

The Town of Painted Roofs



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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In the town of Colorford, every roof is painted a bright color. Red roofs mean medicine, blue roofs mean shelter, yellow roofs mean food, and green roofs mean help. People come from far away to find what they need. Rosie, a young artist with curly black hair in two puffs, loves to paint. She lives in a little house with a bright orange roof.



Rosie's dog Pip, a fluffy cream-and-brown pup with an orange bandana, follows her everywhere. Rosie carries a rope belt full of brushes and paint pots. She often helps Grandpa Sol, the baker, whose roof is painted sunny yellow. "Colors talk without words," Grandpa Sol says, his white beard twitching as he smiles. "That's why our painted town is so special."



One day, dark clouds roll over Colorford. Heavy rain pours down for hours. Rosie watches from her window as the colors on the roofs run and fade. When the rain stops, the roofs are gray and bare. The whole town looks dull and sad. Rosie's big brown eyes grow wide. "Oh no!" she whispers. "The colors are gone!"



Travelers arriving in Colorford look around in confusion. Without the colors, they cannot find food or shelter. A family with empty baskets wanders past Rosie's house, unsure where to go. Villagers hurry back and forth, but they cannot find one another either. Rosie sees a lost traveler trip over a stone. Pip barks and sniffs the air, worried too.



Rosie runs to Grandpa Sol's bakery, which now has a plain gray roof. "Grandpa, the town has lost its voice!" she says. Grandpa Sol nods slowly and hands her a warm loaf of bread. "Colors are like kind words," he says. "When they fade, we must speak up and paint them again." Rosie thinks hard. Then her gap-toothed smile appears. "I have an idea!"



Rosie unrolls a big sheet of paper on the bakery counter. She paints small pictures: a loaf for food, a bed for shelter, a red cross for medicine, a hand for help. "These symbols are easy to understand," she says. "Even if the paint washes away, the shapes will stay." Grandpa Sol adjusts his round spectacles. "A wonderful plan," he says. "Let's ask everyone to help."



Rosie and Pip visit Mira, the town healer. Mira's red roof is now gray, but her scarf is still bright red. Mira listens carefully. "I need people to find my door quickly," she says. "Your symbols will guide them." She tests Rosie's drawings. "The red cross is clear," she says. "But make the hand bigger." Rosie nods and sketches again. Pip wags his tail.



Rosie calls a meeting in the town square. "We can paint every roof together!" she announces. "And we can add symbols so everyone knows what each house offers." At first, some villagers grumble. "That's too much work," says one. But Grandpa Sol raises his weathered hand. "Many hands make light work," he says. "And Rosie's symbols will help us all." Slowly, people nod.



The next morning, everyone gathers with brushes and paint pots. Rosie hands out her symbol designs. Grandpa Sol brings bread for the workers. Mira checks that the red cross looks right. Pip carries a little brush in his mouth and wags his tail. "Let's paint!" Rosie shouts. Ladders lean against walls, and brushes swish across the gray roofs.



Rosie climbs a ladder to paint her own roof bright orange. She adds a small paintbrush symbol to show that this is the artist's house. Neighbors help one another. One paints the blue shelter symbol while another holds the ladder. Children giggle as they paint yellow loaves on a bakery roof. Even the grumpy villager joins in, painting a green hand for help.



By afternoon, the town is changing. Red crosses glow on the healer's roof. Blue beds mark the shelter. Yellow loaves show where food is shared. Each roof has a bright color and a clear shape. Travelers stop and point. "Look! A bed! We can rest there!" says a tired mother. Rosie watches from her ladder and smiles.



Then a sudden drizzle begins. Rosie's heart thumps. Will the new paint wash away? But the symbols are painted with thick, strong paint. The drizzle stops, and the colors hold. Grandpa Sol laughs. "Your idea worked twice," he says. "First for color, then for shape." Mira arrives with her satchel. "I found three lost travelers," she says. "They followed the red cross."



Rosie stands on a crate in the square. "The colors are back," she says, "but the symbols make them even clearer." She points to a new sign she painted: a small map of the town with every symbol. "Now anyone can find food, shelter, medicine, or help." The villagers cheer. Pip barks happily and does a little spin. The town of Colorford is colorful and clear again.



That evening, the town has a celebration. Lanterns glow, and music plays. Grandpa Sol gives Rosie a fresh paint pot and a new brush. "You have a gift," he says, "for using art to help others." Mira ties a tiny new bandana on Pip—orange with a painted paw print. "For the best helper," she says. Rosie hugs them both. Her heart feels full.



From that day on, Colorford's roofs are repainted every year. Rosie teaches the children how to mix colors and paint symbols. Travelers still come, and they always find what they need. The town is famous for its colorful roofs and helpful signs. And Pip still carries his little brush, ready to help.



Rosie sits on her orange roof and looks at the bright town below. "Colors and shapes tell a story," she says to Pip. "And everyone can understand." Pip wags his tail. A traveler waves from the road, following a blue bed symbol to the shelter. Rosie smiles her gap-toothed smile. Creativity and teamwork made Colorford a better place for everyone.