

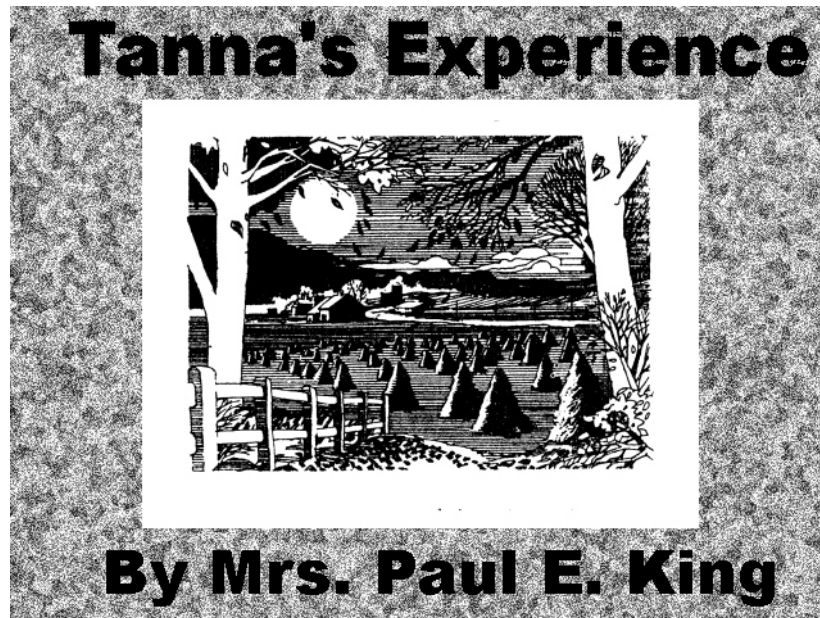
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**TANNA'S EXPERIENCE**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

"Come on, Tanna," blonde-haired Haley called. "Just because you had one bad experience doesn't mean it needs to be repeated. In fact, I know it won't be this way at Tess' house. Tess is sensible. She doesn't go in for the far-out kind of things and happenings. You must not get the feeling that you're better than the rest of us just because you're a Christian now. . . ." Haley's sentence trailed tantalizingly in the silence that followed.

Tanna Lynn sighed. She felt grieved over Haley's comment. Haley had been her closest friend on the block. She had thought that Haley, of all people, would have understood her feelings and respected her convictions, since they went to the same church. Tanna was excited and happy when Haley had finally begun attending church with her after her many invitations.

"Please, Tanna!"

Haley's plea sliced into Tanna's serious thoughts. Soberly, she said, "I can't, Haley. I feel I couldn't take Jesus with me to that party; and where He wouldn't go, I can't go. I don't have any desire for these things since the Lord has taken control of me and my life. Everything's changed, Haley. Everything! Since Jesus forgave me of my sins and I've been born again and sanctified wholly, I delight in pleasing the Lord. He wouldn't go with me to that party. I know He wouldn't. So, like I stated before, I can't go."

Susan, who had been reading the Daily News, which was lying on the coffee table, now glanced up from the paper and asked, "What kind of bad experience did you have, Tanna? At least I think Haley described it as such a 'bad experience,' I mean."

Tanna shivered with remembering. Then she said, "It's something I'll never forget and something I never want to go through again. Never!"

"What was it? I mean, what happened? I always think of Halloween parties as fun times and fun things," Susan said as she put the paper down and probed Tanna's face for an answer.

"It's the most frightening thing I've ever experienced in all of my life," Tanna replied. "From the depths of my heart, I thank God that He delivered me. It was dreadful and. . . ."

"What happened?" Susan asked quickly, before Tanna had time to finish her sentence.

"If I had only listened to my dear, sweet Aunt Helen I'd never have gotten involved in the occult at all," Tanna said. "But my parents didn't see anything at all wrong with the Ouija board. My mother and my Aunt Helen, though sisters, were poles apart in their way of thinking and their beliefs.

Aunt Helen has always been a devout and very real Christian; Mother, until two years ago, was anything but a Christian, a thing she'll tell you herself.

"The Ouija board was a sort of plaything at our house," Tanna continued. "It was a gift from a friend of mine on my fourteenth birthday. Kay gave it to me, telling me of all the fun we girls would have when we got together and had sleep-overs at each other's houses, a thing we did frequently since my parents thought it was great for us to get together this way. I see now that this was not good."

"So what happened?" Susan inquired again, a hint of impatience registering in her voice.

"I'm getting to it, Susan, as fast as I can. First, I'm taking you back to where it all started; this way you'll be able to see the progression of what I became addicted to and was mixed up in. I played with the Ouija board even when my friends weren't with me. I was fascinated by it; drawn to it by an irresistible force which, I know now, was the power of Satan.

"Jill, one of my friends, was into black magic and Kay, whose grandfather was deep into seances, introduced us all to that. At a slumber party one time at Kay's house, we all sat on the floor and, with our hands barely touching, we commanded a table to rise and walk around the room. I sat like one hypnotized as that inanimate object obeyed and walked all around the room.

"When I mentioned this to Aunt Helen, she wept. Then, putting her arms around me, she prayed for me, asking the Lord to send deliverance to me and to make me His child, covered by the blood of Calvary's Lamb. She warned me of Satan's power and told me that God forbade these things in His Word. I told her we did it just for fun; she told me it was dangerous and wicked and sinful, adding that she was going to pray for God to open my eyes and send deliverance to me."

"Deliverance from what?" Susan asked quickly and innocently.

"Deliverance from Satan's power," Tanna replied.

"But Tanna," Susan countered, her brow furrowed in lines, "why . . . ? Well . . . I guess I don't understand all this about Satan."

"Everything we were doing pertained to the occult, Susan, and Satan is the master of the occult -- Ouija boards, seances, black magic, witches and witchcraft, you name it, all these things are of Satan and are controlled by Satan. No wonder my aunt was horrified when I told her what we were doing and what was happening at our sleep-over gatherings. I see it all now, since Jesus saved and cleansed me and delivered me. Before this, I was like you, Susan; I saw no harm in it. I thought it was a scary kind of fun. How easy it is for Satan to fool us. He gives us only so much bait -- a little at a time to get us involved in a thing, or hooked on it, and we take it from there; miserable puppets who do his bidding. We become his slave.

"It took nearly four years of earnest praying and much interceding by my dear Aunt Helen and her Christian friends, before I was delivered out of Satan's power and his binding clutches. I had tiptoed into the occult by way of the Ouija board, and before I realized what was happening, I was in so deep until only my eyes were showing!

"I'll never forget the night of all Halloween nights. I felt I had aged 10 years when I finally got home. As usual, we girls went to a spook house which some civic group had made to scare us. For a few hours there was a huge crowd, and then little groups began sectioning off.

"What's next?' I asked Gail, a friend of mine whom I saw little of since her move with her parents to another town.

"The grand finale! You game for it?' It was a man's voice.

"I turned and saw Floyd, a boy down the block from our house. He looked at me. "Well, are you wanting to come?' he asked, adding, 'you'll never forget it, I'm sure.'

"Who's going to be there?' I asked quickly, hoping Blenda was going.

"I'll be there, you may be sure,' Blenda chirped, as she filled a cup with punch from a huge punch bowl provided for us by the civic club. 'Where Floyd goes, I go,' she added. "We're going steady now, you know.'

"No, I didn't know; but I was glad to know Blenda would be going. Where, I didn't know.

"Anyone else?' I asked Blenda. She was a sensible girl with a good name and I knew that she went to one of the churches in our town: which one, I didn't know. Since I hadn't been attending church anywhere, it didn't matter to me where she went. It was just nice to know that she attended somewhere.

"I asked Jerry and his sister to come,' Floyd replied, answering the question I had asked. 'You have someone you want to bring along?' he inquired. 'Kay, maybe?'

"Where are we going" I asked.

"It's my secret,' Floyd said. "Not even Blenda knows. But I brought everything I'll need to have us a night we'll always remember and never forget. Get Kay and meet me outside. I'll have the car waiting out front.' He tossed his empty punch cup into a nearby wastebasket and slipped quickly outside.

"We drove to an empty farmhouse not more than a mile away. With flashlights we went through the house, making sure that it was indeed empty. Floyd knew where the main power box was in the basement and he turned on the lights. The owners had kept the electricity hooked up because they were cleaning the house. With lights on in the stairwell we went into a room, Floyd and Blenda, Jerry and Brie, his sister, and Kay and I.

"Why the washroom?' I asked, feeling goose bumps.

"Stone walls,' he explained, shaking his head as though I should have known that from the very beginning. But I didn't know. So I kept quiet.

"Floyd! Whatever . . .?' Blenda gasped as he laid out chicken feet, chalk, various herbs and roots, a vial of blood and all kinds of feathers and bones.

"Light these candles, Brie,' Floyd said.

"Goose bumps seemed to have covered my arms. Whatever was he doing? I wondered, as I crawled up on a table and sat down to watch what was going on. Kay scooted up beside me, saying, 'Spooky-scary, isn't it?'

"I nodded silently.

"Floyd was meticulous about everything he did, referring often to a book of black magic which he had brought along, using some items, putting others aside. Then he drew the chalk circle.

"As long as we stay in here, inside the circle, nothing can harm us.' His voice was quiet, assured and convincing, even though it had the same effect as grating chalk on a chalkboard. Kay and I were already inside the circle so we were 'safe.'

"The ritual began. I felt bored and thought it was a lot of nonsense until Floyd called out, 'Damien. Hail, Damien.' His voice peaked. My eyes felt like they had tripled in size. I was terrified.

"What are you doing?' I demanded. "You're calling Satan himself!"

"Floyd looked at me, saying calmly, 'I've always wanted to see him; to know him, haven't you? After all, why are you and your friends into Ouija boards and seances and such? But hush. Not another word from you, nor anybody, or I could put us all in jeopardy.'

"I felt cold and numb with fear. Kay gripped my arm in a vise-like clasp and Brie had gone into what looked like rigor mortise. Jerry's face looked white as chalk and Blenda's eyes were round with fright.

"Floyd continued with his chants. And then we heard it -- footsteps coming down the wooden steps outside the room! We froze. Who was it? The owner of the house? Or the one Floyd was determined to see? A crack under the door let the light from the stairwell seep in. The footsteps kept coming. The doorknob turned and the door began to creak open.

"In the name and blood of Jesus Christ, do not enter this room!' Blenda shouted in a voice that didn't even sound like her own. All motion stopped. It seemed that all life had ceased. With our eyes fixed on the door, suddenly the light seeped back under the crack with no interruption. Nothing.

"No one moved. Then Floyd threw down his book. "You ruined it!" he shouted at Blenda with absolute disgust. We were this close to seeing and you had to ruin it!" His eyes flashed anger.

"Please take me home, Floyd," Blenda pleaded.

"With eyes still blazing with anger, he said, 'I've a good mind to make you walk home.'

"I'll walk with her," I said, jumping down off the table.

"So will I," Kay declared, slipping down beside me.

"Throwing his odd assortment of things into plastic bags, Floyd said, 'Don't be silly. No one's walking.'

"My car's outside," Jerry volunteered. 'Brie and I'll take you girls home. Come,' he said. 'Floyd can go on with his chants and his incantations. This is dangerous business. I want no part of it.'

"We walked soberly and solemnly up the steps and out to the car. Floyd wasn't far behind us, I should add. And it was when I was safely home and in bed, that I realized how far and deep into the occult I had gone. My Aunt Helen, bless her, had many Christians praying for me, with her. Today I am free from Satan's power, all praise and honor and glory to Jesus and His precious blood, and never, never, never will I go back into sin and its evils. My heart is fixed: I'm going to Heaven whatever the price or the cost. And Haley, I'll not be going to that Halloween party."