

FOGO: Fear of Going Outside  
Season 2, Episode 6: "Scat and Tracks"  
Transcription

{{Sound Cues}}

—

Ivy Le, addressing the listener:

I'm not sure we need a content warning today, but the American Ninja Warrior obstacle course that is trying to go hunting for the first time has been such a spectacle. The content warning is a habit at this point. Today is actually pretty PG because our expert guest is 14 years old. Um, the S word is scat and there are, I think, just two F bombs.

{{Bass-y rhythmic funky rock music plays underneath}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

If you've listened this far, you may have noticed that I have a propensity for nerding out. Well, back when magazines were on paper, I read Popular Science, and sometime in the late 20th century researchers figured out that Mosquitoes are attracted to carbon dioxide, and I found out in my magazine, when the internet was new and people still paid bills with handwritten checks. Mosquitoes love me—

{{Mosquito buzzing}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

—which is a problem because my mosquito bites turn into huge red welts that take weeks to clear. Often those welts turn into blisters and open wounds that take even longer to heal. Remember, I'm allergic to nearly all Texas plants, most nuts, cold air and raw cherries. All those things are avoidable by staying inside and being knowledgeable about food. But mosquitoes have wings and actively hunt me for my blood. So I had no choice but to use this knowledge for violence. Since then, whenever I hear a mosquito in the room, I sit in my bed with my back against the wall and cover myself with a blanket. Face exposed, hands ready to pop out, lying in wait. And I exhale hard, not like a dreamy, cloudy sigh, like, 'Aaah,' I mean—

{{Ivy blows}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

—a blow torch of CO<sub>2</sub>. I mean, dragon fire to bait the mosquito and the mosquitoes cannot resist my CO<sub>2</sub>. My CO<sub>2</sub> brings all the skeeters to the yard, and when it does, when I have it right where I want it.

{{Mosquito buzzing, then a CLAP}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

CLAP! It's over. I do not stop when I think I got it. No, I stop once I have found the body and then I throw it away and go wash my hands sometimes of my own blood. So what you need to understand today is first, I am no animal rights activist. If an animal is in my house out to hurt me. I do not take the high road. That makes me a bad Buddhist. Yeah, I know the life of a mosquito is not worth more than my own, but I'm not making Buddha this round. I'm not fooling anybody. I am a stone cold killer, and my weapon is knowledge. The more I learn about something, the dead-er it's gonna be. And today I'm getting my knowledge ammo from a Girl Scout.

{{A crash cymbal and the music stops}}

{{FOGO Theme Music: fun bouncy music with electronics fades in}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

I'm Ivy Le with one E, and you're listening to *FOGO: Fear of Going Outside*. A Nature Show by the most reluctant host ever. This season, I'm doing everything it takes to figure out how to go hunting and I'm gonna do it...or die trying. So far, I've tried everything I could think of to get a gun, but I couldn't afford one.

I got a bow instead. I asked several people to mentor me, but no one could schedule it. And I still haven't found any land to go hunt on. I butchered a whole hog with a renowned hunter chef who gifted me a textbook on how to hunt hogs, and I'm realizing that I might have to do the whole thing all by myself. So today I've asked a literal girls scout to teach me how to track and find animals.

{{FOGO theme music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

So far, meeting Hunter Chef, Jesse Griffiths last episode, and butchering a whole hog with him indoors inside his beautiful, cozy restaurant, Dai Due. That was the coolest thing I've gotten to do on this hunting quest. The most obnoxious thing has been looking for land to hunt on. Here's producer Myrriah Gossett talking about the runaround.

{{Western Guitar music plays}}

Myrriah, leaving a voicemail:

Hey Ivy! Um, just another land update this week. I've hit up just about every friend I can think of that has property, uh, asking if they have hogs and also asking if they would maybe let us come out and hunt. But every time they go, and they might talk to their neighbors, but then the neighbors are like, "I don't know these people."

Myriah, leaving a voicemail (cont.):

And some people are like, I don't really want people to find out where we live. And then I started reaching out to outfitters, uh, that like sell the experience, but none of them are returning my calls or emails. But I'll keep trying. Um, talk to you later. Bye.

{{Western Guitar music stops}}

{{Phone hang up sound}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

There's land that's owned by private citizens, and the landowner tells you what you can and can't do on their land and when you can or can't do it. Then there's land that's owned by the government, which basically tells you the same thing. There's no just regular land anymore.

{{A Wild West whistling tune plays}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

You need permission nowadays to be on just about any piece of Earth. That's not just in rural areas either. It's like that in cities too. A homeless person can be arrested for just existing on a quote-unquote public bench at night. It's public like the White House is. I was taught the White House is our house, but try taking a nap in one of our bedrooms. You will catch a trespassing charge because it's actually owned by the National Park Service.

{{Brass horns blare and the music stops }}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Many of the people we've met along the way are actively asking people they know to help us with land. Jesse, the chef, suggested some outfitters that he knows.

{{A rhythmic bongo, shaker, and bell driven jungle-like beat plays}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.)

Allie, that reporter from episode one, thinks she knows a reporter who hunts. And Nicole from Montana is making email introductions to everyone she knows in Texas. Meanwhile, I need to become a hunter. Jesse gave me some pretty practical advice.

Jesse, at Dai Due:

One thing to always remember when you're hunting pigs, remember that they're always somewhere like we tend to think that they just disappear and then, you know, towards evening—

Ivy, responding to Jesse:

They appear

Jesse:

They appear. I guarantee you, they were somewhere all day.

Ivy:

Right.

Jesse:

You know, they were somewhere.

{{A drum fill, and the music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

But how do I find where that is?

{{The jungle-like beat resumes}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

I asked the Girl Scouts of Central Texas if they have a class. They had reached out to me after the end of season one offering to attend one of their adult training events. It's where they teach adult scout leaders how to go camping and lead a troupe. I had just gotten back from the outside, so of course I was like, "No, thank you. I'm good." But I reached back out like, "Could y'all girl-splain woodcraft to me?"

Don had told me Woodcraft is knowledge of the woods, like how to track and find animals there, which I need to know to kill one. It just felt like something they would give merit badges for. They gave me an honorary merit badge for archery cuz I showed them that I did all the requirements. They also give merit badges for online etiquette and screenwriting too. So I could hardly believe that they actually do not have one for tracking. I got lucky though, which has rarely happened on this quest. The person I was emailing said that she knew of a Girl Scout who is a scat expert.

{{A country acoustic guitar song plays}}

Isabelle, at Camp Kachina:

Hi, Isabelle. I'm a 10th grader.

Ivy Le, narrating:

Isabelle, our scat expert, arrives with—I mean, it's slung on her shoulder like a purse, but Isabelle's carrying a nap-sack like the scout in that West Anderson movie, y'all. It's got tri-folded, laminated nature guides peeking out of the pockets. I've seen these at the checkout counter at H.E.B.

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

H.E.B. is our regional grocery store and also our regional version of FEMA. I meet Isabelle outside of the mess hall at a real Girl Scout camp, like in those coming of age movies about white teenagers.

{{The country acoustic guitar song stops}}

Ivy, addressing Isabelle:

When did you first know that you were really interested in poo?

Isabelle, responding:

Well, it wasn't poo specifically.

Ivy:

Okay. What was it?

Isabelle:

Um, like when I first learned that I was like really into animals was when I was a kid, I would draw pictures of cockroaches. Um, and then I gave those to the lady that was helping us move out of our old apartment. Um, so she has like a couple scribble drawings of cockroaches from me and at one point I demanded that my father take this, uh, cockroach that he had caught and let me have a tea party with it.

Ivy Le, narrating:

I love kids, and it's not just because I have a couple of my own. Kids do not waste time trying to make themselves look good like adults do. If you ask a kid a real question, they're gonna give you a real answer. If you give me a choice between sitting at the kids' table talking about bugs and K-pop, or sitting with adults talking about real estate, I pick kids every time.

Kids are so real. And this kid, she is weird and perfect and fearless. I hope I can keep up with her out here in the woods.

{{A woodsy acoustic guitar starts playing}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

We are at Camp Kachina. 244 acres on Lake Belton, near Temple, Texas, where girl scouts from all over central Texas come to learn about sailing, swimming, hiking, archery, and hatchet throwing.

They sleep in these little wooden and wire structures with no AC, charmingly called "Chicken Coops" because they are basically human-sized chicken coops. People who allegedly love their children send them here. And just so you know that I asked, they do not allow hunting on their land. Something about kids and safety or whatever.

{{One last guitar strum and the music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

We are just outside the mess hall. Kirsten Mitchell, who works for the Girl Scouts is chaperoning because Isabelle's mom wasn't available. Kirsten brings out a wooden sign with drawings of tracks and a tub of perfect little plaster animal footprints.

Ivy Le, addressing Isabelle:

What are like the coolest nature things that you know how to do?

Isabelle, responding:

Oh, um, a lot of it is identifying spiders. That's my favorite thing to do, is just look at a spider and tell what it is. Um, I like looking at, um, like tracks and identifying tracks. I like— uh...Like, just playing with bugs. Bugs is fun. I like finding bugs. That's really cool.

Ivy:

When you say playing with Bugs , what do you mean by that?

Isabelle:

Um, like, I'll pick up a Roly-Poly and let it crawl around on me. Or, um, I'll poke a, like a, just a Millipede. I don't poke—I don't mess with like poisonous bugs that I know are dangerous. I like to just leave them be and watch them. Um, but like flipping up rocks to find cool things underneath them is a lot of what I do when I say, when I play with bugs.

Ivy:

I see.

Isabelle:

Mmhmm.

Ivy:

I see, so Roly-Polies is actually the reason why I didn't know armadillos were mammals.

Isabelle:

Oh!

Ivy:

I thought they were like giant Roly-Polies

Isabelle:

Bugs do not really get that big. There is one really, really big, um, millipede that I believe is in a desert in Africa, but I think I'm wrong about that. That one's really cool though. It's like, I wanna say like a foot long. They're really cool looking.

Ivy:

Are millipedes dangerous?

Isabelle:

No, that is centipedes. I think they're relatives of each other, but millipedes are the ones that have rounded heads, so they're nice and round and friendly. Where centipedes move weird and are scary looking.

{{Bug crawling sounds}}

{{Eerie piano music}}

Isabelle:

Well, I guess that's not very helpful.

Ivy:

I think. I think it's very—I—I— I don't think I'm ready to tell the difference between a caterpillar that's a pretty butterfly, a millipede that's friendly, and a centipede that is dangerous.

Isabelle:

Mm, that's fair.

Ivy:

The margin of error sounds really uncomfortable.

{{Bug crawling sounds}}

Isabelle:

Uh, yeah. Centipedes are kind of crazy. I don't like them very much.

{{Intense music builds}}

Ivy:

Tell me about that.

Isabelle:

Uh, they just kind of freak me out with the way that they move, which is weird cause I can deal with a lot of other bugs, but not centipedes. I don't like— I don't like the way that they move. They kind of like, they can move really weird in a way that just doesn't look right to me.

{{One final eerie piano note}}

Ivy:

So just very unsettling?

Isabelle:

I feel like they should just stop.

Ivy:  
They should just stop being?

Isabelle:  
They should just stop being what they are.

Ivy:  
I'm with you.

{{Isabelle giggles}}

Ivy Le, narrating:  
Isabelle takes out her laminated Texas Nature Guides from her napsack. These guys are not that intimidating. There's just a quick paragraph of what you need to know about various animals and actual photographs of what to look out for in nature. Isabelle walks me through what evidence to look for when I'm tracking wild hogs.

{{Bugs and Birds chirping from the campground}}

Isabelle, addressing Ivy:  
Uh, this one says that, uh, they like trees—ah, tree rubs is what you can look for to see where an animal has been. So it'll like rub up against a tree rather, like unconsciously just passing by or consciously like scrubbing against it. Like deer will do that to get like, um, like fuzz off of their antlers and stuff.

Ivy:  
Huh.

Isabelle:  
So that's like—Tusk scratches is something you can look out for.

{{Determined electronic music builds}}

Ivy:  
Tusk scratches? Okay.

Isabelle:  
Mm-hmm.

Ivy:  
I think tree rubs—Oh, but just like any tree?

Isabelle:  
Mm-hmm. .



Ivy:

Okay. Tree rubs, tusk scratches, like tusk scratches on trees?

Isabelle:

Yeah.

Ivy:

Okay.

Isabelle:

They'll rub against trees for that.

Ivy Le, narrating:

Up until this very moment, hog rub to me meant barbecue seasoning. Actual hog rubs look like a mud mask around the first two or three feet of a tree. Sometimes you can see where the pigs walk in circles around the tree and expose the ground because like Jesse said last episode, pigs don't sweat.

They wallow in mud to regulate temperature, keep bugs off of them, and to protect their skin against sunburn. They rub on trees to get the excess mud off. Pigs are so intelligent, they particularly like rubbing on utility poles because we treat those poles with a wood preservative that helps them kill their parasites. A tree like that is usually a pit stop along a pig highway.

{{The electronic music stops}}

Ivy:

All right. What else am I looking for?

Isabelle:

Um, here They'll have like scat somewhere. I think that's showing you... Yeah, that's what they look for, to find places that they've been. So that's like in the dirt. They'll rub in the dirt and then that is what their tu- or that's what their scat looks like.

Ivy:

Large tubular scat.

Isabelle:

Yeah.

Ivy:

It just looks like regular scat.

Isabelle:

Uh, yeah. Uh, a lot of scat looks like scat. Uh...

{{They both laugh}}

Isabelle:

But like also, um...So Deer, you'll see has pellets, an oblong, weird looking pellet.

Ivy:

Whoa.

Isabelle:

Mm-hmm.

Ivy:

Okay. Well then what determines the shape of scat?

Isabelle:

Uh, a lot of it is diet.

Ivy:

Ah.

Isabelle:

So it's gonna be what you eat. Like here's mountain lions.

Ivy:

Okay.

Isabelle:

They eat a lot of fur, so it'll determine the size and shape of their scat-

Ivy:

They have white scat?

Isabelle:

Yeah.

Ivy:

Ew. Why? How?

{{Isabelle laughs}}

Isabelle:

Cause of the fur.

Ivy:

This fur doesn't make scat white.

Isabelle:

Cuz it goes well, it'll go through the digestive system, so it's gonna get all weird and bleachy cuz of the acids in your stomach.

Ivy:

They—they poo bleached poo? Wait, which animal is this, the mountain lion?

Isabelle:

Well,they're pooping out fur.

Ivy:

That's disgusting. Why is that more disgusting than dark brown and black poo? Why am I reacting so viscerally? I guess because if I was a human. And I pooped white poo. I'm like dead. I'm already dead.

Isabelle:

I mean, it's probably not great. Well, you can like poo out green poo. That's normal for humans.

Ivy:

Yeah. I mean if you eat enough vegetables, I guess.

Isabelle:

Yeah, that's good stuff.

Ivy Le, narrating:

Now that I have a basic working knowledge of different kinds of scat, Isabelle leads me to the trail, away from the safety of the picnic tables and parking lots and human chicken coops. We pass by some troops packing up, heading back to the cities where we belong.

Ivy, addressing Isabelle:

Did you learn this in Girl Scouts or did you learn this separately?

Isabelle:

Um, it's not a huge Girl Scout skill cuz it's not an actual badge you can get, but I learned this separately because of just being in camps and having an interest in wildlife, um, and going camping a lot. Our—my troop is very active and going outside and camping places, so it's kind of stuff that I picked up from getting guides to help learn about animals and stuff.

Ivy:

Like once you see the print or the scat or the fur, you can like, you know, get close to it–

Isabelle:

Mm-hmm!

Ivy:

–Look at it, pull out your guide or whatever. But the obstacle is like just seeing it in the first place.

Isabelle:

That's true. They are rather subtle things to find. Um and then–

Ivy:

So how do you–how do you train yourself up to see them?

Isabelle:

It's a lot of noticing little things at first. It's like–uh, looking at different, um, patterns in the dirt is like–it's hard to look at and it's hard to explain how to get to that point. A lot of it was practice. I was not able to identify tracks and stuff, um, when I first started. But it's looking at easier things to identify.

Like Scat helps bridge you into that cuz you can look and identify something that isn't a rock, that's poo and then learn and take what you learned about that. And take that and apply it to the dirt that you are looking at. And it's a lot of building up those skills before you're able to like just look at the ground and see something.

{{A bouncy drum beat plays}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“It's just a lot of building up these skills,” says the teen who started with cockroach tea parties! I do not have a lifetime to build up these skills. I spent my lifetime building up indoor skills like price negotiation, bookkeeping, and hustling dues at the pool hall. I train my eyes to see things like cop cars at night with their headlights off.

I have literally gotten into a car accident with a green trash bin because I don't notice nature colored things. I only have today to learn how to find tiny little animal clues in the gigantic magic eye puzzle that is nature.

When we come back:

{{The drum beat stops}}

Isabelle:

Oh my God—

Ivy:  
What the—

Isabelle:  
That's so bad.

{{Screams}}

{{A drum fill ending with a cymbal crash}}

Ivy Le, narrating:  
Isabel, Kirsten, our chaperone, me and FOGO's, fearless producer, Myrriah Gossett, we start walking.

{{Footsteps}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):  
It is a humid day in central Texas, which is to say a normal spring day here. Austinites tell people that it's dry in central Texas, but what we really mean is that it's dry compared to Houston, Texas.

Isabelle leads me around Camp Kachina, which she knows really well as a scout who has spent a good bit of time here, and she explains how she's looking for scat and tracks.

Ivy, addressing Isabelle:  
So what's your start? Do you first—you're like, you know, well, at first I have to look for some places where I think there might even be animals.

Isabelle:  
Yeah.

Ivy:  
Stuff to look for because there's just so overwhelming. There's just so much freaking nature.

Isabelle:  
Mm-hmm.

Ivy:  
So how do you narrow down where to go look?

Isabelle:

Um, a lot of it is like getting away from too much like people stuff cuz people make a lot of noise and animals aren't too big on that. So a lot of it's looking out into trails, um, and seeing um, from there different places animals have been. Cuz I know something animals will do a lot is make different trails of their own and runs, which is where a lot of animals have been walking over and over and over. So they've worn down the grass in the area, just down to the dirt.

Ivy:  
Oh.

Isabelle:  
Um, so that's good to look out for. And from there you can see different places where maybe hair is snagged or animals have pooped because they're just on the way to somewhere else that they can look for. Um, and one, you're on a trail, you can look out for like different clearings in the area, and the brush, which can be places where maybe an animal has eaten or something like that.

So it's a lot. Just being aware of where—what is around you. So there's just a lot of really small things you gotta look out for.

Ivy:  
Okay. Um, what are you looking for right now?

Isabelle:  
Like if an animal has been around nearby, they'll press down, like grass pretty well. I know animals will like, a lot of it's like just, um, leftover things that have been like left behind by the animal. So, um, like teeth marks on plants and stuff.

Ivy:  
Cuz to me everything in this forest looks busted.

Isabelle:  
Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that's Texas. It's all a little rundown.

{{They laugh}}

Isabelle:  
It's just, it's hard to live here as a plant or an animal I think.

Ivy:  
Oh really? Because of the laws?

Isabelle:  
Heat. It's a lot of heat.

Ivy:  
Ah.

Isabelle:  
It's so much "Not a lot of water."

Ivy:  
Yeah, no.

Ivy:  
So much Lack-of-water.

Isabelle:  
So much lack of water. And then the plants get mean because of it. So they get all spiky.

Ivy:  
Mm-hmm.

Isabelle:  
And then they get all mean and it's not fun.

Ivy:  
Okay. So the plants are like that here. It's not their fault, it's trauma.

{{Isabelle laughs}}

{{A crow call in the distance}}

Ivy:  
Sounds like a crow.

Isabelle:  
I wanna be friends with crows so bad. I would love to be friends with all of the animals. Except for centipedes.

Ivy Le, narrating:  
We turn towards the lake visible in the distance. Some of the train is dirt, but some of it is just rocks. Rocks on top of rocks.

Isabelle:  
I think we might be looking at a whitetail deer because of the little middle bit.

Ivy:

Seriously?

Ivy Le, narrating:

I think it must be because it's been drizzling a little bit, so the ground is damp, but we find some tracks right away.

Isabelle:

You kind of see the shape of it–

Ivy:

A little bit is just kind of raised?

Isabelle:

Mm-hmm.

{{Funky bass riff plays underneath}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

Deer tracks look a little bit like MRIs of our brains, two slender halves with space in between. It's an adjustment for me to look for impressions in the ground. Normally I'm looking at the ground for stuff sticking out, so I don't trip, but I am adjusting. But now I'll probably trip and break a leg where no EMS can reach me.

Ivy, addressing Isabelle:

So like if we follow these tracks, are we probably gonna find some scat?

Isabelle:

Uh, we might, yep, look at that.

Ivy:

Boom, a little bit right there!

{{Isabelle laughs}}

Ivy:

Right by the producer's shoe.

Isabelle:

Nice, good find.

Ivy Le, narrating:



These deer are leaving tracks everywhere. It's like they want us to find them. I start to wonder if Isabelle's got Girl Scout cookies in that nap sack of hers and the deer are just lying in wait somewhere to ambush us to get them. Everybody wants Girl Scout cookies.

Isabelle:  
Oh, ducks, oh!

Ivy:  
Did you find it? Did you f— Myrriah found ducks.

Isabelle:  
I love ducks.

Ivy:  
Where? Where? Where?

Myrriah:  
Two little ones right next to each other. See?

Ivy Le, narrating:  
Duck prints look like fat Pterodactyl prints like three fingers with bat wing webbing between them. I feel my hungry ancestors helping me find tasty animals.

Isabelle:  
You need to get more guides is what I'm learning here.

Myrriah:  
Yeah, we're short on guides.

Ivy:  
Geez Isabelle, we were really counting on you.

Isabelle:  
I'm sorry. My collection is so sad.

Ivy, narrating:  
Another one!

Isabelle:  
Can't really see the two little dots there. Again, that's like a really perfect track. I don't know how they found that, but that could just be because of the way that this dirt is.

Ivy:

Or it could just be like the weight of this particular animal. It just like leans a little forward.

Isabelle:

That's also very true.

Ivy Le, narrating:

Another one! We find another deer track, but I can't see or hear the deer anywhere. I scan for danger, but I actually don't sense any.

Isabelle:

Which one?

Ivy:

Little white stuff.

Isabelle:

Oh, good catch! I think—

Ivy:

Is that the mountain lion? Mountain lion scat?

Isabelle:

Uh, it looks fairly old.

Ivy:

Okay.

Myrriah:

Looks like a dog's scat...

Isabelle:

Yeah.

Ivy:

Just looks like dog cat. Yeah. Okay.

Isabelle:

Well it's got—I think that's a bone.

Myrriah:

Ooh!

Ivy:

Is it a bone?

Isabelle:

Maybe.

Myrriah:

Is it an owl pellet?

Isabelle:

No, owl pellets. Um, they're very pellet shaped. This is a little longer than a pellet would be.

Ivy, narrating:

Another one!

Ivy:

Where are we looking at?

Isabelle:

Another track. See the round edge of the hoof there? It looks like it's probably another deer though.

Myrriah:

Oh my God. Who'd have thought I'd already be bored of deer tracks and I've only known that they exist for like an hour.

{{Bass music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

It's not just that we'd been having an unreasonable amount of luck finding tracks today at this point. I'd been outdoors for nearly an hour and I was starting to get nervous because the outdoors is not a matter of if, but when it's gonna get you.

Ivy:

Oh my gosh. So many insects out here.

Kirsten:

I'm actually really impressed. This is like the most amount of tracks in scat I've seen.

Isabelle:

Yeah, normally you don't see this much. They were coming out just for you Ivy .

{{Ivy laughs}}

Ivy:

It's good to know. Even animals chase the spotlight of fame .

{{Laughs}}

Isabelle:

They're looking for the clout. .

Ivy:

Just one coyote—

Isabelle:

One Coyote wants the clout.

{{Ivy Screams}}

Ivy:

Jesus! What was that?

Isabelle:

A stink bug, I think.

{{Isabelle giggles}}

Ivy:

I didn't know they were so big.

{{Isabelle continues giggling}}

Ivy:

Sorry, Myrriah. Your ears okay?

Myrriah:

I think they're a little bit lower than most people...

{{Laughs}}

Ivy:

Oh my god.

Isabelle:

That just gave me a heart attack.

Ivy:

It was coming right at me.

Isabelle:

Oh, that might be something.

{{Footsteps}}

Ivy:

That?

Isabelle:

Yeah.

Ivy:

You remember to look at trees?

Isabelle:

Mm-hmm.

Ivy:

Is that a tusk?

Isabelle:

Uh, I don't know what that is.

Ivy:

It's just like a little pock mark in the tree.

Isabelle:

Mm-hmm.

Ivy:

Like you can go past the bark and then you can kind of see the tree on the inside.

Isabelle:

Yeah.

{{Dangerous music starts playing}}

Ivy:

And then you can kind of see that the underside of the bark is reddish

Myrriah:

Whoa.

Kirsten:

Oh, it's your least favorite.

Ivy:

What?

Isabelle:

Oh God. Oh God. It's a giant centipede. God.

{{Gasps}}

Ivy:

Oh my fucking God.

Isabelle:

I'm just going to stand away.

Ivy:

Oh My God.

Isabelle:

That's so bad.

{{Unintelligible screaming}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

We ran right under a centipede. It was crawling right above our heads in the tree. We've been so focused on the ground and the bases of trees for tusks and rub marks that we walked right up to its tree. That tree is its now. And if I had tripped then my soul would've been its two.

{{Dramatic music fades out}}

Isabelle:

Ooh, okay.

Ivy:

Oh my God. How are you feeling? Tell me everything:

Isabelle:

Uh, really jittery and not happy about that. I have seen one of these before.

Ivy:

AH-EW—I WANT TO BARF WHAT THE HELL?!

Isabelle:

See, I'm telling you they're wrong and they're bad.

{{Laughter}}

Isabelle:

They're so cool looking, but I hate them.

{{Ivy cackles in disgust}}

Ivy:

Jesus. Why is it moving like that? AH!

Isabelle:

I don't like 'em, dude. Ah, so that, my friend is a giant Texas centipede. We don't—they're—they're kind of cool.

Ivy:

What is it doing up there?

Isabelle:

Hunting for other bugs probably, anyways.

Ivy:

Cool, cool.

Ivy Le, narrating:

Up until this very moment, I was someone who couldn't tell you the difference between Centipedes and Millipedes. Well, fuck me. Not anymore. I can never go back to the old Ivy.

{{Funky Electronic Music Plays}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.)

Millipedes are friendly scavengers with four legs on every body segment, and they scurry about like Pixar characters. Centipedes are venomous hunters, who move, like they're possessed by evil. If you blink, it looks like they teleport. They have two legs per body segment.

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.)

You can remember that because the devil has two horns and centipedes are the devil's cockroaches. This centipede looked like it was almost a foot long. I'll subtract two inches for the fear factor for our listeners abroad. 10 inches is 25.4 centimeters. Ugh, I can't even say Centimeter anymore without gagging. It was lurching around the tree trunk, so I couldn't see all of it at once to be sure.

But as it curved around its body parts just kept coming. Like a freight train with cars that never end. City centipedes get to be just three or four inches long tops, and they avoid humans. Wild centipedes this big are eating rodents. The internet says their venom isn't fatal to humans, but the internet says a lot of things that aren't true.

If this centipede had let go of the tree and decided to fall on me, I would be dead of cardiac arrest before we could even learn about its venom's effects. But I didn't die. Neither did Isabelle, which thank goodness for that she's gonna do so much with her life. Nature doesn't care if you live or die, but apparently it does show you its best and worst sides when outdoors people are taking me specifically outside.

Isabelle has been outside probably dozens—even hundreds of times in her young life. But even she can hardly believe how many tracks and how many inches of centipede we've seen today. I thought she was my magical woodland, Disney Fairy, guiding me through the dark forest. But maybe I'm an elegant Disney witch, summoning danger when I go outside to humble humans who hike.

Either way, it's low key, magical. Isabelle and I catch our breath after that encounter. We more or less decide that we've had enough, we get back on a trail and start hiking towards the main office in the parking lot.

{{The music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Isabelle needs to go home to finish her homework, so we ask her about ways to learn more before I go hunting.

Ivy:

What's the duo lingo for poop?

Isabelle:

It's uh, it's gonna be guides and then looking online at tracking information and stuff, like Googling it, reading it, and then trying to apply that to going outside...Which does mean you do have to go outside though. I'm sorry.

Ivy:

You should have a TikTok. You should do a TikTok. You should be like, okay, here's the thing.

Isabelle:



Yeah?

Ivy:

And then like walk people through how to like determine what it is.

Isabelle:

Mm-hmm.

Ivy:

Based on what they see. And then if I could just get on Scat TikTok.

Isabelle:

Yeah.

Ivy:

I feel like I would learn without going outside.

Isabelle:

But then you wouldn't be able to do it on your own.

Ivy:

What are—No, but then you learn to be able to do it on your own.

Isabelle:

You can—

Ivy:

So what are some probably—what are, what's terminology that is probably a hashtag on TikTok that would help me be able to learn how to do this without going outside.

Isabelle:

Ooh, that's a good question.

Ivy:

I mean, are there like tracking communities or like scat, fur, and track communities?

Isabelle:

Not that I've seen. I feel like a lot of people who do track animals are very much so outside tracking animals all the time. So, there's not like an online presence.

Ivy Le, narrating:

I didn't quite believe Isabel, not because she isn't trustworthy, but because I feel like everything's on TikTok, but she is right. Tracking videos on TikTok are mostly about putting air tags on your house cats, so I would have to go outside to practice, but where would I go? I can't even find land to hunt down a reviled pest. Who's gonna let me on their property to go around? Poking at literal shit. Today will have to do me.

{{Inspiring air-y music}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Luckily, Isabelle was a good teacher, thanks to her, I feel myself starting to notice signs of life and the dirt around me. I think I can spot the difference between poop and dirt, which is a stunning achievement when you consider that dirt is mostly old poop.

This morning, I didn't know the difference between millipedes and centipedes, but tonight I'll probably have nightmares about one. I also pieced together today that animals build their own roads and highways.

{{Music fades out}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

And like me, they also don't like leaving them as an indoor person. I never really thought about animals building their own infrastructure. I thought they just wandered randomly in the wild. I thought that's what makes 'em wild.

But tracks, prints, rubs, and scat. Give me clues to map out their roads so I can follow them because there's only a few places they're going right. They sleep—uh, drink, water, eat—probably at a feeder if we're on hunting grounds and poop.

It is so surreal to be me, to know so much about things I have zero interest in. I'm a little proud of myself. I've always known so much about all the glamorous BBC Earth animals, you know, like lions and tigers and penguins, that sort of thing, but, I hardly knew anything about the beasts in my part of the world, and now I can't wait for the day that this comes up at a garden party, so I can just casually be like:

{{Intense Bass driven rock music}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

(Doing a Southern accent:) No, that's not a hairball from your cat. That's classic predator scat. You should go check on your kitty, honey.

(Dropping the accent:) Of course, I'm gonna sound like a Southern Gothic gentleman detective, and you would too, if you had to wait years to say something like that!

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Isabelle heads home to keep her GPA up and Myrriah gets a call back from someone Allie the reporter introduced us to. He's a wealthy rancher with acres and acres of land and tons of wild hogs.

Next time on FOGO.

Ivy, addressing Kevin:

I heard you've got a, you got a little crew? Squeal Team Six.

Kevin:

Yeah. That's—that's what we, we call it when we're going out on maneuvers at night with the thermal scopes.

{{FOGO credit music plays}}

Ivy, addressing the listener:

You can see pictures and video from this episode on Instagram at [@fogopodcast](#).

FOGO is written, produced, and hosted by me, Ivy Le with one E. We are produced and edited by Myrriah Gossett, engineering Mixing and Additional Sound Design by Robyn Edgar. Our theme song and Original Music are composed by Michelangelo Rodriguez. Story Editor is Minda Wei. Production support by Benjamin Grosse-Siestrup. FOGO's board of advisors is Jeff Zhao and Martin Thomas.

From Spotify our Executive Producers are: Miguel Contreras, Grace Delia, Jane Zumwalt, and Natalie Tulloch. Spotify Production Support by Shirley Ramos. And special thanks to the rest of the Spotify team.

You can Follow me on just about every social media platform [@IvyLeWithOneE](#) and go to [fogopodcast.com](#) for the newsletter, transcripts, and stickers!

Listen to "FOGO: Fear of Going Outside", for free on Spotify!

{{Music swells and stops}}

Ivy Le, addressing the listener:

And now, here's the Girl Scout's campfire song "Pass This Way Again" in its entirety. The FOGO remix.

{{Remix of "Pass This Way Again" starts playing}}

Girl Scouts singing:

Let a light shine in your window

Girl Scouts singing (cont.):

So I can see where I have been  
And if that candle burns and if fortune smiles  
I will pass this way again  
And if that candle burns and if fortune smiles  
I will pass this way again