

EPISODE 3:

ELEANOR:
Hi everyone!

CORDELIA:
Good day, friends!

ELEANOR:
I'm Ellie!

CORDELIA:
And I'm Cordie!

BOTH:
And this is... The Legendary Handbook!

CORDELIA:
Working title. We have been sent a mysterious book in the mail by our mother who is a compulsive thrift shopper.

ELEANOR:
And we're afraid it's a cursed book!

CORDELIA:
If you tuned in last week, we read an entry from said book, called the Legendary Handbook, that freaked us out, a lot!

ELEANOR:
The strangest thing about it, though, is that the book contains the name of a relative we may or may not have.

CORDELIA:
Which brings us to our very first special guest of the podcast!

ELEANOR:
We decided to call our beloved mom, Fiona, to ask her about this strange relative.

CORDELIA:
We are going to record our call with her so you can all hear our lovely mother!

SOUND: PHONE RINGING

FIONA:

Hi, honey!

CORDELIA:

Hi mom!

ELEANOR:

Hello mummy!

FIONA:

What can I do for girls?

CORDELIA:

We have a random question.

FIONA:

Oh?

ELEANOR:

Did you have a relative named Brigid?

(Their mother pauses)

CORDELIA:

Mom?

FIONA:

Yes, I'm here. Wow, girls, I haven't heard that name in a long time.

ELEANOR:

So you do have a relative named Brigid!

FIONA:

Yeah, my Auntie Brigid. My mother's older sister. She went missing when I was a teenager. She went out for tea one day and never came back.

CORDELIA:

Oh my god, really?

FIONA:

Yes. We took it to the police and everything. She just. . . vanished. Your Grannie was heartbroken.

ELEANOR:

That makes sense as to why we've never heard of her.

FIONA:

Oh yeah, the family doesn't like to talk about it. It was a difficult time.

CORDELIA:

There was no evidence of where she went?

FIONA:

Nope, she was a bit eclectic though. At first they thought she'd come right back, she would sometimes wander for hours at a time. But this was the first time she never came back. You know, she's the reason I love Earl Grey tea and thrifting. We used to go all the time when I was little. I haven't thought about her in years. . . .Oh! Would you look at the time. The grocery store just ended their senior-only hours and I need to get there. Can't have all those insane fuckers buying all the toilet paper, can we?

ELEANOR:

Absolutely not!

CORDELIA:

I'd love to see you drop kick one of them, mom.

FIONA:

I very nearly did last week. Not a single roll to be found! I was ready to tear some man's head off when he tried to walk into the store without a mask.

ELEANOR:

Yeah, mom! Kick his ass!

FIONA:

I'll try my best. Love you, girls! If you need anything please let me or dad know. Talk soon!

BOTH:

Bye mom!

SOUND: phone call ended

CORDELIA:

So, mystery solved!

ELEANOR:

Mom had Aunt Brigid's book, and gave it to us.

CORDELIA:

For what purpose, though, remains to be seen.

ELEANOR:

Speaking of the book, let's open it up, shall we?

CORDELIA:

Yes, let's!

SOUND: BOOK IS OPENED.

ELEANOR:

Hmm, let's see here. . .

(reading from book)

"Hostage Negotiation and You" page sixty-eight.

CORDELIA:

What is this, the FBI?

ELEANOR:

Will you let me read!

(reading from book)

"Stargazing" page three sixty. . . and, "Crow Pie" page seven.

CORDELIA:

Is the book suggesting we eat crows?

ELEANOR:

Why don't we find out? I wouldn't put it past the book.

CORDELIA:

It did tell us to cut off parts of our toes to fit into shoes.

ELEANOR:

True. Let's find out if we have to eat crows next!

SOUND: pages turning.

ELEANOR:

(reading from book)

"As with many processes of particular importance, the pie begins with the preparation. While it is certainly natural to be focused on the final act of the capture, The Reader is strongly forewarned against letting haste detract from their observance of the proper rites. Crows witness well, and they do not forget. They remember faces, names, identifying features and failures best of all. Your impression here will be indelible; steady your hand.

First, you will need to establish a secure base of operations near to the habitat of the crow of your interest. The Reader may be surprised to learn that cities are far more successful grounds than the more civil wild of the woods (though if you are indeed surprised, be certain not to allow your face to betray it, lest the crows remember). In fact the urban environment offers numerous benefits to the contemporary crow; groups of tall trees are more plentiful than in farmlands, buildings and pavings raise the average air temperature, and artificial lighting discourages encounters with their natural predator, the Owl (see confectionary questions, p. a-three-uh). More appealingly still, the guns in the cities are rarely aimed at the birds.

While a gathering of crows may seem a killer opportunity, the Reader should reconsider any inclinations to intervene or interrupt. Crows gather to mate (a private moment), to discuss (our failings), or to mourn (with great solemnity). In the first case our decency dictates distance, in the second, our pride. In all cases and the third in particular, Pie has no place.

Instead, wait until the roost has run its course, and capitalize on the Lingering that takes place in the twilight of all social gatherings. Here you will find a corvid no longer interested in the social but not yet willing to return to its individual affairs, and your offer of distraction will be welcome.

Do not begin with the pie.

Do. Not. Begin. With. The. Pie.

You will show yourself foolish, haphazard and ill-informed to a watchful witness with a penchant for gossip, and secure nothing but the scorn of every passing pigeon, parrot, and even parakeet (the last of whom may show their trademark sympathy, but will quietly know you to be simply subpar). Instead, you must opt for an Amuse-bouche.

Ideally you will have observed your target as much as casual proximity will allow, to glean the crow's preferred diet. In all case, bring a range of options, and after some artful arrangement (presentation here is key), retreat to twice the length of civil distance (a bird's notion of social distance accounts for the possibility of flight).

The next day, the same.

And the next."

CORDELIA:

Ooooh, I get it! You are making a pie for your new crow friends!

ELEANOR:

Thank god. I probably would have actually thrown up if I had to read about cooking and eating crows.

CORDELIA:

Oh my god, I love crows and corvids!

ELEANOR:

I have heard stories about people befriending them and the crows bringing their new human friends gifts. They're really smart too.

CORDELIA:

They are! It's so amazing. Maybe we should try that. Read more!

ELEANOR:

(reading from book)

"Do not be discouraged if your crow does not appear - your dedication will be noted, and you will be seen. Indeed, truancy should be seen as encouraging, as it means you are regarded as sufficiently dangerous as to require regard. The next day, the same. Be resistant to discouragement. However, if at any point the Reader should find yourself with an audience of 3 crows, resolve any outstanding business with Morrighan before continuing - multi-tasking is not your friend here. The next day, the same. And the next. The Reader should not hold the suspicion of the bird as being too personal. For centuries, crows have been maligned in human folklore and legends; anyone told so often for so long that they are villainous has every right to wonder what kind of creature sees villains everywhere. However, you should also not think the suspicion entirely specious and on the basis of species alone. Any bare and open sky is an open eye, and you have been seen. Your failings are bright, shiny things, and crows love to collect. Show humility. Let the pie wait. At long last, at the time and place of your normal offering, the crow will appear bearing something for you in their beak. Here again you must not leap to conclusions - observe the nature of item offered, and the manner, and presentation (which here in particular is key). If it is anything man-made, wait a week. If it is stone, proceed with caution. If it is bone, gamble as you will. In all cases, the Meal has finally been paid for, and you should act quickly. Water, bread, and a napkin should be instant (keep the water filled throughout the meal, and the table free of crumbs; you will find that in this moment presentation is key). Never leave the bird unattended, but focus on delivering your pastry as quickly as possible, before the bird can reconsider. Cutlery is a plus; the bird will know it is both symbolic and metallic, and feel seen. Prepare pie crusts as directed. (Do not bake) Make a medium thick gravy with flour, shortening, and juices. Boil eggs as you would for ramen (runny but not running), and cover with plenty of dough. Do not bother to lattice the top - we are past presentation now - but ensure the crow's offer can sit snugly in a central divet. Serve and retreat. 3 pecks will grant you 1 request. 1 peck, a simple query yes or no. A clean plate means two things - you should list egg-boiling on your resume and your arrangement is secure. As you resume your daily life, be discreet, but also do not attempt to conceal the bond. The crow cannot risk a distance of more than 100 meters, and people will notice. Explain that you fed it once. Explain that it likes you. Call it a friend, and smile in that third way humans do to explain that the unfunny joke was funny and the question was unwelcome. Never call it a pet. Aside from being a grave disrespected, it may open you to legal trouble, as crows are listed on the Department of the Interior's Federal Register of Migratory Birds and therefore are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. No part of them can be owned."

CORDELIA:

Informative, as always.

ELEANOR:

...Do you think we could make an army of crows that are also our friends?

CORDELIA:

You know, you're usually someone who does exactly whatever they put their mind to, so why the hell not! This year has already had enough nonsense things happen.

ELEANOR:

This is. . .so true.

SOUND: cell phone buzzing

CORDELIA:

Huh, weird. Mom is calling me again.

ELEANOR:

She may have butt dialed you.

CORDELIA:

What if she kicked some Karen's ass and wants to tell us about it!

ELEANOR:

Answer it Cordie!!

CORDELIA:

Hi, mom!

ELEANOR:

Did you have to fistfight anyone in Rittenhouse?

CORDELIA:

Please tell me you bodyslammed an anti-masker.

FIONA:

Ha, ha, thankfully I was able to get what I needed without incident. I did have a question for you, though. Why did you ask my about my Auntie Brigid?

ELEANOR:

You sent us her creepy-ass book.

FIONA:

I--what?

CORDELIA:

Yeah, her Legendary Handbook. The one with her name in it and the weird clock inside.

FIONA:

Girls. . .I didn't send you a book.