

Consider a Birthday Candle

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On my birthday, once, I said to the candle on my cake, “I will be sorry to blow you out, for your life has only just begun.”

“Do not apologize,” it replied resolutely, “although my life is short, it has a noble purpose.”

As I watched its wax begin to warp, I implored the noble candle to say more.

“It is not in the nature of a birthday candle to speak but to listen. And in this way, I shall achieve my purpose—as a keeper of wishes—and will be gladly extinguished for the realization of yours.”

I heard the candle as it sank into the frosting, its purpose yet unfulfilled. But how to reciprocate its selfless act? I asked it:

“And is this what you would wish for?”

The candle nodded its head with a feverish flicker, and so I wished, and granted. And this was received with great celebration, and the candle’s smoke swirled in contented curls.