

THE STARRY NIGHT

READ: PSALM 34:7; JOHN 14:27

NOTE: THIS STORY ADDRESSES VIOLENCE AND MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR YOUNG OR SENSITIVE CHILDREN.

Look at the shapes in this painting,” the art curator said, trying to speak over the kids in the class. The comment barely registered in Breanna’s mind.

Breanna’s class was on a field trip to the Museum of Modern Art, but all she could think about was her cousin, who was shot and killed in her neighborhood only a few nights ago. *Why does this happen?* Breanna wondered, her heart heavy with grief. *Is anyone safe?* Their group walked on.

They stopped in front of a different painting. “This is a very famous painting called *The Starry Night*,” the guide told them. “Vincent van Gogh painted it in 1889 while he was in a hospital.”

“Van Gogh? Was that the guy who cut off his own ear?” asked one of the boys.

“Yes. He was in a hospital in France afterward and painted this. While the hills and sky in the painting could be seen from his hospital window, the village is from his imagination, possibly even his hometown in a different country. Look at the dark colors used. Each building in the village is outlined in black. But the yellow and white of the stars and moon stand out in the sky. Look at the brush strokes. They swirl in the night. But the village is made up of straight, up and down lines. See how the heavens are filled with wild energy, while the village is silent and structured.”

Breanna stared at the painting. To her, it seemed like God was looking down on the little village from heaven, His Spirit actively protecting it, even though the village itself looked still. *Maybe Van Gogh needed this then like I need to see it now*, she thought.

As her class moved on to the next painting, Breanna prayed a silent prayer. *Jesus, please watch over my neighborhood and keep us safe. Please help me remember that You saved me and are always with me, even when bad things happen that I don’t understand.* And for the first time in several days, Breanna felt at peace. ♥

LAUREN N. SIMMONS

JESUS IS WITH YOU

KEY VERSE: THE PEACE I [JESUS] GIVE IS A GIFT THE WORLD CANNOT GIVE. SO DON'T BE TROUBLED OR AFRAID. JOHN 14:27 (NLT)

Do you feel unsafe where you live? Or maybe you’re dealing with a situation at school that makes you feel afraid. Remember that Jesus sees you and is with you, even when bad things happen. Because He saved you from sin, you can talk to Him anytime. Ask Him for protection and peace in your situation, and trust Him to help you talk to an adult about any fears you have for your safety.

