



Button, Button

Janet Rivenbark

Now, what am I supposed to do with these? Mary wondered as she stared at the metal buttons spread out on the side table next to her bed. *Thirty of them and no two alike.*

She had to smile at that. The children were always bringing her odds and ends that they thought she might find useful: half full spools of thread, bits and pieces of yarn, old clothing, and fabrics. Those she could always find a use for, but odd buttons? Most of the time clothing she was making or repairing needed more than one, even if the person didn't mind things not matching perfectly.

She studied the buttons more closely. Several had coats of arms that looked authentic. One looked like a Chinese coin. One small one even resembled a Star of David.

She picked up one that looked like a screw head. She smiled and set that one aside in an old, cracked teacup. Mouse had recently requested a cloak. One like Vincent's. The screw head button would make an interesting closure on that.

She looked back at the remaining buttons and picked up several with coats of arms.

Jacob has that vest, she mused. It's still a perfectly good vest, but the plastic buttons on it have long since broken and fallen off. These buttons are all roughly the same size, and even if they don't match, they will work. Besides, Jacob might even recognize the coats of arms.

Those joined the one in the teacup.

Having found homes for 5 of the buttons she looked back at the rest with renewed hope. The big shiny, plain one might work nicely the next time Vincent lost the button off his cloak.

There were several more ornate ones that looked as if they'd come off ladies' coats. Some of the women Below favored short capes instead of coats. They were made off the same pattern out of old Army blankets. They all used a single button at the collar to hold them closed. The fancy metal buttons would add a touch of something more than utilitarianism.

She counted.

Thirteen down and seventeen to go.

She swept the remaining buttons into her hand and put them into the tray on the top of her sewing basket. She'd find a use for all of them, she was sure of that. Nothing ever went to waste Below.