DELIVERED
By Mrs. Paul E. King

How dumb can one get?! Recently, I did the most stupid and most dangerous thing of my almost-seventeen years of natural life. Talk about naive, that’s yours truly!

First, let me explain, or tell you, that I go to a public school. So does my older brother, Charles, and a younger brother, Christopher. We go, not by
choice but by compulsion. When Dad's company transferred him here, Mother taught all three of us children for almost four full months. Then she was informed by an official from the school board that home schooling was not allowed, and we had to enroll in the public school.

What a change for us! All our life, all three of us attended a wonderful Christian school until Dad's move. Consequently, each of us was in a state of total shock by what went on in the school we were now attending. Respect for the teachers and one's fellow classmates was almost nonexistent, and the common courtesies like saying "please" and "thank you" seemed to have been erased completely from the average young person's vocabulary.

We found a few young people whose moral values and standards were pretty much like our own and, though we were definitely in the minority, we had times of wonderful Christian fellowship together. Alton Getterman and his sister Arlis were two who shared our Biblical principles and beliefs; so did Tanya Aman, Robert Swank, MerLee Brown and Andrew Likens and his sister, Karma.

I was overjoyed to discover that the Lord had His born-again children in all parts of the country and not just in one area or location. And since Jesus had said that we -- the Christians -- were "the light of the world," and "the salt of the earth," I prayed earnestly that those of us who knew the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Sanctifier would be lights that shone brightly for Jesus. Naturally, I was ecstatic when Randy Powell approached me in the school hallway; I thought he was becoming interested in spiritual things. Randy's reputation was anything but good. But I had been praying for him. Earnestly. And all the others like him.

"Wait up, Jen," Randy called, as I hurried toward my home room.

"Sure, Randy," I answered, pausing long enough to let him catch up with me. "What's on your mind?" I asked, hoping with all that was within me that Randy would say he wanted to get saved.

"How about doing me a favor, Jen?" he asked.

"Like what?" I countered, with a question of my own.
"Stick this little bag in your jumper pocket for a while. I'll get it later." And without waiting for me to answer, he dropped the bag on top of my books and took off at a fast pace down the hall where I saw him melt into the crowd of students emerging inside from the long line of school buses outside the heavy doors.

I wasn't aware that I was standing, dumbfounded, in the center of the main thoroughfare until a couple of girls shouted, "What's wrong with you; are you glued to the floor? Can't you move out of our way?"

I shook myself, trying to clear my brain of its confusion of thoughts and, stepping quickly out of the center of the busy hallway, I apologized profusely then made my way, closer to the wall, toward my home room. "Did you forget we have assembly this morning?"

I looked up into Alton's face. "Guess I did," I confessed.

"I'll be waiting for you in the assembly hall," he added.

"After roll call, God willing."

Alton looked down at my books. "You're about to drop your bag," he said, pushing the bag away from the edge of my armload of books where it was, indeed, ready to drop.

"It's not my bag," I said.

"Not your bag?" Alton quipped quizzically. "Then whose is it, Jen, and why don't they carry their own bag? Those books you're carrying are heavy enough without adding anything more to them."

"It's Randy's bag."

"Randy who?"

"Randy Powell."

Alton turned white. "What's in it?" he asked fearfully. "Jennifer," he added quickly, "you know Randy's reputation!"
"I do," I admitted softly, studying the bag. "But what am I to do? He asked me to put it in my ample jumper pocket for a while. Said he'd get it later. And then he took off down the hallway and just merged in with the masses of students getting off the buses. He didn't give me time to refuse, even! It's kind of dumb."

"Not with Randy, it isn't dumb; he's smart as they come where wickedness and evil is concerned, and you just be sure he's not up to any good thing. Why don't you open the bag and see what's inside?"

"That wouldn't be nice, Alton. It would be . . . shall I say, nosy?"

"And maybe you'll just have to be nosy, as you phrase curiosity. Randy's been caught with drugs, Jennifer, more than once."

I sucked my breath in quick like and gasped at the thought. "Really?" I asked, feeling as though the blood was draining out of my body. I looked at the bag on top of my books and felt as if I had a poisonous viper there. I wanted to run; to shake it off. I felt weak. Really weak!

"Say, you'd better hurry, or you'll be late for roll call," Alton said quickly, checking his watch and hurrying away to his home room.

I was shocked beyond words by what Alton had just said. I felt curiosity seep slowly into my being. And I, who was never one for such! I suddenly felt repelled by it. Walking briskly, I hurried toward my home room, picking the bag up like it was poison and dropping it into my ample, over-sized jumper pocket.

Why did Randy have to choose me to hold his mysterious bag? I wondered as I slid into my seat just as Mr. Twilliger began the roll call. And why did I ever wear the jumper with the big-enough-to-hold-a-bag pocket?

I felt a sudden rush of nausea hit me in the pit of my stomach, then sickening waves of heat turned to chills of icy coldness. Methodically, I answered "Here" when Mr. Twilliger called my name.

"Are you ill, Jennifer?" he asked, coming back to my desk and telling me this was the third time he had asked the same question.
I apologized, saying, "I . . . I don't know. I wasn't when I left home this morning." Then, fearing lest he should discover the mysterious bag hidden inside my deep pocket, I said, "I . . . I'll be all right, I'm sure. Thank you."

"Go to the student lounge and I'll have the school nurse check on you."

"No, please, Mr. Twilliger. I . . . I'm sure I'll be all right. May I be excused to go to the restroom?" I asked softly, having made up my mind what I would do about the bag.

"You may, Jennifer. Also, you may be excused from the assembly meeting which is about to begin."

"Th . . . thank you, Mr. Twilliger," I replied, getting to my feet and leaving the room.

I felt faint and light-headed with alarm, having conjured up in my mind all kinds of horrible things that could be in that miserable brown bag, reposing securely inside my jumper pocket. I could scarcely wait to get rid of it.

It was quiet, for once, inside the restroom; no loud, boisterous girls broke the intense silence and, best of all, I was alone. But for how long, I didn't know; I couldn't be sure.

I wasted no time; with trembling hand I grabbed the despicable bag by one corner and jerked it out of my pocket. Then, making sure I had locked the door behind me, I cautiously opened the bag and peered inside, gasping at what I saw.

My heart thumped madly as the scenario unfolded before me like a book opening its pages: Randy, afraid of being caught with his cache of drugs -- pills, capsules, packets, powders, et cetera -- had tried to use me to hide them! Who, in the entire school, would ever suspect or suspicion a Christian of having drugs in her possession? Especially, when said person and her fellow believers were considered role models and had never caused one bit of trouble or confusion in the school!

I could scarcely believe my eyes. Randy was not only a user of drugs himself but he was supplying others with them also! There were scads of them in the bag.
Still handling the bag like I had a serpent instead, I tipped the bag and watched the now swirling water flush the contents away. Then I leaned my head against the door and cried, thanking the Lord for taking care of me and for sending Alton along at just the right time.

I felt weak with the realization of what could have happened to me had the cache been found in my pocket and on my person. Too, what if Randy had set me up for just such a thing? This latter thought made me feel faint. Suppose Randy had, even now, told someone that I had a bag of drugs in my possession and, if they didn't believe him, they should merely search me and they would discover the truth of his statement!

"O God!" I cried out in anguish. "Please don't let it be so! Please! You know I'm innocent!"

An indescribably beautiful and wonderful peace came into my soul: I knew God's hand was covering and protecting me.

I crushed the bag down into the waste basket with the other soiled papers, then I washed my hands thoroughly, feeling contaminated by merely handling the bag. Oh, the awfulness, the hideousness, of sin! I thought. And the deceitfulness, too.

After washing my face with cold water and patting it briskly to bring color back into it, I started down the hallway, deciding to sit in the rear of the assembly hall and listen to whatever the reason was for the specially called assembly meeting.

I had just turned the corner and started down the long hallway to the assembly room when I froze in my tracks. Going through Randy's locker, with Randy looking on, was Mr. Lykens, our high school principal.

"We know you have drugs," Mr. Lykens said testily, "and one of these days we'll find them! It's a promise, Randy! Then you'll be put where you belong."

Randy stood with his arms crossed and a smug smile on his face, as if to say, I told you you wouldn't catch me.
I started again toward the assembly hall. When Randy saw me he nodded, still looking as confident and cocksure as ever. I turned my empty, enormous pocket almost inside out to let him see for himself. His smug smile faded abruptly and an ugly, threatening glare replaced it.

I guess I should have been frightened and scared at this point, but knowing I had done the right thing gave me a feeling of real courage and confidence. What’s more, I knew the Lord was my Protector. He knew how to keep Randy from harming me.

As I sat down on one of the rear seats, my heart was lifted up in praise to God for coming to my rescue. And right on time! As for Randy, I placed him in God's hands. We had witnessed to him many times, telling him there was a better way, a holy way. He had laughed at each of us and made fun of us. Now, I realized, we must turn him over to God and trust Him to work in and move upon the seemingly hardened heart.

I leaned back against the chair and listened to a man whom I had never seen before talk on the horrors and dangers of drugs and how God had delivered him from them.

God! I thought. God! Finally, finally, our school was beginning to see that God was important. "Please! Please!" I prayed silently, "Let them see that You are the All-important One!"