

# The Box of Colors

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

The box of crayons was filled with an assortment of colors. They were stuffed in tightly together, and many of them were not happy. The problem was that every color in the box thought it was the most important.

The blue colors, from the very light to the very deep, grouped together and said, “We are the most important. Without us, there would be no clear sky above, no water in the oceans, no bluebirds that sing about happiness, or beautiful bluebells that sway gently in the garden. Without us there would be no lakes, streams, or rivers. There would be no teardrops to cry; no twinkles in your eye. That is why blue is the most important color.”

The green crayons disagreed. From shades of the palest moss to vivid chartreuse and the many hues in between, they insisted green was most important. “Without us, there would be no grass in the parks, no plants to grow food, no leaves on the trees, no Statue of Liberty! There would be no frogs croaking mournful songs atop their floating lily pad stages. No lizards lazily meditating in the sun, no turtles swimming through the timeless seas, no fearsome dragons to write stories about! So naturally, green is the most important color.”

The reds and oranges got fired up. “Without us,” they argued, “There would be no excitement! We are the shades you see when molten lava erupts from the volcano, when the forests ignite with uncontrollable fire, and when people rage with unleashed anger. We are the energy of scorching suns and the supernova that explodes from a dying star! We can be softer, too. We are the gentle beauty of romantic sunsets at the end of the day and the inspiring morning sunrises that take your breath away. We are the first robin of spring; we are the color of majestic cardinals, glorious orioles, and the countless exotic birds of the tropics. There is no doubt that we are the most important.”

The brown and black shades had their say. “We are darker and more plain than these other colors, to be sure,” they agreed. “But we are the colors of the earth. Without us, there would be no welcoming trees to climb and no creatures hard at work. Imagine no beavers building dams, no buffalo roaming the plains, no bears catching wild salmon in the streams, and no little puppies at play! Without the colors of nature, there would be no wood to shape a canoe or build sailing ships that explore the far reaches of the world. Without the brown and black soil of the earth, you could not grow crops. There would be no warm, squishy sand to dig your toes into at the beach. Surely without us, you could not build a home to live in nor have wood for your fireplace to warm you. That makes us important, too.”

“Don’t forget us!” The pinks and purples and yellows piped up. “We are the colors of wild imagination! Without us there would be no unicorns or princesses or sweet daydreams. We are the bright hues of happiness, of cotton candy, of dollhouses, and of gumdrops. We are the most important colors because children need us! We are the colors of bright fantasy and birthday wishes. Without us, the world would be dull and dreary!”

How would they decide? Seizing the opportunity, the orange crayon spoke up. "I am the brightest crayon!" he shouted. "I am the biggest, the boldest, the best in the box!" He bellowed. "There is no color more important than me!" The other crayons did not know what to do. For a moment, they all fell silent.

Then, quietly and without fanfare or bluster, the gray crayon spoke. She was an unimpressive color, a faded, smoky hue that wasn't used very often. The other crayons had to lean in to hear her. "You may not know me well," she began. "I am not the most vivid color in this box. I am not the blue of the sea, the green of the hills, the red in the sunrise, the brown of a mighty oak, the black of the fertile earth, or the purple of childhood dreams." She continued, "But I know the strength of steel. I represent the backbone of industry, the towering skyscrapers of a crowded metropolis. I am the glittering promise of innovation, of new technology: a shiny microchip, a tiny nanobot. And I am also the gray and silver that signify maturity, the signs of old age, and the wisdom and knowledge that comes with it." She paused to look at the crayons.

"How foolish you are. We must resist the urge to fight each other. Listen to me and know this: The world is a rainbow; without all the colors, you are nothing. We are only important together; we swirl and blend and merge to create all the beauty of the universe. Everything sacred in this world shines through a prism of color. Our diversity is our strength. Together, we are everything."

**Questions**

1. Pick a color groups and assign an emotion it.
2. Which color group's imagery was most compelling to you? Why?
3. What is the theme of this story?
4. How could you apply this theme to a real-life scenario?