# Warm And Safe

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# Warm And Safe

by pebbleinalake

Summary

(Episode tag for 1x03) After their adventure in the swimming pool, Vision helps Tommy get warm and dry. And continues being in denial about his parental status.

Notes

Written for the Heartember and Comfy-vember prompt challenges on tumblr. Cross-posted to SquidgeWorld.

I love the relationship between Vision and Tommy so much. Will probably end up writing most of my November challenge fics for them. (Note: I do refer to Tommy as "Thomas" in this fic, because it's exploring Vision's feelings on the situation and he wasn't ready to truly see him as Tommy yet.)

Their feet dragged as they moved down the hall towards their hotel room, dripping pool water in their wake.

Vision hated how sluggish his system felt. Everything was still in the process of coming back online. A quantum computer as complex as his takes a minute to fully boot up. He was used to processing things at impossibly fast speeds, so this delayed response time was unnerving. Mostly, he felt as if he wanted to set his system to sleep mode and rest for the next twelve hours minimum.

A small sneeze from beside Vision brought his attention back to the boy at his side. He glanced over to see that Thomas looked even more exhausted than Vision felt. The teen's eyelids were dropping heavily and his steps uneven.

It made sense that he would be tired out. The poor kid had just had to face one of his biggest phobias, and that was after he'd already lived through a long, traumatizing day of being kidnapped. Activating his super abilities and having to transfer that much power over to Vision probably pushed him well past his limit.

It took him a moment to realize that Thomas was shivering, too. He was soaked through from their adventure in the swimming pool.

"Humans aren't supposed to be wet and cold at the same time," Edith said, appearing on Vision's other side. "The water could contribute to lowering his core body temperature. Don't want to compromise his immune system when he's already exhausted."

She had a good point.

Vision unlocked the hotel room door. He gently ushered Thomas inside, noting that the boy looked about half asleep already.

Once they were safely inside, he crossed to the bathroom and retrieved several towels. He balled them up and held the bundle close, transferring enough energy to the conduits in his hands to generate external heat.

"Careful, V," Edith said. "Don't drain too much power from your other processes. Your system is still coming online."

"Don't worry, I'm being careful," Vision told her.

Thomas shot him a confused look at that statement, but didn't comment on it. He was probably wondering at Vision's continued habit of "talking to himself" randomly. Thankfully, he didn't question it this time, too tired to bother.

"What are you doing to the towels?" he asked instead.

Having finished his task, Vision unrolled the now-warmed towels and passed them across to Thomas instead of answering.

The teen scoffed lightly as he felt the warm fabric against his skin. “So you can add ‘towel warmer’ to your list of superpowers then,” he joked.

“You should dry off before you become more chilled.”

Nodding, Thomas peeled off his wet clothes and began drying himself off.

Giving him some privacy, Vision scooped up the discarded clothing and hung it up in the bathroom to dry. They would stink of chlorine by morning, but they were also likely among the only things the kid owned. He needed to look into getting him more clothes. Vision had set aside a decent amount of money while working odd jobs these last few years. He should ask Friday to help him set up a fund for Thomas to use as needed.

When he returned from the bathroom, he saw that Thomas had mostly finished drying himself and was now wearing his button up shirt and a blanket. A quick scan revealed that his core temperature was better. That was a relief. He still looked tired and miserable, though. He was clutching an open bag of chips in his hand, half-heartedly snacking on them.

Vision tentatively sat down on the bed beside him. Grabbing one of the towels, he began running it through the boy’s hair, trying his best to shake loose the water that still clung to it.

Thomas stiffened at the first contact, but relaxed again almost immediately. Whether knowingly or not, he slowly leaned farther and farther into Vision’s space as his eyes began drifting shut. Leaning up against the synthezoid’s own wet form wasn’t exactly helping the situation, but Vision found himself reluctant to suggest that Thomas get off of him.

By the time he was done drying his hair, Vision found himself supporting most of Thomas’s weight as the teen leaned fully against him, too sleepy to feel self-conscious about it. He was concerningly lightweight. Vision made a mental note to make sure Thomas ate something more substantial than the vending machine chips before they parted ways in the morning.

That thought struck him in a way that he wasn’t expecting. Of course he had to leave. That had always been the plan. He was supposed to get Thomas to someplace safe, set him up with some financial assistance, and then go his own way. Not only was it the obvious — no, *only* — way to handle the situation, there was now the additional factor of the paladin. That bounty hunter was going to keep coming after him. Thomas would be safest far away from him.

And yet…

There was something that suddenly felt so *wrong* about the whole idea. He’d never even met this boy before today. Why should it matter if they never saw each other again? Why did the thought of it make his central processor lag?

Thomas yawned and slumped heavier against his side. This close, Vision could feel the way he was still shivering. The hotel room’s air temperature should be comfortable enough based on what he knew of human biology. Perhaps this was a side effect of stress and exhaustion. Deciding that his system was sufficiently powered up to handle it, Vision used the same energy transfer subroutine he’d used on the towels to heat his entire body. He convinced

himself that it was a practical decision since he still needed to dry his own body off. The fact that Thomas instinctively curled deeper into the warmth he was generating was merely a positive side effect.

He caught a flash of movement and looked up to find Edith's avatar standing a few feet away. She was smiling at them with an unreadable expression. (While they technically existed on the same server, Vision never dug into the other AIs' subroutines, wanting to allow them as much autonomy as possible. That did, unfortunately, make them difficult to predict and understand at times.)

"What is it?" he asked quietly, not wanting to disturb Thomas.

Edith shook her head, her smile turning fond. "Nothing. It's just nice to see this side of you."

He didn't want to ask what she meant. Not while everything was still too raw. This day had been… difficult.

Maybe noticing the direction his mind had wandered, Edith's expression sobered. "Everyone is going to gather in the living room in five minutes," she said. "You should put him to bed beforehand."

He didn't ask why she was calling a meeting. It might be a strategic planning session. Or, knowing Edith's unpredictable nature, it could be any one of a million other possibilities.

Reluctantly, he shifted Thomas's body weight off of him, stirring the teen from his doze. Thomas opened his eyes tiredly, then startled awake a bit further as he tried to take in his surroundings.

"It's okay," Vision tried to calm his worries. "We're still in the hotel. Everything is okay."

To his astonishment, Thomas settled immediately. For someone who'd spent his whole life being let down by every possible adult figure that should have looked out for him, this boy was remarkably trusting. That Vision's voice alone was enough to reassure him… it didn't quite compute.

Vision helped guide Thomas under the covers. He plucked the bag of chips from his arms and set it aside. The teen really needed more food than that, but they would worry about that after he'd gotten some sleep. Vision pulled the comforter up, tucking it gently around the sleeping boy.

Gazing down at the sleeping form of his — no, the *other* Vision's — son, he was relieved at seeing Thomas resting and safe after everything that had happened. The realization hit him out of nowhere that he would do pretty much anything to keep it that way. To keep him safe.

Edith and the others were waiting, but he found it hard to take his eyes off Thomas, knowing they would likely never see each other again after tomorrow. It was necessary. It still felt so inexplicably wrong, though.

“What a lovely image,” Ultron chimed in dryly, always needing to have the last word on anything. “A father being protective over his son.”

Vision drew in a sharp breath. “He’s not my son,” he shot back.

Ultron scoffed loudly. “Sure. “Keep telling yourself that.”

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