

The AFTBACK Chronicles

Q: How are people supposed to cope these days?

Poor Peter Brownlow. Poor Deirdre B. Being apart for twelve months is not the thing for a medical-doctor-soon-to-be-economics-professor and an art historian married for a mere five-and-four-fifths years.

Lassoed by Love, 21st Century-Style.

A: Scheherazade-like stories, animal-style, from their three beloved stuffed ones.

'Get my wife through the separation,' orders Peter.

'Oh boy, Boz,' says Sturgess Ursule, dominant bear. 'I'll tell Mistress about when I went to China undercover to expose bear gall bladder harvesting with my haberdasher's special invisible cloak of ten thousand hand-sewn sequins. And how I found Debi the love of my life on the Internet.'

'Yes, Mater,' barks Bluey Bligmund the devoted Scottish terrier. 'Remember when we went to Paris for your course and I snuck away for the weekend to discover my wolf roots at that hideously expensive retreat in the Highlands of Scotland? Without that awakening I could never have established my Clinic at the Top of the Stairs, where I treated such cyberspace luminaries as Lassie, Rin Tin Tin and Sam the Terrorist Sniffer Dog.'

'Whatever you say, Boss,' whispers Mikey Kerowack, beatnik bear, who processes his severe autism literarily, creating an opium-soaked odyssey through the Wild West. Cowboy, prisoners, wild horses, Mr and Mrs America, bureaucrat, journalist, animal activist, relocated informer ... Mikey hopes his epic will be worthy of his idol, Jack Kerouac.

Nobody expects what happens after Reunion at Los Angeles International Airport. The stuffed animals drag their humans Peter and Deirdre into a Wild West odyssey worthy of Jack Kerouac, Jean Cocteau and Earth First!

And so the AFTBACK Chronicles are born.