



## The Woman Who Sewed Herself Back Together

by Mari Syrad Grieves

She was getting tired of this and she was beginning to run out of thread. With every inconvenience, every knock, every embarrassment, and every trauma, Sally would lose another part of herself. An inconvenience in itself.

For the slightest grievance, e.g. dropping her pen or sneezing, Sally would lose few strands of her messy auburn mane.

For marginally more affecting issues, a stubbed toe or a missed bus, Sally might lose a fingernail or a lid of eyelashes, maybe a tooth.

On worse days, perhaps a complaint at work, or a broken-down car, Sally would lose a number of fingers, random in their selection, and varying in inconvenience depending on the detached digit and the impact on her dexterity when it came to sewing them back on.

Sally had become used to living like somewhat of a leper though, it being five years since a thin book of needles and a thousand spools of golden wire thread turned up at her door with a note that read only: 'No one can save you but yourself' and a set of confusing pictorial instructions of sewing techniques from 1955.

Sally struggled to fully relax as one minute she would be a whole human catching the tube with all the other whole humans, and the next, having caught her handbag in the closing doors, would be scrabbling around on the floor trying to find an ear before it was squished by the commuting hoard.

That being said, Sally had been relatively lucky so far, having only lost half an arm when her cat died, and her left foot when she was fired from her job as an ice cream seller, and both she had been able to reattach without much more than an hour and a half and a spool of thread. Nothing else had yet been so serious as to command any more significant amputations.

It was an unremarkable day to start with. Sally washed her densely freckled face, fed her new cat (no comparison to the old one, unfortunately), and took herself off to her new job serving pale unappetising chips on the pier, most of the job being a futile battle with the town's ever-multiplying seagull population. She like being by the sea, but she did get nervous about the thin cracks that covered the boardwalk for fear that she might be startled and lose a lip or a little finger to the fish below.

At quarter to five, Sally began to close the stall, stealing a few bits of haddock as usual for she and her cat to share, when with an almighty thump, an enormous codfish landed on the counter, lashing and flipping as it gasped air into its gills. Then another thump, this time a turbot, then a pollack, a stack of plaice, a swarm of mackerel pouring down from the sky. Terrified, Sally tried to run, but it was too late, she could feel her joints start to pull, the stitches on her recently reattached nose start to snap.

One by one her fingers and toes scattered away from her, locks of hair blew away, caught on the shoulder by a falling seabass, her arms ripped from their sockets, and Sally fell as her legs stood still and her torso kept going. Lying on the ground, bald and limbless, Sally looked at the sky, dark and slippery with creatures of the sea, the last thing she saw before her head blew off from her shoulders, was a dolphin, as wild eyed as her, blasting towards her face.