

## PRO LOGOS

### What's All the Shouting About?

LET ME SET YOUR MIND AT EASE—

This isn't a typical *True-Believing-Mormon* life story—  
Not a testimonial, memoir, or proselytical ambush set to  
ensnare you in what former or disaffected Mormons might  
sometimes sarcastically call the *Mormon Maze* or the  
*Morg*—or maybe the *Big Bad Wolf* dressed up in sheep's  
clothing—

Not a *Deseret Book* fairytale.

[Deseret Book Company being the dominant, nearly  
monopolistic—often Machiavellian—Mormon publisher of  
things Mormon to Mormons, and to the World at large.  
Employing officially approved websites, books, magazines,  
religious art, and audio and video recordings, involving a  
generous salting of inspirational myths, tall tales, and an  
occasional strategic historical revision or lie. All with an  
eye to advancing the curious story of Mormondom's self-  
styled divinity, amazing proliferation, and apparent success.]

Instead, this is my life story—about my successes—  
And failures.

The story of *Me-Mollie-Mormon*—

Based largely on personal journals that I've faithfully  
kept every day for more than twenty years—and off and on  
before that. Doing what I understood God wanted me to do  
[as revealed through so-called sage and sacred advice of the

Mormon leaders in Salt Lake City—men the Mormons call the *Brethren*, whom I've heavy-handedly redesignated as the *Holy Hegemony*]. Also, for the record, at the time of this writing I'm the same age that Jesus Christ is celebrated to have been when he bit the dust in Jerusalem or bought the farm when he finished what Mormons call his *sacred mission*.

Furthermore, in terms of the elusive, even problematical notion of failure versus success, this is not the story of my successes as a Mormon because there weren't many. And certainly not many to celebrate at this late date—*not hardly!* And not the story of the successes of the Church [uppercase out of habitual deference] because where I was concerned there were few of those, as well. Meaning that in the final assessment the Church failed to meet my needs as a so-called daughter of God—*daughter of Zion* in Mormon-speak—and as a young woman of the Twentieth and Twenty-first centuries [this assessment in light of continuing protestations from the Mormon powers-that-be that I was the one that was broken, not they]. But, to be fair, this is not the story of Me-Mollie-Mormon gone wrong or right, particularly—just maybe ballistic. You get to decide.

In truth, this is the story of a genuine *Mormon Bitch*—hence the title. A young woman so immersed in a down-spiraling illusion of happiness, so walled up within the contrived, controlling environs of her family's curious religious heritage, that it made her slaphappy—as in *bitch-slapped*. In fact, I was so stuffed with my Church's daily-bread dose of fear, guilt, shame, doubts, misgivings, and

superstition that I morphed into a holy terror. An unreasonable, fundamentally insecure critic of everything contrary to my parents' way of life. A *narc* in the classical sense. Where nothing about what I was being asked to do and to be seemed to make a whole lot of sense to me. And where, on the one hand, I was learning to act like a genuine goody-two-shoes; and on the other hand I allowed myself to strike out like a frustrated rattlesnake at virtually anything that crossed my path or the dictums of my narrow-minded religion.

Also my story is about the godawful depression I often felt—not unlike many Mormon girls and women. And the intimidation caused by misguided men, who now may be best regarded as assholes, bullies, or tyrants. Men for whom the word *sonovabitch* may have been coined and used with great alacrity and accuracy. [As you can see, they really got to me.]

But mostly my story tells of Mormonism's disappointing failures to answer most of my more meaningful and important life questions—or my inability to understand or accept such. Or to agree with. Or live up to. Questions it claimed to be able to answer with one hand tied behind its back, but didn't. Or couldn't. Questions about the meaning of life and what was right and wrong; and related questions, such as why most Mormons—who actually don't have horns—appear always to be locking horns with others about religion. And questions such as where did I come from before I was born—if anyplace? Why was I here living on this also-ran-backwater-ball-of-mud planet, revolving

around a middling, somewhat insignificant little star/sun, instead of on one of a gazillion other, often more grand, God-engineered fusion machines in what enigmatically calculates to be a quantum Universe? Why do natural selection and evolution of the species appear to be the mechanisms God used/uses to populate this neck of the woods, when most religious folks regard it as little more than magic?

And, in fact, is there a God in the first place?

And if there is a God, why does He [She, They, It] often show up as a prankster of sorts that likes to pretend to be a make-believe being, but isn't? And why has He [She, They, It] turned out to be such an enigmatic friend, often undependable and confusing for me and, for the rest of humanity, an amazingly diverse character with a supposed nine billion names that plainly augment the mass confusion? And questions like what is going to happen to me after I die?

[And, by the way, why can't I be immortal and never die in the first place? Or last place? I mean, if Twenty-first Century genetic scientists can flirt with the idea of making the cells in my body permanently renewable, why couldn't God have started things out this way in *Genesis* in the first place? And why are my body and mind right now screaming *survival* at me as if it may be perfectly natural for me to live forever, or at least for a long, long time—now that I'm actually having all kinds of fun in my life, maybe for the first time in my life, and may actually prefer not to kick the bucket when my bucket list bucket is empty?]

These have always been relevant questions for me, mostly because they were and are questions the Church itself supplied to me, and proposed to answer, or contrariwise avoided answering, as it tried to deal with them, but really didn't. At least not very well. Although I must admit that the Church gave me its best shot right up to the end of its relevance. Most churches try to do their best. But it just wasn't good enough; and I'm impressed now that its efforts to reshape me after its own image were about like trying to build a sow's ear out of a silk purse or a diaper bag.

Although to be fair the Church still manages to slip in a good one once in a while—speaking through my well-meaning parents, family, and very former friends mostly—most of whom are still Mormons. Whenever I allow it, these folk throw up questions and hurl answers at me and mine as if they were throwing mud against my firewall, hoping some of it will stick. Questions such as how can I tolerate all my suffering and unhappiness [in their view] now that I'm stuck outside the Church instead of stuck in it? And now that, according to most Mormons, I'm racing down a one-way track to damnation and hellfire? Questions like these. Or they actually try to tell me what I really want out of life—or should want [to them there is no difference]. Of course, they're very good at glossing over the fear, guilt, and shame bugaboos that bullshit churches generally use to assault everybody within the range of a good preacher's voice—bugaboos they say derive from misunderstandings of meaningful moments or misinterpretations of the Church's holy imperatives—or are just figments of my imagination in

the first place. And naturally they're compelled [as if by obsession] to show me how I can rehabilitate my life by *faith*, ignoring science, evidence, and reason as I do so; because they say that this unholy trinity of faithless thinking actually arises from questionable people with questionable motives, who as wolves in sheep's clothing give credence to science over religion and logic over faith—end of debate. And naturally they are equally practiced at showing me how I can through faith—*their faith*—come to believe in a Supreme Power bigger than myself [one that from my point of view sometimes appears to act much smaller].

Lots of pot shots at me and my rebellion, for sure—  
But few real bulls eyes.

In the past, the Church always provided me with a book of rules and platitudes, instead of answers. One full of *shoulds* and *shouldn'ts*, *oughts* and *ought-nots*. Strategies for life that I eventually learned had almost nothing to do with anything real beyond civility and wishful thinking. All of which led me hither thither through the full range of the Mormon mish-mash and, eventually, to my successful disengagement from almost everything seriously having to do with Mormonism. Not necessarily from the colorful or benign culture of the Church or from admiration for much that it sponsors [because the Church really does sponsor some passably good things, such as sometimes feeding the poor, helping little old ladies across the streets vis-à-vis the Boy Scouts, and building its cities on a north-south grid (very efficient) with ultra-wide paved streets with lots of easy parking to make it easy for Mormon shoppers to spend

their means with various of the Mormon business barons and to deal with the Mormon shylocks].

What I did disengage from was the Church's franchise and membership, from institutional association with it and all of its adjuncts, such as Brigham Young University [where I went to school], and ultimately from friends and family that were Mormon [which, as I said, still involves most of them], and from most of its oddball characters. Also, from adherence to most of its philosophical strategies, peculiarities, and caveats. From its often strange dogmatical teachings, practices, and standards. From most of its mind- and spirit-throttling rules. And from its sometimes downright goofiness. I mean, in many ways the Mormons really are the peculiar people they once liked to brag about being; and it's good for me to be done with them.

Beyond that—

Don't expect to find any of your Mormon apologist/evangelical ballyhoo here in these pages. None of that crap [I call it crap now that I no longer give a crap]. That's not the intent of this story. Also, you'll find nothing done up in carefully twisted logic. Nothing intent on selling Mormonism as more than a functioning collection of interesting and often entertaining cultural myths and homilies. A lot of writing about Mormons and Mormonism tries to do that, you know, but not my story. Also, it doesn't pretend to give you a gift, only to rip it away, as the Mormons' own mythology and misguided maneuvering often manages to do. Usually when you're not looking. My story won't do that.

Accordingly, there will be no final chapter where the heroine returns with lowered head and humility to the creature that made her. There will be no pictures of Jesus Christ or Joseph Smith—spiritual doms—dominating the cover. There will be no book deals with the aforementioned *Holy Hegemony* of hero-leaders, where I am miraculously redeemed from my fall by their pitchman-like spiels and spoofs—or where in the nick of time my dazzling insights redeem them from their fallen condition.

My story is mostly about cold, hard, right-back-at-you subjective Mormon facts and modern Mormon and post-Mormon life, as I lived it and recorded it in my journals [a habit I still can't break]. A way of life so problematical in its well-meaning ambivalence that it could make you want to chuckle if it all weren't so tragic. A story of the subtle and saccharine-sweet seduction of an innocent, ordinary dork-of-a-girl as she was Hitler-junged into *Mormon Bitchism*. Where people smiled at me as they took my cake, grinned while they kicked me in the nuts.

The story of Me-Mollie-Mormon at the peak of my Mormon glory, like the princess perched on the apex of the glass hill [one of the fairytales that I loved to read as a youngster; before I was guilted into putting away childish stuff]. Me at the top of my Mormon game, confined to what I call the *Mormon Bubble*. And the story of my supposed fall from my perch and the significant apocalypse that followed—which was not an end scene at all, but a wonderful ascent and rescue from the Bubble that first shielded and protected me, then left me and my young-



woman spirit and heart separate and distant from reality and happiness—before my unforeseen enlightenment and pick-me-up.

And *such* a rescue it was. An amazingly unexpected save, all things considered. All made possible by the help of friends of principle astride magnificent chargers—

*Truth, Logic, Courage, lots of caffeine, nicotine, and—  
Sex—*

Which I now call the *Vanquishers of Mormondom—*

*Champions of Freedom and Happiness—*

*Demystifiers of the Mormon Miracle—*

Rescuers of the maiden that foolishly placed her trust in her Church and religion, over and above anything else—especially herself.

However, as I describe these circumstances—

My account will include considerable slapping around—

And a fair amount of effusive garrulousness—

[Dare I say *yakkity-yak?*]

Also, the words you read here may be somewhat different than you are accustomed to hearing in Church or Sunday School.