

# Rueben and the Fire



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Imagine raising six spirited kids on a grass farm. Today. That'squo;ll test any mamarsquo;s strength. Dorcas Smucker and her brood live out their days in full view in this collection of musingspicking blueberries while watching for bears hoping for angels driving off the nearby freeway moving into the ldquo;thousandstory houserdquo; enduring 15yearold Mattsquo;s lecture on respect while captive in the car. Then there was the fourweek road trip which Dorcas says ldquo;My sisterinlaw warned me would be like putting your whole family in a bathroom and staying there for three days.rdquo; Dorcas and her husband Paul are purposeful parents. But they arenrsquo;t perfect. Dorcas wonders if their marriage can endure when she and Paul

can't ever figure out what gifts to give each other. She tries to navigate her mild daughters's development into a very certain self wondering "When do I give in and when do I stand firm?" There are no recipes here. But there is story upon story. Dorcas has three daughters and three sons. And she has a voice encouraging doubting entertaining but never taking herself too seriously. Often slightly offstride and with disarming humility Dorcas keeps finding resource in her life at home "Often the things we don't know we need come into our lives without knocking."

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