



May 7, 2018

Dear Oona,

I hear about other dogs raiding the food pantry. They tease me with tales of potato chips and glory. My humans keep mine locked with a baby lock. I feel shut out. What do I do???

Harry

Dear Harry,

First things first. If your human is reading this to you, walk away. Act disinterested. You saw *nothing*. Visit the computer later tonight. We'll talk.

You'll need other dogs to make this work. Do *not* let the cat on it. Cats are *not* your friends, no matter how much they smooth-talk. Cat burglars, as a rule, are loners. They're in it for themselves. Period. Worse, they'll turn you in. Make sure the cat's outside chasing birds or whatever pointless stuff cats do.

Baby locks like this one are hard to crack. They're usually up high and, well, you have no thumbs. Relax, Harry.

We'll let the human use his.

Position yourself in the kitchen near the pantry and pretend to be comatose. You must be convincing. Drool. Quiver. Roll your eyes back. Let your tongue touch the floor.

Timing is critical. Watch and wait for the human to go to the pantry and open the door. Don't let anybody lose their head and bounce up and down at the pantry expectantly. Stay cool. Everybody does their part. If you have a dog in the family who's slow or excitable, encourage them to visit another room and close the door behind them. Sorry, looting's not for losers.

When your human opens the lock, your partner goes into action. Again, impress upon your accomplice to act *only* once the door is open. Pick your partner carefully. Make sure they can follow instructions and aren't prone to sudden naps or like to chase their tails for no apparent reason. Another wolfhound works best. We do plunder right.

The lock clicks open and your cohort goes wild. He barks at the front door like killer clowns are out there. Or he runs to the window and barks maniacally. The human goes to see and you casually slip into the pantry and grab booty. Get it quick. Get enough to share with your partner, but not too much to fit into your mouth all at one time. Get out of there. And, of you really want to confuse

your human (and who doesn't?) quietly click the door shut again.

That last touch is the mark of a pro, Harry. Cover your tracks. The human won't suspect a thing until one day he opens the pantry and...it's bare!

You can pull this scam off over and over because humans, like some of your dog friends, are forgetful and easily distracted. Just don't grab too much at once. And don't leave wrappers lying around. This is what that space under couches is for. When your human finds them, innocently point to the cat.

Happy looting, Harry!

Oona