

I have been known to send out a search party when my boyfriend doesn't come back in time from filling the car up with petrol. So it stands to reason that long distance relationships are not my thing. And I should know since I dated a man once who constantly travelled overseas for his job.

Each month I would stand at the airport envisaging Hollywood-style embraces and longing kisses.

It wasn't the fluorescent lighting that let me down, it's just that blokes running towards you, arms outstretched, tears streaking their face only happens in Tinseltown.

For a start, no one leaves their luggage unattended at an airport. Then there's the jetlag, the crowds and don't forget you haven't seen each other for weeks and are more likely to shake his hand than shove your tongue down his throat.

NEVER TEAR US APART

Separation anxiety isn't all it's cracked up to be



When young children are separated from their carers they show their distress by crying, screaming and calling out.

And as adults we still feel the same fears that separation brings. 'He won't love me when he gets back. He'll meet someone else in the six hour stopover in Hong Kong between meetings, I just know it,' and so on.

So it's important to take time out to reconnect, to catch up and reacquaint physically, mentally and emotionally.

The fact is that while he's been away working, you've been at home doing the same thing. You didn't have time to be unfaithful, so chances are neither did he!

I once asked a man a few weeks before he departed on an overseas holiday if he would give me his word that he'd be faithful. He agreed, but only if I gave the same. I was shocked.

In all my obsessing that he would do the dirty on me it had never crossed my mind that he may be feeling the same fears.

Contact while abroad may be necessary to manage the fear. I forewarned the same man that I'm prone to creating fights so as to allay my fears, and he said he'd pick me up on it if I did and we'd discuss it at the time.

I thanked him and in turn asked him to contact me when he arrived at his destination. He did and I felt calmer.

Stupidly I forgot to spell it out in detail and that was the only contact I got until he returned.

As the week wore on I was convinced that he'd either met another woman or pirates had taken him hostage.

Yet he duly arrived home with open arms and was greeted by a manic banshee crying over his liaison with a swashbuckling, buxom woman with an eye patch.

But separation is manageable. Keep a routine while your partner is away. Make the most of your time alone. Organise time with girlfriends and family.

When dealing with separation anxiety be honest (not dramatic) and communicate your fears. When you voice them aloud they never seem as powerful.

Together you can work out a strategy to minimise the anxiety and you can always look forward to that reconnecting dinner upon his return. Apres dinner will be your just reward!