

WOMEN'S CHOICE
GYNECOLOGIC ASSOCIATES

Cheryl A. Gibson M.D.
Susan F. Smith M.D.

23 Mansfield Avenue
Burlington, Vermont 05401
802-863-9001
Fax: 802-862-9637

ICELAND

Explore a land of Vikings and volcanoes, of geysers and hot springs. Or choose from 20 other exciting trips.

1-800-8-ALYSON (800-825-9766)
WWW.GAYADVENTURETRAVEL.COM



Feminist Therapy

Leah Wittenberg
Licensed Mental Health Counselor

Psychotherapy for individuals and couples

2 Church St., Burlington
sliding fee scale

(802)658-9590 ext.4

RE/MAX North Professionals



Rob Johnson, Realtor

463 Mountain View Drive
Suite 200
Colchester, VT 05446
Phone: 802-655-3333 x45
Fax: 802-655-0400
Email: Rob@Condoguy.com

Susan McKenzie MS.

Jungian Psychoanalyst
Licensed Psychologist – Master

Specializing in issues of Gay, Lesbian,
Bi-sexual and Transgendered individuals and couples

Quechee – White River Junction (802) 295-5533
Insurance Accepted

Doggone Ridiculous!

BY SCOTT SHERMAN

In her latest opus, *Out on a Leash*, Shirley MacLaine comes out with a vengeance: Has a woman ever waxed so rhapsodic over her partner before? “I’ve never had a girlfriend like this. She is my confidante, my sense of home, and my deepest venture into the intimacy of myself. She has taken me on a road away from this world into a new world of happiness and inner peace. The happiness comes from what I’ve found; the inner peace comes from what I did not even know was there before. I lie with Terry and understand for the first time what it means to weep for the sheer joy of it.”

And that’s just for starters: “She is my heart and part of my soul ... why have I never felt this way before? I am at once exalted and ashamed because I have known so many ... yet this is the first time I’ve found peace.”

“Terry loves me and accepts me, sometimes with hints of sadness for what I don’t understand, and with steady joy for what I might somehow come to know.”

MacLaine goes on and on, but I alas, cannot. Because Terry, you see, is a dog.

No, not a dog as in home-ly: an honest to goodness canine. Four-legged. A dog. Woof.

Having earned a reputation as a “free thinker” in previous books such as *Out on a Limb*, in which she professed her belief in reincarnation, MacLaine truly appears to have gone off in the deep end in this bestial confessional. Listen, I like dogs too, but MacLaine sees her pet not only as an animal companion, but as a guide, spiritual leader, and paranormal presence. “Perhaps she is a messenger from God. Perhaps in her warm little body and soul lies all I need to know of life and death and spirit. Perhaps the TRUTH is my dog Terry, and the joke is that dog spelled backwards is God.”

But as loving as MacLaine is to her dog, her people skills seem

Out on a Leash
By Shirley MacLaine
Hardcover, 208 pages
Atria Books,
ISBN: 0743485068
October 2003

to need some work. How horrible for her children, not to mention her ex-husband and ex-lovers, that she feels closer to her dog than to them. “Have I discovered that I am capable of unconditional love?” MacLaine wonders, pondering her relationship with Terry.

Or how about her question to a friend whose son was murdered? Referencing karma, the Buddhist principle of cause and effect, MacLaine asked her, “Do you believe that on some level you played a part in the death of your son?” Just the question every grieving mother wants to hear.

MacLaine’s experience is twisted not only by her own *outré* spiritual beliefs (she spends time practicing “thought transference” not only with her dog, but with “flowers, birds and trees – and yes, even rocks.” I especially like the way she adds that last part, as if we all can understand sharing the thoughts of birds and trees, but rocks – hey, that’s hardcore), but by her belief in her own self-importance.

“I know in my heart that good films probably have a more profound effect on human lives than anything other than war,” she shares. Of course, as an actress in so many good films, that makes her *pretty important*. I, for one, know that *The Turning Point* had me wearing leg warmers for at least six months.

However, as bizarre as any of MacLaine’s meanderings might be, nothing prepared me for the fact that every other chapter of the book is written in the italicized voice of her dog. *I have known my Mistress Mother before, in an Egyptian lifetime, when I was the animal god Anubis, and she was a minor, mortal princess, Terry “writes” in her first chapter. Notice MacLaine’s egotism*

here – she can’t have just an ordinary dog – it has to be a reincarnated god.

In over 50 pages, Terry enlightens us as only a former dog-God can. *Even though we dogs are perfect, we do have some problems*, she bravely admits. *For example, when males of our species go around lifting their legs and peeing to mark their territory, that is not a good thing.*

Or how about this revealing profundity: *I think people make too much of sex. It’s certainly not an issue for me, since I’ve been neutered, and it’s not much of an issue for MM, who went through menopause some time ago.*

While most of Terry’s chapters are painful to read, she does have a good heart. *I’m watching humans as they grapple with the subject of what they call ‘gay’ sex. I don’t understand the problem. Neither does God.* But then she says things like *I am perfectly happy with this stick in my mouth ... I may start to chew on it, but if I do the stick will be perfectly fine with my need to chew on it. It isn’t afraid of me. I know it isn’t afraid of me because I can feel its energy, and its energy doesn’t know anything about fear. Everything and everyone is energy.* Did I mention that there are over 50 pages of this?

MacLaine ends the book by remembering “something Terry said to me once.” No, what she said isn’t important. What matters is that *MacLaine actually believes her dog talks to her.* The last person I can remember making that claim was David Berkowitz, better known as the Son of Sam.

Of course, his crimes were literal. MacLaine’s are only literary. And while I would have liked to like *Out on a Leash*, I’m afraid the book, like MacLaine’s co-author, is a dog. ▼

Scott Sherman speed-reads on airplanes and at home in Richmond.