

00:00:00	Biz Ellis	Host	Hi. I'm Biz.
00:00:01	Theresa Thorn	Host	And I'm Theresa.
00:00:04	Biz	Host	Due to the pandemic, we bring you <i>One Bad Mother</i> straight from our homes—including such interruptions as: children! Animal noises! And more! So let's all get a little closer while we have to be so far apart. And remember—we are doing a <u>good job</u> .
00:00:21	Music	Music	"Summoning the Rawk" by Kevin MacLeod. Driving electric guitar and heavy drums.
00:00:25	Biz	Host	<i>[Continues through dialogue.]</i> This week on <i>One Bad Mother</i> —can a book make a difference? Yeah! Duh! We welcome back Alli Harper from OurShelves. Plus, Biz is unsure of her options.
00:00:36	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz and caller: Woooo!
00:00:39	Caller	Caller	I am feeling really depleted.

[Biz laughs.]

I feel depleted. I feel like this whole shit has been relentless. This—it's been relentless! And been really hard and I don't even have it as hard as other people. But I am fucking exhausted. I'm exhausted. I am wiped out. And I am sad and I am tired. And I just...

[Small child begins talking in background. Biz laughs.]

I'm just so... so... depleted. Depleted is how I am. And also I just stuffed a bunch of tissue paper in my underpants because I just got my period in the car. And that's how I'm doing.

[Biz laughs.]

Thank goodness there were tissues in the car.

[Biz laughs.]

00:01:38	Biz	Host	Wow. Tell me how you really feel. <i>[Laughs.]</i> I just did not know—I did not know where that was gonna go! And like you just took us on such an incredible journey there. So, A, thank you for calling and wooing with me. B, yeah! Yeah! It's relentless. Relentless is a really good word. Relentless. It's just like, y'know, having something drip on you or a smell that's relentless or a sound that's relentless where you think, "I'd like that to be over." And then it's not. And it's just like—and then you begin to think, like, "Well I'll just tune it out like that time I worked at Johnny Rockets for three years. I don't even hear the songs anymore," but that's a lie. You can't really tune it out. It is relentless.
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And I appreciate—I'm gonna assume it was your child's voice or maybe you're just standing close to children having a woo moment? But it was like, "You have to look at me! You have to look! At me!" And then just—god, I can only think of saying the cherry on top, which is just so... not appropriate for what happened to you next. In your car. Quick thinking with the tissues! That was excellent response! There's nothing worse than that happening. Getting a little visit from the Aunt Flo. And I'm just... just glad you're on the planet, man. You're doing a really good job.

You know who else is doing a good job? You. And you. And you and you and you and you! I'm talking to you, essential workers. I am talking to you, everybody working in the healthcare industry. Especially wanna put a little spotlight on the vaccinators! The people who are lined up giving out those vaccines! The people who are making sure those vaccines are kept safe and stored properly! And to those who are shipping those vaccines and to those who are making those vaccines and to the people who are getting vaccines! Hooray! Hooray! You're all doing such a good job.

Thank you to everybody who have also been out there in the relentless storm that is this pandemic! Mail carriers. Grocery store workers and employees. Also, thank you to people who are patiently waiting for their vaccine and letting those who need to get it first, get it. I am one of those people who are like, "I don't have any special needs for a vaccine." Okay, guys? I host a podcast. I can do it from the house. We have no family that lives near us. Stefan works in theme parks. We can wait! We are happy to wait in a line. You know what you do when you wait in a line? You bring a good book! So thank you to everybody who is also waiting. That is a really helpful way to support this whole process. And thank you librarians and teachers! Yay, teachers, getting your vaccine! I'm so glad to hear about that and people in the educational world trying to figure out how to make this smooth and possible. So thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone for everything.

00:05:21 Biz

Host

Guys, this is where I am. There have been a lot of positive updates in the news about vaccines and about numbers going down and about the world slowly opening up and things going back to normal and new options are becoming available. For example, in-person learning is trying to return to all of us. And I just wanna say that I hope we can remember that just because these options are becoming available again doesn't mean that the decisions are any easier to make. For a year we have all made different sacrifices. Some people have left their jobs so that they could stay home with their kids while their kids could not be in school. Other people have multigenerations living in their house and just because the school is open does not mean it is safe to send their child back for the safety of other members of their family, and some people have set up a system that works so that they can go to work while their children learn remotely.

And I don't know about you, but suddenly having to figure out how I'm driving my kids to school— *[Laughs.]* To get that schedule and that routine back in order? I mean, I just realized that like... Stefan had had a day of work cut from him early. Everybody in their company did. Early on in the pandemic. And I started thinking about the fact that if that day returns, what is happening to my Fridays? How am I doing my show? How are we recording? What's going on with the kids if they're not back in school? *[Laughs.]* I don't know the answer! Suddenly there are new choices and new things that are coming up and we have to remember that is going to happen! And I just... I'm trying to be really conscious of it so that I don't beat myself up when I don't know what decision I should make? And I also put that out there so that we can keep it in our minds as we are engaging with each other and talking to each other about where we

are and what we need. I dunno. You're all doing a good job and y'know, just 'cause your school suddenly opened up doesn't mean that it's all better. *[Laughs.]*

00:08:09	Music	Music	With that said, what <u>can</u> make it all better is a good book. And I am so excited that this week we are welcoming back Alli Harper, who is the founder of OurShelves, which is a diverse children's book subscription box that is very dear to the <i>One Bad Mother</i> community hearts. So I look forward to hearing how that's going! Banjo strums; cheerful banjo music continues through dialogue. Please—take a moment to remember: If you're friends of the hosts of <i>One Bad Mother</i> , you should <u>assume</u> that when we talk about other moms, we're talking about <u>you</u> .
00:08:10	Theresa	Host	
00:08:17	Biz	Host	If you are <u>married</u> to the host of <i>One Bad Mother</i> , we <u>definitely are</u> talking about you.
00:08:21	Theresa	Host	Nothing we say constitutes <u>professional</u> parenting advice.
00:08:24	Biz	Host	Biz and Theresa's children are brilliant, lovely, and exceedingly extraordinary.
00:08:28	Theresa	Host	Nothing said on this podcast about them implies otherwise.

[Banjo music fades out.]

[Biz and Alli repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss the weekly topic.]

00:08:34	Biz	Host	Guys, I'm so excited. This week we are welcoming back Alli Harper, who is the founder of OurShelves, a diverse children's book box service and advocacy effort. Alli is an attorney and community organizer who has focused on a range of social justice issues from working toward Maryland's marriage equality victory in 2012—woohoo! As President of the ACLU of Maryland, to working on voting access in 2008 as Executive Director of the Cleveland NAACP's Early Voting Program. She is now focused on ensuring all kids and all families have a place on OurShelves because she and so many others believe who our kids meet in their books matter. You may <u>also</u> remember her from such episodes as episode 282 back in 2018 and episode 332 back in 2019 and here we are on episode 39...5? Is that right? Woo! Welcome back, Alli! It's so nice to have you back. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:09:38	Alli Harper	Guest	Thank you so much for having me back! It's great to be here.
00:09:42	Biz	Host	I would like to start with what we always ask all of our guests—and you! Twice now!—and it has changed up from the very first time to the second time. Let's see—let's go for magic number three! Who lives in your house?
00:09:57	Alli	Guest	Well, so there is still me and my wife, Jen, and our daughter Anna who is now eight. And our son Isaac who is now two and the first time I came on this show he was just about to be born! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:10:16	Biz	Host	I know! Yeah! We were like, "Any second now!"
00:10:18	Alli	Guest	It was—OurShelves was being born. Isaac was being born and getting to know you guys was being born. And let's see. And we have our fish, Scale. And we are expanding our family again because we have a little kitten—

[Biz gasps.]

—who will be joining our family in about a week. Her name is Urue.

00:10:37 Biz Host Is she coming in by plane? Is she quarantining? What's happening? In a week?! Where—

00:10:43 Alli Guest Well she's a rescue kitty and they have to have a little bit of time with their foster parents. Yeah. And then so we are very excited! It's our first cat.

[Biz gasps.]

00:10:55 Biz Host So very exciting. Cats. I love a cat. I mean I got three walking around in here right now being very disrespectful of the recording.

[Alli laughs.]

00:11:19 Alli Guest Oh, a kitten is gonna be so much fun! Okay. So I want to shift to OurShelves. You started OurShelves—what are we coming up on? The second full-year anniversary? It feels like it—

00:11:22 Biz Host Yeah. Two. We've been around about two years! That's amazing. Amazing. I would like you to just—for anybody who listens to this show and is not familiar with OurShelves—here ya go. I would love for you to just sum it up for everybody so I don't mess it up. *[Laughs.]*

[Alli laughs.]

00:11:43 Alli Guest Well OurShelves—as you said—we are a diverse children's book box service and advocacy effort. And we started it—it came from a really personal place of when my wife and I had our first child, Anna, we had a really hard time finding two kinds of books. One, books with two-mom families. So we knew how important it was for Anna and all kids to see books where their own selves and families are affirmed. And also of course we wanted to have books that showed many other kinds of kids and families because we wanted our bookshelves to cultivate our values of inclusion, equity, and social justice. So we were surprised at how hard—

[Biz laughs.]

00:12:30 Biz Host —those books were to find! And maybe I shouldn't have been. But we were. So you guys are like, “Nope! We're gonna start a subscription service and everybody's gonna get one box and then we'll be out of books.”

[Both laugh.]

00:12:44 Alli Guest Well it's a good—I remember you mentioning this. How—I remember you saying at some point how you were wondering, could we even survive 'cause there are so few books.

[Biz laughs.]

00:12:56 Biz Host I mean, and actually it's interesting. I do have an update on that front 'cause we've run into that. Really?!

00:12:58 Alli Guest But to go back to your point about being surprised and what you just said—I think the reason I was so surprised—I mean, my work had been in social justice/anti-oppression work. So I knew about

kind of systemic oppressions. But I was surprised because the audience is so huge! And at that point I knew it kind of—when I first had my daughter I knew it anecdotally, because everyone we talked to across the country was looking for these books. And now we actually know it because now with OurShelves, we know the numbers. More than half the babies in this country are babies of color! There's more than nine-and-a-half million LGBTQ millennial parents actively considering growing their families! And there's more than twelve million millennial moms who support diverse families! So there's millions and millions—

[Biz laughs.]

—and I think that's why when we first had Anna—y'know, we were just busy trying to survive as parents. We weren't focused on this. We were trying to get what books we could. But it was actually when she—you can't really ever age out of picture books 'cause I still read picture books?

[Biz laughs.]

00:14:33 Biz

Host

But when she started reading chapter books and reading fewer picture books, that's when my heart broke and I was devastated because I was like, "Here's another kid—like millions of kids—who missed out on seeing herself being adequately represented in kids' books." And meanwhile we were starting to plan for our second child and I'm like, "I'm not sitting this one out. The audience is here. There are solvable problems. But we need to prove—to your point—we need to prove the audience. Because the audience is here and it's significant but it's currently vastly underestimated." Well I guess that's what I wanted to ask next. Two years. You mentioned that—ha, ha—if you ran out of books there for a second. But—

[Alli laughs.]

00:15:04 Alli

Guest

—but really, have you seen the impact of what I'd like to hope is sort of a nationwide refocusing on diversity and making sure all voices and faces are represented. Have you seen an uptick in the pipeline, as it were?

Yes. I would say we definitely have. So our book boxes include racially, ethnically, and religiously-diverse kids and families. LGBTQ kids and families. Disabled kids and characters. Y'know. We run the gamut of folks who are traditionally underrepresented. And we are seeing more books of traditionally-underrepresented identities. But I would still say it's at the rate of a slow trickle? And not commensurate at all to the sustained, abundant outpouring of books that should be coming out to reflect our population. And I think our population—and not just our population, but people's desires! Because it's not just those of us who are traditionally underrepresented who want these books. It's millions and millions of allied folks who have—again—values of inclusion, equity, and social justice.

So I think—I mean, that was part of the reason we chose a subscription service as our organizational model for this advocacy.

Because instead of kind of doing a one-time campaign on one particular book, the idea is—as we continue to grow our membership, not only are our members receiving these books from our curation team who are amazing. We can talk about them in a second. But they're also being counted when we go to publishers and advocate, we're not just saying, "Oh! Did you know there aren't any books including X, Y, or Z characters and we would like you to create some," but we're also there to buy those books in ever-increasing numbers to really show—with actual sales—that there's opportunity here rather than risk. Which it seems like right now they—not across the board. It's different depending on the publisher.

But in too many cases they overperceive risk and underestimate opportunity! And part of that is because the books that are existing—like you said—so the two problems that led to the founding of OurShelves. One is there are not enough diverse kids' books, period. Definitely, to your point. But the second finding that led to our founding is that actually there are more books that exist, but they're too often too hard to find. And our curation team is a real big part of us being able to find these books but often they're from smaller publishers, foreign publishers. There's problems sometimes with how books are labeled.

00:17:27 Biz Host
00:17:29 Alli Guest

Self-publishers. I would imagine. Yeah.

Yeah. It's all—so these books can be hard to find. But the problem is when they're hard to find—and not enough people buy them—the sales underperform. And when the sales underperform, then the publishers—it perpetuates this false notion that there's not an audience for these books, which is not at all true! They're just hard to find! But when the sales underperform the publishers then increase their perception of risk when creating more books. And so that's kind of—we're trying to intervene 'cause if we can get people the books we can also help with the sales.

00:17:56 Biz Host

Well talk to me about the curators. Talk to me—because like I come across books because of either school—my children—or guests. And I'm always like, "Oh, I need to let somebody know at OurShelves. I need to let somebody know! I need to stick my nose in there and be like, 'Have you read *Zoe and Sassafras*?' I love them!"

[Alli laughs.]

It's not about anything, it's just an African American lead kid in it! Right? *[Laughs.]* Like that's all! She's a scientist! Y'know, or we just had the author of *Black is a Rainbow Color* on the other day, which is just the most beautiful book in the world. And I'm like—Which has been in our boxes!

00:18:33 Alli Guest
00:18:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Alli: We love that book!

00:18:36 Biz Host

Biz: I know it's so good!

See, I'd much rather—actually, I don't know if I would rather reach out and you guys say, "We already know it." *[Laughs.]* 'Cause then I'm like, "No, no! We need more!" But how do you guys go about finding—A, I wanna shoutout to any publishers listening. Don't forget OurShelves is here as a resource of where to send books

00:19:01 Alli Guest when they are published. But yeah. How are you finding out about books?
So our curation team is incredible. So our curation team brings together expertise from librarianship, teaching, early childhood development, psychology, racial and other identity-based bias, academic—it's an incredible group. It's a majority people of color. Majority LGBTQ. 100% of the team has the lived experience of both being underrepresented in kids' books themselves and also having kids who are underrepresented? And it's funny 'cause often I say who our kids meet in their books matters, which is true. But also who selects our books and reviews books, I think, matters a lot. So our curation team is an incredible group. We spend a lot of time trying to find these books and then critically reviewing them. And we do our best!

We have relationships with all of these different publishers. We also have relationships with different advocates. And y'know some books are easier to find than others. It's a lot of word of mouth, too, with people who do reviews who are really trusted sources who do reviews of books. SO it's a real team effort, but it's—the curation team is incredible and really it's... to be able to connect their expertise to everyday families, teachers, librarians, healthcare providers, just everyday people who are busy and don't have the time to do the kind of often seeming like PhD-level research to find one child's book. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

00:20:32 Biz Host They help with that!
Well what's amazing about the concept of the box, right? This book box subscription. Is it does meet the need of, "I do not have time. I know I want this thing, but it's really hard to go out and find or make sure that I know that it's a good book!" That it's not like one of those computer-written books on how to tell time from like *PJ Masks*. Right? Where you're like, "That is not even a book! This is directly from the TV show." So that's what I mean. Anyway. I guess I wanna ask—two years is still not long enough, I think, to get a full grasp on the impact of your work or just the—how the nation is moving along? In terms of social justice? But are there some characters that were not represented when you started that you have found still are not represented enough?

00:21:27 Alli Guest Oh my gosh. I mean, I could just go on and on.

00:21:30 Biz Host A million? *[Laughs.]*

00:21:31 Alli Guest Forever. I mean—I mean, I hate to say that, but it's true! And I don't wanna sugarcoat it because—I mean, we send quarterly book boxes. So once every three months. And we work really hard to curate those exactly to your point that our books are high quality books that also feature traditionally underrepresented kids and families. And I should make the point—and feature them in a variety of ways. Because for us, it's not just representation, but it's how we're represented. I felt very strongly about this because when I first had my child, who was a baby. Y'know, started as an infant, as they do.

00:22:10 Biz Host Oh, did they?

[Both laugh.]

00:22:15 Alli Guest Fascinating!
And the only books—there was one board book, *Mommy, Mama, and Me*, that everybody had. By “everybody” I mean, y’know, a few people who found it. A few. But that’s the one that people kinda knew about.

00:22:27 Biz Host Well there’s only a few lesbians, right? *[Laughs.]*

00:22:30 Alli Guest I mean, there were just like two of us at the time. *[Laughs.]*

00:22:33 Biz Host Yeah. A handful. Like a gaggle. A gaggle of lesbians out there. That’s it. *[Laughs.]*

00:22:39 Alli Guest But even—I mean, even asking our queer friend, y’know. What books? I remember someone just saying, “I know there’s that one...” It was like people—too many people literally had zero. And still today literally have zero showing their families. And you know it’s better. But in terms of varied representation, most of the books you could find then—and even now, to a large extent—are more about homophobia and bullying and those books—I don’t wanna be misunderstood. ‘Cause those books are important. And I wanna make clear that we need more of every kind of book. And it’s also so important to say, again and again, that we also really need books for our families and also for families who are not traditionally underrepresented to see kids just having fun!

00:23:24 Biz Host Thriving!

00:23:25 Alli Guest Avoiding bedtime and throwing ice cream on the floor!

[Biz laughs.]

Or like whatever it is that kids do! And it makes them really happy and laugh. And that is what we still—across identities—we still have trouble finding those books. So we’re really trying to—and y’know, to folks listening, it’s like as we advocate in our classrooms, libraries, bookstores—we wanna be asking for representation of all of these different identities, disability, Black/indigenous people of color, y’know, LGBTQ—we wanna ask about the identities, but we also wanna ask the next question! Of not just, “Do you have a book with an LGBTQ character,” for example, “But do you have a book—a biography-type book? Do you have a book appropriate for babies?” *[Laughs.]* “Do you have a book with toddlers learning about potty training?” Y’know, all the things that we need through our various stages of childhood. There should be enough variety of representation that it’s not just kind of one book about bullying that someone’s giving to me. Which people did! ‘Cause they knew how important representation was. Gave it to me to read to an infant. Which I don’t wanna read to my infant.

00:24:35 Biz Host No?

00:24:36 Alli Guest Y’know, introduce my family type to my infant in a bullying context. Which of course that friend understood. But they were trying to hard just to get representation! So we’re still—I mean, that’s an area where I think across the board.

00:24:48 Biz Host Yeah. That’s a really good point. That it’s not— *[Laughs.]* It’s not just one specific, y’know, identity. It’s everybody like it feels like, “Oh, well you have that book about bullying. Isn’t that enough?” *[Laughs.]* Right? Like, “You’re represented.” As opposed to, y’know, it’s like... one of the things that we’ve talked about forever on the show is this notion of there only being one type of parenting. And apparently only one type of person gets to have the one experience

of not getting enough sleep. Now that can't possibly be true. Mm-kay? But that's the image—the picture that is presented time and time again in commercials and in magazines and on TV shows and on everything.

And it's—let's just make—I'm all about equality! Let's make sure we all get to see ourselves in these very mundane—again, normal, normal, normal, normal, normal is what we want. Alright. OurShelves. Proactive. Amazing. *One Bad Mother* listeners. Proactive and amazing. And I know that together it is a unstoppable force. And so to our listeners, can you talk to us about like all—I mean obviously I can go and subscribe. Hooray. I have done a good job. But like, what about libraries—how do you work with libraries? We have a lot of librarians that listen. What about school libraries? What about teachers and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah? Tell me all the ways that OurShelves gets out there are people can support.

00:26:36 Alli Guest

Awesome. Well first of all, before I do that, I will just say to your point about OurShelves and *One Bad Mother*—so still, two years into this, I still hear from so many members that they learned about us through *One Bad Mother*. 'Cause whenever I'm interacting with members who are asking questions or sharing some positive feedback, I say, "How did you learn about us?" And so many people still say *One Bad Mother*!

[Biz cheers.]

And I will say it again. I know I've said it before that in particular in the last year, y'know, with the pandemic, people reaching out to just say you're doing a good job; we appreciate you; we love these books; these books are making a difference while we're at home with our kids—it's *One Bad Mother* listeners! It's people—it really was—so many *One Bad Mother* listeners reaching out. We had one shipment that because of the pandemic had a delay and I remember I sent the email out and was so nervous sending it out!

[Biz laughs.]

Y'know? And these—and so many people responded, many of whom are *One Bad Mother* listeners, saying, "I heard about you on *One Bad Mother* and you're doing a good job!" And oh! I mean, I just can't tell you. So—yes. So thank you, *One Bad Mother* community.

00:27:43 Biz Host

I know, the community is so much—they're just so nice! It's so good! They're so nice!

00:27:48 Alli Guest

It's just the nicest! And I'm sure I mentioned this before, but even after being on this show—when I first had Isaac—I remember so many people wrote asking questions and saying, "Oh, and how's the new baby?"

[Both laugh.]

00:28:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: I know! They're so—they're so good. We like books and we like supporting—

Alli: I'm like, these are the nicest people ever! I mean—

00:28:06 Biz Host —like in the ways that we can support. So I just—I'm so glad. So how can we continue to support more?

00:28:14 Alli Guest Yes. So yes. Of course. Definitely you can go to OurShelves.com and learn more about OurShelves. But there's so many other ways, too. So yes! Talk to your teachers. We work with schools in so many ways. We work with schools at the school district level? If you have curriculum coordinators, librarians, school boards we speak to. Principals. Sometimes it's a team of principals. Sometimes it's the parent group if there's a diversity and equity parent group. So we have many different relationships in many different forms. It totally depends on the school, but we work with the school.

And some schools, they just want us to send them the boxes and we just send them the boxes. Some schools want to interact more and feel like they have certain holes they really need help with and we get on the phone with them and figure out those holes and try to help. So definitely talk to your schools. Your librarians. We are trying to help. We're just trying to... there's so many people who want these books and our assumption is the books—because of systemic problems, not because of us. 'Cause in the beginning—particularly as a parent—I just thought it was me. I was like, "I'm a terrible parent. Can't show my kid books with two moms. I feel so guilty. They're gonna group up thinking everyone has a mom and a dad." Y'know. All these things.

[Biz laughs.]

But that's not the case! It's not us! It is structural problems. So that is one thing, is to remind ourselves it's not us. Structural problems we need to fix. So talk to schools, librarians, booksellers—like I spoke about before, not just advocating for representation but advocating for varied representation. Intersectional representation. Many people live at the intersection of multiple underrepresented identities and we work very hard to find books showing intersectional characters and also really making sure when we're asking and advocating in libraries, bookstores, classrooms, paying attention to who is writing and illustrating the books. Making sure that we're supporting—asking, y'know, if the authors, illustrators, the book creators—are traditionally-underrepresented identities.

There's a term in the children's book world called Own Voices? That Corinne Duyvis came up with the term. But the term means that, y'know, for example if you see a book that has a Black main character, it's the voices—the book is Own Voices if the author/illustrator shares that underrepresented identity. So we very much curate looking for Own Voices books. So again, in your schools, libraries, ask for Own Voices books. We also—if you go to our social media pages—our authors and illustrators, many of whom are Own Voices—we have videos of them sharing why they made these books. Like Angela Joy, who you just had on—which I love that interview, by the way! She's so amazing!

[Biz laughs.]

00:30:59 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** She was so much fun!

Alli: She did a video reading!

00:31:01 Alli Guest She's so much fun! And all the resources at the back of that book. The poetry and the music? She did a video for us reading her book! So that's another great thing, is grab those videos and show them to your kids. To your classroom. So they see that there are authors and illustrators of all different types! Still every time when I get one of those videos I get so excited 'cause I think of them as such, y'know, gods and goddesses. And the other thing I would say is OurShelves—we really continue to advocate. So whether you subscribe or not, we want to hear from you. About what you are still looking for in kids' books! So you can write to info@OurShelves.com. You can send a video or you can write it down. But we wanna know what you're still looking for. Which characters, which types of families, what kinds of storylines—y'know, does your kid really want a dragon story and you want to see a two-dad, multiracial family.

[Biz laughs.]

00:31:59 Crosstalk Crosstalk Y'know, like whatever it is, we wanna hear!
Alli: As specifically, as broadly—y'know, whatever it is!

00:32:02 Biz Host **Biz:** Still gotta fight dragons! Still gotta fight dragons.
00:32:05 Alli Guest Doesn't matter if you got two dads. *[Laughs.]* I love it. Yeah! Whatever it is! You just tell us. And we want to keep sharing that with publishers. And also in that, share not just what you're looking for but why it matters. To the extent you feel comfortable, do you remember the first time—if you are traditionally underrepresented—that you saw yourself in a kid's book? What did that feel like? Or what does it feel like when you're trying to read to your kids and you can't find a book. Each bedtime, you can't find a book that represents them. Or if you're not traditionally underrepresented, why does it matter so much to you to have these books? Because there is a real expertise that comes from our lived experience that we need to connect to publishers.

And again, it's not all publishers, but there are too many—I was meeting with a senior editor at a New York publisher known for diverse kids' books, and I when I was telling her about my own family—about how we needed just more everyday books, how it was so hard to find any book with a main character with two moms that wasn't about bullying—she literally said to me, “Well I don't understand. Like if the book isn't about the two moms, what would it be about?” And that's—we need to hear from you about what you want. Because it's not necessarily—

00:33:14 Biz Host Dragons, obviously.

00:33:17 Alli Guest Dragons!

00:33:18 Biz Host It would be about dragons! *[Laughs.]* Come on, everybody! Dragons? Absolutely! I mean... y'know, I know what kids like. *[Laughs.]* Dragons. Zombies. Science. So much science. I mean, I'm glad but god. I'm like, what am I reading right now?! Anyway.

[Alli laughs.]

So. OurShelves. Year two. What's—what's the future look like? Do you have any thoughts on that? 'Cause I gotta tell ya—I'm like, I'm

00:33:57 Alli Guest ready for an OurShelves book fair. When that thing—that needs to be your next step. We—that’s funny. Y’know, we’ve actually—right before the pandemic we were about to do our first book fair and then the pandemic hit. What—a school district asked us. Yeah. Our big push this year—there are two exciting things on the horizon for this year. So one is really strategically deploying our members’ voices and stories when it comes to what we just spoke about in terms of who’s missing. What storylines are missing. We’ve been collecting this data all along, but now—as I mentioned—if anyone wants to share a video, we’re actually going to be trying to collect more video. Put it together. And really strategically deploy it with both the public—because there’s still a lot of public education to go around. How early bias begins. So that’s one piece, is continuing to share our stories and voices in a collective way. And the second piece is, we are starting to work—we’ve been communicating with publishers all along and I think in the beginning we were thinking it was much more—we would ask, y’know, “Will you create these kinds of books?” And I think during our creation—as you predicted—
[Laughs.]

[Biz laughs.]

We have come up to certain holes that have been really hard to fill. So for example, recently we have been really struggling finding board books. Baby board books that had LGBTQ kids and families. So y’know, after two years of boxes we’re really running very low on those. So it has forced us—maybe earlier than might have occurred otherwise—to kind of go a step further with publishers? So now we’re talking to publishers about actual partnerships with content development.

00:35:29 Biz Host
00:35:30 Alli Guest

Yeah.
Y’know, so instead of kind of getting information from parents, teachers, families, kinda passing it along and hoping for the best, I think now it’s like, “Okay, how can we work together now because we need these books yesterday on these?” So that’s the other piece that we’re really excited about. And one—I will share one wonderful victory story.

[Biz laughs.]

00:35:53 Biz Host On our advocacy front. If you would like.
I would love it!

00:35:55 Alli Guest *[Both laugh.]*
So in terms of how our advocacy works, this is a great example. There’s a wonderful publisher called Barefoot Books, and they made a wonderful board book that featured—it’s called *Baby’s First Words*. And super sweet. Follows a family through their day with word identification.

[Biz laughs.]

And it features a main character and a two-dad multiracial family and super sweet book. And so we met with them to say, “Thank you for this wonderful book!” That—when we met with them—and today,

is still so rare to find. And we said, “And there are so many other—as you know, Barefoot Books, so many other identities needing these kinds of books.” And I spoke about my own two-mom family and the many other holes in the marketplace. And this past year it turns out a senior editor named Kate DePalma was in that meeting, and she reached out to us and said, “We have a great book called *The Bread Pet* coming out in 2020!” And *The Bread Pet* is all about how sourdough can get out of control and grow and grow and grow so it’s a super silly, funny story. And it features a main character girl of color and a multiracial two-mom family. And what’s neat is Kate—who is also the author, and who’s LGBTQ—told us that OurShelves influenced the decision for the choice of family type in this book. And what was cool is that—again—our advocacy strategy isn’t just to advocate in words, but to be there to buy the books. That’s why being a member of OurShelves is so important, to be there to buy the books in ever-growing significant numbers. And so we then bought that book and we have members—our membership tripled in size last year and we have members in all fifty states and D.C. now—

[Biz cheers.]

—and we then sent that book to all of our members with our winter book boxes a couple months ago! So that’s how the advocacy works and that’s a huge thank-you to the *One Bad Mother* community that’s such an important part of the OurShelves community and that with just two years—in publishing, things take a long time. It takes books a couple years to get published, as Angela Joy was sharing.

[Biz laughs.]

And it takes a couple years. So in a short time in the publishing world, we’re just so excited to already be seeing examples of publishers being really responsive and wanting to hear what they’re saying. “What do your members want? What do you want?” And then we’re there to communicate that ‘cause we’re hearing awesomeness from our members and then we buy it and share it and get it to our libraries and schools and that’s—y’know, that’s how we’ll move to this sustained, abundant outpouring of books that we deserve but we don’t yet have.

00:38:32 Biz Host

I love it! I love it. Because when I get paralyzed and frozen about how to make a change or make a difference, I could buy a book. Y’know? I can buy a book! I can buy—everybody repeat after me, “I can buy three copies of that book! One for me. One for my public library. And one for my school library.” Alright. Alli, thank you again—not only for coming back to talk about OurShelves, but for creating OurShelves and sticking with OurShelves. [Laughs.] ‘Cause sometimes we all get started on something and we’re like, “Eh. No thanks.” So I gotta say, good job sticking with it! And I just... wish OurShelves more and more success and, y’know, any way *One Bad Mother* can continue to support we would be absolutely proud to do. Thanks so much for joining us again!

00:39:34 Alli Guest

Oh, thank you so much for having me and thank you so much for everyone in this incredible community does to change the bookshelves across America and also, y’know, again, I just heard

			the Angela Joy episode. Thank you for all you're doing just to support authors, illustrators, book creators, everyone. Y'know, Theresa! Yay! <i>[Claps.]</i>
00:39:52	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz: Yeah. Yay, Theresa! <i>[Laughs.]</i> I know. It's the best!
00:39:58	Alli	Guest	Alli: Who—we also feature Theresa's book in our box! 'Cause these are the people who are doing the real hard work of creating. Y'know, so much labor and love and heart goes into those. So thank you. And thank you for creating this community where people just share so much fun and authenticity!
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:40:10	Biz	Host	It's been such a lifesaver this past year! <i>[Laughs.]</i> Oh, this year has been a horrible year! <i>[Laughs.]</i> Where we all needed more books! Thank god OurShelves was available! Alright—we will make sure that we link everybody up to OurShelves and we will continue to keep an eye out for opportunities and I look forward to one day there being an OurShelves book fair in my elementary school. So I look forward to that. I'm gonna cross my fingers and wish for that to happen. And y'know. Have a good rest of your day!
00:40:44	Alli	Guest	Thank you, Biz!
00:40:46	Biz	Host	Absolutely. Bye!
00:40:47	Alli	Guest	Bye, guys!
00:40:48	Music	Music	"Ones and Zeroes" by "Awesome." Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:41:06	Theresa	Promo	<i>One Bad Mother</i> is supported in part by KiwiCo. With a KiwiCo subscription, you and your child get everything needed to create unforgettable moments shipped right to your door.
00:41:16	Biz	Promo	KiwiCo crates are genius. We have been receiving a variety of the different types of crates that KiwiCo offers for years now. Most recently, we have been playing with the Kiwi crate that was the science of trees? Where you could actually set up these experiments to see how like capillaries in plants worked and then you could play this tree game where you're like, "How do the root systems work?" And keep your tree balanced! It was really fun and amazing and you can also get the KiwiCo crates as gifts.
00:41:59	Theresa	Promo	KiwiCo is redefining learning with hands-on projects that build confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills. There's something for every kid—or kid at heart!—at KiwiCo.
00:42:11	Biz	Promo	Get 30% off your first month, plus free shipping on any crate line with code "badmother" at KiwiCo.com .
00:42:18	Theresa	Promo	That's 30% off your first month at K-I-W-I-C-O.com , promo code "badmother."
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:42:30	Theresa	Host	Hey, you know what it's time for! This week's genius and fails! This is the part of the show where we share our genius moment of the week, as well as our failures, and feel <u>better</u> about ourselves by hearing yours. You can share some of your own by calling 206-350-9485. That's 206-350-9485.
00:42:50	Biz	Host	Genius fail time— <i>[makes sound of drumroll]</i> —Theresa! Genius me.
00:42:58	Clip	Clip	<i>[Dramatic, swelling music in background.]</i>

Biz: Wow! Oh my God! Oh my God! I saw what you did! Oh my God! I'm paying attention! Wow! You, mom, are a genius. Oh my God, that's fucking genius!

[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their respective genius moments of the week.]

00:43:13 Theresa Host
00:43:15 Biz Host
00:43:16 Theresa Host

Okay.
Also hello.
Hi.

[Biz laughs.]

I—so I have a home haircutting genius. So I don't know if this happens to anyone else, but we just like don't have—we don't have the drapey cloth-y thing that you put around? And so no matter what my kids are wearing—like, if it's a towel or just a shirt over a shirt or whatever shirt they're wearing or no shirt—regardless of what I do, the little clippings of hair stick to their skin somehow and are really upsetting to them. And it's really hard to get it off and they have to take a shower and it's like a whole thing and plus it's everywhere and then I put it in the wash and somehow the little hairs are just still there afterwards! I dunno.

00:44:00 Biz Host
00:44:01 Theresa Host
00:44:02 Biz Host
00:44:05 Theresa Host

They're like glitter.
It's like glitter! It's a lot like glitter.
It's our body's glitter.
I inadvertently discovered—a few days ago I was giving my nine-year-old daughter Gracie a haircut, and she happened to be wearing a swimming rash guard shirt? With like the high—like it kinda goes up high on the neck? Y'know? It's not like a turtleneck but it's a little bit of a mock turtleneck. Yeah. It goes up a little bit. And for whatever reason the material of a swimming rash guard is repelling to little hairs! So when I gave her a haircut outside, it just came—like, all the—there was no hair sticking out her at all! It just came immediately off. It just slides off the rash guard. It's like using one of those drapes that they use in the salon. Which—I dunno. You can probably buy online for like five bucks. I don't really know.

[Biz laughs.]

00:44:59 Biz Host
00:45:02 Theresa Host

I haven't boughten that—
I don't want to know. *[Laughs.]*
I don't wanna know and I haven't gotten that deep into it. But we have rash guards in every size because we have three kids and we live in Southern California.

00:45:11 Biz Host
00:45:12 Crosstalk Crosstalk

You get rashy. *[Laughs.]*
Theresa: Yeah. *[Laughs.]* So—yay. Yeah!

00:45:17 Biz Host

Biz: That's... genius.
That is genius! It is. It's very good. If it makes you feel any better, we got like a whole shaving—Stefan got like a kit at the beginning of the pandemic and by “the beginning” I mean he ordered it and then like six months later it arrived because everybody was ordering these things? It has one of the cape-y, drapey things. And it doesn't work. It doesn't work at all. It keeps it off your clothes but it doesn't

like go up to your ears or something. That stuff's everywhere. You have stumbled on to the next big great idea, Theresa.

00:45:50 Theresa Host Thank you. Thanks.

00:45:51 Biz Host You're doing amazing. I... found something I hope that I can watch with Kat on our Thursday night watching shows. Okay. So if you've been listening, I've made some poor choices when it comes to screening what we watch together on our TV night. *[Laughs.]* Some bad choices with some adult content, or just content I don't want to explain. Right now. Or at Thursday nights at like eight. So I've been making bad choices and last night we were scanning through the Netflix and we tried *Glee*. And—

00:46:36 Theresa Host Oh, yeah!

00:46:38 Biz Host Everybody—I remember everybody loving *Glee*. And I remember everybody saying, “You, Biz, would love the *Glee*.” And I remember being like, “Probably.” But I think I had like a baby at that time. Y'know. Whatever.

00:46:53 Theresa Host It wasn't the right time.

00:46:55 Biz Host Wasn't the right time. We watched the first episode and I of course found many things funny that they did not—they just weren't laughing about. *[Laughs.]* Y'know like, teenage bullying.

[Theresa laughs.]

In high school. “Mom! This is—everybody's high school wasn't like this? That you all didn't come away from it with a sardonic look at life and how people interact? Oh well, eleven-year-old.”

[Theresa laughs.]

But we've really enjoyed the music and I just wanna warn everybody—I mentioned this to Gabe, and he was like, “Oh.” So I don't— *[Laughs.]* I don't know if that means it's gonna get weird and dark and adult in the next three episodes or something? But for right now, I feel like I've made a really good choice.

00:47:46 Theresa Host I think it's gonna be great.

00:47:48 Biz Host Okay. There's singing and that makes me happy.

00:47:52 Theresa Host I mean, there's—okay. I'm not gonna—

00:47:54 Biz Host Don't! No spoilers! Alright. I am gonna sit here and state for the record—with great confidence—I've made a good choice. Ta-da.

00:48:05 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

Hi, Biz and Theresa! This is one of those—I forget what you call them. Simple geniuses. Easy geniuses. So my toddler, who's eighteen months, has recently decided that she doesn't wanna get out of the car when it's time to get out. I'll park the car and get out of my side. Come to her side. Open the door. She looks at me and says, “Bye-bye!” And wants me to shut the door and walk away. Obviously I can't do that. And it's created a little bit of a power struggle, but I'm hungry and tired. I wanna go inside.

So last Friday I thought of something. She loves giving the cat treats, for whatever reason. So looked at her and I asked her, “Do you wanna give the cat a treat?” And she said, “Yes.” And she got out of her car seat with no struggles. But here's the real genius. On Monday, the second I parked the car I heard her pipe up from the back seat—“Meowmeow?” Which is what she calls the cat. And I

said, “Do you wanna give the cat a treat?” She said yes. And I completely avoided the power struggle altogether. It’s now Tuesday. We’ll see if it works again. But either way, I’m doing a good job and so are you. Thanks! Bye.

00:49:22 Biz Host
00:49:24 Theresa Host
00:49:26 Biz Host

Very good.

Very good.

Also. I look forward to the big happy kitty who’s getting all the treats!

[Both laugh.]

That cat’s gonna be like, “You guys need to go on another errand and then come back.”

00:49:37 Theresa Host

Yeah. “Could you do me a favor and go somewhere and come back?”

00:49:40 Biz Host

Just come back. But you gotta go somewhere first. Treatsies. Treatsies. We gonna be a big kitty! Yeah! Who da baby?! You’re doing an amazing job getting your kid out of the car with bribes. Yayyy! Failures.

00:50:01 Clip Clip

[Dramatic orchestral music plays in the background.]

Theresa: *[In a voice akin to the Wicked Witch of the West]* Fail. Fail. Fail. FAIL!

[Timpani with foot pedal engaged for humorous effect.]

Biz: *[Calmly]* You suck!

[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their respective failures of the week.]

00:50:08 Biz Host

Fail me. You fail me, Theresa. Boop! Fail me. Boop boop!

[Both laugh.]

00:50:15 Theresa Host

Stop poking me! Ouch!

00:50:17 Biz Host

I’m poking you on the nose! Boop! Alright. Let’s just—I don’t know where I am today.

00:50:21 Theresa Host

I don’t either. For those of you who have been listening to this show for a long time, you know that I have two dogs that live in my house. Cocoa and Sissy are the names of the dogs. And they have been my dogs and Jesse’s dogs since before we had kids. And they... they’re great. They’re just getting old. The fail is that we have worked for years to help them get along with each other. They’re both rescues and they’re terrier-chihuahua mixes and they have a lot of special problems.

[Biz laughs.]

Between the two of them. And I mean it’s just—it’s been a long road. A lot of like working with trainers and trying different things. And ultimately... recently, we made the decision that one of the dogs is going to live in one part of the house and the other dog is going to live in the other part of the house.

00:51:22 Biz Host

Oh!

00:51:24 Theresa Host

And y’know, it’s not like they like can’t ever see each other? Like it’s an emergency if they—but we’re just really keeping them separate and it’s better and it’s needed. Like one of the dogs was attacking the other dog and the dog that was getting attacked has a heart

problem at this point 'cause she's really old and so it was actually really scary every time. And... I'm glad that we're doing it, but it just feels really sad because I know this is like their final years with us? And we've done everything we can do and this is just what it is and like my dreams of like the big happy family—which, to be honest, have been squashed in many other ways—

[Biz laughs.]

—are also just being squashed by like, who has to have two dogs that can't be together in the family? Like that's just sad to me. So that's it.

00:52:15 Biz Host That is a deeply emotional and personal fail. That's not really a fail? But I mean, it's a fail because you feel that way? And I'm really sorry.

00:52:26 Theresa Host Yeah. Thank you.

00:52:27 Biz Host Yeah. I so badly wanna tell you though that you're doing a good job making a really hard decision?

00:52:34 Theresa Host Thank you.

00:52:36 Biz Host But I will not deny you feeling like shit for this. *[Laughs.]*

00:52:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** Thank you. Thanks, Biz. Yep.

00:52:43 Biz Host **Biz:** You're welcome! You're welcome.
Okay. Our school has been talking about more in-person learning after spring break, and—as well as like a summer camp-y thing. In person. There have been three Zoom calls to answer parent questions, give information about, y'know, what they're doing. How they're doing it. All of that stuff. They have been at reasonable times. And I have missed every single one. Two of those Zoom meetings that would've been really helpful to go to started at four o'clock, and both of those I remembered it at like two and said, "Ah-ha! Four o'clock today!" At 4:45 I remember that I did not start the call. Did not go. Was not attendant. And, uh, yeah! I just—it would've been good to go to. As a person who will probably—

[Theresa laughs.]

—send their kids back to in-person learning. And it's gone. That opportunity's gone. So anyway. It's like things don't matter anymore! *[Laughs.]*

00:54:04 Theresa Host It's almost like that, isn't it?

00:54:07 Biz Host Innit? It's a little on the edge.

00:54:09 Theresa Host It almost feels like that.

00:54:11 Biz Host Feels a little like that. Like—is that numbness all over, or just in my left hand? I dunno. I dunno. Just somebody poke me for a while and I'll tell you.

00:54:21 Theresa Host Boop!

00:54:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz and Theresa:** Boop! *[Laugh.]*

00:54:25 Biz Host Ow.

00:54:26 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

Hi, Biz and Theresa! I'm calling in with a fail. I have to take my kids—my oldest in to get a rapid COVID test and of course it's one of the drive-throughs so you just pull up to this tent and—because she's little. She's seven. She's in a car seat. I offered—I said, do you need me to sit back there with her and hold her? The nurses

said, “Sure, that may be helpful.” So I climb into the backseat. Now, we live in Maryland, and it’s—it’s cold here. It’s cold. So I climb into the backseat and I thought, “Oh, I don’t wanna leave the door open because then, y’know, it’ll be super cold for my toddler.” So I pull her door closed behind me and the COVID test goes fine. My seven-year-old didn’t have a problem with it. And then I go to open the door to get back out. And at this point the nurses had walked away with the swab. I go to open the door—

[Biz laughs.]

—to come out and it’s got—the kids’ doors are baby-locked. I can’t get out. I’m stuck in the backseat. So I had to find a way to contort my body *[through laughter]* to get over the center console—

[Theresa laughs.]

—to get back into the drivers’ seat. I’m sure the nurses and whoever was waiting in line behind me was wondering what the hell I was doing trying to get out of this locked car. *[Sighs.]* Well, I failed. Yeah. I should’ve remembered that before I closed the door to try to keep my children warm. I suck. *[Laughs.]* You, on the other hand, are amazing. Thanks for the podcast! Bye.

00:56:21 Biz Host

Oh. Yeah. Drivers behind you might’ve started honking at you, but I think we now remember that we assume if somebody’s honking at you, they’re honking at you ‘cause you were doing it. And you were definitely doing it! In that car!

[Both laugh.]

That is—Theresa and I both like—you’re like, listening, we’re listening, and I look up at Theresa in the Zoom and Theresa’s just shaking? With a smile on her face, shaking her head. Because we all know what’s coming!

00:56:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Theresa: We know. We all know.

Biz: We know.

00:56:58 Theresa Host

Why do we know? Because it’s happened.

00:57:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Theresa: So many times! *[Laughs.]*

Biz: Yeah! Because we’ve locked our own selves in the back of the car!

00:57:06 Theresa Host

I have freed parents from this. I’ve like been walking near the elementary school—

[Biz laughs.]

—and I look up and somebody will be back there with their baby—it always happens when you have an infant. They’re back there with their infant breastfeeding or feeding or whatever or changing a diaper or whatever and then they’re calling for you. “Can you—the child safety! Can you please? Somebody free me!”

00:57:29 Biz Host

That’s—and now I just want like a special suit where I’m like, “Da-da-dahhh! I’m here to open your door for you!” *[Laughs.]* You just—wow. Well, look. You’re doing a horrible job.

00:57:43 Theresa Host

Mm-hm. You are.

00:57:46	Biz	Host	I mean, <u>really</u> . I can't <u>believe</u> it. <i>[Theresa laughs.]</i>
00:57:52	Music	Music	Have you ever! "Mom Song" by Adira Amram. Mellow piano music with lyrics. <i>You are the greatest mom I've ever known. I love you, I love you. When I have a problem, I call you on the phone. I love you, I love you.</i> <i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:58:15	Music	Music	Inspirational keyboard music plays in background.
00:58:16	Biz	Promo	<i>One Bad Mother</i> is supported in part by Rothy's. Rothy's shoes are designed to be incredibly comfortable with zero break-in period thanks to their seamlessly knit-to-shape design. And with so many styles to choose from? Rothy's shoes are the perfect way to add comfort to your closet.
00:58:32	Theresa	Promo	So I chose some Rothy's—I have to say, it was really hard to choose 'cause there's a lot of cute styles. But I went with the high-tops. And they're really cool. I feel like they are the kind of shoe that can be a little bit dressed up. It can be casual. They're comfortable either way, which I so appreciate. I also just love that they're knit with thread from plastic water bottles. So they're ultra-comfortable as soon as you slip them on and that's also very eco-friendly. Plus, they're fully machine washable.
00:59:06	Biz	Promo	You can check out all of the amazing shoes, bags, and masks available right now at Rothys.com/mother .
00:59:15	Theresa	Promo	That's Rothys.com— R-O-T-H-Y-S.com/mother .
00:59:24	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> Janet Varney: Hey. I'm Janet Varney, host of <i>The JV Club</i> podcast. <i>[School bell rings. The muffled sounds of talking in the hallway.]</i> Janet: Ah, high school. Was it a time of adventure, romance, and discovery? Speaker 1: <i>[Cheering.]</i> Class of '95! We did iiiit! Janet: Or— <i>[Rain sound effect.]</i> Janet: A time of angst, disappointment, and confusion? Speaker 2: We're all tied together by four years of trauma, at this place, but enjoy adulthood, I guess! <i>[A chorus of boos.]</i> Janet: The truth is? It was both! Music: Bouncy music fades in.

Janet: So, join me on *The JV Club* podcast, where I invite some great friends, like Kristen Bell, Angela Kinsey, Oscar Nunez, Neil Patrick Harris, Keegan-Michael Key, to talk about high school: the good, the bad, and everything in between.

Speaker 3: My teenage mood swings are *[voice dropping into something gruff and aggressive]* gettin' harder to manage!

Janet: *The JV Club*. Find it on Maximum Fun.

[Music fades out.]

01:00:10 Promo Clip

Music: Mellow synth piano plays in background.

Brea Grant: Hey! I'm Brea Grant, an e-reader who loves spoilers and chocolate.

Mallory O'Meara: And I'm Mallory O'Meara, a print book collector who will murder you if you spoil a book for me.

Brea: And we're the host of *Reading Glasses*, a podcast designed to help you read better.

Mallory: Over the past few years, we've figured out why people read.

Brea: Self-improvement.

Mallory: Escapism.

Brea: To distract ourselves from the world burning down.

Mallory: And... why they don't.

Brea: Not enough time.

Mallory: Not knowing what to read.

Brea: And being overwhelmed by the number on their TBR list.

Mallory: And we are here to help you with that. We will help you conquer your TBR pile... while probably adding a bunch of books to it.

Brea: *Reading Glasses*.

Mallory: Every week—

Brea: —on MaximumFun.org.

[Music fades out.]

01:00:54 Biz Host

Oh, Theresa. It is time. It is time for you and I to virtually hold hands and listen to a mom have a breakdown.

01:01:11 Caller Caller

[Answering machine beeps.]

Hey, *One Bad Mother!* I am calling with a rant. And I feel like I should be yelling it 'cause that's what everyone else in my house is

doing all the time. I'm not in my house right now. I'm in my car. A few moments of silence. Yeah, they're just yelling! Just yelling all the time! Even when they're playing they're yelling? To the point where I can't tell if they're playing or if someone's actually hurt and I go crazy going and checking on them all the time saying, "Who's hurt? What's the matter? Why are you fighting?" "We're not fighting, mama. We're not yelling!" Oh. Sounds like yelling to me. Sounds like screaming bloody murder, actually. Screaming more than yelling.

[Biz laughs.]

So loud. Think you should write a children's book called *Never Not Loud: And Other Truths About Children*.

[Biz laughs.]

Yeah. Talked to my son about it and he said, "Oh mama. We're not yelling. We're just talking really loudly." But that's yelling! Okay. Well I think I'm doing a pretty bad job, but maybe tomorrow will be better. I hope you're having a good day and you're all doing a good job. Thanks!

01:02:21 Biz Host

Okay. First of all, you're doing a great job. And I'm trying to figure out what you think you're doing a bad job at. Are you not doing good job at yelling loud?

[Theresa laughs.]

Like, should you be yelling more? Are you not yelling loud enough? Like, what's—what's the bad job you're doing? I mean, there are kids in your house and they are loud. That is something I wasn't prepared for, which I should've been. Given how loud I am. Like as a person. Just walking through the world. And they—ours are loud. And they're sometimes Theresa and I will text each other and I'll just say, "I—it's just so loud in here!"

01:03:03 Theresa Host

Yeah. It's so loud. Last night my own eldest child confided to me—she was feeling really bad about it. She said, "Um, mom, I don't mean to be mean, but sometimes—" and we call Curtis "Gaga" sometimes. "Sometimes Gaga's voice—even when he's not crying! Even when he's just talking or playing? It makes me feel so overwhelmed." *[Laughs.]* And I just took her hands and looked into her eyes and I said, "Yes. Yes." *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

01:03:45 Biz Host

That's so funny. Because my oldest has also said, "Why is Ellis so loud? Why... do they have to be so loud? It makes me really anxious when they yell and they're loud!" And it's like—

[Theresa laughs.]

"Really? It's so weird that that does that." And then like at night when it's time for Kat's bedtime routine—which is, y'know, at eleven, "Go brush your teeth." They feel they have to speak the entire time as a way to avoid doing any of the things they need to do? And they're so loud! 'Cause Ellis is asleep! And so we're all just like, "You have to use the nighttime voice!" And they're like, *[loudly]*

01:04:43 Crosstalk Crosstalk “Okay!” and you’re like, “Whoa! No! That’s not it!” And also by like nine o’clock at night, we’re all done with noise.
Biz: I don’t want any noise! Yeah! And the point—

01:04:50 Biz Host **Theresa:** I know. My ears like hurt at that point in the day. Yeah. Yeah.
—that, dear sweet caller, you make about when they’re playing together and then it sounds like something bad is happening?
[Laughs.] Ellis would have like a friend over in the pre-COVID days and when you heard yelling it was because Ellis was probably having a meltdown about something. And it would be very loud and very upsetting. And then as they started making friends—right? A friend would come over and I would hear that yelling and I would think, “Jesus Christ. Will we ever get past this?!” And then they’re having fun! But the noise—the sounds—is almost interchangeable.
01:05:31 Theresa Host And what does that do to your body? Like, do you know what I’m saying?
01:05:36 Biz Host Oh, yeah! It makes my body—‘K. You know like a cartoon where somebody’s caught under a large like Liberty Bell and somebody hits the bell—

[Theresa laughs.]

—and then it vibrates and then the bell comes up but they’re still—like, Bugs Bunny’s still vibrating? Like that? That—

[Theresa laughs.]

—except I’m being vibrated between knives.

[Both laugh boisterously.]

01:06:03 Theresa Host Just, “Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!”
01:06:05 Biz Host Just an upside-down bucket of knives.
Just an upside-down bucket of knives. Yes.

[Theresa laughs.]

01:06:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk So... I just wanna say, I think you have stumbled onto something that I believe there is enough evidence to support—children?
Always loud. What was it?
Biz: Not never?

01:06:28 Biz Host **Theresa:** Never not loud.
Never not loud. They are never not loud. For sure. And you’re doing a remarkable job. Just even staying. *[Laughs.]*

[Theresa laughs.]

01:06:51 Theresa Host Woo! Theresa? You are also doing a wonderful job! It’s so nice to see you.
It’s really good to see you, Biz. You are also doing a really, really good job.
01:06:57 Biz Host I really appreciate that! I—I just have to ask. I keep thinking about the first shows we did when the pandemic began. ‘Cause we’re

			coming up! We're coming up on an official year since our schools were shut down.
01:07:15	Theresa	Host	It's true.
01:07:16	Biz	Host	Again, we've said this before. I remember us talking about how different we might all be on the other side of this.
			<i>[Theresa laughs.]</i>
01:07:28	Theresa	Host	Yeah.
01:07:29	Biz	Host	And I can really feel that now.
01:07:32	Theresa	Host	I do feel different!
01:07:33	Biz	Host	I do feel different. It's true.
01:07:36	Theresa	Host	It's really true.
01:07:38	Biz	Host	Like, lots of different parts of me feel different. Like I look different. I think I might sound different. I definitely feel different! Yeah. Anyway. I just wanted to acknowledge that, and that I'm glad that what's not different is that I get to see you. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
01:07:59	Theresa	Host	Yeah. I get to see you every week. It's a highlight.
01:08:04	Biz	Host	That is a highlight. Well, have a good week and I'll talk to you next week!
01:08:06	Theresa	Host	Okay!
01:08:07	Biz	Host	Bye!
01:08:08	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz and Theresa: Bye!
01:08:10	Biz	Host	What did we learn today, guys? Well we learned something we have learned before and is good to continue to learn, and that is—diverse representation in all books is incredibly important. In children's books—and like when people say “children's books” I think everybody's like—thinks of like one type of book. Right? Like a picture book or y'know, <i>Bedtime for Frances</i> or something like that. But it's really—y'know, the board books for infants and babies. The picture books for new reader books to the books for chapter and for young adults—I mean, it's gotta be <u>all</u> the way through, from beginning to end. One book has an impact. A whole legacy of books starting from the first time a kid picks up a book and hopefully never ends. 'Cause they're always picking up books. That it reflects <u>them</u> and it reflects those around them.
			Y'know, I want my kids to see diversity not only in their books, but in who is around them! Who's at the dinner table! Who's at the—y'know, event that we're going to! Who's at their school? Who's in their friend group? I mean, it should be so normal that the world is... made up of such diversity. And luckily we live in a place where that's very possible, but a lot of times people live in communities in which diversity is not around them. And books are a wonderful way to bring that into your house if you are not currently in a place where it can be reflected in your environment.
01:10:07	Biz	Host	So again, OurShelves is such an easy step. You subscribe and they do all the work and ta-da! Books! If you're in publishing, you know what I'm gonna say. Check them out! Use them as a resource! They're doing all the good, hard work to show that there is a need that needs to be met. And finally, y'know, if you can get a subscription for your school library? For your teacher? Your classroom? Your friend? I feel kind of like we should be like, “Y'know. OurShelves box bombing! Different libraries! Just like a random library!” <i>[Laughs.]</i> Like somewhere in the United States—boom! Suddenly gets a subscription from a secret admirer. Ooh, I like this. I like this. I might have to do this. This sounds like fun.

What we've also learned today is that the pandemic is still here. It's been a year. Choices are not any easier to make and in fact suddenly options are coming back on the table and that isn't necessarily helping? *[Laughs.]* And it can be kind of like, "But I asked for options! Oh wait, I now have options and I have zero idea of what to do!" Right? Like— *[Laughs.]* Eh, it's okay if you ask for it and then it didn't help. That's real. It's really tough right now. We've been at this for a long time and everybody is dealing with it and being affected by it in varying degrees, and I think the best we can do is continue to go out and be mindful of each other and kind to each other and know that what works for our family doesn't necessarily work for someone else's family and vice-versa? And that we should not feel bad either way about that. Mm-kay? Best you can do is make the choice that's right for you right now. And then tomorrow? If something changes? You make a new choice. But you're all doing such a good job. And I will talk to you next week. Bye!

01:12:29 Music Music "Mama Blues" by Cornbread Ted and the Butterbeans. Strumming acoustic guitar with harmonica and lyrics.

*I got the lowdown momma blues
 Got the lowdown momma blues
 Gots the lowdown momma blues
 The lowdown momma blues
 Gots the lowdown momma blues
 Got the lowdown momma blues
 You know that's right*

01:12:53 Biz Host *[Music fades somewhat, plays in background of dialogue.]* We'd like to thank MaxFun; our producer, Gabe Mara; our husbands, Stefan Lawrence and Jesse Thorn; our perfect children, who provide us with inspiration to say all these horrible things; and of course, you, our listeners. To find out more about the songs you heard on today's podcast and more about the show, please go to MaximumFun.org/onebadmother. For information about live shows, our book and press, please check out OneBadMotherPodcast.com. *One Bad Mother* is a member of the Maximum Fun family of podcasts. To support the show go to MaximumFun.org/donate.

01:13:21 Theresa Host *[Music continues for a while before fading out.]*

01:13:45 Music Transition A cheerful ukulele chord.

01:13:46 Speaker 1 Guest MaximumFun.org.

01:13:47 Speaker 2 Guest Comedy and culture.

01:13:49 Speaker 3 Guest Artist owned—

01:13:50 Speaker 4 Guest —Audience supported.