

"The Surprise Party"

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By Rebecca Enney

Have you ever been part of planning a surprise party? Elizabeth is helping with a surprise party for Martin, her cousin from Tanzania! Today is his birthday. Martin and his family arrived last Sunday afternoon and will leave tomorrow (just about the same time Elizabeth has her first day back at school) to fly back to Africa where they live. So this morning, Martin's father took him on an errand, but it was really just to get Martin out of the house so they could decorate it for his surprise party.

Elizabeth and her mother set up the picnic table in the back yard and then she and her father put together this funny contraption thing to make a special place for Martin to sit so he could be the "king of the party"! See, they even have a crown for him! Here is Martin's sister Esther and his mother Naomi and Baby Ruth. All the children from Pastor Ed's church have been invited to Martin's party!

Barabas arrived first, then Larry and Loretta, then Polly and Haman, then Obadiah, and Sam.

Running Chairs was late as usual. In fact . . . what no one at the party knows or remembers is that today is also Running Chairs birthday. Her family will have a birthday dinner for her tonight. But in the back of her mind, she was really, really wishing there could be a surprise party for HER.

And so it was that when Running Chairs arrived at the Mawakasunga house this is what she thought; I bet this is not really a party for Martin; it is a party for me! And she became very excited about that. And when she walked out back she saw that Martin was not yet there and she saw that the balloons at the throne were her favorite colors red and orange and she saw all HER friends were there and she made the most embarrassing humiliating mistake of her life. She thought the party was for her!

She ran up to the balloon throne and she put on the crown and she cried out "Thank you! Like thank you so much for my surprise party!" . . . except this was NOT all for her, it is for Martin!



Everyone grew quiet and looked at Running Chairs. It was very awkward. Finally Mrs. Mawakasunga went up and whispered something to Running Chairs. Then she put her arm around Running Chairs and walked to the back of the party with her where Running Chairs stood

with tears running down her face. And in the middle her of tears, Martin arrived and everyone forgot about Running Chairs and they all cheered for Martin.

Martin sat on the throne under the balloons and put on the crown and had a wonderful birthday while Running Chairs pretended to have fun. But mostly she was still so humiliated that she could have made such a mistake.



Sometimes in life, we think that everything is about US, about ME and we presume to stand in the place of honor by mistake.

Jesus warned us to be careful about such things. Never figure that you are the guest of honor. It is better to start in the back of the room and wind up staying there than to walk up and sit on the 'birthday throne' and be surprised like Running Chairs. That party really was a surprise for Martin . . . and for Running Chairs.

THE END