

Flyaway

by Bevan Thomas

Page 1

Panel 1

Small panel.

A large tree in a wooded park during the summer. Its branches are covered with verdant leaves and a city rises beyond the trees. Everything is calm.

Panel 2

Small panel.

Identical image of the tree except it is now autumn. The leaves have changed colour and most have fallen off the branches. A wind is blowing. In the distant sky, a flock of swallows is flying south.

Panel 3

Su, a swallow, is perched in an adjoining tree with her friend Kyla, a squirrel. They both gaze at the flock.

Panel 4

Pan-out

Two women, Sarah and Carla, stare at the swallows as well. The positions of the two women in relation to each other are similar to Su and Kyla.

Sarah is a woman with long hair and an appearance that is reminiscent of Su in various ways. She looks really mournful and stressed with bags under her bleary eyes, long tangled hair, and rumpled clothing.

Carla looks very clean-cut and in control. The opposite of Sarah.

Sarah: Do any stay behind?

Carla: What?

Panel 5

Sarah continues to stare sadly at the receding swallows.

Sarah: Do any of those birds stay behind while the others fly south? Do they think “this time I want to tough out the winter, see what's it like? I don't want to go?”

Carla: Wouldn't they freeze?

Page 2

Panel 1

As Sarah talks, she unconsciously runs a hand through her tangled hair. Sarah isn't especially happy about being promoted to assistant manager of the supermarket. She still sees it as being in a rut.

Carla: How're things at work?

Sarah: Got promoted to assistant manager.

Carla: That's wonderful! Congratulations!

Sarah: Right. Thanks.

Panel 2

Carla notices that Sarah really isn't pleased.

Sarah pulls at her hair in annoyance.

Carla: What's wrong? That's good news.

Sarah: Stupid hair. I can't do a damn thing with it!

Carla: Then see that hairdresser I've told you about. He's really good.

Panel 3

Sarah stares at Su and Kyla.

She mutters quietly, distracted.

Sarah: Stupid hair.

Panel 4

Close-up of Su. She rubs her head with one wing in a manner that echoes Sarah fiddling with her own hair.

Page 3

This page is a montage of Sarah going about her day.

Panel 1

She wakes-up in her bed in her apartment. Her boyfriend Tony is asleep beside her. The bedroom is sparse and even at the beginning of the day Sarah looks depressed. Her hair is a mess and she's wearing

pyjamas, the most unerotic pyjamas imaginable. No passion in her relationship with Tony.

Panel 2

She is in the bathroom in her pyjamas and dressing-gown. There is a window beside the sink. Sarah is desperately trying to comb her hair, but it is such a mass of tangles that it refuses to cooperate.

Panel 3

Sarah leaves the apartment to head-off to work.

Tony doesn't notice as he's watching daytime TV.

Panel 4

Sarah stands in a bus on the way to work, holding on to one of the handles as the vehicle heads downtown. As it is rush hour, the bus is totally packed and Sarah gets jostled by the numerous people who surround her.

Panel 5

Sarah is at work at the supermarket. She is looking through the produce section, making notes on a clipboard, and looks really depressed.

The building has various large windows.

Panel 6

Sarah stares longingly out one of the windows. She sees a flock of swallows flying south. Sarah wants to fly away with them so badly.

Panel 7

Close-up of the swallows flying. Sarah can't be seen.

Page 4

Panel 1

Sarah sits on a bench in the park. It is a month or two later, things are a lot colder, ground starting to frost. Almost all the leaves have fallen down, leaving bare trees.

Sarah is dressed in a thick winter coat, scarf, and toque. She is obviously cold. She is tossing bits of bread on the ground, to feed the birds, though almost all birds are gone. Sarah doesn't expect for any creatures to get her food.

Panel 2

Su flutters down from a tree and lands close to some of the bread that Sarah tossed. Su looks really hungry. It's been hard to find anything to eat.

Panel 3

Sarah notices Su.

Sarah: Oh, hello. I wondered if all the birds had gone south by now. Are you hungry?

Panel 4

Su tentatively takes some of the bread.

Sarah: Why did you stay behind? It must be hard to find food now with everything's so cold.

Panel 5

Sarah: Don't you have somewhere better to go to?

Panel 6

Su cocks her head as if trying to understand what Sarah is saying.

Page 5

Panel 1

Sarah wakes-up. This panel is almost identical to the first one on page three.

Panel 2

Su tries to sleep, huddled on a bare branch. It is really cold.

Panel 3

Sarah snarls in frustration as she tries to comb her air. This panel is almost identical to the second one on page three.

Panel 4

Su tries to preen herself. Her feathers look really bedraggled.

Panel 5

Sarah is at work, still checking stock with her clipboard. She is really bored.

Panel 6

Su flies over the park, searching for food. There isn't any. She looks really depressed.

Page 6

Panel 1

Sarah wakes-up. This panel is very similar to the first panel of the previous page.

Panel 2

Su tries to sleep, huddled on a bare branch. It is really cold. It reflects the previous page.

Panel 3

The reader looks through the window of Sarah's bathroom to see her there staring out. She is still

pulling the comb through her hair, and the size of the window and her trapped expression make her look like a prisoner.

Panel 4

Su stares with longing towards the south.

Panel 5

Sarah holds-out a strand of hair and glares at it while her other hand lifts up a pair of scissors.

Sarah: Screw this!

Panel 6

Su spreads her wings wide and lifts off the ground.

Page 7

Panel 1

Sarah talks to her boss in his office. Her hair has been cut a lot shorter, though very raggedy; she cut it herself.

Sarah: I quit.

Panel 2

Sarah storms out of the apartment she shared with her boyfriend. She holds a suitcase in each hand and has a satchel strung-over each shoulder.

Tony is watching TV in exactly the same post as in Page 4, Panel 3. It's like he hasn't moved.

Sarah: I quit!

Panel 3

Sarah is carrying the same bags that she had when she left Tony's apartment. She is about to board a ship that's heading south. She looks a lot more upbeat than she did before.

Carla rushes-up to her. Carla is red-faced and short-of-breath. She obviously ran very hard to catch Sarah before she left. Carla looks totally flabbergast.

Carla: Sarah!

Sarah: Oh, hello, Carla.

Panel 4

Carla tries to catch her breath as she argues with her friend.

Carla: What are you doing? What happened to your hair?

Sarah: I cut it.

Panel 5

Sarah is about to walk on to the gangplank to get into the ship.

Carla is angry with Sarah. Not just because she'll miss her friend, but because, from her perspective, this is just such a stupid thing to do.

In contrast, Sarah smiles and she looks really happy.

Carla: You're crazy! Abandoned your job and Tony--

Sarah: I need to go now. I'll phone or e-mail or whatever when I get where I'm going, okay? See you later.

Panel 7

Carla yells after the ship as it pulls away.

Carla: Wait! When would that be?

Page 8

Panel 1

Su flies over the coast, leaving the land behind for the ocean. It is snowing.

Panel 2

Sarah is reading in a chair on the deck of the ship as it moves away from the shore. She's bundled-up and it's snowing a little.

Panel 3

Su is flying over the ocean, nothing except water for as far as the eye can see. Su drifts towards the big waves. The snow and the cold are making it hard to fly. The waves seem to reach out towards her.

Panel 4

The ship is now entirely surrounded by water. Sarah is still reading.

One of the passengers, a man named Terry, walks up to her. He looks similar to Tony, Sarah's ex-boyfriend.

Terry: Pretty chilly to be out here, isn't it?

Sarah: I'm used to the cold. But it should get warmer soon, right? I mean, we're heading south.

Terry: Yeah, I guess it will. Hey, you want to get together later today? My name's Terry.

Panel 5

A huge fish with a gigantic mouth leaps out of a wave to try and swallow Su. This fish is a monster, like one of those bizarre sea-creatures seen in medieval bestiaries or some prehistoric fish older than the dinosaurs.

Page 9

Panel 1

Sarah really doesn't feel like hanging-out with anyone right now, especially someone who reminds her of her ex.

Terry looks disappointed.

Sarah: I think I'd like to be alone right now, thank you.

Terry: Oh.

Panel 2

Su flies away just in time and the fish falls back into the water.

Panel 3

Sarah watches Terry walk away.

Panel 4

Su stares back at where the fish vanished and continues to fly-on.

Page 10

Panel 1

Sarah is on the deck of the ship. She is wearing different clothes than before as this is a different day. She is underneath an awning to keep the rain off her that's pelting everything. She stares out the ocean, trying to see what's there. She looks concerned at all the rain.

Panel 2

Su frantically beats her wings as she tries to make it through the storm. She is exhausted.

Panel 3

Close-up of the sun as it moves from behind dispersing storm clouds as the rain ends. This panel is coloured in a mixture of Sarah and Su colouring.

Panel 4

Sarah looks out at the ocean and holds out her palm to touch the rain. She has a relieved look on her face as she notices the rain is going away.

Sarah: Ah, the storm's clearing-up.

Panel 5

Su flies towards a flock of swallows who are flying around a tropical island. This the same flock that flew south at the beginning of the story.

Panel 6

Sarah is on the deck of the ship as it goes by the tropical island that Su and her flock are at.

Sarah has a big contented smile on her face.

Sarah: What a lovely day.

THE END