

## **EPISODE 1:**

CORDELIA:

Hey y'all, I know you're all looking forward to Ellie and Cordie's Quarantine Unboxing Video.

ELEANOR:

Unfortunately, Cordie's webcam on her computer just. . .stopped working. So I made the executive decision to make this series into a podcast, you know, like any Millennial with a microphone would do.

CORDELIA:

If you're new here, hi! I am Cordelia, but you can call me Cordie, and this is my sister Eleanor.

ELEANOR:

But please, call me Ellie. Cordelia here is uh—a genius, really— an Linguistic Anthropology Grad Student —girl get those letters!—who has already has a degree in the Classics

CORDELIA:

I'm basically your life if you had read everything your English teachers ever mentioned, which is to say a hollow shell of a human with strained eyesight and actual papercut scars. But Ellie is our STAR!

ELEANOR:

Stop it! Actually, don't stop.

CORDELIA:

—she's a performer who does all kind of magical, amazing theater and circus things, she does tricks, she wears COSTUMES — she's doing a super secret immersive show soon with some crazy company out of Philadelphia called called Cirque du Nuit—

ELEANOR:

Thank you to my agent.

CORDELIA:

You are so welcome. Invoice is in the mail, My rates are very reasonable. Frankly I've got the time because we are stuck at home because of the plague!

ELEANOR:

Which is why we're ACTUALLY here, in your ears. To mitigate the boredom, we started making unboxing videos during Quarantine, and for some reason, people find us entertaining! What you are about to hear is the audio from the original unboxing video. I hope y'all find this as interesting as we did.

ELEANOR:

Hello friends! Welcome back to our Quarantine Channel. Today, as you all know, is an unboxing!  
With a twist!

CORDELIA:

Right, so we got a mysterious package in the mail. There's no return address.

ELEANOR:

But it's got our address, obviously.

CORDELIA:

Looks handwritten, but it's very neat and regular. It might be some kind of font or stamp or something.

ELEANOR:

And like, a few weird stamps - like old-timey mail stuff stamps, but otherwise nothing else on this box.

CORDELIA:

Right! No markings, or labels, or branding!

ELEANOR:

Which is totally weird, so we thought it would be fun to open it with all of you on our channel!

ELEANOR:

Yeah. Anyway, here is the box! It's a little heavy, whatever is in there is pretty solid.

**SOUND: eleanor shakes the box**

CORDELIA:

What are you doing? Don't shake it, what if it's fragile?

ELEANOR:

It doesn't say fragile on the package.

CORDELIA:

It also doesn't say, "Please shake me!" on it either!

ELEANOR:

Okay, okay, geez. Calm your breasticles.

CORDELIA:

My breasticles are fully calm, thank you. Give me the box.

**SOUND: The scissors drop.**

ELEANOR:

Scissors! I thought I was gonna be the one to cut it this time.

CORDELIA:

You almost sliced your finger off, last time! Let me do it.

ELEANOR:

No, let me!

CORDELIA:

Oh my god, fine! Slice your finger off! See if I care. I am NOT taking you to the ER where we are both going to catch the plague because you decided you wanted fewer fingers!

ELEANOR:

Chill, panic queen.

**SOUND: Scissors cutting tape can be heard. the box is being opened**

CORDELIA:

So, real talk, what do we think this is?

ELEANOR:

Severed body parts for sure.

CORDELIA:

Ooooh, what's in the box?

ELEANOR:

WHAT'S IN THE BOX? No, really, I'm pretty sure this is mail fraud, I've been reading about that.

CORDELIA:

Woah woah woah, what now?

ELEANOR:

It's that thing where scam companies mail shit so they can establish shipping records, looks more legit or whatever.

CORDELIA:

Is that really a thing?

ELEANOR:

Girl, it was all over Facebook like, three months ago. Where do you live, under a rock?

CORDELIA:

Yes, asshole, it's called Grad School.

**SOUND: Loud thump, tear, the box is fully open.**

CORDELIA:

So, inside, is a book.

ELEANOR:

Anticlimactic. Are you sure you didn't just order this for one of your classes?

CORDELIA:

Do you have any idea how much textbooks cost? Believe me, I track that shit.

ELEANOR:

Anything else inside?

CORDELIA:

There is also a piece of paper.

ELEANOR:

Oooh, let's read it!

CORDELIA:

There's letterhead on it. It reads, "Brigid Nimah O'Connor". Isn't mom's maiden name O'Connor?

ELEANOR:

Yeah, it is. I wonder if this is someone who's related to her.

CORDELIA:

Huh, weird. I've never heard the name Brigid at family gatherings.

ELEANOR:

Well, we solved one mystery! Someone who may or may not be related to us sent us this box, and it's just a book. Thankfully, the bomb squad doesn't have to come.

CORDELIA:

Well, was it her? What does the note say?

**SOUND: paper unfolding.**

ELEANOR:

It. . .it doesn't say anything. It's just a blank piece of paper. Very mysterious and spooky. I wonder what Brigid meant with this.

CORDELIA:

No idea. Did you know that the very first recorded Salem witch to be executed was named Bridget?

ELEANOR:

Thank you, well of Semi-Useful Knowledge.

CORDELIA:

My knowledge is very useful! Let's move onto the book.

ELEANOR:

It looks super old.

**SOUND: book is lifted out of the box.**

CORDELIA:

Here is the book, as you can see it's got this cool tan, brownish color. It smells like an old book.

ELEANOR:

The title reads, "The Legendary Handbook". Sounds exciting.

CORDELIA:

Let's open it up!

**SOUND: they open the book.**

ELEANOR:

It's. . . a little dusty.

**SOUND: eleanor sneezes.**

CORDELIA:

Don't sneeze all over the artifact! Get a tissue, you animal!

ELEANOR:

My sleeve is a perfectly good tissue, thank you.

CORDELIA:

You are nasty. Anyway, there's no author listed, no publisher or publish date but there is Brigid's name under "This book belongs to" on the inside cover. And. . .huh, weird.

ELEANOR:  
What?

CORDELIA:  
There's two more lines under her name.

ELEANOR:  
Ooooh, spooky! There's two of us!

CORDELIA:  
That doesn't automatically mean it's for us!

ELEANOR:  
I guess. . .maybe Brigid knew we'd get our hands on it some day?

CORDELIA:  
If Brigid is even related to us. Oh look! A publisher's note.

ELEANOR:  
Let's read what this mysterious Publisher has to say.

ELEANOR:  
(reading from book:)

"Publisher's Note

It is the request of the makers of this collection of instructions that neither the books nor authors be referenced or considered as the sources of the knowledge that lies within. That which has been always Known to itself cannot be said to be learned, but rather revealed, and however much the vantage point of a viewer may change or differ upon observation, the subject is not moved, save that it is recreated by experience upon the plane of many realities.

Similarly, the Truth of the contents is not to be refuted, as they are offered not as fodder for the low metric of the Objective but rather unstoppably permeate the space of real. In short; it is not for us to judge whether this knowledge is real, but rather for us to alter our reality by how this knowledge may judge it.

The Readers are encouraged not to get too hung up about this. In light of the persistence of our actual existences, it is only by the concentrated application of Will that anything that has been can substantively change that which we accept as now. "Once upon a time" remains bound into another time, until such time as one chooses to understand their now as inheritance. That being said, to allow the fabled past or imagainitive future to be entirely dismissed in favor of the now is to imprison oneself within the narrow confines of on person's life and and what may be

reasonably accomplished. The Readers must agree; there is no adequate reason to be simply reasonable. In light of the. . .para-para. . .

CORDELIA:

Para-ontological contents of this work, the Readers shall defend, indemnify and hold the authors, publishers, scribes and orators of THE LEGENDARY HANDBOOK harmless from any and all claims, injuries, damages, losses or suits including attorney fees or blood debts arising out of or in connection with the observation of, adherence to, or investment of credulity in the instructions, believes, or forbidden ken within contained.

Should a court of competent jurisdiction determine that this Agreement is subject to THKTT 4.24.115, then, in the event of liability for damages arising out of bodily injury to persons property or fabrics of being caused by or resulting from the concurrent negligence of the Readers, the makers of this volume shall be held to the liability hereunder only as it is articulated to the extent of the Contractor's negligence. It is further specifically and expressly understood that the indemnification provided herein constitutes the Readers' waiver of immunity under Existential Insurance, Title --: I can't even read that!

ELEANOR:

What even is that?

CORDELIA:

No idea.

(Reading from book)

solely for the purposes of this indemnification. This waiver has been mutually negotiated by the parties. The provisions of this section shall survive the expiration or termination of this Agreement, this Nation, this Story, and most certainly, this Reader(s).")

CORDELIA:

Um. . .well. . .that's. . .

ELEANOR:

This almost sounds like a contract.

CORDELIA:

Uh, what it sounds like is the weirdest shit I have ever heard! What in the ever living fuck is this thing?

ELEANOR:

Language! Remember we are a family friendly channel according to YouTube!

CORDELIA:

YouTube can suck my left nut. Turn the page!

ELEANOR:

Okay, okay! Wait. . .look, there's like. . .two little lines to sign our names at the bottom.

CORDELIA:

I think that's just to write your name in case you lose it or whatever. Still, I don't know that I have ever seen a book start with a disclaimer.

**SOUND: grunting, fingers moving across paper.**

ELEANOR:

What's wrong?

CORDELIA:

I can't seem to. . .The page won't turn. It's like it's glued down or something.

ELEANOR:

Hmm. . .can I try?

CORDELIA:

Sure.

**SOUND: book is handed to eleanor.**

ELEANOR:

Huh, you're right. What if. . .

**SOUND: book is turned upside down.**

CORDELIA:

Be careful!

ELEANOR:

Well, do you have any better ideas?

CORDELIA:

Maybe. . .nah, that would be crazy.

ELEANOR:

Maybe what?

CORDELIA:

Maybe we have to sign our names to turn the page?



ELEANOR:

That's. . . a little spooky. Let's do it!

**SOUND: rustling. writing sounds.**

CORDELIA:

AHAH!

**SOUND: Page turning.**

ELEANOR:

I can't believe that worked.

CORDELIA:

Maybe this is one of those joke magic books and it only works if there's new ink on the page?

ELEANOR:

Cordie, you don't have the Rona, do you? Are you delirious? That sounds a little far fetched, even for you.

CORDELIA:

I know. . . I just. . .

**SOUND: PAGE TURNING.**

CORDELIA:

Woah! I would like everyone to look at this! Show the camera!

**SOUND: eleanor turns the book towards the camera.**

ELEANOR:

Can you describe what you're seeing? I want to make sure we're seeing the same thing.

CORDELIA:

It's a picture of a giant clock. But there's more than numbers on the clock. . .there's symbols and letters, I think that's. . .Latin, maybe?

ELEANOR:

And in the center are the hands, right? That's what I'm seeing.

CORDELIA:

Yeah, I'm seeing the same thing. Let's see what the next few pages are.

**SOUND: pages turning.**

ELEANOR:

It's a list of a table of contents! Each entry seems to be advice on how to. . .well, everything, it seems like.

**SOUND: PAGES TURNING.**

CORDELIA:

There's so many contents.

ELEANOR:

Yo. . .

CORDELIA:

It occurs to me that this would be very difficult to sort in the Dewey Decimal System.

ELEANOR:

You are such a weirdo. Are you having like, Grad School war flashbacks?

CORDELIA:

You don't even know.

ELEANOR:

We should read one aloud!

CORDELIA:

Why don't we start with the first one?

ELEANOR:

I suppose it's best to start at the beginning, isn't it?

CORDELIA:

(reading from book)

"Entry one, If lost in the woods, here is how to find your way home."

ELEANOR:

Does it say which woods?

CORDELIA:

No, it just says, "woods".

ELEANOR:

Is there a map?

CORDELIA:

Will you let me read! This is only the first page!

ELEANOR:

Okay! Jeez.

CORDELIA:

(reading from book)

"If walking through the wood one day, and you happen to find yourself lost, it is of the utmost importance you alter your circumstance as soon as possible, so you may find yourself home. First, carefully assess your surroundings using the best available eyes.

ELEANOR:

"Best available" -- why do they say that? Am I supposed to have an extra set?

CORDELIA:

I don't know.

ELEANOR:

I'll just use the spare eyeballs I have in a jar and use them as a spyglass!

CORDELIA:

Shut up!

"Second, look to the sky, if sun is directly over head, congratulations! Simply place a rock within view of the sun and wait to see where the shadow lands. Stand perpendicular to the shadow, and viola! You are facing north. Once north, follow the moss to the left. Make sure the pine needles are facing the opposite direction of the moss."

What the fuck is this thing?

ELEANOR:

Maybe it's a children's bedtime book? Let me read!

**SOUND: book passes hands to eleanor.**

ELEANOR:

(reading from book)

"Once you have followed the moss and pine needles, you should find yourself oncemore on or bisecting to a main trail. Once on the trail, turn right, walk one hundred paces, and you should find yourself at the entrance to the wood, and safely make your way home. Please note that it is advisable to bring proper provisions if going for a walk in the woods, and perhaps a map, a compass, and or a guide."

CORDELIA:

What if you're lost in the woods at night?

ELEANOR:

Let's see if they have a dark mode!

**SOUND: page turning.**

ELEANOR:

(reading from book)

"If it is dark out, extend congratulations to yourself. You have made a bone-headed move, clearly have insufficient regard for your own life to make use of this book. The authors recommend that a coloring book may better align with the Reader's dumbassery, but until such time as one can be located: Stay out of the woods at night."

CORDELIA:

Some guide.

ELEANOR:

Yeah, but the author certainly has a sense of humor!

CORDELIA:

I wonder if Brigid wrote this.

ELEANOR:

We have to find out who she is, first!

CORDELIA:

That's true. Oh my god, look at how long this video is! We should cut it now.

ELEANOR:

Yeah, but I definitely think we should talk more about this book. This thing is freaky! I like it.

CORDELIA:

That's a great idea, Ellie! Leave a note in the comments if you want us to feature the book in our next episode!

ELEANOR:

Don't forget to like and subscribe, or whatever the kids do these days, I can't tell you what to do!

BOTH:

Toodles!

CORDELIA:

So, as you can tell, we were unable to post this video.

ELEANOR:

But we have decided we want to read an entry from this book every week, and document our experiences on here! It's going to be like a whole podcast series!

CORDELIA:

Right, until the external webcam I ordered comes in, which will take like, a week.

ELEANOR:

In which case it will be a very short podcast series!

CORDELIA:

Maybe in the future we'll bring in special guests, like our Mom!

ELEANOR:

The most special of guests. Okay, until next time, thanks for listening to whatever the fuck we opened!

CORDELIA:

Hope we're not cursed!

BOTH:

Goodbye!

SOUND: outro theme

## **EPIISODE 2:**

ELEANOR:

Welcome back friends!

CORDELIA:

Turns out, so far we are not cursed!

ELEANOR:

If you are new here, hi! I'm Eleanor! Ellie for short.

CORDELIA:

And I'm Cordelia! Cordie for short.

ELEANOR:

And this is. . .wait we don't have a name for this yet, do we?

CORDELIA:

I feel like it'll come to us eventually.

ELEANOR:

Yeah, probably.

CORDELIA:

Anyways, my sister and I got mailed a mysterious book!

ELEANOR:

It's not really a mystery, it was probably mom.

CORDELIA:

Shhhh!

ELEANOR:

But she sends us weird shit all the time! You know she does that thing where she goes shopping for things she doesn't need!

CORDELIA:

When she goes on her treasure hunts!

ELEANOR:

Exactly. She definitely found this somewhere and thought we'd like it.

CORDELIA:

I refuse to believe you're right.

ELEANOR:

Ugh, whatever. If you don't know what we're talking about, go back and listen to the first episode!

CORDELIA:

We should probably give a little backstory every episode, don't you think?

ELEANOR:

Why? Those listening should already know what we're talking about! Responsible listening!

CORDELIA:

Which is why I am going to explain more!

ELEANOR:

Ugh, fine!

CORDELIA:

Each week my sister and I are going to read entries from this mysterious book.

ELEANOR:

One of us will pick three, and the other picks one of those to read!

CORDELIA:

Yes! So, let's get started.

SOUND: book is opened.

CORDELIA:

Hmm. . .there are just so many contents. . .here we go!

(Reading from book)

"Doppelgangers, Imitators, and Twins: What To Do When Now There's Two, page three hundred and ninety four"

ELEANOR:

"Turn to page. . .three hundred. . .and ninety. . .four"

CORDELIA:

You did not just quote she-who-must-not-be-named.

ELEANOR:

It was so hard not to. She still sucks major ass though.

CORDELIA:

She does indeed. Next selection!

(reading from book)

"Small household management and chore delegation, page fifteen."

ELEANOR:

That sounds so boring!

CORDELIA:

Or useful. . . Okay! Jeez. And, the last one. . .

(reading from book)

"The Sudden and Urgent Change in Shoe Size, page thirty two."

ELEANOR:

Let's do the Doppelganger one!

CORDELIA:

Alrighty. . .page. . .three hundred. . .and ninety four.

SOUND: pages turning.

CORDELIA:

(reading from book)

"Firstly, The Reader is advised is to determine that you are, in fact, you. This is either incredibly simple or soul-wrenchingly complex, dependent on your natural tendencies towards introspection. As a rule of thumb, it is useful to at least consider the following each day: Where are you? How did you get there? Do you remember waking up today? For more advanced cases, identify a trusted ally to ask you the following prompts while carefully studying the bridge of your nose (if you cannot identify a trusted ally, this may be a poor indicator)"

ELEANOR:

Ooo who would be your ally?

CORDELIA:

Uh, you obviously. Wouldn't I be yours?

ELEANOR:

I mean ... yes if you're—

CORDELIA:

What?! You doppleganger bitch! How dare you?

ELEANOR:

Shut up! I was gonna say, "yes if you weren't busy" but like, 60% of the time you're shut up in your room, making no noise and pretending you do not exist.

CORDELIA:

Yes it's called grad school. Also, watch yourself, that's reference two.

ELEANOR:

Noted.



CORDELIA:

Alright then, if I was busy who would you ask?

ELEANOR:

Hmm, probably Mel. She knows you so well, I'd trust her.

CORDELIA:

Oh you know she's honestly a good choice. She would totally shoot a clone.

ELEANOR:

Is that what it says to do?

CORDELIA:

Oh no, it's like a little question chart:

(Reading from book)

"Hand the book now to your ally, that they may ask the following questions: One, What is the earliest memory you have? (Be sure to look for details rather than dates here, associative capacity is more telling than accuracy.) Two, What is your favorite body part? ( Note, Do not allow peeking!) Three, How many fingers am I holding up? (Note: Hold up a foot or fresh fruit instead. Depending on your suspicions, a cross is also an acceptable option.)

Once you have achieved sufficient Self-Satisfaction, these same questions may be presented to the person(s)/potential duplicate(s) in question. However, a simpler solution is to suddenly and without context confront the subject of suspicion and declare that "I'm on to you, and I'm well aware. When the time comes, everyone else will know too." At this point walk away before any clarifications can be requested. This not only dampens the spirits of would-be replicates, but serves as a convenient catch-all for all scales, levels, and degrees of betrayal."

ELEANOR:

So weird. What's next?

CORDELIA:

That's the end.

ELEANOR:

Wait, is that it?

CORDELIA:

Yup, for this entry at least.

ELEANOR:

But that was so short!

CORDELIA:

Well you know, easy stuff: are you real? Has everyone in your life been replaced by a duplicate?

ELEANOR:

I want to read another one.

CORDELIA:

Weren't you the one who came up with the "pick 3 then pick 1" rule?

ELEANOR:

Yes and now I'm picking another.

CORDELIA:

Yeah that sounds right. You passed the test — you're definitely you. Okay, how about we read another one that I picked?

ELEANOR:

Let's do the changing shoe size one. Can I read it this time?

CORDELIA:

Sure!

SOUND: Cordelia hands the book to eleanor, she turns the pages

ELEANOR:

Alright, here we go.

(reading from book)

If the shoe fits, wear it. If it doesn't, and a combination of grave stakes and dire circumstances absolutely prevent the purchase of a more comfortable or viable size, continue as instructed.

FOOT TOO SMALL / BIG SHOES TO FILL: Let it be presumed that you have neither the means nor the option of a visit to a cobbler. Should you have time, some shoes may be shrunk by wetting them and then allowing them to dry. Should time be among your neithers, a variety of options still present themselves.

Full or partial insoles can work wonders, particularly when the difference is slight (though clearly still noticeable). A heel strip can also secure a sliding shoe for a more snug fit. For a show either too wide or long at the toe, cotton bandages or thin strips of fabric can be wadded into the front for comfort.

CORDELIA:

Oh, I've done that. Like those red pumps I have - super cute but just a litte too big.

ELEANOR:

(reading continued)

"FOOT TOO LARGE / SHOE TOO SMALL: Permanent damage is never ideal, so we will aim to be judicious. Find the sharpest knife you have – if a sharpener or whetstone is available, these would be a few minutes well spent. Next you'll need an open flame – a stovetop is quite reliable, but a set of matches can do in a pinch. Hold the knife over the flame for about 60 seconds, slowly moving along the length of the blade to sterilize all surfaces. Washing your hands is also advisable. If you can lay down a towel, do.

Begin at the heel. A small trim can go a long way here. If you'll need to be up and walking immediately, opt for whichever side of the foot you are least inclined to favor. If you can avoid walking in the foreseeable future, try to whittle a smaller portion from each side. Should this prove insufficient, wipe down your blade and continue.

The majority of the toes on the human foot can be considered superfluous. The big and pinky toes contribute the most to balancing, but a cursory knowledge of footwear instructs us that a tight squeeze will probably affect the outer edges most. Start with the pinky, and remove one at a time, checking for fit between each.

Should you find that you have overcompensated, refer to the instructions above on stuffing the toe of the shoe. Gauze can serve a double function here.

While precision is key (now is certainly an occasion to measure twice), The Reader is also advised to work as quickly as possible. Any initial bursts of adrenaline will begin to fade, leaving the task at hand less desirable over time. Application of a bite stick will prevent damage to the teeth and--"

SOUND: book gets put down

CORDELIA:

Oh. . .

ELEANOR:

Oh my god. That just made me nauseous.

CORDELIA:

Ellie. . .what is this thing?

ELEANOR:

I. . .I don't know.

CORDELIA:

Why would mom send us something like this?

ELEANOR:

Maybe she didn't read it?

CORDELIA:

Maybe we should call her and ask her?

ELEANOR:

Yeah. . .I am. . . How could this. . .is this for real? Like, is this a joke?

CORDELIA:

I. . .I don't know. Everything about this book is just. . .weird.

ELEANOR:

Yeah. Can we call it for today?

CORDELIA:

Sure. We'll be back next week, folks, to call our mom.

ELEANOR:

Yes, we'll be back with an episode titled, "Hey Mom, Why Did You Send Us Nightmare Fuel?"

CORDELIA:

Seriously. Alright,

BOTH:

Bye, all.

**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.

#### **EPISODE 4:**

CORDELIA:

What do you mean, you didn't send us a book?

ELEANOR:

We got this weird book in the mail last week, and you're the only one who sends us stuff like this.

FIONA:

Girls, you know I would have let you know if I was going to send you something. Which, by the way, did you get the itty bitty gas lamps I sent you?

CORDELIA:

Yes, they're adorable. But that's not the point, mom!

ELEANOR:

If you didn't send us this book, then who did?

FIONA:

I have no idea.

CORDELIA:

Well, your Auntie Brigid's name is in this book, mom.

ELEANOR:

There was even a blank note with letterhead with her name on it!

FIONA:

What does the letterhead look like?

CORDELIA:

It's black letters with pretty swoopy penmanship. It almost looks handwritten.

FIONA:

That's definitely Auntie Brigid. She used to write me little notes all the time and send them to me in the mail. I used to love getting her letters, even though she lived down the street.

ELEANOR:

Do you still have them?

FIONA:

Of course I do. All of her belongings are in a storage unit downtown. It was all left to my mother and I, and we didn't have the heart to sell any of it.

CORDELIA:  
The plot thickens!

ELEANOR:  
Do you think we'd be able to see some of Auntie Brigid's stuff?

FIONA:  
The storage facility is closed due to the pandemic at the moment. But. . .maybe I'll call your Nanna and ask her if she's heard from Brigid.

CORDELIA:  
Do you think Nanna knew about this book?

ELEANOR:  
Yeah, maybe Nanna sent it!

FIONA::  
I doubt it, but it couldn't hurt to ask. She was really upset about Brigid's disappearance, though. Even now, she still doesn't like to talk about it, that's why I don't think she sent you the book. But I'll certainly ask if she's maybe heard from her. This could mean she's alive, girls.

CORDELIA:  
Listeners, we may have cracked a cold case!

ELEANOR:  
Yeah, if we can find out where this was sent from, maybe we can trace it!

FIONA:  
Slow down there Paul Holes. Let's rule out your Nanna first.

ELEANOR:  
Okay, fine. Wait. . .who's Paul Holes?

FIONA:  
He's the cold case detective that helped catch the Golden State Killer. Keep up.

CORDELIA:  
Yeah, Ellie, keep up.

ELEANOR:  
Shut up!

FIONA:

Be nice to each other, you two.

CORDELIA:  
Yes, mommy.

FIONA:  
Alright, well, I'll let you two get back to solving mysteries. I'll give you a ring after I talk to Nanna. But brace yourselves, Auntie Brigid is a touchy subject for her, she may not tell me anything.

ELEANOR:  
That's okay, mom. Thanks for offering to talk to her.

CORDELIA:  
Yeah, I don't think it would be a good idea if we did. If she doesn't like talking about her, and we're not supposed to know about her, she'd probably shut down pretty quick.

FIONA:  
You know your Nanna, she'll hold all of her emotions in the middle of her chest, and keep them there.

ELEANOR:  
And maybe admit one feeling after some whisky.

FIONA:  
Yes, well, I'll talk to you both soon. I love you!

ELEANOR:  
Love you too, mom.

CORDELIA:  
Talk soon, love you, bye!

FIONA:  
Bye girls!

ELEANOR:  
Well that was. . .enlightening.

CORDELIA:  
Do you think Auntie Brigid is still alive?

ELEANOR:  
That would mean she's been in hiding all this time.

CORDELIA:

Yeah, but hiding from who?

ELEANOR:

Or what?

**(there is an uncomfortable pause.)**

CORDELIA:

Could that be why she sent us the book?

ELEANOR:

Who knows. This book is. . . I don't know. Do you think it's listening to us? What if it knows where Auntie Brigid is?

CORDELIA:

Ellie, that sounds a little out of left field.

ELEANOR:

Does it, though?

CORDELIA:

A sentient book? Ellie, I know you've got an artistic mind, but maybe we need to get a little fresh air.

ELEANOR:

What if we got another perspective on this?

CORDELIA:

That's a good idea, actually. Maybe let's go for a walk, clear our heads, and I'll give Mel a call? She's in my program, but her specialty is Written Language and its Evolution.

ELEANOR:

Is this the same aforementioned Mel? The amazing scholar who is also an artist and held her very own art exhibit?

CORDELIA:

Yup! She's fabulous.

**SOUND: facetime ringing sound**

MEL:

Hello!



CORDELIA:  
Hey, Mel! How are you?

MEL:  
I've been managing. Drowning in readings and papers, and for once, I'm thankful for it.

CORDELIA:  
Same. You remember my sister, Ellie, right?

MEL:  
Yes, of course! Hi, Ellie! It's really nice to see you!

ELEANOR:  
It's nice to see you too! Good to know there are. . .other people out there.

MEL:  
So, what's up? You said you had a weird question.

CORDELIA:  
Yeah, I have a bit of a. . .well, an out of the blue kind of question. It involves a book.

MEL:  
Ooooh! You know I love books.

CORDELIA:  
That you do, that's why I figured you'd be the best person to ask.

MEL:  
Ask what?

ELEANOR:  
Well. . .I think it's best if we just show you.

**SOUND: rustling sounds as cordelia picks the book up to show the "camera"**

MEL:  
Hm. . .that looks really old. Where did you get it?

CORDELIA:  
It was sent to us in the mail.

MEL:  
No return address?

ELEANOR:

Nope.

MEL:

And it wasn't that weird scam thing?

CORDELIA:

Definitely not. It. . .well, let me open it.

**SOUND: BOOK IS OPENED.**

MEL:

Is that supposed to be a. . .

ELEANOR:

A clock? Yes. Wait. . .Cordie. . .

CORDELIA:

Holy shit!

MEL:

What?

CORDELIA:

The hands. . .they've moved.

ELEANOR:

Last time we looked at this picture of the clock. . .I could have sworn the hands were in different places. They had been pointing in opposite directions when we first opened the book.

CORDELIA:

Now. . .now it looks like they're pointing in the same direction. . .what's that word there? It looks like the Latin word "Esse". . .

MEL:

"To be".

ELEANOR:

And on the other side of the clock. . ."Non esse"

MEL:

"Not to be". . .what did you get your hands on, Cordie?

CORDELIA:

We thought it was some kind of vintage volume our mom found in a thrift shop, but she didn't send it to us.

ELEANOR:

And it has the name of a relative we've never met in it.

MEL:

Woah, how strange.

CORDELIA:

What's even stranger is that this particular relative disappeared a long time ago, gone without a trace. There's no way she could know about us.

MEL:

Unless she's been in hiding all this time.

CORDELIA:

Those were our thoughts exactly.

MEL:

But why send it now?

ELEANOR:

Maybe she knew how bored we'd get during quarantine?

CORDELIA:

Speak for yourself, I have like, eight and a half assignments I could be doing right now.

MEL:

Me too, but this is way more interesting. What is the book about?

ELEANOR:

It reads a bit like a "How To" guide, but. . .a little haunted.

MEL:

Haunted?

CORDELIA:

One of the entries in it was instructions on how to suddenly change your shoe size. . .by cutting off pieces of your feet. Some of the entries are pretty lighthearted, though. The first one we read was "How to find your way home when lost in the woods".

MEL:

Do you think you could read me one? I'm so intrigued!

CORDELIA:

We usually do a three and one rule.

ELEANOR:

Where one of us picks three entries, and the other picks one out of those three.

CORDELIA:

But in this case, since you're our impromptu special guest, why don't we let Mel pick the entry?

ELEANOR:

Sounds good to me! Can I be the one to pick them, though?

CORDELIA:

Sure, brat.

**SOUND: eleanor blows a raspberry at her sister.**

**SOUND: eleanor picks up the book, flips to the table of contents.**

ELEANOR:

Okay. . .let's see here. . .

(reading from book):

"Common Magic Potions: Tinctures for All Seasons" page four-sixty-seven. "Starblinding" page three-sixty, subsection Omega. And. . ."Ouch! My Paw! And Other Times Not to Trust Tigers" page one thousand and thirty.

MEL:

Wow. . .um. . .let's do "Ouch! My Paw!" That sounds fun.

CORDELIA:

Alrighty, here we go!

(reading from book) (entry by jen cowitz)

As people have moved into cities, encroached on wilderness, and developed weapons to render such beasts inert, we have lost our fear for creatures like lions, bears, tigers, and most dangerously, hippopotami, and opt for awe and wonder. While a healthy appreciation and respect for nature is much needed, one must remember that these creatures are highly invested in our failure to recognize them as honed, cunning, and treacherous.

Tigers, while less intelligent than the average housecat, put the vast majority of their talents into tricks, manipulation, and the dramatic ending of lives from the deadly gifts nature has given them. In broad strokes, if they are alive, they are trying to either eat you or extinguish you as a threat. Regardless of thorny paw, toothache, or crimped tail, you are simply no match on foot.

There are, however, instances in which one can, in fact, trust a tiger:

Tigers are lazy, but they have no intention of being seen as such. Offer a tiger a gift of food and, with enough groveling, it will insouciantly allow you to pass.

As well, tigers are excessively proud, and should you come across one, bargaining your life on a good riddle can often help you weasel your way out of a devouring. Better yet, propose that the last tiger you saw called the one before you stupid, filthy, langorous, or cheap, and the tiger is sure to start a fight with the "other" tiger rather than pick their teeth with you. This is best performed if there is, in fact, at least one other tiger nearby. If the other tiger is present, laud and debate the merits of both.

ELEANOR:

A little shorter than the standard one, but you get the idea.

MEL:

Well. . .that was. . .

ELEANOR:

See what we mean?

MEL:

Yeah, what a fascinating find! And there's no publisher or date listed?

CORDELIA:

Nope, the only authority mentioned at all is in the Publisher's Note. . .but the company's name is impossible to read.

MEL:

Hm. . .so they left a note, but no name?

ELEANOR:

Yeah, it's this long, strange letter that sounds like a lawyer's wet dream.

CORDELIA:

It almost reads like a contract.

MEL:

I wonder. . .you didn't give the book your name, did you?

ELEANOR:

I--what do you mean by "give it our names"?

MEL:

Did you write your names anywhere in the book?

CORDELIA:

We did.

ELEANOR:

There were two lines at the bottom of the publisher's note. . .and the page wouldn't turn unless we signed it!

MEL:

Oh, dear.

BOTH SISTERS:

What?!

MEL:

I just--this sounds a lot like the stories I used to read about the Fae Folk. Like, this book sounds like something they would write.

CORDELIA:

I didn't even put that together.

ELEANOR:

Yeah, I can't believe I didn't either. . .Nanna always told us to stay away from the Fae.

MEL:

I'm totally not trying to freak you out, but I am a little superstitious, as you know. Has anything weird happened around the house? Or have you had any bad or strange dreams?

CORDELIA:

Nope.

ELEANOR:

Not that I could tell.

MEL:

Well, that's good. Maybe I'm wrong. It does sound a little crazy saying it out loud.

CORDELIA:

Oh, Mel, we have been feeling a little crazy since we got this thing. It's entire existence is a mystery, and it only seems to get more complex.

MEL:

Did you ask anyone else in your family if it's some kind of heirloom?

ELEANOR:

Our mom said she'd ask our Nanna about. . .well, about the relative that went missing. Her name was Brigid.

MEL:

Like the goddess?

CORDELIA:

I suppose. We've never heard about her. She was our Nanna's sister, but she went missing when our mom was a teenager.

MEL:

And her name is in the book as well?

ELEANOR:

Yup, there was also a note with her letterhead in the box when it arrived.

CORDELIA:

We decided to try doing an unboxing video, but the footage got all corrupted, so we started reading the entries in podcast form.

MEL:

That sounds like a lot of fun! Maybe when things are a little safer I could take a look at it. It sounds like a piece of history or something.

ELEANOR:

Yeah, I just hope it's not housing a Trickster God or anything.

MEL:

Well. . .I don't think so. But I would be careful sleeping in the house with it. Maybe put it in the box each night. Just in case.

CORDELIA:

That's some solid advice.

MEL:

Let me know if you find anything else out about your Great Aunt. What a strange and wonderful tale this is turning out to be.

ELEANOR:

Yeah, strange being the operative word.

CORDELIA:

Thanks for your input, Mel. I really appreciate it. We'll let you get back to the million assignments you have going.

MEL:

Of course! You know I'm always ready to talk about the odd and mystical.

CORDELIA:

That's why you were the first person I called. Bye, Mel!

ELEANOR:

Thank you!

MEL:

I feel honored. Talk soon! And. . .maybe sprinkle some salt around your house. Love ya, bye!

**SOUND: hang up sound.**

ELEANOR:

I'm gonna go get the salt shaker right now.

CORDELIA:

I still can't believe the clock hands moved.

ELEANOR:

Let's look and see if they moved again.

**SOUND: PAGES TURNING.**

CORDELIA:

Nope, still pointed to "Esse".

**SOUND: PAGES TURNING.**

CORDELIA:

Oh my god, Ellie, look at this.

ELEANOR:

What?

CORDELIA:

Is it me, or is there a third line under "This Book Belongs To" ?

ELEANOR:

I---oh my god, there is.



CORDELIA:

This is. . .let's close it for today.

ELEANOR:

Yeah, I feel like I need to go to church.

CORDELIA:

Jesus is a biscuit!

ELEANOR:

Let him sop you up!

**SOUND: they laugh. a moment of tension is broken.**

CORDELIA:

Well, thanks for tuning in, we'll be back next week.

ELEANOR:

We know this was a most unusual episode, but we're grateful you've stuck around!

CORDELIA:

Tune in next week to see if our Nanna told our mom anything!

ELEANOR:

Or if the book's clock hands move again!

CORDELIA:

Or if the Fae have come to claim our souls because we gave them our names!

ELEANOR:

Hope we don't die!

CORDELIA:

Toodles!

ELEANOR:

G'bye!

## **EPISODE 5:**

CORDELIA:

Welcome back to the Legendary Handbook Podcast! I'm Cordie!

(Pause)

ELEANOR:

Oh, shit are we starting? I'm Ellie!

CORDELIA:

If you were with us last week, welcome back!

ELEANOR:

And if you're tuning in for the first time, go back and listen to the first four episodes. I promise you this will not make sense right off the bat.

CORDELIA:

But if you're insistent on only listening to this episode, we were sent a strange book in the mail, and it has the name of a missing relative within it. But, we do not know if this missing relative is the one that sent it to us.

(another pause)

CORDELIA:

Ellie, this is your line!

ELEANOR:

Oh, God! Sorry. We, uh, also gave our names to the book, but the Fae Folk have not come for our souls yet, so I think we're okay.

CORDELIA:

Well, that remains to be seen.

ELEANOR:

This is true, considering I had a really strange dream last night. Which is also what Mel told us to watch out for.

CORDELIA:

Well that explains the spacing out. You did?! What happened in it, do you remember? Are you okay?

ELEANOR:

I think so. Kind of. I mean. . .I was. . .well, I was wondering through the woods. It was gray and misty out, and there was a woman's voice. . .calling me. And. . .I was following the voice, like I knew who it was. But. . .I've never heard this voice before. . .somehow, though, dream me knew who it was. . .I don't know if that makes sense.

CORDELIA:

I guess. . .that's really weird, Ellie, given that the book has warned us about walking through the woods.

ELEANOR:

I know, that's why I am trying very hard not to spiral into a full blown panic attack right now.

CORDELIA:

Nothing else happened in the dream, though, right?

ELEANOR:

Not that I can remember.

CORDELIA:

Well, that's good. Maybe it was just a dream.

ELEANOR:

You're right. Our dreams are just really our subconscious trying to work out the contents of the day.

CORDELIA:

Yeah, and since we've been reading from a weird and fantastical book, it makes sense that you'd dream about it. Wandering in the woods seems benign enough. Speaking of the book, why don't we open it up?

ELEANOR:

In this strange and wonderful book, there are several thousand entries on how to do things.

CORDELIA:

Each week, one of us will pick three entries within the book, and the other one will pick the entry we read! Last week, we had an impromptu special guest, my best friend Mel, who picked out the entry we read, but Ellie picked them.

ELEANOR:

Which means it's Cordie's week to pick!

CORDELIA:

And so, we begin. It is currently four thirty, eastern standard time.

ELEANOR:

And as far as the book goes, it's. . .

**SOUND: book is opened.**

ELEANOR:

Delta. . .pentacle. . .eighteen?

CORDELIA:

Oh yeah, the book has its own clock built in.

ELEANOR:

Like I said, for this to make sense, go back and listen to the first four episodes, I promise, we will continue to make references to things that will not make sense if you don't!

CORDELIA:

What Ellie said. So, this week, our entries are. . .

**SOUND: PAGES TURNING.**

(reading from book)

"Losing the Trail, How to Prevent Being Followed", page eight sixteen, section theta.

ELEANOR:

Also known as: the way every single femme presenting person lives their lives trying not to be followed around by creepy men.

CORDELIA:

This is true, but you know this book definitely doesn't have advice about that, this is definitely--oh wait, it has a subtitle. . .

(READING FROM BOOK):

"Spy Evasion and Unnamed Entities, how to proceed with each".

ELEANOR:

Well, I mean, creepy men are sometimes unnamed entities.

CORDELIA:

The facts are these. Next entry, let's see. . .

**SOUND: PAGE TURNING.**

(reading from book):

"Rule of Threes: Your Third Wish and How to Use It", page. . .wait, it says,

**(reading from book)** "page thirty five and a half".

ELEANOR:

So this book has half pages?

CORDELIA:

Ellie, this thing has its own clock that has moving hands and impossible images and words. Half pages, non-pages, lost pages, who knows what other kind of pages it has!

ELEANOR:

You're right. Pick the last one!

CORDELIA:

Alrighty. . .wait! What about the Magic Potions one? We almost read that one for Mel.

ELEANOR:

Oooh, yes! Let's read that one!

**SOUND: PAGES TURNING.**

Eleanor:

The seasons are finally changing again, after a summer that feels like it went on for far too long. Anyone else feel that way? I guess I'm just a hot-cider-and-cozy-sweater kinda gal. The sunshine is nice, but I'll take a cool and misty autumn morning over a clear afternoon at the beach any day. I own far too many scarves not to use them! Acrylic, wool, pashmina... I even have a fur lined one (humanely sourced!) for special occasions. (Today was a mustard cable-knit that my godmother made for me a few years ago, and It was perfect.) But, the leaves are finally starting to change, there's a chilly breeze blowing through, and all the beautiful colours of autumn are beginning to shine! Finally! Rain or shine, I'd be out there, playing in the woods, making little houses out of twigs and leaves for the fairies, watching the birds and frogs, or trying to catch the little bugs that scattered when I'd turn over an old log (I guess I've always been a little weird!). The smell of wood or peat smoke would always fill the air around the house, with whatever Nana had bubbling in the cauldron mixing in with the lovely scent of home. She would always sing some quiet song to herself when the hearth was roaring, and I now catch myself doing it too, nowadays.

ELEANOR:

Oh my god, this is reading like one of those online recipes that tells an entire novel before the actual recipe!

CORDELIA:

I know, let's see what else this author has to say, it may have to do with the recipe, you never know!

(reading from book)

"Nana's cauldron seemed to always be on the hearth-fire, cooking up some decoction or poultice for the folk of the nearby town, so each day in her idyllic and misty cottage would carry a different scent; St. Peter's Potion (for upset stomach or throes and fits) blanketing the area in the smell of sweet spice and flowers mixed with the metallic sharpness of cormorant's blood, or the head-spinning miasma of hemlock, poppy, mandrake, vinegar and boar's bile in a new batch

of Dwale, in case some poor villager needed to visit the Churgeon. Although I always loved helping Nana brew, the fumes of Dwale always sickened me as a child, and so Nana would send me instead out to the garden or down to the river to look for snails to salve burns and blisters.

ELEANOR:

Our nanna did that sometimes! Remember when we used to pick her flowers and she'd cook with them?

CORDELIA:

Yeah but she didn't make medicine out of snail goo!

ELEANOR:

True. I wonder if this is Brigid's entry.

CORDELIA:

I don't know, don't you think Nanna would have inherited some magical potion making if that was actually a thing?

ELEANOR:

Well, she was really broken up by Brigid's disappearance. She might have put it away somewhere in her head. It may have been too painful.

CORDELIA:

That's entirely possible.

ELEANOR:

Does our witchy author ever get to the damn recipe?

CORDELIA:

Let's find out!

"But I always loved helping collect the ingredients, and we would often go foraging for them together. While it's fine purchasing or trading for ingredients and reagents when you're starting out, I still think there's nothing quite like gathering or growing (or butchering!) your own. You can always be sure of the authenticity and quality, that way, and I think it gets us closer to the whole "art" of potion-making when we have a direct connection to the things we're using. If you don't have the ability to forage (say, if you're living in a city), or don't feel that you're ready, I recommend getting to know your local herb-seller, spice-trader, miller, game-hunter, and distiller very well. (Pro tip: a gifted philtre will go a long way towards making friendships, and the ingredients are easy to come by! Everybody has someone in their life that they want to make an impression on, after all!. Today, growing in a thicket of silver birch, I managed to find and pull a lovely mandrake root... or rather, Cooshie did; I found out quite by accident some time ago that he seems to be immune to the screaming, and he's since become very good at digging

them up for me while I run and hide. He's such a good boy! Since some of the ingredients of these potions will be dangerous to gather, and since not everyone has such a faithful hound to help out, I've decided to put together a separate article on foraging for plants and preparing them for use safely. Look for my entry Everything You Need To Know About Collecting and Preparing Herbs Without Dying or Being Cursed in the next few weeks! Now I've got my own cauldron bubbling away on the hearth while I write this, Cooshie happily curled up at my feet. I swear, he either thinks he's a rug or a princess, nothing in between. It's just a basic philtre, today; a local couple was hoping to "spice up" their relationship, and I'm happy to oblige. The smell takes me right back to Nana's house, and It feels just so right to be here, doing things the way my foremothers did. It's nice to feel connected to that history, to help out my friends and neighbors, and to cozy up to this little piece of what autumn means to me."

ELEANOR:

She just keeps rambling! are we ever going to get a potion recipe?

CORDELIA:

I mean, I hope so. But this is very informative.

ELEANOR:

Yes but I want to know how she's spicing up the relationship of this couple, though. It may be useful for when quarantine ends and we can hoe to our hearts delight.

CORDELIA:

Speak for yourself! I will immediately be going to a library when this lockdown ends. I miss libraries.

ELEANOR:

Yes, we know, you're a grad student. Let's back to the entry!

"Oh! I almost forgot! A quick note on cauldrons: I cannot recommend copper enough. I know it's prohibitively expensive, but it's so good at heat conduction that it's worth it. Cast iron will do just fine, though- but be very careful about cleaning and seasoning it IMMEDIATELY between brews! Things tend to want to "stick" a little more in cast iron, and you don't want any hemlock left in there if you're just trying to make some soup for dinner. Also, if you leave it cold for any length of time with anything wet or acidic in it, it'll start to rust!

Make sure you're getting one large enough for the kinds of brews that you're hoping to make- if you're making large batches of decoctions to bottle up or stock an inventory, you'll want to make sure you get your hands on a pretty large one. Also, You'll want to make sure the cauldron's stand is sturdy enough to support the pot while it's full- some of the hearth-mounted swing-arm stands are really only good for one- or two-gallon cauldrons. Make sure your stand is sturdy, and well affixed to its mounts. Also, beware those modern non-stick cauldrons! The coating isn't designed to stand up to open flame, and it can have some pretty horrible reactions with certain ingredients which will ruin whatever you're trying to make. They're really only good for low-heat cooking, but even then I'd stay away. It's mostly a marketing gimmick, I think.) With that out of

the way, take a deep breath of that sweet fall air, grab a cozy sweater, and get ready to do some brewing!"

ELEANOR:

Finally! The moment we've been waiting for. The recipe. . . You're not going to believe this.

Cordelia:

What?!

Eleanor:

The book just says,

"For recipes, go to pages 132.33.13, 321.03.30 6.132.330"

Cordelia:

No fucking way!

ELEANOR:

Way!

CORDELIA:

Well, let's turn to those pages!

**.SOUND: pages turning**

CORDELIA:

Page. . .132. . . That's odd. It's a completely different entry.

ELEANOR:

What does it say?

CORDELIA:

It says, "Let Me Reed-iterate". That's funny, it has to do with reed pipes. I love word puns.

ELEANOR:

That doesn't sound like a recipe or a potion at all.

CORDELIA:

You're right. I bet you the other pages have nothing to do with magic potions either.

ELEANOR:

We might as well check, though. Let me see.

**SOUND: cordie hands book to ellie**



**SOUND: PAGES TURNING**

ELEANOR:

Page 321. . .nope. It's an entry called, "Your Goose Is Loose!" . And. . .

**SOUND: PAGES TURNING**

ELEANOR:

Page 6. . .ugh! It's "Flower Picking: For Lovers, Friends, and For Enemies". That's disappointing.

CORDELIA:

It really is. I don't think the recurring number of 132 is a coincidence though.

ELEANOR:

You're probably right.

CORDELIA:

What if it's a code?

ELEANOR:

A code? Why would the book have a code in a random entry that leads to other entries that are completely unrelated?

CORDELIA:

There could be a secret message the book is trying to tell us.

ELEANOR:

Or warn us about something.

CORDELIA:

That's. . .ominous.

ELEANOR:

That dream I had last night got me all kinds of fucked up.

CORDELIA:

We'll have to diffuse some calming oils. I think this thing is really getting to our heads.

ELEANOR:

I wonder. . .what if our listeners would want to help us figure out whether these numbers are a code or not?

CORDELIA:

I think that's a great idea. Okay, listeners, we have our first challenge for you. We are going to put pictures of the pages that correspond with these numbers on our socials, maybe you all can help us figure this out! The numbers we have been given are: 132.33.13, 321.03.30, and 6.132.330. We'll circle the sections that match these as well.

ELEANOR:  
Happy solving!

CORDELIA:  
Send us a message if you figure it out. Considering Ellie's weird dream, there is a slight sense of urgency here.

ELEANOR:  
Let's not terrify our listeners. I'm sure it's a fun, cookey little message the author of this entry put in here, though whether it is for us or some other reader remains to be seen.

CORDELIA:  
"Remains to be seen" seems to be a recurring theme here.

ELEANOR:  
Well, this book is shrouded in mystery. We hope you all enjoyed this episode. Stay tuned for next week.

CORDELIA:  
And let us know what you think of this puzzle! I'm sure you're all very smart and will solve it in minutes.

ELEANOR:  
We appreciate you all. Toodle-loo!

CORDELIA:  
So long!

## **EPISODE 6:**

ELEANOR:

Hi everyone!

CORDELIA:

Good day to all our friends.

ELEANOR:

And welcome to a very special episode of the Legendary Handbook Podcast!

CORDELIA:

Today, as you may be able to tell, we are outside.

ELEANOR:

Cordie and I have decided to brave the weather, with masks on, of course, and go see if we can find some crow friends.

CORDELIA:

We've been cooped up in the house and were trying to come up with outdoor ideas for this episode, and we settled on finding corvid friends to make a pie for.

ELEANOR:

First, like the book says, we must scope out the area for potential friends.

CORDELIA:

We are currently walking through town, towards a small patch of woods. There are lots of trees there, and we figured, where there are trees, there are likely corvids.

ELEANOR:

We also made sure we took the book's advice, and we are walking to the woods in the middle of the day. No dumbassery to be found here!

CORDELIA:

Absolutely not. We also brought provisions, and a compass. Just in case.

**SOUND: footsteps.**

ELEANOR:

We have reached the entrance to the woods. The trees all look so pretty. We also brought a pair of binoculars to spot some corvid friends that may be far away.

CORDELIA:

Yes, let us begin.

**SOUND: FOOTSTEPS underscore this next section**

ELEANOR:

The leaves. . .the foliage. . .so crunchy.

CORDELIA:

We should label this the ASMR episode.

**SOUND: leaves crunching. a crow caw.**

ELEANOR:

Cordie, look!

CORDELIA:

Oh my god! So majestic.

ELEANOR:

I can't remember, what did the book say to do when we first came upon one?

CORDELIA:

I think it told us to wait, I'm pretty sure there was something in there about looking for a murder of crows first and wait until their social gathering is done.

ELEANOR:

Oh, right right. There was also something about it taking a few tries so they notice us.

CORDELIA:

I'm sure they are watching us right now.

ELEANOR:

I just hope they're the only ones watching.

CORDELIA:

Will you relax?

ELEANOR:

I'm just saying, I did have that weird dream.

CORDELIA:

I know, but we're following the book's rules on walking in the woods. We should have brought it with us.

ELEANOR:

Ugh, yeah. But it's so heavy to carry around. I am wondering if the corvids are regarding us. Do you think we are dangerous enough to require regarding?

CORDELIA:

Perhaps. I don't want them to think we mean them any harm, though.

ELEANOR:

Oh my god, give me the binoculars! I think I see more.

**SOUND: shifting, binoculars get handed over. more cawing. wings flapping.**

ELEANOR:

There's a bunch of them! This is so exciting.

CORDELIA:

This really is a killer opportunity.

ELEANOR:

Look, there they go! Why don't we mark this spot and come back to it tomorrow?

CORDELIA:

Yes! Let's see. . .oh, look! There's a couple of stones here. That's pretty remarkable.

ELEANOR:

Yeah, they look like they were placed there before. Maybe someone else was looking for corvid friends and marked their spot.

**SOUND: a loud ringing noise, like ringing in the ear.**

CORDELIA:

Ow! Ugh. . .my ear is ringing.

ELEANOR:

Agh, mine too. I--Cordie. . .

CORDELIA:

Wh--why is it dark out?

ELEANOR:

Isn't it the middle of the afternoon?

CORDELIA:

There's. . .it looks like it suddenly got dark out, what the---

WITCH OF THE WOODS:

What are you doing in my woods?

**SOUND: both girls scream. Running.**

**EPISODE 7:**

CORDELIA:

Hi everyone.

ELEANOR:

Hello. As you can tell, we are not dead.

CORDELIA:

We're. . .not entirely sure what happened last week.

ELEANOR:

One minute we were admiring corvids, and the next, it was pitch black out, as if the sun had suddenly been swallowed up.

CORDELIA:

And. . .the voice. Which brings me to the question: was that the voice you heard in your dream, Ellie?

ELEANOR:

Not exactly. Both were femme sounding voices, but the one in my dream sounded familiar. The one we heard last week was. . .new.

CORDELIA:

It was the strangest sensation, because it felt like. . .it felt like someone had been watching us, and then I heard that voice in my head.

ELEANOR:

Almost like it was coming from inside our heads.

CORDELIA:

Ellie. . .I'm so freaked out. What should we do? We followed everything the book said! It wasn't night when we went into the woods, but somehow, it turned into night time?

ELEANOR:

Maybe we. . .oh, I don't know. I don't know what to make of that. Do you think we should consult the book?

CORDELIA:

That. . .I don't know why, but that's a comforting thought. Maybe it has an entry on what to do when time plays tricks on you.

**SOUND: book is brought out of its box, opened.**

CORDELIA:

The clock hands move moved again. Look, there's a. . .is that a. . .that's definitely a number, what does that say. . .one-ninety-one?

ELEANOR:

I think so. And the other hands. . .one is pointing to the word "Starboard" and the other is pointing to. . .a picture of a throne? I swear every time we open this book I find new things to look at.

CORDELIA:

I think we should start making marks as to where the hands have been. Maybe there's some strange pattern to it?

ELEANOR:

It wouldn't hurt. We'll have to go back and listen to where the hands have been before. I cannot remember exactly where they were right now.

CORDELIA:

Me either. My brain still feels like scrambled eggs after hearing a strange woman's voice in my head.

ELEANOR:

Me too. Here, I'll mark where they are now with some dots. Maybe it'll make a map to some buried treasure.

CORDELIA:

Whatever treasure this book has to offer is definitely haunted as fuck. I don't think it would be sending us to find gold.

ELEANOR:

Yeah yeah yeah, but I can dream, can't I?

**SOUND: ellie marks the page**

ELEANOR:

Okay, dots marked. Now, let's see if the book has any advice on time trickery.

**SOUND: pages turning.**

CORDELIA:

Wait, Ellie, look. Under the "A Guide to Star Scaping". . .that looks like fresh ink. Look at it compared to the rest of the contents. It says, "Time Scaping".

ELEANOR:

I---you're right. The subsections read: "Telling Time: You Tell That Clock You Mean Business!", "Wasting Time: What To Do When You Have Things To Do but Do Not Want to Do Them", "Reading Time: Measuring the Human Construct of Time", "Time After Time: An American Classic",

CORDELIA:

Is the book a Cyndi Lauper fan?

ELEANOR:

Apparently. Look, there's more.

CORDELIA:

"Wibble Wobble: What To Do If and When you Find Yourself in a Black Hole", "Difficult Time: What To Do When Your Clock Appears to Have Melted", and. . ."Time Tricks: When Time Moves Too Fast". I knew it would have advice!

ELEANOR:

Yeah, but you're right, Cordie. . .this ink looks new. I don't think these entries were here before.

CORDELIA:

Maybe you were right, maybe the book is listening to us.

ELEANOR:

Well, I think we should see what the book has to say on our situation, it may have something that could help us figure out who. . .or what. . .spoke to us, or why the time moved so quickly. What page does it say it's on?

CORDELIA:

Page. . .one thousand and eight? Jeez.

**SOUND: PAGE TURNING.**

ELEANOR:

This. . . this looks handwritten.



CORDELIA:

Yeah, and the . . .the ink is still shiny.

ELEANOR:

**SOUND: SNIFFS**

It smells like new ink. Read it, Cordie!

CORDELIA:

Okay, here we go,

"Time Tricks: When Time Moves Too Fast. So, you've found yourself in a bit of a sudden change in the time. And this isn't a, "Oh, my! Look at where the time went!" kind of situation, this change was sudden, jarring, and probably terrifying. There are a few things this could be. If you cannot read your situation below, you may want to consult a physicist, doctor, or simply go to bed.

Please note: the human concept is an overly simple, linear, and very boring way to tell the passage of events. Time, in and of itself, is an illusion, but remember that it is also as real as the birthmark on your left shoulder."

ELEANOR:

How does the book know you have a birth mark on your left shoulder?

CORDELIA:

The--I---maybe the author is someone we know?

ELEANOR:

How could that be possible? The book hasn't left our apartment!

CORDELIA:

It could be a coincidence. There are lots of people with birth marks everywhere.

ELEANOR:

I know, I just--there's been too many strange things happen for me to believe there's such a thing as coincidence anymore. Read more.

CORDELIA:

Alright,

"The first situation you may have found yourself in: you have crossed a fairy circle. Perhaps you stepped on a mushroom, or you entered the circle and stood in the center, without realizing it.

For the solution to this, please see page two sixty three, you will find an entry entitled, "Identifying, Avoiding, and Neutralizing Fairy Circles". This is recommended reading should the Reader(s) choose to go back into the wood. Fairy circles are very common in there. Please note, the Fae Folk have a hard time distinguishing whether something was intentional or an accident. Tread carefully."

Did you see any mushrooms when we were walking?

ELEANOR:

No, I don't think so. I--is the Fae Folk really. . .you know, real?

CORDELIA:

According to the book, they are. We'll have to bookmark that chapter on fairy circles. I don't think we crossed one. I feel like we would have seen the mushrooms or. . .rocks. . .or something. You know?

ELEANOR:

That's true. What are the other two examples it gives?

CORDELIA:

"The second situation you may have found yourself in is: You have fallen victim to an optical illusion. The Reader(s) is/are encouraged to not fret if this is the case. Optical illusions are quite common as well. For reference, see Chapter eighty four in Volume six, entitled, "Eyes and Optics: The Science and Hilarity of Optical Illusions". If there was more than one witness to the illusion, see Volume three, chapter two, entitled, "Common Group Psychiatric Breaks: A Folie a Deux", you may have both just hallucinated."

ELEANOR:

Wait. . .volume. . .there's more than one Legendary Handbook?!

CORDELIA:

I---

**SOUND: closes book, turns it over**

CORDELIA:

The spine on this says it's Volume Number Thirteen.

ELEANOR:

Of course it's number thirteen! Why would it be anything other than a creepy number?

CORDELIA:

At least it's not number six six six.

ELEANOR:

Well with this implication there could be a Volume Six Six Six floating around out there! Oh my god, what did Auntie Brigid get herself wrapped up in? There's no way she signed her name in this thing not knowing what it was.

CORDELIA:

That could be the reason we have it now. Maybe she needed us to have it?

ELEANOR:  
Yes, but why?

CORDELIA:  
You know. . .I. . .I'm at a loss here.

ELEANOR:  
Well, I don't think we had a shared hallucination. Let's see what the third possible situation is. I'm putting money on that there's a mysterious blue box with a gorgeous David Tennant inside that whisks you away for adventures across the universes.

CORDELIA:  
Ha, ha. Nerd.

ELEANOR:  
You are one to talk! This is the one who's going to write a dissertation on the origins of human language and how it's connected to tool making.

CORDELIA:  
You can't tell me that's not cool as shit, though.

ELEANOR:  
It is, but that's. . .so much research.

CORDELIA:  
That's if the sentient book doesn't send a fairy assassin after us first.

ELEANOR:  
I---I would pay to see what a fairy assassin looked like.

CORDELIA:  
I wouldn't! Don't jinx it!

**SOUND: PAGE TURNING.**

CORDELIA:  
Okay, last one, "The third, and most rare of these, but not an impossible one: you have trespassed in a witch's woods and she's really mad. But now she feels bad for scaring the shit out of those that trespassed because it was probably an accident so she's trying to help. The Reader(s) may be surprised to see how far favors can go. This situation has nothing to do with time at all, but the guilty conscience of a very exhausted witch--who can play around with light and time. This is another situation to not fret, per say, but let this be a cautionary tale. Look for the signs of three when walking in the woods, keep your compass handy, and remember that time is an illusion."

ELEANOR:

That's. . .oddly specific.

CORDELIA:

Holy shit, do you think we stumbled upon a Witch's Woods and they were just messing with us?

ELEANOR:

And left us this entry to apologize?

CORDELIA:

I don't know where you got the idea the witch was apologizing, the word sorry does not appear in here.

ELEANOR:

Okay, I guess we were being a little careless. But how were we supposed to know that the woods we have access to belong to a witch?

CORDELIA:

The witch could have left a mark somewhere.

ELEANOR:

Maybe it was this witch's voice that we heard last week! This one explains it all.

CORDELIA:

I guess, I just have more questions now, though. Why turn it night time suddenly? Why is there a witch in the woods? Does this witch know our Auntie Brigid? The entry mentioned something about favors.

ELEANOR:

I think this confirms that the book can hear us, though. Or maybe. . .,maybe the witch has remote access? Like, Team Veiver, but for books!

CORDELIA:

For all we know, that could be true. Well, listeners, thanks for tuning in.

ELEANOR:

I really do think this is a cursed book now, though. It's number thirteen!

CORDELIA:

Again, super spooky. Also implies that there is more than one Legendary Handbook. It sounds like they all have their specialties, too.

ELEANOR:

Also, we would like to thank our listeners, (LISTENER NAMES) for figuring out this strange number code! Turns out, it was a cipher!

CORDELIA:

Yes, and it led to a mysterious message. The message reads, "BEWARE THE THICKET. SHE IS WATCHING"

ELEANOR:

So, we need to watch out for a mysterious femme thicket. I've been weary of bushes ever since we got this message.

CORDELIA:

We really appreciate our community coming together to figure this out! It helps to know others out there are experiencing this with us.

ELEANOR:

It makes it a lot less lonely. Thank you all.

CORDELIA:

Until next time! Remember: witches are territorial and do not like trespassers, even if it's an accident.

ELEANOR:

We hope you all learn something from our mistakes!

BOTH:

Goodbye!

## **EPIISODE 9:**

CORDELIA:

Welcome back, everyone.

ELEANOR:

Hello!

CORDELIA:

If you're new here, hi, I'm Cordie.

ELEANOR:

And I'm Ellie.

BOTH:

And this is: The Legendary Handbook!

ELEANOR:

In which my sister and I do our best not to freak out when we read entries from a mysterious, and possibly haunted book that was sent to us.

CORDELIA:

The book has a picture of a clock that's also not a clock and its hands move, and we're almost positive it can hear us.

ELEANOR:

Whether it's benevolent or malicious remains to be seen.

CORDELIA:

Though recently it did lead us into a witch's woods and she got really mad at us.

ELEANOR:

She said she knew we were there by accident!

CORDELIA:

I know but still, I have never been so scared in my life.

ELEANOR:

What about the time Ronald McDonald was at Maggie Sullivan's birthday party?

CORDELIA:

In my defense, he did NOT look like Ronald McDonald. Who draws their clown make-up with that many pointy shapes? John Wayne Fucking Gacey? Six year old me was NOT having it.

ELEANOR:

You straight up punched that dude in the nuts. It's one of my very first memories.

CORDELIA:

Fiona didn't raise a helpless damsel in distress!

ELEANOR:

(sings)

"Don't be polite to men that creep you out!"

**SOUND: clap clap**

CORDELIA:

"Don't be polite to men that creep you out!"

**SOUND: CLAP CLAP**

BOTH:

"Your comfort is essential and his feelings aren't special, don't be polite to men that creep you out!"

**SOUND: clap clap**

ELEANOR:

Solid advice that has helped me well into my twenties.

CORDELIA:

It's a good thing neither of us are attracted to more than just men.

ELEANOR:

Could you imagine being attracted to . . .only. . .men?

CORDELIA:

I don't know what I'd do with myself.

ELEANOR:

And yet. . .men find a way to butt into our business. I told you about the time I had been on a date with Riley and some guy tried to hit on them while I had my hand on their waist?

CORDELIA:

Or when I was out with Angela and she and I were holding hands and some man said, "Can I join?" I wanted to throw up.

ELEANOR:

I did throw up on a man once. Not one of my proudest moments, but I have no regrets. How is Angela doing, by the way?

CORDELIA:

She's as fine as she can be right now, she said England is in another lockdown, but she has plenty of books. I miss her.

ELEANOR:

For reference, Angela is the love of my sister's life.

CORDELIA:

Who had to move back to England for school and family reasons and was supposed to come back this year, but. . .PANDEMIC TIME.

ELEANOR:

Angela if you are listening, you are sorely missed here in the Shaunessy household.

CORDELIA:

Alright enough about my sad sapphic love life, let's get to the book.

ELEANOR:

Let's see. . .the time is two-eighteen pm.

CORDELIA:

Book time is. . .

**SOUND: book opening, pages turning**

CORDELIA:

These look like constellations, hold on. . .I think that's. . .Leo? And the other hand is pointing to. . .Sagittarius.

ELEANOR:

The second hand, look! It's. . .is that Aries?

CORDELIA:

The fire signs! Oh and there's a number. . .one sixty two.

ELEANOR:

Let's mark it. For those that might need a refresher, the clock hands move almost every time we open the book and we've been documenting where the hands are pointing to see if there's a pattern.

CORDELIA:

So far, we just have more questions than we do answers.

ELEANOR:

Such is the nature of this book.

CORDELIA:

It is my turn to pick this week, although we had an. . .irregular kind of reading last week.

ELEANOR:

Yes, last week we discovered the book can hear us, and knows we accidentally trespassed in a witch's woods, there was a fresh entry that was way too specific to not be directed at us. But I don't mind Cordie, you pick.

CORDELIA:



Okey dokey, let's see. . ."How High is Too High--Tower Construction and Dragon Proofing", page seven thirty three. . . "The Madness that Poets Call Love" page eight hundred and eighty eight. . .awww. . .and. . ."When you Find Yourself as a Bird--The Do's and Don'ts", page fifty three. Wow. . .well, now that I'm thinking about Angela, I want to read the Love one.

ELEANOR:

Yes, let's read the one about Love and cry, I'm not touch starved or anything. Hand me the book.

**SOUND: book is handed to Ellie, pages turning.**

ELEANOR:

"Love is an absurdity.

It has been named a malady; an affliction of the mind and senses. To the ancient Romans, it was an uncouth and sometimes shameful madness, worthy of ridicule and cautionary tales. To the nobility from middle-ages Europe to feudal Japan, it was an illness best avoided, as its presence could wreak havoc on dynastic scheming and diplomatic marriages. And yet poems were written, songs were sung, and stories were told of its inescapable pull. It afflicted the young with a terrible virulence, and the grown with an intractable shattering of their well-wrought sense.

Star-crossed love. Unrequited love. Love at first sight. True love.

These are the bread and butter of the poets and the romantics, of playwrights and bards.

They are awful ideas.

Perhaps, if we hadn't spent so long telling people that love was a terrible evil, we would not have such twisted views on what is laudable about it, on what is worth romanticizing.

Perhaps, instead, we lack the linguistic nuance to talk about love in a way that is useful or enlightening.

Perhaps our fear of it (through many ages, and many cultures) has caused us to bury it, and its many permutations have calcified into a terrible and rotten whole.

The ancient greek language famously had many different words to describe love, from ἀγάπη (agápē) "benevolent, charitable, love; the feeling one has for one's children or spouse" to ἔρως (érōs) "intimate love, sexual attraction" (or, according to Plato "the appreciation of another's beauty, or the awe of beauty in general").

CORDELIA:

Oh my god! This author is familiar with the ancient Greek words for love. Did you know they had six different words for different kinds of love?

ELEANOR:

I know there's more than one, but I didn't know there was six of them!

CORDELIA:

Yup. There's philia, which translates to "affectionate regard, friendship". It was developed by Aristotle, it's best known to describe the loyalty and affection friends feel toward one another.

ELEANOR:  
That's beautiful.

CORDELIA:  
There's also Storge, which is the empathetic love that parents have specifically for their children. It's similar to Agape, but it's usually used exclusively to describe familial relationships. Philautia has the same root as Philia, but has to do with self-love and one's own happiness. The last is Xenia and refers to the ancient Greek concept of hospitality. Think, taking care of your neighbor. Xenia was actually very sacred to the Greeks, so much so that if you showed up at the doorstep of a king and asked for lodging among him he, by the law of Xenia, had to give you food, shelter, and provisions that you needed.

ELEANOR:  
Xenia I remember. Paris technically violates Xenia when he "abducts" Helen. I say that because there are many iterations of the Iliad where Helen went willingly. I also just like the idea of a woman making a choice and causing a ten year war.

CORDELIA:  
Yes, the face that launched a thousand ships. All of the Greeks rallying to fight with Menealeus were all moved by Storge, they had all sworn they would fight for whoever Helen chose to marry when she picked Menealeus.

ELEANOR:  
I love ancient Greek mythology.

CORDELIA:  
You're preaching to the choir. I literally have a degree in this stuff.

ELEANOR:  
Shall we get back to the entry?

CORDELIA:  
Oh, yes!

ELEANOR:  
Alright, where was I? Oh yes! Greek words for love.  
"But even in its earliest permutations in Germanic languages and before, the word love means "care, joy, desire, to hold dear" and to... well... "love". It means all of these things, and yet, at the end, it remains an impenetrable monolith. It has been used since at least the Middle Ages to mean everything from horrifying, one-sided, covetous obsession to a fondness for a particular type of cheese.

The confusion, the thing that has skewed it for us all, the thing that has muddied the waters so thoroughly throughout history is not our lack of a thousand different words to describe its every permutation; Every love is different in some way, and no amount of hair-splitting nuance could get us any closer to an accurate description of an individual expression of it. But our broad use of this monolithic word points to an underlying truth; The mechanism of love is the same, no matter what its form.

No, the thing that has infected our sense of love is from something wholly unrelated; the idea that we can have. When we believe that our desire for another is to have them, that our joy around another is to need to own them, we have skipped the tracks of love and begun barreling towards tyranny. We cannot love that which we believe we are owed, because the mechanism of love is inherently antithetical to anything but mutual, egalitarian benevolence. It is no wonder that after countless millennia of hierarchical categorizations for different permutations of peoples, our concept of love has become obscured. When people are viewed as things, it is easy to confuse covetousness, jealousy, objectification, projection, pride, or obsession with love."

CORDELIA:

Ah yes, the objectification of women in the male gaze.

ELEANOR:

Unrealistic expectations, men not understanding women's bodies, feeling entitled to their bodies--it all clouds what love is really about.

CORDELIA:

Then, women, who have been gaslit for so long, lower the bar so, so low for men, to the point where if they show just an iota of basic human decency, ie, not assaulting them while intoxicated, they are thanked endlessly as if they have done some great service.

ELEANOR:

Exactly. And I know plenty of cis men who would never in a million years, hurt their partners, or even a stranger in that way. Believe me, I definitely do not want to alienate the good men who may be listening.

CORDELIA:

It's just that enough of them have done things like that, that it makes us weary of all men. Good dudes out there, come get these guys who are messing it up for you!

ELEANOR:

Toxic masculinity ruins the party again!

CORDELIA:

Even the book knows it. What else does it say on love? We keep getting sidetracked.

ELEANOR:

I know, we're just filled with feminine rage today.

"To whit: Love is not an invisible force or form of matter in the universe, nor a state of being, nor an internal reservoir that can be drained. It is a feeling, yes, and one we can absolutely stumble into, trip, and of course, fall. But the mechanism of that feeling, the single action that comprises all of love, is to share. To share a glance across a room. To share words. To share a gift. To share time. To share food, or circumstance, or thoughts, or feelings, or touch, or our bodies. To share long-winded, imperious screeds on the nature of love because it's too difficult to approach directly. To offer--"

CORDELIA:

Wait wait wait, does it really say that or did you just make that up?

ELEANOR:

What do you mean? Of course it actually says that.

CORDELIA:

Wow, this author is really self aware.

ELEANOR:

I know. May I finish?

CORDELIA:

You may.

ELEANOR:

"To offer to engage with parts of yourself without a sense of transaction or obligation, for, naturally, if you offer something to someone and they decline, no sharing can be said to have occurred.

Love is the feeling of sharing with another and having them joyously accept. Love is the grandmother telling old stories to bored descendants, only to have them cherish those tales as they grow older. Love is the offer to give someone space when they need it, or wrap them in blankets and give them soup when they didn't know they could ask for it. Love is the active choice to share, moment to moment. And, sometimes, if you're lucky, you may learn to string those moments on into eternity.

And I hope, if you'd accept it, that I get the chance."

CORDELIA:

Wow. . .that was beautiful. I really liked this one.

**SOUND: pages turning.**

ELEANOR:

Me too. Cordie, look at this. There's a handwritten section on the back of the page.

CORDELIA:

It reads,

"It was a Sunday afternoon. The wind was pleasant, and the grass was singing. Or at least, I think it was singing. Everything felt like it was singing, then. Even the calls of the gulls felt like a symphony to me, because you were there with me. The sun was bright, but not too hot, and I swear the air tasted like sugar. But not as sweet as you. I wish I could tell you now, I would have been content to lie on that hillside with you forever, and let the wildlife feast on us and the ground swallowed us whole. Just as long as you were there with me. And even then, no grave could hold me, no time could hold me, no world could hold me, not really. I wish time was really shaped like a rubber band, I'd love to hop in and spring towards you. I wish I could tell you now that I will always crawl home to you, though far apart we may seem. There is no such thing as separation, and your music is always playing in my ears. I will always sing for you. - B"

ELEANOR:

The writer of this note really took the book's advice here.

CORDELIA:

Do. . .do you think Brigid wrote this?

ELEANOR:

Oh. . .I don't know. The author could be anyone with a name that started with a B.

CORDELIA:

Where's the note with the letterhead on it? We should compare the handwriting. I don't think it's a coincidence that Brigid's name is in this book and there's a handwritten note with a "B" at the end.

ELEANOR:

Okay, hold on, I think it's. . .let me find it.

**SOUND: rustling. drawers opening and closing.**

ELEANOR:

Found it!

CORDELIA:

Hm. . .I think. . .I think this is the same handwriting.

ELEANOR:

Let me see. . .I wish we had a longer sample. But it does look really similar. We'll have to ask mom if she could show us some letters Auntie Brigid wrote to her when she was younger, that would give us a better idea. Wait. . .what's this?

**SOUND: rustling. Envelope being opened.**

CORDELIA:

An envelope. . .with a dried piece of thistle inside.

ELEANOR:

I wonder what it's doing in here.

CORDELIA:

I could be a momento from this day the handwritten entry talks about. Thistle is an interesting momento to have though, it has a lot of cultural significance. It's both a flower and a weed.

ELEANOR:

She has the range, darling!

CORDELIA:

One of my favorite facts about it comes from French lore, that it is a weapon against those who may mean you harm. It's often referred to as the "Flower of the Sun" or the "Herb of Witches", and they believed that it not only could look into the sun, but proudly stood to face the light. It's also associated with protection from evil and can be used in warding and protection spells by witches.

ELEANOR:

Protective and brave? So versatile. I like the idea that it's significant to Brigid. Maybe she's trying to protect us. Whoever this entry was about she clearly loved a great deal. I wonder who it is.

CORDELIA:

We don't know for sure if this is something Brigid wrote. . .but I do really love that too.

ELEANOR:

Do you think we should put it out so it protects us here?

CORDELIA:

Maybe let's keep it in the book and look into getting a thistle bundle to put by the door. I love the idea of having it around, but this one seems special, and I don't want to take it away from the book.

ELEANOR:

Me too. Well, listeners, let us know what your favorite flowers are, or if you have any cool stories about thistle!

CORDELIA:

We'll be back next week with another entry, and hopefully no haunted stories!

ELEANOR:

And we'll try our best to stay out of the woods.

BOTH:

G'bye!

## **EPIISODE 9:**

ELEANOR:

Hello everyone!

CORDELIA:

Welcome to the Legendary Handbook Podcast.

ELEANOR:

I'm Ellie, and that's my sister Cordie,

CORDELIA:

Hi!

ELEANOR:

We were mailed a weird, enchanted, and possibly sentient book. It's a magical how-to guide of sorts.

CORDELIA:

Every week, my sister and I read an entry from said book and give you advice on how to navigate a fairy tale.

ELEANOR:

This week is brought to you by: I stayed up way too late last night scrolling through a certain app and now I have had way too much coffee.

CORDELIA:

Also brought to you by: I was working well into the night and had to drown out the annoying noises coming from Ellie's phone.

ELEANOR:

Needless to say, we are both hyped up on caffeine and very little sleep.

CORDELIA:

I'm also running fully on adrenaline, I had a synchronous session with my one class today and let me tell you, the arrogance of some people amazes me! I almost got into it with one of my classmates.

ELEANOR:

Spill the tea! This is the first I am hearing of this. I had a marathon of BuzzFeed: Unsolved playing on my headphones and must have been asleep, I swear Ryan Bregara's voice will knock me out immediately.

CORDELIA:

It's this one guy Jack. He's. . . nice I guess. He's the type that probably never had to work for anything in his life, charm his way into anyone's pants, and isn't used to losing arguments. We got into it over the theory of human language development being in conjunction with humans using tools. He was trying to fight me on historical fact!

ELEANOR:

I swear, most men only ever have one thing: the audacity.

CORDELIA:

This dude really thought he was doing something too. I hit him with some proven, peer reviewed studies and he deflated like a balloon. It was glorious to watch. Imagine thinking a historical fact is up for debate.

ELEANOR:

We love an educated queen. I'm so proud of you.

CORDELIA:

Thank you, thank you. He hardly ever comes to our live sessions for class, too. My professor is pretty chill about online sessions, but I have found they're so helpful right now.

ELEANOR:

Did you learn anything interesting?

CORDELIA:

Well, after I did that epic smackdown, we had a lecture about language acquisition and how it's vital to socialization. Infants actually have this stage in their development known as the "critical" stage, where their brains are at their most ready to learn language, and if they don't learn it then, it will be very difficult for them to learn it later.

ELEANOR:

What happens if a child can't hear people speak?

CORDELIA:



I actually have a deaf classmate and they were talking about how when they were little, they didn't know how to sign until they got to preschool, they just thought everyone only ever heard muffled noises and read the lips of whoever was speaking. It was super fascinating.

ELEANOR:

That is really fascinating, actually. Because they still had the concept of language, but it wasn't in the way we think. Like, they had a way to communicate. Do they speak at all?

CORDELIA:

They can, but now they prefer to sign.

ELEANOR:

I think sign language is one of the most amazing things humans have ever done. They can literally say an entire sentence with just their faces.

CORDELIA:

I am actually planning to concentrate on Language Acquisition and its role in socialization--a great way to study that is by studying deaf children who were denied language when they were young. Language and naming things is part of what brought us into the modern era.

ELEANOR:

Language certainly has power. This book, to bring us back from this fascinating tangent, is a good example of that.

CORDELIA:

Oh, yeah, for sure. Especially if it's based on Fairy Folk Lore, names are crucial in practices like that. I wonder. . .

**SOUND: book opens.**

CORDELIA:

Hmmm. . .oh look! The book has an entire section dedicated to language and communication.

ELEANOR:

Let me see. . ."Did a Sea Witch Take Your Voice? Here are Four Ways to Effectively Get Your Point Across while Voiceless"

CORDELIA:

Oh my god, okay Ariel. Look at this one, "Talking in Circles: How to Stun an Opponent without Lifting a Finger". I love that.

ELEANOR:

"When words fail: What to do when no words fill the moment correctly". Awww!

CORDELIA:

Ellie, look at this one: "The Naming of Things: The Awful Power of Language".

ELEANOR:

That makes my blood pressure go up, considering we gave the book our names. We've had the name discussion.

CORDELIA:

Not really, Mel just asked us about it. I think we should read this one.

ELEANOR:

So are we just throwing out my three and one rule?

CORDELIA:

Oh, come on! Please? What if this will help me for my dissertation?

ELEANOR:

Ugh, you sly academic dog! Fine. Because I care about you.

CORDELIA:

Yay!

**SOUND: PAGES TURNING**

CORDELIA:

"We take our words for granted, and it is folly to do so. Even now, as you read this, you are scanning senseless scribbles of ink on a page- these runes, these lines of ordered chaos, enter your mind as sounds, and those inaudible sounds (provided you are not reading aloud), transmute, by virtue of your learned mastery of this strange arcana that we call language and the alchemy of the human brain, in to \*meaning\*. Do you see it? Do you recognize the absurd miracle of this? Even if there were no other magic in this or other worlds, this alone would be proof of its existence. It is a laughably impossible feat to encapsulate an object or a feeling or a concept or even an entire living being in a sound (nevermind the inanity of drawing those sounds), and yet you do it every day, even when you do not speak... For your thoughts cannot escape the hold that the construct named language has upon you. Can you have a thought without words? Can you remember a thing without defining it? Perhaps, in small ways, in physical sensations and feelings that we don't know what to call, but even as you experience them or remember them, you will seek to name them."

ELEANOR:

Ooooh, this author is getting really introspective and philosophical. Right up your alley, Cordie.

CORDELIA:

Yeah, this is the stuff we debate all the time in class. To continue,  
"We assign every thing a name, and these names contain those things. Words shape our world; and, because we have no locus of understanding beyond our own perception, and no ability to share our understanding without language of some form, we must take this literally. Our language IS our reality. And even if we lost all language and the world went on spinning, it would not matter, as we would have no way to tell without the lesson of distinction, the tool that separates this from that, the words that distinguish and compare yin and yang, the fruit that shares the knowledge of good and evil.

Eden was lost to us the moment we first named a thing, for it separated us at once from everything else in existence- and so doing, gave us thought... a thing once reserved only for deities.

This is a power greater than any in the universe, though we cannot measure it because we are never not within its bounds. Words have tremendous ability; to collapse existence into pieces of meaning sent from our mind to our lungs and carried on a ripple in the air. And those who hear those words conjure their own meaning, from their own experience, and so the power of the Named grows even as the preciseness of our speech is weakened."

Wow, yeah. This is an example of how one word can mean a different thing to different people. Like, if I say the word, "dog", you immediately will think of the Beagle we had growing up. But if I ask Mel what she first thinks of when she hears the word dog, she will think of her little Pug.

ELEANOR:

It kind of sounds like everyone has their own set of rules that language sets up for them.

CORDELIA:

Exactly. There's no way to convey meaning with language that isn't through the filter of our own lived experience, and so language is never perfectly precise. Or something like that. Whatever. I'm a linguist, not a rhetorician.

ELEANOR:

A linguist you are indeed. Can I read the rest?

CORDELIA:

Sure!

ELEANOR:

"There are ancient stories of the True Names of things- words that Defined with such preciseness as to give absolute power over the Named by the Speaker. It is best not to concern yourself with hunting for such things; but if we assume this myth to have merit, then the opposite must also be true; As the Name of a thing becomes imprecise, the agency of the Named grows. So what of that which is nameless? What becomes of those things that once had names, but lost them? Where goes the limitless power of language when its meaning is forgotten, yet the runes that once transcribed its sound remain?

It is impossible to say, since we cannot define that which is undefinable in speech. But be wary of such things, or places, or people. Forgotten or lost words still hold power- but power that is

unbound by our current constraints on our reality. They are echoes, for us. Ripples through our ancestry and through worlds and through time. They held power for us, once --and so they do still-- but it is unrestrained, unrefined, and untapped. The tragedy and power of nameless things is one and the same: that they are forever trapped in their endless freedom. And if they are possessed of a mind, then they are free to be anything within our vast unknowing, or worse yet, define themselves as any or all of a thing that is.

In short: Be careful with your name. It is all that you have."

Wow, that was. . .definitely not what I was expecting--or, you know what, I don't know what I was expecting. But it wasn't that.

CORDELIA:

The book definitely got a little too. . .spacey wacey for me to ever use this as a credible academic source. Not sure why I even thought that to begin with.

ELEANOR:

Wishful thinking? It was interesting though. I had never thought of names like that before.

CORDELIA:

Well, this book certainly does have a way with words. Oh! I just realized, we didn't let the listeners know what time the book has logged right now.

ELEANOR:

You're right! For those who are confused, which, at this point, we're nine episodes in, and if you're only listening to this now, go back and listen to the first eight episodes!

CORDELIA:

The book has this weird picture of a clock in the beginning, but it has way more than numbers on it.

ELEANOR:

And the clock hands move.

CORDELIA:

Oh, yeah, this supposedly inanimate object moves on its own. Should have mentioned that earlier.

ELEANOR:

Well, here we are.

**SOUND: pages turning**

ELEANOR:

Looks like the book is still pointed to the zodiac signs they were last week.

CORDELIA:

That's convenient. Maybe we'll show you all what this insane thing looks like sometime.

ELEANOR:

Do you think our listeners would like that?

CORDELIA:

I mean, they loved the weird code cypher thing we put out there. Maybe this strange clock is some kind of code as well, just way more complicated.

ELEANOR:

Let us know if you'd like to see a picture of the clock!

CORDELIA:

And remember, don't give your name away.

**SOUND: book closes**

ELEANOR:

I---Cordie, did we establish that this book is numbered?

CORDELIA:

I think so, yeah. Remember when we read that entry that was a little too specific? It referenced another volume.

ELEANOR:

Yes I remember. What number was the volume?

CORDELIA:

The one we have with us right now? I think it was number thirteen, because of course this would be a scary numbered book.

ELEANOR:

The spine says that this is number twelve.

CORDELIA:

What?!

ELEANOR:

Look!

CORDELIA:

I---I could have sworn it was volume number thirteen. Remember how we talked about how spooky that was?

ELEANOR:

I vividly recall that, that's why I asked you about it because I had to make sure my memory wasn't playing tricks on me. Maybe we can listen to the episode we found the number to check?

CORDELIA:

That's a good idea. That's. . .maybe we're both remembering it wrong?

ELEANOR:

Don't you think the odds of that are a little slim? Remember, the woods incident was not a shared hallucination.

CORDELIA:

Yeah, but if it was volume thirteen and now it's volume twelve. . .what happened to the original volume twelve?

ELEANOR:

As usual, this book is always leaving us with more questions than answers.

CORDELIA:

It's like a David Lynch movie.

ELEANOR:

Or Inception.

CORDELIA:

Or Inception if David Lynch wrote it.

ELEANOR:

Oh god, the very idea of that makes my brain melt.

CORDELIA:

Why don't I make some tea and we do that Adult Coloring book to make our minds not be goo anymore?

ELEANOR:

Oh the one with the swear words in it?

CORDELIA:

Obviously.

ELEANOR:

Incredible. Well, that's all for this week, friends. Thanks for tuning in.

CORDELIA:

We'll be back next week with hopefully more hours of sleep!

ELEANOR:

And our names in tact.

BOTH:

Toodles!