

00:00:00	Biz Ellis	Host	Hi. I'm Biz.
00:00:01	Theresa Thorn	Host	And I'm Theresa.
00:00:03	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.
00:00:25	Biz	Host	<i>[Continues through dialogue.]</i> This week on <i>One Bad Mother</i> —someone's gently rapping at my chamber door. It's probably my kid. We talk with Catherine Baab-Muguirra about Edgar Allen Poe. Plus, Biz gets in the Halloween spirit!
00:00:39	Crosstalk Caller	Crosstalk Caller	Biz and caller: Woo! Hi, Biz! Good morning!
00:00:43			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			This is a check-in. I... had a total breakdown this morning. Because my toddler woke up sick. And we— <i>[lost for words, then repeated "aaaagh!"]</i> We are paying so much money to send her to a preschool that has such great COVID policies in place and is taking care of the kids and the teachers and any time any kid is sick they need to stay home, which is—which is great! And I love that. But my kid is still getting sick. And is still getting colds every-other week, which means <i>[tearfully]</i> we are spending so much money for her to stay home half the time. And it's only two days a week anyway. And I just—
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			—need that! I just really need that! <i>[Sighs.]</i> And my husband was kind of looking at me like I was nuts this morning for breaking down over this, but it has been a <i>[inaudible]</i> couple of weeks.
00:01:59	Biz	Host	It has!
00:02:01	Caller	Caller	And I am just very tired. And I couldn't drink my tea this morning 'cause I had to go to the doctor to take a glucose test. Aaagh! I think I just needed to scream. And I guess woo. Because this is—this is the shitshow I live in now. Okay. Hope your day is going better than mine. Thanks for the Hotline. Bye. You're doing a good job.
00:02:28	Biz	Host	Oh my god. You are doing such a good job! And of course you broke down. To be perfectly honest, most of the other things you had just talked about—like not being able to have tea? That could've easily been enough of a triggering event for a breakdown for many of us on many different days. I gotta tell you—even in a world in which there wasn't COVID—and let's say money wasn't an issue. 'K? Let's just say money? Not an issue. We've got our kid signed up for two days of preschool. Those two days—you can't put money on those two days. Those two days are invaluable. And when your child keeps having to miss school because of being sick—which is part of the preschool process! God! Immunity! It's really frustrating! Like, that's—I—again, in the long list of things we didn't talk about before we had kids, who's covering when a kid

stays home from school? Like, it's—it really easy for that to become a pattern. And it sounds to me like your breakdown was well-deserved. And I know that the costs of preschool are incredibly stressful. And I know that how much we rely on those designated times for our children to be somewhere else also are very important and can cause great anxiety knowing that at any minute they could fall apart. So I just want you to know that I see you. And I think you're doing a really great job. And that little noise that you made at the very beginning of this? Man. That's the noise of the situation. Like, that is a noise that's being heard all around the world right now. Like, *[Laughs.]* I know that noise! *[Aggravated loss for words.]* I know it. Speaking of all around the world, it's time for us to say thank you.

00:04:31 Music Music

Heavy electric guitar and driving percussion overlaid with “Ohh, oh-oh, oh-oh” and “Hey-ey-ey-ey-ey-ey” lyrics.

00:04:44 Biz Host

[Singing] Thaaaank youuuu, healthcare workers! Thank you, teachers! *[Laughs.]* Thank you, librarians! And—I guess thank you, preachers! *[Regular voice]* You know what? Actually, I am gonna say thank you to the faith community. It's been a hard year and I know in many cases you have been able to offer comfort and relief to a lot of families that are in need. I know for a fact that in lots of situations in which—especially when COVID was very bad and now when—with the different areas that are still struggling with COVID and people not being able to get in to see their relatives—I know a lot of times it's priests and ministers and rabbis and nuns and other members of faith leadership that are at those hospitals, acting as a liaison for families that can't be there. You know what? I—yeah. Surprised we have not said thank you already. So I just wanna say, thank you. Because that's hard. That's a lot that you have to hold and carry. So thank you very, very much.

And—again—really—thank you, medical staff. Thank you, teachers. Thank you, school administrators. Thank you, bus drivers. Thank you, the people who pack and create lunches or people who work in cafeterias. Thank you. It's remarkable. And nothing's normal. And yet we're all tootling around like it's supposedly normal. And that sort of like... disconnect between reality *[through laughter]* and what's really happening? And what we feel like is supposed to be happening? Can be really, really surprisingly stressful. So thank you.

You know what's not stressful? That is how we like to celebrate Halloween around this house. We recently—and I'm gonna need to watch it again—we recently watched *Curious George's Boo Fest*. This is still a family favorite. We know all the lines to *Curious George's Boo Fest*. We find it very funny. *[Spooky voice]* “This is the house of very scary fish!” That movie is a delight. And we all piled onto the couch the other day, put it on, and watched it and giggled in great delight. And it made it feel like Halloween. And that was really nice. I was very excited. Stay tune for *A Very Christmas Monkey* coming in December. Speaking of getting in the mood for Halloween, you know what? When this comes out, I'm pretty sure Halloween's just a few days later. You know me—I'll be a sad witch sitting in a car in car line that day. *[Laughs.]* But what better to put us in the Halloween mood than talking to our guest today,

Catherine Baab-Muguira, about the power of Poe-sitive thinking.
Ha, ha, ha!

00:07:47 Music Music
00:07:48 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.

00:07:55 Biz Host
If you are married to the host of *One Bad Mother*, we definitely are talking about you.

00:07:59 Theresa Host
00:08:02 Biz Host
Nothing we say constitutes professional parenting advice. Biz and Theresa’s children are brilliant, lovely, and exceedingly extraordinary.

00:08:06 Theresa Host
Nothing said on this podcast about them implies otherwise.

[Banjo music fades out.]

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

00:08:12 Biz Host
This week, I am so excited to be talking to Catherine Baab-Muguira, who is a writer and journalist who has contributed to, among others, *Slate*, *Quartz*, CNBC, and NBC News. A frequent podcast and radio guest with appearances on NPR and *Lifhackers’s Upgrade*. And now her first book—*Poe For Your Problems: Uncommon Advice from History’s Least Likely Self-Help Guru*—welcome, Catherine! *[Laughs.]*

00:08:41 Catherine Baab-Muguira Guest
I am thrilled to be here! Thank you for having me!

00:08:44 Biz Host
Well before we get in to all of the really wonderful advice that Edgar Allen Poe—it’s really—I mean, he’s a bar to set up high—

[Both laugh.]

00:08:58 Catherine Guest
I wanna ask—who lives in your house?
Okay. So I have a—I was trying to remember the age of my kid.

[Biz laughs.]

00:09:21 Biz Host
He is—*[Laughs.]* He’s almost fifteen months. And then we have—so there’s my husband, too. Our little boy is fifteen months. My husband is here. And we have a humongous cat who weighs like thirty pounds, and his name is Tuna and he lives here, too.
Tuna?! I also have a cat who we’ve never weighed ‘cause we can’t pick them up. I’m gonna—that’s not true. I can pick that cat up. But it’s probably—it could easily be a lot—do you just call Tuna a Maine Coon and be done with it? Just pretend?

[Catherine laughs.]

00:09:37 Catherine Guest
I should! I wondered—we’re at the point of like, vet shopping. Like someone who needs pills. ‘Cause we were so sick of being body-shamed about this cat. Or the cat being body-shamed.

[Biz laughs.]

00:09:50 Biz Host
00:09:54 Catherine Guest
00:09:55 Biz Host
00:09:58 Catherine Guest
Oh, poor baby. He a good cat. Tuna is a good cat!
He is!
And that—some cats live the voluptuous life, and that is fine.
Yes. I agree.

00:10:01 Biz Host Oh my gosh. Fifteen months. That's not really a number you're supposed to remember easily at this stage. I just wanna let you know. That's like—fifteen months—how ya doing? *[Laughs.]*

00:10:09 Catherine Guest Oh my god. I am so tired!

00:10:13 Biz Host Tired! *[Laughs.]*

00:10:15 Catherine Guest And speaking of remembering things—I mean, it's like his age I can't remember. And I can't remember anything else. Like—

00:10:19 Biz Host Yeah, no. No.

00:10:21 Catherine Guest Edgar Allen Poe—did he write *The Raven*? I don't know! *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

00:10:25 Biz Host I know. I get ya. I'm with you. And luckily, this is a good audience for you. Because you have a lot of people who are listening who are also very tired and are also, like, "I think that there was like a PBS cartoon in which they quoted Edgar Allen Poe on *Arthur & Friends*?" Anyway. So, look. You're doing a really good job. Because you made all these things happen during a pandemic. I'm so excited.

00:10:49 Catherine Guest Yeah! You should—*[Laughs.]* Everybody needs to understand that she says, "I'm so excited" and she looks like she could take a nap. She was making a nap face for a second. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:51 Biz Host I was. I was about to go to sleep just then. But I was really excited to do this particular podcast because I felt like maybe I wouldn't have to be like, "Oh, that's the baby. Sorry everyone." Because—

00:10:58 Catherine Guest Oh, no. It's—if the baby starts, go get the—I am not kidding. We've had people that we've talked to while they're in car line. Picking up their kids. A closet. Several closets. There have been several—

00:11:09 Biz Host *[Catherine laughs.]*

—full-on, hiding in the closet in order—and then you still might hear the scratch—

[Catherine laughs.]

—or as I was joking earlier, the rap-rap-rapping on your chamber door!

00:11:33 Catherine Guest Hell, yeah! That's exactly it!

00:11:35 Biz Host Let's jump into the book, because what I tell all of our guests who have very young children in your house, we can make this interview very short and then you tell everybody else that the interview is going for another hour. And then you—*[Laughs.]* You just sleep! Sneak out! *[Laughs.]*

00:11:49 Catherine Guest This is the plan now. Okay. Let's do it.

00:11:52 Biz Host Okay. Very good. Very good plan. Okay. So you have created this remarkable book, *Poe For Your Problems: Uncommon Advice from History's Least Likely Self-Help Guru*. I think it's important to read all of those things so people really know what we're talking about. I gotta ask—this—how—and this is also a very cliché book question. How did it come about? Let's go ahead and get that one out of the way before we get to some more fun questions. *[Laughs.]*

00:12:20 Catherine Guest Sure. So—alright. I'm from Richmond, Virginia, which is arguably Poe's hometown, too. And I live there now. And so I encountered him when I was in elementary school and I was a big reader, exactly like you'd expect. And so I read and loved him when I was in fourth grade and fifth grade. And then I grew up and kind of

forgot all about him, like you do. And in 2016—late 2016—let’s call it November 10th—I got very depressed.

[Biz laughs.]

00:12:50 Biz Host And—
Wait! Who—that’s so funny! I’m laughing really hard because all we do is talk about depression on this show. In fact, we—we love the depression. We embrace it here.

00:13:03 Catherine Guest Excellent. Because that’s where this is going. I joke about November 10th, but it was a lot of different things in my life. Like it is. And I mean I’ve always had depressive episodes, too. So this just happened to be the worst one yet. And I don’t know what it is—what it was—but I had some intuition that led me to start re-reading Poe for the first time since I was little. And it was this revelatory experience. I discovered that these torture stories that I thought were just plain old adventure tales were actually metaphors for the pain of the human condition, for depression and anxiety and despair. And it spoke to me in this profound way and then I started reading all the Poe biographies and it sounds cliché or even, y’know, reductive, but in spite of everything that life threw at him, I saw he persisted and did his work anyway. Which was such an inspiring message for me when I was at that really low point. And then like you do, I was out for a drink with a buddy of mine and I was telling him, like, “This is the weirdest thing, but Edgar Allen Poe is cheering me up.” And he said, “That sounds like a book.” And I joked back at the time. I was like, “Oh, yeah. It’s gonna be called *How to Say Nevermore To Your Problems: Poe for Self-Help.*”

[Biz laughs.]

00:14:22 Biz Host And I wrote it down on a cocktail napkin—
Yes you did! Oh, thank you! I was just like, “Please tell me you wrote it down on a cocktail napkin.” *[Laughs.]*

00:14:26 Catherine Guest I did! I did! With like, y’know, drawings and such. So here we are now, years later.

00:14:33 Biz Host Y’know, I think—I’m so glad that you shared that. Because I think we live in a world—especially in an American culture—that has got at many times the wrong view of mental health. For example, depression. As a person who has had bouts of clinical depression, y’know, I mean... who doesn’t? Anyway. I feel like on this show we’ve discussed how with motherhood, people can dismiss depression as just, “You’re tired and you’ll get through this and then you’ll be fine.” Right? If you’re depressed at the beginning or middle or... any time. And with that I think there’s this theory that if you are depressed, you shouldn’t read depressing things. Because it’s gonna make you worse. Pretty sure that’s probably tied into some rest cure theory that, y’know, “Women! Stop thinking! Don’t read!”

[Catherine laughs.]

“It’s going to upset you! Don’t be upset!” Can I ask—was there a particular Poe story or poem that really—you were just like, “This is the one I want.” *[Laughs.]* “At my funeral.” Or whatever? Was there like a, “My t-shirt.” My whatever.

00:15:48	Catherine	Guest	<p>Yeah. Two I can think of. And I read them probably in this order. But <i>A Manuscript Found in a Bottle</i>—one of Poe’s earliest Gothic horror stories. It’s about a guy who is in a shipwreck and then gets tossed onto another ship that turns out to be crewed by ghosts, and then it’s being sucked into a whirlpool and there’s no hope for anyone. And that really spoke to me at that moment when I was super down. I said, “Yep. It’s a whirlpool. We’re all getting sucked down.” And then <i>The Pit and the Pendulum</i>, which a lot of people will know. The first couple of lines—at this time in my life I was reading in the bathtub and just tears rolling down my face, but the first couple of lines are:</p> <p>“I was sick. Sick unto death with that long agony.”</p> <p>And it was so cathartic to have that pain acknowledged. It’s funny that you mentioned that “stop reading depressing things” because at the time my therapist was like, “Pleeease quit this! He’s too depressing!” And I mean, that wasn’t my experience of it, though, at all! I think sometimes you really need a mirror. Or something that seems like a mirror. Where it’s not dismissed.</p>
00:16:57	Biz	Host	<p>I think it’s actually fascinating that you—you read Poe. You wound up coming back to Poe. It wound up serving more as a mirror than as, y’know, a weight. And you then continued to see not only the benefits of sometimes seeing a mirror, but sort of all of these different Poe <i>[through laughter]</i> experiences and Poe approaches to life. That fit in in so many other ways. I am not saying that this is a true, “Let’s all start a cult” self-help book. It’s much more of like a anti-, y’know, sort of self-help. But! At the same time, it made me feel better <i>[through laughter]</i> about a lot of stuff I was doing!</p>
00:17:46	Catherine	Guest	<p>Oh good! I’m so glad!</p>
00:17:48	Biz	Host	<p>Y’know? Like, “Oh, I—y’know.” And even my oldest, who—by the way—around fourth grade started reading Poe and they’ve got a big book of Poe in their room and they’ve of course stepped away as well. So I love hearing that, yeah, that seems about the right age to kind of get into it. They picked it up and started reading through some of it and were getting really—and they’re like twelve right now. But getting like—so they’re right in that perfect moment of, like, sarcasm and yet still, like, “Is this for real?” And like, “Everything’s awful. But everything’s great.” Yeah! And so like— <i>[Laughs.]</i></p>
00:18:25	Catherine	Guest	<p>Oh, I love it! This is perfect!</p>
00:18:27	Biz	Host	<p>It is so perfect! So—okay. You start writing it. And so I gotta ask—how did you—how did you approach or just did it unfold pretty naturally as you were starting the process? Y’know, these different categories. You’ve got like “Poe for Work.” “Poe for Relationships.” <i>[Laughs.]</i> How did you—how did you get there?</p>
00:18:49	Catherine	Guest	<p>You know how you make big messy notes?</p>
00:18:51	Biz	Host	<p>Yes. Some of us. <i>[Laughs.]</i></p>
00:18:53	Catherine	Guest	<p>And that was kind of how this—I was trying to be like, Poe’s weirdness and his fuckups and oh my god this particular story from his biography. So I just like, “What are the categories?” Like, “Fucking up professionally. Fucking up in your romantic life. Fucking up with your creative career.” So then I was like kind of dividing these all into those categories and that’s how that worked. And it ended up being a good framework because his biography does roughly fall into those—</p>

00:19:20	Biz	Host	Categories?
00:19:22	Catherine	Guest	'Cause he screwed up in five major ways.
00:19:27	Biz	Host	<p><i>[Biz laughs.]</i></p> <p>It's so good! I was reading—I guess I had kind of—when I first got it, was skimming around and got to the relationships stuff. And I was just like—there's a scene in which he had been staying, I guess, with like an aunt and a cousin? But it probably wasn't a cousin. It was probably somebody even closer. And then like he had to leave and then that cousin... was—it became very convoluted. Eventually, though, he freaked out and wrote this letter to his aunt being like, "I must marry her—I will die! I will die!" I'm like, "Wow. These—" <i>[Laughs.]</i> There were so many things that Poe said in romantic situations in order to manipulate somebody. To be with him. That I thought, "How am I gonna explain <i>[through laughter]</i>—" Like, I just feel like to my child, I'm like, "If they ever do this, run! You're not—" but it's—it's so awful! What did—what's the worst thing that Poe did that you were just like, "I really can't believe this is something that we got to—that I even have to write about it." And it doesn't have to be the weird incest. <i>[Laughs.]</i></p>
00:20:36	Catherine	Guest	Okay. There's—well if you were to look beyond the incest—
00:20:42	Biz	Host	Sure. Looking beyond the incest, everybody. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:20:44	Catherine	Guest	Okay. This is what I find so intensely relatable. He did marry his thirteen-year-old cousin. No one's glossing over that fact. It's very weird. Their relationship, to all evidence, was loving and affectionate and they were married for almost eleven years. But anyway, after Virginia's death, Poe—like, he initially just absolutely collapsed because he couldn't take it. It was an echo of his own mother's death. And then he spends a year boring everyone he knows with this idea that he has figured out the material, spiritual, mathematical, metaphysical universe.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			<p>And he understands the galaxy and how it works and God is an author just like himself, so he's definitely equating them. And as a culmination of all these things he gives this lecture which he called his "Eureka Lecture" in early 1848 and it was a public meltdown on par with, like—and I say this being mildly mentally ill myself—it was like, Charlie Sheen babbling about tiger blood. It was Britney Spears with the umbrella. Like, and I say that loving Britney. So Poe had this amazing public meltdown in the wake of his wife's death, which was also at the same time I would say a really beautiful working-out of his grief. And to this day, y'know, you have university professors saying that Poe predicted the Big Bang Theory. That he—there was a huge book by John Tresch that came out earlier this year. And he was talking about how Poe predicted various scientific theories. I can't follow the science. I can definitely follow the public meltdown, though.</p>
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:22:24	Biz	Host	<p>I just love and admire. So—</p> <p>I like that there, out in the world, are all of these other approaches to Poe. Right? Like, y'know, here is this—with science and with</p>

physics and with—and that they're all like, "Ooh! I gotta get you this book called *Poe For Your Problems!*" [Laughs.]

[Catherine laughs.]

00:22:49 Catherine Guest Right? Like, that's just—sitting on some Harvard professor's wall. I love it! You're part of a weird Poe club now. How does that feel? It is! It's a weird little cult. And we're all kind of pathetic in our own ways, but it's definitely real. There's a biographer that jokes about the pathological identification that you develop if you spend time with him? And it's so true!

00:23:04 Biz Host [Biz laughs.] Alright. If there was one bit of help that you found besides being a mirror—that you found that Poe was really able to set a bar for you in some way—that you found really good—what, in the writing of this, what came out like that for you?

00:23:26 Catherine Guest I think the big takeaway is that he is a person who made so many mistakes, public and private. Not just the meltdown with the Eureka Lecture. It was also—he picked so many professional fights. Even with people who were supposed to be friends of his and people who could've employed him when he needed money.

[Biz laughs.]

He just screwed up left and right. And yet those things kind of fed into his success, in a sense. Like, his bad reputation is what makes him well-known to this day. So notoriety can work for you. Your personal dire flaws can also work for you. And that was such a cheerful message for me because—

[Biz laughs.]

—like anyway, I'm obsessed with the things that I've done wrong and I've regularly, like, just walking along and cringing at some memory from thirteen years ago. So—yeah! Maybe it's all working out, even if it doesn't feel like it is.

00:24:16 Biz Host [Biz laughs.] That's right. Even—after we're all long dead and buried, we will be remembered for something. [Laughs.] Yeah. Okay. Did you ever have a moment where you thought, "Oh, no. I've run out of Edgar Allen Poe puns." [Laughs.]

00:24:31 Catherine Guest Well—I will say I didn't think I could top myself after I came up—bragging about myself, but "The Poe-posed Driven Life," where I can pun on Rick Warren. And take it in a stark direction. I was like, "Alright. That's it. I can't do better than that, ever."

[Biz laughs.]

00:24:52 Biz Host And that's the height of my career and it's passed now. Right there. [Laughs.] Guys, this is full of the Poe puns. Which is delightful. Okay. For example, just—there's trolling as a fine art. As a category. And it made me think how—how successful would Poe be today at being a troll? Probably the king of trolls. Right? Like, probably—

00:25:15	Catherine	Guest	I think he'd be amazing at Twitter.
00:25:17	Biz	Host	Yeah. To the point where he might not be able to get anything else done. Because he was only trolling. Right?
00:25:23	Catherine	Guest	He'd be on Reddit and he'd never move beyond it, probably.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			Or some other really—not saying all of Reddit is dark—but he'd be in some dark corner of the internet.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:25:34	Biz	Host	Oh, alright. Catherine? This is delightful. And I only wish there was an—and I look forward to!—a future book on Poe and parenting. Because that's gotta be right around—
00:25:46	Catherine	Guest	Poe-renting.
00:25:47	Biz	Host	Yeah! Poe my god, I just can't even stand—
00:25:51	Catherine	Guest	I said I couldn't top—no, I'm just kidding.
00:25:53	Biz	Host	But then you did it! But then you did it. This was right here, on this show. We got Poe-renting. Poe-renting. I love it. Thank you for joining us. Thanks for writing this book. Guys? This is a delight. It is a absolute hilarious and insightful—it makes me wanna go back to all my Poe. It's very funny, because I am like our PTA person at the school? But at our school we call it the WPO—the School-Parent Organization. And so I've made all these little things for Instagram that say—oh, and our—our mascot is a raven. And so I'm like, "Quoth the raven, volunteer! Signed, W-POE." Right? So, y'know. We're kindred—
00:26:40	Catherine	Guest	I love that!
00:26:41	Biz	Host	I know! We're kindred—you gotta find your—find your fun! We—everybody knows how to find books. But we are going to still link you up to where you can access this book, as well as getting to know more about Catherine. Catherine, thank you so much. You're doing such a great job. Fifteen months? Give me a break. Give me a break!
00:27:01	Catherine	Guest	<i>[Sighs.]</i> Thank you. I hopefully survive.
00:27:03	Biz	Host	You— <i>[Laughs.]</i> And if not, as we've learned from Poe, you will go down a blaze of flaming glory.
00:27:08	Catherine	Guest	The more I screw up, the better this is gonna go.
00:27:12	Biz	Host	Yes! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Catherine laughs.]</i>
			You are a parent. Good job! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:27:15	Catherine	Guest	<i>[Sighs.]</i> Thank you! Thank you so much. I love the podcast.
00:27:18	Biz	Host	Thank you so much. And I hope you have a very happy Halloween.
00:27:22	Catherine	Guest	I was gonna say, Happy Halloween to you, too!
00:27:25	Music	Music	"Ones and Zeroes" by "Awesome." Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:27:42	Music	Promo	Inspirational keyboard music plays in background.
00:27:43	Biz	Promo	<i>One Bad Mother</i> is supported in part by Smalls. <i>[singing]</i> Give your feline friend protein-packed meals they'll crave with Smalls! Guys? <i>[Laughs.]</i> Delicious! Smalls is fresh, human-grade food for cats delivered right to your doorstep. With the help of cat nutritionists, Smalls develops complete and balanced recipes for all life stages.

Guys? I gotta tell ya—I got three cats. One, this cat food does not smell. Two, all of my cats are eating all of it. All of it! And I gotta tell ya, they seem very satisfied. Plus, I like giving my cats food that I can recognize. All you have to do is go to Smalls.com/badmother. There you can take a short quiz to customize your sampler, and use code “badmother” for a total of 30% off your first order. That’s Smalls.com/badmother, code “badmother.”

00:28:48	Music	Promo	<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:28:49	Biz	Promo	Cheerful ukulele with whistling plays in background. <i>One Bad Mother</i> is supported in part by Wild Alaskan Company. If you like to cook, you know that flavorful meals start with high-quality food and simple ingredients. With Wild Alaskan Company, their seafood is frozen right after it’s caught for peak freshness. All you need are a few simple ingredients and you’ve got a delicious lunch or dinner for your whole family. We got some spot prawns and let me tell you, those spot prawns are spot gone. They were delicious! And I’m Southern. So as healthy as seafood is, I like to fry it. Right now you can get \$15 off your first box of premium seafood when you visit WildAlaskanCompany.com/badmother . That’s WildAlaskan—A-L-A-S-K-A-N—Company.com/badmother .
00:29:41	Theresa	Host	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> 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.
00:30:01	Biz	Host	Genius fail time. Genius me.
00:30:05	Clip	Clip	<i>[Dramatic, swelling music in background.]</i>
00:30:18	Biz	Host	Biz: Wow! Oh my God! Oh my <u>God!</u> I <u>saw</u> what you did! Oh my God! I’m paying <u>attention!</u> <u>Wow!</u> You, mom, are a <u>genius</u> . Oh my <u>God</u> , that’s <u>fucking genius!</u> Oh my god! I have one. Okay. History shows that Ellis does not like having his hair washed. This is—the kid is like about to be eight? <i>[Laughs.]</i> In a month? And still—oh. I—he—maybe they’ll never shower. Maybe. I dunno. It’s been a lot of like—we happen to have one of those tubs that has the extension hose showerhead? So that’s how we normally do it. It involves a lot of screaming. Putting cups over our ears. “My eyes! My eyes! There’s water in my ear!” We just don’t wash his hair a lot. Which has been a fail in its own right here a few times. Anyway. Recently, I—and by the way, I had offered this before. And it was not well received. But it had been maybe seven months to a year? And I tried again. And I said, “Would you like to wash your hair salon style?” And I explained that he would sit on the toilet with his feet up, turned just so so that his head could lay over the edge of the tub, on a towel, and they found this very comfortable. And I washed their hair salon style. And they loved it so much. They’re like, “We could wash it every day! Because now I really love hair washing.” I’m like, “Wow. Let’s settle down. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Settle down. The salon is only open every once in a while.” But anyway, it’s wound up being awesome and I felt like a super genius.
00:31:50	Caller	Caller	<i>[Answering machine beeps.]</i>

I have a really simple genius. You know those plastic tubs for storing baby wipes in that we probably all have a couple dozen sitting around the house? Still left over? They are the absolute perfect size for holding a pack of surgical masks. So if you keep a box of masks in your car, you can put them in the wipe container and they're contained. They won't end up on the floor if you take a turn too fast, and then you can just pop it open, grab one, put it on you, put it on your kid, and go on about your day! That's my genius. You're all doing a good job.

00:32:27 Biz Host

I... love this. I feel like parents have developed a special skill, what with pacifiers dropping, Little comfort loveys or rattles. Like, we've all figured out how to attach *[through laughter]* y'know, pacifiers or certain stroller toys to the stroller or to the child so they don't fall onto the ground. Now this is ingenuity through things that were laying around. Like, for example, using a pacifier strap on a favorite toy at a restaurant in a highchair. Now you've just carried this on with the wipes boxes! Which—y'know, I ain't got any babies in this house anymore, and I am sure there's still a wipe box floating around the garage. But to have that in the back of the car? With the masks in it? That is freaking genius! Failures.

00:33:26 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.]

00:33:32 Biz Host

Biz: *[Calmly]* You suck!

Fail me, me. Okay. I can. This was delightfully epic as well. So... earlier this week, I had to go to my parents' apartment to do a virtual doctor's appointment with my mom. So I had to be there a little before three to sit with her. As soon as I got to the apartment, I reached into my purse to get the apartment keys and that's where I saw Stefan's car keys. For their car. That I had used several days earlier. We just don't drive a lot of places. *[Laughs.]* The pandemic is still here. And so I suddenly realized Stefan didn't have a way to go get our children from school. And I didn't have time to turn around and go back home and still make the doctor's appointment for my mother. And so—and we're like—it's like twenty minutes 'til three. I then have to—I just emailed everybody I knew at the school. *[Laughs.]* And I included the after-school guy. And was like, "Uh, can Ellis and Raiden stay there today and can someone figure out how to tell my children that they're staying there? And for Ellis, just let them know in a really easy manner? 'Cause they're not gonna be happy?" And y'know, I thought I had had a minor victory. In that the messages all got out and both children were able to go to after-care. By the time I went to get them, Ellis got in the car and was like, "Don't you ever do that again!" And so I got to then drive home with a very upset seven-year-old. So. That didn't help. With the failures. *[Sighs.]*

00:35:21 Caller Caller

[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi, *One Bad Mother*. This is a fail. So I'm working from home this week, but normally my commute to work is about forty minutes one way. I work in a small office of nineteen fully-vaccinated people and a couple of months ago we had our very first potluck since the

pandemic started. And of course I hadn't had time to run to the store. So I used our grocery delivery app to have my contribution brought to me at the office. So now when I order groceries, that address to the office seems to be stuck in there so I have to remember to change it. And... but today I didn't. So while I'm happily working away at home, my groceries are being delivered to my office forty minutes away. Uh, yeah. I'm... really thankful for my coworkers who accepted the delivery and put everything that needed to be in the fridge in the office refrigerator. So now my husband's at home. He's getting our four-year-old ready for bed. And I'm driving eighty minutes round-trip to get our groceries.

[Biz laughs.]

I mean, I guess I did get a little bit of alone time in there? So maybe there's a sliver of a genius? *[Sighs.]* I don't know. But y'all are doing a great job. And mostly? I just suck.

00:36:42 Biz Host

Ohhh! Okay. You suck a little. *[Laughs.]* It's like—it's like the not remembering to change everything out of one bag into another bag. Like, the diaper bag into your "I am a person" purse. Oh! I have done something very similar with Amazon deliveries. Like, ordering—and pizza! Like if I was visiting my parents in Alabama, I would order the pizza through this app and put their address in. And then I'd get all the way back here and I would order pizza and be like, "Where's my pizza?" And then I would realize it was going to my parents' house. Lucky for them, they got pizza. I am so sorry. Just nothing can be easy, can it? Oh well. You're doing *[through laughter]* a horrible job ordering groceries and remembering to, I dunno, take care of stuff. Oh well. *[Laughs.]*

00:37:34 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.*

00:37:59 Promo Clip

[Music fades out.]

Music: Fun, jaunty, upbeat music.

Renee Colvert: Well, hello. I'm Renee Colvert.

Alexis Preston: Hi, I'm Alexis Preston. And we're the hosts of [Can I Pet Your Dog?](#)

Renee: And we got breaking news. We got an exposé! All the beans have been spilled, via... an Apple Podcast review that said, "This show isn't well researched."

[Alexis gasps.]

Renee: Well, yeah, no duh. Of course it's not! Not since the day we started has it been well researched! Guessing and anthropomorphizing dogs is what we do.

Alexis: The *Can I Pet Your Dog?* promise is that we will never do more than ten seconds of research before telling you excitedly about any dog we see.

Renee: I'm gonna come atcha with top-ten enthusiasm, minimal facts.

Alexis: *[Chuckling.]* We're here for a good time, not an educated time.

Renee: So, if you love dogs and you don't love research—

[Alexis cackles.]

Renee: Well, you know what. Come on in to *Can I Pet Your Dog?* podcast, every Tuesday on Maximum Fun network.

[Alexis giggles as the music ends.]

00:38:48 Promo Clip

Music: Slow, light ragtime piano music plays in background.

[Sound of gavel banging three times.]

John Hodgman: I'm Judge John Hodgman.

Jesse Thorn: And I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn!

John: Ten years ago I came on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* and judged my first dispute: is chili a soup? It a stew, obviously.

Jesse: The Judge has dispensed a decade of justice. He's the one person wise enough to answer the really important questions. Like, should you hire a mime to perform at your own funeral?

Speaker 1: After they cry, I want them to laugh.

John: Do you really need a tank full of jellyfish in your den?

[Someone laughs.]

Speaker 2: They smell like living creatures decaying!

Speaker 3: Only if they are decaying.

Speaker 2: Yeah, which they will be.

John: Real people. Real justice. Real comedy.

Jesse: Winner of the Webby Award for Best Comedy Podcast.

John: The Judge John Hodgman podcast—every Wednesday on MaximumFun.org!

00:39:39 Biz Host

[Music ceases. Gavel bangs three times.]

Alright, everybody. It is time... to... listen to a mom have a breakdown.

00:39:45 Caller Caller

[Answering machine beeps.]

Hey, Biz. Long-time listeners since the OG days. I remember at one point you—well, actually for a while you discussed how you were angry and you were rage-y and you were yelling a lot. At your kids. At your family. And... you got help for it. And you changed. At least, I think. I don't know. I was wondering if you could check back in on that on the show. Just talk about it. Just... mention it again. I've got a toddler and I'm dealing with all of that. I'm just now starting my journey to get help with it, because this is not the person that I am and this is not the parent that I wanted to be or that I am. And... I know that there's more than just me out there that's dealing with this. And I need to hear it. I need to hear that there's another side and that it gets better. And that... the help worked. And I know that there's someone else out there that needs to hear that, too. And I really wish that you would talk about it again, or some more, of where you are in it. I'm sure that it's heavy and it's hard to dig into your personal shit. Probably harder than ever, because of everything that's happening, but I could really use it. So... just think about it? Thank you.

00:41:40 Biz Host

Okay. First of all, you're doing a great job. And you know what? I think it would be really good to do a show in which I have a chance to circle back on what the last few years have been like. I... I want you to know that I see you, and that that rage and anger that you're feeling? It doesn't make you a bad parent or a bad person. I can still look back on that particular time where it had gotten very bad for me. For whatever reason, the image I can remember the most is sitting in front of the—like, sitting. Not standing. Sitting down. In front of the dryer. 'Cause I just couldn't stand up anymore. I guess it was as about to pull clothes out or maybe I was pulling clothes out? And there was just so much noise happening in the house and crying and screaming and just, like, demanding. And I... could hear myself snapping. And I could feel that—I don't know how to describe it. *[Laughs.]* That, like, seething... simmering... aaah! Like you wanna just yell, "Everybody, shut up! I'm going out for milk and I'm never coming back!" Y'know? Like—or just screaming! Just screaming. Right? Like, I remember that feeling so clearly. And... that was just one of a few moments that made me realize something was—something was off. And I want to emphasize that that's a real distinction. Being a parent puts us under a remarkable amount of pressure. And that doesn't even include whatever other things we have going on in our lives. It is exhausting. It is insistent and persistent. And there is very little space to breathe or replenish. And in any other circumstance? People would be like, "Take a vacation." Or like, "Go on a retreat." Or "Go have a massage." But no one—no one really does that for parents. I'll say it—I think especially moms. When they're—again, it falls back into this, like... this assumption that we really like being parents all the time. And that we asked for it. *[Laughs.]* And that it'll just work itself out. Right? And I needed to get into therapy and I needed to be with a therapist who had a sort of family therapy background so I could talk about my relationship with my kids. With this person. Who would be able to help me understand where they were developmentally. And just the fact that they might be approaching life differently than I am, which can cause such—"Why wouldn't you just pick that up?!" *[Laughs.]* Like, "Oh, because they don't see it

00:45:43	Biz	Host	<p>that way!" It has been, I guess... three—it's been a while. But I got on medication maybe two or three years ago. That has allowed me to be able to function and work on things that I wanna work on and establish healthier patterns in a way that will let me eventually step down from that medication and—and really be at a better place. So I'm gonna leave you with that right now and just say, y'know, we will touch base on this. I think you are doing an amazing job. You are <u>not</u> alone. Seeking help is a great strength. And just keep checking back in with us. Okay? You're doing a remarkable job. Guys? If there was a sort of synchronistic, like, theme of this show—the one that's jumping out at me is mental health. 'K? <i>[Laughs.]</i> I mean, our guest, Catherine, talked about her depression and talked about how reading Edgar Allen Poe, for example, really was therapeutic and provided a mirror. And I think with our rant caller that they were looking for a mirror. And I certainly am very happy to talk about my own personal experiences so that I can find other mirrors and/or be a mirror. Because it's really easy to feel like you're the only one. And help is available and out there. I'm not saying it's easy to get it. Right now it's very complicated. Y'know. It costs money. There's a lot of backlog. People are waiting and not taking new patients. I'm not saying that it's easy! I am just saying that it's out there. And... with support, you can access it. Okay? You are all doing a good job. No one is nailing it. No one is, like, living the perfect Instagram/Facebook-pictured life. Not even a little. Everybody's kid is screaming in Target. Everybody has probably cried in a Target parking lot at some point. If not, it's coming. Right? We all have had poop in the tub. We're all dealing with loss on some level, given this last year and a half. It's... a... lot. Okay? A lot! You're all doing a very good job. I hope that you are a sad witch—sad mom witch—or something really fun. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Or you just steal all your kid's Halloween candy and give yourself a night watching Netflix. I don't—whatever—whatever makes your Halloween special. I will talk to you next week. Bye!</p>
00:47:57	Music	Music	<p>"Mama Blues" by Cornbread Ted and the Butterbeans. Strumming acoustic guitar with harmonica and lyrics.</p> <p><i>I got the lowdown mamma blues Got the the lowdown mamma blues Gots the lowdown mamma blues The lowdown mamma blues. Gots the lowdown mamma blues Got the lowdown mamma blues You know that's right.</i></p>
00:48:22	Biz	Host	<p><i>[Music fades somewhat, plays briefly 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.</p>
00:48:51	Theresa	Host	<p><i>One Bad Mother</i> is a member of the Maximum Fun family of podcasts. To support the show go to MaximumFun.org/donate.</p>

00:49:14	Music	Transition	<i>[Music continues for a while before fading out.]</i>
00:49:15	Speaker 1	Guest	A cheerful ukulele chord.
00:49:16	Speaker 2	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
00:49:18	Speaker 3	Guest	Comedy and culture.
00:49:19	Speaker 4	Guest	Artist owned— —Audience supported.