Tanya took the skirt home and unpicked the seams. She removed the last of the tassels, cut away the most worn parts of the skirt and cleaned the fabric carefully. Using the newly cleaned material, Tanya made two plump, square cushions for her lounge. Tanya loved watching her granddaughters lay the cushions on the floor then roll off the lounge. They chuckled as they landed on the soft velvet.

8 Years and chuckles sped into the past, until the pillows caught Beth's eye at a jumble sale. She really liked their pale colours. They were pretty and peaceful. Beth thought there was something special about the cushions. On a whim, she bought the pillows to give to Mrs Wills and Mrs Parker. Every Friday Beth visited a nursing home as part of her school's community service programme. Those two elderly women were her favourites. She would give them one cushion each.

9 On Friday, Beth first went to the East Wing to give Mrs Wills the cushion.

"Oh, aren't those colours gorgeous!" clucked Mrs Wills. "Thank you, dear," she said as she stroked the cushion. "I used to have a velvet skirt when I was younger, a beautiful velvet

skirt with gold tassels. I remember making it from scraps of fabric for a friend of mine."

10 Beth left Mrs Wills looking out of the window with the cushion on her lap. Then she went to see Mrs Parker in the West Wing. Mrs Parker loved her cushion too. She held the cushion to her face and felt the soft velvet on her cheek.

"My mother used to make velvet cushions," she told Beth. "But there's something else this cushion reminds me of. I just can't think what it is."

Mrs Parker traced her finger over a purple square on the cushion. "I used to think purple was magic," she giggled, "and, you know what else? I think I used to have a velvet skirt. Yes, I did. I had a beautiful velvet skirt with gold tassels. A friend made it for me."

Beth felt excited as she pushed Mrs Parker into the East Wing of the building. She was taking her to meet Mrs Wills.

11 Veronica and Ruth recognised each other straight away and, leaning from their chairs, they tightly clasped the other's shoulders.

"Remember that skirt we used to have!" they cried together. Then they fell into a conversation filled with laughter and tears.

Beth couldn't help grinning. The joy from the old friends was infectious. Beth left the women together and snuck off quietly. She knew there had been something very special about those cushions.



Questions

- 1 What was Veronica keeping the velvet for?
 - a to make it into a cushion
 - b to make it into a skirt
 - c for something special
- 2 Who made the skirt?
 - a Veronica made the skirt.
 - b Ruth made the skirt.
 - c Bella made the skirt.



- 4 When Tanya saw the skirt, she
 - a decided to make it into cushions.
 - b loved it instantly.
 - c bought it for her daughter to dress up in.
- 5 How many people wore the velvet skirt?
 - a two
 - b eight
 - c ten
- 6 Who was Mrs Wills?
 - a Ruth
 - b Veronica
 - c Veronica's mother



Vocabulary

Match the words from the text to the clues.

The brackets show the text sections ().

plump recognised
confident velvet adopted

- 7 A type of fabric (1)
- 8 To feel sure and in no doubt (3)
- 9 Took on as your own (5)
- 10 Full or round (7)
- 11 Identified someone or something already known (11)

Grammar

A **compound word** is made of two separate words, e.g. *afternoon*.

Make compound words from the following lists.

- | | |
|----------|--------|
| 12 left | grew |
| 13 under | seas |
| 14 over | growth |
| 15 out | over |

Back To The Text...

- 16 The illustration on the front cover is probably in Veronica's home.
 - a true
 - b false
- 17 The text suggests that velvet is a very durable material.
 - a true
 - b false
- 18 Prediction: What is likely to happen in the future?

- a Veronica and Ruth will get together again in the nursing home.
- b Bella will grow up to become a dressmaker.

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19 a Ruth used the velvet for a skirt.
b Veronica's mum used the velvet for cushions.
- 20 a Tanya bought the velvet.
b Beth bought the velvet.
- 21 a Beth visited Mrs Parker.
b Beth visited Mrs Wills.

Think About This

- 22 Look at the title on the front of the card. What is the gold item that is attached to each 'V'?
 - a a ponytail
 - b a gold tassel.
 - c a gold cushion.
- 23 This recount probably spans over
 - a ten years.
 - b twenty years.
 - c fifty years.

Challenge Option



Vocabulary: How many words can you make from the name VERONICA?