

FOGO Episode 7 “Plants, Animals, and Bugs! Oh My!”  
Transcription:

{{Sound cues}}

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{{Chill bassline fades in}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“I consider it a great privilege to be a part of someone’s awakening, whether it’s a political, spiritual, or a sexual one, but *especially* if it’s a culinary awakening. I’ll never forget witnessing someone eat their first ever taco. It was like watching a symphony in face form.

I had a roommate once who had never tried Korean food, and now as an adult, she was determined to expand her palate. Now, I’m not Korean, but I lived near Gwinnett County, Georgia for many years. It’s like a WHOLEEEEE Korean city. I mean, Korean Chambers of Commerce, Korean bath houses, bakeries, car dealerships. Rival churches! So Korean food was one of *my* culinary epiphanies living in Georgia. I freaking love it. I 100% would cancel other plans to go eat Korean food with even just myself. So when my old roommate said she wanted to try it, I volunteered to come.

She had another friend who wanted to go, too. Let’s call her Elena. This...Elena taught English in Korea for a year and also fell in love with the food. So we all go to a Korean BBQ joint, and while we’re waiting for the meat, the server brings out all the condiments and side dishes. This part of the meal is called banchan. It’s my favorite part. I often spend more money buying up side dishes than the entree at a restaurant, but at Korean restaurants, they give you like a dozen side dishes for FREE! \$Free.99! That’s my favorite price!

One of the condiments you can prepare while you wait for the meat is fermented soybean paste. It lends this unctuous funk that ties everything together. You can put in soup, you can dip your meat in it. But on its own, it’s what some food writers might call ‘challenging.’ It’s the kind of Asian condiment adult white people who have had the privilege of traveling in Asia like to brag that they “can” eat. But like, 6 year olds all over the world “can” and do eat it all the time! That’s like if I bragged about being “able” to eat ranch sauce. Haha. Theoretically. I mean I can! But I don’t. But it would be like that.

Elena eggs my friend on to eat the sauce just on its own, making her feel like she would be too vanilla if she didn’t. White people implying other white people were too white as a passive aggressive dare was new to me, so I didn’t know what to do, and I didn’t stop it. So my friend tried it, before anything else we had ordered came. That was her literal first taste of Korean food, and she was very put off by it. Instead of a symphony of the face, it was like watching a YoungLife pastor beatbox... It was overwhelmingly awkward.

I was angry, but I couldn't put into words then why. It was like Elena was saying she was better than everyone else, and for us to know it, she would have to show you how disgusting she thought Asian food actually was. She was gatekeeping Korean food, when I'm pretty sure no one had asked her to. It's soybeans, not Star Wars."

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

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

"The possibility of seeing our friend experience the joy of it for the first time had been stolen. It's unfair really how disproportionate an impact someone can have on your experience of something new if you meet them too early."

This is Ivy Le with one E and you're listening to FOGO: Fear of Going Outside, where I venture to find out what's so great about the outdoors. I am the most reluctant nature show host ever, attempting everything it takes to. Literally. Go. Camping. So far, I've gotten advice from friends, I've taken professional camping lessons, gone to therapy to understand my fears, bought some gear, tried hiking, and beta-tested the Texas bush. I'm getting really close to my camping trip, so on today's episode: I get some local knowledge of plants and animals."

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

{{A piercing bird screech}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

"Now that I've more than survived an expedition into the wild Texas thicket, I'm seeing myself the way small woodland animals see me! As far as feminist outlooks go, I find that this apex predator attitude suits me more than either the boss babe or the mediocre man approach to confidence. Whether I'm in the woods or the board room, I can say to myself: [rapping] I am healthy, I am stealthy, Big 'ol brain, top the food chain."

{{Whip-crack}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

"With this newfound confidence, FOGO's producer Myrriah Gossett and I officially book the campsite. There were no reservations available for our original proposed dates, which is shocking because multiple people told us, without asking, that June in Texas is a horrible time to camp. So we end up booking for three days, two nights in early... July! The average temperature in July here is 96°F, only "rarely exceeding 101°." But Myrriah, like any good producer, is always good for seeing the bright side of a situation."

Myrriah, in the office:

"I'll book it."

Ivy, in the office:

[Ivy gasps, unconfidently] “Oh my god!”

Myriah, in the office (cont.):

“Look at this campsite though! We’re like— it’s a good spot. So we’re right by the water and fishing dock.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“It’ll be hot, but we can try to enjoy being by the water.”

{{Water splash}}

{{Bass-y Western music fades in}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

“So we have paid our reservation. All that’s left is to get medically cleared to go camping and learn to identify some plants and animals. I learned going out into the woods with Ryan on his trail build last week that not everything is bigger and scarier than in the city. Actually, the country cockroaches were almost adorable. Not everything in nature is a direct threat to me! So today, I’m going to The Lady Bird Wildflower Center to identify which plants and insects *are* threats vs. which ones I should allow to live.”

{{A lively Spanish guitar song plays}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

“The Lady Bird Wildflower Center is Texas’ Botanic Gardens. It sits on 284 acres on the outskirts of South West Austin. It’s got trails, gardens, and green houses, and thousands of visitors come every year from the world over. I’m meeting with one of their staff members for a tour.”

Leslie Uppinghouse, outdoors:

“My name is Leslie Uppinghouse. I’m a horticulturist at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. And I’m also the serving lepidoptera specialist, which means I raise moths and butterflies.”

Ivy Le, outdoors:

“Ah.”

Leslie (cont.):

“So I’m a maintenance gardener that raises bugs.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“Leslie meets me at the entrance. She’s dressed like a gardener about to spend the hottest part of the day in the yard, except she’s also wearing a walkie talkie. Staff here communicate on long range walkie talkies, so you’ll hear it now and again. I’m in resort wear, basically, because it’s

summer: off-white slacks, a pineapple print top, plus an Asian Mom sun visor. But fashion is only the beginning of our differences.”

Leslie, outdoors:

“I was thinking, I'm a FOBI. I'm a Fear of Being Indoors. I start to get real claustrophobic if I'm inside and I can't have the experience of being outside at least several hours a day.

I grew up like a feral animal [Leslie chuckles]. I lived in old-growth forest in the northwest, only on three little acres, but in a pretty rural area called Lake Oswego, outside of Portland, Oregon, so I cannot handle being in an air conditioned window. I can't sleep in like hotels that don't allow you to- uh- it just- it just creeps me out so hardcore because of all the dust mites and just that re-circulated air. Justm I start thinking about that and then my throat just closes.”

Ivy, narrating:

“Because she has FOBI, as she calls it, and because the Lady Bird Wildflower Center where she works gets so many visitors, she's spent a lot of time thinking of ways to make nature more welcoming to the outdoor skeptics like me.

Leslie, outside:

“A lot of little kids that haven't been in nature come at it overwhelmed.”

Ivy, outside:

“Mhm.”

Leslie (cont.):

“We also receive a lot of tour groups of people with, um, disabilities. You know, some can feel quite overwhelmed in that scenario. And then in adults, there's lots of adults that are quite overwhelmed by the ex-, you know, the experience of being outside. And so, we try to make sure, again, it kind of goes into the path and the open spaces in the buildings, that it's not- it's not an unpleasant experience.

So we're definitely not trying to force people into nature, because then they're just not going to come back. But we want them to feel, even if they don't know anything about plants and animals that they feel included to explore.”

Ivy, narrating:

“I wanna feel included to explore! Leslie's taking me through the botanic gardens and behind the scenes today, identifying plants, insects, and animals all along the way.

{{A Spanish guitar version of the bouncy FOGO theme song fades in}}

Everything here is native to Texas, where I'll be camping, so this is the perfect place to get the field knowledge I'll need. We go through the first exhibits on the visitors' path of the gardens.

There are kids everywhere, and this area is designed to be interactive and educational for them. Which is great! Because everything is at my height!”

Leslie, outside:

“So here's a little bobcat sculpture.”

Ivy, outside:

“Oh, that’s what a bobcat looks like?”

Leslie (cont.):

“Yeah! Yeah!”

Ivy (cont.):

“They look smaller than I thought-”

Leslie (cont.):

“They’re very small. They look like a tall house cat!”

Ivy (cont.):

“Okay. So like a very tall house cat. It does look like a *mean* house cat.”

Leslie (cont.):

“Nooooo. If you ever saw him, he doesn't look mean at all. He's super sweet. The funniest part about this, is more than once, we get reports of, “oh, I saw the bobcat,” and we're like, “oh, really where?” And they'll say, “oh, at the edge of the bridge.” You're like, “oh, yeah, that's a sculpture,” and they go “no, no, no, it was *with* the sculpture.” And so twice, it’s been reported just sitting here with the sculpture.”

Ivy, narrating:

“FOGO Danger Rating: {{CROAK}} Bobcat: Still a threat, but I could take ‘im. They’re not as big as I’d imagined. I thought bobcats were bigger, like jaguars. But it turns out, jaguars are seven times bigger than bobcats. You just can’t tell watching nature documentaries through a cell phone screen.

The point is, I definitely could take a bobcat. This is a decent start to learning about the plants and animals I’m likely to encounter camping. We keep making our way through the visitors’ gardens and stop by the highlight of this trip: the edible plants garden! Nature’s banchan, let’s go!”

Leslie, outside:

“The plant back here, the Carolina wolfberry, the Lyceum– that is actually our native goji berry.”

Ivy, from the studio:

“Goji berries have local dupes! We can make tea if we find some at the campsite.”

Leslie, outside:

“So this is why Top Mountain Men. This is such a strong mint that you're probably going to want to spit it out.”

Ivy, from the studio:

“I did not spit it out. I wish I had a tin-full of it.”

Leslie, outside:

“This is our spring onion. This is a native onion here in Central Texas. It's very yummy. You can just chomp on it, it's super good.”

Ivy, outside:

“How do you identify this? It looks like grass.”

Leslie (cont.):

“Well, if you look at it-”

Ivy (cont.):

“Smells awesome!”

Leslie (cont.):

“Yeah, doesn't that look like an onion? Like that's a young onion seed head, and then if you pull it up, it's a little white onion. I can pull one up actually.”

Ivy, narrating:

“She pulled some out of the earth for me. They smelled like green onions, which I use a lot of in Vietnamese food and I eat every stalk.”

Ivy, outside, horrified:

“Eugh! The yellow thing, is that moving!? Are there things that are moving in here?! Ew, yeah, they're moving!”

Leslie, outside, bored:

“There might be bugs in there.”

Ivy (cont.):

“That does not- I thought that was a part of them- is that actually bugs?!”

Leslie (cont.):

“No, no. Where, where?”

Ivy (cont.):

“They’re moving! They’re like-”

Leslie, dismissively (cont.):

“I do not see it. I do not see it.”

Ivy, narrating:

“I’m not supposed to eat plants without a guidebook, but bugs are okay?... Hm! Leslie is so extremely outdoorsy, I feel like I have to fact check nearly everything she says. That’s kind of the whole reason I’m out here, because I love nature shows so much but I’m not sure how much I can believe the people who usually host them.

Like these plants, they were pretty tasty! But she didn’t snack with me. That’s like if I gave a Taco Tour of Texas and didn’t eat anything the whole time. You’d question my enthusiasm. I can’t believe we have such variety of edible plants in Texas. It’s so hot and dry here. I actually hope I get to try some foraging when we go camping! And I hope I never have to use those skills in a zombie apocalypse.

FOGO Danger Rating: {{CROAK}} Edible Plants... Delicious. *I am a threat - to them.*

Leslie and I start to go off the path to get to where we’re going, behind the scenes. But there’s still a boatload of nature I have to get through on the way. There’s so much wildlife that I can hear but can’t see.”

Leslie, outside:

“So immediately, once we’re off like the path, you’ll start to hear things better. And even though there’s birds in the garden, like see, do you hear now there’s like a lot of bird activity. If you just stand still-”

{{Leslie pauses, birds chirp}}

Leslie (cont.):

“See how the wind’s coming through, and it got quiet? Birds rarely sing on top of wind because they can’t get their message out.”

{{Walkie talkie message in the background}}

Leslie (cont.):

“So I was hearing a Tufted Titmouse Cardinal, White-eyed Vireo, and a Goldfinch. Yeah, you know, they’re pretty far away. They’re pretty up high. These are big post oak trees, so they’re actually quite high. And then there’s, um, a Juniper back there, so they’re pretty high on the canopy. [to passers-by] Hi, guys!”

Passers-by, outside:

“Hello.”

Leslie, outside:

“We have Road Runners that cruise through. Those are nice ground birds. We also have Bobwhites that are little quail, that are fun, that run around.

Some of the noisiest birds in Central Texas are the wrens, and they're the smallest, some of the smallest. So sometimes the biggest bird sound is comes from the smallest bird. And some of the really big birds have very small sounds like some of the Hawks have a very weensy lil cry, even though they're a giant bird.”

{{A quiet moment, then two birds sing in call and response}}

{{Bass-y electronic music fades in to underline narration}}

Ivy, narrating:

“Leslie can make sense of all the sounds she hears from the animals we can't see. So just because something has a big scary sound, she said, doesn't mean it's from a big scary animal! But vice versa, a small sound doesn't mean a small bird, either. Birders can even identify birds by just their songs and calls, the same way I can identify Daddy Yankee by the opening notes of Gasolina.

The Audubon Society has blog posts where you can learn the basics. For example:

Songs are what they call multi-syllable patterns like this Cardinal

{{Cardinal song that starts out with one high note, followed by a ringing series of dual tones}}

And calls are when the sound is just one syllable, sometimes repeated like the famous Austin Grackle

{{Grackle call that sounds like a match being lit over and over}}

And we have ground birds like the Road Runners, who don't beep like in cartoons, they kind of purr and coo at the same time?

{{Road runner that sounds like somebody blowing a really aggressive raspberry, or like if you stuck your tongue out when you sneezed}}

Shoutout to the folks at our play-cousin podcast, Bring Birds Back, for walking me through birder terminology.

FOGO Danger Rating {{CROAK}}: Birds: not a threat. They're mostly just dinosaurs fallen from grace.

When we come back, I finally meet a snake in the wild. Leslie of course makes the introduction.”



Leslie, outside:

“So I’m super traumatizing her right now. Hahahaha!”

Ivy, narrating:

“So far with Leslie, I’ve seen a bobcat statue, a bunch of random plants, and learned about local birds. So far, none of these things are threats! [Sing-songy] But we’re not done yet!”

Leslie, outside, excited:

“Let’s go look at a snake!”

{{Super low-toned music plays, like we’re on the prowl. DOOM!}}

Ivy, narrating

Get in, losers. We’re learning about animals.”

Leslie, outside

“So rat snakes, super common in Texas. They can get quite large. They’re non-venomous. They are a wee bit aggressive. So it’s a good one for you to see.

{{ECHOING}} They are a wee bit aggressive.They are a wee bit aggressive.They are a wee bit aggressive.”

Ivy, narrating:

“Leslie had got a hot tip on the walkie talkie about a snake by the greenhouse. And we start speed-walking there to catch it before it’s gone. Y’know, off to whatever snake appointment it has next. I’m trying to keep up with all my sound equipment and all my emotional baggage! We’re taking the back way, where only staff are allowed. I suddenly notice there are no children around. I’m the only one back here in sandals. Someone points us to the outer corner of a greenhouse, where I only see vines. I’m half crouching like in a group photo, trying to see what they can see. Until suddenly, I’m eye level with this snake! Who saw *me* before I saw *them*!

It looked sort of like a rattlesnake, but greener.”

{{Suspenseful action music}}

Ivy, outside:

“I will watch out. I will watch out, Leslie. I will watch out.”

Leslie, outside:

“So this is a- yeah, this is a great plains rat snake. He’s one of our prettiest snakes. And you can see in the center of his tummy. He’s sittin’ there digesting, so he’s not going to go anywhere. He’s not remotely aggressive. He’s a non-venomous snake. Really beautiful. They’ve got that beautiful patterning on their head. So you can tell the difference between that snake and, um-”

Ivy (cont.):

"Eugh- all these plants are touching me. I'm trying to get the shot, but the plants!"

Leslie (cont.):

"Okay. Okay."

Ivy (cont.):

"Ahh! This is not one of the poisonous ones, right?"

Leslie (cont.):

"Nope. This is a pipe vine. So now he's kind of moving."

Ivy (cont.):

"Uh oh."

Leslie (cont.):

"See him moving? So back away a little bit."

Ivy (cont.):

"Okay! I'm gonna back away."

Leslie (cont.):

"Well, only 'cause I don't want to interrupt him. Because he is- he's- see how he turned around now he's looking at you?"

Ivy (cont.):

"No, ah, okay! I'm out, I'm out."

Leslie (cont.):

"He's okay! He's not going anywhere. He's just checking to make sure like, leave me alone. I'm just trying to-"

Ivy (cont.):

"He's trying to look at me!"

Leslie (cont.):

"Yeah, he's looking right at you."

Ivy (cont.):

"Eugh, okay..."

Leslie (cont.):

"He's fine."

Ivy (cont.):  
“Okay, bye. Bye.”

Leslie (cont.):  
“Bye, Buddy!

So remember that butterfly that-”

Ivy (cont.):  
Was that the- a rat it ate?”

Leslie (cont.):  
“No, it may have- it may be a small mouse. Yeah, they're called rat snakes, because they typically will eat a lot of mammals. So a lot of small mammals. Yeah.

Ivy, narrating:  
“You can see some of the pictures I take on our Instagram @fogopodcast. I really hope the snake... likes the pictures I took? Because, you know, we always see snakes when they're, like, bewitching and beautiful and thin. But like, this snake is fascinating and beautiful and strong! Even while it's eating a mouse whole. And I hope it doesn't think that I took a really unflattering angle... I feel like I took a lot of different angles. This feels very momentous!

Here's some background about my snake experience. I volunteered summers in the reptile department at the Dallas Zoo when I was a teenager, but I never handled the animals in the exhibit at all. I didn't feed them, I didn't touch them. I put on a puppet show about reptiles for children with discerning taste in theatre. So I guess I was always making nature shows on whatever stage I could get, but now, here is a real snake not stuffed with my hand, but with a formerly live animal.”

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

Ivy, narrating (cont.):  
“Many snakes don't even have venom. They kill by constriction, which is what the great plains rat snake does, and it's not big enough to choke a human who is fighting it to death. Maybe just enough to turn some people on!

FOGO Danger Rating {{CROAK}}: Great plains rat snake... big threat to rats. Zero threat to humans.”

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

{{A lively Spanish guitar song plays}}

Ivy, narrating:

“Leslie Uppinghouse is actually a lepidopterist. A lepidopterist is somebody who specializes in studying caterpillars, moths and butterflies. So she gets really, *really* fucking excited about caterpillars.”

Leslie, outside, speaking quickly:

“This is a pipevine caterpillar. So the pipevine swallowtails and these are some of my favorite creepiest ones.”

Ivy, narrating:

“The pipevine swallowtail is this forebodingly beautiful big black butterfly with blue iridescence on its smaller hind wings. We’ve seen a couple so far, and they have big, sexy Ursula energy.

The caterpillar that becomes her has big MCU alien energy. They are about two knuckles long, black with red-orange spikes all over. Some of the spikes are quite long, so you can’t tell which end is its head until it comes toward you. And remember, caterpillars don’t just crawl with their legs carrying a hard body like a cockroach does.”

{{DOOM TONE}}

Ivy, narrating (cont.):

Caterpillar bodies ooze forward, so its flaming spikes undulate toward you in waves.”

Leslie, outside:

“Aren’t those cool?”

Ivy, outside, squicked out:

“Ooooh my god.”

Leslie (cont.):

“So they’re all over here! And they’re just cruising around and they’re eating this plant.”

Ivy (cont.):

[Big exhale] “Oh my god.”

Leslie (cont.):

“Aren’t they cute? [Sing-songy] They’re a-dor-able! You want to handle one?”

Ivy (cont.):

“Not... really... But-”

Leslie (cont.):

“You could! They’re [sing-songy] pre-tty fun.”

Ivy (cont.):

"I- oof. They're kind of beautiful, in a- [cross-talk]"

Leslie (cont.):

"Aren't they beautiful- [cross-talk]"

Ivy (cont.):

"I love a great villain in a superhero movie."

Leslie (cont.):

"Yeah! They're very, um- like, here's one down here that I need to move anyway, because he's down too low. Oh-"

Ivy (cont.):

"Man, Leslie is just like... Leslie just doesn't give a fuck. Leslie's just-"

[Ivy screams! It's shrill and shocked. Ivy laughs.]

Ivy (cont.):

"Ahh! Leslie, oh my god."

Leslie (cont.):

"I love his little antennas. He tickles. You sh- [Ivy laugh-screams in the background] I think he's soooo tickly. Okay, if I was going to run a spa, I would do that thing where you'd have little tiny caterpillars running up and down your back to relax you."

Ivy (cont.):

"Wow. You know what kind of spa would not get any investors? Would be your kind of spa."

Leslie (cont.):

"And once he's so like relaxed, he's like ah, tickle tickle tickle."

Ivy (cont.):

"She keeps walking towards me, you guys."

Ivy, narrating:

"These do not look like a spa treatment. One is unsettling, but a bucket of these would be a threat. She is walking toward me with this sleep paralysis demon that is broadcasting with every cell in its being that it does not want to be fucked with, and she's acting like it's a Tickle Me Elmo doll."

Leslie, outside, hyper:

"Because I'm just trying to show you, he's sooo cute! Tickle tickle tickle! It's so fancy. I wish you could feel it, Ivy. It's so lovely. It doesn't sting. It's just a little teeny tickle. It's so cute."

{{Serious electronic music starts}}

Ivy, narrating:

"It is not cute. But it is my duty as a nature show host to find out how it really feels! My stomach might fall out of my vagina, but I'm doing it.. I tell her I'm ready to hold the caterpillar."

{{Suspenseful nature show music plays}}

Leslie, outside:

"Ready? You wanna try?"

Ivy, outside, uneasy:

"Uh huh..."

Leslie (cont.):

"Okay, I'm gonna videotape you. Now, what I want: I'm going to ask you, you can scream, but do not fling him."

Ivy (cont.):

"Do not fling."

Leslie (cont.):

"Don't fling him, he's very- just hold your hand out."

Ivy (cont.):

"Let me just put all this equipment down."

Leslie (cont.):

"Okay. So I'm gonna have you do it, rather than me putting him on there 'cause that's gonna feel better to you. Put your hand right in front of him, and he'll crawl right on it. Look at this-"

{{Ivy is LOSING HER SHIT screaming. But, like, to be fair, this caterpillar is gnarly. Google it!}}

Ivy (cont.):

[Through screaming] "God, I got it! I got it! Ahh! I- ahh!! AHH! Oh my GOD! It's stuck at the end! It just like really-"

Leslie (cont.):

"It did! It sticks."

Ivy (cont.):

"Just like velcroed-"

Leslie (cont.):

“Yep, that’s how he stays on the plant.”

[Ivy screams in relief]

Leslie (cont.):

“Good job! You did it! Yay!”

[Ivy screams in... celebration?]

Ivy, narrating:

“I was screaming because I was taking care to hold my one hand still and not hurt the caterpillar, while the rest of my body writhed in torment and released its overwhelm through my lungs.”

Leslie, outside:

“You can say you have handled a pipevine swallowtail. Good job. And you only screamed a little. Not bad. There we go.”

Ivy, outside, disgusted:

“Euughh, I thought I was not gonna scream”

Leslie (cont.):

“Ok, yeh, bye snake! Bye Pipevine Swallowtail!”

Ivy (cont.):

“Bye, yeh, I feel like I’m gonna throw up.”

Leslie (cont.):

“Do you feel barfy?”

Ivy (cont):

“I do feel barfy-” [cross-talk]

Leslie (cont.):

“No, it’s good! It’s good, it’s good! You did it! You did it. Well done. [Ivy coughs] Take a lil drink of water. [Leslie laughs]

You did good! And did you- you were screaming, so you didn’t really- did you sensory feel how nice and tickly it was?”

Ivy (cont.):

“It felt- it didn’t feel nice. It felt like, like, like... of like a... fabric that’s kind of stuck to you.”

Leslie (cont.):

“Okay, so those back legs, they are little suction cups.”

Ivy (cont.):

“Mhm.”

Leslie (cont.):

“And so, like, that's how they can, like- how do caterpillars, like, climb up slippery plants or on... so it's his back legs that do hang on, and that was that one when you were like “get him off.” He's gonna hang on because that's his protection when the wind blows so he doesn't fly off everywhere.”

Ivy, narrating:

“FOGO Danger Rating: {{CROAK}} Caterpillar... Poisonous to eat, but not dangerous to touch according to Leslie? She and I obviously have very different sensory experiences of the world and the animals in it, but I'm inclined to believe her, just because if these caterpillars were spreading pathogens to visitors, it would be a problem directly assigned to her, as the house caterpillar expert.”

{{[Low string music fades in. Like a Game of Thrones vibe.]}}

Ivy, narrating:

How do I describe harvestmen spiders, which are not really spiders, in a way that doesn't turn FOGO into a horror show? It looks like if your individual hairs all came to life. And they wanted vengeance.”

Ivy, outside, startled:

[Screaming] “Oh-woah my god!”

Leslie, outside:

[Laughing] “Yeah, so those are harvesters. They're actually *technically* not a spider, but people think of them as spiders. They only have one body part. So spiders have more segments than that, um, but I love them. So when you're ready, I'll make them do their bouncy thing. I love harvesters, they're very cool. They *can* bite but they're not remotely aggressive.

Um, they do this funny community gathering. And there's different theories as to why and sometimes you'll see thousands of them in a big pile.”

Ivy (cont.):

“How many is that, do you think?”

Leslie (cont.):

“That's probably only about maybe twenty? Okay, so tell me when, and then I'm going to make them do their little vibrate thing. And this is their warning that they're telling me. So if I tap here they go. They'll- they'll-”



[[Leslie taps the spider-pile, and Ivy screams]]

Ivy (cont.):

“Ahh! Leslie, what are you doing?!”

Leslie (cont.):

“See how they do the bounce? Like, “Go away. Go away. Go away.” Isn’t it cute? I love them.”

Ivy (cont.):

“They’re like, springy.”

Leslie (cont.):

“Yeah, they’re doing bounce, bounce, bounce, and then pretty soon they’ll go back together.”

{{Low string music fades in. Like a Game of Thrones vibe.}}

Ivy, narrating:

“If you didn’t know what you were looking at, a cluster of harvestmen at rest might look like a dried up clump of air plants. But when they decide all at once to move, when they do “the bouncy thing” as Leslie calls it - when they scatter as fast as wind in every direction, it feels like your blood is trying to escape your body.”

Ivy, outside:

“This is- oh, man. I have screamed more times on this field recording trip than any other trip I’ve been on so far.”

Leslie, outside:

“These are my tamest creatures. Come on. [Ivy laughs] Come on!

You’re stressed out? Okay, okay. I’ll try to tone it down a little.”

Ivy, narrating:

“We do tone it down a little bit, but I don’t know if that’s on purpose, or we’ve just run out of horrors at this point. Leslie and I start heading over to Leslie’s office where there’s going to be soap, air conditioning, and some places for us to sit and talk further. But to get there, we have to go back through the area with the little sculptures, where there’s one more teachable moment to be had.”

Leslie, outside:

“And then there’s another little sculpture that reminds people in the- in there. Oh, you might see an animal here.”

Ivy, outside:

“Is that a raccoon?”

Leslie (cont.):

“Mhm.”

Ivy (cont.):

“Okay.”

Leslie (cont.):

“And that’s where a raccoon would typically be.”

Ivy (cont.):

“Hiding in the brush?”

Leslie (cont.):

“Yeah, they’re going to be a little bit shy. They’re going to be in the shade. They’re not going to be out in the open. Do you want to fun pat him on the head?”

Ivy (cont.):

“No, I’m good. [Ivy giggles]”

Leslie (cont.):

“Does it actually make you nervous?”

Ivy (cont.):

“I, just like, I would- I would never do that. That’s so contrived. I would never pat a raccoon on the head.”

Leslie (cont.)

“Right, but right. Okay, so it’s not a fear thing.”

Ivy (cont.):

“So, but like, so why would I practice patting the bronze raccoon on the head?”

Leslie (cont.):

“To practice getting closer. Can you stand close to it?”

Ivy (cont.):

“Why would I get close to a raccoon? Like, does the raccoon want me to be close to the raccoon-”

Leslie (cont.):

“No! No-” [cross-talk]

Ivy (cont.):

"I think he probably wants me-" [cross-talk]

Leslie (cont.):

"Because if you were ever- because raccoons come in at night. They're nocturnal. And so if you ever had your door open, and there was a raccoon in the house, what would you do?"

Ivy (cont.):

"Uh, I would, uh, not get close to it. That's probably not what I would-"

Leslie (cont.):

"You'd have to get it out of the house."

Ivy (cont.):

"Um. I would-"

Leslie (cont.):

"So what would you do if you were alone?"

Ivy (cont.):

"I would open- I would open the doors. And I would make a lot of just, like, apex predator noises and then like, give it a chance to- to escort itself out."

Leslie (cont.), a little disappointed:

"Mmkay, good call. That's fine."

Ivy (cont.)

It's like, you know, I don't think- I don't think it wants to be there."

Leslie (cont.):

"No, it doesn't. [some cross-talk] And that's and that's a good plan of action. Some people would scream and kick it or something like that. Or hit it with a broom."

Ivy (cont.):

"I would be like I'm a primate!"

Leslie (cont.):

"Yeah."

Ivy (cont.):

"This- you in a primates house!"

Leslie (cont.):

"Yeah. Just to open the door and let it walk away."

Ivy, narrating:

“This was the weirdest pop quiz. I couldn’t tell if we were testing my raccoon knowledge or if we were testing me? Like, does she just want to know whether she can get me to do weird things because she thinks indoor people are pliable, or does she think she can go pet raccoons? And which one of those options is better or worse than the other?”

First of all, I know my apex predator noises work, because they already did out in the Texas thicket. And secondly, raccoons are my fellow city dwellers! Just like humans, there are country raccoons and city raccoons. City raccoons can open gates. They like late night fast food french fries, specifically, like I do. I know I would not have to resort to violence with a raccoon, because they *have* gotten into my garage before. I just yelled out to it that I was about to close the garage and it should git. And it did! Which implies that North American city raccoons understand English. That’s how smart they are!

{{Saucy djembe beats fade in}}

Ivy, narrating:

“We arrive at Leslie’s office to talk some more about her outdoor outlook, inside air conditioning. I also had to go by there because I had dropped off all of my shoes at her office. I didn’t know what to expect, so I had brought sneakers, rain boots, and cowboy boots for her to choose from. I finally wash my hands after touching all that nature! And yeah, we talk about my upcoming camping trip.”

Leslie, in her office:

“You know, it’s perfectly normal to be afraid when you go outside, because you’re really vulnerable. And like, you know, the quivering deer, like, you’re, you’re the weakest of the species. Now, obviously, we’re the most dangerous species, ever, created on earth, period.

But when you’re just left on your own to go outside, you have to put on clothes, you have to put on shoes, you have to put on sunscreen, you have to put on a hat. That doesn’t make you a paranoid person. That makes you somebody that is conscientious of your own physical comfort. And it makes you *more* prepared, I would say, than the average outdoorsman. Really. Like the *average* outdoorsman. There are professional outdoorsmen that think about their pack and their PPE, their personal protection equipment, you know, every time they go out the house, but the average person is actually pretty lame. They get really comfortable being outside, they’re not thinking about the dangers of that environment.

You on the other hand, who actually has issues with being out there are going to be more careful. And in theory, you’re going to be more comfortable outside, even though you have those fears, than somebody that’s forgot their water bottle, didn’t put on their sunscreen, and is walking around in a tank top. So you know, I don’t- I wouldn’t beat yourself up about being cautious and thinking about your own personal safety. That actually empowers you to be better prepared to be outside, you know?”

Ivy, in Leslie's office:

"So you think I'm prepared. Do you think I can go camping?"

Leslie (cont.):

"No! I don't think you're ready to go camping."

Ivy (cont.):

"Oh, really?"

Leslie (cont.):

"Have you been camping?"

Ivy (cont.):

"Um."

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

Ivy, narrating:

"This is a little confusing. Dispiriting even. That snake was more affirming.

After we spent all this time together learning about nature. After she just said how much more prepared I am because of my caution. She says I have many more steps to go before I'm ready to go camping. And maybe some people would agree with her, but I'd managed to avoid them until now."

Leslie, in her office:

"No. You're not ready."

Ivy, in Leslie's office:

"Okay."

Leslie (cont.):

"I think you're ready to go by yourself into a park like Pace Bend Park and go for a hike. Go to a state park. Start there. For a day trip.

Ivy (cont.):

"Okay."

Leslie (cont.):

"Take snacks, take a cooler, take all the things that you'd love to eat the most. Take all sorts of clothes that you can throw in your car and have access, if you need to, take every kind of bug spray you can, take all your camera, and your gear, walk around and record wildlife. Go record

some birds. Go in the morning, so it's not really, really crazy hot. Go by yourself and experience it for as long as you feel comfortable doing it.”

Ivy (cont.):

“Go- like why by myself?”

Leslie (cont.):

“Because you need to do that in order for you to feel comfortable camping, even if you're camping with other people. Camping's a really big step. Spending the night outside and having-isolating yourself to basically going to sleep... is not easy, even at the best of them. You need a couple of state parks under your belt.”

Ivy (cont.):

“Okay, because, um-”

Leslie (cont.):

“And you're never by yourself because there's always Rangers. That's why state park's good.”

Ivy (cont.):

“Yeah. That's true. That's like- that makes sense to justify, like, the fee and stuff. Uh- so, a-a-actually just booked a campsite yesterday online?”

Leslie (cont.):

“Okay! [Ivy laughs] I'm not saying you can't do it! Are you going camping with a friend?”

Ivy (cont.):

“Uh, well with a producer, Myrriah.”

Leslie (cont.):

“Okay.”

Ivy (cont.):

“Uh. She's been camping before.”

Leslie (cont.):

“There you go. You'll be okay.”

Ivy (cont.):

“So, okay...” [Awkward laughter]

{{Reflective piano music plays}}

Ivy, narrating:

“It should be noted that Myrriah is not here recording with us. Leslie has not met Myrriah. All she knows is this person is not me and has been camping, at least once, before. But I don't think Myrriah would let me die. So that much is true. But I wouldn't let Myrriah die either, so...

I am not sure what to do with all of this information. I appreciate her being transparent about what an ordeal camping is, but I don't feel like driving all the way out to a state park with all these supplies. Is that much easier than planning a camping trip where I can sleep the night, instead of having to drive back as soon as the sun goes down? But it doesn't really matter because I don't have a choice. I apparently have to reclaim a relationship with nature to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma—Thanks, Obama! And I've already booked the site, and I hope that this doesn't foretell that I made a big mistake. But there's no way to know until we go. When something must be done, someone else's guess on whether or not I can doesn't really matter. When the work must be done, frankly, *my* guess on whether or not I can doesn't really matter.”

{{Twinkly, hopeful chimes start in the piano music}}

Ivy, narrating:

“I know that to a lot of people, I look like a quivering deer. I'm allergic to a lot of stuff out here. I have the muscle definition of, y'know, a podcaster. I wear a lot of dry clean only clothes. Just like how I thought all camping and campers were similar when I first started, I think to people with FOBI, all people with FOGO seem similar, too.

I feel like Leslie wants me to succeed, because she thinks everyone should be outdoors. But she doesn't really think that I can, at this point. And it's hard not to take that to heart when she obviously knows so much more about being outside than I do. Everyone I meet influences me a little bit. They give me their lens to see the world, and sometimes to see myself. Either as an apex predator or a quivering deer.

And I'm exhausted, and I should be. I gathered edible plants, I learned about bobcats and bugs, I even met my first snake in the wild. So I did do what I set out to accomplish today, which is learn a lot, but at this point I'm so fatigued—mentally, spiritually, and physically—that on my drive back home, I had to pull over on the side of the highway to keep from falling asleep while driving. There was no traffic that day, so the Wildflower Center would've been only a 25 minute drive from home. A highway patrol officer knocked on my windows to wake me up and tell me to move along if I didn't need medical attention. I moved, but mostly because I was intimidated and groggy, not because I medically assessed myself.

So perhaps, I should make sure I'm medically cleared to go camping because after just three mini outdoor adventures, at this point, my body is kind of ringing the alarm.”

{{Twinkly, hopeful chimes music plays and breaks down}}

{{Jazz-y drums and synth solo play}}

Ivy, narrating:

“Next time on FOGO...”

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

Ivy, in a clip:

“Okay! Act normal! Everybody, act normal! Okay? I feel an- ooh! Ooof!”

Ivy, narrating:

“Please share this show with someone! Especially if they know how to make TV shows. And go to fogopodcast.com for merch and transcripts! Because our comedy is for everyone!”

FOGO: Fear of Going Outside is a Spotify Sound Up Series and was workshopped as part of the Spotify Sound Up Podcast Accelerator Program.

FOGO is written, hosted, and produced by me, Ivy Le, and produced and edited by Myrriah Gossett.

Music by Michelangelo Rodriguez.

FOGO is engineered and mixed by Robyn Edgar, with additional story editing by Aira Juliet and Minda Wei. Production support by Benjamin Grosse-Siestrup.

You can learn more about Lady Bird Wildflower Center at [wildflower.org](http://wildflower.org).

FOGO’s board of advisors is Jeff Zhao and Martin Thomas.

From Spotify, our Executive Producers are Gina Delvac, Candace Manriquez Wrenn (wrens are very loud birds as we learned today!) Andrea Silenzi, Natalie Tulloch, and Jane Zumwalt.

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

You can follow me on Twitter and TikTok @IvyLeWithOneE, the phrase all spelled out, or visit @fogopodcast on Instagram to see behind the scenes photos.”

Leslie, outside:

“Well *that* caterpillar is non-lethal.”

{{CROAK}}