

MY HOOMAN AND ME

Barbara A. Mudge

Excerpt from Chapter entitled “All Aboard”

“You have post-traumatic stress syndrome,” suggested both my niece, Orlagh and her daughter, Nichole, during their recent visit to my desert home. We were enjoying some wonderful early-summer, girl-talk-reconnecting. We hadn’t kept in touch during most of Cassie’s tough times so they asked me to narrate her story. In the cool of my sapphire-rimmed pond at the onset of a desert heat wave, I acquiesced.

“This will take a while,” I warned them, fully expecting glassy-eyed malaise halfway through the convoluted diatribe. It was a look I’d often seen when recounting Cassie’s perplexing drama to others over the past years. Genuine in their interest they insisted, so we settled on our floaties under teal-colored umbrella shade. Cassie, in all her wisdom, retreated to lounge in the air-conditioned living room. She didn’t need to hear the story. She lived it. I tried to keep the odyssey that was to become *MY HOOMAN AND ME* to bullet-points, realizing at some point how our ups and downs sent us on a roller-coaster ride.

Starting with when I brought my new rescue Cassie home, the excitement for a fun-filled life together had us strapped into a theme park ride’s train car: the *clack clack clack* of the first climb evoked those same feelings of excited anticipation. Ascending into the blue sky, merriment glided into apprehension as her strange symptoms started to develop. High hopes for an easy cure at the apex then swiftly dashed downward, freefalling as “*maybe it’s nothing*” proved unlikely. Trusting the solid steel track as it began another rise elicited an optimism that perhaps this next loop-de-loop might bring medical resolution. Then the exhilaration of weightlessness at the top slammed reality back into the seat and what should have been a happy life together deflated into a whirlwind of worry. I held on tight as the tram corkscrewed into each gravitational pull of “*what can we try next*” seeing ahead only never-ending tight turns and vertical loops.

All Rights Reserved.