

The Defense

If only I knew how to explain why I never went to parties.

By Fridrik Rafn Gudmundsson

Why don't you ever come with us?" the girl shouted. "Don't you want to be a part of our group?"

It was the end of spring, and school was almost out. During breaks

would have welcomed the other team over for a free shooting contest, but I was not having much luck that day.

"So why don't you ever come to our parties?" she continued. "Don't you want to have a little fun?"

the others really wanted to understand. But I doubted it. How could they? I was the only Latter-day Saint in my school, and none of them understood much about the Church or its standards.



we played soccer outside, and I was the goalkeeper. As goalkeeper I was used to dodging and blocking oncoming attacks from the field. However, this game was different because I had to dodge and block attacks coming from the sidelines too.

In between the offensive assaults of the other team, I was being interrogated by a couple of girls in my class who were standing on the side of the field. To avoid their questioning, I

"A little fun!" I thought. Being at a party with my classmates, playing silly games, and feeling forced into uncomfortable situations was not my idea of fun. I'd rather stay at home.

"We're all trying to get to know one another, and you are never there," came another attack from the sideline.

"That's right!" I said. And I would have explained why if I felt she and

"Don't you like any of the girls in our class?" she asked.

"It's not about not liking them," I said. "I'd just feel uncomfortable."

"But why?" she poked.

My team had just lost the ball, and all the guys were now running in my direction.

"Why would you feel uncomfortable?" she poked again.

Everything seemed to move in slow motion as my eyes focused on

the approaching ball. Her voice was the only thing I heard, and the constant “why,” “why” kept echoing



excitement of the game. “The reason I’m not coming to your parties is . . .” I started, then paused, thinking for a moment.

“Is?” she repeated a little anxiously.

other team cheered, while the girls stood there laughing.

“Saving yourself for someone,” she said, giggling. “So what is her name?”

I felt embarrassed. Although I



in my head. My opponent was clear for the shot, and I could see that the ball was going to hit me hard. But I was ready. He kicked the ball, which bounced off my hands with a loud slap. “Yes! Another assault successfully frustrated,” I thought, grinning. I grabbed the ball and threw it down the field to my teammates and then turned to face my other opponents.

“So?” she said.

My heart was still racing from the

I looked down the field again to see the opposition approaching fast. My heart picked up a couple of beats, and I knew I had to finish what I started to say. “Is because I am saving myself for someone special!” I blurted out.

“What!” she exclaimed.

My opponents were upon me, and my attention was again fixed on the game. The ball whistled through the air, penetrating my defenses. The

didn’t have anyone special in mind, I still knew that one day I would meet my future wife, and I needed to be worthy to take her to the temple. That’s why I didn’t go to their parties.

My hands still tingled and my heart continued to race as I walked home later, yet there was a slight grin on my face. I might have suffered humiliation on the field that day; however, I walked away feeling victorious. **NE**