

Children who are cruel to animals often are victims themselves

DEAR ABBY: After 30 years of reading your column, I am impelled to respond to "Seen It in Seattle," the letter regarding the St. Bernard who was teased by a neighbor child until it turned vicious and finally had to be euthanized. I am sorely troubled by that letter. Do you realize how many systematic acts of cruelty that would have taken, especially for a breed as placid and gentle as a St. Bernard?

One has to ask — where were the parents, the neighbors, the owners of the dog? Why would so many people look on impassively while a tethered animal was tortured into insanity? The way the helpless are treated is the measure of a society.

People of good will and conscience **MUST** speak up when they witness abuse. Abby, please encourage readers to be a voice for the voiceless. — **PUZZLED IN CORAL SPRINGS, FLA.**

DEAR PUZZLED: I already do — and with the help of people like you I will continue to do so. All that is needed for evil to thrive is for people of good will to look



DEAR
ABBY

the other way. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: This concerns the letter about the child's cruelty to the St. Bernard. This is a difficult letter to write because, as a child, I physically abused cats and dogs. It was not because I had a "conduct disorder" — it was because I myself was beaten and sexually molested by my father on a regular basis from the time I was 4 years old until I was a young teen-ager.

The pain I caused those animals haunts me to this

day. For the past several years, I have volunteered at my local animal shelter. I have also rescued cats and dogs. It's a small way to make amends for what I did as a child. The reason for my letter is to warn adults not to just look at the child who is abusing the animals, but to look at who could possibly be abusing the child. — **SURVIVOR IN CALIFORNIA**

DEAR SURVIVOR: You have written a powerful letter. A child who abuses animals — or other children — desperately needs intervention and professional help. You are not the only reader to point out that this could indicate abuse in the household. Children from healthy, loving families rarely become abusers. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: The first cruelty in this case was keeping the poor dog tied up all day every day. If the dog's owners could not provide a fenced yard, they should never have taken the dog.

The late, famed anthropologist Margaret Mead said: "One of the most dangerous things that can happen to a child is to torture or kill an animal and get away with

it." The child in this case needs help and isn't getting it, and — is usually the sad case — the poor dog paid the price after having suffered for so long. — **ELEANOR J., COTTONDALE, ALA.**

DEAR ELEANOR: Anyone who sees an animal being abused should telephone the SPCA, animal control and/or the police. If the perpetrator doesn't get help, a child could be next.

DEAR ABBY: The letter from "Troubled in Connecticut" about what to call her in-laws reminded me of a funny story. After my husband and I were married, he asked my mother what he should call her. Her reply was, "Your Majesty will do." — **HAPPY IN HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIF.**

DEAR HAPPY: I like her sense of humor. Apparently your "Queen Mother" recognized a prince when she saw one.

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In this show, the shrew has her own ideas about being tamed

By CHRISTOPHER POTTER
NEWS ARTS WRITER

REVIEW

How ironic that a production as informal as "The Taming of Shakespeare's Shrew" builds tension in ways the Bard himself likely never imagined.

A troupe of strolling players — in this case the Brass Tacks Theatre Ensemble — wander about the Performance Network lobby and stage. They greet audience members, set

up scenery and props (the company looks very weary), and engage in petty arguments ("You better keep track, 'cause you're makin' out my paycheck," one actor snarls at the director).

"Claire, it'll work," says actor and true-life director/producer James Ingagiola, who plays Petruchio to Claire Mannie's Katherine. Ascend-

ing a box, Mannie quietly recites Kate's play's end "supplication" speech ("Thy husband is thy life, thy lord, thy keeper..."), then storms off the stage, shouting, "HOW IN THE HELL AM I GOING TO SAY THAT?"

What a stroke of dramatic genius, to see Kate, seething with feminist resentment, overcome by the centuries-old sexism that pervades Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew." For the remainder of the

production (which runs just over two hours), Ingagiola and Mannie wage war both onstage (as Petruchio and Katherine) and off, waging loud closed-curtain arguments that often disrupt ongoing scenes.

It's a brilliant play-within-a-play philosophy-versus-philosophy concept rendered with intriguing naturalism by the cast. The actors lean toward overplaying their roles perhaps out of worry that something is going wildly wrong; Tom Vesota

does a great mealy-mouthed turn as their hapless director.

I wouldn't dream of revealing the show's startling ending, save to say that it brakes what's been a very funny show to a dead halt, and mixes in mortified guilt — in this case a moving and satisfying sensation.

Mannie is a startling (and sexy) revisionist Kate, Ingagiola a strong if perturbed Petruchio, while (co-director) Rob Sulewski, Erica Dutton,

Scott Hove and (as always) Aral Gribble stand out in support. A stunner.

"The Taming of Shakespeare's Shrew" runs through July 30 at Performance Network, 408 W. Washington St. Curtain is 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$12 general, \$9 student-seniors. Thursday is Pay-What-You-Can Night. For details call (734) 663-0681.