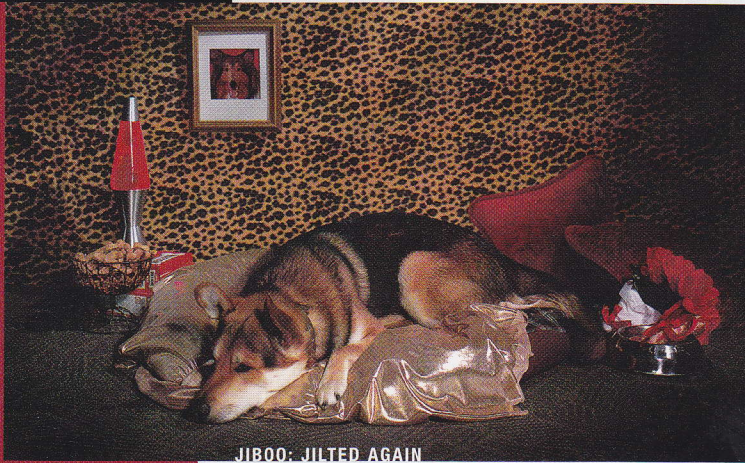


experiment

gimme
some
lovin'

The author attempts
to find romance
for her pent-up pooch



JIBOO: JILTED AGAIN

Hypothesis:

The expression “horn dog” exists for good reason: canines have raging hormones, especially unneutered males. And with mass spaying, it’s hard to find a good, willing female – that is, a bitch – in most neighbourhoods. Consequently, my unneutered German shepherd cross, Jiboo, has resigned himself to leg-humping, courting the pillows on my bed and general malaise.

So, following in the tradition of a parent arranging a marriage, or at least a sexual rite of passage for a teenager, I will procure a tryst for Jiboo. Other options, such as castration or, more disturbing, manual stimulation – which, I was horrified to discover, an acquaintance performs regularly on his 120-pound Great Dane – are not desirable. If I succeed, my method will aid legions of dog owners whose frustrated, crotch-sniffing pets are a constant source of worry and embarrassment.

Apparatus:

1. Personal ads in Calgary newspapers
2. Messages on pet Web sites
3. Posters at local dog parks
4. Propositioning other dog owners

Method & Observations:

Vacillating between the Personals, Pets and Services categories at Calgary’s *Fast Forward Weekly*, I settle for Announcements.

Me: Hello. I’d like to place an ad in your paper. It’s, um, kind of wacky.

Classifieds Guy: Give it to me.

Me: [Boldly reciting my ad.] BITCH WANTED – My handsome one-year-old German shepherd cross would like to have sex, for recreation, not procreation, with your (spayed) female. He likes long walks through the forest, swimming in the river and being chased. Please call [my number] or e-mail [Jiboo’s e-mail address]. Photos welcome.

C.G.: [Chuckles.] Excellent. Do you want the bitch thing to run for two weeks?

Me: Let’s just start with one for now.

After two weeks, however, no one has called about the ad or sent an e-mail. I try option No. 2, posting my request on several dog Web sites, but my message is ignored in favour of more “serious” pleas for information about hip dysplasia and gingivitis.

Next comes option No. 3: putting up posters reading “Wanna Fool Around?” at a popular off-leash dog park. My posters are torn down twice in the space of six days. Yet ads for “dog walking” and “dog photography” (surely a dubious operation) remain undisturbed. Meanwhile, leftist radicals – downtown pet-store clerks and fellow owners of mixed breeds – unleash upon me self-righteous diatribes about the “political correctness” of neutering. I move on to option No. 4:

Me: Hi there. Nice dog. [I staple one of my posters to a pole.]

Mother Pushing Baby Stroller, Walking Dog: Are you looking to find a new home for your dog?

Me: No, I’m actually looking for a girlfriend for him.

Mother: I’m sorry?

Me: I’m trying to find a female dog for my dog to have sex with.

Mother: Oh. [Picks up pace.]

Apparently terrifying people, I retreat to the poster strategy, designing a new batch that hopefully makes me sound less like a pimp. But even “My Dog Needs Your Help” flyers are removed. The only response comes from a *Calgary Sun* reporter who requests an interview for her column, “Fur, Fin & Feather.” (Jiboo seems pleased about sharing the page with the Sunshine Girl.)

Reporter: What’s your dog’s sign?

Me: He’s a Cancer.

Reporter: Is Jiboo interested in a long-term commitment?

Me: Oh, good question. No, I don’t think so. Just sex.

Reporter: If another dog is interested, where will the rendezvous take place?

Me: “Your yard or mine?”

Again, no takers.

Conclusions:

I need help. Jiboo’s ego is only so resilient. I decide to consult renowned dog psychologist Stanley Coren at the University of British Columbia.

Me: Have you ever heard of a dog prostitute, uh, for dogs?

S.C.: Never. Dogs are not people in fur coats. The average dog has the mind of a human two-year-old, with the body of an Olympic athlete and all the social consciousness of a teenager. So they sometimes do things that are even stupider than a teenager.

Me: Is that possible?

S.C.: What you’re doing is you’re reading in human emotions. We say, “Oh yeah, if I get this promotion I’m going to go out and find me a blond.” That’s not the way dogs work.

Me: Uh-huh.

S.C.: So the dog doesn’t miss anything if he’s neutered. Even the personality change is small. The dog doesn’t run around and go, “Oh my God, I’m disgraced. I can’t go into the bar anymore!”

And this revelation, too! Humping pillows is not a sexual behaviour, but rather a canine’s way of asserting household dominance. Jiboo isn’t lust-filled, he’s just *power-crazy*. If he gets truly frustrated, Coren says, he’ll drool, his teeth will chatter, he’ll be hyperactive and I may even see parts of him that are usually covered. When this happens, the doctor suggests I simply give him a bone to chew.

If only it were that easy.