

Edgar wandered over and stared at the seeds. He tried to bend down into the can to get the seeds, but they were too far down.

“Can’t reach them,” he told Spike, who smiled and murmured, “True. And what would a clever corvid do now?”

“No way to do it at all,” Elouise barked. She narrowed her eyes at Spike and hissed, “Nasty trickster, you are.”

Edgar picked up his three clawed feet one by one and slowly clomped around the can. “Thinking I am,” he said to no one in particular.

Silence settled on the forest. A bee buzzed. The sun shone. Spike sat on his round rump and hummed softly to himself.

Elouise pretended to watch a beetle dance along a log, but she kept an eye on Edgar.

Edgar turned his great black head this way and that, this way and that. Then suddenly, he threw back his head, opened his great beak wide, and croaked, “Of cawwwwwwse!”

He stomped off to the stream and came back seven times, each time with a big black stone in his beak.

One by one, he dropped them in the can. And with each stone, the water in the can began to rise until the seeds were in reach of his great black beak.



Spike rattled his quills and singing, “Ipso Facto, Ipso Facto,” he danced around the silver can.

Edgar blinked, put his head on one side for a moment, and carefully took each seed into his beak, swallowing it with a big gulp.

Elouise sat very still and wished she were somewhere else. This was strange and surprising. She didn’t like this at all.

Edgar shook his head from side to side. “What does this mean?” he asked himself softly. “Does this mean . . .?”

Spike stopped his dance and slowly bowed to Edgar.

“Curious and clever, one of the family Corvidae; I—a simple piggy with spikes—bow to you. So smart, so astute. As sharp as your shiny black beak, your birdy brain is.”

“So . . . then . . . I am clever?” asked Edgar.

“Decide,” said Spike. “You decide. Are you?”

Edgar turned his beak up to the Blue on High, and said quietly, “No. Was just luck. Just this one time. I saw a stone and . . .”

Spike smiled gently.

“To see what you already know is easiest . . . but . . .” He paused and patted Edgar’s claw.

Later, as the shadows lengthened in the forest, Edgar asked his spiky friend, “How did YOU know to do that—with the water and the stones?”