

The Purpose

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Once upon a time in a land not too far away, there lived a little girl. Like many little girls, she had her very own room, and she enjoyed filling it with all the pretty things her father brought her from his travels. One of her most prized possessions was a beautiful porcelain doll with raven black hair and eyes the color of the sky. The doll's name was Eloise.

One day, as Eloise was sitting comfortably on her bed, a nearby book said, "Eloise, I don't want to be a book anymore; won't you teach me how to be a doll?"

"You can't be a doll," Eloise replied gently. "That isn't what your author intended you to be." At that response, the little book became very sad.

A few moments later, the book looked around the room again and, catching sight of the perfume bottle, she said, "Please, please, Miss Perfume, won't you teach me how to smell as nice as you do?"

"Very well," the perfume agreed. "All you have to do is close your eyes and think of the loveliest smells you can conjure up."

The little book became very excited and squeezed her eyes shut, thinking of all the lovely smells in the world. She thought of freshly blooming jasmine on a bright spring day. She thought of the ocean breeze in the summertime and of crisp autumn leaves in the fall. She saved her favorite smell for last—chocolate chip cookies baking in the oven. However, despite imagining all of these wonderful scents, the little book still smelled the same.

Disappointed, the little book glanced around the room once again. This time, she spied a music box on the little girl's dresser. "Oh, Music Box, won't you teach me how to sound as nice as you?"

It took a bit of convincing, but the music box finally opened her lid and agreed.

"All you have to do is close your eyes and think of the loveliest sounds in the world."

The little book once again became very excited and closed her eyes. She thought of a chorus of crickets. She thought of a crackling fire and a gurgling stream. She saved her favorite sound for last—the sound of raindrops hitting the roof. However, despite all of these wonderful sounds, the little book couldn't produce a single note.

Frustrated, the little book looked around the room once more. This time, she spotted a beautiful painting on the wall. “Painting, please, please, won’t you teach me to look as lovely as you?”

“Alright,” the painting agreed. “What you must do is close your eyes and think of the loveliest sights you can dream up.”

Again, the little book closed her eyes and tried to think of all the lovely sights in the world. She thought of soft rolling hills with fresh green grass. She thought of light peeking its way into a dense forest, and lakes as clear as glass. She saved her favorite sight for last—a little girl’s smile. She had a lovely time thinking of all of those lovely sights but, once her eyes opened again, she was disappointed to find that she looked just the same as before. Her cover was still plain and dusty, she couldn’t make a sound, and she still had the same musty smell.

Furious, the little book went back to her corner and, even though she tried very hard not to cry, tears began to leak from her eyes. She was so busy crying that she didn’t notice Eloise climb down from the bed and walk up to her.

“Don’t cry,” Eloise comforted, offering the little book her lace handkerchief. “You mustn’t; you’re getting your pages all wet!”

“What’s the point?” the little book asked between her tears. “Even when my pages were dry, I couldn’t do anything. I can’t smell like Perfume, or sound like Music Box, or look like Painting.”

“That’s because you’re not them,” Eloise replied. “You’re you! I was trying to tell you earlier—you have a purpose all of your own!”

“What purpose could I possibly have?” the little book queried.

“Books inspire people! They take people places they could never go before. They teach people things they might not know otherwise.”

The little book’s eyes widened. “I can do all that?”

Eloise nodded. However, before she could say anything else, she froze. Footsteps could be heard coming toward the room, and she didn’t have time to get back to the bed! The little book quickly closed her pages and flopped on to her side just as the little girl entered the room.

“Hey, how did you get there?” the little girl asked, picking up Eloise and returning her to the bed. As she did so, she caught sight of the little book laying on its side. Curious, because she hadn’t read it before, she picked the book up with her free hand and opened it to the first page.

As the little girl flipped through the pages, the little book was very happy. Not because she had learned how to smell like perfume, not because she had learned

how to produce music, and not because she looked as beautiful as the painting...
but because she had a purpose all of her own. And she was satisfied with it.