

Pigeonhole 45

[bright ambient music]

Introduction

CHORUS OF VOICES: Pigeonholed, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole.

Coffee

CHERYL: Nefertiti, I wanna talk about coffee.

NEFERTITI: Ah!

CHERYL: [laughs] I wanna talk to you about coffee!!! [ambient music fades out]

[clattering and clinking of a kettle on the stove, turning on the stove, and a cat whining squeakily]

[coffee can opens, scoop scrapes some coffee grounds out, taps out the scoop into a coffee maker as the cat keeps whining]

CHERYL: Do you remember how you found out what my favorite kind of coffee is?

CAT: [squeak]

NEFERTITI: Yes!

[coffee can closes, water begins to hiss as it heats up, cat squeaks]

NEFERTITI: I believe we were on text message. [water hissing grows, heading toward a boil] We were chatting, one of our long-form chats that we do that are so enriching to my life, by the way. I think I just asked you, "How do you take your coffee? How do you like your coffee?" [kettle removed from the stove top, hissing stops, and water sloshes and rings inside the kettle]

[quiet ticking of the stove burner cooling down, hot water pours into a mug slowly]

NEFERTITI: I love the sound of the hot coffee, how that pours into a mug. And depending on the mug, it sounds differently. [kettle clanks down onto the burner] I love how the milk drops in. [milk splats in small amounts into the mug, cat squeaks again] I like brown sugar cubes. [plaintive cat squeak, tiny metal spoon tinkling against coffee cup] I like the sound they make when they plop in. I like the sensation of the spoon coming against them as they're melting. I love it when they're fully melted, and I no longer feel them or hear them. [spoon taps the coffee cup side twice, coffee drips from it] And then, of course, the taste is wonderful. [stirring spoon resumes, tapping and sliding in the coffee cup] So, yeah. For me, it's a whole thing from the feel of the beans falling through my fingers into my little manual grinder, to the soothing sounds of the coffee percolating and drip, drip, dripping into the carafe or a mug. [one last begging squeak from the cat, a percolator starts bubbling] Oh! And the smell. [big sniff in] That delicious aroma that fills the kitchen. And even the steam that wafts from the machine, I sometimes let that caress my face to get my pores nice and open for a facial. If you haven't tried it, let me know how it works out for you if you ever decide to. It's good stuff. [bubbling coffee fades]

Friends

[relaxed, jazzy synth music break]

CHERYL: You're in New York, and I'm in Oregon. Very often, I will wake up, and you've texted me while I was asleep. First thing I do is make coffee. Well, while the coffee's making, I feed the cat. And then I sit down with my coffee and look at my text messages. [typing a message on iPhone] And so often, you're the first person there. You're there before I wake up. You know, I'll jump on to say hi to you, and I'm like.... [message sent swoosh]

IPHONE VOICEOVER: [incoming message bubble pop notification] "Cheryl Green. Good morning. I hope you had sweet dreams. Coffee time here. I hope your weekend is starting off good."

CHERYL: At least once I've told you about the coffee that I'm drinking, and you're like, "I'm gonna make a cup for myself, too." And then we actually do have a coffee, a spontaneous coffee date!

NEFERTITI: That's exactly right. Every so often I realize, like, wow, this is an ungodly hour for her. And you've assured me no, you mute your phone or do not disturb, but you do something so that it's okay for me to message you when I have time. I think that the beauty of not having the pressure of everything being in-person is exactly that. We can text whenever we have the energy to or the time to, we have the words.

CHERYL: I'm taking antibiotics because I got a puncture from RouRou. The pharmacist said, "Don't have any dairy with the pill." So, I'm drinking my coffee with this disgusting...milk substitute! It's made out of sunflower seeds and sesame seeds, I think, and oats? It's so disgusting! It's so.... [seemingly endless near-silent laughing]

NEFERTITI: [giggles]

CHERYL: But because I'm addicted, I'll just, like, slurp it down. I gotta get this coffee in me. But I mean, I'm gonna have me a sesame seed bagel, especially when—

NEFERTITI: Yes!

CHERYL: Boiled and baked in New York!

NEFERTITI: Mm!

CHERYL: I'm gonna have it, right?

NEFERTITI: Boiled and baked in New York, just like me! [chuckles]

CHERYL: But I'm not, I'm not gonna put the sesame bagel in my coffee.

NEFERTITI: No!

CHERYL: Which is basically what this tastes like, like if you soaked your bagel and then just ate the bagel.

NEFERTITI: Ate the bagel.

CHERYL: Ate the wet bagel. [laughs]

NEFERTITI: Do you doctor it in any way to try and help reduce the offense?

CHERYL: The seediness?

NEFERTITI: [giggles]

CHERYL: No, I just drink it really fast. [laughs] It's like I'm drinking coffee out of a bird feeder. That's what it is. [chuckles] But starting tonight, I can go back to dairy.

NEFERTITI: Yay!

CHERYL: Yeah.

NEFERTITI: Are you gonna celebrate tomorrow morning?

CHERYL: Yes, I'm gonna actually set up an IV that will drip cheese into my body through the night. [trying to hold back a laugh]

NEFERTITI: Oh!!! Cheryl! I want one.

BOTH: [delighted laugh]

Cheese

[relaxed, jazzy synth music break]

CHERYL: You know how they first start the IV with the saline solution, can you taste it in the roof of your mouth?

NEFERTITI: Yes, I can.

CHERYL: Yeah.

NEFERTITI: Mmhmm.

CHERYL: Yeah, but why can't—

NEFERTITI: But cheese.

CHERYL: —they just make it taste like cheese?

NEFERTITI: [happy slurpy sound] And how about different types of cheeses? I'm thinking a little smoked gouda. Some type of cheddar. Fried Dominican cheese. Something like that.

CHERYL: Mmhmm!

NEFERTITI: Yeah! What kind of cheese do you like?

CHERYL: Everything that's not blue or green.

NEFERTITI: [pause] Wait, they make green cheese?

CHERYL: I don't know if it's green or if it's just— It's called blue cheese, but I think I've seen something that's teal.

NEFERTITI: I had this awful but brilliant math teacher in high school. What I distinctly remember even now, many years out of high school, is he would say, "The moon is made of green cheese!"

CHERYL: [chuckles]

NEFERTITI: And I always remember thinking, first of all, I know that's not true, but is there such a thing as green cheese?

CHERYL: Um... [clears throat] yeah. Yeah. Uh.... [typing on a laptop]

NEFERTITI: I thought he was full of cheese.

BOTH: [laugh]

NEFERTITI: I thought it was such BS, but I guess not. [typing stops]

CHERYL: Okay. So.... We're both gonna get educated right now. Wikipedia says that green cheese means that it is fresh cheese that is not thoroughly dried or aged, but it is white in color and usually round in shape!

NEFERTITI: Sounds like a deuce. Mm.

CHERYL: It includes queso fresco!

NEFERTITI: Which is delicious! It starts green?!

CHERYL: It's never actually the color green. Green just refers to it being new or not fully aged.

NEFERTITI: Oh! Oh! Oh, like she was green at the job.

CHERYL: But when I think about somebody being new at their job, like, it's not that this cheese doesn't yet know how to be cheese.

NEFERTITI: It's simply that it's...fresh and new.

CHERYL: And when I click on images of green cheese, there's actually quite a bit of cheese that's green. [giggles]

NEFERTITI: It's mold! The cheese itself isn't green. It's the mold on the cheese?

CHERYL: Okay. Some of it might be herbs. Some of it is mold.

NEFERTITI: Okay.

CHERYL: Some of it is pesto.

NEFERTITI: Ah!

CHERYL: Yeah. Some of it is just scary. Sage, so there's some....

NEFERTITI: Oh, right. That's green.

CHERYL: Yeah, I guess your teacher probably was referring to like, a queso fresco, you know, a nice round, soft.

NEFERTITI: Nice, soft, green moon.

BOTH: [giggling]

NEFERTITI: How about coffee? Is any coffee green?

CHERYL: Well, before the beans are roasted, they're green.

NEFERTITI: Okay. Well, then, there you go. Green is my favorite color.

CHERYL: It is my last name.

NEFERTITI: [chuckles]

Friends

[relaxed, jazzy synth music break now with a little Latin beat]

CHERYL: You and I have never met in person. And we have these long text conversations. A lot of the time, I forget that we haven't met in person. And I think outside of disability community, people say, "Oh, if you're only virtual friends, you're not real friends."

NEFERTITI: Do they?

CHERYL: Oh, you haven't heard that?!

NEFERTITI: No. Some of my most solid and years, years-long friendships are with people I've never met. [pause] Really?

CHERYL: Yeah, I hear it a lot. I see posts on social media. I hear people just really ranking online-only friendships as inferior or not full, not complete. It'll be complete once you finally do meet in person. Then it'll be real.

NEFERTITI: [big sigh] When people say that it's hard to make friends as an adult, I have found that it's been hard to make friends my whole life, you know, being very discerning about who I grant my precious time to. This is coming from a place of protecting myself and valuing my time and who I spend energy on and who I share myself with.

CHERYL: I've always had a really hard time making friends up until a few years ago. And the whole thing about being able to interact online and kind of form friendships in different ways has been so helpful kind of for me to learn how to communicate with people! You know, it's not in real time in the same way, and you can think about your response before you make it and not put your foot in your mouth as often.

NEFERTITI: Absolutely. And also, like, my relationship is a long-distance relationship right now. We are a bicoastal partnership. And he's on the West Coast, I'm on the East, and we see each other every couple of months. And for the time being, that's the way it has to be. Yes, our ultimate goal is to be in the same place at the same time on a more permanent basis, but that isn't the case now. You think I'm going to say no to the best man I've ever met in my life, who has only improved my life because why? He's in California? No.

CHERYL: Yeah.

NEFERTITI: No.

CHERYL: [imitating an air horn] Ber ber ber! [laughs]

NEFERTITI: Ber ber ber! Yes. [giggles]

CHERYL: Ber ber ber!

[relaxed, jazzy synth music plays until the end]

CHERYL: I just cannot. Waking up to see a text from you is, "Yay!"

NEFERTITI: [delighted laugh]

CHERYL: And I just, I appreciate you to the ends of the earth. Even though the earth is round, we'll pretend it has ends. [laughs]

NEFERTITI: And we'll pretend it has ends. Absolutely.

CHERYL: [laughs]

Wrap-up

Every episode is transcribed. Links, guest info, and transcripts are all at WhoAmIToStopIt.com, my disability arts blog. I'm Cheryl, and...

TWO VOICES: this is Pigeonhole.

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

Music in the episode: "Space Jazz" Kevin MacLeod (incompetech.com)

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