

Dangerous Visitors

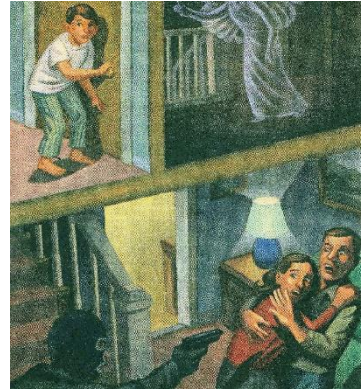
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David finished his prayer, got up from his knees and crawled into bed. "It's too early to go to bed," he complained. "Can't I stay up longer?"

"No," replied Mom. "We need to get up early tomorrow, and we're all tired. Besides, it's later than it seems. The sun sets late during the summer."

"But it's so hot!" David moaned. "I can't sleep when it's so hot."

"The windows are open and it will be cooling off soon," said Papi. "Just lay down and you'll be asleep before you know it."



Mom and Papi both gave David goodnight hugs and kisses and left his room. He heard them checking on his little sister, Ariel, who was sleeping next door; then he heard them go down the stairs. Pretty soon he heard noises in the kitchen and smelled Mom's good banana bread baking. Still, he couldn't get to sleep.

Then David heard something different, something exciting: unfamiliar voices downstairs. Great! We've got company, he thought. I wonder if they've got kids. I'll go see who it is. David got out of bed and started toward the door of his room.

"Go back to bed and stay there," came a voice.

Startled, David looked around. Who said that? There's no one here. Deciding that it was just his imagination, he once again started toward his door.

But again it came, this time with more urgency: "Go back to bed and stay there!"

Puzzled and disappointed, David obeyed. He got back in bed, and he stayed there.



David didn't realize that a frightening situation was unfolding downstairs.

After putting David to bed, Mom had busied herself in the kitchen, and Papi had gone to the study. As he sat at his desk working, Papi felt something brush against the side of his face.

"Get up," said a man roughly.

Startled, Papi tried to turn to see who was there.

“I said get up!” repeated the man, pushing a hard object close to Papi’s face. With a start, Papi realized that he knew the smell of the hard object: it was the smell of a gun.

As calmly as he could, Papi replied, “Okay, I’m going to get up now, nice and slow.”

“Good. Now give me your wallet,” the man said once Papi was standing. Papi obeyed, being very careful not to move too quickly.

“Now turn around and go to the kitchen. Tell your wife not to scream.”

As he turned around, Papi could see that there were two men, both with stockings over their heads so their faces couldn’t be recognized. One of the men carried a pistol.

“Honey, don’t scream,” said Papi as they walked through the family room toward the kitchen. Even though he had told him to say this, the robber hit Papi in the head with the gun when he did. Papi’s head began bleeding.

That’s when Mom saw what Papi had already seen: the two robbers, especially the man with the gun, were shaking violently.

A look of understanding passed between Mom and Papi. These men were really nervous—scared even. Mom and Papi knew they must be careful not to do anything that would startle the robbers. A scared man with a gun is very dangerous indeed – he would shoot his own shadow if it startled him.

Trying to keep the robbers calm, Papi began talking quietly. Again and again, he repeated soothing words: “It’s okay, man, we’re not going to try anything. We’re not going to hurt you. We’re Christians. We love you. God loves you. He’ll forgive you if you ask Him. His kind of life will make you truly happy...” On and on he talked, his voice quiet and gentle.

“Give me your purse,” the other man ordered Mom. Slowly she retrieved it. He yanked it away and pushed her back into the family room. “Where’s your jewelry? Go get it,” he commanded.

“I don’t have any jewelry,” Mom replied calmly. “We don’t wear jewelry.” Mom silently prayed that he would believe her; she didn’t want him to search through the house and scare the children.

He looked Mom over to see if she had any jewelry on and, finding none, decided to believe her.

Finally the men made Mom and Papi (whose head was bleeding quite a lot by now) lie face down on the carpet, where they tied them up. Then, just as suddenly as they had come, the men were gone.



David hadn't heard any voices for a little while, and he decided that the visitors must have left. He was just turning over to sleep when he heard Mom and Papi running up the stairs. "David, Ariel – are you kids all right?"

Mom ran into Ariel's room first and found that Ariel had slept through everything. Papi burst into David's room, holding a bloody towel to his head. "Are you okay?" he was saying. "Is everything all right?"

Confused, David sat up. "Yeah, Papi, I'm fine. What's wrong? Are you bleeding? Who were those visitors? I started to come downstairs to meet them..."

Mom arrived in time to hear this, and she suddenly turned very white.

"...but someone told me to stay in bed," David finished.

Thinking at first that perhaps one of the robbers had come upstairs, Mom anxiously asked, "What? Who was here?"

"No one, there wasn't anyone here. But when I started to go downstairs someone told me to stay in bed, so I did."

Mom and Papi looked at each other in amazement for a moment, and then hugged David harder than he could ever remember being hugged before.

"David," said Mom with tears in her eyes, "I am so glad that you obeyed that someone."

"Why? Mom, what's wrong? What happened?"

"Mi hijo*," said Papi, "those visitors were not friends. They were two robbers—two very nervous robbers—and they had a gun. Mom and I were afraid that they would shoot at anything, just because they were so nervous. If you had come running down the stairs and burst into the family room...Well, mi hijo, they probably would have ... shot you."

David's eyes grew wide as this all sank in. He thought for a moment. "But then, the "someone" who told me to stay in bed... was that... do you think that was my guardian angel?"

"Absolutely," Mom and Papi both agreed. "We believe with all our hearts that tonight God saved you."

* Pronounced like me-hoe, mi hijo means "my son" in Spanish.