

## Pigeonhole Episode 42

[bright ambient music]

### Introduction

CHORUS OF VOICES: Pigeonholed, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole. [music dissolves into chill melody]

CHERYL NARRATING: I'm unabashedly in the target audience for cat videos on the Internet. And capybaras in hot tubs. Dogs who look like potatoes. A guinea pig referred to as a meat potato. Cats named Potato. I'll take them all. I'm insatiable. And here I am, for four years, basically losing track and forgetting to release this film. I'm taking down the password on Vimeo and YouTube. Here's the audio from *Stinky Chicken Dog 2*, complete with audio description.

### Introduction to the film, Jenni, and Kali

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Text onscreen: *Stinky Chicken Dog 2*. Then, a white woman presses an icon on an iPad.

JENNI (via speech generating device): My name is Jenni Funk. [cheery music plays] I made this movie to let people know how having special needs can be sometimes isolating.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: She reads the iPad's language app.

JENNI: And I had an illness when I was three, which left me with speech and mobility problems. [finger taps screen] I use language board and a walker and do a little sign language.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: She leaves her apartment with a small brindled chihuahua on a leash.

JENNI: [finger taps screen] I live in an apartment by myself. Still, it would be nice to have some companionship.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: They walk in the lawn. The dog explores the grass on her own on a bright, sunny day.

JENNI: Because of this, I decided to adopt a dog.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: The dog sniffs the air, her lip curled tightly over one tooth.

JENNI: Kali had been abused but was adopted by an elderly lady who had to give her up because of health reasons. Because of this, Kali is extremely fearful of almost everything.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: The dog lounges in the sun, Jenni calls to her and laughs when the dog won't move. Then, Kali's Oregon Ducks dog bed is on a recliner.

JENNI: Kali has a lot of struggles because of her being abused.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: She sits in the bed and licks Jenni's hand sweetly. Jenni strokes her back. Kali's ears are down, eyes wide.

JENNI: Any loud noise like clapping or yelling will make her run. I really love Kali, and I know she loves me. But sometimes her fear gets in the way.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Jenni reaches for her, and the dog leaps off the chair to the sofa.

JENNI: Sometimes I fall down, and sometimes I am loud, and this scares her. This hurts my feelings, but I understand.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Jenni stretches across the recliner. Kali resumes licking her hand. Now, Kali stands in the kitchen sink.

JENNI: Despite all of this, I really love her, and she really loves me. So, we struggle on.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: A person holds her rump while Jenni delicately pours water from a cup over Kali's back. Kali peers with her giant eyes past Jenni, and Jenni scrubs Kali's fur clean. Now, Kali sits on a dish mat as Jenni rubs her dry with a plush orange towel. Kali in her bed again, relaxing under a pink blanket, she basks after her bath, stands, and shakes her whole body, wags her tail, and prances down off the chair. [tags jingle against collar as she shakes]

[cheery music fades]

JENNI: I'm interested in the film industry, so I'm making this movie to share my experience. I recently made a movie documenting what it means to me having her share her life with me.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Icons and sentences display on the iPad.

JENNI: I am interested in talking with others to find out what their experiences have been and how their pets have helped them in their lives.

### Meet Brandon and Chutney

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Now, a large yellow dog chewing a nylabone.

JENNI: I would like to introduce you to Brandon who lives with his English Retriever, Chutney.

[plucky music plays]

BRANDON: I would say that I am a pretty fun-loving individual who loves to perform live in front of other people. [plucky music fades out] I have had Chutney for three years. [dog pants softly] He basically is a service dog. So, he came on the job as a very small puppy. Chutney?

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Brandon, a white man, sits on the sofa.

BRANDON: Chutney? Come here.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: His shirt says, "Badass brain injury survivor."

BRANDON: I just bathed him yesterday, so you'll notice he has a nice, clean coat. However, it's still shedding everywhere.

JENNI: [laughs]

BRANDON: And that's kind of annoying for me.

## Meet Kiersi and Rowena

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Now, a gray and white tuxedo cat.

JENNI: This is Kiersi, who lives with her cat, Rowena.

[mellow music playing]

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: On the wall behind Rowena, a C.S. Lewis quotation, "There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind."

KIERSI: I got her at the Oregon Humane Society. Rowena comes from the book *Harry Potter*.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: A South Asian Indian woman in a flowered dress.

KIERSI: Rowena Ravenclaw is one of the founder of Hogwarts, which is the school of witchcraft and wizardry. And she is the head of the House of Intellect.

## Relationships with animals

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Now, Jenni on her sofa looking down at the dog off screen. She pats the arm of the recliner with Kali's bed. She looks back at the dog, crosses her arms, and furrows her brow. [mellow music fades out]

JENNI: [finger taps screen] When Kali first came home with me, she would run to me and even sit on the davenport behind me. Also, she would sleep in my bed at night.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Kali sits and looks toward the camera, very still. Jenni, arms still crossed and frowning, plops down on the couch, looking toward Kali.

JENNI: Since I am quite restless at night and often thrash about, I probably decked her, and now she doesn't.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Kali stands and backs away, then sits, vigilant. Now, Kali in her bed, ears back, Jenni leans in and kisses Kali's forehead.

JENNI: Kali will cautiously approach me and lick me nonstop, and I continue to pet and feed her.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Kali returns the affection with kisses to Jenni's chin. Back at Brandon's apartment.

BRANDON: One of my favorite memories of Chutney was taking him on the plane to go over to my sister's place. Chutney, he just got on the plane and didn't make a noise and got under the seat, and he just fell asleep and didn't wake up until we were ready to go!

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Jenni gives two thumbs up to the camera.

BRANDON: It's so great, you know? It's so great, so great having him around.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: At Kiersi's apartment.

KIERSI: Probably taking her home was really one of my favorite memories, and at the Humane Society, I was really nervous to take her home. And I was like, “Oh my gosh. I feel like a first-time mom, like what am I doing?” And my friend just laughed, and she was like, “It’ll be fine.” I got her at a time when I had just moved in, and I was really kind of lonely.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Rowena sits on a paper bag. Later, she chews on a toy and bats at it, lying on the floor inches behind Kiersi’s wheelchair.

KIERSI: Yeah, she’ll follow me quite a bit, to the point where I have to be very careful that we don’t clash.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Now, chewing a toy on a string.

KIERSI: She sleeps everywhere in this little apartment. And then also, she’ll sleep in the bed with me like a human sometimes.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Kiersi continues waving the toy. Rowena defiantly ignores it.

KIERSI: Kittens and cats kinda take over your apartment and make it their own.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Then, on the counter, she plays with an orange.

KIERSI: So, I lived with my parents for a bit, and we always had animals. So, animals were always really important. And then I moved into an adult foster care home, and I wasn’t allowed to have any animals.

[cheery music returns]

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Back at Jenni’s, Kali in bed, chomping dog treats. Jenni sits on the couch, watching Kali.

JENNI: I would like to take her for walks, but my hands don’t work so well, and I can’t get the leash fastened.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Now, she holds out a treat. Kali approaches, gets frightened, and backs away. Jenni finally tosses the treat to the floor. Kali bounds over and gobbles it.

JENNI: [finger taps screen] Kali always runs away from me. She is very frustrating with all her little quirks and bad breath, but she is my friend. Still, this is the saga of my struggles with my shelter dog, Kali.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Someone holds Kali on the couch while Jenni offers another treat. Kali refuses and leaps away. Jenni sighs in exasperation and flings the treat to the ground. Now, Brandon puts Chutney’s service dog vest on while Jenni smiles and watches from his sofa.

BRANDON: Chutney is a service dog, and he has a service to perform. Other dogs, they just are there to be a dog, you know? And they don’t really perform any “service” per se. They can do tricks or whatever, but it’s not nearly the same thing as going and putting on a vest and being 100% on target for wherever you need to go.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Brandon grabs water and sunglasses and leaves with Chutney on his leash.

BRANDON: That's what Chutney does, and that is so cool. It's so cool to watch him work.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: They return. He removes the vest.

Jenni pats the couch cushion, and Chutney launches into a full body wiggle, wags his tail, leaps up with her, and she wraps her arm around his neck. [cheery music fades]

KIERSI: I didn't spend a lot of time here really 'cause I work and go to school. But I really knew that I wanted to get an animal, and I knew that cats were low maintenance, and it would be like a good starter animal.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Rowena continues ignoring the toy on a string and hunts for a small toy beneath Keirsi's feet. Kiersi reaches down for a pet, and Rowena steps away, ears back.

KIERSI: I think it's really important that people with special needs or people with disabilities have access to emotional support animals and service animals. And also, I think it's very important for veterans to have access to those support animals.

### Wrap-up to the film

JENNI: Thank you, Brandon, for your time.

BRANDON: You're welcome. Thank you.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Brandon reaches across Chutney to shake Jenni's hand.

JENNI: Thank you, Kiersi, for your time.

KIERSI: Thank you for coming over.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: They shake hands.

KIERSI: [chuckles] Thank you for interviewing me!

[bouncy music plays]

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Back at Brandon's, Jenni pats her thigh, as the sign for "dog." Chutney stands, his front legs on her lap, licking her face as she hugs his neck. She smiles and laughs.

JENNI: My favorite part about making this film was meeting Brandon and Chutney, Kiersi and Rowena, and seeing how these pets have impacted their owners' lives.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Now, he lies on his side licking her hand. She reclines, resting her body along his, and he licks her hand and face.

JENNI: Both Brandon and Kiersi receive different aids and comforts in their daily lives, and the animals provide much friendship to both.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Now, he lies with his head in her lap. He kisses one hand while her other arm is draped over his neck. She smiles and laughs with delight. Jenni touches her cheek to his forehead, then he cranes his neck up to kiss her face. He licks her hand for a while then drowsily rests his chin on her and closes his eyes.

JENNI: I adore Chutney and wish my dog, Kali, was more like him. But Kali truly does love me in her way, and we muddle on.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: She pets his velvety head then strokes down the thick yellow fur on his back.

JENNI: I hope making this film will make others aware of the isolation of living alone and how having a cherished pet can make a difference.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION: Now, Jenni holds an alphabet board. She spells out “Good boy.” She shakes her hand in the sign for “yes.” She signs, “I love you,” her arms in a tight X across her body.

Now, images around Jenni’s apartment. Holding up her pillow with, “life is better when I’m with my dog.” Framed family photos on the wall and giant pink letters spelling out Jen and Kali. Kali is on the floor, scared, tucked into a corner by the sofa and sets of shelves. Framed photos. One of Kali looking regal with “best dog ever” on the frame. Kali back on the recliner, chin snuggled on the edge of her Oregon Ducks bed. Jenni holds up a tote bag with white lettering reading, “Best dog mom ever.” Behind her, dog leashes and a pink dog jacket hang on the wall. She smiles. Cut to black.

There are three short, fast videos of the animals, each playing forward and in reverse over and over as the credits roll.

Filmmaker: Jenni Funk with support from Cheryl Green. Featuring Jenni Funk and Kali Funk. Animated image: Kali throwing off a pink blanket as she stands in her bed and gives a full body shake.

Kiersi Coleman and Rowena Coleman. Animated image: Rowena leaning over a table, batting a small orange.

Brandon Scarth and Chutney Scarth. Animated image: Chutney licking his chops and tapping one front paw back and forth.

Thanks to Joan Funk and Chris Roberson.

Music: *Pat Dog* and *Turning to You* by Blue Dot Sessions, *Summercase* by Jazzhar, and *Shiny* by Podington Bear from Free Music Archive.

Jenni used a ProLoQuo2Go to record her narration. Funding generously provided by Regional Arts & Culture Council. Copyright Jenni Funk 2018

### Wrap-up to the podcast

[bright ambient theme music]

CHERYL: Every episode is transcribed. Links, guest info, and transcripts are all at [WhoAmIToStopIt.com](http://WhoAmIToStopIt.com), my disability arts blog. I’m Cheryl, and...

TWO VOICES: this is Pigeonhole.

CHERYL: Pigeonhole: Don’t sit where society puts you.