



Our Hen House
CHANGE THE WORLD FOR ANIMALS
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Interviews with Jenny Brown and Gretchen Primack

By OUR HEN HOUSE

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*Following is a transcript of interviews with **JENNY BROWN** and **GRETCHEN PRIMACK** conducted by **JASMIN SINGER** and **MARIANN SULLIVAN** of [Our Hen House](#), for the [Our Hen House podcast](#). The interview aired on Episode 243.*

ALESSANDRA: Continuing our highlights reel, we're thrilled to once again feature the fabulous Jenny Brown, cofounder of Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary and author of *The Lucky Ones: My Passionate Fight for Farm Animals*. We've long been huge fans of Jenny's, even before she gave Jasmin and Mariann's still favorite interview way back on Episode 35 of the podcast. I'm sure that if you haven't already you'll fall in love with Jenny Brown as well. Check out her work at woodstocksanctuary.org.

JASMIN: Welcome to Our Hen House, Jenny.

JENNY: Thank you. Thank you so much for having me on.

JASMIN: Hugging you is kind of almost as good as hugging a pig, I would say.

JENNY: I'll substitute, I'll stand in. I'm totally happy to stand in.

JASMIN: Yeah, well, there's just so many things we want to talk to you about and we also hope to get to Woodstock Sanctuary with a camera crew at some point.

JENNY: More than welcome.

JASMIN: But for now let's paint a picture of what people find when they get to Woodstock Sanctuary.

JENNY: Well, we are two hours north of New York City, located in the beautiful Catskill Mountains.

MARIANN: You can even get there on the bus, right?

JENNY: Yes, you can take the Adirondack Trailways and it'll drop you off right there, which a lot of people do. And you can come up for the day and just volunteer. We welcome volunteers year round. There's a lot of poop to scoop as you can imagine with over 300 rescued farm animals. But on the weekends when we're open, Saturday and Sunday through the summer, you come, we have a visitors' center with snacks, all kind of vegan yummy stuff. We have people try some Treeline nut cheese which is fabulous. We do tours, three tours a day, and basically we bring people around -- you have to be on a tour to go in

with the animals. We take people around with the animals. We introduce them to the incredible individuals that live there, tell their stories, and at the same time talk about how the millions, billions of others just like them live and die in today's animal agriculture, on large scale farms, factory farms, and on small farms alike.

MARIANN: You must get a lot of people who aren't on board, who don't really know a lot about these issues, who just happen to be in the area, it's a beautiful area. What kind of reactions do you get?

JENNY: Well, we intentionally have billboards where there's an animal, there's a person, and it says, "Woodstock Sanctuary, where animals are friends, not food," because we don't want to give the impression that we're a petting zoo and have sort of a bait and switch feeling with visitors. So I'm very clear when we start out the tour what we're all about and what people will hear because they're welcome to, they don't have to take a tour, they can walk around and just see the animals in their pastures, pet the animals in the barns through the fencing. And so we're very clear about it, and I try to temper what I say based on the age of the people in the tour. So if there's a lot of kids I don't use words like the male chickens are ground up alive when we're talking about the egg laying hens and what happens to their brothers.

MARIANN: No, of course, you have to change your messaging for children. It's too awful.

JASMIN: I mean, sanctuaries are magical places, they're places where animals who would have been killed are given a second chance at life. They have dignity there, they have peace and comfort and I think that people are really blown away when they experience it for themselves. I think it's pretty much impossible to not have a life altering experience. Do you agree?

JENNY: I totally agree, and the thing is that these animals behave very differently than they would on farms because they've been treated with kindness. And even animals that have escaped from slaughterhouses or have been seized from abuse cases, most of them after some time learn to trust again because we're gentle voices. And again we treat them with compassion, we're all about their quality of life, and so they respond to that. They respond to that affection. And that is what I think really touches the heart of people because they've never seen them in that environment.

MARIANN: And it must be so amazing to work there and see them come around like that, from being so terrified and really not connecting to humans at all and changing into these. I mean it's a miracle that they can do it, they're much better than I am.

JENNY: Well, they are superior to us in many ways.

JASMIN: They trust again.

MARIANN: How long does it take?

JENNY: It varies. We still have a steer named Mike who was rescued a little over a year ago who escaped from a slaughterhouse in New Jersey, and he's still, it's really taken him a long time. It's taken him over a year to where he'll sit calmly and let you scratch his ears and scratch his back. If you're in there with him sometimes he's a little bit more reserved and kinda headbutty a little bit, playing, protecting, not intentionally -- wouldn't hurt you at

all. But he took a while to come around. If you watch the footage of him -- he was all over the news -- you see him being chased through the streets by police officers and the fellow who owns the slaughterhouse, who backs into him in the video footage intentionally to knock him down. So he had some bad experiences. And when you're raised for production you're seen as a commodity as opposed to a sentient, living, feeling being. And so again he had no reason to trust people, so we do our best to socialize them and again to acclimate them to a different environment with friends, they have pasture, they get everything they need, yummy food and treats. We call them by name because we see them as equals. We see them as here with us and not for us.

JASMIN: They're individuals. That's right, here with us and not for us. They have points of view and they're each individuals, just like our dogs and cats are. They each are just bursting with personality. But let's take a step back. I want to talk about this book, *The Lucky Ones: My Passionate Fight for Farm Animals*, which I love. And I know that it has been described as a memoir with a mission, and I think that this is such a phenomenal book, which you wrote with Gretchen Primack. And it talks about your story, Jenny, because I think a lot of people watching this would see you and rightfully think, "This is an incredible human being." How does one become Jenny Brown? Well, let's take a step back and look into your childhood a little bit. Let's psychoanalyze you a little bit. Yeah, if you could just lie right here. Jenny, you have a kind of traumatic story from your childhood, but I think that it really did involve awakening to the plight of others. Talk a little bit about your childhood for us.

JENNY: Well, we live in Woodstock, New York, famous for the concert, but I grew up in a very conservative Southern Baptist household in Louisville, Kentucky. I ate everything that flew and walked and never thought about that. Always said I loved animals, never thought about the ones on my plate just like everyone else. So I was 10 years old and I developed cancer in my leg and chemotherapy and other treatments didn't stop the growth of the tumor so eventually my leg had to be amputated below the knee down when I was 10. And I always say my leg is nothing compared to the two years of chemotherapy, the toxic drugs that went through your system. But at that time I had finally been able to adopt an animal companion, not a pet, that's a nasty word. And her name was Booger 'cause I was a gross kid, then shortened to Boogie.

MARIANN: Much better.

JENNY: And Boogie, I think, was the catalyst --

MARIANN: So to speak.

JENNY: Yes, for my realizing that she had a broad range of emotions, that she was an individual in her own right, and growing up and going to church and we have a soul, I really started realizing, well if we have souls, Boogie has a soul. I was a rebellious teen trying to prove myself, I'm like everyone else, and I think it made me tougher. And it wasn't until I started college that I picked up some literature literally during college orientation week and read about how animals are treated in medical experiments and cosmetic testing. Never thought about the circus that I loved to go to, rodeos, animal exploitation, animals used for fur.

JASMIN: Because we're just told these things and we accept them as normal. We just trust whoever says, "Yes, this is okay," and we don't question whether or not that's true.

JENNY: Exactly, because we're so disconnected from how these animals would normally live when we're growing up. And again it's our earliest indoctrinations that basically put the blinders on us in terms of relating to these animals. And we relate to our cats and dogs, and unless you grew up on a farm, you really don't know the personalities of farm animals, and even then you try to distance yourself from even thinking about their personalities or even the fact that they can suffer. So for me it was reading about it, slowly moving into how we treat the animals we eat, taking a public speaking course, and eventually doing some undercover video for PETA in the early '90s, 'cause I graduated with a film degree and actually went on to work for a decade in film and television as an associate producer, production coordinator, myriad of positions, working my way up to producing and directing shows for like Discovery Channel. But it wasn't until I went undercover again after eight years and was sent to Texas to document downed animals -- so I visited a number of stockyards and basically saw the worst of humankind and saw animals suffering in pens, animals that were callously treated, hogtied, calves desperately wanting to suckle on your fingers, calves taken away from their mothers. And I just realized to show any empathy for these animals in this setting -- with a purse that actually had an undercover video because, even though stockyard auctions are open to the public, big signs that say, "No photography, no video," so I sort of infiltrated this world with my overalls.

JASMIN: I can picture you with your overalls.

JENNY: And so it was that week that made me realize that I'd always been an animal rights person, activist, always went to the protests and took part in whatever way that I could. But it made me realize that my focus, my activism, I wanted to focus on food production animals because they have it the worst and by the numbers.

MARIANN: They have it the worst and there's just so many of them.

JENNY: Exactly.

JASMIN: And I know that you also have some animals that have also gone through amputations of their legs, in an interesting synchronicity, which has also I think helped to pen this book because there was a phenomenal article in the *New York Times* about it, I remember the photograph of it. So you have some animals who are dealing with similar issues in their own animal way?

JENNY: Yes, we have -- well, I recently adopted a little dog from Puerto Rico who's missing her back leg. We have a goat named Albie who'd been hogtied and broke free somehow and was running around Prospect Park. We have a little sheep named Felix who was being raised at a large sheep operation for meat and for fiber, and somehow overnight his leg went missing and actually had a bone protruding from his leg. They don't know if a predator had gotten it. I'm sorry for the graphic description. But thankfully a woman that was there -- he was just gonna go with others to the next auction, and a woman that worked there saved his life.

MARIANN: It would never occur to people to save the life of a farm animal who's injured. The idea is just they're gonna die.

JASMIN: Well because they're a commodity.

MARIANN: And to create a prosthetic --

JASMIN: That's what Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary is really changing the world by doing is to say, "No, you're not a commodity. These are individuals."

MARIANN: What I love about your story, too, is that it kind of has it all. It's like that emotional connection to a companion animal, which is how so many people I think get started thinking about animals, and then the fact that you started because you read a leaflet... The power of activism, simple activism.

JENNY: I know, and people give PETA so much grief but a lot of people are animal rights activists and aware --

MARIANN: Because they're out there.

JENNY: -- because of PETA. And that was me in 1989, before they became --

JASMIN: You were like, what, one then? Early.

JENNY: I was 18.

JASMIN: Okay.

MARIANN: Now you mentioned you had a goat who was from Prospect Park. You have a number of animals from right here in Brooklyn, isn't that right?

JENNY: It's true, because a lot of folks don't realize that in the five boroughs there are close to 100 storefront slaughterhouses that you might have walked down the street and never even realized that that's what lurks behind the doors. You might see live poultry, halal markets, and you might see a few chickens in the window, but you go into these places and often there's turkeys, there's ducks, there's lambs, there's little goats, and sometimes there's calves. And when there's an opportunity they escape, because these aren't major operations with trucks driving in and fencing, big enclosures. They drive into the back where you can't see them being unloaded. When there's an opportunity to escape, they do.

MARIANN: It just shows, because they're not these high security facilities that major slaughterhouses are in the middle of nowhere that animals can't escape from, when animals can get out they'll take that chance.

JASMIN: Of course they will.

JENNY: They're not dumb! They absolutely do.

JASMIN: I have a question, Jenny. We're running out of time and I know that you see a lot in your career and in your life and you've seen a lot for a long time and yet you're smiling. You're still smiling. And I want to know why. I want to know what gives you hope.

JENNY: What gives me hope is people like you guys, people like my friend Gretchen who's coming on next who writes beautiful poetry and cooks delicious meals. It's our community, and I know that I'm not alone and I'm not alienated in feeling the way that I feel about

animals, and there's a growing awareness of how animals are treated in factory farms, lots of press over it, lots of fabulous new vegan foods that are growing in popularity, so if I wasn't hopeful I think I would be in a padded cell, first of all. So I just need to do my part in changing the way the world views farm animals, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

MARIANN: She gives me hope.

JASMIN: Yeah, she gets me a little verklempt. But then after the verklemptness is over you give me hope. You really do, and I think like I said that visiting Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary is an absolute must-have day trip or a longer weekend trip or a volunteer trip by bus.

MARIANN: You have a bed and breakfast, isn't that right?

JENNY: We have a bed and breakfast, of course it's a vegan bed and breakfast. And our B&B caretaker makes fabulous food, and right from the front porch it overlooks the entire sanctuary, so you can see peaceful animals running in the field and then you can eat a meal that doesn't have animals.

JASMIN: Woodstock Sanctuary is a place not only where animals could really get a jolt of hope and a jolt of dignity but where I think a lot of people who are kind of brought down by the stress of living, living here in New York with the kind of hustle and bustle and just people who work for the greater good of humanity or animal kind can just recharge themselves. So I hope that people visit Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary. And Jenny, we can't thank you enough for joining us today in Our Hen House. We are such big fans and I hope the people watching this who are obviously falling in love with you, go to ourhenhouse.org and listen to your podcast interview, I think you've had two, because we've had like 240 something episodes now and yours is our favorite.

MARIANN: Oh, she cries! You'll cry.

JASMIN: She's verklempt, she's a beautiful writer and activist, so if you just go there and check that out. And to learn more about Jenny Brown and the Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary, which she runs with her incredible husband Doug Abel, be sure to pick up a copy of *The Lucky Ones* and also visit Woodstock online at woodstocksanctuary.org or follow your instincts and just hop on a bus for a real live visit. I have no doubt that it will change your life. It's changed mine over and over again.

MARIANN: It will definitely change people's lives. There's no doubt about it.

ALESSANDRA: Our next guest is Gretchen Primack, an astoundingly talented poet whose work incorporates her passion for animal rights in a truly beautiful manner. Not only can Gretchen write, but this woman can also cook! In addition to sharing her poetry in this segment, Gretchen will reveal her secret to creamy vegan eats that will make any non-vegan happy to wave bye-bye to dairy for good. You can find Gretchen online at gretchenprimack.com.

JASMIN: Welcome to Our Hen House, Gretchen.

GRETCHEN: So glad to be here with you, ladies.

JASMIN: We are longtime fans of everything you do and I have to say most poetry annoys me. I admit it. Yours, however, I find a lot of inspiration in. I find it validating and I find it enlightening and it moves me and it touches me, and I'm just so grateful to you that you're bringing the animals into your work because I think the reason a lot of poetry annoys me is 'cause it's very often self-involved. Is that just a generalization?

GRETCHEN: No, that's absolutely true. A lot of it is, and poets are also annoyed with a lot of poetry, so it isn't enlightened.

JASMIN: So is what I just said kind of deep?

GRETCHEN: Extremely deep.

JASMIN: Excellent!

MARIANN: Oh, or very shallow.

GRETCHEN: I actually need to take a minute.

JASMIN: Do you? We could play that video again if you want. But anyway let's talk about your poetry book, *Kind*. Tell us about the vision for this book.

GRETCHEN: Well, as a lot of poetry projects and a lot of poets will tell you, it wasn't formed straight out of the gate. It really, it took some time. I started to write one and then another and then another poem sort of addressing the lack of concern that I have felt around me, even among very progressive, left-leaning, caring, compassionate people.

JASMIN: Yes.

GRETCHEN: And that in a way is the most disappointing for me, people who are able to see that there are injustices, people who are able to think outside of certain boxes, but aren't willing to go outside of other boxes.

MARIANN: Yeah, I think that's something that really breaks all of our hearts all the time, that it's the people we admire the most sometimes who aren't seeing this issue. So how do you bring that into poetry? How does animal advocacy inform your poetry?

GRETCHEN: Well, I started with a poetry base. I had already published a chapbook and had been working for many years and had a Master's degree and all of that. And in a way that made it easier to bring this subject matter in because it was already like I didn't have to think as much about the craft of poetry and some of the stylistic concerns that you think about at the beginning. I could just meld those two worlds in a bit of a more natural way. And it felt like maybe an obvious step, that these two parts of my life that are so important to me and so dominant in my life would merge. But actually I think there's a lot of fear that political poetry or message poetry fails.

JASMIN: It gets pedantic sometimes.

GRETCHEN: Oh, it sure does.

JASMIN: Yeah. But yours doesn't at all. So you were a poet first and then you were an animal advocate?

GRETCHEN: Well, I would say that they -- yes, actually. I was vegetarian from age 13, so in that sense you could say that I was an animal advocate before I was meaningfully a poet, 'cause my poems were really, really terrible for a long time. But in terms of real advocacy, really understanding what's going on, moving from vegetarian to vegan and that, I had been doing poetry for a while before that got me in my mid-30s.

JASMIN: Mm-hm. Okay, well, what I think is particularly interesting is that you use your skill and your talent as a poet to really bring these issues to life, and I'd love it if you would read us one of your poems from *Kind*.

GRETCHEN: Well, I sure will. And you know, we've been talking and thinking about the relationship between mother cows and baby cows and this really sick system we have, an industry that is based on the tearing apart of a mother and child. If we thought about that for even a minute... boy. So I really was compelled to write about that, and one of the first poems that I wrote for this book is a poem called "Love This." Folks in TV land can't see that there are very beautiful drawings throughout this book. They're the work of the magnificent artist Susan Siegel, who also painted the cover. So it's really a conversation between an artist and a poet. I couldn't be happier.

JASMIN: It's wonderful, that's wonderful. I love this poem.

[To read more from *Kind*, visit [Gretchen's website](#).]

MARIANN: There's so much in there. There's just so much in there, and one of the amazing things about what you do is you take these issues that are too hard for people to understand. We were talking before, like people don't even understand that cows have babies. We're all told, "Oh, they would die if we didn't milk them." But they don't understand that they had to have a baby in order to produce that milk. None of us do.

GRETCHEN: No, I didn't.

MARIANN: And you've got so much information just in that poem. One of the things that Our Hen House is all about and that I think the animal rights movement is all about is each person taking -- you said you were a poet before you were an animal rights advocate or at least they were interweaving, before you put them together, and it's so important that we all put them together, what we can do well. I'm so glad you did.

JASMIN: Yeah. And another thing that our movement is all about is trying delicious food, and I know that with the theme of cows and liberating them, not oppressing them, in mind, you brought us some of your amazing food. Now, I have to say, when Mariann and I got married, Gretchen made us our wedding cake.

MARIANN: Yeah, that was a hell of a cake.

JASMIN: That was a hell of a cake! And so what did you bring for us?

MARIANN: And it had cherries.

JASMIN: It did 'cause we love cherries.

MARIANN: 'Cause we love cherries so much.

JASMIN: Exactly.

MARIANN: And chocolate 'cause we love chocolate so much.

JASMIN: And we love you and your cooking and your baking so much! So let's talk about some of these foods and how do they pertain to cows?

GRETCHEN: Sure! Well, so the theme of these foods is cream without cruel, okay? We love creaminess, we are designed to love creaminess as babies, and then we're designed to love fat as humans. It's an evolutionary biological reality, right? I love creaminess as much as anyone else, I just don't want to have a mother gestate a baby for nine months and then have it turned away so that I can taste cream, 'cause that makes *no* sense to me and I'm so done with that part of my life and I'm so glad. So I get the absolute exact same taste of creaminess without cruelty, without cholesterol, by using --

JASMIN: Cream without cruelty or cholesterol.

GRETCHEN: Yeah, with this magic bullet, which is cashew cream. So all of these dishes involve cashew cream, and it could not be easier. I just want people to see how thin this is. So it's basically a heavy cream.

JASMIN: So it means that you can make heavy cream without the oppression.

MARIANN: Who knew that cashews were such a miracle food?

GRETCHEN: They'll never figure this out.

MARIANN: It's a miracle

GRETCHEN: I worship you, I will leave my beloved husband. And he knows it.

MARIANN: And go found a cashew farm. And they're very, very rich.

GRETCHEN: Yeah. It is very rich.

JASMIN: Was the cashew cream responsible for this?

GRETCHEN: Exactly. So the idea is that whenever you want to make something creamier and more rich and exciting, then you add cashew cream. So this is a tomato bisque. You've got tomato soup and tomato soup's fine, but if you want to bring tomato soup from fine to magnificent, then you add cashew cream. If you wanted to make a pasta sauce --

JASMIN: Oh, my God, stop talking! This is insane. This is absolutely insane.

GRETCHEN: Thanks, guys.

JASMIN: I need a moment. Okay, go on.

GRETCHEN: All right. You could have a pasta sauce and a red sauce and add cashew cream and make it a rich pink sauce, or you could make an Alfredo with this. You could pour it over pancakes and waffles. You could put it in just a can of vegetable soup that's been sitting in your pantry for so long you say, "Ugh, that." Put a little cashew cream in there, maybe crumble a little thyme on top. It's ambrosia.

MARIANN: In other words you should put cashew cream in absolutely everything you eat pretty much.

GRETCHEN: That's my point. Thank you for getting it.

JASMIN: I have a two-parter question, watch how this brings around your food and your poetry. What inspires you to make food like this, is it like a flash of inspiration? And part B, is that kind of the same thing that inspires your poetry! Go, while I eat.

GRETCHEN: Well, I've always been insanely food nerdy, and I remember when I first realized that I had to go vegan in order to wake up in the morning and feel like the person that I am, being nervous because I'm such a cook and such a baker. And I was so used to using animal food in my food.

MARIANN: Yeah, everyone is.

GRETCHEN: And so I just applied it and I got so excited. My food started to taste much better 'cause it wasn't like, oh, well, just throw some cheese on it. I mean, you really had to think. And thinking was fun.

MARIANN: Yeah, it's fun, isn't it?

GRETCHEN: Yeah, thinking was fun for me. This recipe is adapted from one by Tal Ronnen, celebrity chef Tal Ronnen -- he really is a genius -- from his book *The Conscious Cook*. And he is a big proponent of cashew cream and got me very excited about it.

JASMIN: Well, I know that we don't have a whole lot of time, so I just --

MARIANN: I need to stop eating.

JASMIN: Yeah, stop. I want to see what else you have and then I want to have time for you to read another poem for us.

GRETCHEN: Okay. Well --

JASMIN: But I also want to know what inspires your poetry, so tell me what inspires your poetry while I'm eating this.

MARIANN: Yeah, like a specific poem. Like, what is your creative process? Does it come to you, just like in a flash, or is it like you decide, "I want to write about dairy cows," and then you sit down and you work your way through how to make that beautiful?

GRETCHEN: It's a bit of a combination. I couldn't sit down with a pen and say, "Okay, dairy cows, go." But I could have dairy cows on the brain and think about it and walk through the woods with my dogs and just go about my business and lie in bed and have like the poetic eye facing a dairy cow and eventually it'll come. And in fact I was just commissioned by a magazine to write a poem about -- well, you know what? I'm gonna be quiet about it because it's not out yet.

JASMIN: Okay, but I'm assuming it has to do with animals.

GRETCHEN: Yes.

JASMIN: Now after you're finished writing the poem --

MARIANN: Can I just say something before we go on?

JASMIN: That that's the best thing you've ever had?

MARIANN: Oh, my God!

JASMIN: What is it?

GRETCHEN: So with this, I made a thicker cashew cream and I made a dip that has, it's got sundried tomatoes and scallions and herbs. You could also put some onion and capers in there and make that kinda dip. You could just do a bunch of fresh herbs. You could put garlic, make a garlic and herb dip. This is so versatile. You can also do a sandwich spread with this.

JASMIN: This is outrageous.

MARIANN: I said before I have to stop eating so much on the TV show 'cause all I do is eat.

JASMIN: You did say that. It's not gonna happen.

MARIANN: Not this week.

JASMIN: I want to hear another poem and then I want to have dessert. What else do you have for us to read?

GRETCHEN: Okay. Well, how much time do you think we'll have?

JASMIN: I think we probably only have time for one more since we are eating like this. Do you want to cheer us up a little bit?

GRETCHEN: Okay, I think I'm gonna cheer you up a little bit.

JASMIN: I mean, this food is definitely cheering me up, but since they can't taste it...

GRETCHEN: Yeah. Well, this book is really about all kinds of animals, our dynamics with all kinds of animals. There's a circus elephant who talks in here, there's a cat that I talk about in here. My husband is an animal, I've got some love poems in here. And then I also wanted to talk about plants, and there are actually several poems that talk about plants, but this one is about eating plants and the joy of that because people say, "Oh, you're vegan, you're so restricted, what do you eat?" And I say, it's kind of the same feeling as like feeling restricted because you don't eat dogs, or restricted 'cause you don't eat tarantulas or giraffe milk.

MARIANN: Or each other.

GRETCHEN: Yeah. It's okay with me that we're not gonna dine on each other's bodies. It's all right. And it's okay with me to not eat animal things, and the more you know about it the less you want to eat them and the better you feel and all that.

MARIANN: The more you find out there's so many other good things to eat.

JASMIN: There's cashews!

GRETCHEN: As long as there's cashews, we're good.

[To read more from *Kind*, visit [Gretchen's website](#).]

MARIANN: That is beautiful.

JASMIN: And so true.

MARIANN: And with those two poems you cover both ends of the spectrum. This is what's happening to animals and it's awful, but this is what's available to us and it's so wonderful.

JASMIN: What have we for dessert today, Gretchen? Moving on!

GRETCHEN: Sometimes the plants are in the form of brownie fruit parfaits.

JASMIN: Yes, they are.

MARIANN: Look at this.

GRETCHEN: So what I did --

JASMIN: Can I just have the camera on me real quick? Restriction. Go on.

GRETCHEN: I heard that! So over here, I made a very thick cashew cream and I made it savory, but here I made a thick cashew cream and I made it sweet. I put a little vanilla in there and I put a little maple syrup in there, and then I took a brownie --

MARIANN: Ooh, it's at the bottom.

GRETCHEN: Because you gotta just go overboard sometimes. Overboard is a very positive thing on many occasions.

MARIANN: Well, if it's a dessert it's a dessert.

GRETCHEN: So there's brownies and then cream, blueberries, cream, raspberries, cream, and then just a little brownie on top.

JASMIN: This is phenomenal, Gretchen. So amazing.

MARIANN: And it's very healthy.

JASMIN: Yeah.

MARIANN: It has berries in it! As she digs to the bottom to get her brownie.

JASMIN: Just put berries in anything and it will become healthy, right? Exactly.

GRETCHEN: And this is also very versatile. You take the cream, you could do different kinds of fruit, you could just do bananas and cream and have a sort of -- you could do bananas, cream, with vegan graham crackers and ginger snaps in between and have a sort of banana cream pie.

MARIANN: Yum!

GRETCHEN: All of these dishes, what I want to emphasize is how versatile they are. You put cashew cream in anything. You put veggies in here, you put any fruits or cookies or anything in here.

MARIANN: Yeah, I'm kind of amazed that all of these three dishes are all based on the same food. They're so different.

GRETCHEN: Yes, and they're so creamy.

MARIANN: And such different flavors.

GRETCHEN: If you gave any of these to someone who eats dairy and you said, "Okay, this is a creamy tomato soup. This is a cheese dip," they would think that it's dairy. So if you can have exactly the same thing and it's healthier for you and the planet and it doesn't involve cruelty, what is --

MARIANN: And it's arguably better.

GRETCHEN: Yeah.

MARIANN: I mean, I wouldn't go there 'cause people get into arguments, but I actually think it's better.

JASMIN: So much better! Are you kidding? And then at the same time, can I just say this? You're also just opening people's hearts and changing the world through your poetry, Gretchen. And I know you're also the coauthor of *The Lucky Ones* along with the fabulous Jenny Brown, I'm sure that was quite an inspiring project for you to work on.

GRETCHEN: Absolutely.

JASMIN: Yeah. I mean, it's such a great book. And you've got it all, and what I think is so awesome too is that you're not a trained cook! You just are an incredible hobbyist at this, and this inspires me because I know that --

MARIANN: Are you gonna make this every day for me?

JASMIN: Not even at all. But it inspires me to ask you to move in with us. So on that --

GRETCHEN: Cashew cream, even for the absolute layperson, you stick some cashews in some water to soak them overnight, and then you put them in a blender with some different water and you have cashew cream. Anybody can handle that, even Jasmin Singer. Am I right?

JASMIN: Oh, right, I think you probably are. And there's just so many poems in this book that are so beautiful, and the book is called *Kind*. And Gretchen, thank you so much for joining us today on Our Hen House. We so admire the creative and delicious ways that you truly are changing the world for animals, both of the human and nonhuman variety. And to learn more about Gretchen and to find *Kind* and her other books visit gretchenprimack.com.