

When Jesus Came to Laos-Part Three

All around him, rain hammered the ground. Not one little corner of the ground was dry. And not one corner of himself, either.

And he noticed something else. It was dark. Very dark. He could only see tiny spots of light through the leaves overhead.

Thao shivered, then touched his face. His cheek was hot but he was cold. His mother had been right. He needed medicine.

But what could he do now? He had no way of knowing who the strangers were or what they wanted. Should he leave the Bible in the jungle and go home? Would his mother still be there, or had she been taken away? He looked at the Bible. The pastor told them Jesus always knew where they were and what they needed. But did He really know how far Thao had run? Would He help him find his way home?

The bushes beside him rustled. He jumped to his feet. Why hadn't he brought something to defend himself?

He stood perfectly still. A small, brown deer stepped out and smelled the air around him. When he smelled Thao, he bolted into the jungle.

Seconds later, a huge cat ran headfirst out of a tree not far from Thao. It disappeared into the brush, chasing the deer.

Now he knew he was in trouble. He'd recognized those black splotches and brown coat immediately. That was not just any cat. That was a leopard. And if he didn't catch the deer, he might come back for Thao.

He ordered himself not to panic and tried to think of a way out. The trees above offered no protection—the leopard could climb better than he could. And out-running him was impossible.

The trees rustled. Something large was crashing through the brush. The leopard was coming right toward him! The deer must have escaped. Thao prayed he would, too.

He darted into the jungle. How would he ever get out of here? He glanced around but couldn't see any escape.