

I AM NOT A BULLY

by Ken Bradbury



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I saw her, but I didn't say anything. Yeah, Mom was mad, but I couldn't say anything.

Mom turned to me in the car and said, "Terri, you've got to write things down. And pay attention when people tell you things."

I replied, "Mom, I thought it was today ... honest. Maybe they changed the date and didn't tell me."

She shot me a quick look and said, "We could have gone up to the house and asked."

"That would have been really embarrassing."

I hadn't forgotten. This was the day of Mallory's birthday party. She'd invited the whole class. You see ... Mallory's not too popular. I mean, she brings it on herself the way she acts and talks. It wasn't my fault. She made these invitations and she invited our whole class to her birthday party ... I mean everybody. Lots of other kids said they weren't going to go but I slipped and told Mom about the date so when we pulled up to Mallory's house, nobody was there. I didn't tell Mom but I could see into the back yard ... balloons and food and a big Happy Birthday banner ... and I saw more than that. I saw Mallory's face peeking through the curtains in her front window. She was waiting for somebody ... anybody to come to her party. (*a pause, then*) I didn't want to be the only one there. I told Mom it was the wrong date and we drove on.

Look, I am not a bully because I didn't do anything.

Like this kid ... Jeremy. He was sort of ... well ... you know ... heavy. He knew he had a weight problem and he was real quiet and nice to everybody. One day in English class we had to write about our dream job ... what we would be if we could be anything we wanted. I said I wanted to be a chef and own my own restaurant in New York and be on one of those cooking shows. We had lots of cool answers 'cause we took it seriously. The teacher asked us to read them in front of the class so we took turns and when Jeremy got up there he said he



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