**Mary**

**Rebbec**

**Neighborhood Essay**



**The Red Barrel**

Have you ever done something incredibly stupid? Have you ever done something so incredibly stupid you feared for your life? Now I've done plenty of vacuous, fatuous things in my 13 years of living. But this, this might just top the cake. It wasn't even my idea. It was my brother’s. I didn't know any better. I was only six years old. I didn't understand the possible consequences. I know I should have said no. I just wanted to fit in.

I walk up to my dad's truck and climb in. I wait passively as Tommy,  my older brother, climbs into the passenger seat.  It’s not fair that he always rides in the front seat while I'm stuck back here all alone. “How was school?” My dad asks us this every day; it's kinda annoying.

“Fine,” Tommy and I answer in monotone.

“Did you learn anything fun today?” I’m pretty sure he is just trying to kill time until we get home, but I don't mind.

I ponder the question briefly, “Nope.” We never learn anything new at school. Even though Tommy’s 3rd grade classes are much more interesting than my 1st  grade classes, he doesn't answer the question at all. We drive the final few blocks to my house in silence.  I run inside and dump my bag onto the floor of the kitchen. I overhear Tommy tell my dad he is going over to our neighbors’, Kenny and Caleb’s, house.

“I wanna go!” I  run out the door to catch up to my brother who was all the at the end of the drive way. Luckily they live right across the road. He walks up to the boys who are playing ball and joins in. I sit down on a barrel. I have no idea what this barrel was used for but it's really hard. It’s as comfortable as a throne of rock.  I quickly stand up and the barrel falls over. Kenny, Caleb, and Tommy all look at me. I turn as red as a beat and want to run away and hide. To try and make the moment less embarrassing  I try hiding in the giant barrel. I manage to get everything except my head in.  I can see a smile forming on my brother’s face.

I climb out of the barrel and stride over to the boys. They look at Tommy and I.

Caleb says something but I can't hear over the hysterical laughing of Tommy and Kenny. They make their way towards me and Tommy asks if I want to ride a roller coaster. I think they assume

that just because I'm little that I'm stupid. Well I am not. My ratty dirty-blonde hair that hasn't been brushed since who knows when can be very deceiving. I tell him that there are not any roller coasters here, but he just looks at the barrel then back at me.

I have never in my life been more scared than right now. I can't believe I allowed that no good, shaggy black haired fourth grader Kenny talk me into getting inside of this barrel. I would get out of the barrel however, they decided to put the lid back onto it and I cannot pry it open.  As I sit here in this barrel, I can still hear all the giggling like a group of seventh grade girls talking about their crushes. They all disgust me as much as a maggot-full, day old, dead deer rotting on the side of the road.

I start to move. I'm not rolling quite yet, but I think I will be soon enough. I feel so cramped it’s impossible to move. I feel as though I am in one of those rooms where the walls keep coming in and there is nothing you can do to prevent yourself from being smashed. I hear Kenny yell out “GO!” and it’s off to the races I go.

It seems as though the world has stopped and I'm merely floating in outer space. I quench my eyes and hold my breath as I go over the first bump of the long, cracked, grey street. I really wish someone will stop me from rolling. If I don't get out soon I'm going to... I just might… Without warning I come to a complete stop.

I have no idea what those meanies are doing but I want them to get me out. I want to start screaming but I won’t. I don’t want to completely embarrass myself. Just as I'm about to freak out, the top of the barrel pops open. I stammer out, sit down, and look around. The whole world is spinning. I can hardly sit up straight so I crawl 15 feet to the grass and lay down. I probably lay here for 7 minutes when my brother walks over and asks me to go again. “No thanks, Bud!”

I look over at Caleb's freckled face. He looks back at me. Laugh lines begin to form on his face, and he bursts out laughing. I can't believe that they think this is funny. I want to run away again. I'll just do the next best thing. I run back home and right up to my room. I will never ever listen to my brother again.

I grab my pink and blue glittering journal out from in between two “Judy Moody” books and start writing,

“Dear diary,

              Do not under any circumstances listen to peer pressure.. I know I definitely won't be doing anything anyone tells me to do for a very long time. Probably until I am married. That's all.                                                            -Mary”

I place my journal on my bookshelf and head downstairs. After this adventurous day, I could definitely use a nice meal. “What's for dinner?” I ask, and sit down at the table.