

Mary stretched her stiff muscles, she hadn't moved much yesterday, and her body was aching. But the room was starting to glow and much as she was barely holding it together and the prospect of going to his grave to complete the burial traditions made it all a little too real, it was an improvement on lying in the dark waiting for the sun. A couple of the other women were getting up too, probably for the same reason. They tried to get out as quietly as they could. Some of the disciples had mercifully finally gotten to sleep after many hours of restless misery, the last thing they needed was to be woken again now, let them sleep while they could. Who knows what the day held.

Out on the street they huddled together in the cool morning air, though whether it was for heat or comfort, none of them really knew. They walked down the streets that used to be familiar, but today, after everything that had happened, it felt like a foreign landscape. No one else was up and about yet, and the calmness of the early landscape was strangely soothing. The fresh air felt good, and she almost felt like she could take a deep breath for the first time in days. It had only been a few days, but it felt like eternity.

She had been idly wondering how they were going to manage it. They were strong women, but it was a big stone and she wasn't sure they'd be able to make it budge. That plus apparently there had been a guard posted to the grave at the request of the chief priests, she had heard some talking about it as they passed under the window last night. She pondered a moment that the chief priests had been worried enough to risk going in to see Pilate on a sabbath and becoming ceremonially unclean in the middle of a feast. She knew they didn't like him, but what exactly did they think was going to happen? The dead body get up and walk out or something? What an absurd thought. Well not completely absurd.. She remembered Lazarus. But still, highly unlikely.

They stopped for a moment as a sparrow landed in front of them, regarding them curiously. He tipped his head slightly to the side and started singing. It seemed so strange that the birds could go on singing like nothing had happened, the flowers were still brightly blooming. She was torn between it's beauty and a tiny sparkle of joy rippling through her soul, and feeling disconnected from this reality. It abruptly took off, and a moment later, they realised why. Of course now would be the time for an earthquake to hit. As if there wasn't already enough going on. They crouched low and waited for it to pass.

Then came the morning

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJc-HrfLqtM>

Lyrics: https://www.lyricsfreak.com/b/bill+gaitner/then+came+the+morning_20534691.html

Mary glanced at the other women. They seemed a little shaken, but it seemed like everyone was okay. They decided to stay in place for a moment, in case there was any aftershocks. Just as they were about to keep moving, they were nearly knocked over by soldiers, presumably the palace guard that Pilate had granted. That was highly unusual. Those guys were conditioned to brutality and could stand unflinching in the face of angry mobs. If THEY were running scared, it didn't bode well for what they might find. They cautiously stood up

and approached, trying to spy on the tomb from a little way away, trying to work out what they were up against.. It just looked deserted. The good news was, it looks like someone had moved the stone, so they'd be able to get in. Relief. Maybe God was still looking out for them after all. Some of the memories from Friday were starting to come back, carrying Jesus' body through the garden. Mary got a little teary and stopped for a moment to compose herself. Through her tears, she didn't entirely notice the angel sitting on the stone. To be fair, she didn't expect to see one there.

Arm in arm, they stepped in together, trying to each be courageous, but not looking forward to the wave of grief they knew was coming. Except it wasn't the wave they expected.

It was empty. A few grave clothes. Except for the man sittin... wait, there was a man? Mary's brain was already exhausted and struggling to process as it was, she froze in place, unable to speak or think or register what was happening in front of her for a moment. But... how? Who would? Why? What??

Suddenly, there was light and someone standing next to her as the angel from outside joined them inside.. She only just managed to not scream, but she would have fallen over had her friends not caught her. They huddled together, terrified and entirely unsure what to do.

Don't be afraid, you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth. Why do you search for the living among the dead?

Uhh, enigmatic much? You don't just. Where else do you...you're sitting in his grave, surely you got the memo that he died a couple days ago yeah?

They continued. He is not here, He is risen, just as he said. Come see the place where he lay.

Mary stared. Like awkward deer in the headlights stared. Her brain just couldn't. She heard the words, but couldn't quite register what they meant. Her nerves failed her and she took off running, the other women keeping pace as they dashed back to the upper room. By now, people were up and astonished at the young women sprinting through town. They pounded on the door to be let in, forgetting entirely the disciples trying to sleep. Peter sleepily opened the door, and John wandered up as they came in. Totally out of breath, and kind of panicked, they tried to tell the disciples what had happened, but between confused women and sleepy men, it may have been a little garbled. Peter and John hurried to put on a coat to go and investigate, all fears about the Romans coming for them temporarily gone. The body was gone? Dashing down the stairs, Mary followed them back out, hoping that if she went back, maybe it would make more sense.

The angels weren't there this time. But the tomb was still empty. Peter and John wandered back, trying to make sense of it, and Mary dissolved into tears once more, almost running into the gardener. A kind voice asked why she was crying. Oh I'm sorry. I'm in your way, Mary went to move, then turned back. They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know

where they have placed him. She hesitantly stated. Who is it you are looking for? The stranger asked. Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you've put him and I'll go get him. The stranger smiled for a moment, she was not an especially tall woman and it was an ambitious statement. She turned away, thinking to get out of his way, but she'd only taken a couple of steps when she heard

Mary.

That voice.

As the realisation finally dawned on her, she turned with a new kind of tear in her eye. Teacher! Her body was so full of emotions at that point, all she could do was fall at his feet and cry. Jesus smiled at her, and wiped the tears away. You don't need to cling to me. He helped her to her feet.

It's really you!

He smiled at her. Go to my brothers and tell them I will meet them in Galilee. She didn't want to let go of him again so soon. But Jesus was trusting her with his story. Flashing him one last grin and yelling See you soon! Over her shoulder, she took off running once again. But this time it felt like she was floating. She laughed as the sparrow flew with her, and grabbed a couple of unsuspecting strangers in a joyful whirl on the way by. Bewildered by joy, they carried on with their day. She paused as she approached the house, breathing deep, breathing the life back in. Catching her breath. She was ready.

See what a morning

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhNG8kA7Z_4

Lyrics: <https://store.gettymusic.com/uk/song/see-what-a-morning/>