"X" Marks the Spat

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Abstract

"WHERE have you been, young man?" my mother asked as I came in the kitchen door. "Just messin* around/" I replied in the evasive vernacular of one who does not want his mother to know where he has been...
HERE have you been, young man?” my mother asked as I came in the kitchen door.

“Just messin’ around,” I replied in the evasive vernacular of one who does not want his mother to know where he has been.

“Don’t try to fool me. I can smell the popcorn on your breath. You’ve been to the Princess, haven’t you?”

“So?” I said.

“So I told you not to go to those ‘X’ movies. They’re perverse, decadent, and immoral.”

“And dirty!” my elderly Aunt Miriam growled from the kitchen table. She had mother’s disapproving frown spread over her wrinkled face.
Mother and Aunt Miriam both knew all about “those dirty ‘X’ shows, with the senseless sex and violence.” They had never actually seen one, but of course that simple little letter “X” meant trash and filth to them. At any rate, it was certainly nothing for a seventeen-year-old boy to see.

“Well, what was it this time?” Mother continued as she peeled an onion for supper. “I’m almost afraid to ask.”

“The Intimate Secrets of Raquel Schwartz,” I replied as I sat down to the table.

“Oh my God! Not that one!” She was turning red.

“Mother,” I said, “It was very meaningful and culturally enriching.”

“And dirty!” Aunt Miriam interjected as she scowled at me across the table.

“I heard about that one,” Mother said in a very angry tone. “Ethyl Phillips saw it last Tuesday. She told us all about it at bridge club.” (I could just see Ethyl turning on the Wednesday Afternoon Ladies’ Cards n’ Coffee Club.) “I just couldn’t believe it,” she continued. “Trash, filth, perversity!”

“And dirt,” Aunt Ethyl said as she leafed through her new issue of “True Crime.”

I wanted to explain to them that the movie had its good points. The love scene between Raquel and the aardvark was handled in extremely good taste, I thought. Nudity was kept to the bare minimum. The suicides, murders, and rapes were handled delicately. But I knew mother and Miriam would never understand.

“Why don’t you go see a good movie for a change?” Mother admonished. “Go see a good wholesome family picture with good clean stars.”

“Who do you suggest,” I asked, “Flipper or Lassie?”

“Now don’t get smart. There are plenty of decent movies with decent stars. So see a nice Western. Or better still, you can just stay home for a change.”

“Yes, Mother,” I said. But I knew the brick wall of her cinematic morals would crumble when she became tired of me hanging around the house.