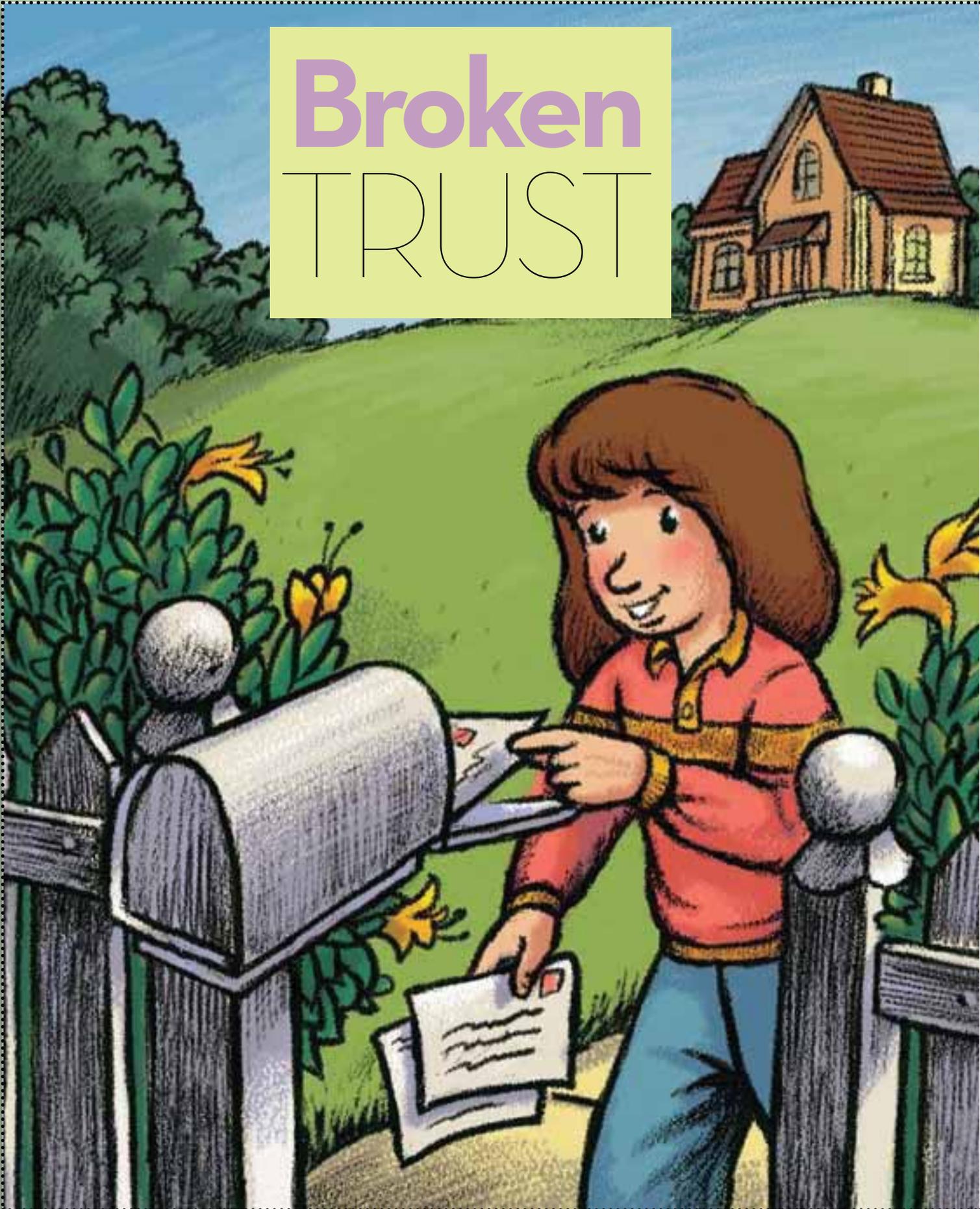


Broken TRUST



BY MARNIE SPENCER

(Based on a true story)

We believe in being honest (Articles of Faith 1:13).

Melinda left her house holding the key Mrs. Roberts had given her. “I’m off to work,” she said. She liked the way that sounded. “Not every 11-year-old has a job,” she thought.

She walked to the Robertses’ house and opened their mailbox. The Roberts family would be gone until Thursday, and they had hired Melinda to get their mail and do other chores at their house every day.

Melinda went into their house, put the mail on the kitchen table, and filled the cat’s food dish. Then she went into the family room to water the plants. It felt strange to be in her neighbors’ house alone.

In a corner of the room she saw a shelf filled with glass figurines. Each one was a little girl in a fancy dress. She picked one up and looked at it carefully. On the bottom it said, “Michelle.” Melinda wondered if each of the figurines had a name. She picked up another and turned it over. It was named Rebecca.

Melinda picked up another glass girl, one in a pretty yellow dress. As she turned it over, it slipped from her hand and fell to the floor. Melinda gasped and knelt down quickly to pick it up. Its head and one of the legs had broken off.

“Oh no,” she thought. “What am I going to do? Mrs. Roberts is going to be so mad at me!”

She put the head back on the figurine and was surprised to see that she could hardly tell it was broken. When she put the leg back, she found that

the little girl could still stand up.

“If I put it back just right, Mrs. Roberts won’t even know it’s broken,” she thought. “If she picks it up or bumps the shelf, it will fall apart, but she’ll think she broke it herself. No one will know it was me.”

Melinda had a sick feeling as she walked home. She wondered if she should tell Mrs. Roberts about breaking the figurine. “But she trusted me,” Melinda thought. “She’ll never trust me again if she knows I broke something in her house.”

Melinda went to the Robertses’ each morning for the next two days. She was careful not to go near the shelf where the figurines were. She didn’t even want to look at them.

On Thursday afternoon, the Robertses’ car was back in their driveway.

Melinda walked over to return their key. Mrs. Roberts thanked her for doing such a good job and gave her an envelope with money inside. Melinda could hardly speak. She felt awful. “It’s just a little glass girl,” she thought. “It’s not a big deal. And they’ll never know I did it.”

That night after dinner, Melinda’s father opened the Book of Mormon for family scripture study. They were reading about Helaman’s stripling soldiers.

Melinda and her brothers listened as Dad read Alma 53:20: “And they were all young men, and they were exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted.”

“They were super brave,” Nathan said.

“And strong,” Tyler added.

“They were strong and brave enough to fight,” Mom



agreed. “That’s what the first part of the scripture says. But in the next part, it says something more about them—that they used their courage to be true. They stood up for what was right.”

Melinda looked at her Book of Mormon and read the words again. She had been entrusted with something, and she had not been true.

A little while later, Melinda stood at the Robertses’



door. Mrs. Roberts looked surprised to see her. “Hello,” she said. “Did you forget something?”

“Yes. I mean, no. I need to tell you something.” She took a deep breath. “I broke one of your little glass girls. I put it back so you couldn’t tell it was broken. I’m sorry I broke it, and I’m sorry I didn’t tell you about it before. I was just scared, I guess.”

“Why don’t you come in and show me what you broke?” Mrs. Roberts said.

Melinda followed her neighbor into the family room and pointed out the girl in the yellow dress. When Mrs. Roberts picked it up, its head and leg fell off. “I would never have known it was broken if I hadn’t picked it up,” she said. “Well, it can be glued. I broke another one once, and I glued it.” She picked up another figurine and showed Melinda. “You can hardly tell, can you?”

Melinda shook her head. She hadn’t noticed the crack in the other one. “I really am sorry,” she said.

“It’s OK. I’m glad you came back to tell me the truth. That took a lot of courage. You know, we’ll be going out of town again next month. Would you like to help out at our house then too?”

Melinda looked up. “Do you trust me? Even after I broke something?”

“You’ve shown that you are very trustworthy. You told the truth when you didn’t have to. I’ll be glad to have you work for us again.”

“I won’t touch the figurines. I promise.”

“That’s fine. Thank you, Melinda, for coming over tonight.”

The heavy feeling Melinda had felt for days was gone. She felt as light as a feather as she skipped home. ●

“You and I must strive . . . to be honest with God, honest with ourselves, and honest with other people.”³

Elder David A. Bednar
of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

