

Warm Hands

by Angie

*“Cold hands, warm heart”
- English proverb, origin unknown*

Vincent had not failed to notice that Catherine usually wore leather gloves when she visited him below, but that she took them off and left them in his chamber. Often, she helped Mary or others with the children, and when she entrusted her hands to him on her return, before putting on her gloves and returning above, they were cold. When he commented on it, she just shrugged. He loved to hold her hands and she loved him to do it. It had become a welcome habit for them. So he said no more about it.

She had never complained about being cold, although now that fall was in full swing, the tunnels were prone to cold draughts. Catherine didn't wear the hand warmers worn by many of the women and men below. Perhaps she had not thought of it, or no one had thought to ask her if she wanted any. He guessed they were not usually worn above.

On one of these occasions, while Catherine was playing with the toddlers in the children's room, Vincent had an idea. He quickly found a piece of foolscap and traced around both of her gloves and then folded the paper into a book he was reading.

After Catherine returned above, he retrieved the tracing and went to visit Mary.

“I would like to make Catherine a pair of hand warmers,” he told the older woman, showing her the tracing he had made.

Mary nodded. She showed him the ones she was wearing.



“These are pretty easy if you're willing to crochet,” she remarked. Every child was taught to knit and crochet, but many, including Vincent, did not pursue it – unless they needed something special. However, once learned, never forgotten, she hoped. He certainly didn't seem to suffer from cold hands; his were always warm.

She found some fairly lightweight yarn, then found a suitable crochet hook. Then she pulled out a sheet with a simple pattern from a photocopied stack she kept in a box.

“This one is pretty simple, Vincent, especially since you have the dimensions of Catherine's

hand.”

Vincent thanked her and returned to his chamber. He began to crochet immediately, concentrating as he tried to remember the long-ago lessons. He found he improved as he worked, and that his nails did not get in the way. So he soon had the ribbing done, and proceeded to crochet the remainder, using the rough dimensions the pattern suggested.

A couple of hours later, he had one glove made, so he started on the other – but then stopped in consternation. How many chains had he used? How many rows? He looked at the finished one and counted, hoping he was correct, then proceeded to crochet the ribbing and the rest of the glove. Then he sewed both together along the edges as directed.

He gave them a critical eye. Was one slightly larger than the other? He couldn't be sure, and decided it didn't matter as long as they fit.

On Catherine's next visit, he presented them to her as soon as she took off her 'above' gloves. Her reaction was everything he could have wished. She gave him a loving hug, then a kiss, which he was happy to return with interest.

He kept them ready for her visits after that.

Vincent decided he had better make her at least one more pair. Inevitably, they would need to be laundered. So he sat down with the pattern – but he wasn't completely satisfied with it. The gloves were nice, but short. This time he wanted to make them longer.

He regarded the finished product, made a few calculations, and started crocheting again, measuring against her glove tracing as he went along. What he ended up with this time was longer, folded along the length of the crocheted rows, instead of the width. They would be warmer, but they might be awkward to wear, he decided.

Then he had an idea. Joining them between the fingers would make them much more useable. So he did that, using Catherine's gloves as a model for the width of each finger. Then he made a second pair, this time being sure to record the numbers, so he could make both exactly the same. He was much happier with them this time. They truly were fingerless gloves, not just hand warmers.

He took them to show Mary, who tried one on and pronounced them 'wonderful', praising him for such a simple adaptation – one she planned on trying herself, she promised. Vincent was quite pleased with himself.



Perhaps he could make Catherine more pairs. Could anyone have too many, he wondered. He found he quite enjoyed crocheting. And the bonus of making Catherine happy and warm, to say nothing of the kiss of thanks, was no little incentive.

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