

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Usually I see Simone during the day, but one time I saw Simone in the middle of the night. I knew that Simone likes to be out at night, especially if the sky has some stars and the moon showing. After what I'm going to tell you about was over, I understood better why Simone likes to be out at night like that.

The words that I said **look like this**.

The words that Simone said **look like this**.

If you're reading this out loud, maybe you can make different sounding voices for Simone and for me. If you're reading it to yourself, you can hear the voices in your head.

Sometimes, after I've been sound asleep for a few hours, I wake up more easily if I hear a noise. So I guess it was way after midnight, but before the sun started to make the sky even a little bit light, that I heard it. It was a meowing, not real loud but loud enough to make me more awake. I wondered if it was Simone, or some other cat, and decided to look and see.

I looked out the bedroom window, but saw no cat. Then I decided to go downstairs, to where the door goes into the back yard. But just as I was going to start down those stairs, I heard it again, right outside, near me. So I went out the back door, to where we have a small deck, and there was Simone, sitting on the railing. I was surprised, because I'd never seen Simone there before, and I'd never seen Simone in the middle of the night. So I said, in my head because that's how Simone and I talk to each other,

Hi, Simone. How'd you get up here?

I'm glad you have wooden poles to climb up on. Now, be quiet and look up at the sky with me.

Well, okay, but it's nice to see you, especially at this time of night. Do you come up here often?

I t's nice to see you, too, but I didn't call you out here to do a lot of talking. Now, look up, and wait, and you might see another one.

Another what?

Shh! Quiet! But keep awake.

So I did what I was told, and was quiet, and looked at the sky. There were hardly any clouds, and the moon was not bright, so the stars were fairly easy to see, the bright ones anyway. Then I forgot, to be quiet, and said something else.

What are we looking for, Simone?

If you keep looking, and are quiet, and just wait, you'll find out.

I wondered if Simone was wanting to me to feel that special feeling Simone talks about, or was actually waiting to see something. Then I saw it. A bright light moved quickly across the part of the sky where I was looking, and then went out.

Did you see that?

Yes, Simone, I did. It was really special.

Was that a part of..., you know..., of ..., God?

Well, no, not exactly. That was what we humans call a shooting star, when a piece of something falls into the air and burns so bright we can see it from way down here.

I don't know what all that means, and I don't want you to talk a lot to explain it. But it was nice to see. I've seen it before, once in a while. But I saw quite a few tonight.

Actually, there was a comet going by the Earth, and that's why there were extra shooting stars around, but Simone didn't want explanations, so I didn't say anything about the comet.

It certainly was nice to see, and, Simone, if you'll just be quiet, and just look, you might see another one.

Simone didn't say anything, though I think Simone smiled when I said that. Simone and I looked some more, and then Simone broke the silence.

My mother taught me how to do this.

Do what, Simone? I'm not sure what you mean.

My mother taught me to be out at night and just look at the sky, or just be outside and close my eyes and just know that the sky is there.

Is that when you get that special feeling, Simone, that feeling about what we humans call God?

Yes. Quite often. But not always. I get that feeling at other times too. But if we'll both be quiet again, maybe we'll both have that special feeling together, and that would be nice.

And it was nice. So nice that I closed my eyes, and just sort of felt the beautiful sky, and, I think, sort of felt God there too. When I opened my eyes, Simone was gone. But that was alright. I think Simone was happy for me that now I understood a bit better what Simone sometimes feels. I think Simone left me to feel it by myself so I wouldn't talk about it, but just do it. I stayed on that porch a little longer, until I started to feel a bit cold. Then I knew it was time for me to go back to bed.

Maybe you can try being still and quiet and knowing God is there. Like Simone said, it doesn't have to be in the middle of the night.

Sometimes thinking about some words from the Bible help to give us that God-is-here feeling. Here are some words I sometimes think about like that, from the Bible - in Psalm 46, verse 10 - when God says to people:

"Be still, and know that I am God!"

So, if you want to try it, memorize those words, and then, when you want to do it, shh!, just hear them in your head, and enjoy whatever feelings come to you.

Being quiet with God like that can be as good a prayer as a lot of sentences, and it's something you can do any time, anywhere, in the middle of the night, or even in the middle of the day.

So, hear in your head the words God says to you and to everybody,
"Be still, and know that I am God."

*Want to hear more **Simone** stories? come to Esquimalt United Church for our Sunday Service starting at 10:45 a.m. 500 Admirals Road, Victoria, BC*

P.S. It is not every Sunday that Ted Bristow has the children time, so if you are in luck you might hear a Simone story the Sunday you come. Otherwise you have to come back the following Sunday and see if Ted is there.

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