I should have known that I'd never be able to cover up . . not anything! . . . from Mom; but I thought that I had thought my little plan through pretty thoroughly and that this once she would never know. And never find it, either. After being seventeen, closer to eighteen really, I felt that I was a man and had, therefore, a few rights of my own. I was not a juvenile any longer True, I wasn't a full grown man but neither was I a boy! A little boy, that is.
My mother (and father, too) is a super parent, and I mean super. A fellow couldn't ask for any finer, cleaner-living, Godfearing, loving, kind and gentle mother than mine. But while she is all this, and many more nice-sounding descriptive adjectives besides, she can be as firm and adamant on some things and along certain lines as anyone I have ever known.

She has an innate "radar" to sense and detect sin in any way, shape or form in her children's lives that beats anything I have ever seen or known.

Mom lives God and breathes God. She does a lot of praying and is a real student of the Bible, too. In other words, I guess what I'm trying to say is that I believe in my mother Through and through, I believe in her.

She's not a live-one-way-today-and-another-way-tomorrow person. No way! She's as steady and as consistent as is the sun that comes up each morning in the east. I just wanted you to know this.

If I hadn't listened to and obeyed the siren of Satan I would never have done what I did. But the heart is, indeed, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and though I was sure I could and would get away with my ignoble (meaning base) scheme, my mother's God-given "radar" was quickly gathering and collecting its signals.

I came home from school as usual and carried my books and homework into my bedroom, where I put them on top of the desk until my after-school chores were all finished and completed. This was a daily routine sort of thing; taking my books and homework into the room and then doing my assigned chores, I mean. No new thing, this. What was new, however, was how I was sneaking around and pretending to be studying when all the time I was play acting. Well, like I said, I unloaded the books onto the top of my desk, did my chores quickly, then resorted to my room and closed the door.

I felt a slight twinge of guilt as I lifted the bedspread and ran my hand in an accustomed way between the mattress and the spring. I knew just where I had put the magazine, after all, I had gone through half a dozen or more. Yes, I guess it would be more. At first, I felt really guilty and wicked but after the first one or two it didn't bother me too much anymore; nothing more than the slight twinge, which I already mentioned.
I fumbled between the mattress and spring, running my hand back and forth in the place where I always hid the magazines.

"Hey!" I said out loud. "Where are you? I know I put you right here!" And I rested my hand on the place where I knew the magazine should have been.

Not feeling it, I pushed the bed covers up on a pile on the bed and lifted the mattress. No magazine! Hey, what was happening? I was sure I had put it almost directly beneath my midriff (when I was lying down, that is), and exactly in the center of the bed, far enough away from the outer perimeter of the mattress so Mom wouldn't find it when she changed the sheets.

With fear chasing my vertebrae and running up and down my back, plus a strange inkling that I would never again touch or see the magazine . . . the one under the mattress, I mean . . . I lifted the mattress high off the bed. Nothing. Nothing!

With a thud, I let the mattress down. I was discovered. The real me was uncovered. My sin had found me out. My mother had the evidence. Well, I guess I didn't dare say that she had the evidence for I was sure that a fire had consumed its heart and all; every single, filthy, dirty page between its shiny-sleek covers, burned up.

My mouth went suddenly dry. Very dry. My saliva seemed to have dried up; it got as thick as cotton. I was in for it. I knew it. As sure as I knew my name, so sure was I that I was in for a severe punishment.

I tried to straighten the bed covers and make the bed as smooth as I had found it when I got home from school, but my hands trembled too much to do a good job of it. How could I ever face my mother? I wondered. I wouldn't be able to act natural, not since I knew that she knew what I had been sneaking around and doing. She had always had such high hopes for me. Even more painful, she had trusted me!

I was a for-sure hypocrite. A pretender. An actor. Worst of all, I was a deceiver.
I had never stopped to think of this before; now that I did, it cut me to the very core of my inmost being.

I tried to study but discovered I was doing nothing more than reading words and looking at equations that were meaningless globs of nothing. My mind refused to concentrate. I was discovered and uncovered for what I really was and who I actually was. I wasn't the good, wholesome, morally clean young man everyone thought I was. Oh, to look at me and to talk with me, I was, but it ended there. And I mean there. Period. My mind was defiled. Polluted. It was a cesspool of iniquity. And, of course, I knew the root of all my trouble was in my heart: "As a man thinketh," the Bible states, "so is he."

Mother called me for supper and, truthfully, I wasn't hungry. With the knowledge that I was discovered/uncovered, my appetite took flight. But I knew I had to go, so go to the table I did.

As usual, we had a delicious meal and a delightful time around the table. Everyone had an enjoyable time but me. I dreaded the questions directed to me and could scarcely look up when I answered. Mother was her normal, pleasant self and if she relayed her findings to my father he gave no inkling or indication of it.

I excused myself early from the table and hurried back to my room. Studying was out; with a capital O, a capital U, and a capital T. Out! I tried, but in vain.

I went to bed early, and I mean early. I was expecting the door to open and the confrontation with my parents and me to begin at any moment. But nothing happened. Nothing. Not that night nor the next day or the next. My misery increased with each passing day. My parents' silence thundered and pounded my guilt deeper and deeper into my heart. I felt miserable and wretched and dirty.

I came home from school at noon on Wednesday; we had only half a day of school. Mother had the table set for only two, since Dad was at work and my younger sister and brother had gone to spend their free school day with one of our married sisters who lived in the town next to ours.
I took my books down to my desk, washed my face and hands and combed my hair back in place then went out into the kitchen, where ambrosial odors had set my appetite in motion.

"Your dinner is ready," Mom said as I sat down to the table. With that, she set my plate before me.

I gasped. "Hey, you made a mistake!" I exclaimed as I pushed the plate away from me. "This isn't food, Mom; it's potato peelings, egg shells, orange rinds and seeds, and coffee grounds. Here's a wilted, black-spotted leaf of lettuce and some limp cabbage leaves. Ugh!" I remarked as I moved the plate farther away from me.

"What's wrong with your food?" my mother asked, standing beside me and putting the filled plate before me again.

"Why Mom, that's garbage!" I cried. "Certainly you won't make me eat this. It isn't fit for human consumption. It . . . it'll make me sick, I know it will. Look at this squishy tomato and . . . and the moldy bread and . . . ."

"Son," Mom said softly-kind, "I don't want you to eat that. And you wouldn't choose to eat garbage, now would you?"

I shook my head in an emphatic no, my mind suddenly comprehending. The confrontation had arrived. It was totally different than anything I had ever had before. Tears stung my eyes, blurring my vision.

Mother cupped her hand under my chin and turned my face toward her. "Now what I want to know is why you want to fill your young mind with garbage? That's worse than filling your stomach, wouldn't you say?"

Looking into Mom's eyes, I saw deep pools of pain and hurt and grief over my waywardness.

"It will damn your soul, Son," she continued softly, her eyes probing mine while her tears of sadness flowed.

"I . . . I'm guilty," I confessed. "And Mother, I'm sorry. Forgive me, please. I need washing. A soul washing," I cried, feeling that I'd die unless I made peace with God immediately.
I couldn't eat; I felt as though Mom's real dinner . . the one where, only moments ago I could scarcely wait to begin eating..., would now choke me. I knew I was dreadfully wicked, and that by sneaking around and looking at and reading those magazines, I had defiled my mind. My heart, too. The mind is much like a computer, they say, which, when fed anything into it, retains said thing or things.

A computer's word processing could be altered and changed, I knew, but what I had read and seen would be with me forever, to come back to mind at various intervals along the journey of life. Nothing but the blood of Jesus would be able to make my heart white and forgiven. This was a blessed thought indeed. But the other thought, of what I had done to my mind in feeding it "garbage" instead of wholesome and nourishing food, troubled me. Would I ever be able to forget?

"Mom," I said with trembling voice, "I'm ready to pray"

And pray we did. Never before had I actually seen how wicked and sinful and deceitful my heart really was. It was a literal cesspool of iniquity. I felt like at any moment I would cross the brink of life and end up in the hot, never-dying, ever-burning flames of hell. I knew I deserved nothing less: I had helped to crucify the Lord Jesus Christ afresh and anew.

Oh, the freedom, the release, when I prayed through and made contact with Heaven! My guilt was gone in an instant of time. I became a new creation in Christ. I knew that I would never again look at nor have in my possession a mind-destroying-defiling magazine. Never! I made a vow to God on my knees. It was a vow I meant to keep. Suddenly I felt hungry. Very hungry.

"I'm ready for dinner, Mom," I said as I got up from my knees and wrapped my arms around her neck. "Anything but garbage."

Smiling, she took the previously filled plate and tossed its contents into the garbage can where it belonged. Then, letting out a loud, "Praise the Lord," she set the real dinner on the table, every single bit of it healthful, delicious and nutritious.
I ate with the appetite of the healthy and the whole; my heart was a wellspring of joy and peace.