

# The Robin and the Cardinal

by RV Staff Writer E.T.

Spring rain means plenty of worms for the local birds to eat. One day, Robin and Cardinal bump into each other. Will they be friends or rivals?

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One April day, after a long, soaking rain, Cardinal poked his head out from under the evergreen branches to see if he would get wet or stay dry. When he didn't feel any drips, he hopped down to the ground, using the tree branches like a spiral staircase. Cardinal ordinarily liked to stay in the safe cover of the trees. He was a bright red bird, and it was very easy to spot him in the open field. If a hawk saw him, he could become someone else's dinner.

So Cardinal hopped around the edge of the field to look for worms in the grass. He didn't stray too far from his safe trees.

Meanwhile, Robin swooped down into the middle of the grassy field and pecked at the ground. Robin was mostly brown, but his belly was a pretty orange color. He was very proud of his colorful chest and tended to strut around in front of the other birds. Robin found a big, juicy worm and ate it up.

When he looked up, he saw a bright red flash at the edge of the field. Robin flitted over to see what it was.

"Oh, hello!" he cried. "I'm Robin. I didn't know there were any other red birds here," he said.

Cardinal looked up at Robin. Robin was a bit bigger than Cardinal, but he was not as big as a hawk. Cardinal supposed he was safe to talk to. He looked at Robin.

"I don't think you *are* a red bird," said Cardinal. "Your belly is orange."

Robin looked at Cardinal and then down at his own belly. Compared to the red bird's bright feathers, his own belly didn't seem very special anymore.

"Well," said Robin, "I guess that's true. But you didn't have to say it out loud." Robin's feelings were a bit hurt. "I was going to tell you that all the best worms are in the middle of the field, not on the edges."

Cardinal replied, "I don't feel safe all the way out there. I need to stay under the tree branches so the hawks can't see my feathers."

Robin thought about this. Maybe having such bright feathers wasn't that fun after all, if it meant that Cardinal had to hide them. Robin felt sorry for Cardinal. "Tell you what," he said. "You stay here and I'll bring you a nice worm to eat."

Robin flew off to the center of the field and began to peck the ground. Soon he had a big worm in his beak. He hopped back over to Cardinal.

"Here you go!" he said. Robin dropped the worm on the ground in front of Cardinal.

Cardinal nibbled at the worm. "Thank you very much," he said. "It's delicious."

"You're welcome," Robin said. He had a feeling that they would become great friends.

## Questions

1. Why does Cardinal stay near the edge of the field?
2. How does Robin help Cardinal?
3. By the end of the story, how does Robin feel about his feathers?
4. Do you think Cardinal meant to hurt Robin's feelings? Why or why not?