

Secrets and Surprises

Was it right to keep Kate's secret?



By Sheila Kindred
(Based on a true story)

"The Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil" (Moroni 7:16).

"Hey, look!" Kate picked up a crumpled paper doll from the floor in the store. "Here, put it in your pocket."

"You want me to take it?" Maddy asked.

"The store can't sell it anyway," Kate said. "They'd just throw it in the trash. This is a rescue mission. We're saving this doll!"

Kate smiled at Maddy. Maddy smiled back.

"OK." Maddy slipped the paper doll into her pocket. It felt special to be on a rescue mission!

Still, as they walked out of the store, the paper doll felt like a heavy rock in her pocket. Is that what a rescue mission was supposed to feel like?

When they got back to Maddy's house, Kate carefully taped and flattened the paper doll the best she could.

"What kind of clothes should I make for her?" she asked, picking up a crayon. "How about a beautiful ball gown?"

Maddy nodded eagerly. "Then we can show my mom!"

"No! We can't tell anyone," Kate said. "Not ever. It's our secret, OK? Promise me you won't tell."

"Oh . . . OK. I promise," Maddy said. "But why can't we tell?"

"If you tell, your mom would get mad, and she might not let us play together anymore."

"Why would she be mad?" Maddy asked. Her stomach felt fluttery and nervous.

Kate put down her crayon. "If you don't tell, I'll let you keep the doll and all the outfits I draw for her."

Now Maddy knew why she felt so nervous. "We . . . we stole it, didn't we?" she whispered.

"Hey, you're the one who stuffed it in your pocket and sneaked it out of the store."

"Because you told me to!"

"I did not!" Kate said. "I'm going home before you get me in trouble." She stood up and ran out the door.

Just then Mom came into the room. "Why did Kate leave in such a hurry?" She saw the paper doll in Maddy's hands. "And where did that come from?"

Maddy bit her lip. She didn't feel good about keeping a secret from Mom. But what if Kate was right and Mom got mad?

The nervous feeling in her stomach wouldn't go away. She took a deep breath and blurted out the whole story.

"Kate told me to promise to keep it a secret," she said. "But it felt wrong."

Mom sat beside her on the bed. "Most secrets are wrong. Especially if you're told to never tell anyone. On the other hand, a surprise, like a gift or party, can be a good thing. It's meant to be fun for everyone."

Maddy nodded. "Thanks for not getting mad at me," she said. "Kate said you would."

Mom hugged her tight. "I'm really proud of you for listening to the Holy Ghost and telling me the truth."

"Will you drive me back to the store to return the doll?" Maddy asked.

"Of course!" Mom smiled. "And when we get back, you can help me make a cake to surprise Dad."

Maddy laughed. "Now that's something I can feel good about!" ●

The author lives in Iowa, USA.

