

A Voice in the Night Surprise!”

The voice boomed in my ear, rousing me from a deep sleep. I blinked, trying to see who could be calling my name at this hour of the night, but it was pitch dark inside my family’s hut. I could not see a thing. I lay there for a moment, listening to the sound of my heart pounding in my chest. Had I been dreaming? It had seemed so real. “Surprise!” The voice was louder and more insistent than before. I sat up. “Yes? Who are you? What do you want?” The voice was masculine, strong and deep. “Get out of the house. If you do not leave, you will die.” I opened my mouth to reply, but nothing came out. “Surprise! You must leave. Now!” The command was so loud and urgent that the earth beneath me seemed to tremble. I felt that everyone in my village would probably come running to see what was going on at our home— but nobody else seemed to be able to hear the voice. My father’s snoring told me he was still asleep. My mother and my sister Maria did not stir. I was fifteen years old and not at all ready to face the world on my own. But I knew I could not ignore this powerful, commanding voice. I jumped up, dressed quickly and walked out into the African night. I didn’t know where I was going or what was about to happen to my family. I only knew that my life was at stake. I have not been back to my village or seen my parents since that night, over 25 years ago.

A New Beginning Then, on the fourteenth day of our journey, late in the afternoon, I saw something in the distance. “Look!” I shouted to Gafar, pointing toward a clearing in the jungle a few hundred meters distant. “Houses!” he cried. “People!” We began running as fast as we could. Our wanderings had taken us all the way across Mozambique’s Tete Province to the town of Vila Nova da Fronteira, on the border of Malawi. As we stumbled out of the jungle, we were surprised to see an elderly man standing at the edge of the clearing. His white beard and bushy white hair made him look like a wild man. But a friendly grin spread across his face when he saw us, and he raised his hand in greeting. “I’m glad you’re finally here, boys,” he called out to us. “I’ve been waiting for you.”

As we began to eat I asked the question that had been on my mind from the moment we had emerged from the jungle. “Mr. Lukas,” I said, “you told us that you were waiting for us. How could you know we were coming when we ourselves didn’t know?” “That’s right,” Gafar chimed in. “We have been lost in the jungle for days.” Mr. Lukas nodded and chuckled softly. “I saw you in a dream,” he said. “I see,” I said. This was not terribly surprising news. I believed that such things happened and thought that Mr. Lukas must be a witch doctor, like my parents. And yet I had not seen anything in his house to make me believe this was true: no mysterious drawings or symbols, no collection of magical herbs, no ritual drums. “A dream?” Gafar asked, before shoving another huge piece of sweet potato into his mouth. “Yes. God showed me in a dream that you were coming. He told me to go to the edge of the jungle and wait for two boys who were hungry and exhausted. He also told me to take care of you when you arrived.” I had expected him to say that the revelation had come from a spirit—not from God. Furthermore, I was not sure which god he was talking about. I had grown up believing in many gods and spirits who had to be appeased constantly. I also believed that there was a “great God,” but He was far away and could not be expected to care about the daily struggles of human beings.

Surprise, Pastor (2012-02-01). *Voice in the Night: The True Story of a Man and the Miracles That Are Changing Africa* (p.15- 40). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.