

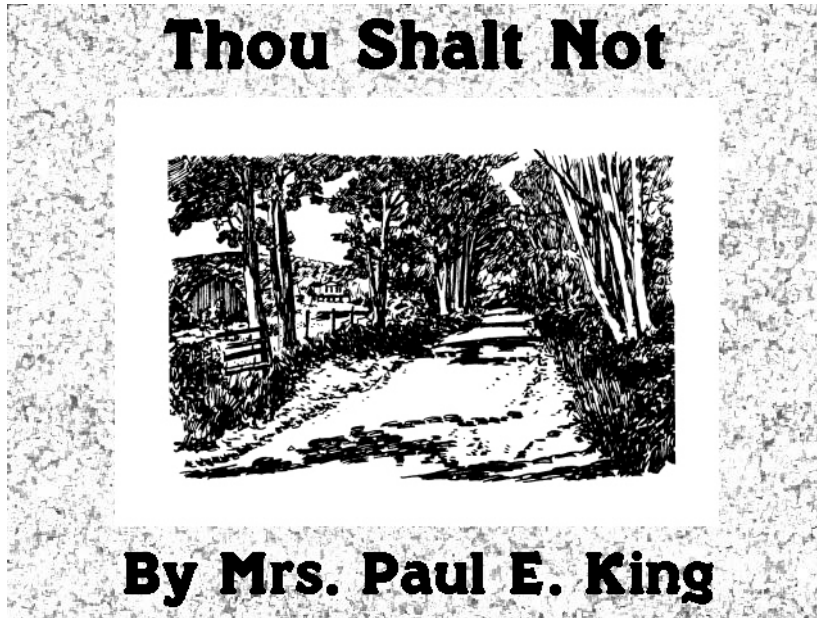
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**THOU SHALT NOT**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

"So, what do you think?" Sally asked Mitch as they walked down the sidewalk together.

Mitchell spun around on his heels so fast that he nearly fell over. "Sally," he cried, "you amaze me. You know what I think and how I feel about any of those things. All our life we've gone to the same church and heard the

same sermons, and you know what our pastors every one of them -- have told us regarding the horoscope and those, whatever they're called, cards and. . . ."

"But, Mitch, Kitty and Brittannie and Al and Darv all say that isn't so; they say reading one's horoscope is just plain old fun. And a lot of things do come true, Brittannie told me, and they do happen, just like her horoscope reading said it would for that particular day. In fact, almost everything happens each day exactly like the horoscope predicts it will. This is why they're interested in what's going on out at that old abandoned barn at the edge of town."

Again Mitch was shocked. "What's going on out there?" he asked quickly. "It seems to me that barn's nothing more than a breeding place for evil. First, it 'housed' -- if one dare use that word -- a bunch of out-of-state ruffians, then a bunch of drunks and gamblers met a couple times a week to drink and gamble 'in secret,' and now, . . . well, I think it's time for us as young people to do something to help clean our town up. Morally, I mean. After all, it's not fair for us to think there's nothing we can do and that it's all up to our parents to do everything. We have a job to do too, when and if we are born again and sanctified wholly. But back to the barn; what's 'brewing,' or should I say 'breeding' out there now?"

It was Sally's turn to be shocked now. "This is incredible!" she exclaimed, facing Mitch. "Do you mean, actually mean to say that you don't know what's. . . . Oh, Mitch, haven't you heard?"

"I haven't. What's going on?"

"This is incredulous!" Sally exclaimed again, her big brown eyes registering surprise.

"I heard you the first time," Mitch stated with a bit of humor. "Only, the first time it was 'incredible,' and this time around it's 'incredulous.' Either way, the fact still remains -- I don't know what you're talking about. I haven't heard. Do you believe me now?" He smiled at Sally.

Sally laughed her soft, bubbly kind of laughter. Then she said, "Oh Mitch, of course I believe you. You never say anything but the truth. I was --

and am -- shocked though, that you don't know about the barn. You know Henry and Cory, I'm sure."

"Henry Watley? Sure. And Cory Templ, too. I've been trying to get them to come to church with me. We used to work together at the Dog and Spuds Shop. What's with them? They're on my prayer list."

"Cory and Henry told Darv and A1, who told Brittannie and Kitty, that a gang meets regularly out at the barn to 'practice,' their word, witchcraft. They have some sort of club going, so the fellows said, and they're trying to round up more members. They want to form a coven. Imagine it! Right here in our town! Almost under our noses, so speaking."

"Sally," Mitch said, "is this true? I mean, well, it isn't just a rumor?"

"All I know is what Kitty and Brittannie said in my presence when I stopped to talk to Candace and Ellie and Flo. This is where and how I learned what I told you about the horoscope. Brittannie especially seems caught up in this . . . this . . . whatever it is. She told Candace and Flo and Ellie to meet Kitty and Darv and A1 and her at the barn."

"It's satanic," Mitch answered without preamble or apology. "It's of the devil. Every single bit of it -- the horoscope and all. And maybe, now that you told me all this, I'll be able to put some pieces together about something that happened over in Snowshoe County."

"Like what?"

"Our sister church over there had quite a scare two weeks ago, Dad told us around the supper table recently. He said the pastor told him he had just stood up to begin his sermon when in walked a group of rough looking young men. They paraded down the center aisle and stood near the first two pews, looking first at Brother Milton then turning and staring from one side of the congregation to the other, with evil looking smirks on their faces."

"Oh, Mitch, no! Where did they come from? What did the pastor do?" Sally's eyes were pools of fear.

"Brother Milton said he asked if he could help them and they snarled at him. Literally and actually, they snarled at him."

"Snarled!" Sally screeched.

"Bro. Milton told Dad they sounded like a dog when it snarls; he said it was the only way he could describe the sound since it was a snarl -- from all of them. Then a tall, angular fellow shouted, 'You up there' -- meaning, of course, Brother Milton -- 'we're going to trample you and your people to dust. We hate you. Hate you! Satan will yet conquer and defeat you. Every one of you.'

"Brother Milton asked for those who knew how to get a hold on God to pray and plead the blood, while he did the same. And he told Dad that the minute they began pleading the blood of Jesus the whole group stood like they were paralyzed; then, as one, they turned and ran screaming in fear out of the church. And Sally, I have a feeling they're a part of that gang, or club, or whatever they may call themselves as a group, from out at the barn."

"Oh Mitch, I'm scared. Really scared."

"You have no need to be scared if you're covered by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, Sally. There is no power on earth, no matter how evil, that can get through or past the blood. The precious blood of Calvary's Lamb is the covering for our sins as well as our covering and protection from evil. I am greatly concerned for Henry and Cory, though. They're so vulnerable. So are Candace and Flo and Ellie. And they're all so . . . so ignorant and unlearned about the snares of the devil, and about spiritual things."

"It . . . well, it . . . it gives me the creeps. And I'm beginning to realize that all those horoscope happenings regarding Brittannie's life must come from Satan, Mitch. For it certainly wouldn't be answers from God. Not when a thing leads you down the path Brittannie, especially, is going."

"You're right, Sally. God's Word is explicit and very definite when it says, 'There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

"Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer,

"For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out before thee' (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

"God is against all these evil practices, Sally. This is why it's dangerous to get involved with horoscopes, astrology, the Ouija board, and all such things. They're the 'little' tentacles that lead you on into Satanism, witchcraft and seances. It's happened to some innocent people; people who were not saved and sanctified and covered by Jesus' blood. I know what I'm going to do, Sally. . . ."

"Pray," came the instant reply. "And Mitch, I'm going to do the same thing. We need to pray for God to break up that club out at the barn. Who is to say the gang won't try to disrupt our church services here in town? They sound like they could be violent, and like they're dangerous."

"Except for the blood, Sally. Well, here's where I turn down my street. 'If two of you agree. . . .' Let's band together in fervent and earnest prayer for Henry and Cory's deliverance, as well as for the three girls. OK?"

"Amen. Thanks Mitch, for being a spiritual pillar for the rest of us young people. . . ."

Two nights later, while Mitch and his parents were sitting in the living room reading, a car screeched to a sudden and abrupt halt in front of the house and out jumped Cory and Henry. It was nearly midnight, and it was Halloween. Mitch answered the knock.

"Henry! Cory!" he exclaimed, seeing their white-as-chalk faces and their look of terror and fear. They were trembling and shaking violently. "Come in. Come in," Mitch said warmly and cordially.

"Oh Mitch, Mitch," Henry cried. Tears rolled down his cheeks. "It was terrifying."

"Worse than that!" Cory exclaimed. "Oh Mitch, why didn't Henry and I listen to all you said to us and told us? It was scary tonight. No, it was worse than scary. I can't find a word to describe what happened tonight out at that old barn."

"What happened?" Mitch asked, as he led them in to his parents in the living room and they sat down.

"We thought this thing about witches would be fun," Henry stammered as his body trembled. "You know, like the fantasy thing you see of a witch and her black cat riding a broomstick; that sort of thing. But it's not fun; it's a for real thing, and it's from somewhere other than from above, like you often told us about Heaven and God and all those holy, shining-bright beings up There."

"It's not a game," Cory remarked on Henry's 'heels.' "This is what Henry and I thought it was -- a sort of scary, unreal, but exciting game."

"Oh, it was terrible! Terrible!" Henry declared. "Tonight out there at that old barn, the leader of the gang demanded that everybody there had to give their total allegiance to Satan and worship him: no one else -- Satan alone. It was eerie Weird. The leader's eyes looked like balls of burning steel."

"That's the truth!" Cory added. "He's a tall, angular sort of fellow. . . ."

Mitch and his parents exchanged meaningful glances.

"And . . . and suddenly he -- Satan -- appeared," Henry cried, shaking violently again. "Oh, it was the most frightening thing I've ever experienced. When Satan appeared, I mean. Oh Mitch, Cory and I don't want to worship Satan. We need help. That's why we're here."

"We tore out of there like a couple of hunted deer," Cory added, "and it seemed as if the leader's fiery-looking eyes followed us all the way outside the door. Mitch, I'm ready to change. I know you serve and worship a Christ who loves me. You said He did; that He loved us so much that He died for us. Tonight I'm ready to open my heart to Him. . . ."

"Oh, yes. Yes," Henry cried. "I'll never take the way of sin again. I need Jesus. I want Jesus."

It was a glorious fall night; one neither Henry or Cory will ever forget. That night, they were born from above; made new creatures in Christ. All desires for the questionable things were gone. They were transformed;

joyously and willingly they followed God's "Thou shalt nots," as prescribed for every true believer and born again child of God in the Bible.