

A Voice of WARNING

“Touch no unclean thing” (Isaiah 52:11).

BY TERRY REED

Based on a true story

Beads of sweat trickled down Tad’s face as he dragged the lawn mower’s grass catcher through the gate into the alley. All Tad could think of was a drink of cold water on this hot Saturday. As he opened the metal garbage can to dump the grass clippings, he saw a magazine lying at the bottom.

Tad reached down to pick it up, and as he pulled it out, his arm brushed against the hot metal edge of the can. Ouch! He straightened up and looked at the magazine in his hand. On the cover was a smiling woman who was immodestly dressed.

Tad remembered Dad warning him about magazines with this kind of picture. Someone must have dropped the magazine in the trash can as he or she walked through the alley.

“Tad, would you like something to drink?” Mom called from the back porch.

Tad’s heart suddenly sped up. He knew he should leave the magazine in the trash, but he wasn’t ready to let it go.

“I’ll be right there, Mom,” Tad yelled back. He quickly rolled up the magazine and stuffed one end into the top of his jeans and pulled his shirt over it. He dumped the grass clippings and walked back through the gate. Mom handed him a glass of lemonade.

“Thanks, Mom,” he said.

“Thank *you* for mowing the lawn,” Mom replied. “You need to come inside now. Your face looks flushed from the heat.” She turned and walked back to the house.

Tad knew that his face was probably red from the fear of being caught. As he was putting his empty glass in the kitchen, Dad suddenly walked in. Tad jumped.

“Hey, Tad! Got the yard done?” Dad asked.

“Yep.”

“I could use your help fixing the car right now,” Dad said. “How about it?”

“Sure,” Tad said. “I’ll be right there.”

“Thanks,” Dad said and walked out the door.

“Whew! That was close,” Tad thought. He hurried to his bedroom and shut the door behind him. He pulled out the magazine. His hands trembled as he looked for a place to hide it. Tad shared the bedroom with his younger brother Alex, and he didn’t want him to find the magazine. Tad pulled a chair over to the closet. Climbing up and looking at the highest shelf, he spied an empty cardboard tube that used to hold his telescope. He slid the magazine into the tube, then pushed it toward the back of the shelf. A feeling started gnawing at him that if he needed to be sneaky he was doing something he shouldn’t. Tad pushed the feeling away and went outside to help Dad.





“The Holy Ghost will protect us against being deceived, but to realize that wonderful blessing we must always do the things necessary to retain that Spirit.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Be Not Deceived,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 46.

The rest of the day was so busy that Tad had to ignore the magazine. He was frustrated, and he felt confused too. On Sunday, as he got ready for church, he grew more and more uncomfortable. He had a dark feeling that he couldn't shake.

“Why did I keep it?” he thought. “Why didn't I just leave it where it was?”

In Primary, Tad's class talked about choosing the right and, for the boys, preparing for the priesthood. Tad was deep in thought on the way home. He decided that on Monday after school he would burn the magazine. He felt better already.

When Tad got home from school on Monday, he hurried to his room. “The sooner I get this done, the better!” he thought. But as he turned the corner he almost tripped over a stack of books on the floor. A strong, fresh smell of paint caught his attention.

Tad peeked into his room and saw Mom sitting on his bed. Painting supplies were scattered across a big cloth on the floor. When Mom looked at Tad, he knew she had found the filthy magazine.

Tad's heart started pumping faster. “What are you doing to my room?” he asked.

“I wanted to start painting it, and I had a strong feeling that I should start in the closet first,” Mom said. She motioned for Tad to sit by her. She put her arm around him and didn't say anything for a few seconds. “The Holy Ghost wanted me to find what you had hidden in your closet.”

Tad hung his head. He was afraid of what his mother must think of him. Tears welled up in his eyes.

“Where did you get it?” Mom asked sternly.

“It was in the garbage can in the alley,” he said.

“Saturday afternoon.”

“Did you look at it?”

“No, Mom, I didn't. On Sunday, well, it just didn't *feel* right. I decided to burn it after school today.”

“Oh, Tad, I'm so glad to hear that!” Mom pulled him to her in a close hug. “I've been so worried about you

all day. Heavenly Father was worried about you too. He didn't want you to look at that pornography because it would have put bad images in your mind.”

“I'm sorry, Mom,” Tad said. He felt so ashamed.

“I can see you are, Tad. I've been thinking all day about the wonderful gift of the Holy Ghost and the voice of warning He can be.”

Tad was glad his mother had listened. He resolved that next time *he* would listen too.

That night as Tad knelt by his bed, the smell of paint still hung in the air. He saw how good his closet looked without the scuff marks, smudges, and fingerprints. Even

though the filthy magazine was in his closet for only a

weekend, those two days had felt like the longest, yuckiest days of his life. As Tad began his prayer, he knew the first thing he would thank Heavenly Father for was his mom. ●

