



Walking in Circles Before Lying Down

Merrill Markoe

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Dawn Tarnauer's life isn't exactly a success story. Already twice divorced, the young Californian is too busy job-hopping to start a career, her current boyfriend insists on living "off the grid," her Life Coach sister perpetually interferes with incomprehensible affirmations, her eccentric mother is busy promoting the culmination of her life's work: The Every Holiday Tree, and her father is ending his brief third marriage while scheduling two dates for the same night.

Dawn's only source of security and comfort, it seems, is Chuck, a pit-bull mix from the pound. So, when her boyfriend announces that he's leaving her for another woman, a despairing Dawn turns to Chuck for solace. "I should have said something sooner," Chuck confides, as he tries to console her. "Couldn't you smell her on his pants?" Dawn is stunned. It's one thing to talk to your pets, but what do you do when they start talking back? It's not just Chuck, either; she can hear all dogs—and man's best friend has a lot to say. The ever-enthusiastic Chuck offers his tried-and-true advice on the merits of knocking over garbage and strewing it everywhere, auxiliary competitive peeing etiquette, and the curative powers of tossing a ball. Doubtful of her own sanity, Dawn considers that, in the ways of life and love, it might be better to trust Chuck's doggie instincts instead of her own.

Filled with sharp wit, biting humor, and canine conversation that would make Doctor Dolittle's jaw drop, Merrill Markoe's engaging, cleverly written novel is about the confusing search for love and the divine acts of dog.

Walking in Circles Before Lying Down Details

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From Reader Review Walking in Circles Before Lying Down for online ebook

Sandra says

Really, really funny stuff.

I want Merrill Markoe to be my friend, so I can listen to her snarky but right-on-the-money comments.

Andrea says

This is a really sweet book about a woman and her fur babies. I love how she could communicate with the dogs. That could have ruined the book so it was a bit risky. However, it just made it fun! I also enjoyed the storyline as well as the other characters.

Elizabeth says

I usually *hate* stories in which animals play a major role (especially stories involving dogs), so I was surprised when I liked this bizarro fake memoir of a woman who talks with dogs. It's better than it sounds!

Bren says

Not sure why I stayed with this book for the duration. All of the characters were unlikeable and complete train wrecks. I am a huge animal lover and was very disappointed that the author couldn't make the dogs likeable.

Kasey says

This book could have been really great. The premise was great, the conversations with the dogs were great - I was laughing out loud quite a few times. It was like Eliza Thornberry for adults.

But come on. NO ONE'S life is that messed up. It was so unrealistic, and I'm not even talking about the talking to dogs part. Two failed marriages, a sister/life coach who dated two wife-killers and a mom who's crazy about making a Christmas tree for the whole year. Let's not even start on Dawn's abusive-but-sexy boyfriend, who we are constantly reminded is great in bed...

I don't know why "adult" books have to be all about sex and swearing. It's definitely back to YA for me.

Jacqie says

This was a cute one. It's about a girl who has a horrible dysfunctional family and keeps making bad choices. She works at a doggy day care. One day, after her boyfriend walks out on her, her dog (and all the other dogs) start talking to her, giving her advice, telling her to follow her instincts.

The family and relationship dynamics are things we've seen before- we all know she needs to dump the using boyfriend and go out with the cute nerd. What is unusual and funny is the dialogue with the dogs. They pretty much say what dogs think- most important things are food and play. As someone who likes to give voices to her animals (okay, you know you do too!) I liked how the author made this work.

Morpheus Reads says

Walking in Circles Before Lying Down

by Merrill Markoe

3-1/2*

Clever story about Dawn Tarnauer, a twice-divorced Californian who can't seem to catch a break, either in life or love. She has terrible instincts and judgment about people, stemming from being surrounded by narcissists her whole life. Her sister, Halley, is the same in that she has a strange history of picking the wrong men, including an infamous killer, whom she is sure is being framed. *To know Halley for any length of time was to know that she had a sociopath tracking device where her heart was supposed to be.* Dawn is surrounded by users, including those she should be able to rely on the most. It is full of so many examples of selfish and insensitive behavior by her parents and her sister, among others, that you start to feel the craziness she goes through. There is no dealing with people like this. Resistance is futile.

In the midst of her despair after yet another relationship has ended, she finds herself having one-sided conversations with her dog, Chuck. He is the only being she feels comfortable with. She talks to him and vents her frustrations about life until one day he talks back and tries to convince her to let him help her make better decisions by using the years of instinctive skill he can provide. She's sure she's losing her mind but over time just goes with it as she realizes she can hear other dogs as well and can communicate with all of them. The author's imagination about their thought processes and her vision of their voices and personalities is pretty funny.

There is a running joke throughout the book about how aspiring writers should follow certain rules, including using visual statements that grab the readers' attention. The joke is well-done as it pops up at perfect moments. That being said, the author followed that rule in a stupendous fashion, as there are certain moments that are so well written--the comic timing and/or imagery produced is really excellent.

It was in the middle of an acid rain of unsolicited advice from Halley that I met my second husband, Jake.

Right behind her was a guy who looked like one of the tousle-haired "Alive with Pleasure" people from the Newport cigarette billboards. He was tall, square-jawed, ready to put on a pair of Dockers and laugh heartily at the innocent pleasures of a sprinkler in summer with his shirtless buds from Abercrombie & Fitch.

(Dad:) "I thought things were going good." (Dawn:) "That's the kiss of death," I said. "The only way to make

love last is to want it over."

Relationship advice from her Peter Pan rockabilly dad:

"But as you get older, come to find out the best things in life are quick. It took a few decades, but I finally achieved my life's goal of combining marital bliss with a one-night stand."

And finally, thoughts from someone she'll discover is actually good to know and shows promise. (Dawn:)

"Does anybody have a family that functions like a family?" (Friend:) "I think so, but my theory is that the 'good family people' hang out with other 'good family people'. Those of us born into the nutcase class seek representatives of our caste to make us feel normal." Truth.

My thoughts are that this is a story that is cute but not cutesy. It is lighthearted and humorous but also has heavier undertones. It links the fictional characters with celebrities famous or infamous that we actually know about in real life in a funny way (even when referencing real-life tragedies). It also covers heavier matters of dealing with toxic people, struggling with depression, and with the unease of being temporarily jobless or homeless. Those darker moments are lightened up with the humor of the conversations with the dogs and hearing them explain why they do some of the things they do, being reminded of the silly antics of puppies and the boundless joy of happy dogs, and the eventual hope that Dawn is finally getting her life on track.

Heather says

Zippy and predictable, with one of the laugh out loud-est passages I have ever read. After some serious life missteps, the protagonist's dog, Chuck (a pit bull mix), starts talking to her. She also hears other dogs, like Johnny Depp, a little pup she house-sits for. And this happens:

"Someone's at the door! Someone's at the door!!" they both yelled.

"I just told you, it's my—" I called, knowing they couldn't hear.

"Hey, get away from the door, you miserable jack-off," I heard Chuck shout at my dad. "I'll rip your ass in half."

"Me too! I'll rip your ass in half, too!!" yelled Johnny Depp. "We hate you. We hate you. We hate you. We hate you."

"You guys, knock it off," I said, racing to the open door. I just told you...it's my — Hi, Daddy," I said, hugging him.

"Come in! Great to see you again!!" screamed Chuck.

"Thank God you're finally here!" screamed Johnny Depp. "We missed you! Where you been? Welcome back! Who are you??"

Jenny says

The Blurb: Dawn Tarnauer's life isn't exactly a success story. Already twice divorced, the young Californian is too busy job-hopping to support a career, her Life Coach sister provides perpetual interference, and her eccentric parents need parenting. (*Life in disarray, but not a tragedy. Promising start.*) Dawn's only source of security and comfort, it seems, is Chuck, a pit-bull mix from the pound. (*Yay! Dogs! I love dogs!*) So when her boyfriend announces that he's leaving her for another woman, a despairing Dawn turns to Chuck for solace.

"I should have said something sooner," she hears Chuck say, consoling her. "Couldn't you smell her on his pants?" (*Cheating boyfriend--boo! Talking dog--yay!*)

Dawn is stunned. Suddenly she can hear not just Chuck talking, but all dogs--and man's best friend has a lot to say. Doubtful of her own sanity, Dawn nevertheless considers that in the ways of life and love, it might be better to trust Chuck's doggie instincts instead of her own. (*All right! Lighthearted relationship comedy complete with talking dogs!*)

But then I read it. Dawn is a mess. And not in the adorable, romantic-comedy sort of mess. Or even the, I'm-a-mess-and-I-know-it-and-I'm-going-to-do-something-about-it. It's more along the lines of the all-of-your-friends-stop-talking-to-you-because-your-life-is-a-diaster-and-it's-only-going-to-get-better-when-you-finally-start-acting-like-a-grownup kind of mess.

And then her dog started talking. And he was more of a jerk than the humans! This is so not cool. Your dog may be obnoxious or stubborn or crazy (mine is all three), but we love them because they aren't jerks. Because they are loyal. Because they love us even when we don't deserve it.

If Dawn had learned from her mistakes or grown as a character, I might have been able to forgive some of the novel's other problems. But she really doesn't. At the very end of the book, she dumps the toxic boyfriend, but it doesn't redeem her pages and pages of mind-numbing idiocy. Huge, huge disappointment. Would not recommend. To anyone. Ever.

Tracy Antol says

I should have liked this book more. I like Merrill Markoe. I LOVE dogs. So why don't I love this book? I feel like it was a bit all over the place. Hopeful when I read passages like "she had a sociopath tracking device where her heart was supposed to be" seemed promising. The dog starts to talk about 30% of the way in. He's just a caricature of what a human thinks a dog is saying. If we're comparing dog characters I loved Garth Stein's Enzo pieces. Chuck is just the Adam Carolla of the dog world. Meh.

The story jigs and jags all over the place. And when one of the dog characters I cared about gets hit by a car. The story quickly jigs over to Dawn's own self-absorbed storyline. Double Meh.

And while there was some kind of theme Ms Markoe was trying to convey, I think it gets lost. Buried under

too many pointless characters and storylines. If we could focus on "seeing the world with as much enthusiasm as a dog" then I think I would have liked it so much more.

This won't be one I will be telling people to read.

Margie says

First of all, using the four letter word in this book certainly doesn't add to the story, but that's my pet peeve with a lot of books and movies. At least, it wasn't used often and I guess was used when it fit the story. Other than that, this was a cute story. As someone else described it chick lit with Dr. Dolittle thrown in.

Michelle says

I loved this book! If you love dogs, you should like it a lot. It was a really quick read, I literally read it in a few hours on a lazy Sunday afternoon when I wasn't feeling too well. I have 2 dogs and 3 cats and my husband and I are always talking to them and making them talk back to us, so this book was a great read for me. So cute!

Lauren says

As a dog owner, I found this book hilarious and strangely informative.

Did you ever think you could understand what your dog is saying to you? My beagle is constantly saying things like, "Take me out now please!" or "I *really* would like some of that organic uncured turkey bacon you're eating."

In this book, the main character's dog takes pity on her and really does start talking to her. And so do all the other dogs she knows, which is a lot as she works at a dog daycare.

And you know, I find myself believing that what her dog said to her is probably what Ian is saying to me. "Don't leave me alone in the car, you won't come back for like five hundred years, and I'll just *have* to eat the seat cushions. It's a *rule*!" Ms. Markoe is funny and a good writer, and she also knows her dogs. It's a good combination.

Mehgan says

The characters were completely unlike able. I thought I'd like to see a dog talk and what he'd possibly say but then I didn't even like the dog. The author just doesn't really seem to know how to write good dialogue. The main character, Dawn, is very whiny and unmotivated and has no backbone to speak of so all the other characters spent their time berating her and she just took it, all the while every once and a while blaming her parents for the way she is.

I wouldn't recommend this to anyone. It took me way too long to read bc I just couldn't get into it.

Sarah Raskin says

Wow. It's rare that I don't finish a book...or a movie, for that matter. Particularly one that I enter into *looking* for fluff.

"Walking in Circles" is, to me, the equivalent of "Elizabethtown" -- all of the right elements are there (appealing setting, familiar characters, familiar author/filmmaker), but were so unimaginatively executed, I had to stop half-way through so as to not reward lowest-common-denominator work.

Daniel Clausen says

My apologies to Ms. Merrill Markoe--there is no good reason to give this book 3 stars instead of say 4 or 5. I think the book is exactly what it wants to be: it's a light read about growing up and finding your way in life that also has talking dogs. It's at times comfortable falling into cliché and looks ironically at its own obedience to genre. It has elements of chick-lit, RomCom, whatever you want to call it; Starbucks coffee appears quite a bit in the book, etc. I don't think the book needs to apologize for any of these things.

In true RomCom fashion, the book has lots of false flags, twists, and distractions to steer you away from the guy you kind of know the main character will end up with.

At some points in the middle it lacks the manic energy of the beginning. The first 100 pages came very easily, then the book started to drag a little.

Perhaps it was the talking dogs, actually, that weigh the book down. The problem is that I've seen two seasons worth of Wilfred before reading this book. That's not the book's fault. But it does take some of the shock and originality out of the book. Any irreverent thing a dog says in the book Wilfred says better. Am I right?

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPaCd...>

One advantage Wilfred has over the book as well (which also happens to be set in California) is that it has many seasons to build up multi-layered characters and a complex world.

In the end, one thing this book has in common with Wilfred is that they both make a dog saying "Throw the ball" seem deeply philosophical.

What book should I read next? First I have to throw the ball.

Jen says

Spoilers-you have been warned.

Ugh. I so wanted to like this book more than I did. I am a dog lover, my Jack Jack is like my child and him being able to talk to me would be amazing. I liked the idea of this book, there was just so much to it. The constant drama/new crisis in Dawn's life was confusing. She was really unstable at times-the moving from place to place really drove me crazy. Her self esteem sucked and she let her family walk all over her. Chuck was the most reliable and stable throughout the whole book.

I had planned to give this book three stars just because I love dogs, but then when the "God Save the Queen" and "Just Kidding" chapters came up, I had had enough. Joking about taking dogs to the pound pisses me off immensely. The main reason I finished the book was to make sure Chuck turned out ok. Glad to know Brandy didn't return to her crappy owner too.

jv poore says

This is a book that has been on my "To Read" list forever. It is a cute, quirky, quick-read book. Parts of this book were hilarious; however, the characters were a bit over-the-top for me; or maybe it was just that EVERY single character seemed to be particularly bizarre. I will certainly try another Merrill Markoe book.

Jody says

I don't think that Merrill Markoe meant to write a work of great literature. This book is *fun*. If you have a good imagination and a sense of play, it's a very entertaining, wonderful book. Merill Markoe's dogs are much wittier and to the point than mine . Read it for fun. I laughed all the way through and have recommended it to all of the playful, imaginative people I know.

treehugger says

Ya know, I feel a bit let down after reading this book. The cover is literally squashed with reviewers talking about how witty and funny the doggy dialogue is, but I didn't think it was that great. Nothing was mind-blowingly funny, and several of the characters went beyond quirky and slipped slowly into the just-flat-annoying category. The plot was as transparent as really really old socks, and I ended up not caring about Dawn because why should I? She didn't seem to think she was worth anything.

The relationships in the book were too overstated, and I think my dogs would have much more exciting things to say to me if they ever decided to voice their opinions.

Maybe good for a quick plane flight or some brainless bedtime reading, unless you can't stand for a girl to get walked all over again and again, and then it wouldn't be very restful reading. I guess I'd only recommend it if you're really bored!
