

I Clearly Remember the Day... by Gloria Grieco
Writing Your Life Stories group

I clearly remember the day when my sister and I got into real trouble. We were 8 and 10. It was summertime. We lived in a large apartment building in New York. Across the hall was a single Mom and her daughter Kathleen. The Mom worked so my Mom watched Kathleen during the day. The 3 of us got along well and had lots of fun. My 3 cousins lived across the street and were moving away that day.

My Mom had to go to Gramma's for a short time and left us alone. It was Kathleen who persuaded us to fill the bathtub with several unrolled rolls of toilet paper. It looked like snow! Then Kathleen lit a match and threw it into the tub. WHOOSH! The toilet paper exploded into a huge fireball and burnt out almost as quickly as it had ignited. We were fascinated at the sight.

Of course when Mom came home and smelled and saw the remains of our experiment, we were in big trouble. We were allowed to go say goodbye to our cousins but for the rest of the summer, we couldn't play outside and had to go to bed right after supper. It was hard to go to bed while it was still so light outside.

Kathleen was punished also. Our punishment was nothing compared to hers. Her mother beat her and had her kneel in the closet and pray for hours every day. When school started, the Mom and Kathleen moved away and we never saw her again.

My sister and I always remember the spectacle of that fire and have come to realize how dangerous it really was.