

stead of freaking out, would get used to the idea again of a dog in a restaurant. Local merchants might extend the privilege to the well-trained dog. It would have to be a neighborhood thing."

Earning a privilege through self-discipline and work? Denying the same privilege to those who won't or can't make the same effort? Insisting that "absolute obedience" in a coherent system of instruction "confers nobility, character and dignity?" In all sorts of ways Vicki Hearne is downright subversive. Only occasionally does she insist on the larger application of what she has learned from dogs and dog training, and clearly wants the country to give a thought to: the importance of care and coherence in society, the supreme value of challenge and response. In her way, she is like Merlin in T. H. White's *The Sword in the Stone*, who tried to teach young Arthur about Man, nature and even politics by letting him briefly be part of the animal world.

Meanwhile, clients keep coming to Silver Trails with their dogs to train, paying, as Hearne wryly puts it, "to let me abuse them." Just before I left, a woman appeared with a little black dog known as a Schipperke,

pointy-eared and with forelegs as delicate as a trout rod. The dog's name was Iago. Before Hearne emerged, his owner began giving him "heel" and "sit" commands. Mostly he did as she asked, but in a lackadaisical way.

Vicki took him over with her commanding chirp "Iago, heel," and a firm hand on the chain collar. Iago moved precisely, sat frozen like a piece of porcelain. His pleased owner said, a bit defensively, "He was doing it that way at home this morning."

Said Hearne with only a slightly indulgent smile, "I'm afraid he's got your number."

Iago's owner replied with spirit, "He'll have to change *that*."

"No," said Victoria Elizabeth Hearne. "You'll have to change that."

As I left them I thought of Hearne's theory of practically everything: in the Garden of Eden every animal obeyed Man willingly. But we blew it, and after the Fall all the animals lived as they pleased and paid us no heed. Except for dogs, who liked comradeship and loyalty enough to give us another chance. With a little help from their friends, they are still at it.

From left: Border collie Kep; Airedales Texas and Drummer; Plott hound Lucy Belle; Rosie, a pit bull.

