

# A World Together

by Angie

*".... Are we here together alone?  
It is I you hold and who holds you."  
Walt Whitman*

Mary had been sorry to see Brian go back Above, likely for some time. He had brought them all something invaluable – the knowledge that their community had what his world did not necessarily offer or accept – unique individuals and an all-inclusive sense of belonging.

Of course they all knew this unconsciously, all accepted it as a part of what they were as a community. But seldom had they had the opportunity to express it to an outsider, particularly a child. Catherine had not needed it, of course, but Brian had, in order to be encouraged to keep their world secret.

Where would they be without the skills of William as a cook, or Rebecca's for candles, or Father's as a doctor? Vincent was their conscience, as well as their protector. Everyone contributed as they could and it didn't matter what their origin was, what they looked like, or even whether they were male or female – or whom they loved or chose to be.

She regarded the corner of her chamber where she kept the bulk of the yarn that was donated to them from their Helpers Above. She felt a great need to express her gratitude for their community, somehow, a gift that everyone could use to celebrate their world openly.

Oh, she had used scrap yarn for so many project – afghans, cushions, baby clothing, sweaters, vests, even washcloths ... and they would be used and enjoyed for years, passed down until they disintegrated. She wanted something more personal, something that would express the uniqueness of life in their community – especially its love, encouragement and acceptance to all who lived in it.

She ran over some ideas in her mind, and stitches with which to do them. It should 'say' something too, not too subtly. She settled on an idea that was easy to do – for she had no illusions about doing them all herself – and quick, that most of all.

She got up and rummaged, picking several odd but colourful skeins out of her collection, and then several she could mix together to make them unusual and unique. Then she grabbed a crochet hook and began her foundation row. She was well into the second row when Catherine knocked on the wooden post holding up her curtain rod.

"Come in," Mary called out, knowing who it was, because no one knocked as she did – almost a kind of code. Come to think of it, everyone had their own way of signalling ...

Catherine approached her and greeted her happily.

"I'm so glad Brian is reconciled with his father," Catherine commented. "What are you making, Mary? I need something to do, to release all this pent up energy, after the stresses of the last few days."

Mary smiled at her. "I know that feeling. I have it too, so I decided to make something, many somethings, for the wonderful people in our world."

"Oh please, do tell!" Catherine begged. "Can I help?"

"Of course you can," Mary assured her. "I'll need some help."

She explained what she was doing and how, and Catherine without more ado, went to the yarn bins and looked through them, picking out a ball that was obviously made of a lot of scrap yarn. Perfect, she thought. She grabbed a crochet hook from a mug full of them.

"How many stitches in the foundation?" she asked.

"Depends on the yarn," Mary said. "Make 104 and then see how long it is."

"Okay," Catherine said, beginning immediately. After that was done, she asked Mary how to do the stitch she was using. That too was simple and she was soon moving along the row quickly. At the end, she turned and started the next row. She decided she wouldn't need many rows at this rate, and enjoyed the prospect of making more, all different, yet all with a common stitch.

Over the next few days, Catherine and Mary made a glorious range of colourful items. They had discovered that the stitch work for virtually any kind of yarn, a bonus, since they always had more scrap than full skeins.

"We can't make enough for everyone, Catherine commented, realizing this somewhat belatedly. "So who should we give them to?"

Mary thought about that and then smiled. "Let's give them first to the people who gave their stories to Brian. Then let things happen."

"What things?" Catherine asked, curious.

"Just watch," Mary advised her, refusing to say more.

"They're beautiful," Catherine remarked, after they had finished enough of them for the purpose. "What shall we call them? They must have a name."

Mary considered for a moment ... then another. She smiled at Catherine

"There's a term I've seen used Above, an acronym, but we need something better. Why not just call them the 'All for One' scarf – as in '*The Three Musketeers*'?"

Catherine chuckled and nodded. "And '*One for All*' ! It's perfect! I think the world Above is too fond of labels and it's divisive. **All** it is! I'll save one for Brian too."

The All for One scarves were handed out and the comments they received when informed of the name, were a benediction to the two women who had worked on them. No one missed the point – and neither did Brian when presented with one.

Over the next few weeks, every time Catherine went below, she noticed that her scarves – easy to spot because of their many colours – were around different necks. Finally, she asked Mary what had happened. She had obviously missed something.

Mary chuckled. "This is how our community works, Catherine. We are all important, all part of each other, equal - and we share everything. So after the first group had worn the scarves for

two or three days, they passed them on to someone else – perhaps a person who was sad, or who had lent a hand, or just a friend. They've all done the rounds several times now."

Catherine shook her head in disbelief. She could never have predicted such a thing, and knew for certain that it could not happen in the world above. Looking at the current wearer of a scarf, she could see that their handiwork was more than just what they seemed – they had become a symbol of happiness and pride. She was thanked profusely by current wearers, as was Mary.

Such a simple thing, yet so meaningful, she thought. A true measure of the tunnel community.

**END**

