

# An Easier Place

by Angie

*"I am not used to Hope - "*  
- Emily Dickinson

Vincent stood in the shadows of a copse of spruce trees, hooded, more against the damp than any concern about being seen on this very foggy, chilly spring night.

He was outside in the Park because he wanted peace and quiet. In the tunnels, there was rarely any of the latter because of the pipes, which were used by many during the day, and sentries at night. Here, he could truly think, without any distractions.

Emily Dickinson, he thought, knew much about despair, pain and loneliness. Her poems were explicit, yet despite that, always offered hope – and not *'just the thing with feathers'*, he thought wryly.

He was running over his favourite poems in his mind, searching for one that fit his emotions, when he heard the screech of a car's tires on the road not far away. Momentarily distracted, he peered carefully around the trees and saw a white van shudder to an almost stop, then toss a large bundle out of a side door, before it lurched and sped away.

Vincent realized the bundle on the grass was firstly, human, and secondly, alive, although he could not have told Father how he knew that. He rushed over to it and determined it was a woman, badly cut about the face. He didn't hesitate. There was no time to lose.

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Later, when Father assured him the woman he had brought below would recover, Vincent returned to his former location in the Park.

Now he had a reason to remember a particular Emily Dickinson poem. There was something about the injured woman which spoke to his heart, although he had never seen her before.

It took him only a few moments to recall the poem, one that seemed to speak directly to him now, whereas in the past, it could only voice a conundrum he would likely never experience.

Softly, he recited it to the fog ....

*"It might be lonelier  
Without the Loneliness—  
I'm so accustomed to my Fate—  
Perhaps the Other—Peace—*

*Would interrupt the Dark—  
And crowd the little Room—  
Too scant—by Cubits—to contain*

*The Sacrament—of Him—*

*I am not used to Hope—  
It might intrude upon—  
Its sweet parade—blaspheme the place—  
Ordained to Suffering—*

*It might be easier  
To fail—with Land in Sight—  
Than gain—My Blue Peninsula—  
To perish—of Delight— ”*

Vincent sighed, wondering how Emily could have known this. Had she experienced it? So much of her life was unknown.

Hope for himself was always tempered by the knowledge of what he was (and was not) and where he lived. The poem perfectly expressed a sweetness he now felt, that he dared not express to Father - and the sense that his life had changed irrevocably this night.

He wasn't sure what to do about it, except accept that he had now bound himself to the fate of this unknown woman and that he was responsible for her. He had taken on the task of caring for her, promised Father, and she was even now in his bed, in his chamber. His place that held his hopes – and where he had suffered too – *'too scant by cubits'* indeed!

Her face was wrapped in bandages, including her eyes. That last was not strictly necessary, but it would prevent her from being frightened, both by her unusual surroundings and by himself, her caregiver.

She had been deeply unconscious, and was still. He could feel that much from her already, something else that he must keep from her. Who from the world above could understand his extra sensory 'talents'? Even Father did not, although he accepted them as a 'gift' to his special son.

Suddenly, he felt a sudden awareness of the woman and knew that she was regaining consciousness. Satisfied that he had calmed himself emotionally, he quickly made his way back to the tunnels and his chamber, to see what this unusual encounter would mean for him.

He wanted to be there when she awakened. She would need to be fed and comforted. He hoped that Emily was wrong, that this would not be an incident he would regret, that would upset his carefully managed emotional state.

He would have to be careful, that was all. It would not be *'easier to fail'*. He would make sure of that.

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