

A Little Luck

by Angie

"Luck is a thing that comes in many forms ..."

Ernest Hemingway

St Patrick's Day was special in New York because of the large number of Irish who had arrived on its shores during the potato famine in Ireland. There were songs devoted to that time and Catherine loved them. Folk songs had their own rhythm and always seemed to raise her spirits, even if the words were not always happy.

Below in the tunnels, there were some festivities planned, small ones, just to recognize the fact that no few of the residents had, or could claim, some Irish ancestry.

Catherine arrived on a Saturday before the 17th, having decided she wanted to do something to mark the occasion. She went into Mary's chamber, with the vague idea of making something small to hand around. When she told Mary, the older woman smiled and reached in a bag to produce a skein of bright green cotton string shot with silver.

"You might be able to make something green out of this," she commented.

The obvious thing would be a shamrock, so Catherine asked Mary if she knew how. The older woman admitted she had no idea. How difficult could it be? So Catherine grabbed a fairly small crochet hook from the collection in an old jar and sat down. Surely she knew enough stitches now to fabricate something so simple.

So she started with a ring – what Mary called an adjustable ring, but which she knew from magazines some called a 'magic' ring. It seemed appropriate, and she began with a simple stitch, just binding the ring in place, then decided on the stitches. Yes, a small dense one, a bigger one and then the biggest, then reverse the order, bind it to the ring. First leaf made. Then repeat three more times.

She bound the last stitch to the ring and examined her work. She pulled the loose end of string from the ring tight and was pleased at the effect, which looked quite realistic. It needed one more thing to make it useful, so she crocheted a small length of chain stitches and attached the end to the ring too.

All that had taken her only a couple of minutes, so she put the shamrock aside and made another, and another, and before long had a dozen, then two, then three, before the pipes announced lunch.

They were addictive, and Mary praised her when she was shown them.

"These are wonderful, Catherine! Better than I could have done. You have a talent!"

"I like to find solutions," Catherine admitted. "Must be my lawyer training. Never accept that there isn't a way – and in this case, simple was best."

That afternoon, she made more, and Mary found another skein and helped her. Before dinner, they had enough for everyone.

On March 17, Catherine made sure she was there for lunch, when William produced his green lemonade for the children, along with green beer for the adults, quartered egg salad sandwiches topped with green pickle rounds, and enough green-iced, spice cupcakes for a feast.

Catherine had added a basket full of the little shamrocks to the buffet. They got many oohs and ahhs as they were picked up and the loop fixed to a button, zipper, or whatever. Mary had thoughtfully added a small saucer of safety pins, for those who had nothing to attach them, so some used those.

“Well, that was a success,” she commented to herself aloud, sitting down with her sandwiches cupcake and half pint of beer.

“It is indeed,” Vincent whispered into her ear from behind. He waved one of the shamrocks in front of her eyes before he sat down beside her.

“Where’s yours?” he asked, knowing full well that she had not taken one of her own creations.

Catherine blushed and quickly wrapped the little shamrock he gave her around a button on her blouse. Vincent had strung his onto one of the leather ties on his vest, where it was certainly visible against the buff-coloured leather, and the silver strands caught the torch light.

Father stood up at that moment and raised his hands to get everyone’s attention.

“This is St Patrick’s day, and this year we thank Catherine for making everyone a little Irish luck charm to carry around. We are lucky to have such a Helper. May we all have good luck, not just today, but all days.”

There was a vast sea of clapping and a few whistles and hoots, as everyone shouted “Yay Catherine.”

Catherine blushed again, a bit surprised at the response to something so simple.

Vincent leaned close to place a soft kiss on her cheek. He sensed her embarrassment.

“Catherine, here in the tunnels, our gifts are not usually material. Your little shamrocks made everyone happy - and very lucky - today.”

Catherine couldn’t think of a suitable reply to that, so she kissed him back, something that pleased them both.

END

