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**STARS**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

"Let's go to the library, Trish," I said, as I finished helping Tricia with her math.

"Can't do it, Merv," she told me, closing her book and stretching her arms. "Cam's coming over in a little while. She's going to teach me all there is to know about astrology."

"What do you mean, all there is to know? That's a pretty big mouthful. A big assignment, I would say, for one evening."

Tricia laughed. "O Merv, you funny but grand boy! You know what I mean!"

"Do I? And how should I? What makes you sure that I know?"

Again she laughed. "Oh, get out of here!" she exclaimed, laughing and waving a hand teasingly toward the door. "She's going to teach me about the horoscope. My horoscope, particularly."

"You don't say!"

Trish got up from her chair in a hurry; kind of like she was shocked, or something. "Hey, why the bit of sarcasm; the irony?" she asked quickly. "I take it you don't approve . . ."

"You've guessed right; I don't approve. And if you want to grow and thrive in your new-found faith and life in Christ, you'll call Camille and tell her not to come."

Tricia looked shocked. Stunned; kinda' like she was slapped in the face for something she knew nothing about; something for which she was innocent. "I . . . I don't understand," she stammered haltingly.

"Naturally."

"What's meant by that?" she asked quickly and innocently. "There can't possibly be anything wrong with something so simple as a horoscope."

"How do you figure that, Trish? I mean, what makes you so sure there's nothing wrong with it?"

Tricia pursed her lips. Holding her hand, she counted off two reasons. "First," she said, holding up an index finger, "Camille's OK. Not a Christian yet, but OK. Second, there's nothing wrong with the stars."

"Right. On both counts . . . or reasons," I said complimentary, "Camille is a good girl, and there certainly isn't anything wrong with the stars, looking at them, observing them, and that sort of thing. But what Camille's about to tell you is wrong. In fact, it's downright sinful."

Tricia gasped. "Ar . . . are you sure, Merv?"

"As sure as I am that I'm Merv Tripplett and that you're Tricia Bilbrey."

"But how can it be wrong? It . . . it's all about the stars and . . . and . . ."

"Trish," I said gently, "You're still a babe in Christ: The fourth soul I won to the Lord since I got saved and sanctified wholly. I don't mean to sit idly by and let you be deceived by Satan, nor led into the occult. Please, if you believe in me and what I'm telling you, call Camille and tell her you're not interested."

Sitting down quickly, Tricia said, "No, Merv, I won't call her; let her come. You may be able to help Cam, too. I don't believe she wants to be involved in anything evil herself. She doesn't think it's wrong, I'm sure. Do you mind terribly to wait till she gets here before making your little speech, or whatever it may be called?"

"Course I don't, Trish. But I must get to the library before it closes tonight. I have some researching to do for that essay-thesis thing Mr. Hopper asked me to write. What time is Cammie due here; any idea?"

"Any minute now, Merv."

"I'll wait ten minutes, and if she's not here by then, I'll have to leave. But please, Trish, don't get involved in that. Promise?"

"I promise. You have me feeling half-scared. Oh, here's Cam now. I'm so thankful you'll be able to talk to her, too." And Tricia hurried to the door.

"Merv!" Camille exclaimed. "How nice to see you again. How about staying and having some fun? Ever hear about the horoscope? What a silly question!" she exclaimed answering her own question. "Who hasn't heard? Or seen? The papers all seem to be carrying something about it."

"Yes, I know . . ."

"You don't sound one bit enthusiastic, Merv. You, of all people! The 'pepper-upper' of our class, the enthusiasm-builder. How come? What's wrong?" And Camille slumped weakly into the nearest chair, exclaiming, "I can't believe it! I just can't believe it! Not one teeny, tiny spark of interest and/or enthusiasm from the most enthusiastic fellow in Brentwood High! Again, I ask, what's wrong?"

"Everything."

That brought Camille out of her chair. "Everything? Di . . . did something happen to . . . to your parents, Trish?" Her great dark eyes looked as perfectly round as large marbles; the expression on her mouth was sad.

"It's nothing like that," I corrected quickly. "I meant that everything's wrong with that crazy horoscope thing."

Cam gasped. Her delicate little hand flew to her neck in horror. Her eyes remained large and round and sort of shocked looking. "Wh . . . what makes you say that?" she asked quickly in a voice that shook with emotion.

"First of all, we need a clarification-differentiation between astrology and astronomy. Can one actually know his future by studying the stars? Astrology has been called the oldest science and has many times been confused with astronomy. Astronomy is the science concerned with the positions, magnitude, motion and distances of celestial bodies. It is based on proven and documented facts about our universe. Astrology, on the other hand, tries to interpret the influence of these celestial bodies on each other, on our planet and on the inhabitants of this planet.

"The dictionary gives this definition for astrology: 'False science that claims to interpret the influence of the stars and planets on persons, events.' That, from the Thorndyke-Barnhart Desk Dictionary. Now here's another one from Winston Dictionary-College Edition: Astrology, 'the practice and system of predicting events by the position and occult influence on human affairs of the sun, moon, and planets.'

"Notice that word occult. Look its meaning up sometime. Among a few of its meanings, you will discover these things listed: magical, mysterious.

This, again, from the big Thorndyke Barnhart Desk Dictionary. Originally, astrology meant 'the word of the stars.'

"Astronomers have a continual battle with astrologers in astrology's claim to be a science. A science must be backed up with facts proven by experimentation. The results must be the same each time the experiment is performed. Now, keeping this in mind, how can anyone look at astrology as a science? Especially since one is able to read his own horoscope, written by different people, and find contrasting results. True or false, Cam?"

The pretty auburn-haired girl gulped. "That is absolutely true, Merv;" she admitted quickly, adding, "you amaze me."

"Nothing amazing, really," I said kindly. "The Bible is the Christian's true guide book to Heaven. Which brings me to something more. Astrology claims to be able to tell you what the future holds. So, that means your destiny has already been decided for you and no matter what you do, you just cannot change what the stars have decided. In other words, one is predestined to a life that he has no control over; he has no choice.

"This is positively and absolutely wrong. False! Jesus said, '. . . And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,' not 'whosoever will if it's written in the stars.' Each of us was created with free will; we, not the stars, decide what we will do with our life and our soul. We can either accept God's Word or reject it. Our decision is not already plotted in the stars. We decide, and act upon that decision whether for good or evil, right or wrong. But we do the deciding."

Camille was almost breathless as she listened. Tricia, too. Neither had ever heard anything like it before.

"Astrology's basic principle is that nothing can change our destiny," Merv continued. "If this is true, how can we account for our salvation and subsequent sanctification? I know Jesus changed me and my life; He put my feet upon the Solid Rock and pointed me in a different direction. The stars and planets had nothing whatever to do with this. It was Christ."

"He changed me, too, Merv," Tricia said softly, reverently.

Cam stared at the floor, thinking.

"Want to know the real truth about astrology?" Merv asked quickly.

The girls nodded.

"It's a tool of the devil, and one of his slickest ever. With it, Satan gets people preoccupied with their future . . . what's going to happen on day number so and so? When am I the easiest upset? Will I have a good day on such and such a day? And God's Word tells us plainly not to worry about the future, but to cast all our care upon Him. To trust Him for our future.

"God forbids us to follow the signs of the heavens (Jer. 10:2). He wants us to follow Him in simple obedience and trust, knowing that He makes no mistakes. He knows the future, and we are to rest securely in this knowledge and leave the future with Him."

"Wh . . . what . . . I mean, well, Merv, what if one needs to have answers to some sticky questions that pop up; who does he go to?" Cam asked honestly. "I've pretty much relied on my horoscope for answers and for help."

"Have you been satisfied with the answers you got? With what 'the stars' told you?" Merv asked quickly.

"Sometimes, yes; other times, no. But it's been a sort of leaning post, if you know what I mean."

"I'm not sure I do, Cam; explain, please."

"Well, if I was unsure or insecure about a thing or an event, I'd consult my horoscope and sort of lean on the answer."

Merv fixed his eyes on the girl before him. "Do you want to know a real fortress of strength, an ever-present help, Cam? Someone Who's greater by far than any 'star predictor' . . . do you?"

"Yes, I do. I really do, Merv. I'm terribly afraid at times. And I don't know what to do nor whom to turn to for help. I believe what you've said; it makes sense . . ."

"If you will turn, with all your heart, to Jesus Christ, and ask Him to come into your heart and forgive you of your sins, you will find the One who created the stars. He will become 'the bright and morning star' to your soul and you will never again dabble in the evil of the horoscope. Your soul will find the rest for which you are searching."

"Show me how, Merv. Please . . ."

The prayer meeting didn't last long, for Cam's heart was open. Her repentance was deep, the confession sincere and broken. The Christ of Calvary became her own personal Savior and Lord.

"I can't believe I'm me!" she cried happily, hugging Tricia and praising the Lord. "Just think of it, in darkness and sin one minute and saved the next. I feel so light and so happy. Now, if any of the kids tell me to 'look to the stars,' I'll say, 'no, look to Christ. He has all the answers.' Thanks, Merv, you're great. And you, too, Trish."

I would never make it to the library in time, I knew. But there are some things far more important than writing essays. Yes, far more important, I thought as I stepped out into the night, praising God for rescuing another soul from sin and Satan.