

00:00:00	Biz Ellis	Host	Hi. I'm Biz.
00:00:01	Theresa Thorn	Host	And I'm Theresa.
00:00:02	Biz	Host	Due to the pandemic, we bring you One Bad Mother 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 good job.
00:00:20	Music	Music	"Summon the Rawk" by Kevin MacLeod. Driving electric guitar and heavy drums.
00:00:24	Biz	Host	<i>[Continues through dialogue.]</i> This week on <i>One Bad Mother</i> —let's make believe we aren't losing our minds! We talk about imagination as a way to cope with illustrator-author Tori Sharp. Plus, Biz brings the God of Lightning.
00:00:37	Crosstalk Caller	Crosstalk Caller	Biz and caller: Wooooo! I just booked my first—
00:00:39			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i> —solo vacation. No partner. No kids. Just me and my dog. In a cabin in the woods. Close to hiking. Close to everything that I like doing and no one ever wants to do with me. <i>[Sighs.]</i> I am so proud of myself. <i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:01:11	Biz	Host	<i>[Sighs.]</i> I'm doing a good job, and so are you. Yayyyy! You are doing a <u>seriously</u> good job. That is like... <u>epic</u> . You are doing the thing that all of us say we are going to do and you are doing it. And I am with you—going off to a cabin with a dog in the middle of the woods? That is heaven. That is heaven. And you're right—not a lot of people wanna do that. And it sucks when no one else in your family wants to do it. <u>And</u> —let's get real—even if your family <u>did</u> wanna do it with you? It would not be the same experience that you are about to have. You deserve this trip. And I am <u>so</u> glad to hear that you are doing it. You are doing such a good job! You're doing such a good job. Speaking of good jobs, <i>[singing]</i> it's time to thank the people making it happen <i>[regular voice]</i> and I would like to say... there has been a group of people that we have not thanked on this show, but who deserve thanks. And I am so grateful to a listener for calling in to help me remember this. This week, I would really like to focus some thank-you's to all the people who work in transportation. Buses still were running during this pandemic. As are trains and airplanes and—I mean, people still have to get from A to B. Even when it was just for essential travelers, essential needs, somebody—maybe we weren't remembering how essential the people were who got us to where those essential people needed to be. I am pretty sure that when somebody became a city transportation worker, for example, that they weren't like, "You know what I'd like to do? I would like to every day just pick up a group of strangers during a pandemic and cross my fingers." So I just wanna tell you I see you? Thank you for showing up so that others could show up. And thank you to everybody who works in that industry in terms of keeping all of us who take public

transportation safe by keeping trains and buses and planes and everything so clean. The country could not have moved without you there to move us. And so I want you to know how grateful I am to you. As always, I am so grateful to everyone in the medical industry. I am so grateful to teachers. Teachers? Teachers? You did it! School's over! Whatever this year of school was, you've done it. You did it. You've done it. I hope you close your computer and never look at an email for like the next two-and-a-half months. 'K? I hope you seriously sleep. I know you have kids. A lot of you have kids at home. So it's not like you suddenly are on vacation. [Laughs.] But I just want you to know how much I appreciate you.

Libraries? It's your turn to shine! It's summer reading! Wooo! Thank you, libraries. Thank you everybody who keeps food coming in America. Everybody who is working at grocery stores, stocking, delivering, harvesting, thank you so much. And as always, thank you to all the volunteers. All the people who have been out there during this pandemic, volunteering their time whether it be at food banks; whether it be at vaccination or testing centers. All of it. At schools. Everywhere. Thank you for offering your time and thank you to everyone who has gotten vaccinated. If you are a person who is able to get vaccinated and you have not yet, I highly encourage you to go do so. Everybody, you're amazing. Thank you. Now. Little check-in. It's not really that little. [Laughs.] But—so for the last... I guess during this pandemic? Year? Katy Belle—aka Kat—has found that they enjoy using pronouns he/him/they/them. And let us know fairly early on in the pandemic. The first switch was to Kat, and then they decided they wanted a different name. And came to us to inform us that they would like to go by the name “Raiden.” Now. [Laughs.] Why I fucking love this name is because it is the—and they did not know this when they picked this name—it is a Japanese god of lightning and thunder? Also, *Mortal Kombat*. As Stefan said to me, “I mean, if you're gonna pick your own name, you might as well pick a really cool one.”

00:05:18

Biz

Host

So out of just respect for Raiden over the last... year? Because I wanted to make sure that Raiden had the room and the space with this choice to make sure that they were comfortable in the spade that they were creating for themselves, I have just been continuing to call them “Kat” on the show. But as I have referenced on the show many times, every kid—[Laughs.] Every kid—I was just at a graduation for Raiden, who was going from sixth to seventh grade. Every kid currently is allowing all of this new language when it comes to gender to be part of trying to get through puberty. And this time in their life.

This is a time when kids are already exploring who they are, how they want to be seen in the world, how they wanna present themselves in the world and walk through the world and I think it is such a gift that they now have language when it comes to... gender and self-identity to be part of that journey and that experience for them. But anyway. I just—it was getting harder and harder for me to not use the name that they have chosen for themselves. And y'know? Yes. I miss the name Katy Belle. I do. But I don't miss my child 'cause my child's right here in front of me, being the exact same child, just going by the epic name of Raiden! So that's my

check-in. *[Singing]* Summerrrr! *[Regular voice]* Speaking of middle school changes, checking in, gods of thunder, epic-ness—today we are going to be talking about coping with that time in our lives through art and imagination with our guest, Tori Sharp. Who just came out with their first graphic memoir, *Just Pretend*.

00:08:22 Music Music
00:08:23 Theresa Host
00:08:29 Biz Host
00:08:33 Theresa Host
00:08:36 Biz Host
00:08:40 Theresa Host

Banjo strums; cheerful banjo music continues through dialogue. Please—take a moment to remember: If you’re friends of the hosts of *One Bad Mother*, you should assume that when we talk about other moms, we’re talking about you. If you are married to the host of *One Bad Mother*, we definitely are talking about you. Nothing we say constitutes professional parenting advice. Biz and Theresa’s children are brilliant, lovely, and exceedingly extraordinary. Nothing said on this podcast about them implies otherwise.

[Banjo music fades out.]

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

00:08:46 Biz Host
00:09:15 Tori Guest
00:09:18 Biz Host
00:09:29 Tori Guest
00:09:44 Biz Host
00:10:00 Tori Guest
00:10:05 Biz Host
00:10:08 Tori Guest
00:10:12 Biz Host
00:10:30 Tori Guest
00:10:36 Biz Host
00:10:38 Tori Guest

This week, we are talking to Tori Sharp, who is a Seattle-based author-illustrator and swing and blues dancer with a BFA in sequential art from SCAD. You can find her online at www.N-O-V-E-L-T-O-R-I.com—NovelTori—and on Twitter @NovelTori. *Just Pretend* is her debut graphic novel. Welcome, Tori! Wooo! Hi! Thank you so much for having me!

[Biz laughs.] Thank you so much for joining us. Before we get into *Just Pretend*, I would like you ask you what we asks our guests, which is—who lives in your house?

It is me and my dog, Annie. She’s a toy poodle. *[Laughs.]* I have some other neighbors who live in the building. And all of them have their own entrances. But as far as my household is concerned, it’s just me and my dog!

I actually really like the notion of like, “Who lives in your house?” And you’re like, “Well, other people live in the building. And technically that is—” No, I actually like that a lot. That’s pretty good. Do you like ‘em? Do you have to—y’know. Are they alright? Are they alright neighbors?

Oh yeah, they’re wonderful. Yeah. I got pretty lucky. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.] And how old is the poodle?

She’s two, but I’ve only had her for a couple of months. SO. Ooh! Was this a pandemic poodle, or was this a—are poodles the type of dogs that you would wanna get as a pandemic pet? Or was this like, “I have wanted a poodle my entire life and I want it to be small.” Like, how—tell me the story of the toy poodle.

Well, she’s—I was looking for an ESA. An emotional support animal.

Oh, baby!

Yeah. And she just—I found this dog. She used to be a breeding dog and she was being retired. I think she’d only had one litter, and she just has the calmest, sweetest personality. And her previous owner thought she would do really well having a person of her

			own? 'Cause she was living with a lot of other dogs and it seems like she was a dog who would like a lot of individual attention. So she's been absolutely wonderful and I guess in that way she's kinda of a pandemic dog? But I also just—
00:11:07	Biz	Host	But it sounds bigger than that.
00:11:09	Tori	Guest	Yeah! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:11:11	Biz	Host	Talk to me about why you were looking for a poodle! I'm really interested. Yeah.
00:11:16	Tori	Guest	Yeah. So... part of it is anxiety and the sense of stability that comes from having a living creature there with you all the time. Right? That was the element that the pandemic affected and also that—right at the one-year anniversary of the pandemic, a couple of my closest friends here in Seattle just separately told me they were moving out of the country. And I was very excited for them? But I also realized after a year of living on my own it might be a good idea to have the presence of some sort of living being who would just kind of be there all the time.
			The other reason that I decided to get an ESA is that I'm on the autism spectrum? And it just ends up being really helpful for autistic people a lot of the time to have the routine that's built into caring for a pet and also things like interacting with them and petting them and having that soft texture can be really calming. Having them lay on you and provide a little bit of weight feels really grounding. There's lots of reasons that it can be super helpful for autistic people and I have her as an ESA right now and have considered trying to get her to be a service dog if she does well? And I have other chronic health issues, too. So. <i>[Laughs.]</i> There's a few different axes on which she would be a great support. Or as a children's author I thought, there's also a possibility to have her be a registered therapy dog and bring her into schools for class visits. So I'm not—
00:12:41	Biz	Host	Oh, I love therapy dogs!
00:12:43	Tori	Guest	Yeah, me too! I just had some of my first virtual school visits? Which were amazing. But I'm also really looking forward to being able to go into schools eventually and interact with kids and hopefully bring Annie along so that they have that comfort from her as well.
00:12:59	Biz	Host	I gotta tell you, I'm just gonna stop and say what a remarkable job you're doing. Just like—good job. That is such good taking care of yourself? Y'know? We all struggle with that, I think, regardless of what the makeup is? I don't know. I just... think that that is remarkable and I really appreciate you sharing it with us. 'Cause I would also imagine when you go into schools, I <u>know</u> that Annie would be a comfort for the kids to see. Right? And as a way to connect. But I've gotta imagine it would be <u>incredibly</u> stabilizing and comfort for you, too, to have her there.
00:13:44	Tori	Guest	That's a great point! For school visits in particular, I hadn't really considered how helpful she would be for me as well. I guess because I think of that as something that I would be doing for other people?
00:13:55	Biz	Host	Oh, interesting. Yeah.

00:13:56 Tori Guest Yeah. But I absolutely agree. I think just having her present with me to focus on when I feel overwhelmed is a great help. And she can always be a topic of conversation if any public interaction with people gets to be confusing. *[Laughs.]* So yeah.

00:14:16 Biz Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah! I just wish we could all carry dogs and cats around with us all the time! It would be so nice! Alright. Let's get into the book, because *Just Pretend* is your first graphic novel and not only is it a graphic novel, it's a graphic memoir. And I should be 100% up front with you—I have a middle schooler—just newly-minted middle schooler—in my house. Who eats graphic novels. For breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And this is such a great addition to their collection. Right? It's so... I just—I'm so thrilled that so many, in particular, women illustrators and writers are writing these sort of middle school sort of aimed books? So thank you. It's great. But it's a memoir as well! So talk to us about—talk to us about it. It's about divorce and using imagination and creativity to sort of cope with it. But that's just the blurb. That's just the blurb cover. Talk to us about it.

00:15:29 Tori Guest Yeah! So *Just Pretend* is a graphic memoir for ages eight to twelve, approximately. Or whoever feels like picking it up. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

It is about how when I was a kid I lived in multiple homes. So my parents are divorced, right, and in a lot of stories about kids with divorced parents they end up living with maybe one parent and you don't see a lot of the back-and-forth that happens? At least when I was growing up they didn't have books that really showed what that particular experience was like. And when I was making *Just Pretend* I really understood why that is. It's really strange to tell a story where the characters flip-flop back and forth between so many different settings. It creates a really unusual narrative structure and you're writing a book about instability, which means that the way that it's written and read can feel kind of unstable as you're going through it, too.

And it definitely does have that component that you're mentioning about storytelling being a way to cope with everything that's going on. To process it. To understand it. To communicate with those around you about what it's like if you have trouble just getting the words out in a way that makes sense to people. And it does have a little bit to do, as well, with storytelling being a way to cop out of and not deal with what's going on in your life at the same time. And how at some point we do need to actually take steps to verbally communicate with the people around us about what we're feeling. And that happens in a few ways in the book. There are relationships with my best friend, Taylor, who's still one of my very best friends. And with my family members. And I think also the character of Tori has a little bit of reckoning to do with herself. And just understanding herself better as she goes through. And I am mentioning her as a character separate from me? *[Laughs.]* Because I still feel a little self-conscious about that. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

00:17:23 Biz Host Well anybody who writes a memoir or any book in which—even if it's fictional—it takes the writer, the author, through personal

experiences that they may have had. Can either be—well I think it always winds up being therapeutic on some level. But it can also bring up stuff, maybe, the writer wasn't expecting for it to bring up. Or what was the process like for you?

00:17:53 Tori Guest

I'll begin with the idea of it being therapeutic, right? Because I—I wanted to write a memoir and I also wanted to make sure that I wasn't using it as a space to process my own life on paper in a very public sense. I feel that in order to write memoir I had to reach my own conclusions about a lot of things and do the work in my own life to come to a sense of understanding about what had happened. But yeah. Eventually I felt like I was at a point where I had something to say with it and could write it down in a way that would be meaningful to the people who were reading it. Right? So you write for yourself first a lot of the time, and I love making comics and it was a special experience that I enjoyed? But also the point of the book is for kids who are going through their parents' divorces or who really wanna be a writer or do some creative pursuit and feel like there are so many obstructions in their life. To feel a sense that they can do it and that it's worthwhile to pursue those things. And as for the process of writing from my own life? *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

At first the draft that I wrote of *Just Pretend* was stretching basically from the day I was born until now. It was more autobiographical. I knew that the final draft wouldn't stretch that long. Memoirs typically only cover max a year or two of your life, because you're telling a contained story. But in order to figure out what I wanted this book to be about I just wrote out everything that felt like it remotely related to the topics of divorce and storytelling throughout my life. And then I showed that very messy, terrible first draft to my agent and he helped me see what were the parts of it that really would work perfectly in a middle-grade graphic memoir and what felt like the core story and he advised that I really focus in on the friendship with Taylor and helped me see everything more clearly. But that's tough when you're working as, y'know, with a professional, right? With your agent. And you know that something's garbage the first time you send it in? *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

I sent it to him and had an absolute meltdown and I... *[Laughs.]* I went and I watched—I could not stay still because I was so restless so I went to a movie theatre and saw *Detective Pikachu* by myself.

[Biz laughs.]

It was just what was playing and it calmed me right down. So. *[Laughs.]* That's my process.

00:20:22 Biz Host

That was not the worst adapted movie that's been out there of the last couple of years, okay? As the parent who is totally fine going to see whatever with kids? I've seen *Detective Pikachu* in the movie theatre. Wasn't bad. A little weird to separate Ryan Reynolds' Pikachu from Ryan Reynolds' Deadpool, but that actually just made it more enjoyable for me.

00:20:44 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: I kept waiting for something—

00:20:49 Tori Guest **Tori:** Right. I didn't go in with super high hopes, but I was delighted. And it might've just been how panicked I was about other things that made me want to love it. But I came out of that theatre just thrilled at what I had just watched.

00:20:57 Biz Host That's exactly—I feel like that's a good reason to go into any movie. Y'know? Just like, "I'm gonna need this movie. It has one job—to calm me down and get my mind off of whatever else is going on." I love it.

00:21:11 Tori Guest Come on, movie! We're setting you up for success here!

[Biz laughs.]

00:21:17 Biz Host The bar is so low!
Oh, I understand all the low bars. Alright. Let's talk about imagination and making believe and pretending in terms of... coping. I am a huge fan of make-believe. And a huge fan of pretending. You will never hear out of my mouth to our kids, y'know, "What?! That's ridiculous! That can't happen!"

00:21:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Tori:** "You're too old for this."

00:21:50 Biz Host **Biz:** *[Through laughter]* I'm like, if I can't—oh, pbbbth! Yeah, sorry. Those are not the parents you got.

[Tori laughs.]

00:22:06 Tori Guest I remember there was this imprint in our backyard that my oldest, when they were young, thought looked like a dinosaur footprint. And Stefan and I were like, "Maybe. Might be. I dunno. Could be!"
00:22:08 Biz Host Can't prove otherwise, so why not?
Yeah. Can't prove—I dunno. I dunno if it isn't. And y'know I know that there was the fear of one day them realizing that it wasn't and that we were horrible, horrible liars. But we just had to hope that we were pushing the joy of the moment of the imagination, rather than... everything being a horrible lie. *[Laughs.]*

[Tori laughs.]

00:22:32 Tori Guest So talk to me—
I haven't met your kids, but I'm pretty sure they'll forgive you for that. *[Laughs.]*

00:22:36 Biz Host Oh yeah, they're alright. I'm gonna mess 'em up lots of other ways. Don't worry about it. Talk to me about... when you started—like, how did this—have you been drawing—for example, you are a beautiful illustrator. And I've got a kid who draws. And I understand—I am not an artist like that. So that was never an escape for me or a tool I could use. But I can see how helpful a tool it is for my oldest. So talk to me about when you discovered that was something that you could use?

00:23:11 Tori Guest So I started drawing more seriously in middle school, right?

[Biz laughs.]

I got very into it. Partially because it was a way to just fidget? Like, have something to do with my hands in classes if I needed to get me through the school day when it felt so long. But I also got really

into drawing as a coping mechanism when I felt a lot of pressure to be perfect in other ways? Because it felt like the only thing in my life that I was allowed to be really fucking bad at. And that was just very liberating, to think there are no grades attached to this. Even our class in school, you're not really graded on how good it is? It's a participation kind of class? That's exactly what I needed. And then just from drawing a lot I realized... that... I had this natural ability to copy from photographs. So—or from life. Right?

Up until then I had just been doodling without really trying to draw from life and at some point in middle school I started going out into my mom's garden and drawing roses. Or taking photographs of people and drawing them. My mom, I think, still has a drawing hanging up that I drew when I was about thirteen based on my own school photo? And it looks photorealistic. So that was something that came really naturally to me when I was growing up. And I know that *Just Pretend* is a cartoon? *[Laughs.]* But I think that in order to cartoon well, you have to be able to draw well from life. So just having that basis of—I didn't have to do this well, and then I sort of discovered pretty quickly the thing about it that I was actually good at? Was nice? 'Cause I think that when you're going into art it's not like you're doomed if you can't draw from photos well right away. Right? Everybody has different strengths that you can work into your process. But I was just lucky that I stumbled on it pretty early and it became something that then—by high school I had a sense of competence? Competency?

00:25:11 Biz Host
00:25:13 Tori Guest

Yeah. Competency. Yes.
I felt pretty fucking good at it.

[Biz laughs.]

00:25:17 Biz Host

So then it was like a point of pride. *[Laughs.]*
Yeah! *[Laughs.]* Which is—in middle and high school, you got to cling to those things! When you find a thing that brings you the joy and you're good at? It's like, "Oh! I must cling to this!" I love it. I love that. Did you ever—'cause this is, again, one of the themes in the book. Did you ever get lost in it? Did it ever... distract you from... from your—the things you had to cope with?

00:25:47 Tori Guest

Yeah. I think maybe it... it became a way to cope that wasn't always super healthy? But I think that part of that is that some of my friendships were so based around the—like, or in stories that we perhaps weren't talking about other things all the time? I dunno. 'Cause it's both, right? Like, our in stories help you connect with people. I was the type of kid who really liked to analyze my friends' writing, too, so they would print it out and I would go over it with red pen and—

[Biz laughs.]

—it was pretty much every day they were coming in with new writing for me. 'Cause I would make it up but I would also doodle all over their papers. And just get really excited about the fun stuff that was happening in their stories. So it became something that bonded us because I typically had a mutual love of writing and drawing with my friends. But you need a foundation for a relationship kind of beyond shared interests at some point, too. So I

think it's a little tough to transition past that and then really be involved in each others' lives in a different way. Or you can conflate the two and think that that type of friendship is a really close friendship and not test it with other—just by going through life together in other ways. But I still think overall writing and drawing has done more to connect me with other people than *[through laughter]* distance me from them.

00:27:08 Biz Host
00:27:09 Tori Guest
00:27:10 Biz Host

Than not. *[Laughs.]*

Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

Well... why do you think—I mean, regardless of what the mechanism is or what the way it comes out is... what do you think is valuable, especially for middle-school-aged kids? In using make-believe, imagination—and these are two words that conjure up such young images as opposed to what you associate with middle school or older aged kids? What do they benefit from from doing this and as a parent, how can I not squash that? *[Laughs.]* “Stop it! Stop doing that! Stop whatever you're doing!” *[Laughs.]* Right?

00:28:01 Tori Guest

Right. I think seeing a couple of reviews—I don't typically read reviews for my book, but I had noticed at least one that said something about—just really early on—that said because the kids are using their imaginations it felt younger than the target age group. Which I thought was so funny, because I, as an adult, call myself a professional make-believer? Like, my job is so fucking weird. I do a bunch of different things.

[Biz laughs.]

And so I feel like that's the only umbrella term that makes sense for being an author and also being a literary agent and the other odd jobs I've done along the way. And I think that imagination has such a crucial role for kids. Beyond it connecting you with people and it just being a fun thing to do with friends, imagination and storytelling are a type of problem-solving? Stories in particular, the way that they're structured, the character has a problem and then they have to figure out ways to overcome it. And usually in a story they have lots and lots and lots of little problems.

And—for instance, writing, or just going out and playing pretend with your friends or playing role-playing games, are a way to vicariously through the characters establish problems and then come up with different solutions for how those characters could get out of it. Which I think is applicable way beyond creative pursuits. I think for kids interested in math and science and all sorts of different fields, no matter what they want to do, having good problem-solving skills helps you in all areas of life. And I also think for a lot of kids—especially neurodivergent kids? The idea of roleplay is a great way to kind of practice. It's a way to internalize the ways that you notice people around you interacting with each other. And then act them out. To see how they feel and to try to assess why other people are communicating in that way. So neurodivergent kids are not—it helps with communication skills as well.

00:29:58 Biz Host

Yeah. No, I think—but I think you're right. I think the lifelong benefits from it are those things! Communication skills as well as creative problem-solving are just so... important to us as adult? And sometimes you can see out in the world where imagination has

been severed. *[Laughs.]* As opposed to where really great problem-solving really comes from creativity. And if you can imagine and pretend, you tend to be able to be more empathetic, I think. Being able to come at things from different perspectives and seeing things through different lenses. Which I think is so critical. I have to ask about the dancing. Because it's in your bio, and I think it's the most amazing thing ever. Please tell me about the dancing.

00:30:59 Tori Guest

So when I started college, I got involved in a swing dance club. And it just clicked instantly as something that I really love to do. I always felt like I was a terrible dancer? I remember playing *Dance Dance Revolution* with my sister, who is an actual ballet dancer and everything when we were kids. And feeling like I could never reach that level of skill. But social dancing with swing is such a fun way to be out interacting with people in a context that also feels very safe and kind of anonymous? Because you go—I'm very extroverted, so I like meeting new people. But in swing I think it's such a great way to meet people, because you get to dance for the length of a song, which is three or four minutes. And if it's terrible you never have to dance with that person ever again.

[Biz laughs.]

But if you kind of click and have a good time talking with them, it's easy to have continued dances with them or to talk to them on the side and make new friends. And then it expanded into blues dancing and fusion and some other forms of dance. Once you know how to lead and follow and have the basic steps for one—I went to a country barn and really quickly picked up two-step dancing—

00:32:22 Biz Host

So fun.

00:32:24 Tori Guest

Yeah. All of it's so fun. *[Laughs.]*

00:32:26 Biz Host

It is so fun. Once again, good job recognizing what you like to do and doing it! *[Laughs.]* I just love it!

00:32:34 Tori Guest

The character of Emily in the book, my sister, is a dancer. So there's a lot of me being dragged around to all of her different dance classes. And when I was maybe three or four I was in a dance class, and I—in the class—was really good. But I screamed my head off every time my mom tried to take me to the class? I hated the feeling of tights being pulled on my leg. I didn't like people messing with my hair. I knew that once I got there I didn't really understand the other kids or what was expected of me. But I was naturally really flexible and great at understanding the steps and remembering the footwork and stuff. So I was out there, three or four years old, in my little dance outfit on stage and like—
[Laughs.]

[Biz laughs.]

I have memories of those shows, even. Part of why I write memoir is that I have a weirdly good memory. But then that was the last dance class I took until college. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

00:33:32 Biz Host

No, but there's something so much fun about swing dancing. It's so... it's so, like, fast and fluid and physical. I just... the energy of it is... just so joyous. Y'know? It's so joyous.

00:33:52	Tori	Guest	And it's great—like, dancing with a partner is so different than dancing on your own, too. And it's a lot—I think it's a lot more fun because you've got this counterbalance where you're using each others' weight to spin more quickly and to do the types of moves and motions that you wouldn't be able to do on your own. It's definitely one of the things I've missed the most during the last year. I dance around my house and my kitchen and everything but it's not the same as dancing with <i>[through laughter]</i> another person.
00:34:19	Biz	Host	I dunno. Annie the toy poodle might be quick on the pickup. You never know.
00:34:24	Tori	Guest	You've caught me. I have danced with Annie a few times.
00:34:27	Biz	Host	Absolutely.
00:34:29	Tori	Guest	Oh, absolutely!
			And she's excellent at it.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:34:31	Biz	Host	Good!
			<i>[Tori laughs.]</i>
			Tori, thank you so much for joining us. This has been more than I hoped for. I am so glad that we got to talk about so many different things. And the book is <u>such</u> a great—like, it—it's right up there with all of the other ones that my kid has just <u>absorbed</u> . Y'know, <i>Awkward</i> and <i>Smile</i> and all of these. And it's—I'm so glad that it's out there. And thank you for sharing it with all of us!
00:35:09	Tori	Guest	Thank you for having me and thank you for buying your kid graphic novels, too. I love hearing that kids are reading them. It's so good for them.
00:35:18	Biz	Host	Yeah! No, it's so good. And plus there's a whole anime thing now so we literally read graphic novels front-to-back <u>and</u> back-to-front in this house.
00:35:25	Tori	Guest	Oh, wonderful!
00:35:27	Biz	Host	Because they are all in Japanese. You gotta read them the other way. But I'm like, "What's happening?! Why are you reading the end first?!" 'Cause I'm old. But— <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:35:35	Tori	Guest	I haven't read very many of those, but I'll be reading them backwards and then accidentally finding myself turning the pages in the way that I'm used to.
00:35:43	Biz	Host	The wrong way. I know. I know. I just am like, "How is your brain doing that? I don't even understand." But no, no. We are big supporters in graphic novels in this house. So we'll make sure that everybody knows how to get—obviously you all know how to get a copy of a book these days. But!
			<i>[Tori laughs.]</i>
			We will make sure that you are able to find out more about Tori and all of her other endeavors and thank you so much for joining us!
00:36:12	Tori	Guest	Thank <u>you</u> !
00:36:15	Biz	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Have a wonderful rest of your summer.
00:36:17	Tori	Guest	You as well.
00:36:18	Biz	Host	Okay. Buh-bye!
00:36:19	Tori	Guest	Bye!
00:36:20	Music	Music	"Ones and Zeroes" by "Awesome." Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.

			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:36:36	Music	Promo	Cheerful ukulele music with whistling plays in background.
00:36:37	Theresa	Promo	<i>One Bad Mother</i> is supported in part by Dipsea, an audio app full of short, sexy stories designed to turn you on.
00:36:44	Biz	Promo	Everyone needs an escape, but those can be hard to come by right now. Oh! Double entendre! I did it. Guys?
			<i>[Theresa laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Laughs.]</i> It can! It can be difficult to find yourself a little escape. And more importantly to find a little space where your pleasure is the <u>only</u> priority. Each Dipsea audio story features characters that feel like real people and immersive scenarios so it makes you feel like you are right there. And speaking of right there, it is an excellent app because you can make sure the settings are just so. So that <u>your</u> stories are exactly suited for what you are into.
			<i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:37:32	Theresa	Promo	For listeners of the show, Dipsea is offering an extended 30-day free trial when you go to DipseaStories.com/badmother .
00:37:41	Biz	Promo	That's 30 days of full access for <u>free</u> with you go to D-I-P-S-E-AStories.com/badmother .
00:37:51	Theresa	Promo	DipseaStories.com/badmother .
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:37:57	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.
00:38:19	Biz	Host	Genius fail time! <i>[Singing]</i> Ba, duh, daduh, da-da da-daa! Theresaaa! <i>[Regular voice]</i> Sometimes I wanna go like <i>I Dream of Jeannie</i> style and just be like, "Blink! Theresa!" I wish that I could do that multiple times a day.
00:38:38	Theresa	Host	That's really sweet of you. I wish that when you did it, not only did I appear but I also had a very bouncy, long, blonde ponytail. Always. 'Cause that sounds fun.
00:38:50	Biz	Host	That would be helpful. And something kind of loose-fitting, except around the bosom area.
00:38:55	Theresa	Host	Oh yeah.
00:38:56	Biz	Host	Just so you know, you said it would be nice probably if I <i>I Dream of Jeannie</i> -d you into my space all the time, but it would really just be for me to unload on somebody who I knew wouldn't say I was a bad person. So I'm not sure if it would be a perk for you, but I wish I could do it.
00:39:14	Theresa	Host	Yeah. I mean, I feel like we— <i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			—we play those roles for each other. So I think, y'know, it goes both ways. So maybe you can also appear for me at times and be unloaded upon.
00:39:30	Biz	Host	Ohhh! Good. AKA, texting.
00:39:33	Theresa	Host	Yep.
00:39:35	Biz	Host	Genius me, Theresa!
00:39:36	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.]

00:39:50 Theresa Host

So, this really did feel like a genius. You probably remember, Biz, that on Tuesday I was texting you ferociously-slash-sadly because just—

00:40:02 Biz Host

You were *Dream of Jeannie-ing* me! You were *I Dream of Jeannie-ing* me, big time!

00:40:04 Theresa Host

I really was. Yeah. Yeah. I was like, "Where are you? I need you now." And then you were available like eight minutes later and I was like, "It's too late now! I can't talk!"

00:40:15 Biz Host

It was already gone. I knew it! Dammit!

00:40:16 Theresa Host

That was my window. So... basically just everything felt like it was falling apart Tuesday. Y'know, as you said to me, summer sucks. And it turns out that even post-COVID, summer still can suck. And I still have not gotten to the point with my three amazing children where I have a schedule that functionally works for our family during the summer?

[Biz laughs.]

I can't seem to make it happen! I just have not. Maybe someday. But—so everybody's still—there's still a different day for each person in my family. There's still a different arrangements to be made for each child. We're still not at the point where everybody can be in one place together during the day or doing the same thing or even that two out of the three could be doing something together. And on Tuesday what happened was one of my kids got sent home from camp. And this has happened before and it's probably not the last time that it will happen, but it really broke me because there were a lot of really annoying things that came before that and I had worked really, really hard with this camp situation. This was Oscar. And I felt like it was—like I could not go on in that moment. But the genius is coming. I did pull it together and reminded myself that him getting sent home from camp one day is a thing that happened, but it does not necessarily mean all of these other things that I have in my head about the future.

[Biz laughs.]

And—*[Laughs.]*

00:42:02 Biz Host

I like the thought of the future literally being fifty years down the road and everything that could happen between this one moment and then—and I am not joking. Like—*[Laughs.]*

00:42:12 Theresa Host

I was—yeah. Yeah. I mean, I think I was thinking short-term future, like... my summer? But yes. Of course, years to come. And how everybody's doing.

00:42:24 Biz Host

How will everything ever be? *[Laughs.]*

00:42:26 Theresa Host

How will everything ever be okay? And—but you know, the camp was... not saying it was the end of the world. They were not saying "Your child cannot come back" or, y'know, this is—it's just—he needed to come home. I'm not gonna get into all the details. So I pulled my act together. By the time I got to Oscar, I had my act

together enough to have an actually very helpful conversation with his counselor teacher person, and with him. And we talked more about it on the way home and it was just the two of us because I picked him up early and it was just Oscar and me. And y'know, we really got to—we had a good conversation about it? And I did not think it was possible, but the next day he went to camp and had an amazing day. Like, an amazing day! There was no—he was like ready to go. He went. He had a good day by all accounts. And when we picked him up he was dirty and tired and happy and had all kinds of stuff that he wanted to share about his day. And he earned a fake cockroach to prank me in his lunchbox and was delighted with that.

[Biz laughs.]

And y'know it was just—it was like an actual win. It wasn't like, "Well, we're getting there." It was like an actual win. And I know again that this also doesn't mean anything necessarily for the future, but it was one really good day. And I felt so good about it. Like, it just was what I wanted for Oscar. It was what I wanted for me. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

00:44:03 Biz Host I gotta tell you, it really is genius! It's really hard to get out of the place you started in. That is such a deep well of a place? That it is hard to change those gears. And I think, again, it's just... incredibly unfair, the amount of mental pivoting that we have to do every single day. And it's never the same each day. And there's always something literally unexpected, and you're *[through laughter]* supposed to somehow have it together—

[Theresa laughs.]

00:44:48 Theresa Host I'm laughing 'cause it's absurd. 'Cause you're correct, and it's absurd. *[Laughs.]*

00:44:52 Biz Host Running on nothing! You're completely empty, yet you're expected to run a NASCAR race. Right? And win! And do it smiling! Like, it's—it is stupid.

00:45:06 Theresa Host Yeah. It's stupid.

00:45:08 Biz Host It's stupid. But you did it!

00:45:10 Theresa Host Yeah. I did it. Yeah.

00:45:12 Biz Host You did it!

00:45:13 Theresa Host Yeah.

[Both laugh.]

00:45:15 Biz Host I mean, if you could talk to me nine years ago when we started this show—however many years we've been doing it—I can't believe I'm just sitting here so genuinely like, "You did that, Theresa! It's so hard!"

00:45:29 Theresa Host I know. Thank you.

00:45:31 Biz Host Well, good job.

00:45:32 Theresa Host Thanks.

00:45:33 Biz Host It was the last week of school. And my oldest, who—at the beginning of the show, as you know, we are calling Raiden now. Which makes storytelling a lot fucking easier.

[Theresa laughs.]

Raiden, god of thunder, was quote-unquote “graduating” sixth grade. Because at their school, elementary goes up through sixth and is going to become a middle schooler. And it’s been such a shitty-ass year. I agreed to let Raiden and their two best friends spend the night in this house. I got a COVID test. I’m vaccinated, fully. But I got a COVID test. Raiden got a COVID test. The other two got COVID tests. Everybody was negative. Stefan and Ellis went somewhere else.

00:46:30 Theresa Host
00:46:32 Biz Host

Nice.

Because the fail would’ve been to let them stay. This is not Stefan’s wheelhouse. And I let those children come over here after the formal graduation ceremony and I said to them, “If you need anything that’s an emergency, you can come and get me. If you make anything, clean it up. Other than that, I’m gonna be in my room. Goodnight!” *[Laughs.]* And I did! I did!

00:47:05 Theresa Host
00:47:07 Biz Host
00:47:08 Theresa Host
00:47:10 Biz Host

I love it! I love it.

And they had a great time.

Of course they did!

There were like a million things that sounded like emergencies to me. But overall, great time. It was... I fucking love sleepovers? And so this is like something I have missed over this last year of not being able to have the house full of insane children? And so I did all the things that made all of us comfortable and then we let it happen and then I immediately Clorox-wiped the entire house down. *[Laughs.]*

[Theresa laughs.]

00:47:42 Caller Caller

But it was fun!

[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi, *One Bad Mother*. *[Through laughter]* *One Bad Mother*. I’m calling with a genius. I have a five-year-old daughter with autism. She’s nonverbal and has many sensory issues. Therefore wearing a mask is not the easiest thing for her. Since the pandemic, we’ve only taken her out of the house—well, out and about where she needed to wear a mask—to a couple places. Namely Target. Maybe twice. When school started up we found out that she couldn’t go back unless she wore a mask all the time. She’s done with her IEP and all this sensory... so I thought about, how did we get her to wear a mask those two times we took her out? And she has an oral fixation and the only way she can keep her mask on is with a pacifier. So my genius was to sew pacifiers into multiple masks so she could wear her mask at school and keep it on and the only way she took the mask off, the pacifier would be out. So works so far and learning how to get over the pacifier will be a genius for another day. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

00:48:49 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Thank you!

Theresa: I mean, this is—

00:48:53 Theresa Host

Biz: This is—yeah.
It’s so good!

00:48:55 Biz Host It's so good!

00:48:58 Theresa Host It's amazing.

00:48:59 Biz Host It is like—somebody call *Shark Tank*! Right? Somebody get this person a deal! You... are a genius. Is what you are.

00:49:12 Theresa Host You're an actual genius. Like, you're why this segment exists.

[Biz laughs.]

It's not for the stuff we're spouting most of the time. It's for people like you doing amazing genius things.

00:49:27 Biz Host Yeah. I expect to hear all about your call from MIT very soon. Because you fucking deserve it. Good job! Failures.

00:49:37 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.]

00:49:43 Biz Host Fail me, Theresa.

00:49:45 Theresa Host Okay. So Gracie, my nine-year-old, does not have a lot going on this summer. One thing that we're doing is very short Zoom music lessons twice a week with somebody who she's been working with for a while. *[Laughs.]* It's very slow going, but it's fine. It's a thing that we're doing. But the main thing is, we have to show up on time because they're 25 minutes long. I mean, I think that's probably the fail? Because...

[Biz laughs.]

[Laughs.] Showing up on time is not the easiest thing for me in general? Let alone right now.

00:50:26 Biz Host It's all Zoom summer kids—whatever.

00:50:29 Theresa Host Exactly. And it's twice a week, so it's not every day or—there's no rhyme or reason. Y'know.

00:50:34 Biz Host It gives you two days to forget. *[Laughs.]*

00:50:35 Theresa Host Yeah. Exactly. But she has the lessons—the teacher has the lessons back-to-back. So it's not like we can go over or move it around or whatever. And—*[Laughs.]* Today, I had it up on the schedule of the day. It's just that then we never looked at it. Which happens sometimes. We just never looked at the schedule of the day, even though I made it. Even though it was there. And so I got a text from the teacher like eleven minutes into the lesson? Being like, "Hey, I'm on Zoom." And actually she probably texted me at like seven minutes in, but I didn't look at my phone for another few minutes?

[Biz laughs.]

Y'know? And so Gracie was pissed because she wasn't prepared for that. She didn't wanna do that. And she was watching a bad

movie. So we barely made it to the lesson and we ended up using the lesson to *[through laughter]* screen share this bad movie—

[Biz laughs.]

00:51:44	Biz	Host	—with the music teacher. So that is what I paid for. Today.
00:51:49	Theresa	Host	Oh, you paid for it. You paid for it, mother.
00:51:50	Biz	Host	Yep.
			Wow. You're doing a horrible job scheduling things and remembering them, I guess. I guess that's the... the fail. But, y'know. Summer!
00:52:03	Theresa	Host	<i>[Without enthusiasm.]</i> Woohoo.
00:52:04	Biz	Host	Fucking woo. Alright. I think I have spoken of this before, and if I have, it really makes this an even better fail. That there's been no resolution. And that maybe I've ever forgotten all about it. Something I knew was a fail and then forgot and am now gonna treat as if it's the first time I'm talking about it. When Ellis takes their bath, they cover their feet up with washcloths. And we're not allowed to see their feet.

[Theresa laughs.]

00:52:42	Theresa	Host	Ever. And they wear—
00:52:44	Biz	Host	It's okay that I laugh at that, right?
00:52:48	Theresa	Host	Yeah! They wear—I used to think it was kinda cute!
00:52:49	Biz	Host	It's adorable!
			Like, I'll just make little washcloth foot socks! Foot socks! Right? "Your toes are going to have a secret campout," right? No. So I, y'know, look. He's been doing this for a really long time. And as a baby when I had the time and energy and still cared about cutting my children's toenails— <i>[Laughs.]</i> Y'know, I know that there's a potential for ingrown toe stuff maybe. I dunno. No one was complaining about toes. And I the other day said—part of me, though, was like, "Ugh." It's like a little ding that's been going on for months that I am now only hearing. Okay? And I go, "Ellis, I'm gonna need to see your feet. 'Cause I know that you've been covering them up. I have a feeling you don't want me to see something! I'm gonna need to see your feet." "No." "Okay. I'm gonna—is there something that you don't want me to see?" "You will be very mad." And I'm like, "Well what is it?" "I can't tell you." Did you draw "I hate Mama on it?" "No!" "Do you have an extra toe I don't know about?" "No." "Is your toe telling you to do bad things?" "No." I'm having a hard time figuring out what might make me mad! And I'm sure it's because he's picked something to pieces. Right? But I don't know. I'm not—I don't know where my worry level should be because they're walking just fine. There seems to be no discomfort. But now I'm—it's like Pandora's box. Now I just have to know. And I have gone about—I have offered money. I've offered "If I get mad, you can get X, Y, and Z." I've sent Raiden in on it. Raiden's like, "Hey, I heard you talking with Mama. What is it? I am really good at keeping secrets!"

[Both laugh.]

00:55:03	Theresa	Host	That's so messed up.
00:55:04	Biz	Host	And—nope. Won't share. I am now tempted to go in at night and try and get the sock off? But...

00:55:13 Theresa Host So are they—I didn't realize—when you were first setting up the story, I thought it was just while in the bath. Like it was a fun bath time game. But it's all the time.

00:55:21 Biz Host They keep socks on all the time. I can't see the feet.

00:55:24 Theresa Host And they just change their socks in secret. Like... when they're getting dressed in the morning.

00:55:30 Biz Host Yeah. Well they get dressed on their own. Now I'm like—

00:55:33 Theresa Host But if you came in to spy, they would notice and be like, "No way."

00:55:36 Biz Host Oh, they would immediately cover their feet.

00:55:39 Theresa Host Hm. Hmm.

00:55:41 Biz Host So...

00:55:42 Theresa Host Mm-hm?

00:55:43 Biz Host This is gonna be my fun summer game.

00:55:46 Theresa Host Is this where you're leaving us?

00:55:49 Biz Host I don't know what it is! Yeah! I'm leaving you right here!

00:55:53 Theresa Host But it's obviously the nails, right? The nails are way too long. They're way too long.

00:55:58 Biz Host Something's weird. There's definitely—

00:56:01 Theresa Host The nails are way too long. That's what it is!

00:56:03 Biz Host One foot is fine. One foot they'll show me. It's the other foot they won't. And so I'm like—

00:56:07 Theresa Host Okay, that's—now that's interesting. So the one foot... how were the nails?

00:56:12 Biz Host They were alright. I mean, y'know, kids pick at their toes. They take their own nails off and stuff.

00:56:17 Theresa Host Totally. Totally.

00:56:19 Biz Host But the other one I'm like... what—I mean, if he'd somehow removed it or if it was infected, we would know. Because it would hurt! It would hurt very badly.

00:56:32 Theresa Host You would know because it would hurt. Yeah.

00:56:34 Biz Host So... I don't know! But this is the *One Bad Mother* summer mystery. [Laughs.]

[Theresa laughs.]

00:56:43 Theresa Host If you enjoyed *Serial*—

00:56:46 Biz Host Yeah. [Laughs.] If you—[Laughs.] "If you enjoyed *Serial*, you'll enjoy Ellis's mystery foot." Anyway.

[Theresa laughs.]

That's it! The fail is I have no idea what's happening. It also feels like I fail that I won't just say, "Show me your foot or you'll never get—" Y'know, just force him. But that seems fucked up. And then just that we're even at this place. There's a lot. There's a lot messed up. Also—what? I feel like, "Ellis, have I ever yelled at you or been mad? Have I ever been mad?" "No." "So what could this be that you think would trigger this?"

00:57:31 Theresa Host Are they afraid of getting their nails trimmed? Do you think it could be one long nail and they just don't want it trimmed or something?

00:57:36 Biz Host This is the kid who had the bag of nails and hair collection.

00:57:40 Theresa Host Oh yeah.

00:57:41 Biz Host Oh, Gabe just made a face. Gabe came into the show after that collection story. Anyway. There ya go, guys. It's a nail-biter! [Laughs.]

[Theresa laughs.]

00:57:53 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

Hi, guys. I'm calling with a fail. This is a fail. I was listening to the latest episode about forgetting to teach your kids how to use their cutlery and it reminded me that last week my nearly-six-year-old daughter asked me, "Mom, how do I properly wipe after using the bathroom?" And I realized my daughter turns six next month and I have never taught her how to wipe after using the toilet. So y'know. In the last two or three years where I haven't been wiping her butt, she's probably been doing it wrong and that's probably why she keeps picking at her underwear all day. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

00:58:36 Biz Host Oh, just fail on fail on fail over here. You guys are doing a good job. Look. You're doing a reasonable job. You know how this fail happens? This fail happens similarly to the toe fail. You're just so happy that your kid wants the independence and doesn't want you to do something for them anymore that you just immediately close that chapter.

00:58:56 Theresa Host Yes. You assume it's fine. You're hoping it's fine? It's probably fine?

00:59:00 Biz Host It's probably fine. Again, if it wasn't, I feel like we would all really know. *[Laughs.]*

00:59:08 Theresa Host Yeah! Absolutely. Absolutely.

00:59:10 Biz Host Right? That is exactly how—there are multiple things I realize I have not taught my children. Simply because I stopped thinking about it. *[Laughs.]*

00:59:23 Theresa Host Definitely.

00:59:27 Biz Host So... good job no longer thinking about it! Failure, realizing that you now are thinking about it. *[Laughs.]* Enjoy not sleeping.

00:59:40 Music Music "Mom Song" by Adira Amram. Mellow piano music with lyrics.

*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.*

01:00:05 Promo Clip *[Music fades out.]
[Sound of thunder and rain plays in background.]*

Mallory O'Meara: Are you riddled with guilt over your TBR pile?

Brea Grant: Are you filled with shame about a book that you just can't seem to finish?

Mallory: Are you having regrets because grad school killed your love of reading?

[Angelic choir.]

Brea: We're *Reading Glasses*, and we're here to help!

Mallory: I'm Mallory.

Brea: And I'm Brea.

[Rhythmic percussion plays in background.]

Mallory: Let us absolve you of all your reading guilt.

Brea: Stuck on a book you don't like?

Mallory: We'll help you dump it!

Brea: Can't figure out what to read next?

Mallory: We'll recommend something in your wheelhouse.

Brea: Can't decide where to buy your books from?

Mallory: We'll point you in the right direction!

Brea: No matter what you read or how you read it—

Mallory: —We'll help you do it better.

Brea: *Reading Glasses!* Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

Music: Cheerful, "Linus and Lucy"-style piano music plays in background.

01:00:47 Promo Clip

Jackie Kashian: I'm going first! It's me, Jackie Kashian!

Laurie Kilmartin: Man! She's always this bossy!

[All laugh.]

Laurie: Hi. I'm Laurie Kilmartin. We're a bunch of standup comics and we've been doing comedy like sixty years total.

[Jackie laughs.]

Jackie: Both of us. But we look amazing. And—

[Kyle laughs.]

Jackie: It's all working out. We drop every Monday on MaxFun and it's called *The Jackie and Laurie Show*. And you could listen to it and learn about comedy and learn about anger management and all the things.

Laurie: And Jackie is married but childless and I'm unmarried but child-full. So together—

[Jackie laughs.]

Laurie: —we make—

Jackie and Laurie: —one complete woman.

Kyle: *[Through laughter]* Is that just how it's gonna end? *[Laughs.]*

Jackie: Yeah! Yeah! And we try to make Kyle laugh just like that and say “Oh my god” every episode.

Kyle: It’s a good job. *Jackie and Laurie Show*. Mondays, only on Maximum Fun.

01:01:37 Biz Host *[Music ends.]*
Well, everyone, it’s time to gather together and listen to a mom have a breakdown.
01:01:46 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

Hi, guys. This is a rant. I guess. I was just in Trader Joe’s and I discovered just how fucked up it is to be inside the brain of a mom sometimes. When you’re there by yourself without any children, which sounds amazing. And I was looking forward to that as I was driving to the store. And then I was in the store and I saw all these moms with their kids and I wanted to cry and I missed my kids.

[Biz laughs.]

And that’s weird. I see them every day. They’re not anywhere unusual. One of them is just home. I could go home and see my kids. But I was sad and jealous and I wanted my kids there with me even though—who wants kids at the grocery store with you if you can go by yourself? And then I’m leaving and I see this girl leaving with flowers. She’s dressed really nice. Who dresses nice anymore? Nobody!

[Biz laughs.]

But this girl, she’s carrying flowers! She looks happy! She doesn’t have any kids with her. And I was jealous! I was jealous of her also, because she got to dress up and go somewhere and have flowers. If I brought home flowers they would get knocked over or turned into art projects. Who knows. So... that’s what I’ve got. We’re all doing it. That’s all.

01:03:14 Biz Host *[Chanting]* Doing it! Doing it!
01:03:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz and Theresa:** Doing it!
01:03:17 Biz Host You are... doing it. You are doing good job.
01:03:23 Theresa Host Yeah, you are.
01:03:24 Biz Host Yeah. This is a crazy place. I need to get out of this house so bad. I need to be away. From people who need me. And then it’s happened to me. Let’s say Theresa and I were doing a live show, back when that kind of thing happened. I would go to the airport and I would be so excited that I was by myself. And then I would see families. And I immediately wanted to be with my family. It’s probably some sort of natural instinct. That keeps us *[through laughter]* from just running away forever.

01:04:07 Theresa Host Yeah! It’s probably like a necessary for survival of humans? Yeah. Yeah.

01:04:11 Biz Host Yeah. Probably. Just wander—yeah. It’s—and I—it’s always surprising, because we all understand the value of boundaries? And even going to the fucking Trader Joe’s by yourself can offer a little headspace. It’s not just that you miss your kids at the grocery store. I think there’s something else happening here when we go through this. And it’s—like, would you be feeling this way looking at

a parent with their kids whose kids are pulling things from the aisles and throwing them on the ground? Right? Or just punching their brother over and over. Right? Or just asking the parent for stuff nonstop! “Can I have? Can I have? Can I have? Can I have?” Like... are they—‘cause sometimes when we’re out, everybody looks like they’re fucking perfect. Right? Everybody looks like—I can remember that time I’m in the car and there was a mom and their two kids crossing the street and everybody was just smiling crossing the street? And I was like—

[Theresa laughs.]

I was so jealous in that moment. I was like, “Look at that family. They are out. Everybody looks happy. And they’re like... doing it! Really well! We would never look like that! If you ever saw us walking across the street, I don’t think I would ever look like that.” I don’t know if that’s true, guys.

01:05:48 Theresa Host

Yeah. I am reminded of when Jesse and I used to go out on dates. When that was a thing that we did. And I remember that I would tell him—like, he would suggest a dinner place and I would say, “Well, we can’t go anywhere where there’s likely to be kids. We have to go somewhere that is not kid-friendly.” And it was for this exact reason! Like I just did not—if I was gonna go out—it’s not like I have a problem with being at a restaurant where there’s kids.

[Biz laughs.]

It’s that if I’m not gonna have my kids there, I don’t wanna be looking at other people’s kids for this exact reason. ‘Cause I would have pangs. I would have pangs of longing for my children. And I don’t—that’s not what I’m going out for. I don’t need that. I don’t need to take that on.

[Biz laughs.]

01:06:38 Biz Host

I could just stay home!
How would you feel about a romantic night—

[Theresa laughs.]

01:06:54 Theresa Host

—for the two of us in which 90% of your evening is just thinking about your own children? Yeah. No. That’s not hot. That’s horrible. And I also simultaneously feel—on different levels—that there are some errands that I do like doing with my kids. I mean I don’t really like doing errands, but if I have to do errands, some errands are errands that I would like to do with some of my kids. Actually more enjoyable as a way to pass the time with my kids, to have one of these kinds of things to do. Curtis, my little one in particular, is a delight on errands! Like, it’s like having a little buddy with you! Y’know?

[Biz laughs.]

And it’s so nice! It’s so nice. So I don’t think you’re broken. I just think *[through laughter]* what you’re—

[Biz laughs.]

—I just think what you're expressing is that feeling of, "Oh fuck, there's no going back. There's no escape from my mom brain. I'm just now a mom forever, whether I'm with my kids or I'm not with my kids. My brain is different and this is where I live now. This is where I live. And that's—"

01:07:54 Biz Host
01:07:56 Theresa Host
01:07:58 Biz Host

You live in this horrible house now. Welcome! *[Laughs.]*

[Through laughter] Yes. Yes.

Look, you're doing a good job. And the woman who was dressed up really nice getting flowers? I can tell you what their story is. Their story is they were out of clothes.

[Theresa laughs.]

And this was the only thing they had to put on. Everything else was covered in barf or whatever and they—this was it! This was it.

And—

01:08:19 Theresa Host
01:08:21 Biz Host

What are the flowers for?

The flowers? They were to cover the stain that we didn't know was there.

[Theresa laughs.]

Did you see the stain? Then I think it worked. Look, the bottom line is you are doing an amazing, remarkable job. And that's just who we all are now.

01:08:38 Theresa Host
01:08:39 Biz Host

Yes. Yes.

Yep. Secret handshake!

[Both laugh.]

01:08:42 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Theresa: Tears. The secret handshake is just seeing each other crying in public. That's the secret handshake.

01:08:52 Biz Host

Biz: Tears. The crying is the secret handshake? *[Laughs.]* Wink! Speaking of seeing each other in public, that's probably happening more and more and more. Which is probably a good time to remember that everyone has got a shit-ton of chaos going on in their lives. Whatever you wish people understood about you when you're out in the world? Just go ahead and assume that about everybody else. We're all anxious suddenly going out. We're all trying to make decisions that feel like the right decision when it comes to mask or no mask as the rules change and shift again and some of us have kids under twelve and some of us don't. And like, ahh! If I can keep a mask off my kid I would in two seconds, you know what I mean? So what's safe and what's—everybody, let's assume the best about each other. First. And that we've all put the thought into it. What's working for our family and then giving others space. You're all doing a remarkable job. It's fucking summer. And that sucks.

Theresa? You... are doing a good job. And when you and I were texting the other day in the middle of breakdowns, you—one of the things you said was, "I just needed to tell you 'cause I knew you would still think I'm doing a good job as a parent." And I just really wanted to share that. Publicly. You're welcome. Because I think

			that's really—that's just it. When we hit those places of just complete... drowning. It feels like somehow it's because we're horrible. And we've somehow raised horrible and we're horrible and everybody's judging. And it's just... it's just not true. It's not true! The two aren't related. And so I will say to you again, Theresa, you <u>are</u> doing a very good job. You are a <u>very</u> , very good mama. And—
01:11:12	Theresa	Host	Thanks, Biz.
01:11:13	Biz	Host	—I see everything you're doing.
01:11:16	Theresa	Host	Thanks, Biz. You are also doing a very, very good job.
01:11:23	Biz	Host	Thank you. And we will talk to you guys next week!
01:11:29	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz and Theresa: Byeeee!
01:11:32	Music	Music	"Mama Blues" by Cornbread Ted and the Butterbeans. Strumming acoustic guitar with harmonica and lyrics.
			<i>I got the lowdown momma blues</i> <i>Got the the lowdown momma blues</i> <i>Gots the lowdown momma blues</i> <i>The lowdown momma blues.</i> <i>Gots the lowdown momma blues</i> <i>Got the lowdown momma blues</i> <i>You know that's right.</i>
01:11:57	Biz	Host	<i>[Music fades somewhat, plays in background of dialogue.]</i> 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 . <i>One Bad Mother</i> is a member of the Maximum Fun family of podcasts. To support the show go to MaximumFun.org/donate .
01:12:26	Theresa	Host	<i>[Music continues for a while before fading out.]</i>
01:12:49	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:12:50	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:12:51	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:12:52	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:12:53	Speaker 4	Guest	—Audience supported.