



By: *Catriona M. Munro, TA Editor in Chief*

How many spouses do you need?



In the tundra of - mainly American - reality TV shows relentlessly piped on to British screens via any old streaming service, lurks an irresistible, 18-chapter, almost live series cataloguing the lives of a Mormon man based in Salt Lake City and his 4 wives, plus an ever-increasing headcount of offspring. The show is called Sister Wives, and is about the large family's preferred way of life: polygamy.

Since polygamy is illegal in the UK, US and Europe, most readers are probably unfamiliar with it as a domestic arrangement. It should be noted that it can take the form of polyandry, where "co-husbands" share a wife. It is legal in certain sub-Saharan countries and also legal in Islamic nations, but rarely practised nowadays.

Fewer than 1% of Muslim men live with more than one spouse in Egypt, Iran, Pakistan or Afghanistan.

Sociologists predict that same sex marriage will see a trend for the popularity of multiple contemporaneous marriages to increase. Watch this TV series immediately if you are even vaguely tempted, is my humble advice.

Polygamy modus operandi

The patriarch of the Sister Wives caravanserail is a 6-foot plus bleached blonde surfer look alike, now aged around 50, called Kody Brown. It is not clear how he generates his substantial income to house, feed, clothe and educate his 4 wives (all of whom have their own large houses in an estate in Utah) and countless children.

There was a brief hejira a few years ago when the local law authorities began to cause legal problems for them, so they packed up and moved to Nevada to be near Las Vegas and liberal life, but the lure of Joseph Smith's teaching drew them back to Salt Lake City.

Most of the wives have no careers, so no paid work outside Kody's bounty and providing insights into the parameters of polygamy to inquisitive voyeurs like me.

The wives did their utmost to get on with each other and keep Kody happy

The wives, all of whom were brought up in polygamous Mormon families, all married Kody within a relatively short period, which instantly made me suspicious about his - and their - motives. They all embraced the polygamy modus operandi, did their utmost to get on with each other and keep Kody happy.

He ate dinner with the wife and kids of his choice, then spent the night with the wife of his choice, regardless of whether the woman he slept with had to wash the dinner dishes, let alone cook the food. Nobody complained...in the early days...

The wives all cracked ultimately, incapable of dealing with the green-eyed monster that stalked their houses and engulfed them. They found themselves straining at the threads of reason in an effort to be the favoured one.

What happens when you learn a lesson

But that was Robyn and only Robyn. Sometimes the less-favoured women would reveal their torment at one of Kody's excruciating "family meetings" or at a bitchfest with someone they trusted.

One wife was so desperate to retain her idyll that she offered to divorce Kody so that he could legally marry Robyn and make her children legitimate. He accepted this supreme sacrifice despite the fact the meeting with the lawyer was on their anniversary. Which he forgot.

Is Kody just a sexist pig and all the wives pathetic doormats?

Is Kody just a sexist pig and all the wives pathetic doormats? I think that's a bit harsh. Kody insists that loyalty is the most precious

thing in life to him, and it probably wasn't easy to see your entire circus collapse as one by one, like an onion, they all peeled off: left him and embarked on a slew of legal moves to get their hands on his money. One of them even found a new husband a few weeks after leaving Kody.

Kody, whom Robyn loyally stayed with, although it's a close run thing, found something resembling peace when all the she-wolves went their own ways.

So serene was abandoned Kody, that he reminded me of Dorothy Parker's the smell of my bridges burning. He was an example of what happens when you learn a lesson. Maybe have a go at monogamy, Kody? If Robyn lets you...