

## Bonus episode #087 - Dog days

### Episode description

In this episode, Andrew talks about his heartwarming and occasionally challenging adventures in dog sitting Gabby Girl, a dog he and his wife unexpectedly agreed to care for. Tune in to hear about their unique experiences and grow your English fluency along the way!

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Listen to bonus episode 81: <https://esl.culips.com/2023/12/bonus-episode-081-gabby-girl/>

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Hello, everybody, and welcome to bonus episode number 87 of the Culips English Podcast. I am Andrew. I'm your host and your study buddy for today, and it's great to be back here with you for another episode. I hope you're doing well. And if you are new to our bonus episode series, let me quickly explain what it is. **Simply put**, it is the series where I tell you some stories from my everyday life as a Canadian person who lives abroad in Seoul, South Korea. And the goal is that by listening to this series, you will be able to build your English fluency, increase your cultural knowledge of the culture of English-speaking people, grow your vocabulary, and become a better communicator.

And guys, I've been working on a little **acronym** for this series, and I've come up with B.I.G.B. B.I.G.B, build your fluency, build B, increase your cultural knowledge, increase I, grow your vocabulary, grow G, and become a better communicator, become B. So B.I.G.B. What do you think? Is it OK? Not so good? Let me know. I'd love to hear what your thoughts about B.I.G.B are. And if you have a better acronym or a better suggestion for me, **I'm all ears**. I'd love to hear it. You can let me know just by making a comment on our Discord community or by sending me a DM. And yeah, I hope that we can come up with a cool acronym, a cool catchphrase for this series. And I'm going to throw things over to you guys and see what your suggestions are. And I'll work on it a bit on my end as well. B.I.G.B, it's pretty cool. It's pretty good. But maybe we could come up with something smoother. I don't know. Let's see what we can do together.

Anyways, in today's episode, I have a fun story for you. I think, a kind of heartwarming story. At least for me, it was a heartwarming experience. And I'll tell you all about it in just a moment. The story is about a dog sitting experience my wife and I had recently, where we dog sat a dog named Gabby. Gabby Girl. And maybe you guys will remember about Gabby Girl and the sequence of events that led up to us dog sitting her. And if you haven't heard that story yet, you can go back and listen to bonus episode number 81. So, it was just yeah, about a month ago where I shared that story. And in that episode, I tell you the backstory about how we met Gabby and what led up to us actually dog sitting her. It was a

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pretty random and weird experience to be honest with you. But **it all worked out for the best** in the end. So, I think if you haven't heard that episode yet, you should go back and check it out first and then listen to this one.

And while you listen and study with this episode, we have some great tools to help you out. We have an interactive transcript and a vocabulary glossary that will explain some of the key or difficult vocabulary that you'll hear me use while I'm telling you this story. So, if you'd like to follow along with the transcript and study with the glossary, it's free and it's available to everyone out there. And you can access it just by following the link in the description for this episode. And we'll also put the link to that Gabby Girl episode, bonus episode 81 that I mentioned just a second ago in the description. So, you can follow that link to listen to that episode if you haven't heard it yet.

And if you are one of our supporters, if you are a Culips member, then I'm going to make a special comprehension quiz and I'll put the link to the comprehension quiz in the member-only channel of our Discord community. And it's really fun. We're having a lot of fun over on the Discord. Every time I post one of these quizzes for our members, everybody screen captures their score and shares it with the community, and we encourage each other. And it's been a lot of fun. So, for members out there, if you haven't joined us on Discord yet, come on, we'd love to have you join us.

And if you're not a Culips member yet, then you can find out all of the benefits and bonuses and great learning tools that you get when you are a member. And you can sign up just by following the link that we'll put in the description for this episode or by visiting our website, [Culips.com](http://Culips.com).

And with that being said, I think we're ready to get into this week's story. So here it is, my adventure's dog sitting Gabby Girl. Here we go. So, a few weeks ago, Gabby Girl, this really cute black dog, some kind of mix, some kind of mutt, but nonetheless, very cute with a little white beard on her face, which actually looks a little bit like me. I don't know if you guys have seen my photo before, but unfortunately, even though I am only 39 years of

age, my beard is also pretty much all white at the front. So, we resembled each other in that way, Gabby Girl and I. And yeah, I can't remember exactly how old Gabby is either, but I think she was five, four, six? Somewhere in that four- to six-year-old range. So not exactly a puppy, but not exactly an older dog either, I guess, around mid-age similar to me, maybe perhaps like early mid-age, I guess.

So, without going into the backstory about how we met Gabby, because as I mentioned earlier, I've already told that story in bonus episode 81. I will say that my wife and I agreed to dog sit for Gabby Girl when her foster family went out of the country for a short trip. And again, wow, I should have done my homework here. I should have found out the exact details. I'm not exactly sure where the foster family went on that trip. I think it was to another country very close to Korea, maybe Hong Kong or Taiwan or Thailand. You know, one of those countries that you can visit for three days because pretty short trip, I'm sure they didn't go to Brazil or any place like that for that time. So, they went away, they went abroad and during that time, my wife and I cared for Gabby. And we were really excited to have her come into our home and to have another dog in the house. After losing our dog Pinky back in the fall, our house has felt a little bit empty. So, I think we were both excited to have a new dog come into our home, even if it was just for a few days.

So actually, the weekend before Gabby's foster family went away, they came over to our house and they dropped Gabby off for just an hour so that she could acclimatize to her new environment or at least the environment that she would be in for three days. And that's a great expression right there, a great word to add to your vocabulary if you don't know what it means already, "acclimatize." And acclimatize means just to adjust to a new environment or to get used to a new surrounding. So of course, for me and for my wife, our home is home, right? We're very comfortable and we feel awesome there. But for Gabby, it's a new, strange environment. And so, we wanted her to acclimatize, to adjust, and to get used to that new environment. Now again, I don't know Gabby's complete backstory, but I do know that she spent some time in the shelter in the past. And right now, she is staying with a foster family who have kept her for about six months. And that's very kind of them to do that, right? They got Gabby out of the shelter, they're taking care of her, but

they're not going to keep her forever. They're still looking for a forever home for Gabby. So, I think because of that, you know, Gabby's probably had some trauma in her past. I'm not exactly sure. Like I said, all of the details of her life story, but I know she's been in and out of shelters and from one home to another home. So, a traumatic life for just a young dog, right? Of only, well, four to six years old. Can't remember exactly how old she was.

But anyways, she came over to our place the weekend before to acclimatize. And she was on her own just for an hour with us. Her foster family left because they just dropped her off. And I have to say that for most of that time, she looked pretty nervous when she first arrived into our place. And our house is very small. So, it's not like she can explore everywhere. But after 10 minutes of exploring, then she pretty much just settled into her blanket that her foster family had left for her. I guess she has like a security blanket, you know, a place where she lies down to go to sleep every night and feels comfortable with that blanket. And it probably smells like home to her.

So, we put that blanket down for her in her little bed area that we had made for her in our living room. And she, yeah, just lied down there and pretty much stayed there until the foster family came back an hour later. And yeah, we tried to give her some space. We didn't want to stress her out too much or to bother her. So, we really just let her **do her own thing**. She wouldn't really come to my wife or come to me at all. If you would give her a snack, she would eat the snack. But she wasn't crazy about eating snacks, you know, like some dogs, when you give them a treat, they just **go ballistic**, right? They're wagging their tail and jumping up and down and trying to get everywhere. But that wasn't really Gabby's style. She's very calm, very **down-to-earth** dog, no barking, no tail wagging. Actually, in many ways, she reminded us of Pinky just being very calm and maybe nervous, quite nervous at the same time.

So that was cool. That was fine. We let Gabby to our thing. She just lied on her security blanket and a security blanket is a kind of blanket that often little kids like to have too, to provide them with some comfort. So, you hear of little children often having a security blanket as well. And I think Gabby's blanket provided the same function for her. But I have

to say, when Gabby's foster family arrived after an hour, then it was **like night and day** in Gabby's personality because she went from this very shy, quiet dog that was just calmly lying down in the corner, not really sure of what was going on to all of the sudden being super stoked, super excited, tail wagging and just ran to the door to meet her foster family. And you know, I think my home is quite nice to be honest with you. But I guess Gabby was really excited to go back to her foster family's home because she was just very, very excited to leave. So, my wife and I were like, "Oh, it's too bad that she doesn't seem to have that same affection towards us." But we remained hopeful that when she came back next weekend, then maybe she would feel a little bit more comfortable and then gradually start to feel the same way about us as she did with her foster family.

But spoiler alert, that didn't really happen exactly because the next weekend Gabby came back again, and her foster family dropped her off and they gave us all of their supplies and food and blankets and toys and instructions. And it was really nice of the foster family, they wrote the instructions in Korean and also in English for me. And then they took off on their trip. And so, my wife and I were on dog sitting duty for the weekend. And yeah, it was pretty chill. Like Gabby was really quiet the whole time, mostly just lied on her blanket the whole time, did a little bit of exploring. And as the weekend went on, she came on a Friday and left on Monday morning. So, it was just like a weekend kind of thing. As the weekend went on, she did a little bit of exploring, but mostly like 90% of the time just lied on her blanket in the living room. So much so that I was almost worried like, is she going to get a bedsore or something from lying down so much?

And a bedsore is what we call the kind of injury or kind of wound that people can get when they lie down for extended periods of time. So often you hear about people who are hospitalized as getting bedsores, right? Because for whatever reason, they can't move around and they're just lying down the whole time. Well, if they get injured or hurt from not moving, that's called a bedsore. So, kind of half joking. I was like, "Is Gabby going to get a bedsore?" She just totally loves lying on her security blanket but wouldn't really venture off of that blanket too much. In fact, it was even a little bit difficult for us to get her to eat unless we put her food bowl on that blanket. If we put her food and her water on the



blanket, then she would eat a lot and she had a great appetite. But even if we moved the food bowl and the water bowl just a little bit off of her security blanket area, then she wouldn't eat anything. So that was really surprising to us. But my wife made sure to kind of hand feed Gabby, put the bowl in a really comfortable place for her, and hold it there so that she would eat her food and her dinner and her meals. And so that was very nice.

So, guys, overall, I have to say watching Gabby, dog sitting Gabby was super chill. It was almost as if she weren't there at all. However, there was one thing that required a little bit of skill and a little bit of effort, and that was taking Gabby for a walk. Now, I think Gabby has a history of running away. And her foster family said that she actually had escaped from them once, and they had to spend some time looking for her to get her back. Thankfully, they were able to find her, and she didn't escape too far. But because of that incident, it's really important that whenever you take Gabby Girl out for a walk, that you keep her on a tight leash. Have you heard that expression before? It's actually the perfect expression to use in this situation to keep a dog on a tight leash. But we can also use it as an idiom for other situations in life. Let me just break it down what it means.

So, when you take a dog for a walk, the rope that you use to attach to the dog's collar and that you hold in your hand, that's called a leash. And so, if you keep a dog on a tight leash, it means that you hold the leash very tightly and you don't give it a lot of **slack**. "Slack" is what we call a loose rope. So, you know, the rope can be very tight and **taut**, or it can be loose and slack. Well, if you're walking your dog and you have your dog on a tight leash, it means that you're not giving the dog too much freedom. You're holding the dog close to you by holding that leash very tightly and making sure the leash remains tight. However, we can use this expression in many other ways in English as well, such as and maybe this is a little bit sexist to say. But I've heard some guys say things like this, like they go on a shopping trip with their wife, and they have to keep their wife on a tight leash. Meaning they have to make sure that their wife doesn't spend too much money on the shopping trip. I'm not necessarily saying that I would use the expression in that way, but that's a way that I've heard it used often in the past.

Another way that I've heard it used often is like maybe you have a new employee in your company and because the new employee is, well, new, they don't have a lot of experience or knowledge about how the company works. Maybe you want to keep that rookie employee on a tight leash. You want to control them so that they don't make any big mistakes while they're learning about the new company culture. It's a really versatile expression in English, a nice idiom to know, a nice one to add to your vocabulary.

But in this situation of actually walking Gabby, it was true. We had to **keep Gabby on a tight leash** because she has that history of running away. And to be more specific, I would say that we had to keep Gabby on tight leashes because when we took her out for a walk, we had to use a harness and a collar and two leashes. And that's just so that if one of the leashes failed, then she wouldn't be able to escape. We'd have that backup leash. And yeah, as I mentioned, it was a little bit difficult to take Gabby for a walk.

She likes going outside, she likes walking, and she's house trained, which means that she would only go to the bathroom outside. Lovely, love that about her. But when you would take her out for a walk, she was extremely stubborn. And I think that she probably hasn't had any training in the past about how to walk, because she would only want to go in the way that she wants to go. And for seemingly no reason at all, she would just suddenly stop if something scared her. Or if she saw something that she didn't like, she would just stop and refuse to move and be very, very stubborn about it. So, we'd be just walking along having a nice walk. And then suddenly Gabby would sit down and stop and just be like, "Nope, not moving. I'm not going anywhere at all!" And sometimes you'd try and turn around and go back towards our home, and it would be the same thing where she just wouldn't move at all. I guess, you know, I can't get into her mind. I don't know the psychology of a dog, but there's something in her mind that just spooked her or frightened her. And so, there were a few times where my wife or I would have to pick Gabby up, and she was much heavier than Pinky, so we got some exercise in that weekend. But we'd have to pick her up and just carry her back to our home because she would refuse to- to move.



And the times when she did move, then she'd pull very heavily on the leash. She was, yeah, like I said, not really leash trained, so she would lead the way and really lead the way and pull on the leash and pull my wife and I around. We did this dog sitting experience a few weeks ago, and during that weekend, there was a lot of snow in Seoul, and the roads were really icy as well. And so literally we could use Gabby as a kind of sled dog to pull us around in the snow and in the ice. So that was kind of funny, but I think in the future, when Gabby finally finds her forever home, she's going to need a little bit of leash training and walk training.

And it was a little sad because we live really close to some very nice walking trails, and my wife and I were excited to take Gabby to these trails and to have some nice walks. And when we tried to do that, Gabby just totally **straight-up refused**, and was like, no, I'm not going on these nice walking trails. In fact, she preferred some of the narrower back alleys of Seoul. So, she's a real city dog, doesn't like the wilderness trails as much and prefers those back alleys of the city.

Like I mentioned a little bit earlier, my wife and I were expecting that after a few days went on that Gabby would eventually warm up to our home and warm up to us and show us a little tenderness or kindness or love, just like we showed towards her. But it didn't really turn out that way. I think that yeah, Gabby is very stubborn, like I said, not only with her walks, but maybe also with the way that she shows affection. So, we enjoyed having Gabby in our home. We had a great experience with her. We liked having a dog in the home again, but we were a little bit heartbroken when her foster family returned from their trip and they came to the door and Gabby just lit up and went crazy again, wagging her tail and was just all over them, excited to see them and excited to go back to her foster home. And she didn't really turn around and say goodbye to us. She was just so excited to get back to her foster family's home.

So, we were a little bit sad about that, but yeah, not really too sad at all. And in the end, it was a good experience. We enjoyed having Gabby in our home and we wish nothing but

the best for her. We hope that she finds a family that can give her the love and attention and support that she needs. And we hope that she can have a happy future going forward.

So, everyone, that's going to bring us to the end of today's episode. I hope you enjoyed listening to this story and I'm curious, I have a question for you, and I would love for you to share your answer for it on our Discord community. Let's get a little discussion about this going on. I would like to know what strategies do you use to make newcomers feel welcome in unfamiliar settings? Maybe it's somebody in your community or a new employee at your workplace or maybe even a dog that you are dog sitting in your home. My wife and I tried to make Gabby feel comfortable by giving her some space and letting her just chill on her security blanket and bringing the food and the water up to her so she could eat it comfortably and those things that I mentioned in the episode. But in your life, in your experience, if you've had this kind of similar situation where you've had to welcome a newcomer into a place where maybe the newcomer feels uncomfortable, but you feel comfortable, what kind of things do you do to make them feel welcome?

If you have any tips or stories to share about this topic, I can't wait to hear them. So please just make a post and share your opinions and your ideas with me and with our wider Culips community on our Discord server.

And if you haven't joined us on Discord yet, it's free for everybody to join. The link to join is in the description for this episode and we hope that you will join us there. We have, I think, around 4,000 people now on our Discord. So, it's growing every day, every week, and it's just a wonderful place where you can connect with other English learners from around the world and together, we can all build our English fluency.

So, everyone, I think I am done for today. For this episode, I'm going to sign off, but thank you again for listening. Take care and I'll talk to you next time. We've got a new episode coming out very soon and I'll catch you all then. Goodbye.

## Glossary

1. **Simply put:** An expression used to indicate that something will be stated in a clear and simple way. Example: "Simply put, photosynthesis is how plants make their food."
2. **I'm all ears:** An expression indicating that the speaker is ready to listen attentively. Example: "Tell me about your day. I'm all ears."
3. **Acronym:** A word formed from the first letters of a series of words. Example: "NASA is an acronym for National Aeronautics and Space Administration."
4. **All worked out for the best:** An expression meaning that a situation has ended positively, despite initial problems. Example: "I was worried about moving, but it all worked out for the best."
5. **To do her own thing:** Acting independently without influence from others. Describes Gabby's behavior when she first arrived at Andrew's home.
6. **Go ballistic:** To become extremely excited or angry. Andrew uses this to describe how some dogs react to treats, unlike Gabby.
7. **Down-to-earth:** Being practical and realistic; humble. Andrew describes Gabby as a down-to-earth dog due to her calm demeanor.
8. **Like night and day:** An expression indicating a significant change or difference. Used to describe the change in Gabby's behavior when her foster family returned.
9. **To keep something on a tight leash:** To maintain close control over a situation or person. In the episode, it refers to keeping Gabby on a physical leash, but also as an idiom for controlling situations.
10. **Slack:** The loose part of a rope or line. Mentioned in the context of how a leash should not have slack when walking Gabby.
11. **Taut:** Pulled tight, without slack. Used to describe the ideal state of the leash when walking Gabby.
12. **Straight-up refused:** Andrew uses this expression to describe Gabby's clear refusal to go on certain walking trails, emphasizing her direct and unambiguous rejection to walk where Andrew and his wife wanted to go.

## Episode credits

Host and preparation: Andrew Bates

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima