

# Good Morning

by Angie

*"Brightest and best are the suns of the morning"*

- old English saying regarding those who rise early  
(possibly a corruption of the first line of an Anglican epiphany hymn  
by Bishop Reginald Heber -1783-1826 )



Vincent had left Catherine's balcony when it was close to dawn. They had parted much earlier, but he had stayed to make sure she slept. He worried about her. She worked too hard and insisted on being with him for longer than thought prudent for a working woman.

He took the elevator back to the tunnels, but he was restless, and the thought of sleep for himself was unattractive. Instead, he made his way to the music chamber, and sat himself on the sand, directly under the grate, and waited.

There had been a play held in the bandshell that evening, but right now the park above was silent, the city almost so. He could hear the wind whispering through the leaves and the rustle needles of the trees. It spoke its own language, one he could not quite understand, but which made him strain his ears nevertheless. Even his eyes could see nothing above the grate, just a velvet blackness that seemed somehow comforting, as if absorbing all the dreams of the night world, accepting them. Even his.

Then, as if perhaps it too had been waiting for the right moment, a robin began to sing, tentatively first, only a short trill, but it cut the silence like a bright silver knife. Then moments

later, the same bird sang a much longer one, its exuberant song rising and falling, as if it was delighted to find itself alone.

In the music chamber, the robin's song rang as clear as a Mozart sonata, filling Vincent with joy and peace. He closed his eyes and listened.

Then from a distance, another robin began to sing. The first one became defiant, louder if that was possible, its song now a warning, a statement of territory. Robins were obsessively territorial. The second robin kept singing, ignoring its rival, while the song of the first became more complex, more insistent.

He imagined he could almost hear the first ruffle its feathers and wondered how long it would stay. Robins would often stay in a single location for up to 20 minutes, he knew.

And now dawn light was beginning to brighten the air above the grate, and Vincent cocked his head to listen. Yes, there were other tiny noises, the little scritchings and hops of sparrows. They always visited the area around the bandshell as soon as it was light, looking for any little tidbit that the audience might have dropped. There were a few peeps and the occasional sharper note as the cheeky little birds scolded each other, grasping for the same morsel.

Then a slightly different peep, higher, more musical, and he knew the chickadees had arrived, seeking their favourite seeds on the ground, briefly, then whirring away. He pictured the little bird doing its acrobatics along branches as ferreted out spiders and other insects from under leaves.

Then abruptly there was silence from the first robin and a whirr of wings. It had been very close, but now it was elsewhere. The rival continued for two more trills, then it too went silent. No doubt both were patrolling their territories, stopping to remind any others of their presence with their long trills.

He heard a louder rustle through dead leaves on the grass, tentative, something larger, perhaps a squirrel or chipmunk. It came quite close, shifting and sifting the debris before scampering off.

Of course, Vincent had never seen any of these creatures in daylight, and they were not abroad at night, as he was. But he could imagine them from his reading, and their sound confirmed what he'd read.

Vincent leaned back against the wall, still listening, but heard nothing more, except the city traffic becoming louder in the far distance. Soon there would be joggers and walkers in the Park. The world would wake up and another day would begin. He heard the rumble of a hand cart, probably one of the park cleaners.

He sighed and got to his feet, happy that he had at least heard some of the morning creatures of the Park.

'Good morning, world,' he said softly, smiling to himself. It was a beautiful world and he felt suddenly part of it, if only as a listener.

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