

Grey and Gold

by Angie

"Art is not a handicraft. It is the transmission of feeling the artist has experienced."
- Leo Tolstoy

Catherine sat with her coffee, pondering what to get Vincent's for Valentine's Day. It had to be something special, preferably something either inexpensive, or that she had made herself. These were *her* criteria, not Vincent's. She had discovered that her wealth embarrassed him and her displays of it, even in something as simple as a gift for him, caused him pain. So she had become more innovative, shopping in thrift stores and even making things she could do easily.

This year she was stumped, again. She preferred to give him something personal, something she could make herself. But what? She decided that the only solution was to talk to Mary. If it could be sewn, knit or crocheted, Mary would know how. That much decided, Catherine dressed and went below.

She found Mary sorting through a cardboard box of odd yarn balls and announced herself with a knock on the wardrobe. Mary turned around and greeted her with a smile.

"Welcome Catherine. Here, take a look at these. Everything imaginable. And this ..."

She held up a ball of soft chenille yarn with large loops.

"What is it?" Catherine asked, intrigued. "Or should I ask, what can you do with it?"

Mary chuckled.

"We don't see this kind of thing often. Mostly pretty ordinary balls of yarn, the stuff we use to knit sweaters, afghans, handwarmers and mufflers you know, a short scarf. But this is special. It's so soft. Look at the colours? Greys and gold."

A muffler, thought Catherine, feeling the softness of the yarn and imagining it around Vincent's neck. She had never seen him wear anything of the sort, but why not? And these were his colours for sure.

Mary eyed the younger woman and chuckled. "I can guess what you're thinking," she remarked. "I thought the same thing when I saw the colours. I can show you an easy way to make a scarf."

Catherine laughed. "I have no secrets down here," she admitted. "Everything shows on my face – which I can't allow in the courtroom. Do you have time to give me a quick lesson now, Mary?"

"Certainly. Let's sit on my bed and I'll show you. It's very easy – you just use your fingers. And you can make it an infinity one – a circular one – which might be better in our draughty places."

So the two women sat down and Mary pulled out the end of the ball and showed Catherine how to do a kind of weaving. As she had said - no hook or needles needed!. Catherine found herself beaming with delight as she saw the process. Even she could do it!

Mary handed her the ball and told her to try it. Catherine continued the foundation chain until she figured it was long enough and then halted. What now?

Mary chuckled. "Still easy," she remarked and showed Catherine how to turn and continue. Catherine continued the row, turned at the end and completed another row. It was now just about wide enough, and she looked askance at Mary for further instructions.

"Now it gets interesting," Mary remarked, and showed her how to complete the last side and then got her started joining the ends. Before she knew it, Catherine was finished.

"That was almost too easy," she chuckled as she regarded the looped scarf. "And it took no time at all!"

"And there's still some left if you want to make yourself one," Mary commented.

"Hmmm, his and hers eh? I think I'd like that," Catherine remarked.

"Well then, you take the rest of this and do just that. I must finish the sorting. A lot of people are waiting for some new yarn."

"Thanks Mary!"

Catherine made a mental note to herself to see what yarn the thrifts had. She could surely keep the tunnels supplied from those. She owed Mary a favour.

She returned home, and immediately sat down to make herself a scarf before she forgot how to do it. She made it longer, and used up most of the remaining ball. It was so easy, she found herself smiling. She finished and quickly took both scarves upstairs to hide in her underwear drawer. She had just done so when she heard Vincent returning, so she hurried downstairs.



Later, they had had their dinner and dessert, and were sitting comfortably by the fireplace in their bedroom. It was time. Catherine brought out the two scarves and handed the muffler to Vincent. He looked at it intently, smiled at the soft texture, and immediately put it around his neck. It definitely suited him.

She put the other around hers and he stood up and lifted her from her chair to give her a big hug.

"It's beautiful, Catherine. I shall certainly wear it on my tunnel patrols. Soft and subtle – just like you, my love.

Catherine beamed and hugged him even tighter.

"And I will think of you when I wear mine. I like to know that you're warm."

"Love warms me," Vincent told her, planting a kiss on her lips.

"*"Love is a second life; it grows into the soul, warms every vein, and beats in every pulse."** he quoted when they separated to breathe.

And my pulse is telling me there's more to come," Catherine remarked as she looked up at him.

Vincent chuckled, and led her to their bed.

END

(* Joseph Addison)