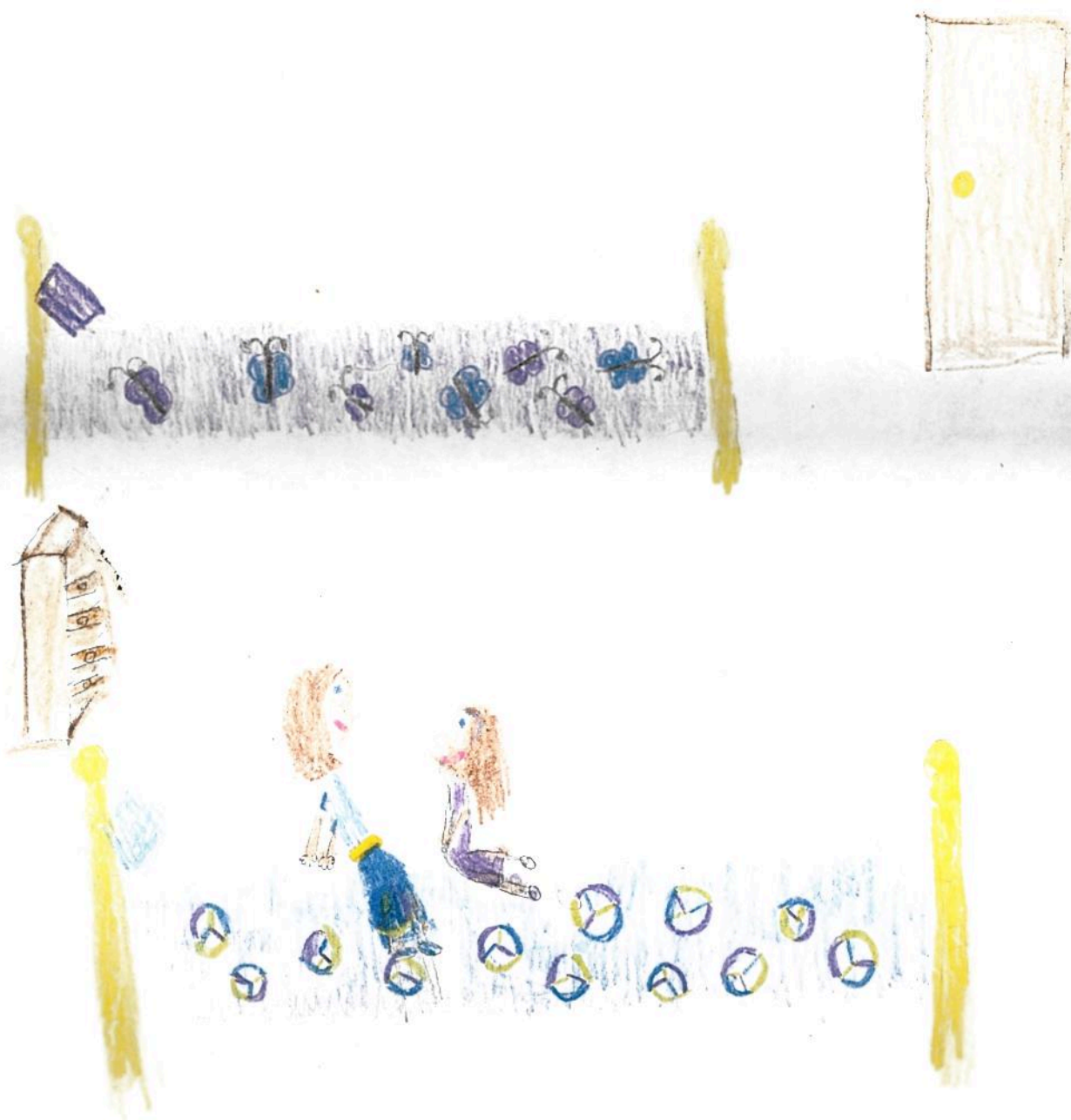


# *The Secret Cottage*

By: Alexia



It was a dark cold night and the farmer's wife was very sick. Even the best of doctors could not cure her. That night the house went up in flames. The farmer tried to get his wife out, but sadly neither of them made it. The kids had to go live in a lonely orphanage. The oldest one, Abigail, was heartbroken, and she did not talk for a long time. She danced and ate and played but never talked.



One day her sister Lillian asked hopefully, "Will you say anything to me, please? "For my birthday, for my 7<sup>th</sup> birthday, pretty please." Abigail thought for a moment and then shook her head. The maid came to tell them it was dinner time, but Abigail locked the door. The maid told her to open the door, but she would not listen. The maid ran downstairs to get the master and then he got the key.



Luckily he was a kind and gentle man who loved and understood children. When he got in he asked kindly, "Why did you do it?" She got a piece of paper and wrote:

*Because I did not want to see anyone that was not my family. So I locked the door.*

"Well that's pretty reasonable, but you must not do that again." The Master told her.

She wrote:

*ok.*

Then he left closing the door very softly.





The next day Abigail went out play in the sun. She wandered further and further than ever before until she found a cottage she had never seen. She cautiously opened the door and slipped into a chair. As she sat on the chair a little girl walked in. She had a basket of berries. When she saw Abigail she screamed and dropped all the berries, now Abigail jumped up and screamed too. Abigail wrote:

*What's your name?*

The girl with the berries said, "Lexi."

Lexi asked "what is yours?"

Right then Abigail didn't know what to say. Finally, for the first time in a long time she said, "Abigail." She never thought she would talk again.



As they picked up the berries Lexi told Abigail about her family. Her two sisters, Gabriella and Lucia, and her parents. Abigail started to think about her sister and her birthday. She quickly said good-bye to Lexi, and ran for home as fast as she could. Abigail did talk on her sister's birthday and never stopped.