



FEBRUARY'S COSY



A
Knit
With Me
Story

story & knitting pattern by Melissa Schoenwether

AN INTRODUCTION:

I have written many stories since I was a kid. Ask my mother about the four pages describing an apple...on a test where I was to write 3 to 5 sentences. She will laugh. The apple was just so interesting. I had so much to say. My mom would also tell you about my first great chapter book: Fred the Fish that Couldn't Swim. I skipped many an elementary school lunch to go to the library to type it. Mistakes were rectified with a bottle of something called Liquid White-Out. It took almost a semester to complete. Story telling was more than something I did. It was my imaginary friend I could play with each day.

As an adult I have sought to develop community, especially with lovers of knitting. I show them what I am making, where I live and tell them stories about my small part of this big, incredible world.

The following story is about a woman who likes to knit, and finds herself creating as her life happens. The story can offer you a bit more to do than just reading the words on the page, if you decide you would like to join in.

Tucked into this story is a knitting pattern, which Ebbie, our main character, is making and writing about as she does. The incessant journaling she inherits quite honestly from me. There are any number of notebooks, binders and even bound index cards with my thoughts and feelings about projects I have made, written out in vivid detail. Very few finished objects made their way to my online Ravelry project gallery, but almost each cast on made it to a paper record.

Notes on where I purchased yarn, what needles I chose, what was I thinking when deciding on the pattern, responses to what I am making all collected on paper. Bits of the yarn are taped beside skein labels. Most entries pre-date now fashionable washi tape. I'd grab blue painters tape, scotch tape and once in awhile silvery thick duct tape to secure my fiber sample supply log for posterity.

Ebbie doesn't go to the extent that I did, not yet anyway. But she definitely gives enough insight so you can replicate her cosy knit as you read. She will share everything from supplies required to what she actually used, to number of stitches to cast on and bind off and what method she thought best. To ensure you get the fullest understanding, the pattern segment she refers to is included at the end of each chapter.

*Creative designers work very hard to formulate beautiful patterns to replicate. It is important to note Ebbie is sharing with you **my pattern for you** and doesn't undermine the pattern copyright parameters.*

Enjoy the story, enjoy the knitting. If you would like to share this project with others, please point them to this story in it's entirety housed on the Encourage Better website: <https://encouragebetter.com>

FROM EBBIE'S JOURNAL: STARTING & MATERIALS NEEDED

**I bought the Bird's Egg color way and used 32 in circular needles. The pattern called for 5 skeins for Size 1, which is what I plan to knit, but I got one additional skein in case I wanted to make it longer. If I opt not to increase the length, I have a small project in mind this extra skein will be used for. That hat I just bound off would be fun to do again in this yarn!*

I had quite a hard time picking a color. If I hadn't gone with the Bird's Egg, I would have loved to use Clay. I kept picking it up only to put it down again to reach for Bird's Egg. So that is what I now have safely in my sack. The blue looks like calm water, gentle, clear and cool. That's what I want my knitting to make me feel right now.

The first ball I wound by hand this evening in my room here at the B&B. The skein fit over the back of the red linen slip cover chair by the window. It was quite

a lovely contrast, red linen, blue wool, soft grey sheer curtains. Soft drops of rain slid slowly down the window. If I had my umbrella swift and ball winder I would have been done in half the time, but I did rather enjoy the repetition of around, around, around, watching the ball build.

The pattern called for 6 stitch markers, but I have a few safety pins and always some waste yarn on hand. I did buy a new tapestry needle to seam up pieces when I finish. I like the bent tip of it, will it make a difference when seaming I wonder..

I have a progress marker, a wee little ceramic blue sock I was using for my airplane knitting. Not that I need a progress marker, but there is just something about that little sock that I enjoy. And there is something quite satisfying about getting lost in my knitting, only to discover I have knit so many rows!

Mrs. Holmgren had some wood ready in the fireplace with extra stacked beside, so I now have a place to be comfortable.

On to the swatching..

1

It really was because she had looked cosy and content, happy with life, and even a bit mysterious that Ebbie had decided to get involved. She had no idea who the woman was, and she probably would never find out, but she did know enough to get started.

Ebbie was now in her fifth airport, with just one more to go, then she would be home.

She had mindlessly wandered the quiet streets of an unfamiliar downtown over a week ago. After a meeting earlier that morning, her brain couldn't settle. She needed time out of doors to quiet herself.

The sidewalks tried to take her places they thought would calm her, but they didn't know her like the moss-covered trails in the woods she called home. Ebbie followed them anyway. Concrete paths moved her along in front of restaurants with sweet and spicy scents mixing together, upscale clothing boutiques filled with lovely dresses that she would never have the occasion to wear, and home furnishing stores with items too big to carry-on and a bit too expensive to ship. She had been walking the better part of the afternoon and couldn't remember if she had passed by the different storefronts before. Her mind had other things to do than pay attention to where her feet were taking her.

She decided to cross the street and search for the ice cream shop Mrs. Holmgren raved about earlier in the

morning over breakfast. It was, after all, this delicious destination that had set Ebbie off from the B and B. She had been told the seventy-five-year-old ice cream parlor was a definite "must visit" and tucked in near the town center, still in the original location. Thinking the town center had to be a bit in, and away from the water, Ebbie readjusted her direction, turned right, and waited for the signal to cross. Funny that even as an adult, on an empty one lane cross street, she felt required to wait for the orange hand to disappear and be replaced by the small white pedestrian image. She always thought he looked like a creeping burglar with bad intentions, but still, she waited for him to give her permission to move.

Once he did, she crossed the street, repositioning the straps on the well-loved backpack she had slung over her left shoulder. Ebbie could pick up and go anywhere in under a minute. Everything she needed was usually in or near this bag. As long as her current knitting project wasn't out of control, Ebbie's life could fit inside this sack.

Or at least it could before...

Now she wasn't sure.

That lack of surety is what drew Ebbie to the nameless woman, for that woman was the literal face of Cosy.

Ebbie had crossed the street looking to find the place famous for homemade ice cream and instead stood in front of a green chalkboard easel with an invitation written simply: "OPEN! Come sniff the yarn."

So she did.

From Ebbie's Journal:

The swatch instructions were straightforward:

"12 sts and 21 rows for a 4 in/10cm square in pattern using US 10.5 needles."

I cast on 23 stitches and knit 30 rows. If I am taking the time to do this thing, I want it easy to read and big enough to measure in a variety of places. Plus, these little squares wind up under my coffee cup, clusters of jars on my desk, on the counter, wherever my life needs pops of fiber inserted. I know I've created enough swatches I could probably sew them together to make a crazy lap blanket.

The stitch pattern required for the swatch is one I always enjoy, a simple moss stitch.

Row 1: k1,[p1,k1] to end

Row 2 onwards is just repeating row 1.

A help to me is remembering that I need to work the opposite stitch of the stitch I see to keep me on track. See a knit, Ebbie? You know you need to purl. See a purl? Better make it a knit. Then I'm freed from relying on the pattern for a bit.

Initially, the swatch made me nervous. It seemed my numbers would be off. After a good a soak and block, it was spot on, which is THE WIN for today that I needed... and a reminder for me to follow through.

If I hadn't soaked and blocked, I wouldn't have a fair assessment of my gauge. But hurray, I'm good!

Now I can ball a few more skeins and get ready to cast on. I am getting quite into this balling by hand approach...

2

The deep bowl Mrs. Holmgren had loaned Ebbie was generously sized and perfect for soaking her knitted square. The sweet B&B owner had made the glazed pottery herself and was happy to take it off a shelf in her kitchen to put it to good use.

"I never took up knitting, though so many of the girls in my day did. I worked a needle well enough to help patch my dad's socks, but my hands wanted to be dirty, so gardening alongside my mother became my calling." She smiled as she passed the bowl over to Ebbie, happy moments gently drawing her back to a different sunfilled place, not the warm kitchen where she stood now, leaning with her hip against the counter.

As Ebbie took it, she looked at Mrs. Holmgren's hands. Long, dark fingers were elegant, muscular. Confident hands, unafraid of work.

A small chuckle, almost to herself, "I remember whispering to the blades of grass how sorry I was that I had to pull them. It didn't feel right uprooting them when they hadn't done anything more than show up at the wrong place at the wrong time. I would dig and plant with her in the morning. Afternoons my father would put a stick in one of my hands and a pocketknife in the other. I'd whittle with him as we swung beneath our shady pecan trees in a swing he built." Her eyes glanced at the bowl with a different

look, one not seeing the here and now, but cherished moments past. "The two of them always talked of making pots or dishes; thought that pottery was an interesting thing to take up. They passed away, having never tried it. Years later, I took the class. I didn't go because I wanted to learn, I went because I missed them." Her eyes met Ebbie's. "It's a special feeling when you make things that give more than just the satisfaction of the finished work."

Ebbie nodded. She knew that feeling, too.

"Are you sure this isn't too special for me to use just to soak something in?" she held the large bowl to her chest, feeling protective.

Shaking her head of soft curls, Mrs. Holmgren answered, "Letting you use it gives me the chance to have a bit of fun remembering. It will be big enough for that thing you are holding," a nod to the dangling swatch also in Ebbie's hand, "but still fit on the sitting-room table in your rooms."

"Well, thank you, Mrs. Holmgren. I'm going to let 'this thing' have a little bath so I can figure out if I am ready to start my sweater," and back up the stairs to her suite Ebbie went, bowl, and swatch in hand.

That little block of yarn divided most knitters into two camps: always knit a gauge swatch or never knit those things. But Ebbie relied on it. She found she enjoyed and benefitted from the preparation. It had corrected her course a few times, directing needle choice, but also served as a testing ground for practicing a new stitch. With quite a few patterns, her swatch had been handy later when she thought something looked too small. *Trust the swatch*, she reminded herself.

"And here's one thing I'm a success with on this trip," she pronounced as the numbers from the swatch stitches and rows matched up perfectly with what the pattern called for. The alternating knits and purls and purls and knits created a nubby texture; her hand brushed over them lightly, her mind somewhere else.

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The brass plate on the door had been polished by many a creative soul entering in before Ebbie and was now shiny and smooth. A series of gentle bells sounded, tiny and soft, like welcome rain you pray for while lying in bed when the dry heat of summer is just too much. She smiled, remembering those childhood summer nights. You could never be still enough to hide from the heat. She and her sister wouldn't speak, but they shared the same thought, the same plea, the same prayer, "Send the rain, please send the rain." And when the sound of it on the roof finally came, they dared not speak or move for fear of scaring it away. That sound meant hope. Refreshment.

It was indeed the perfect sound for entering this yarn shop. Bamboo stalks, dry and golden, stretched down from the ceiling to meet black shelves, the sides of which looked as if they once stood guard as ornate fences protecting a well-loved garden. Ebbie imagined blue and purple hydrangea teasing their way between these iron-scroll spaces so many years ago. Now the curving swirls and decorative twists had bursts of colored yarn peeking through.

Standing just inside the wood and glass double doors, Ebbie looked at the long room. So many textures, unexpected furniture, and knick-knacks; she began to wonder if it was an antique thrift store with yarn accents. It

wasn't messy or cluttered. Somehow the menagerie of furnishings artistically worked and drew Ebbie slowly forward. Her eyes focused, and the fiber was everywhere! She stepped past a.. wheelbarrow? Yes, it was. Red-painted metal now faded and smooth was heaped full of tweedy yarns: brown, black and golden. She continued moving, an old washstand beside her, where a gleaming white porcelain pitcher wasn't filled with water but an assortment of wooden knitting needles.

"I'll be right with you!" a cheerful, but muffled greeting came from behind a massive wooden desk that Ebbie was sure her fourth-grade teacher had once used. On top of it were jars, tall, short, wide, thin, holding varying sized bits of yarn, buttons, and— was that sea glass? She moved a bit closer to see.

"Welcome!" Up stood a woman, dusting off green-linen overalls. She appeared so suddenly from behind the desk it surprised Ebbie just a bit.

The woman wore a cardigan, cropped and grey and knit from the gentlest, fuzzy mohair Ebbie had ever seen. Hopeful brown eyes blinked above the most sincere smile. The smile was real and warm and kind. Ebbie found it hard not to try smiling back, despite the tightness growing in her throat.

The woman asked, "So, are you here for a certain yarn or in need of a distraction?"

Ebbie started to cry.

Walking towards the front door, the woman uncapped the dry erase marker hanging by a colorful strand of yarn. She wrote: "Back at 1:15!" on the board and turned it so passers-by could see, "A distraction it is!" She said and twisted the lock before turning back to Ebbie.

From Ebbie's Journal:

I went back and forth, trying to commit to a cast-on style. The pattern calls for tubular cast on, so off I went to find the youtube tutorial that's been so helpful in the past. I seem to need a reminder each time I try this method! You'd think since I have done that cast on over and over for hats and sweaters, I would have it down.

But I don't.

Truth be told, the tubular cast-on is quite lovely, but I did the swatch using a long-tail cast on, and it works fine.

I suppose I will have to see how easy casting on 87 stitches using the tubular will be..

Update! -I made it through the tubular cast on without too many issues. I just had to go slow and steady, especially working the first row -but I stand firm by my earlier assessment that long-tail is a fine alternative!

Worked the hem as follows:

Row 1 (right side): K1, [p1,k1] to end

Row 2 : P1, [k1,p1] to end

Repeated rows 1 and 2, 6 total times
(12 rows)

I love the way Osprey feels as I work. The thick yarn has a gentle strength to it that gives softly between my fingers and needles. Even in a simple 1x1 rib it looks amazing. I am really looking forward to wearing this sweater. Go needles, go..

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She inserted the key in to the box and opened it. She reached up and pulled out the mail. Having thought she heard the familiar dull sound of the plastic key fob hitting the metal within, she reached back into the box and felt around, clumsy in her gloved hand.

“Uhhhhh!” Ebbie rolled her eyes, removed her hand and jumped a few times to peer into the box to make sure it was now empty. It was. And she was sure the key for the additional packages was on the floor on the other side.

Closing the door to her box and locking it, Ebbie tucked her key ring in to her coat pocket and looked through her mail as she walked around the corner of mailboxes towards the post office counters. Junk. Bill. Bank statement. Junk. And then a small paper for a certified letter. She kept it at the top of the pile as she took her place in line.

Kodiak was such a pleasant small town on a huge island. “The Rock” locals called it. Sometimes the nickname seemed uttered as a complaint, but Ebbie loved her most recent home. The beauty of the island was present in each season, if you were smart enough to pay attention, she

thought with a twinge of agitation. She was not one to suffer through the complaints of people, though strangely enough she did feel compassion for those who struggled through life. Weather complainers chose their struggle, so to them Ebbie felt no sympathy.

The small town post office was tucked quietly in to a spot that always gave her pause when she stepped out the door, or like now, simply turned around in line and looked out the wall of windows behind her. Mountains and oceans and town tucked in at the edge of both, filled her view and let her mind go completely blank until she heard Mrs. Yvette say "Hello Ebbie? You here for pick up?"

Ebbie turned round and laughed a bit embarrassed, "I did it again, Mrs. Yvette. I really should wear platform boots to check my mail."

The older woman shook her head smiling, smooth black hair moving back and forth as it framed her kindly face. "We should have a height policy for those who get the upper boxes. Give me a moment and I'll grab that key. You are by the mid 3000s right?"

Ebbie nodded, "Box 3374."

Mrs. Yvette turned to go, but Ebbie stopped her "I have a certified letter I need to pick up ,too, since you are headed that way..." She extended the paper to the postal worker who took it and headed in to shelves of boxes and bundles.

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"Now don't you start kidding yourself, listening to that shameful voice telling you nobody else has ever popped in here to fall apart. It happens more times than I can count,

and truth be told, there is rarely a problem that can't be put into perspective by creative undertakings. We will find your hands something to do so your brain can do what it needs to sort you out. What is your fancy: the needle or the hook?" Beautiful chocolate eyes looked at Ebbie, who took the tissue proffered and wiped her nose.

She found her voice, "I knit. I can crochet a little, not very well, but I love to knit." She expected to feel embarrassed about losing composure in front of a stranger, but the woman looking at her now had no judgment in those eyes, and Ebbie felt only the weight lift from her after a heavy sigh, and stood to follow behind where the store owner went. The moment had passed and it seemed no expectation was expected.

"Are you a new knitter?" The shop owner asked over her shoulder, more of an assessing query, again no expectation in her tone.

"Actually I have been knitting since I was 5. Knit my first sweater at 10. I just turned 31 last month. So, no, I am rather an old hat." Ebbie smiled thinking of the collection of hats, mittens, scarves in baskets at home by each door. She could see neatly stacked sweaters on shelves in her closet, all knit by hand knit, and mostly by her. She laughed unexpectedly, a short sharp, but true sound as her bathroom popped to mind. "I just finished knitting a bathmat. I am not sure why it is funny, but suddenly it seems like I may be either a well-rounded knitter, or the crazy knitting lady..."

Turning, a grin on her face and a wink, "Let's choose "well-rounded" and perhaps add adventurous to your description. I'm Maddie and this is my shop. I've been here

19 years. Remarkably, when I became the owner, I was not a knitter— or a spinner, or crochet-er” she clarified when it looked as if Ebbie was about to ask. “I did not work with fiber at all. I wanted to own a business and our little tourist town did not have a knitting shop. My husband owned a **restaurant** and the number of folks that came in asking where was the local yarn shop became such a regular thing --and asked by some of the most wonderful people to chat with— I decided Rolling Springs was missing out if we didn’t have one.”

Not quite sure what thought she wanted to speak out first, Ebbie missed the chance when the pause came. Maddie continued, “You are in capable hands now, so relax that panicked face. I studied. And I practiced. I taught myself to knit, as well as crochet and embroidery, and my husband was a valuable tool for questions when it came to business aspects of starting this place. I had worked shoulder to shoulder with him in the start of the restaurant, so I had a bit of a plan from which to have a go.” She grinned conspiratorially, “He has since sold the business and helps out here behind the scenes. Only “behind the scenes” as he wants to be left alone to knit. He has quite the thing for making socks.” She tilted her head to the display in the storefront windows. Sock buntings were hung back and forth, 4 strands deep across the oversized bay windows. Stripes and color work, large and baby sized and a range in between hung by clothes pegs on a line like wash out in the summertime breeze. There was a laundry basket with an assortment of lovely self-stripping yarns balls as well as stacked wooden crates with fingering weight

mini-skeins. Ebbie looked back at Maddie who answered her unasked question with a nod, "Each and every sock over there he either knit on his double pointed needles, or with this year's birthday gift from me... a vintage sock knitting machine that he has restored. I say vintage, it's about seventy years old, but the sock hasn't changed much since then. And when he uses it, he often just works a tube, picking up for an afterthought heel and then finishing with a toe."

Ebbie was quite impressed. Never having used a sock knitting machine herself, she wasn't sure of how difficult it was and made a note to hop online later and see what she was missing.

"I love knitting socks," she confessed as she looked down at her own feet, cosy in the monster socks she had made with all the leftovers from last year's sweater collections.

Maddie smiled. They held each other's gaze for a moment. "You will be fine," the store owner encouraged her. Now let's get you purposed, shall we?"

Not sure why she believed the gentle woman, Ebbie found she did actually believe Maddie, for now anyway. And she followed her to the nook past the display of oatmeal and brown heathered yarns where she saw the pattern cover. And just like that her hands had the problem of how to keep busy solved.

It really was because she had looked cosy and content, happy with life, and even mysterious, that Ebbie had decided to get involved. And by involved she meant embarking on this new pullover. It was an unusual pullover,

more of a vest, but the collar, sloping shoulders and the oversized fit made it surprisingly unique.

"I want to knit that." She reached for the booklet. The pattern design was called "Cosy." Ebbie wanted to feel that way. She wanted to knit herself that cocoon, a self care mantra made of yarn. How that marketing worked, she laughed to herself as flipped to the backside of the booklet to study the schematic. Smiling from the corner of the pattern was a woman in a black and white photo, sheep were all around her legs. *"Bella Harding, pattern designer and shepherdess, happily resides with her wooly friends in Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire. In addition to writing knitting patterns Ms. Harding is devoted to helping advance animal husbandry , especially as it pertains to sheep. 'There is something beautiful about the relationship between human and sheep. We care for their needs and they give us many things in return.' She offers workshops in knitting and gives tours of her farm upon availability."* I want to knit this pattern now even more, Ebbie thought to herself as she looked from Bella Harding's photo back to the schematic. The numbers and measurements of the sketched garment blended with memories of documents filled with numbers and legal jargon from earlier that morning. Ebbie gave her head a shake and breathed deeply.

"Yes, I think I'd rather like to get distracted by this," She said aloud. "I brought a hat to knit on the trip here, but finished it sooner than expected, somewhere over the mid-west, I think. I'll need needles, too. Can you help me gather supplies Maddie?" She asked feeling a bit better now that she had something to make.

"I can and I will. Start here and pick the color you want to use. This whole selection is the suggested yarn, all Aran weight, squishy with a satisfying bounce," she pronounced as she picked up a skein and handed it over for Ebbie to feel.

"Blue, I think. I haven't a single sweater in a solid blue, and this is just lovely."

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"Well, this is just lovely, having you here, now," She said with a flat, anything but "this is lovely," tone.

Ebbie kept her shoulders back and eyes level with the woman speaking, her face unreadable. Ebbie didn't look away, despite the complete want of doing just that.

"Everyone else is already here, so we can go ahead and get started. Come through this way," and she walked out of the ~~sitting room with its assortment of beach inspired decor~~ leaving Ebbie to follow behind her.

From Ebbie's Journal:

Hem is done!

It is at this part of all my sweet knitting that I feel the most excited. That first piece of the project able to be stretched and squished and evaluated... but not so much is knit that I can't jump ship if I feel something is a bit off.

No mistaking this one! I am all in and ready to get on to my favorite stitch. After evaluating the moss stitch on the swatch for gague, I am ready to knit the next 14 inches and make some pebbly texture. I rather do think this stitch looks more like pebbles smoothed out, each lying next to one another upright, sideways, tucking in almost like chainmail.

I don't see it as moss. Maybe my imagination isn't as keen as the original stitch inventor, or maybe I just don't know my moss, but all the moss growing on the trees and rocks back home are not nubby like this. The strands of moss are short and smooth, just shy of being called thick, or they are wispy green-grey beards you imagine on a forest gnome. No bumps like this stitch.

No bumps like my day...

4

Ebbie left the bed and breakfast early so she would be equally early to the meeting. A solid half hour before the appointed time should have been the gentle buffer she needed.

It wasn't.

As she walked in to the room, four others were already seated, wrapping up what must have been the earlier "what to do about the next meeting" meeting.

"Hello, February."

"Hi, Dad."

Her father stood and walked over to greet her with a hug. It was a kind gesture, and though Ebbie knew it wasn't meant to be awkward, it still was.

"I had hoped we could have met last night to visit, but maybe you will have a bit of flexibility in your schedule tonight?" He asked, soft eyes looking down at her.

She nodded and swallowed, "Maybe," and sat down in the chair he gestured to across from his own.

"We can go ahead and start a bit early since she is here now." Ebbie's sister said and continued to her seat after escorting Ebbie in to the room. A cool nod in Ebbie's

direction was the only welcome Ebbie would get it seemed.

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“If you hurry we won’t miss the good stuff at the start!” Her sister was impatiently calling up from the bottom of the stairs. Ebbie was digging through the pile on her desk searching for the pencil set she usually kept in the metal tin so she could grab and go, but Trin had stacked the piles of hand-me-downs she was passing on to Ebbie all over the desk and Ebbie had yet to sort through them. Clothes above her arm from fingertip to shoulder made the task difficult, Ebbie’s fingers rummaged around. “Got it!” she happily proclaimed and put them in to her denim backpack, also a hand-me-down, of sorts, from Trin.

Thumping down the stairs two at a time, Ebbie made it to the landing where Trin stood next to the window seat. The window reached from the ceiling of the floor above to this landing, letting in soft evening light. Trin looked small set against that backdrop. But neat and tidy as always. Older sisters in storybooks were always bossy it seemed to Ebbie, who read enough books to be an expert in most things. Trin was good at keeping things managed, but fell just short of actually being bossy. She was thoughtful, not just considering how to word things to be kind which she did in such a way Ebbie wondered if Trin even had to think about it, but Trin also spent time thinking, “strategizing” their father would say. Ebbie knew her sister was either

prepared or preparing and that made Trin quite a lot of fun to be around. Ebbie couldn't have asked for a better sister.

"Got everything now?" Her sister asked, still patient.

"I am all ready! And thanks for all the clothes and stuff," she smiled "The pile you dropped off is so big I couldn't even see my desk, or my chair!"

Her sister smiled as she walked with her down the last bit of the stairs to the entryway, "When you go through them I want you to think about something," Trin paused, thinking of the polite way to word what she was about to say, as always, "Remember, the clothes I don't wear anymore go to the charity shop and help people get good things for little or nothing. I love that you think my clothes are great for your "Franken-makes," but when you cut them up for fabric it prevents someone from using them, someone that has a need rather than just wants to enjoy them for a hobby. Maybe we could give more of them away this time and take a trip in to the city and actually shop for fabric at a specialty shop. How about think about that before getting too scissor happy?"

Ebbie nodded, knowing Trin was right about giving quality things to a good cause. {ADD HER A BIT ABOUT CHARITY THINGS THEY MAY DO}

She didn't know how to say what she was thinking without sounding dumb. It was fun to see things that Trin wore with such grace and style be transformed completely in to something unexpected. Not just Trin's, but her father's clothes too. The strips of fabric she had collected for months, and slowly braided them into the rug in her father's den, another on the floor by her bed. Courdory

from dad's pants, wool from Trin's sweater and flannel from her own outgrown pajama bottoms had all come together to create the back pack she now had slung over her shoulder. A scarf for winter was also made from it that Ebbie gave Trin last Thanksgiving to kick off the holiday season. Her sister wore it everyday until the warmth of Spring made it a bit uncomfortable. By then Ebbie had made a patchwork wrap to take it's place. She had carefully deconstructed three of her dad's blazers and was rewarded for her effort with lovely, sturdy fabric from the outside, and light, silky pieces from the inner lining. She used only those liners as she cut strips of two inch fabric lengths of alternating colors, sewing them end to end for a few feet and then adding another strip beside the first until a rectangle was formed. On the reverse side Ebbie had used the linen wide legged pants Trin had cleared from her closet the summer before. The fabric was crisp, fun to cut and such a contrast to the slick fabric creation for the other side. Trin had opened the gift, looking over both sides over and over for so long that Ebbie had wondered if perhaps it was a bit too "Franken-monster," a term their aunt laughingly used to describe Ebbie's unique style of piecing fabric. The family were always supportive of her Franken-makes and this always made Ebbie push herself to think of makes that would really suit each person she loved.

As she worked though articles of clothing with seam ripper in hand, she never considered the possibility that other people might need clothes...that other people might need things...that other people might need...

“Yeah, Trin, you are right. There might be better purposes for them. I’ll try not to be so greedy,” she laughed, Trin hugged her from behind as she took the patchwork wrap from the clothes peg in the hall and wrapped around her like a scarf over her jean jacket. She smiled at Ebbie. “I love you, kiddo.”

Ebbie rearranged her backpack over her jacket, shifting the sketchbook and pencils a bit. “Yeah, me too, Trin,” and they walked out the door, headed for the movies and ice cream and fun.

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“So February, our plan is to restructure the way we manage XXXXXX. Part of that restructuring will conclude your service. It should be an easy, straightforward transition. You do have other things that keep you busy and away...” There it was. The sting of disappointment in Trin’s voice was sharp in Ebbie’s ears, though the words had been spoken in the same tone, almost the same tone.

“...so today we just want to go through a simple exit strategy for you, help you understand the bigger picture and then wrap things up hopefully tomorrow or Thursday at the latest so you can get back to doing whatever it is you are up to these days.” No smile, no frown, just a look from Trin, level and empty.

And Ebbie didn’t like it.

From Ebbie's Journal:

I am so glad to have knitting in my life. Anyone looking over my shoulder would see that sentence and raise an eyebrow, but I honestly am so, so thankful to have this release, this time to move my hands and CREATE outside of myself. And that creation is really quite beautiful— and a total contrast to what I am feeling inside.

Uggh! What a day..

But I was able to enjoy finishing the sleeve, shoulder and neck shaping to cast off this first piece. I am taking that as a win.

The sleeve shaping was straightforward: Knit 2 stitches together at the start of every row, and then work in pattern to the end. Work this decrease row every row 28 times for my size (32, 36, 38 for the others) or until 59(65,71,67)sts remain.

I had created a 14 inch swathe of beautiful moss stitch fabric up to this point prior to starting the decreases. The work to create that had become second nature way before the 2nd inch. So decreasing 1 stitch at the start of each row and then moving across the remaining stitches "in pattern" as (k1,p1) or (p1,k1) to the end depending on the "established pattern" was intuitive.

Before I new it I had hit the "59 stitches remaining" mark.

Then it was on to the shoulder shaping, which was pretty much the same thing..

Row 1 I decreased by knitting two stitches together at the start **and end** of each row, then **Row 2** was working in pattern with no decreases.

To make sure I didn't lose track of which was which, I put a safety pin on the side of the fabric for the visual cue "Decrease On This Row, Ebbie!"

Rows 1 and 2 were to be continued "until 35(41,47,53) its remain"

This portion of the knitting really sped up. It seemed I had just turned the fabric when I was at the end and...had to turn the fabric again.

I know I am not a writer for a knitting commentary or magazine—wouldn't that be a dream job!-but I do have thoughts on knitting in pieces. I don't think this style necessarily should be "Worked in pieces vs. in the round vs. seamless." Just like the weather, they all have their purposes. I walk through the woods at home on sunny days, rainy days, and snowy days. Each walk is one foot infant of the other, regardless of what precipitation is, or isn't, falling from the sky.

Having said that..

When I knit sweaters in pieces, front and back panels for this sweater in particular, I really do enjoy the compartmentalized creation aspect. The back piece was it's own

finished object within the actual project. It was an attainable benchmark that I was able to get on my needles, off my needles and feel a sense of momentary completion. Some knitters shy away from this type of knitting as the pieces need to be seamed up as a step before you can say "I am done!" For me, the seaming is interesting and just a part of the craft.

I still have a it more to do before I start the seaming, but I am looking forward to it!

5

