

Bonus Episode: Comfort Creatures

SPEAKERS

Alexis B Preston, Marcelle Kosman, Hannah McGregor, Ella McLeod

Hannah McGregor 00:00

Hey folks, this week we're taking a little break to gear up for the holiday season. So instead of enjoying a regular episode, please enjoy this episode of Comfort Creatures, a podcast hosted by Ella McLeod and Alexis B Preston.

Marcelle Kosman 00:15

If you don't already know, Comfort Creatures is a show for Maximum Fun. The folks who brought you classic podcasts like My Brother, My Brother and Me, Still Buffering, The Adventure Zone and so many others. In this show, Ella and Alexis bring on guests to chat about pet ownership and the power of furry friends.

Hannah McGregor 00:39

We were lucky enough to be guests on Comfort Creatures back in August, and we had such a good time. Of course, that means we talked for far too long. And so the episode was actually broken up into two episodes.

Marcelle Kosman 00:51

You're about to hear part one. After the episode, if you want to hear part two, head over to the Comfort Creatures show feed, wherever you get your podcasts and check it out.

Hannah McGregor 01:00

We'll be back in two weeks for another episode about Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. But until then-

Marcelle Kosman 01:07

Later witches.

(Comfort Creatures opening music plays)

Ella McLeod 01:37

Yeah, yeah, I mean, wow. This is a nice segue into talking about pets. Yes, Stephanie isn't just not like how I am right now. She is not happy. I don't know if it's, I got in yesterday from having you know, it wasn't, I had a biopsy and my gum. So it was local anesthetic. And I'm saying to Alexis, they had to inject me 14 times because I'm magic. I have magic powers.

Alexis B Preston 02:06

Yeah, you're a superhero, I think.

Ella McLeod 02:07

I'm a superhero and anesthesia doesn't work on me. So they have to just, they kept going. They just kept popping up with more needles. Like, I'd be like, I can still feel everything. It was unpleasant. And so they Yeah, and then I got home and the cat came over to give me a little sniff and a little kiss and just was like, whoa, whoa, man, I don't like this. And then literally turned tail and ran away. And it's been a while and then she'll kind of come up to me and lie down next to me like she wants to check that I'm okay. But she really doesn't want to be too close to me. And I just don't know if it's the smell of all the drugs in my system.

Alexis B Preston 02:50

She can smell the 14 shots.

Ella McLeod 02:52

I think she can. She's like, you don't smell normal. Leave me alone.

Alexis B Preston 02:57

Yeah, it's very strange. And also, You're so brave, because also I'm a person that sometimes I pass out when I get shots. So...

Ella McLeod 03:07

Really? Oh my god.. Is it needles? Or is it the process of being injected?

Alexis B Preston 03:13

I don't, it's a newer thing. I didn't know I had it until COVID stuff, but it's got something to do with blood pressure and standing up too fast. So I've learned how to deal with it. But yeah, 14 would probably do it.

Ella McLeod 03:28

Yeah. Honestly, I did have a Harry Potter audiobook playing the whole time. Because comfort, familiarity. Imagine I'm at Hogwarts.

Alexis B Preston 03:43

Which is a good segue into Hello, you're listening to Comfort Creatures. I'm Alexis B. Preston.

Ella McLeod 03:50

I'm Ella McLeod.

Alexis B Preston 03:51

And this week, Ella went to the dentist. *(laughs)*

Ella McLeod 03:57

Well, this week we're going to Hogwarts. That's what we are doing! Kind of,

Alexis B Preston 04:00

Kinda. Well we're going to have such a good episode. We have the incredible Hannah and Marcelle here from Witch, Please talking with their cats. We've got Pancakes, Al Purrdy and Faye. But it's such a good conversation that we actually have to break it up into two episodes. So this week is going to be mostly you hearing the origin stories of their incredible cats. And next week, we get to go full fantasy nerd. And I am so excited.

Ella McLeod 04:35

Yeah, we had so much fun talking to them, which is why it's two episodes. I mean it's like 30% just us laughing.

Alexis B Preston 04:44

It's a lot of that. It's also so funny, like we got done recording and I was like we have an hour and a half of recording, like there's no way I can edit this down. So it's gonna be two.

Ella McLeod 04:54

Yeah, they were just too charming, too funny, too interesting for us to cut basically. I'm so excited for everybody to hear it. But before we get started with that, Alexis, what has been going on with your-what do you call four kids? Is it quadruplets? Yeah. Yeah. How are the quads this week?

Alexis B Preston 05:19

They are good. Um, I feel like since last we spoke, Cricket got his first, I gave cricket his first haircut. Which was very, because I've been very nervous about it. I don't know that he will do really bad at a groomer. Like, I've just been like, there's no way I can take him. He doesn't like other dogs. He doesn't like strangers. And like, I just feel like it's a recipe for him biting someone. So I was like, I'm just gonna do it. So I bought clippers, and I gave him his first haircut. And he was so good. I was worried that he would growl or be upset and he just sat there and I think, liked it a little bit.

Ella McLeod 06:00

That's amazing. And he obviously yeah, I guess it's like, he really trusts you. So it was a bit more familiar. That's incredible. So you've never given him a haircut before?

Alexis B Preston 06:10

No, I've done like little trims, like on his face and stuff, just to, you know, keep his hair out of his eyes. And some of his unmentionable zones when they get, you know, we have dogs,

sometimes you gotta trim up some things. *(laughs)* But when we first found him, someone had cut his hair really badly. Like he was, they had done something weird. I don't know, it seemed like maybe someone had got him off the street also before us and tried to give him a haircut. And then he ran away, was our guess, just because it was such a bad haircut.

Ella McLeod 06:46

He hated the haircut so much. He had the haircut and looked at the mirror and was like, I cannot be this humiliated. Yeah, yeah. *(both laugh)*

Alexis B Preston 06:56

And that's, you know, hair is everything, as Ella Fleabag-

Ella McLeod 07:01

I mean, my whole book is basically about hair, and your relationship to hair. No, there is truly nothing worse than looking in the mirror and being like, now I have to lie to spare the hairdresser's feelings. But I'm so miserable.

Alexis B Preston 07:21

Yeah, exactly. *(laughs)* Here we go. Yes, I love it. Um, yeah, so he's good. And it's already like, it's been a little bit since we did that. It's already grown out of it, but I wanted to give him a lion cut. But I immediately gave up on that. Like, I don't know why I'm trying a hard cut for the first time I'm ever doing this. Like, I should just give him a haircut. The only thing I messed up was, I was doing his tail. And you have to be really careful because you don't want the tail to go in between the like teeth of the clippers. And I didn't make him wear anything but the tail did fall and I just cut like the very tip of his tail. I like, it's shaved. It was to the skin. He just had a little naked nub. *(laughs)*

Ella McLeod 08:10

(laughs) Almost like a little like a little pencil with a rubber eraser at the end, you could could just-

Alexis B Preston 08:15

Yeah, if you dip it in ink, you can actually write with it. Incredible.
(laughs)

Ella McLeod 08:20

(laughs) That's so funny.

Alexis B Preston 08:21

So that's what's going on with Cricket. Everyone else. No new updates. That was the big one. I think.

Ella McLeod 08:30

Cool. It was trying to think if our pup...Yeah. Oh, oh, yeah, actually, you know what, we've had a really medical week in our household because Simba had a rhinoplasty?

Alexis B Preston 08:40

Like a nose job?

Ella McLeod 08:44

(laughs) Well, that's what I said to my mom and kind of he um, he got a grass seed stuck up his nose. So they had, and he was, oh, bless him like he was being really brave. He was clearly uncomfortable. So yeah, my mom had to take him to the vet and they had to put a camera up there and go digging around and then they pulled it out and we were shocked by the size. He's only got a little nose, but this is significantly long, I think the thing that was clearly so uncomfortable for him was that the end of it was a grassy that had clearly started to sprout a little bit right.

So we've kept it obviously, my mom kept the grass seed and it's now in like a little, a little jar. Because of course she did. Because that's just the kind of thing my mom would do. It's like when, oh if any kids are listening, shut their ears now. It's like when your parents keep your teeth when the Tooth Fairy has visited. So it

didn't surprise me that my mom kept the grass seed. She is that kind of a parent.

Alexis B Preston 09:52

That is really cute. I mean, I get it, I love a curio cabinet of strange things. I still have Humphrey's baby teeth.

Ella McLeod 10:00

Yeah, yeah, just weird things in little jars.

Alexis B Preston 10:06

Yeah. I get it. Also she doesn't want any more, I'll take them.

(Comfort Creatures music plays)

Ella McLeod 10:19

I am so excited to be here digitally with you three. This is really huge for me. We are joined today, Comfort Creatures listeners by the incredible, the sensational, the inimitable: Hannah McGregor and Marcelle Kosman. They are the beautiful talent behind Witch, Please, they are professors of insert the things that you teach here. They all professors of the noncommittal shrug Ah, yeah. Okay. And they are cat parents too. And now tell me the names of your cats because from what I remember, you've done an excellent job of naming your pets.

Marcelle Kosman 11:07

Hannah, you should go first.

Hannah McGregor 11:08

Oh, yeah, yeah, my cats are named, I don't know if you can actually see them in the background.

Alexis B Preston 11:16

Oh, a live feed.

Ella McLeod 11:17

Oh my god, Yeah, I can. I can see a foot.

Hannah McGregor 11:18

Okay, so this little Tabby here. That's Pancakes, plural. And then the handsome tuxedo gentleman behind me, who you might be able to see. I don't know if you-

Marcelle Kosman 11:32

No, unfortunately not.

Ella McLeod 11:33

Oh, oh yes.

Hannah McGregor 11:35

That's Al Purrdy. He's named after an important Canadian poet of the 1970s. But because he's a cat. There's two R's in his name. Al Purrdy. Very cool.

Alexis B Preston 11:52

I have always had many splendid friends. *(all four laugh)*

Marcelle Kosman 12:00

I am presently a cat parent to a beautiful cat named Faye. She's a chocolate point Siamese who doesn't have any years. And she was in the room with me. But I see that she has somehow managed to escape,

Hannah McGregor 12:17

She'll return at some point and purr directly into the microphone.

Marcelle Kosman 12:21

I know. She has zero chill whatsoever. Which is, you know, something that I both detest and absolutely adore about her.

Hannah McGregor 12:33

She had a hard life on the mean streets of Edmonton. That's how she lost her ears. And now she's just ready to soak up- a lot of stray cats in Canada are missing ears.

Alexis B Preston 12:44

Yeah. Because I have so many questions but-

Ella McLeod 12:46

Yeah, instantly. Okay, so you've got Faye, who has a story.

Marcelle Kosman 12:50

She's got a real story. I should tell you. So the reason why she's named Faye, when I adopted her, her name was Tinkerbelle. And no shade to the people who had her before me. I don't know what led them to the decision to call her Tinkerbelle but it just didn't feel like the right name for her for her new life with me. And so I decided that Faye was a very classy lady name that is an elegant gesture to her fair origins. Origins, there we go there.

Ella McLeod 13:35

You gave her the dignity she deserves, and I respect that.

Alexis B Preston 13:38

Yeah, no, no shade to them. But I would absolutely hate to have to say Tinkerbelle every time I needed to call my cat.

Hannah McGregor 13:46

Yeah, it's embarrassing, unlike Al Purrdy. *(all four laugh)*

Ella McLeod 13:50

No, but I personally feel like Tinkerbelle is one of those names that are only acceptable in irony. Like if your cat is malicious and evil, calling that cat Tinkerbelle, there's a kind of flair to that. But calling a sweet angel Tinkerbelle? I don't know. I yeah.

Alexis B Preston 14:10

Imagine you lost your pet and you have to holler their name outside. I just really don't like the idea of having to yell Tinkerbelle outside for a long period of time.

Hannah McGregor 14:21

That's a really good litmus test for how to name a pet but I do feel like it is more apt for dogs than cats, which don't know or acknowledge their names.

(Ella, Alexis, and Marcelle all make questioning noises)

Hannah McGregor 14:38

Fine. Fine.

Marcelle Kosman 14:40

I don't know about that, Hannah.

Ella McLeod 14:41

Yeah, that's a whole conversation. Persephone definitely knows her name and all 16 of her nicknames. Okay? For sure.

(Hannah and Marcelle laugh)

Marcelle Kosman 14:51

Oh, my goodness.

Ella McLeod 14:54

So you've got Faye. Is Faye an only child?

Marcelle Kosman 14:57

She is now. She had a sibling named Gandalf, briefly. Gandalf the Stray, but unfortunately he passed away a few months after we got him. It was very sad. It was very sad, Alexis.

Alexis B Preston 15:15

Gandalf the Stray, that really got me. We just glossed right over it.

Hannah McGregor 15:19

Marcelle is really good at naming cats.

Marcelle Kosman 15:23

And then a few years later, I finally convinced my partner to let me get a second cat again.

Hannah McGregor 15:30

We. We finally convinced your partner to let you get us get a second cat again.

Marcelle Kosman 15:34

Yeah, WE. Hannah was a really really really big part of that. Trevor insisted that I make a budget and I was like, how do you make a budget to take care of a cat? So I asked Hannah. Because Hannah has two cats.

Ella McLeod 15:49

I was gonna ask, Marcelle. What is your star sign?

Marcelle Kosman 15:52

(laughing) I'm a pisces.

Ella McLeod 15:54

I am also a pisces. And my partner also made me make a budget for my cat. And I was equally indignant.

Marcelle Kosman 16:05

And Trevor is a Gemini, and Hannah, being a Gemini, I was like, Okay, well, surely she knows how much cats actually cost in dollar amounts.

Hannah McGregor 16:15

Every Pisces I know is like money isn't real. It's just a vibe.

Ella McLeod 16:21

It's a construct.

Marcelle Kosman 16:25

(laughing) Quite literally, it's not real. Anyway.

Hannah McGregor 16:29

Anyway, that is how she ended up with my beautiful fluffy goddaughter, Sally.

Marcelle Kosman 16:35

Sally was named Sally. That was her name at the shelter and it was just so adorable and cute. So I kept it. But unfortunately for me, Faye did not want to share me. And so Sally ended up bonding very deeply with my sister in law, Jillian, who was living with us at the time, and her extremely mean and cruel and vicious cat Sookie. And somehow Sally won over the meanest cat I've ever known. It was just truly unbelievable. And so-

Ella McLeod 17:15

What did she do? Like I want to know how-

Hannah McGregor 17:17

she befriended her the same way I befriend people, which she just stood really close to her all the time. *(all four laugh)* If I'm here constantly, you'll have to-

Marcelle Kosman 17:28

And she didn't seem to mind that Sookie would hiss at her and swipe at her. And so then when Jill was ready to move off to her own place, we just decided that it would be better for everybody if Sally went with her, and that was very sad, but it's not a decision that I regret.

Hannah McGregor 17:49

Yeah, and she's nearby so she can go in and get a faceful of that fluffy belly if she needs.

Marcelle Kosman 17:55

A mere few blocks away. And now those armpit mats are Jill's problem and not mine. She's a ragdoll. Yeah, and yeah, like, finest fluffiest hair and she is truly just the sweetest, dopest silliest gentle soul. But if you try to brush her, she turns into a demon, like, like she would spit and hiss at me and would injure me with her teeth and her claws. It was wild. It was like Jekyll and

Hyde. It was incredible. Thanks for letting me tell you about my pets. It was really...

Ella McLeod 18:41

This is literally the premise of this show. We want you to talk about your cats. So okay, Al Purrdy, Pancakes. Yeah, what's the situation there? Tell me everything.

Hannah McGregor 18:54

Okay, so I grew up with dogs. I was 100% a dog person. I had never what kind of dog person.

Ella McLeod 19:01

What kind of dogs?

Hannah McGregor 19:02

Miniature Schnauzers.

Ella McLeod 19:05

I don't know why. I did not think you were gonna say that.

Alexis B Preston 19:08

Me either! When you said dogs I was like, alright, it's gonna be like, Rottweilers.

Ella McLeod 19:12

I genuinely had an (unintelligible) in my head.

Hannah McGregor 19:16

Yeah, for a very good reason that was before you know, it was the 80s when we got them. Maybe the early 90s. So they weren't the kind of trend dog that they are now.

Marcelle Kosman 19:27

What you're saying is you had those dogs before they were cool.

Ella McLeod 19:35

Look at you with your hipster Ariel glasses on and everything. I had Schnauzer's before they were cool.

Hannah McGregor 19:40

(laughs) But my mother's father had a dog allergy and we got them specifically because they're a hypoallergenic dog. And then we just sort of like, you know, hit it off with the breed, like our first one was so good. So our first one was my brother's dog. The deal was that we could have dogs when we turned 10, because that was the age at which my parents were like you are mature enough now to have a dog. So our first one was Corby. Which is, they both have Scottish names. So Corby is Gaelic for little black crow. And he was an all black schnauzer. He was one of those once in a lifetime.

Alexis B Preston 20:27

Wait, it's Scottish for "little black crow"? All of those words?
(Marcelle laughs very hard)

Hannah McGregor 20:31

Definitely Scottish for crow. But in the family we always said it was Scottish for little black crow. So even as I said it, I was like, that's nonsense and not how languages work.

Ella McLeod 20:42

That, to me was believable. Because if you think about like, schadenfreude in German for being happy

Hannah McGregor 20:53

But like, that's a lot of meaning to pack into that name.

Marcelle Kosman 20:55

Or a little gray crow.

Hannah McGregor 21:02

Corgy. I don't know. I know. Corgy is a little gray crow.

Ella McLeod 21:09

Corby is a little gray crow. Of course. Yeah. We all know that.

Hannah McGregor 21:13

This is not a linguistics podcast. Yeah, he was just one of those absolutely perfect dogs, you know, just like a perfect temperament, would let a child just yank on his beard all day and just sit with great stoic patience. And then my dog was Selkie. Named for, you know, the mythical creature that is a seal in the ocean. Yeah, she was gray. Not as perfect a dog as Corby. Sorry, Selkie. She was also wonderful. It's just like he was a perfect dog. Yeah, but, you know, grew up with those dogs and then went off into grad school for 100 years. And just having a pet was not feasible. I was moving around too much. I was traveling constantly. I lived with people who had pets sometimes. But it wasn't until I finished my PhD that I was like, I am going to treat myself by getting a pet. And for the first little while I was really like, I'll just get a very small dog that I can just bring with me everywhere I go. Because like early career academia, you are never home, like you are just you're just out, you know, 16 hours a day, and traveling all the time and all of this stuff. And then I just like my Edmonton friends were all cat people. So I was like, All right, I guess I will try a cat and Marcelle and our friend Claire went with me to the Edmonton Humane Society. And I went in and was like, Hi, I've never had a cat. I've barely interacted with cats. Can you give me a cat that's gonna be like, chill? Like a chill cat that's kind of dog-like? Like, what's the cat that's most like a dog? I will take that one.

And they just went into this room and came out with this huge tuxedo tom cat. And were like, this one. Sounds all right. And then they give you these like cardboard carriers. They put him in the little cardboard carrier. And then he immediately hulked out of it, like but I brought him home knowing nothing about cats. I brought him home. I just like, put a litter in the corner. I was like, this is your litter. And I put up a little cat bed on the couch and was like,

this is your bed. And he was like, Cool. I live here now? Cool. We're good. And that was it, like he is the easiest cat in the universe. To this day, he is just astonishing- he's got the same energy as Corby did, like he will let a kid yank on his tail.

Yeah, yeah, he just doesn't mind. He lets me cradle him like a baby and blow raspberries in his stomach. Like he's just so sweet. You bring him somewhere new and let him out of his carrier. And he's like, Oh, I live here now? All right. Yeah, like anywhere you go with him, he's the most confident cat. So obviously for my second cat I got a lunatic. *(Ella, Alexis, and Marcelle laugh)*

Ella McLeod 24:41

Naturally, you would do that.

Alexis B Preston 24:48

Alright, we need to take a quick break. When we get back we'll have more from Hannah and Marcelle.

Ad Break!

Ella McLeod 26:21

Okay, so tell us about Pancakes. Why?

Hannah McGregor 26:24

My perfect little neurotic. So I got Pancakes when I moved into my condo because they allow two cats. Like it was the apartments I was in before were one pet maximum. And then my condo board was like two cats. And I was like, Heck yeah, I'm gonna get a cat immediately.

Marcelle Kosman 26:45

All of us in Edmonton, all of all of Hannah's Edmonton friends are staunchly two cat people. And which is one of the reasons why I continually bully Trevor about letting me have a second cat show because it's the correct number of cats. And so and so yeah, so

when Hannah was there to get her first cat, Claire and I were also both like, what if you got two?

Hannah McGregor 27:09

What if you just got two cats though? Anyway, this time around, I decided to work with this great Vancouver based Cat Rescue called VOKRA which is the Vancouver orphan kitten orphan kitten rescue association that started off their original thing was they only do in-home fostering. They don't have an actual shelter. And their original thing was like specialized fostering for pregnant mom cats. And like, really, really tiny orphaned kittens who need to be bottle fed. Oh, and gosh, I follow a bunch of their fosters on Instagram, and you get some real good kitten content.

Ella McLeod 28:02

Oh, you're gonna have to send me those links because all I want on my feed is kittens being bottle fed. Yeah, that's all I want.

Hannah McGregor 28:11

But they sort of expanded to do they just sort of, you know, foster all kinds of cats now. And I have made friends with this lovely person, Ushra, who was one of their sort of main volunteer coordinators. And she was like, Yeah, you should try a VOKRA cat instead of a weird thing about VOKRA cats is that rather than just going to a shelter and being like, cat please, you like you go on these weird little cat dates because you like go to the foster's Home and then like, meet the cat like court in the cat for a while and then and then decide you know, like you and the cat both anonymously fill out a questionnaire about whether or not you liked each other and then each other at the end? Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Oh, and I went and saw a bunch of cats. And was just like, maybe I don't actually want a second cat like, I love AI so much. Like maybe just none of these cats are vibing. Maybe I just only want one cat. And then I went over to Pancakes foster's Home, and

she was this tiny, less than a year old, had already had a litter, babies having babies, had been trapped in the Abbotsford dump where she was born and had lived her short life thus far. And was mostly feral still, like, not interested in being touched by humans, hid behind a couch the entire time. And I was just like, oh, this is my cat.

Alexis B Preston 29:52

When you know you know. It came from a dump? Oh, a dream!
(All four laugh)

Hannah McGregor 29:57

A cat from a dump? A garbage cat from the garbage?

Alexis B Preston 30:02

I'll take one.

Ella McLeod 30:04

This is us having been raised on Disney. It's like, yes, I would give Tramp a home! Like, yeah, that's what you thought you were doing.

Alexis B Preston 30:11

Something like it's almost cliché. It's like, No, really. You came from a dump? That's where you were living?

Hannah McGregor 30:19

Yeah. Yeah. Her original name was Abby. Named for the dump she was born in. *(laughs)*

Marcelle Kosman 30:26

Wow. *(laughs)* Oh, wow. Oh, yeah. Wow.

Hannah McGregor 30:32

Very special. It's very special. Oh, she had a higher difficulty rating as a cat-

Marcelle Kosman 30:39

Yeah. You leveled up.

Hannah McGregor 30:40

You know, you just gotta always be rising and grinding hard and fast every time.

Ella McLeod 30:50

So, you start at your beginner cat and then you move on to an intermediate cat.

Alexis B Preston 30:56

What kind of difficult? What were the challenges just bringing Pancakes home?

Hannah McGregor 30:59

Yeah, well, one was getting her comfortable with me. And then two was integrating the two of them into a household in a way that would work. So I obviously used the valuable quasi canonical advice of Jackson Galaxy to integrate my new cat into the household. So we started off, Pancakes stayed in the bathroom for the first week, so she could have her own little space. And I hung out in the bathroom with her for just hours at a time. So she could just get used to me being around her. And the advice was like, talk to her a bunch. So she gets really used to your voice. And so I would bring my master students theses into the bathroom with me and read them out loud to her. So she knows alot about the publishing industry.

Alexis B Preston 31:57

She's well read.

Marcelle Kosman 31:59

She's an intellectual now.

Hannah McGregor 32:01

Yeah, absolutely. She's just the most brainless cat, just absolutely not a single brain cell in there. But when she got comfortable with

me, she would come out while I was there and was like, you know, boop, my finger like, you know, we started getting comfortable. Then you do the next step is that you lock the resident cat in a separate room and let the new cat out to start to expand their territory. Because apparently what you have to do is teach the cats to territory-share, because they're very territorial animals. So they have to learn how to like, navigate that. So I would let Pancakes out and lock Al in the bedroom. And every time I did it, he would rage poop.

Alexis B Preston 32:50

I was gonna ask if there were any accidents. That's-

Hannah McGregor 32:52

Yeah, I don't think it was an accident. But yeah.

Ella McLeod 32:56

No. That was vengeance. Yeah, he was like, How dare you?

Alexis B Preston 33:05

It was a poop not a pee.

Hannah McGregor 33:06

It was absolutely poop. She pees out of fear sometimes. Okay, yeah. When I have to put her in our carrier, she's really hard to catch because she's still got that feral edge to her. And so I have to corral her into a corner. And like, like, corner her and catch her and she pees out of terror, which makes me feel like, Oh, what a bully. She's like an eight pound cat, like she's so tiny. Yeah, no, but Al rage poops. And very rare because he's a very chill cat. But this really pushed him over the edge.

So anyway, then you do the thing where you start feeding them on either side of a door. And then you slowly open the door a little bit at a time. So they get used to smelling and seeing each other while they're eating. Like there's a whole series of processes. Yeah, there's a whole process to it to like, basically help them

figure out that, like, they're both allowed to be in the space, and it's okay. And a lot of it is like, have them in the same space and then interact with both of them a lot. And play with them and give them a treat, so that they start associating being in the same place as positive reinforcement. And now they tolerate each other, like long term roommates, who have never really become friends, but like really like the rhythms work well, and they've just figured out how to live together and it's like, maybe sometimes it's better if you're not friends with your roommate, because it's less drama. That's them. *(laughs)*

Alexis B Preston 34:44

Yeah, my cats are similar. They're like, they don't like cuddle or play. Yeah, but also they're always within like six feet of each other. Yes. Like always so even though it's like you don't if they get too close, there'll be a little bit of like, hey, woah backup. Yeah, at this same time it's like what do you are you why would you hiss at her? You follow her around the house, like what's happening? Yeah.

Marcelle Kosman 35:10

Before I got Faye I had these two cats who were like siblings from the same litter Beowulf and Cosette, that they I had had them since they were kittens.

Ella McLeod 35:24

So good, so good.

Marcelle Kosman 35:27

Beowulf had thumbs. He was polydactyl but had actual thumb shape weird paws and I was afraid that-

Hannah McGregor 35:35

It was incredible. The biggest, mitty-est paws.

Marcelle Kosman 35:39

Totally symmetrical on both hands. It was like hands not like paws. Anyway, truly, truly beautiful cat. I was shocked. So when we lived in Montreal, our downstairs neighbors had a cat who had a litter of kittens. And then she ate something or was I don't know, it was very unclear. They were sketchy people and the cat died, they wanted to rehome the kittens together. Long story short, we ended up with them. Best best decision young Marcelle ever made. So I'd had them for about I think 12 years, 12 or 13 years or so. And one time, though, when we were still living in Montreal, we had this roommate and so even though Beowulf and Cosette were siblings, Beowulf would beat up Cosette a lot and it was really stressful.

And you would hear this like screeching and you would see tufts of fur flying in the air, it was very, very stressful. And one time we had this roommate and he had come home and Beowulf started picking on Cosette and so he separated them and put Beowulf in the bathroom and locked the door. But then unfortunately, he forgot for a couple hours. And then when he let Beowulf out, he remembered like, just in time before he had to leave for, you know, whatever he was doing. We were students, he was probably going to go do a student thing. So he left Beowulf out and he left the house. And I came home a little while later. And I was coming up the stairs. And as soon as I opened the door to the apartment, I was like, It smells like poop. What's going on? And I sort of start to follow my nose.

And I get to just outside of my roommates bedroom. And I'm like, Oh, how embarrassing for John. Oh my god. I think John pooped the bed. I'm gonna pretend that I never noticed because he's probably so embarrassed about it. So I just go into my room and I'm like, sitting at the desk doo doo doo. And I hear John come home. And you know, when you like, you know, even though you can't see what's happening, you know, you can absolutely see what's happening just by the sound. And so I heard him walk to his room, stop. Take a few more steps. Take his bedspread, off

the bed, go downstairs to the laundry. Come back upstairs. And I was like, oh god, dood thing I pretended I didn't know because how embarrassing for John. Now he's got to wash it. So John comes to my bedroom door and he knocks and he's like He, um, to have any tips. And I'm like, Oh no, how embarrassing for John. Do you have any tips for how to get cat shit out of a blanket? ***(Hannah, Ella, and Alexis laugh)***

And I was like, Oh, no! And I was like, what do you mean? Anyway, John was pretty sure that not one but both of them had tag teamed all over his bed because there was too much for it to have come from a single cat. That was his theory. ***(Marcelle laughs)***

Ella McLeod 39:16

Oh, wow.

Marcelle Kosman 39:18

They were the best bad cats. Truly.

Hannah McGregor 39:24

Marcelle loves bad cats.

Marcelle Kosman 39:25

I love them.

Ella McLeod 39:27

Like they are hilarious because they hold grudges. You know, they remember like, the small roles like I'll tell Percy off or something. And I think we're cool. And like four hours later, she'll come to me. She'll look me in the eyes. And I know she's saying that's for earlier. ***(Marcelle, Hannah, and Alexis laugh)***

Like, I know. They don't forget. They don't forget at all. So Marcelle, you say that you kind of corralled Hannah into getting her second cat. So you're a cat aunt. Would you say you're the

cat aunt to Hannah's cat? Is that accurate? Are you a cat godmother?

Marcelle Kosman 40:05

You know what? So Hannah played a very pivotal role in enabling me to get Sally. I think-

Ella McLeod 40:14

Okay, how? Wait, wait, how?

Marcelle Kosman 40:15

With the budgeting.

Ella McLeod 40:19

Oh, of course she did the numbers. Yeah, absolutely.

Marcelle Kosman 40:22

So Hannah is definitely godmother to Sally. Even now that Sally lives with Jillian. Hannah is still the godmother. I'm sort of like, the sad Auntie who's like, I raised you for a little while. But then you went to your mom, I'm that kind of auntie. And I think Hannah would have gotten a second cat without me bullying her to do it because she had enough other friends who were like, yeah, two cats. Do it. Two cats. Sorry. I'm correct. Yeah. Yeah.

Hannah McGregor 40:53

And now I'm committed. She's never met Pancakes. IRL.

Marcelle Kosman 40:58

No. Wow. I know.

Ella McLeod 41:01

Wow. That's wild. And so now are you going to be behind budget 2.0. so that Marcelle can get a second cat again?

Hannah McGregor 41:08

For the time being I think Marcelle has, I mean, Marcelle, you can speak for this but I think that she has come to terms with the fact that Faye thrives as an only cat with two human siblings.

Marcelle Kosman 41:23

Yeah, yeah. She's very very patient with the baby. So incredibly patient. Like I said she'd never been around children or babies before she-

Ella McLeod 41:36

And how old are they now? How old is Elliot?

Marcelle Kosman 41:38

Elliot is almost seven and Cohen is almost one. And so Cohen was Elliott's? Sorry? No. Well, yeah. Cohen is also Elliot's first baby, *(all laugh)* but to the point of this podcast, Cohen is also Faye's first baby. And so there was a lot of like, I don't know how she's gonna react, but she's very, with the exception of other cats, she is an incredibly docile cat. And so like, and also she likes to be handled a little roughly. *(Hannah laughs)* And so she doesn't mind when Cohen grabs her fur and pulls on it. The most that I've ever seen her do is like look and go *(Marcelle makes a small squawking noise) (the other three laugh)*

Hannah McGregor 42:27

Yeah, there's some really good photos of Marcelle sitting- like Faye is such a lap cat that like, if you it doesn't matter if there's no lap available. She's like, she'll find it. Yeah, give me, I can make a lap.

Marcelle Kosman 42:39

Listen, your neck is available. And that'll do.

Hannah McGregor 42:43

A neck is a lap in a pinch. And there's just these great photos of Marcelle holding Cohen on her lap and then Faye lying half

across Marcelle half across Cohen just being like, This is enough flat.

Marcelle Kosman 43:01

I was like, omg what's happening? And nothing, absolutely nothing. It was adorable. *(laughs)* Oh, yeah, so I think that for the- Oh, she is in the room. Where were you? I don't know. I don't know where she was. So for the duration of our time together. I think Faye will stay an only child because she's just so visibly happy. She's so much happier. It's so obvious when there are no other cats.

Hannah McGregor 43:35

Yeah, can I tell you all about- so I'm not a long term planner. I'm not a future oriented person. I'm just kind of like, we'll probably all die in a fire in five years. So what are we planning for? *(the other three laugh)* However, I have made a long term cat plan. Long term pet plan, which is like I said, it's not like may have and so yeah, what it is is a a desire to continue to be a person who has cats however, the desire to also at some point have a dog. Hmm, how do you do this? Right? Neither of these current cats will tolerate dogs. Pancakes is much too fearful. She is such a good hider that if something happens that she doesn't like I think that she just opens a pocket dimension and just goes in there because she will disappear in a way where I'm like, I looked everywhere. You were nowhere. And Al hates dogs and will like beat the shit out of any dog. He is a big cat. He survived on the mean streets of Edmonton with his ears intact. That's how you know he's tough.

Marcelle Kosman 44:57

He's way tougher, yeah.

Hannah McGregor 44:58

And he will- I've just seen him beat up dogs. And so neither of them can be dog cats. And so-

Ella McLeod 45:08

So, what's the plan?

Hannah McGregor 45:09

Here's the plan. So at some point, one of these cats will pass away. You know, in 20 years.

Marcelle Kosman 45:16

30.

Hannah McGregor 45:17

Yeah, at which point I will get- So I'll have a surviving senior cat, I will get a pair of bonded kittens. The logic being that when you're getting new cats to be companions to a senior cat, it's better to get a pair of kittens because they entertain each other, and so are less likely to hassle the senior cat. And when you get bonded kittens, they're more confident because they have each other and so they're more likely to be easy to introduce into new scenarios. So I will get a pair of bonded kittens to be friends with my senior cat. But I will also start socializing those kittens with dogs from early on. So I will bring them over to the homes of people who have dogs, like I will get them used to dogs. Then when the other senior cat passes away, you know, in 50 years, then I will adopt a dog to be friends with my pair of dog friendly bonded cats. That's so great. It's the best plan I've ever made.

Marcelle Kosman 46:29

Yeah, great plan.

Ella McLeod 46:30

That's really good. I really appreciate that forward thinking.

Alexis B Preston 46:34

It's really good. I will say as a person that has two cats, two dogs, sometimes the dogs just show up and you go you guys figure it out. **(Marcelle, Hannah, and Ella laugh)** And it's kind of hard for a while and you go, this is maybe a mistake, but they're here now.

Marcelle Kosman 46:52

Can't say no.

Alexis B Preston 46:53

Can't say no, they live here.

Hannah McGregor 46:55

If a dog just turns up one day-

Ella McLeod 46:58

Which is what happened to Alexis twice. Literally, Alexis stumbled across both of our puppies like she's the only person I've ever known this happened to. She was coming home from work or somewhere with the first one. And just saw him and was like, yep, that's my dog. And then the second one walked into her garden. She was like, Cool. Now there's a friend. Like that's literally how Alexis got her dogs. She's like a Disney princess.

Hannah McGregor 47:29

Yeah, that's incredible. You're just walking down the street and puppies just run to you.

Alexis B Preston 47:33

Yes. The first one like it's a little he was in, someone had left him in an alley in a crate. My little puppy. But then I was like, well, I'm not gonna call the Humane Society like this is my dog now, obviously,

Marcelle Kosman 47:46

If you call the Humane Society they might try to return it to its owner.

Alexis B Preston 47:50

Exactly. And have him go to someone else? He's my dog.

Hannah McGregor 47:54

He's your dog. Finders keepers.

Alexis B Preston 47:57

He just showed up. He literally jumped through our fence. And I was like, I looked for an owner for a while. And no one claimed him. And then I was like well I guess you're here now.

Hannah McGregor 48:11

Listen, if a dog manages to work its way into my third floor condo, then it's meant to be.

Alexis B Preston 48:18

I'm just saying, plan for that also.

Hannah McGregor 48:20

Yeah, yeah. I mean you make plans knowing that they'll never actually unfold the way you anticipate and and and who knows, like maybe in three years I'm gonna move to a farm and get 100 dogs.

Marcelle Kosman 48:37

And one dalmatian.

Ella McLeod 48:38

I liked that. I really like both of your futures, Hannah.

Hannah McGregor 48:42

Can't you just picture me?

Ella McLeod 48:43

Like, I really can. In dungarees. Is that what you call them? Or overalls? Yeah, in dungarees and like-

Marcelle Kosman 48:53

And a shotgun.

Ella McLeod 48:54

Yeah, I can.

Hannah McGregor 48:56

Future Hannah is wearing linen overalls. Birkenstocks. She's got 17 senior cats.

Ella McLeod 49:05

I also see you having chickens and naming them old lady names. Like Mabel and Doris. Yes, I really see that for you, too.

Alexis B Preston 49:13

Um, I just, we did a rude Chekhov's gun with Marcelle's cat Faye not having ears. And I just realized that's a huge detail that-what?

Ella McLeod 49:27

Oh, baby. Okay. This is an audio medium. So Marcelle is holding a gorgeous, chocolatey colored Siamese with teeny tiny ears.

Marcelle Kosman 49:37

Yeah, they're all like, one of them was a little bit longer. One of them is, sorry, I would realize I was talking to her and pointing the mic at the computer. *(Ella, Alexis, and Hannah laugh)* Wrong microphone. One of her ears is like maybe one quarter and the other one is maybe two thirds of an ear. But, yeah, I guess when she was, she was similarly abandoned as a kitten and left in the back of a pickup truck in a box in Edmonton winter and Edmonton winters are famously very extreme cold temperature winters.

And so the fact that she is only missing parts of her ears is really really pretty miraculous. Oh, and so that's what happened to her. And, you know, this is something I'm sure exists in other cities, but I've never really encountered it as much as I have since moving to Alberta, where a lot of people have a lot of money and don't seem to know what to do with it. But there are way more abandoned purebred cats than I've ever encountered before. And it's just because like I always think of purebred cats is like something that you get when you like, if you have an allergy or something and you need to get one. You know? I just sort of assumed that if you are gonna get a cat, you'll just get a mutt cat because there are different breeds of cat? What? Who knew that?

Hannah McGregor 51:15

Yeah, you don't get cats from a breeder. You get cats from the dump. **(Marcelle laughs)**

Alexis B Preston 51:20

Of course. That's where cats come from.

Marcelle Kosman 51:23

Thomas O'Malley the alley cat.

Hannah McGregor 51:28

This is so classic Edmonton though, because Alberta is a resource based boom and bust economy. And so what you get is like a lot of people moving there for jobs where they're all of a sudden making like \$150,000 a year doing really dangerous work on the rigs, and they've got, you know, they're young and they suddenly have a ton of money. And they're lonely and so they just spend their money on a bunch of really goofy stuff.

And then they you know, the price of oil tanks for a while and everybody loses their jobs and then they all get like- And Alberta is really like that, like housing prices jump up and down like wild. You know, people are always buying luxury cars and then having to sell them six months later. So, it totally makes sense to me that it's just like, people are like, on an impulse buying some sort of fancy pet and then being like, well, I'm moving back to wherever now so I guess I'll just leave this cat in my pickup truck.

Marcelle Kosman 52:31

Oh, yeah. I know people who have, oh my gosh, my friend Kay, who used to live in Calgary, which is a few hours south of me. She went to somebody's house and they had adopted and abandoned like, oh gosh, what kind of cat is it? It's the kind of cat that has like the cheetah spots? It's not like an ocelot. Like-

Ella McLeod 53:01

Oh, Bengal. That's what I have. Yeah.

Marcelle Kosman 53:03

So a very very fancy cat. And probably not a shelter cat.

Ella McLeod 53:12

Yeah, no.

Alexis B Preston 53:14

Can you imagine walking into a shelter and being like, what do you have any bengals?

Hannah McGregor 53:19

I have a theory that Pancakes has a little bit of Bengal in her. Because of just the-

Ella McLeod 53:24

If she's a lunatic, she probably does. Bengals are insane.

Hannah McGregor 53:25

And she's also got some really, like, she's got spots on her belly. Like she's got markings that look and so I sort of think that like her like she had a grandparent who was somebody's escaped Bengal, who impregnated a stray cat. Yeah, I'm creating elaborate narratives about my cats' histories. We all do this, right?

Ella McLeod 53:53

That's what we do. Yeah.

(Comfort Creatures theme music plays)

Alexis B Preston 54:05

I'm sorry, we have to cut it off there. We love talking to them so much. But don't worry, you get to hear the rest of the conversation next week. They're an absolute delight. And next week, we get to fully nerd out and talk about their favorite fantasy creatures. And I mean, obviously you hear it so I don't want to say too much. But it's gonna be great.

Ella McLeod 54:26

It's so great. I mean, that conversation was already perfect. I particularly enjoy it. I just particularly enjoy the way that, I don't know if this is a thing in you guys part of the world. I was saying that, like Canada and LA aren't far away. But to me, I'm like, No, it's all over there. But just this thing of like collecting cats from the garbage, collecting, collecting pets from like, the mean streets of your city like a Disney film. Like I'm, I'm really, really here for it and I'm so excited to hear more from them.

Alexis B Preston 55:03

Oh, same. In the meantime, don't forget to follow us. We are @cccreaturespod on Twitter. We are @comfortcreaturespodcast on Instagram. And please email us your pet stories. We'll figure out a proper segment soon. So if you love a formula, we can do that for you. But our email is comfortcreatures@maximumfun.org

Ella McLeod 55:24

So please don't forget to like, follow, and subscribe, and we will have more episodes for you every week. We're so excited to be here.

Alexis B Preston 55:31

Yeah, thank you for listening. See you next Thursday.

(Comfort Creatures theme music plays)