



Ask Bob

Peter Gethers

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A wise, witty, sometimes heartbreaking love story about a pet doctor who discovers that the best relationships are often the most surprising

Dr. Robert Heller is one of New York City's leading veterinarians, and his "Ask Dr. Bob" advice column is hugely popular among pet-lovers. Yet Dr. Bob understands animals a lot better than people, and he definitely could use some advice of his own—especially when it comes to his family. His father is angry and controlling, his mother is nearly invisible, and his brother seems bent on destroying not just his own life but the lives of everyone around him. As for Bob's wife, Anna, she is all but perfect, assuming one can ignore her own colorful but deeply dysfunctional clan. And then, just when Bob thinks he's figured out what it takes to thrive in the human world as comfortably as he does among cats, dogs, and hamsters, tragedy strikes. How can he go on living when he is suddenly, soul-killingly alone?

In previous books, Peter Gethers has written charming true tales about what a man can learn from a beloved cat. Now he ventures into new territory with a funny, touching novel about a pet doctor who finds out what it means to be human, and what a family must do to truly become a family. Full of unforgettable characters, *Ask Bob* will remind everyone that sometimes we need a lot more than love to make the world go around—but that love is an awfully good place to start.

Ask Bob Details

Date : Published August 6th 2013 by Henry Holt and Co. (first published June 11th 2013)

ISBN : 9780805093315

Author : Peter Gethers

Format : Hardcover 320 pages

Genre : Fiction, Audiobook, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Ask Bob for online ebook

Michael says

Reading *Ask Bob*, I couldn't help but think that writer Peter Gethers was tapping into the same pool as Jonathan Tropper. Tropper's novels are about flawed men and the people who love them. With Gether's novel, the people who love them is extended to not only those of the human variety but also Dr. Bob's animal companions -- both those who helps cure and those who are an intimate part of his life.

Living in New York City, Robert Heller has a thriving veterinarian practice and is the popular writer of a weekly newspaper column (think "Dear Abby" for pets). But unlike the works of James Herriot, *Ask Bob* is less focused on the animals he treats as it is on Dr. Bob himself -- his life, his loves and his family.

Each chapter begins with a column from the syndicated newspaper feature, which will reflect on and foreshadow some of what is to come in the proceeding chapter. And as the novel expands the circle of Bob's universe, several chapters also come with an essay on a person or pet that Bob encounters in his New York practice.

And while Dr. Bob may seem to have it all together in his newspaper columns, perception is not necessarily reality when it comes to his personal life. It's not that Dr. Bob is a mess by any means. It's just that he's human with all the quirks and foibles that comes with it.

The novel is divided into two halves, reflecting on Bob's life and his family before and after a life-changing event. To reveal more about the event would be to give too much away, though sharp-eyed readers may deduce the event long before Gethers get to it on the printed page. Whether you figure it out early or not doesn't make a huge difference because *Ask Bob* is a character study -- and a compelling, amusing, funny and fascinating one at that.

As I said earlier, much of this novel reminded me of what Jonathan Tropper does with his flawed male protagonists. Gethers does a great job of making Bob and his world feel authentic and lived it. There are times when we love Bob and times we're disappointed in him, but as the story unfolds we're shown that Bob is uniquely human and flawed -- just like the rest of us.

Told with warmth and humor, Bob's story is one that will enthrall you and may even tug on the heart strings a bit. It's got humor and it's got pathos and all of it is equally earned.

Ask Bob is a low-key, enjoyable novel. I'm glad I got the chance to meet Dr. Bob and spend a couple of hundred pages with him.

Mickey says

first half pretty good. second half pretty bad

Melissapalmer404 says

Book #81 Read in 2013

Ask Bob by Peter Gethers

This novel has a lot more depth to it than it looks to have at first glance. Bob is a veterinarian in New York City. He is drawn to rescuing animals and in a way, people. But Bob's life has more complexity to it than one would assume. There is physical and mental illness in his family, tragedy, heartbreak as well as happiness and love. The snapshots of his two legged clients who bring him his four-legged patients are interesting. This book had elements of romance, humor and sadness. Overall, a good read.

I received a copy of this book from the Amazon Vine program in exchange for a review.

<http://melissasbookpicks.blogspot.com>

Rachel says

Wow, what a fantastic read.

It took me a little while to get into this book; In the beginning, it seemed like I was going to really love it, then as it went on, I thought I'd be prob rating this a 4, but it just got better and better again hence the 5.

Even though the main theme was romance, I loved the many sub plots and themes within.

At first I thought the blurb of this book was pretty wrong in terms of who Bob was, but it did make sense as the book continued. Then again, he reminded me of an average male; he was certainly a good intelligent person unlike what the blurb had me believe.

Oh, and the humour mixed in just confirms my 5star rating; As I was listening to the book on train trips, I'd be absolutely losing it at some points and I was sure my fellow passengers were thinking I was a little looney.

Overall, a big tick from me. :)

Tonya says

A wise, witty, sometimes heartbreaking love story about a pet doctor who discovers that the best relationships are often the most surprising

Dr. Robert Heller is one of New York City's leading veterinarians, and his "Ask Dr. Bob" advice column is hugely popular among pet-lovers. Yet Dr. Bob understands animals a lot better than people, and he definitely could use some advice of his own—especially when it comes to his family. His father is angry and controlling, his mother is nearly invisible, and his brother seems bent on destroying not just his own life but the lives of everyone around him. As for Bob's wife, Anna, she is all but perfect, assuming one can ignore her own colorful but deeply dysfunctional clan. And then, just when Bob thinks he's figured out what it takes to thrive in the human world as comfortably as he does among cats, dogs, and hamsters, tragedy strikes. How can he go on living when he is suddenly, soul-killingly alone?

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means to be human, and what a family must do to truly become a family. Full of unforgettable characters, Ask Bob will remind everyone that sometimes we need a lot more than love to make the world go around—but that love is an awfully good place to start.

Ask Bob. Hilarious at times --- I think sometimes it was pushed a bit too hard. And don't get me wrong I love animals. But animals over people? Come on! A bit contrived at times. I think I would gag if there were that many animals around while I was eating or making love. Just sayin.

Gin says

Love, Love, LOVED the book.

Erin says

2.5 stars

I felt like this book could not decide what it wanted to be -- based on some of the promo materials and cover, it appeared to be a fun, light-hearted read about a veterinarian who is an advice columnist... but then for half the book it talks about his dysfunctional life and you are kind of wondering is this the basis of how he gets into column writing? The chapters each start with an advice column but it really has no connection with what is being narrated and he does not acknowledge that he is even writing them.. then halfway through the book there is a page where he accepts a column - out of nowhere - has no other tie in with what is happening, and no explanation of how that came to be -- and the chapters continue to start with an advice column. I finished the book, but it wasn't easy -- I did like his mentor and the characters from the clinic, but (view spoiler)

Jill Choate says

Good story line, bad woman choice.

Dyana says

I picked this book up on the new book shelf at the library on a whim - I liked the cute cover. I thought it was a fluffy romance, but it turned out to be a witty, charming, perceptive, and thought provoking gem of a story with romance included. AND this book is NOT about animals but is a complex character study about the flawed and dysfunctional people in our hero's life. The only almost perfect person is his wife Anna.

Dr. Bob Heller is one of New York's leading veterinarians and also writes a column for a syndicated newspaper called "Ask Dr. Bob" as well as writing books about taking care of animals. The column reminded me of Dear Ann Landers for pets and is featured at the beginning of each chapter. My favorite one was about "pet weight" - the weight of your animal on top or against you. Dr. Bob is more comfortable among his animals but discovers thru interaction with the people around him how the human world works. His father is angry and controlling, his mother is compliant, his brother is bent on destroying everyone he

comes in contact with including himself, and his pet patient owners have their own brands of quirkiness.

Halfway through, the book takes a tragic turn from this heartbreaking love story; and Dr. Bob must figure out how to continue on alone. Most of the quirky characters surrounding him have a part in bringing him back to life and instilling insights that give him the capacity to love again. His animals, of course, love him unconditionally. The 1st chapter is slow but after that the book flows along and is captivating. Highly recommended.

Betsy Karpenkopf says

I started this book some week or week and a half ago. I put it aside because I thought it just wasn't something that I wanted to read. Several days after that. I decided to give it a second chance and I am quite glad I did so.

After the slightly frustrating beginning (or possibly it was just my own mood when I began reading), the story actually rolls along rather nicely. The main character is a veterinarian, the eponymous Bob. Each chapter commences with a question to Bob's veterinarian advice column in a newspaper. The conceit is not bad, with Bob handing out some of his wisdom relating to animals and humans as well.

The novel deals with issues of families, lovers, friends, husbands and wives. Animals, naturally, are a constant presence and help move the plot along as well. There is a great deal of sadness in the book but it is in general not too sentimental and weepy. I felt that one or two of the female characters were a bit stiffly fashioned, not one hundred percent human. Elizabeth, one of Bob's paramours, for example did not truly come to life for me. And although in the end we come to understand Camilla, in a lot of the foreshadowing she is almost inaccessible to the reader.

In the final analysis, I enjoyed the book and do recommend it.

Victoria says

My mixed feelings about this novel lie more with the disparity between my expectations and the actual reality of the novel. The description of the book seems to indicate this will be a sort of romantic comedy featuring the titular Dr. Bob mixed with humorous anecdotes involving his animal patients. Instead, the book focuses on the human relationships of the veterinarian. The inclusion of the column as well as Bob's asides focusing on particular individual at a time are perhaps the most interesting sections of the novel. Without them, the book would comprise of nothing more than Bob telling the story of his life - which comprises the bulk of the book. The side characters are much more sympathetic than Bob himself and Bob's so-called wise advice feels forced and false. Bob isn't a very likable narrator and he never comes to life as fully as the other characters. Perhaps it's Bob's inherent judgmental nature (and the way he skewers everyone else or overly romanticizes other people...) or maybe it is his odd favoritism of one animal above the others that makes him feel so unrealistic to me. He never even feels like the animal lover he claims to be.. The book is overly sad and sappy at times and though it isn't an awful novel, it is a far cry from the fun read that it had the potential to be.

Bridget Parler says

I decided to give this book 4 stars because the overall story is amazing. It really took me on a ride. I found this book at my local dollar tree for a buck. Awesome! I had a couple issues with some of the conversations towards the end and some things that happened seemed forced.. hence, the 4/5

The author did an amazing job writing the story in such a way that I could visualize everything happening. I found myself laughing out loud to this book which I feel like I don't do often (automatic star given here).

This book is about romance but I feel that's it's equally about family. The family dynamic is so strong and truthfully told! The book made me smile, laugh, angry and at certain points it made me tear up. I finish this book up Saturday evening. No matter how upset I was at certain times I had to keep reading.

Personally, I think this book would make an amazing movie because it's a rollercoaster. The family truth is such an important component to this book. I also loved seeing the individual character growth and maturity throughout the story.

Mandy says

When I started the book I wasn't sure how I felt about it because I knew what was coming. But the author has that delightful sarcastic humor and I quite enjoy his writing so I just sat back and enjoyed the story. It's a terrific book and Dr Bob is a great character.

Jackie says

I received this as part of LibraryThing Early Reviewers and have to say after initially thinking "not sure where this is going" and feeling like it meandered, the story snuck up on me and I quite enjoyed this book. The story is a bit of a roller coaster (not a bad thing) and I really enjoyed that the characters were not cookie cutter types - they are all flawed in some ways (except maybe some of the external characters) and don't always do what you might imagine they'd do. But that ended up being part of the enjoyment, thinking something would go one way and having it go another. Even if it's sometimes frustrating, it does keep things interesting. Good books should be able to frustrate and surprise.

Katie says

I liked the second half better than the first but this book made me sad which is not what I was looking for from this book.
