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## 521. Talking about Pets (with James) TRANSCRIPT

Hello folks, welcome to this new episode of the podcast. Hope you're doing all right out there. I don't know if you can tell, but my voice sounds a bit funny.

Can you tell? It's because I'm feeling a bit ill at the moment. I've got a bit of a throat infection, but it's okay. I'm on antibiotics, it's all fine and stuff.

And I recorded this episode before I got ill, so now I'm just resting and getting better. Anyway, I just wanted to say at the beginning of this episode that Luke's English Podcast is made possible thanks to support from my listeners and also support from my sponsors. And for this episode, that is italki, that platform, which is very useful if you're looking for one-to-one lessons to help improve your English for whatever reason.

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### JINGLE

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Hello, folks. Welcome back to Luke's English Podcast. It's National Pet Month in the UK from the 1st of April to the 7th of May.

National Pet Month. Yes, so here's an episode all about living with animals, domesticated creatures, our furry companions, our four-legged friends, pets in their various shapes and sizes. National Pet Month is actually a registered charity in the UK and its aims are to promote responsible pet ownership and to make people aware of the mutual benefits of living with pets.

You can find out more by going to [nationalpetmonth.org.uk](http://nationalpetmonth.org.uk). So just like everywhere else in the world, British people love pets, the most common ones being dogs, cats, and fish. And since it's National Pet Month, I thought I'd talk about pets with James, my pet chimp. I mean, brother.

James, my brother. He's not a chimpanzee. He acts like one sometimes, but I can confirm that he is a human, I think.

That's what I was told anyway. So anyway, I'm talking to James, who is my brother. Now, we both had pets growing up together as children, so we thought that we would take a little trip down memory lane in this episode and remember some of those cute little animals that we loved so much when we were young.

So yes, pets. It's a simple topic. It's a universal topic.

I think pets are popular the world over. And it's a fun topic which we can use as a way of presenting you with some authentic listening practise in English. Now, when you think about it, humans have a pretty diverse relationship with animals.

Sometimes we farm them and breed them for various purposes. Sometimes we ride around on them for transport or for sport. Sometimes we eat them, quite often, actually, for lunch, for example.

Sometimes they eat us, less often, admittedly. Sometimes we just like to watch them eating each other, for example, in BBC nature documentaries. And sometimes we like to offer them a friendly invitation into our home so that they can come and live with us, like little hairy members of the family, almost.

Just because we love them, we find them cute, and they help to lower our blood pressure. Yes. Apparently, living with animals is very good for us.

They're good for our health. They can keep us healthy. They're like little furry doctors with no qualifications, except a degree in being warm and cuddly.

Yes, that is something that people say, that having a pet is good for you. They can lower your blood pressure. That having a pet can help you to live longer.

Yes. But surely it depends what kind of pet. I mean, sure, for a dog or cat, I can get it.

But if you have a silverback gorilla or a saltwater crocodile as a pet, then you're probably not going to live to a very old age, are you? In fact, you'd be lucky to survive beyond a couple of minutes with a crocodile in the house. Oh, that's a lovely 23 foot long crocodile you've got. Oh, how original to have a crocodile as a pet.

They're basically dinosaurs, aren't they? So, oh, he's lovely. What's his name? Bitey. Bitey the crocodile.

OK. There, there, Bitey. Hello, little Bitey.

Chomp. Oh, he's bitten my arm off. How adorable.

Chomp, chomp. Oh, and now he's grabbed me by the leg and he's pulling me underwater where he'll drown me and then eat me in one go. How lovely.

It does depend on the pet that you choose, of course. Crocodiles don't usually make great pets, I expect, but I don't know. Maybe they're very loving and gentle.

Let me know if you have a crocodile as a pet. Anyway, the most common pets in the world are generally lovely and fluffy and not usually our natural predators, of course. Here is, in fact, some pet data for you.

So according to the Society for Consumer Research, and this was published in [petfoodindustry.com](http://petfoodindustry.com), globally, 57% of consumers

own pets. And that's according to more than 27,000 online consumers who were surveyed in 22 countries. So 57% of consumers own pets.

Dogs are the most popular pet globally, owned by 33% of respondents, with cats next at 23%. The listing continues with fish at 12%, birds at 6%, and other pet types at 6%. The top pet countries are Argentina with 82%, which I think means that 82% of people who took the survey from Argentina had pets, Mexico with 81%, and Brazil with 76%.

They have the highest rates of overall pet ownership among the 22 countries surveyed, with dogs being the most popular pet in all three nations. The countries included in the survey were Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hong Kong. Ooh, is that a country? Don't email me about that.

These aren't my words. These are the top 20 dog populations. USA are number one with nearly 70 million dogs, then Brazil with about 35 million dogs, China with 27 and a half million dogs, Russia in fourth place with 12 and a half million dogs, and Japan in fifth position with about 12 million dogs.

The UK are in the, what? One, two, three, four, five. We don't care? You don't care. Okay, well, I'm going to tell you anyway.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, about ninth position with about 9 million pets. Cats, USA again are in top place. It's a bit like the Olympics, this, isn't it? Somehow always predictable.

It's always, okay, America and then China. America in top place in terms of cat population, nearly 75 million cats in the USA, about 53 million cats in China, nearly 18 million cats in Russia, Brazil in fourth place with about 12 and a half million cats, then France, 12 million cats. UK are in one, two, three, four, five, six, seventh position with 8 million cats.

Okay, just a bit of cat and dog data there because you've got to throw in some data, haven't you, to make something seem more legitimate. So, there you go, a bit of data there for you, for all of the people who like numbers. So, around the world, there may be different cultures of pet keeping.

For example, whether it's normal to neuter or spay your pets. To neuter, you neuter a male animal and spay a female animal and both of them mean giving the animals an operation on their reproductive systems so as to make them infertile or unable to breed. Now, in some places, that's normal, for example, in the UK and in other places, you might consider that to be a horrible thing to do.

So, you can see the culture is probably different in some parts of the world or it could be whether it's normal to keep your pets mostly indoors or to keep them outdoors. For example, in some countries, you wouldn't dream of letting your dog or cat stay outside all night. It might not just be in some countries, it might be, for example, in some parts of countries like in, you know, cities versus the countryside or whatever, you know, whether you keep your dog or cat in the house at night or whether you let the dog or cat outside, you know, it sort of depends.

So, there are different cultures and the cultures may be different but one thing's for sure, all humans or, well, humans the world over, it seems, have the desire to live with animals as companions and over time, we have developed a symbiotic relationship with certain animals, notably dogs, who seem to express a sense of duty towards their owners and perform various functions for humans. There are ethical issues relating to keeping pets of course. It's always hard to escape issues of morality and ethics even in a seemingly innocent topic like this.

For example, is it somehow cruel to keep animals as pets and how do pets affect the natural world around them? So, my conversation with James touches on some of these things but the main reason we chose to talk about this topic was just to let you hear a conversation in English about a subject that I'm sure that you can all relate to and the main focus of our conversation is just to remember the various pets that we had when we were growing up as children. So, listen out for some little stories and memories and also descriptions of typical behaviour in the past. See if you can notice certain features of grammar and vocabulary in the way that we express these ideas.

The specific vocabulary and grammar relating to those things, I can deal with them specifically in another language focused episode at some point. But this one is all about listening to some real British English conversation and so without any further ado let's talk to James about pets.

## CONVERSATION WITH JAMES

Okay James, so we're going to talk about pets.

Do you think that the audience are expecting this to be riveting and hilarious? I don't know. I've got a feeling that people will see the title of the episode, if indeed the title is pets or something, and they'll go, oh pets, but actually I think it's a lot more interesting and fun than people might expect, don't you think? I do think. Yes, good.

We'll soon see, won't we? We'll see. I wouldn't want to build it up too much. So, we're going to talk about pets and are you a pet person? I mean, are you the sort of person who has, do you have any pets? No, no, not officially.

Not officially? Well, there's a few mice in my flat, but they're not, I wouldn't consider them pets. We used to, as children, have pets. We did, didn't we? I don't currently have a pet.

Let's talk about the pets that we used to have, okay? Okay. Can you remember, what were the first pets that we had? The first pets that we had, I think, were a pair of gerbils. I think we had fish before we had gerbils, didn't we? I think so.

That's going to be annoying. I think we had goldfish. Is that going to be annoying? The bing! Every time an email comes in.

What bing? I didn't hear a bing. Oh, well, I heard a bing. You've got headphones on.

Yeah. Sorry, distraction. What was the question again? Can you remember our first, I don't remember the goldfish, I'm afraid.

Never mind. They weren't that interesting. They just did what goldfish usually do.

Which is die. Exactly, yeah. They do, don't they? I mean, they do say that's the function of a pet for a child is to introduce children to the concept of death.

Is that the main function of a pet? The main function of a pet, yes. And all the other things. They're just a byproduct.

The fun are just like happy byproducts. But the main purpose is to teach a child about death. I believe so.

Okay. No, obviously, I'm being a bit silly there. But what we can do is talk about the pets that we had as children and see if we can remember what happened to them.

I don't remember the goldfish too well. I remember we had a pair of gerbils, like I said, which are very cute little rodents from the deserts of the Sahara or somewhere. Yeah, I don't know where they come from exactly.

They probably come from the Gulf. Yeah, maybe. Persia, Iraq, Iran.

I don't know. We should have checked this first. Little rodents, they are, are you going to Google where the gerbils come from? The pet shop.

Hey, little rodents that, yeah, there you go. Where do gerbils come from? Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Yeah, very good.

You were quite right on that one. So it's a bit like a mouse, but cuter, a bit bigger. They've got a fairly long tail.

They're very adorable. They're quite clean. They don't smell as much as mice, I find.

Somehow they're very clean. Yeah, they live in, they're used to living in very dry conditions and they kind of jump around quite, quite fast, don't they? They can be quite quick and they tend to gnaw on things. Yeah, they're very cute and funny.

There's a verb that people won't know, to gnaw on something. Gnaw. Well, it's G-N-A-W.

Yeah, you don't pronounce the G. And it's pronounced gnaw. And how would you explain the word gnaw? Kind of... Well, it's to bite. It's kind of chew on something with your teeth, isn't it? Yeah.

Where were we? So these gerbils were bought for us by our parents and they were named, I think, Gower and Gatting, who were two England cricket stars of the time who played for the national, England national cricket team. And they were big names in cricket. I think, I suspect my dad probably named them after that.

So they were Gower and Gatting. They were very cute. And we sometimes let them out and they'd run around.

But we'd give them empty loo roll tubes to play with. They liked that. That was their favourite thing.

I think they had a wheel, which they generally ignore. And we had them, instead of in a cage, we had them in what we called the gerbil area. That was later.

No, originally we had, the first gerbils we had were in a little cage and they used to gnaw on the bars. A bit worrying when you see their little teeth on the bars. Yeah.

I mean, just even the idea of keeping them in a little cage is a bit messed up. We'll come to the ethics of keeping pets later. The deep ethical implications.

But it was fun having little gerbils. We must have been about, I don't know, six or seven years old or something like that. Do you remember what happened to those two? Well, I assume they died.

They're not immortal. Well, yeah, they settled down in Portugal. Retired.

They retired. They're still there to this day. Still there.

No, they, one of them escaped. I didn't remember that. No.

Yeah. They, there was one time when we let them out and they had them running around and stuff and we'd let them out and they'd run around, but we keep managed to keep them in enclosed in a certain area. But this one managed to get out of that area.

And there was a little hole in the floorboards. Right. Right.

And it just went for this hole and just went out and just escaped. It was never seen again. Never ever seen again.

I expected didn't survive very well. No, it would have got cold and would have run out of food and probably been bullied by mice and rats. Yeah.

You can imagine them going out. Where were you? Who are you? Yeah. Well, it was London though.

Where are you from? Yeah. They wouldn't have spoken a Brummie accent. They would have been.

Oi mate. Oi mate. Oi, what are you a gerbil? Coming around here, stealing our sesame seeds.

Stealing our cheese. And then, so there was one left then and it did die. Mum told us about this earlier.

Go on, go tell us the story. The gerbil died. And so the one remaining gerbil that we had died during the night, I suppose.

And mum and dad found it. And then they had to prepare themselves to tell us because we were only seven, six or seven years old or something. They expected us to be very upset.

They thought we'd be traumatised and it would be like a really difficult, you know, part of our upbringing. And I think mum decided to do it. And she said to us, um, boys, uh, we've got to tell you something very sad.

And we're like, what, what, what? I'm afraid the gerbil died. And she expected us to cry or something like that. And what happened? Well, apparently we just said, can we see it? I remember seeing it.

It was rigid, stiff as a board. And it was kind of halfway through a, a loo roll tube by in mid stretch. A loo roll tube.

And you could pick it up and it would stay solid. You know, it wasn't bendy. It was absolutely pick it up.

Well, I remember seeing mum pick it up and I think I might've touched it. Really? It's only, it's only a gerbil. See, it helps you learn about death.

It did. It did. So at that moment, something clicked.

Oh, I see mortality. Right? Yeah. Okay.

A loo roll tube. That's the cardboard tube in the, in the middle of a toilet roll. I think they're pretty universal.

But they might not know the phrase loo roll tube. Okay. Loo roll tube.

So this is the sort of thing that gerbils love. They would run through them and they would, uh, gnaw them, um, bite them and chew them up into a sort of kind of... Bedding. Bedding.

Yeah. They'd make bedding out of it. Everything was for bedding.

That was their main concern, food and bedding. So they, they were quite cool. Yeah, that's right.

So we had those, those gerbils. And then, uh, later on when we moved, um, to sort of the countryside, uh, we got cats. The first cat we got was rescued, I think.

We had other gerbils as well. We did. We had lots of other gerbils, but they come later.

Do they? Yeah, they do. Um, were the cats and the gerbils a good combo? Well... It never caused any problems, did it? No, it never caused any problems. The cat never, the cats never actually got the gerbils because later on, after we got cats, we did get some more gerbils, but the cats would try and, uh, sort of, um, the cats were obsessed with catching the gerbils, but they could never do it.

I don't remember that at all. I don't remember the any gerbil cat crossover. Really? I do.

I do. Okay. Well, your memory's much better than mine.

Yeah. That's why we record these sessions, just so I can... Fill me in on bits of my life. Help you remember your life.

It's, you know, you think that we're recording a podcast. It's not. I've, I've been asked to do this in order to help you remember.

It's therapy. Yeah. Um, and, uh, so yeah, we moved to the countryside and we got several cats.

The first one we got was a black cat that I think had been rescued from somewhere. I don't remember where she came from. I think it was a rescued cat.

Yeah. But she wasn't very sort of happy, was she? No, I think there was something wrong with her. She was very, she seemed, yeah, quite sad and very quiet, that cat.

Bit traumatised. Yeah. We don't know how, what had happened to that little cat.

But she was very sweet. Yeah. And, uh, her name was Cass, named after a casserole dish because when, um, so she was... Not Mama Cass from the mamas and the papas.

No, I don't think so. No. When, uh, my dad, when dad bought her, he planned to give her to mum as a surprise.

So, um, they, they bought the cat and then our grandparents kept the cats for a few days in their place. And apparently she would climb up to the top shelf in the kitchen where there was a casserole dish and she would curl up in the casserole dish and fall asleep up there. That's the only place she would feel comfortable.

So she would sleep in this casserole dish on the top shelf of the kitchen. And that's why her name ended up becoming Cass for casserole dish. Cassie.

Very good. Yeah. And, uh, yeah, Cass was very sort of jumpy and nervous and didn't really like a lot of human contact and, uh... Generally be found as far away from humans as possible.

So in the spare bedroom or... Under the bed. Hiding under the bed or... Yeah. Sweet thing.

And you try and, you try and like stroke her or, or like, you know, tickle her or something. And invariably she'd just strike, uh, strike out against you in defence, scratch you or something and hiss at you. So she wasn't the friendliest cat.

Um, and then later on, we got another cat. Do you remember that one? Yes. This cat we bought or was given from some friends of the parents and they'd had a litter of cats, litter of kittens from their cat and their little daughter had named all the kittens.

So when we got our second cat, which was called Posey, we were told it was a female little kitten that the daughter had named Posey and Posey is like a little bunch of flowers. It's an English word for a bunch of flowers. Pretty sort of feminine name.

Yeah. Very feminine name named by this little girl. So we were like, oh, that's so sweet.

We'll, we'll keep her as Posey. We won't change her name. And then a few months later, or a few weeks later, we took her to the doctors to get checked out.

And they said, actually, this little girl cat is actually a little boy cat. So the boy cat was called Posey and he never quite got over that,

did he? He was always a bit screwed up about that one. He was slightly mad.

He was mental. Completely mental. Really manic looking face, wild looking eyes, a big white flash, very fluffy white flash down its front and just bizarre, weird animal.

Bonkers. Yeah. But you went and picked Posey from the other kittens.

You and dad went and maybe mom as well. I think Posey was the cutest one of the lot. So we went, yeah, we'll have that little girl cat.

Yeah. She looks sweet. Not knowing it was actually a deeply messed up male cat deep issues.

But I remember you telling me that you picked Posey because she was, um, running around being quite hyperactive and funny and maybe climbing up your trouser leg or something like that. Yeah. She was the most active cat in the group.

And I was thinking, we know it's a he now. We thought it was a she then. So always go for the most liveliest one when you're choosing a cat.

That's my tip. Don't go for the one that's like with the pus coming out of its eyes. It's kind of sitting in the corner, looking a bit, you know, weird.

Go for the lively one. So you went for the lively one thinking it was a girl went to the doctor, not just, just have it checked out, but to have it spayed. Spayed that's unsexed.

What's it to, to castrate it, have an operation on a female cat. You have it spayed, which is to have an operation done on the cat so that it can't have kittens. Um, I mean, it sounds so cruel.

It does sound cruel, but otherwise they become wild basically. Yeah. And they attract lots of dodgy male cats from around the area.

And then you've got a pregnant cat and loads of kittens everywhere. And it's, it becomes a bit of a nightmare. The male cats can be very aggressive and they spray with, they haven't been spayed.

They haven't been castrated. Pheromone stuff all over the house. Yeah.

It's horrible basically. They're very, I mean, it does seem very mean though, to get that little bollocks cut off. Yeah.

So we took Posey, you took Posey to the, to the vet, not the doctor. Oh yeah. Not the doctor.

That would be weird. The doc, the doctor looks after humans. Yeah.

The doctor would be like, so Mr. Thompson, how can we help you today? Well, actually it's this little cat. Uh, well, normally. That's not covered by the NHS.

Sorry. Normally I do humans, but okay. In this case.

You asked nicely. They're basically humans and cats are basically the same. Same set of skills.

Um, and so Posey was taken to be spayed and the doc, the vet was like, uh, Posey is actually a boy. And, uh, the, and I probably, it was like, Oh really? Well cut his bollocks off. Same fee, isn't it? Same fee.

Same price. Yeah. Just do that.

Um, and yeah, so Posey was, uh, adorable as a kitten. Very, very funny, hilarious. Uh, he used to run around the place like a crazy possessed little creature, but so cute.

And, um, it was very fun to play with, but then it, it kind of, as it, as he grew up to become a full size cat, he still acted like a kitten still running around like a crazy little, uh, thing. And, um, and then just sort of slowly went a bit mad. What were some of the things that meant that it, that Posey was mad? How did you know that Posey was a bit mad? He would, he would occasionally just start running around really manically climbing up things, climbing underneath the underside of the sofa, clinging upside down.

Um, I can't remember what other things he used to eat a lot of wild animals, which I also think is a bit bad introducing a pet into a wild

ecosystem ecosystem where it will just ravage all the local wildlife. Totally. Another reason not to have a pet is because it eats all the little wild birds and mice and stuff ruins the delicate balance of the ecosystem in the area.

And it used to eat and catch and eat big rabbits that were in the fields near where we lived. And, um, one day I remember coming downstairs and there was a full size rabbit just with his head lying in the, in the cat's food bowl. And somehow we dragged this rabbit through the cat flap as well, which was quite impressive, but he hadn't eaten it.

I think it was a present for us. Like you feed me, I feed you. And so we've looked, Jesus, look at the size of that rabbit.

It's massive. It's like the Serengeti out there. Like those sort of nature documentaries of lions, you know, taking down wildebeest and stuff.

It was kind of the equivalent of that. Yeah. Um, and Luke, you saw it eating a rabbit hole once, several times I would, uh, come back.

We had a little room between the kitchen and the back garden, which is where we'd put the cat's food down. And there was a cat flap that let, let the cat into that little space. So we, we wouldn't let the cat into the house at night.

Usually, um, he would have, um, he would have that little sort of utility room area and outside. And he would, uh, bring in animals, uh, into the utility room onto the doormat and then eat them there.

And a couple of times I went into the utility room and saw Posey in a moment of wildness.

Cause normally he'd be all domesticated and very sweet. And then sometimes you'd catch him at night and he's a wild animal. It's like, what, who are you? And, um, I remember seeing once or twice him with a rabbit.

They're like biting through, like biting the rabbit's head off. He would always start with the head and crush it. Skull crunch crunch head first.

Yeah. Eat the entire rabbit bones and everything. You would eat the entire thing, bones and everything except for the spleen, which is probably like some disgusting little organ, toxic little bit of internal organ and, and the little fluffy tail.

They're horrible. They'd be like a little fluffy tail left on the and a spleen. I mean, that's the thing with cats.

Dogs are loyal. Cats are just little bastards. Really? They don't really care.

They'll stick around and pretend to be cute for food, but it, you know, if they were the same size as we were, we'd be finished. They would eat us. The first time they got a bit bored, they'd just kill and eat the whole family.

And also they don't really know what they are. I mean, I think a dog knows its place and it knows its role in the family, but a cat isn't really self-aware and it doesn't really know that it's a pet and it's

just, it seems to be quite confused about its role in life. I mean, it's a killer.

It's designed to kill and eat things, but yet it's petted and soft and domesticated and they're kind of bipolar. I think psychopaths are, they are completely psycho. And there's a little fact I heard the other day that if you, if you're driving and you hit and run over a dog in the UK, you're legally obliged to report that to the police office, police station.

And, but if you run over and hit and kill a cat, you're not really. And we were saying, well, that's a bit unfair. And I've realised because dogs are working animals, they actually have a use.

Nobody relies on their cat for like, you know, you can't get guide cats. Like you can get guide dogs or sheep cats, but you can get sheep, dogs, dogs. You could rely on a dog.

So if you're blind, you might need that dog. And if it gets run over, that's going to really affect your life a lot. But a cat is no good for anything.

Really. There's no function for a cat in society, apart from maybe keeping mice away, but that's not really something that you're going to, you know, really depend upon. They're basically selfish animals, aren't they? Cats.

They look after number one, um, primarily. And what is this thing? Have you ever heard this thing about when a person sort of dies in their, in their home and they get eaten by their cat, eaten by their

own cat, like the, when the person has died, the cat will just start to eat your face off or something. You do hear these stories.

Yeah. Yeah. They're, they are pretty nasty little psychopaths, um, cats, but we've, we've created them, you know, it's our fault.

Did we, did we create cat human being well to mess? They've been domesticated over the centuries. Wild cats that have been bred and cross bred and cross bred and to make them smaller and cuter and more manageable. Would you have a dog? I wouldn't.

Um, if I lived in the countryside, maybe, uh, I think they're, they're great when they're in the great outdoors and especially when they're intelligent and functioning, you know, they have a use. I like working dogs or at least dogs that, you know, can look after themselves. I don't like these little city dogs that you see around that are just little wastes of space.

Basically these little handbag dogs and stuff that you say, I can hate them. Little rats. And they're just there to, to look cute.

And they've been bred to the point of almost uselessness. Like you can get these little bulldogs, French bulldogs and that they can hardly breathe. They've been bred to look so pug faced and you know, squashy face, which we think is cute, but they're useless.

They can barely walk. You know, a lot of those dogs, I might, we might have people listening to this who actually have those dogs. Sorry.

I'm not, don't take it personally. I just personally hate them. Well, we might have people listening to this who have those dogs and we don't really mean any offence, but also we might have people listening to this who actually know about dogs and know about how to breed dogs and, uh, and all those sorts of things.

And I was told once by a Spanish guy that I taught English to who was a dog breeder. He told me about some of those breeds of dogs like pugs and other like bulldogs and things like that. They have those creased up faces.

Um, and they have those sort of, uh, that those broad front legs and stocky little back legs and they have the lower jaw is sort of, um, protruding prominent lower jaw. And they're basically designed to fight their fighting dogs. And, and the, the, the front legs are quite broad to give them stability.

The back legs are quite close together to, to give them extra force when pushing forwards. And, uh, a smaller dog in a sense is, is, um, more dangerous or more effective because they kind of, they can go up and they've got a lower sensor, lower centre of gravity so that it's harder for other dogs to flip them over. And they've got a lot of strength around the neck and shoulders and also the, the wrinkles and creases in their face are so that blood can drain off the, the blood doesn't go in the eyes and it drains away from the face.

Sounds a bit farfetched, but I'll believe it. I'll believe it. Yeah.

I don't really know anything about dogs, so I'll buy that. Um, yeah, very interesting stuff. But, uh, I mean, in mediaeval times there was

a big part of hunting and, you know, every nobleman and probably lower down people had hunting dogs and they're in all these mediaeval paintings and stuff, King Henry VIII and all that.

Really interesting point though, that dogs perform lots of different useful functions. Like you have police dogs. Yeah.

You couldn't have a police cat. No, that wouldn't work. Like if, if people in the city were rioting, there was like a big, uh, um, you know, violent riots.

Bring out some bad tempered cats on leads and sort out the protesters. Maybe like a leopard or a tiger. I think that'd be too skittish to be any good.

You can't really train a leopard. I don't think. Yeah.

The chances are the leopard would just eat the policemen. Yeah. It would attack the policemen.

It would be quite funny, but, um, or it would, it would certainly introduce a, an element of mad kind of danger into the proceedings. Wouldn't it? It would, do you think you could disperse a riot by introducing a bunch of, uh, big cats into the street? Um, I think it could. I think that people would run.

People would run, wouldn't they? They'd run home. But then the next thing you've got to deal with is all the big cats that are just loose in London. Yeah.

It's not, it's not very discriminatory as far as who the target is. No. Dogs are much more effective for that sort of thing.

And you can't have drugs, cats either. You can't, you know, drug sniffing cats at borders and airports or explosive sniffing, sniffing cats. But cats weirdly do have a herb that seems to make them high.

Have you seen that? Yeah. Catnip. Catnip is a sort of herb that grows naturally and cats love it and it makes them go all high.

And it's quite funny, isn't it? It's hilarious. They sniff it and they start rolling around on the ground and they drool everywhere. I feel like we're going on a bit of a tangent here.

Should we go back to sort of pets? Yeah. So pets we have breeding dogs quickly. Uh, apparently Dalmatians are really, really stupid.

What? The ones with spots? Yeah. Because they've been bred for their looks. Yeah.

But they haven't been bred for their brains. Is that right? Apparently they're really stupid. Okay.

It's just a little fact. I may be made up. Okay.

We may need to fact check that. Yeah. Fact check all of it.

Dalmatians are really stupid. It's a sort of fact that you hear in the pub, isn't it? Dalmatians stuffed as a brush. Yeah.

They're the stupidest of dogs. Dalmatians. I could Google it, but I don't want to.

Let's just leave that a mystery. Okay. And, um, Posey, right? The cat.

So his double life is double life. He would, he would be a cute cat during the daytime, sleeping on the windowsill, uh, playing around with string and stuff like that and meowing a lot when it, when he was hungry, but then at night, well, we'd put him out at night. He wasn't really a pampered cat.

Some cats get to stay in at night and some cats get put out at night. It's sort of tradition. Yeah.

You put the cat out. Yes. And we used to put the cat out at night.

It could stay in the little utility room, but it was pretty freezing in there. It can't have been much fun. There was nowhere to really sleep.

Yeah. I think that maybe there was a cardboard box that he slept in. Yeah.

Well, they like, they like cardboard boxes. You can, you can buy a cat like a really nice, uh, handmade, uh, comfortable sleeping box will choose the cardboard box, um, for some reason. So, but I remember a few times, um, noticing that Posey was getting up to things at night outside.

Did you ever see, I remember one once actually us both waking up in the middle of the night because we could hear all of these howling and screeching sounds going on in the garden, all this kind of all that kind of stuff. And we, and, uh, it wasn't Yoko Ono doing a concert in the back garden. Very funny.

It was, um, uh, loads of the local cats had gathered around in our back garden and they were being really weird, having a Mexican standoff, just staring at each other. Why, why wailing? That's right. Staring wailing and just arching their backs and being really weird and sort of walking backwards and stuff.

Probably a full moon. Yeah. And I remember though, this, that all these cats were being really weird and, uh, arching their backs and being aggressive and having this big standoff around a flower bed in the middle of the patio in our garden.

And then I remember seeing Posey in the middle of the flower bed, just relaxed. He was just like chilling out in the flower bed while all these other cats were all sort of having weird, uh, standoffs with each other. And Posey was just lounging like some sort of mafia boss.

He was either the alpha male or most beta-ish male. We don't know which. One of the two is either the king of the cats or just the lowest rung of all the cats.

But who knows if any cat experts know. Ride in and let us know. It was his territory.

I mean, he was, um, you know, in the middle of his own territory. And so maybe he called a cat meeting and he was sort of lounging there while all these other cats were sort of posturing. Debating the best way to overthrow the humans.

Yeah. Yeah. I don't know.

It's hard to tell really. Uh, but it was pretty, pretty weird. Um, did we have, um, any other, well, we had gerbils.

They had more gerbils. We had stick insects at some point, I think. What's a stick insect? I think that was when I was at small school, little, what do you call it? Primary school.

Uh, stick insect looks very much like a stick acts very much like a stick. In fact, you might as well just get a stick. What's a stick.

It's a Brown Twiggy thing. That's a stick. Well, what's Brown and sticky, a stick insect.

So everyone knows what a stick insect is. They're completely useless. And it's very hard to tell when they're dead or alive when there's like 50 of them in a cage or just one.

I can't really can't see the point. A stick. We need to, sorry.

We do need to explain what a stick is because you've got a tree. Okay. Here's how we explain it.

A tree. Wait, you always pick the most obscure, not obscure, but the sort of random words to explain. They can understand all this, but the one word that they get hung up on is stick.

Yes. I might have been teaching English for 15, 16 years. So if we're talking about stick insects, they might need to know what a stick is.

And they already know what an insect is. Yes, of course. They know what insect is.

Yes. It's far more, a far higher frequency word than stick. Believe me, believe me.

A stick is something you throw to a dog that's fallen off a tree. Okay. The dog's fallen off a tree.

Yeah. Go on. A stick is a thing you throw to a dog.

It's a small piece of wood. Yeah. It's fallen off a branch, but sticks that stick insects resemble are the tiny, tiny little ones like two centimetres long.

Yeah. Okay. And I think stick insects are both male and female at the same time, or they've got some sort of weird gender fluidity shit going on very ahead of their time.

Right. And so, yeah, they look like a stick. They don't move that you might as well have a stick as a pet.

Yeah. And it it's less disappointing just to have an actual stick because you know, they just die or they breed massively. One of the two, they all just die within a fortnight or they'll breed to the point of which you've got to start giving them away.

Stick insects. Yeah. Not sticks.

Stick insects don't breed. I mean, oh God. Sticks don't breed.

Sticks don't breed. Stick insects sometimes breed or die. Yeah.

Okay. And they're generally distributed at school through a network, sort of underground network of school children, like stick insect dealers basically. And you might get the first one free and then the second one's going to cost you.

Right. They get you with the first one. They get you hooked.

Then when that dies, my stick insect died. Well, I can sort you out a female, but it can be two quid. What, what, what were the, uh, what was the attraction of having a stick insect? I honestly don't know.

But as a child, if you can remember because they were, they look kind of cool and you stare at them. Is that a stick or is that an insect? And that was kind of the game. Sometimes they'd move not fucking hell.

That is a stick insect. And then other times they wouldn't, right. It could be a dead stick insect could just be a stick dead insect or a stick.

That's really difficult one to work out. Um, okay. We had gerbils after we'd had cats, we kept them not in a cage, but we kept them in a glass.

What used to be like a, an aquarium for fish. And we put our gerbils in that. Was that, was that okay? We called it the gerbil area.

We did. Yeah. But they had holes in the top.

It wasn't sealed or anything. And it was like a blue roll hole things, blue roll tube, blue roll tubes, inner tubes. Right.

And, uh, and that was about it. That's all I had was like some bits of maybe some bits of wood or a bowl of food. I got creative, uh, once that I created all these like, uh, levels made out of wood.

There are seven levels. I seem to remember. Yeah.

All these different levels made out of wood with holes drilled in them. That was cool. Actually.

And then it was like a sort of gerbil fun house. It's like a network of tunnels made out of wood and the gerbils would, would run around through all the tunnels and they build their nest at the bottom in the corner and stuff. That was good fun.

Yeah, it was good fun with all that wood in there. They would spend the entire time just gnawing constantly this sound of like, they'd be gnawing a piece of wood, which would like, um, rattle

and tap against the glass. So you'd be eating dinner and there'd just be this click going on in the room.

I think those gerbils were called Terry and June who were named after a very old school English sitcom based in suburbia with a sort of middle-aged to retirement age couple. And it's very old school British comedy of which the kind that's deeply unfashionable now. And there was lots of misunderstandings and maybe double entendres in Terry and June.

Yeah. I think so just hilarious situations where they get stuck in a room or, you know, like, uh, the, the neighbour misunderstands what's going on. And, you know, that's a bit like a sort of, how would you describe Terry and June? You have to just link it just like a, a suburban, it's like ordinary suburban life with these two people.

Terry was a bit of an idiot and June was really sweet. And they would, for example, a lot of the time they'd be sitting in the garden, uh, reading the newspaper or something, and then something funny would happen with the neighbour or the, uh, the sun Broly thing. Yeah.

The sort of sun umbrella would fall down or something like that. Kind of. Yeah.

I can't remember why we used to watch it all the time. I used to find it really funny. I used to love Terry and June.

So we named our gerbils after Terry and June. And then, um, and the gerbils would be running around inside the gerbil area and the,

and Posey would, would sort of trot through the kitchen and they'd be on the floor, uh, by the door. He would trot through the kitchen and just casually, and then he would just spot one of the gerbils out of his, out of the corner of his eye and just go bonkers and just launch himself at the gerbil area and scrabble in the corner, you know, scrambling at the corner to try and get one of the gerbils.

He didn't know that you can't dig through glass. He didn't really get glass as a con. They were metal edged as well.

These, this aquarium gerbil area. Yeah. So he wasn't ever going to get through the gerbils weren't bothered at all.

No, they just look at him and go, yeah, they just look at carry on. Yeah. Lol.

Um, that's the extent of the pets that we have, but you had a, a goldfish at university, didn't you? Do you remember that? Yeah. I had actually originally had three goldfish. Uh-huh.

One was sort of bluish. One was one of those fan tail type ones. And one was a classic sort of straightforward goldfish.

And the other two died very, very quickly as they often do. Can you tell me how they died? I mean, well, one day they're just floating on the top because what they, what gold fins go down, you know, you've got a healthy goldfish when it's fins all erect and healthy looking and they're looking all lively. And when they get a bit sick, their fins start drooping and you start fretting and feeding them too much.

Maybe I haven't fed them enough, but that's what always kills them is too much food. Yeah. If you want to keep a goldfish healthy, just don't feed it anything at all for years.

And it keeps them really fit and alert. It's basically nearly starved them. That's how you get a healthy goldfish.

And they pick through all the stones at the bottom for tiny, tiny morsels of probably food or poo or something. And, um, yeah, so the other two died pretty quickly in this one, just live for flipping ever. And I felt a bit bad just being one in there, but we're going to do the other two died.

It's not my fault. And it went round university with me and back. So they live for, they live for at least five or six years and it was big by the end.

Yeah. It was really, it grew really big and you're right. It was really, really lively and you didn't feed it.

I mean, that's the thing. No, I did feed it just very little, very, very, very rarely, very small amounts of food. That's the main cause of death of goldfish in a house.

It's by overfeeding because the kids always go, I want to feed the goldfish and it's fun, but then they just die really quickly. It's the only way that you can interact with the goldfish. Yeah.

And so that's that, I think it was called jaws or it might've been called Goldie. I'm not sure named after the drum and bass DJ. I remember though, when, um, you would go into your room, the fish

would notice you come in and it would start swimming back and forwards really quickly that hoping that it was going to get fed that week.

Yeah. But, uh, certainly stayed alive for longer than any goldfish I've ever known before. So maybe your, uh, your approach of not feeding it very much, um, works.

It is a bit sad though. Keeping, keeping a goldfish on its own. It seems a bit lonely.

Do you think so? I haven't got a clue, how much of a brain have they got, but they say they've got a memory of 10 seconds. Well, it's a very lonely 10 seconds, but I mean, it would be like 10 seconds. Oh, I'm a goldfish.

I'm a goldfish. And they'd be like, Oh, I'm a goldfish again. Oh.

And, um, you know, if, if it's only got 10 second memory, it's not going to care whether it's got friends or not. Is it coming? I don't know. I don't know the inner workings of a goldfish.

Oh, where am I? Oh, I'm floating around in a, in a, in a thing. Um, I'm floating around in like a little, uh, goldfish bowl. Um, I wonder if there are any error, there are any other people in here.

Let me have a look. Oh, uh, where am I? Things with goldfish, they don't need the filters and stuff. They can survive just in ordinary water for a long, long time.

Actually, didn't we put it outside into the pond? Is that what happened to it? I think we did. We had a tiny little pond, um, basically an overflow from the gutters. It's clean water.

It was fairly clean water. Just rainwater. Yeah.

And I think we released it into there and I'd see it every now and then. Yeah. In amongst the little lily pads and stuff.

We had loads of goldfish over the years. I had one too, which, um, ultimately got released into the pond and yeah, we used to put our goldfish into the pond eventually and they would stay and survive in there. And you see them even in winter.

Big. Be fine. Yeah.

And you'd see them a glimpse of it. Yeah. Yeah.

Funny. Yeah. Um, it's probably happier in there than in a bowl or in a little box.

Oh yeah. I would have thought so. And so, uh, would you have a pet now? Um, you live, you live, uh, no, I thought about what I'd like to have a pet, but my flat's very small and I live in central London.

Well, urban London, not central. Um, and the only pet I'd quite like the idea of is a ferret. What's a ferret? It's, I don't actually know.

Is it a mammal or is it something else? It's a, isn't it a rodent? No, it's not a rodent. I think it's a sort of quadruped mammal. Let me just check.

They're very lively and they're kind of like a traditional pet in the North of England. Uh-huh. And people I think go ratting with them, catch rats and stuff.

And they're like a mink or a, let me tell you. Okay. The ferret is the domesticated form of European polecat, a mammal belonging to the same genus as the weasel, um, mustela of the family mustelidae.

They typically have brown, black, white, or mixed fur. So they're kind of like quite long. They're very quick, very, they're quite clever.

I think they're quite funny. They're very cute. Um, but I think they need quite a lot of care and attention.

And I think you're supposed to let them go outside sometimes and stuff. Yeah. And I don't have enough space or time to have a ferret.

So unfortunately I'm not going to get a ferret. I need to explain though, still what it is that they've, they're kind of very long. I mean, they look like a polecat, like a little wild mink or something.

Yeah. Long, low to the ground. I think they eat all sorts of things.

I think they insects. They've got a long tail. They've got like a, um, it's hard to explain.

I don't want to say that it looks like a rat because people, no, they don't know like rats. I think they can swim. I think they can eat snakes.

They're pretty versatile, pretty tough little creatures. Um, people use, they're very cute and they're very interested in things. They're very lively and intelligent and, um, they love exploring.

They love climbing up things, but I think it would be too much to get one. Right. I'm not going to.

Okay. They, um, they are used for doing things like catching other animals. Like for example, they can be used to hunt rabbits.

You, because they are so long and thin and they're very good at crawling through tunnels in the ground. So you send the ferrets into the rabbit holes and they will chase the rabbits out and then you can catch them when they come out the other end. Um, and they're also good for kind of chasing or catching rats that might've found their way into, you know, parts of the parts of someone's house or something like that.

And also up North, they have a sport of putting ferrets down your trousers. This might sound ridiculous because it's because it is ridiculous, but I'm sure there's videos of this online, but blokes tie string around the bottom of their trousers and shove a load of ferrets down their trousers. And they wriggle around.

I don't really know what the point of it is except to prove how cool and tough you are, because there's always a danger. The ferret

might see your penis and think it was a tasty morsel and take a big bite into it. And I think that's the risk.

I think it's a bit of like an extreme sport before they'd invented skateboarding and stuff and like hand gliding. So you just get a few ferrets, chuck them down your trousers and hope for the best. And that was, they, you know, they had to find their own entertainment in those days.

The winner was the one who could get the most ferrets down his trousers without his penis being bitten off. Right. I see.

Okay. So that's that. All right.

Ferrets. If anyone, if any of your listeners have got ferrets, please post a ferret video because I think they're really cool. We want to see a video of you with the ferrets down your trousers, please.

Maybe not. We don't want to be responsible for any ferret related accidents. Trouser.

Trouser related ferret incidents. Yeah. But if you do it anyway, just send us the video, but we're not responsible for any trouser mishaps.

Yeah. Other animals as pets. So we talked a bit about dogs there.

I mean, we're not really dog people. We haven't had dogs in our lives, but I think they're cool when they're out in the country and they're like sheep. Dogs are amazing when you watch the sheep dog trials and they can communicate with the farmer, can

communicate with the dog by just whistling and shouting commands.

And the dog can round up a whole load of sheep and get it through a fence, you know, a gate. Yeah. And I think that's incredible.

I love those sort of more intelligent farm type dogs like Collies and um, yeah, like, yeah. Things like that. Yeah.

But I'm not really a big dog fan. I find them generally quite annoying and they shit everywhere. And, uh, they bark.

And when you do a paper round like both of us did, when we were kids, you soon learn to fear and, and hate dogs. They generally bite you and they're just little bastards. Doing a paper round involves riding around the town on your bike and delivering papers to people's houses.

And we both did paper rounds in our village and, um, doing the paper round involves, yeah, like, um, going to the front door of people's houses. And many of those people have dogs and some of those dogs are very, uh, yappy, like, yeah, you know, they bark a lot, right? I used to hate Jack Russells for that reason. They're a sort of English breed on little dogs.

They're known for, again, ratting and stuff. You can send them down rabbit holes and catch rats with them. And they've got this action when they catch a toy, like a little fluffy toy or something, they've, you know, fling it from side to side in a kind of figure of eight type motion, which basically will just immediately break the neck of a rat or something.

But you can see that in them when they're even just playing. That's their default movement is the ring. The creature in half basically can be very aggressive, but they can also be very sweet.

My friend's got a Jack Russell now, and I really like it when they're well trained and well brought up. Just they can be mean when they're not looked after properly. There was a Jack Russell that, um, lived at a house that we used to deliver papers to.

Do you remember once, um, that, um, it was, it was a bit like, um, sort of Russian roulette of like, you'd open the gates to get to the front door. He didn't know if the Jack Russell was loose or not. And sometimes the Jack, it was loose and it would come tearing towards you and just start biting you and start biting your ankles and stuff.

And, uh, once you told me that, um, that happened and the owner, the, the, the man of the house just arrived with this whip. He was a woman, actually this horrible woman that lived in this house. And she just start whipping this dog with this stick.

And I was thinking, not surprised. It's badly behaved if that's how the owner treats it. So I think it's a reflection of the owner on how a dog behaves, but, um, don't beat your dogs out there.

Okay. It's not cool. There'll be someone listening to go, but you have to beat dogs.

Otherwise, no, you don't. No, you don't. All right.

Um, what else? Don't have a dog. If you don't like them, don't have one, don't have one and then hit it. Right.

Yeah. Just don't have one rather than get one and he hit it. Yeah.

Just get a pillow, hit the pillow. If you need to hit something or hit yourself in the face, don't do that. Um, there were one house on that paper round.

There was a very aggressive little dog. I don't even know what it was. I never saw it, but, um, on the front door of that house, uh, the letterbox was down at the bottom.

And so I would push the paper through the letterbox and the dog would come running and would grab the other end of the paper. And then there'd be like this tug of war situation. I can either let the paper go and the dog would just pull the paper out.

And, but sometimes I would hold onto the paper for a bit and the dog would tear the paper to shreds in his teeth. Um, that was, that was funny. Didn't you once managed to, uh, launch a paper, uh, like a missile at, I think it was probably the same house actually, but this dog would come running down the hall and I rolled up the newspaper and just slightly bat it into the face of the dog.

But the paper would fly through the air and you could time it right so that you'd managed to shoot the paper into the hallway of the house while the dog was approaching. And you'd managed to like get you know, hit, uh, hit the target and you get 10 extra points for doing that. And the person wouldn't get their paper because it would be in 10 different pieces.

Yeah. Cause the dog would tear it to shreds again. But I wouldn't do that now.

I wouldn't, I wouldn't hit a dog in the face with a newspaper. No, of course not. Cause I don't do a paper round anymore.

Um, that's little dogs, little yappy dogs. There was also a dog down the road from us that was huge, a great Dane. It was like the size of a horse.

Do you remember that dog? Yeah. Terrifying. Absolutely terrifying.

It was like something come bounding up to you and you just like get the fear. It was like the hound of the Baskervilles. If you've ever read that, we probably haven't Sherlock Holmes book, Sherlock Holmes book about a glow in the dark dog.

Yeah. Yeah. A bit far-fetched.

I mean, you'd see it and you think, Jesus Christ, that's a big, scary glow in the dark dog. You wouldn't think it was a supernatural or maybe you would maybe, maybe in those days, um, in the 19th century, maybe you would, but, um, it was wide open the whole supernatural thing. Yeah.

That great Dane, that dog that we're talking about, the big one, it would come running towards you and it would be 10, 20. Feet tall. No, 10, 20 metres away.

And it would already be huge. And then you'd realise it's still got 10 to 20 metres to come before it gets to me. Through your perspective.

It's already massive. That house is tiny. Oh my God.

That dog's enormous. It's a monster. And, uh, we'd have to walk past the house to get to the station.

And again, it was like Russian roulette trying to work out if the gate would be open. And if the gate was open, uh, you'd have to like try and sneak past like a Ninja. And invariably the dog would come running out and, uh, it would bound towards the fence.

And it, I always thought it would leap over the fence, but they could have done. Yeah. If he got hungry enough, it would be over that scary, so horrible and scary.

All right. What's next? Well, I was thinking what other types of animals could be kept as pets. We've had, uh, ferrets and things.

I quite fancy a lizard as a pet. I think lizards are quite cool. Really? Yeah.

I like lizards. They don't do much though. Do they? They sort of move very slowly, stick their tongue out, eat a cricket.

That's it. That's about it. It's a bit like, I think you need to have a hot lamp as well.

Like a hot lamp. Yeah. So keep your lizard toasty and warm at all times because they're, they're obviously cold-blooded animals and they need to be kept warm.

Right. Um, and I can't be bothered with all that. No.

And they, they shed their skin and stuff, don't they? I think they are cool though. I like, I like lizards. Okay.

There we go. You need, you need like a good branch. Oh, my friend, I've never seen them, but my friend's girlfriend has got a wardrobe full of snakes.

Whoa. She bought this wardrobe and adapted it, put a glass front on it. I think it might be on its side and there's two compartments and there's a, like a boa constrictor.

I've seen photos of it. Seriously? Yeah. Boa constrictor and one other type of snake.

Whoa. And sometimes they get out apparently as well, which the flatmates don't like very much. I think snakes are quite cool, but I wouldn't have one.

Apparently they make quite good pets. You know, I think they could be quite intelligent, quite affectionate. They purr sort of.

Do they? No, I just made that up. Snakes are cool, but I wouldn't have one. Play Frisbee with them.

Right. Fetch with a snake. Yeah.

You have to wait a while. Yeah. It takes quite a long time and they don't always bring the stick back.

Right. Apart from that. Sometimes they come back like three hours later, but just with a massive lump.

Yeah. With a Jack Russell inside them. They've swallowed a dog.

Yeah. What about like a big animals as pets, things like lions or monkeys? Probably not recommended. I mean, a monkey can rip your face off, rip your arms out of your sockets.

And lions, not a good track record of people keeping big cats as pets. Quite a lot of them get killed and eaten by the animals as we established earlier. That's a cat.

Yeah. But big cats are big enough to kill you. They sometimes do.

So don't not to be recommended. I don't think. Okay.

Did you ever see that Louis Theroux documentary about keeping a dangerous animals as pets? I think I've seen all of them. So I must have, but I don't remember it exactly. There's one where he visits a woman who has like, you know, all these different pets, including a chimpanzee and, and, and, uh, she comes out with a chimp and gives the chimp to Louie and Louie's just got this, this is it? No, it's a baboon or something.

It's a baboon. Terrifying. So scary.

Really scary. Uh, I think it's a baboon. Is that a monkey? Is that a kind of monkey monkey? Um, but you re you know, that, uh, it's strong enough to, to kill him really easily if it wants to.

And you get the impression that any minute now it could just go mental and it's like scratch his face or, and he's trying to keep cool. So his vibe doesn't like freak it out. Yeah.

And he's trying to keep calm, but you can tell he's panicking and scared. Uh, there's also a documentary called project Nim. What's that? It's about a, um, an experiment in the seventies.

It's definitely in the seventies where they decided to bring up a monkey as a baby or chimp. So this chimp was called Nim and these bunch of hippies basically decided to rear it and see if they can teach it language. So they bring it up, like they bring it up like a child.

Yeah. And to start with, it seems to be learning language and all these doctors are amazed and scientists because it seems to have learned sign language, but it turns out that it's actually not learning sign language. It's just learning how to repeat things in order to get treats.

So it's quite a misleading experiment to start with. You think, Oh my God, she's saying, I love you. And it's miming back.

But all it's doing is repeating the process it needs to do in order to get its treat. So it's not really communicating. It's just learned this pattern that it has to do to get the food.

And as it gets bigger, it becomes more and more unruly and the kind of really dangerous and a wild and the commune that they live in. It's basically a bit of a hippie situation and they start giving it booze around the table. And they also start giving it weed and this fucking chimp is smoking spliffs around the table with them.

These bloody hippie never trust a hippie, especially don't trust to bring up a chimp. And not surprisingly, it starts getting really dangerous and it attacks a couple of people and they have to put it into sort of monkey care. They have to abandon it.

And it's because it's built up such a bond with this woman, it's heartbroken. And it ends up in sort of in chimp jail with all these other disturbed chimps. And it's really, really sad.

And then like 15 years later, I've sort of spoiled the film here. But 15 years later, she goes back to see and it recognises her immediately. Yeah.

She's like, Oh my God, it's Nim. She gets in a cage and it practically kills her. No, really? Yeah.

It breaks her arm or something dislocates her arm, something like that. And it stops just short of killing her. She says later, it knew it.

It could have killed me and it chose not to just wanted to really hurt me. Yeah. Because all the hurt that she'd abandoned it and you know, all this other stuff.

So it's very sad. Really sad. Yeah.

Yeah. So there's something weird about keeping certain animals as pets, but then, you know, cats and dogs, I mean, it's, it is kind of a symbiotic relationship. You know, we joke about the way that cats only care about themselves, but I think that cats are actually very good for people.

And you know, they have a pretty good life being fed and kept in nice, comfortable surroundings. And apparently they give, you know, both dogs and cats give a lot of pleasure to people. And they help to reduce stress.

And for example, old people who live alone, having a little dog, they live longer. And it also forces you to go outside for a walk. Yeah.

Who's walking, who man, if you take your dog, the dog owners live longer and they have are healthier than people that don't have dogs. But is it fair to keep animals as pets? That's the question, the ethics of keeping an animal. Is it up to us to do that? Well, the only reason they exist is so that they can be had as pets.

It's not like they're being taken out of the wild. So they, they, they're being brought into existence in order to be pets. So, but also another issue about this cats and dogs eat a lot of meat.

Yes. Mainly beef. And there is an argument to say we should stop having pets because all that's contributing to the like deforestation, all that, all that meat has to be farmed.

And we don't know, we all know about the excessive farming and what it's doing to the environment. And those cows fart all the time. Apparently all that gas contributes to greenhouse gases.

So they cut down rainforests to put cattle farms on and stuff. So if you're a vegan and you've got a pet, you're a hypocrite, but we're not having a go. Yeah.

I don't know if vegans pets eat meat or not. They do. You have to feed a dog and a cat meat.

You can't eat feed a dog vegetables. I think you can feed a dog protein that tastes like meat. I think Linda McCartney's veggie sausages.

You think they're happy with that? Uh, I have no idea, but I wouldn't be surprised if there are protein foods for dogs and cats that are not made of meat that are made of other types of protein. Let us know if you're a vegan dog owner. Yeah.

If you don't bother. All right. No, I would like to know, but I'd like to know if you are a vegan dog owner.

Uh, what do you feed? How do you justify that? Would you feed your dog? Uh, I'd like to know. I think that's, I think we're probably done here, James. Oh, status dogs.

We've got a thing in this country, probably in other countries where people like having dangerous, aggressive dogs, kind of in the inner cities as a status symbol, a bit like having, you know, a weapon or something weaponised dogs. So you get these dogs. I think the

worst ones are, well, pit bulls are quite dangerous and Staffordshire bull terriers.

They're an English breed that are very cultish following for these dogs. Staffies they're known as. And I think if they're well looked after, they can be really cool, but they can very easily get very dangerous.

And you see examples of people kind of straining with this dog straining on the lead out of control and some not very disciplined dog owner going, stop it, Rex, come here. And he's like hitting the dog and stuff. And these dogs every now and then grab a kid and kill it or something does get in the news.

Yeah. So don't do that. Dogs that are bred for fighting.

Um, but they're just status symbols. Yeah. I remember that guy I told you before who told me about, you know, the dog breeder who told me about a different breeds of dog.

He told me that these, these dogs are actually, um, you know, although they're fighting dogs, they're not aggressive and that they're actually, they actually make great pets and all that sort of thing. But you know, I wouldn't have one around my kid. Don't you often find that dog owners will always tell you things like that.

Like if you're walking through the park and there's a big aggressive dog that comes running towards you, the dog owner will always say, Oh, don't worry. He's fine. It's not aggressive.

It's like, he looks pretty bloody aggressive to me. I think that, uh, that's a note to end this chat. Or do you, do you have anything you desperately need to say about pets, pigs, miniature pigs? Yes.

I heard a funny story a while ago about a family that bought a, uh, a miniature pig. You can have these miniature pigs and they were sold a miniature pig, but it turned out it wasn't a miniature pig. It was just an ordinary piglet.

And as it grew, it grew to the size of like a pork pig, five feet long roaming around the house. Um, so anyway, that was quite funny. Tell us your pet stories, ladies and gents, if you've got a pet, you've got a funny pets, uh, just, uh, write in the comment section and tell us your pet story.

Uh, we'd love to know about it. And if you are a vegan with a dog or a cat, what do you feed to that dog or cat? Is there such a thing as a vegetarian food for dogs and cats? Thanks so much for listening. And he's gone into the cheesy radio host voice now, Casey wandering.

Uh, thanks so much for talking to me on the podcast today, James talking about pets and, uh, all right. Well, thanks anyway, James, thanks for talking to me and it's time for lunch now. Sweet.

Okay, Luke. Cheers. So there you go.

## EPISODE ENDING

That was my chat with James about pets. I hope you enjoyed listening to that one in the comment section, please write about

pets that you have or that you have had in your lives. Tell us about cute or funny things that your pets do.

Do you have an unusual pet? Have you got any good little pet stories? Put your thoughts into words and add them in the comment section. Now, in terms of language, this conversation obviously contains some vocabulary that would be worth reviewing and clarifying. Also, there was some grammar there, of course, uh, we were talking a lot about the past.

So there were the usual past tenses, but also some very specific aspects of grammar that you might not have noticed. And I'm talking about the ways in which we don't just tell stories in the past, but the ways that we describe habits in the past. There are certain grammatical forms that we use for that, and it might not be obvious to you how that's done.

Um, now I can help you to learn these things, these, uh, certain grammatical forms and bits of vocabulary. I can help you learn them. I can help you to learn how to notice them, uh, to learn how to understand them and learn how to use them to listen and speak like native English speakers.

Well, it would be useful, for example, if I published a follow-up episode to this in which I go through all of that language, that would be a way in which I could help you. And that is the sort of thing that you can expect from Luke's English Podcast Premium when that arrives. Now you might've heard me talk about LEP Premium in recent episodes.

I'm setting it up at the moment. If all goes according to plan and it works properly, as I hope it will, then at some point soon, I'll make that service available to you. And you'll be able to sign up, support my work and gain access to some extra episodes in which I focus more carefully and specifically on the aspects of language that you need.

So, analysing and explaining the grammar and vocabulary in this conversation with James would be an example of what you could expect from Luke's English Podcast Premium episodes, but also not just language that's come up in conversations and monologues, but also it could be a way for me to focus on other aspects of language that I think that you need to know. As I said, I'm still in the process of setting this up at the moment. I'll be doing all of that with my host Lib Syn, so that I can publish the premium content into the app and you'll be able to sign in, in the app to get premium content there and also online from a computer.

So expect more information about all of that soon. Thank you again for listening. Visit the website [teacherluke.co.uk](http://teacherluke.co.uk) to see my transcriptions for the intro and outro of this episode.

You can join the mailing list there as well. Download the app, the Luke's English Podcast app. Just search the app store for Luke's English Podcast app to get all the bonus content there.

There are already various app-only episodes and other little bits and pieces there that you can get. And, you know, so then you'll be ready also to get the Luke's English Podcast Premium episodes through the app. You can send me a donation through the website if you'd like to support the show.

But otherwise, just have a great day or night or morning or evening or whatever time of day it is. And if you have a pet, give them a little treat like a snack or a stroke or a scratch or just a nice walk in the park. Speak to you again on the podcast soon.

But for now, goodbye, bye, bye. Thanks for listening to Luke's English Podcast. For more information, visit [teacherluke.co.uk](http://teacherluke.co.uk). If you enjoyed this episode of Luke's English Podcast, consider signing up for Luke's English Podcast Premium.

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