

MELANIE
DALE

UN
CEN
SOR
ED



UNEXPECTED MEDIA PRESENTS A MELANIE DALE PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION
 WITH THE LAPTOP IN THE BASEMENT A RAINBOW NERDS AFTER MIDNIGHT FILM
 "MELANIE DALE: UNCENSORED" MELANIE DALE HER LONG SUFFERING FAMILY
 THE BOGGART UNDER THE STAIRS THE UNFLUSHED DOOKIE NO ONE WILL CLAIM
 WITH PILE OF DIRTY LAUNDRY AND DRIED CHEESY EGG DISHES ORIGINAL SCORE BY MOMMY? MOMMY?
 MOMMY? WHAT ARE YOU DOING MOMMY? MOMMY CAN I COME IN? MOMMY?
 COSTUME DESIGNER YOGA PANTS FROM THE CLEARANCE RACK AT TARGET DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY THE IPHONE
 WITH THE SCHWEET INSTAGRAM FILTER THAT MAKES EVERYTHING SHINY
 WRITTEN BY A VERY TIRED MOM WHO OVERSHARES PRODUCED BY HUSBAND DALE IN EXCHANGE
 FOR A NECK RUB AND A SHOT AT GETTING LUCKY DIRECTED BY WE WERE
 SUPPOSED TO HAVE ONE OF THOSE!?!

unexpected.org
steer into the surprise



pile productions

I NEED
 A HUG
 FILMS

NPG

NON-PARENTS GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
 SOME MATERIALS MAY BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR NON-PARENTS
 IF THEY STILL WANT TO BECOME PARENTS IN THE FUTURE

PUBLIC BREASTFEEDING, PRESCHOOL VOMITING, AND MILDLY
 INAPPROPRIATE REFERENCES TO DETACHABLE BODY PARTS

special features

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How to Speak Melanie

THANK YOU FOR ORDERING MY BOOK. YOU'RE MY NEW FAVORITE PERSON.

Because you're completely awesome, I'm giving you extra bonus material.

While I kind of feel like I should pretend that I sit around at night poring through deep, theological texts, the truth is, I adore movies and have endeavored to cram as many movie quotes into *Women Are Scary* as possible. I watch my favorites again and again, and when I buy a new DVD, the first thing I do is go straight to the special features. I want to know everything about how the movie was made and will sit through hours of commentary on my favorite movies.

So as a fist bump to all my favorite DVDs, I've set up this ebook like movie bonus features. Consider this the Blu-Ray combo pack with special features, gag reel, deleted scene, and a backstage pass.

When writing the book, some things had to be cut, whether for length or content. And I have a never-ending supply of embarrassing or disgusting stories of mom dating and parenting and parenting while mom dating, so I thought I'd cram in a few of these here, plus extra behind-the-scenes stuff.

I realize that since you're getting this before the book, you have no idea what's in the book and this bonus material is completely out of context. So this is very "wibbly wobbly, timey wimey," to quote *Doctor Who*. Like you may be wondering, "What the heck is mom dating? I thought I ordered a book about finding friends." So I think before we get into the extras, we need a little sneak peek of the book to come.

Finding mom friends is kind of like dating. And just like the other kind of dating, there are bases.

On first base, you make small talk during your children's shared activity, like music class or swimming lessons. Second is a playdate on neutral territory, like the park. Third is a little more intimate, a playdate at your house. There could be dirty dishes and random pee-pee jammies lying in a corner. Fourth base, the homer, is magic, when you ditch the kids and go out with your friend just because you like each other.

I have combined all my favorite things into one big bad book – movie quotes, Bible verses, tweets and Facebook posts, funny stories, and stories from other moms. When I set out to write the

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book, I asked my Facebook friends what they wanted to know about “mom dating.” And then I wrote about that and added in everything I like. I hope you snort laugh at least once and maybe get some ideas for developing friendships, too.

I’m going to take you “around the bases” to your friendship home runs. In other words, I’ll teach you how to score with moms. Yeeeah, that sounds awkward. Check out the sneak peak of the *Women Are Scary* Table of Contents on page 7 for an idea of what’s coming.



WOMEN ARE SCARY **CONTENTS**

1. A Complete Lobotomy of the Heart
2. Women Are Scary
3. The Bases of Momlationships

FIRST BASE

4. Mom-Date Virgin
5. Trolling for Moms
6. Small Talk for Small-Talk Haters
7. Mom Monsters
8. A Totally Judgmental Zit

SECOND BASE

9. Dating on the Space-Time Continuum
10. The Group Date
11. Moms Can Change the World
12. How Not to Choke on Your Own Foot
13. Wield Your Weirdness Like a Boss
14. One Sock Short of a Pair
15. Overly Intense Eye Contact

THIRD BASE

16. It's About to Get Real
17. The Superpower of Initiating

18. Navigating Your Child's Social Awkwardness
19. Dating (When You're) a "Working Mom"
20. The Anatomy of a Full-Frontal Hug

FOURTH BASE

21. Fourth-Basers, the Ultimate Friends
22. Cranking Out a Mom Date If It Kills You
23. Praying for a Bromance
24. Rekindling the Momlationship
25. Going Long Distance

(NOT QUITE) HOME FREE

26. Breaking Up Is Hard to Do: The Phaseout
27. Breaking Up Is Hard to Do: The Confrontation
28. When You Want to Mow Her Down with Your Minivan
29. How to Get Your Mojo Back
30. Screw Your Courage
31. The Mother Network
32. What the World Needs Now

Acknowledgments

Resources for Moms

Notes

TOUR OF THE SET



TAKE THE TOUR

I wanna say hi and invite you to check out my messy office.
Pop a squat on the carpet I never vacuum.



PLAY

STRAPPING ON YOUR MOM BALLS

When you first wake up, what do you do? How do you begin the day? I know some people say they pray the prayer of serenity, or they have a really stellar moment with the Lord, I can only assume involving a lit candle, gentle quiet music, and a journal with flowers on the cover. When my alarm goes off at the cracky-pants of dawn, the first thing I do is say thank you to God for another day, and then I strap on my mom balls.

This isn't something I have lying by the bed, like a chastity belt or a large pair of granny panties. No, mom balls are all in my head, dangling inside my brain, willing me to get up, walk into my kids' rooms, and get this party started.

Why balls, do you ask? Ew. I mean, the best part about being a woman is not having those. I know. I agree. Big yuck to the balls. But I guess I got sick of everyone saying, "He has balls," and "It takes balls." I know that some of the strongest, bravest people on the planet are the mamas wrangling their gremlins. So if *balls* is the chosen word for courage, then let's have us some of those. Metaphorically. I want metaphor balls, not actual balls.



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I actually love this word, balls, but unfortunately, not everyone shares my enthusiasm for it. I learned this the hard way, like I learn most things, when I attended an inter-generational women's Bible study. We were sitting around a table discussing an application of Scripture and I made the mistake of lamenting, "Aw, balls!"

You know that sound on TV shows when the record player stops? (Dear precious young people, record players came before 8-tracks, which came before cassette tapes, which came before CDs, which came before MP3s, which came before Apple downloading songs directly into our brains.)

You know the scene, where everyone's dancing, kids are jumping on the couch, the dog is chasing the cat, and then The Parents Come Home or whatever. The record player screeches, everyone freezes, and then all hell breaks loose. (I was going to write heck, but this is supposed to be Melanie Dale UNCENSORED, so I'm feeling extremely naughty.)

Well, that is exactly how I felt with my AW BALLS right in the middle of Bible study in front of refined church ladies. Sometimes I wonder if I shouldn't leave the house and just phone in this women's Bible study thing.

Anyway, we need to strap on our mom balls when it comes to our kids, cuz it's hard! When my daughter was about two, I remember distinctly standing outside her door in the mornings, listening to her screaming for me, and knowing that it

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was going to be a battle to stay calm and steady all day. I would pause with my hand hovering over the doorknob, tightening on my mom balls, and asking Jesus to take the freaking wheel. And he did.

My youngest has required about three times more mom balls than the other two combined. (If you're reading this someday, lovey, yes, it's all true, and you can be proud of that, sweetie.)

My closest friends have revealed to me why this is, confronting me with the truth in a way that only close friends can: she's exactly like me. We are the same, crazy stubborn, attention-seeking, control freaks. (Yes, baby, you are. And me, too.) If my husband or my mother had told me this, I would not have taken this well, but my sweet friends who know me all too well...yes, I can hear them...and I can hear them laughing at me. (Stop it, Clara. You're laughing at me as you read this.)

I've spent the last several years trying to stay one step ahead of this child, only to find out that the reason she's driving me bananas is because we are totally and exactly the same person. And this is reason 4,911 why mom friends are absolutely essential for parenting. Once my friends brought this to my attention, my entire attitude toward my daughter changed. What I once saw as bull-headedness I now appreciate as the raw materials of her own burgeoning mom balls, which she'll need someday to continue our line of strong women.

We need friends to speak into our lives when we can't see the truth through the daily sludge of tantrums and tattling. We need to remind each other of the big picture, the beauty in the chaos, and occasionally, to strap on our mom balls.

YOU CAN HIDE THEM BUT YOU CAN'T MUTE THEM

When my first child was still a wee little baby and needed to nurse all the time, I found myself in a new town with no friends, and our local chapter of the New Neighbors stopped by and invited me to a meeting.



I was not beyond going to a meeting to find new friends. So, I spent the obligatory two hours prepping to leave the house with a newborn, packed the diaper bag, made sure there were actual diapers in the diaper bag (cuz how many times have you been out lugging a 20-pound bag only to discover at a crucial time that it's filled with everything BUT diapers?!?), and set out to rustle up some people for my life.

There were muffins and orange juice and we sat in a circle on folding chairs, staring awkwardly at each other. Everyone was older than I was, and I realized that the meeting was at our town's senior center. Hmm. Maybe this was not the place to find new mom friends. However, I was already there, so rocking my son gently in his portable car seat, I listened as everyone went around the circle and introduced themselves.

As the leader began sharing about some of the gatherings offered by New Neighbors (Euchre Club! Hello college in Ohio. Yes, please.), my son woke up and started getting fussy. Since the meeting fell right during his morning feeding, I realized I'd need to make that happen for him stat.

Digging through the diaper bag, I pulled out my Hooter Hider, that miracle invention that drapes over your chest and comes with a convenient window up top so you can look at your own boob but those who can't handle boobies unless they're in a Victoria's Secret storefront can remain blissfully unaware of the ketchup bottle-sized nipple being thrust into your baby's gaping bird mouth. Elliott latched on and got to town, and I went back to listening to the neighbor lady talk about all the things to do together in our town. There was a running club. Um, no. People met at the park

to run together on all the trails in nature. Sweating and gasping next to people while inhaling nature. This would not work for me. Go back to Euchre, which I assumed involved hours of playing cards while talking trash and eating microwaved popcorn. That I could do.

When you nurse in public, people fall into two camps – the ones who smile benevolently at you and the ones who look away so determinedly that their necks crank at an unnatural angle and they can have whole conversations with you without actually facing you directly. Our folding chair circle fell into both camps, the smiling grandmas and the uncomfortable wall-starers.

As the meeting continued, I realized that even though people couldn't actually see my nipple, they could definitely hear my nipple, because Elliott was tongue-tied as a baby and nursing took a lot of slopping around to get the job done. The licking and smacking increased in volume and he added in gulping noises and completely upstaged the neighbor lady's speech.

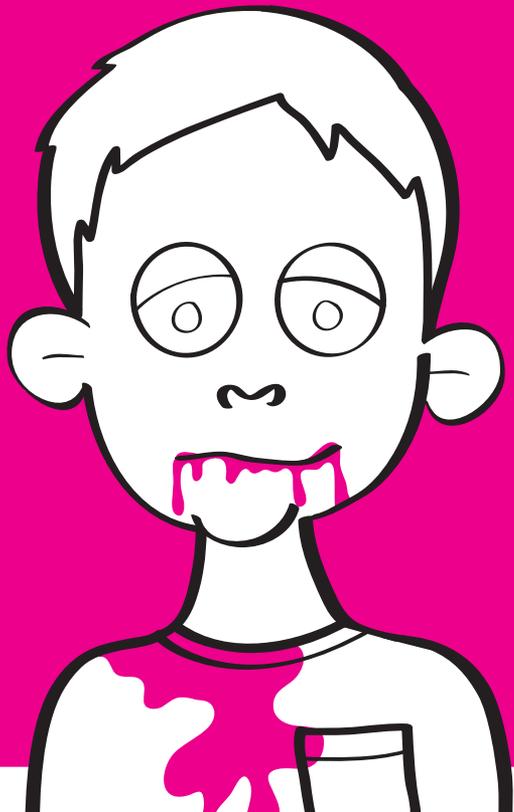
After the meeting, I grabbed a muffin, nodded to everyone, and took off as fast as I could, and Euchre Club never happened, although these days I do play a whole lot of Sequence for Kids and Uno, so that's the same.

Eventually, I found my people, other moms around whom my boy could slurp happily with gusto. The senior center may never be the same.

GAG REEL (WITH ACTUAL GAGGING)

VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE

Let me tell you about the best birth control I've ever witnessed. For seven years, my husband and I led small groups for the class of 2014 at our church. On about year five, I had my girls over on Valentine's Day to be incredibly spiritual and talk about women in the Bible. I made chocolate fondue and hot cocoa, and about halfway through our time together, I heard wailing upstairs. My son had been in bed for about an hour, and I ran upstairs to find him standing in the hallway, covered in...what was that? It smelled like vomit, but it looked like rivers of blood.



It was Valentine's Day, and he had scarfed every treat bag and special snack, and they all had one thing in common. Red dye number 40. It was a Valentine's Day Massacre. I walked into his room to a scene right out of a Tarantino film. He'd hit every blanket, pillow, and stuffed animal in the bed, the box springs, the carpet, down the hallway, and into the bathroom. The one place he'd missed was the toilet.

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I plodded back downstairs and told the girls, inviting them to leave and hold their breath on the way out the door, because the stench was beginning to waft downstairs. They will never entertain the idea of children of their own after experiencing this evening.

I attacked the carpet with our wet vac and after vacuuming up every last red drop, I went to empty the canister in the toilet and missed. The entire contents went down the back of the toilet, all over the floor, and down the hole in the tile we'd never fixed, where I assume it still rots to this day. The toilet was still vomit-free, and my swears may have achieved a poetic level.

After cleaning up the vomit – twice – and getting my son tucked back into his freshened bed, I established our family Rules for Vomiting:

- 1. If you have to barf, run to the toilet.**
- 2. If you can't make the toilet, hit the trash can.**
- 3. If you can't find the trash can, use the sink.**
- 4. Anywhere else is unacceptable.**
- 5. I mean it.**

I drill this into my kids and quiz them regularly, because I am a sympathy-barfer. The entire time I cleaned up this bright red vomit, I fought the urge to add to it, dry heaving over and over. So whenever one of them complains of a tummy ache, and on Valentine's Day and Halloween, two major candy holidays, I review the barf rules to make sure we're all on the same page.

The plus to the Valentine's Day Massacre is that my high school girls were there. We all like to talk about purity and waiting for sex and not giving yourself away and they show the STD videos in school and blah blah blah blah blah. Who needs any of that when they have the smell of my son's barf clinging to their clothes?!? Best birth control ever.

A LATVIAN LOVE AFFAIR

I was living in Latvia adopting our oldest daughter while finishing the book, and I wrote this story into it. It was and is such a sweet example of mom dating and how unusual circumstances can bring us together. Ultimately, though, it didn't fit in the book and got edited out. But I love it and her, so here's a place for it to find new life.

While working on this section, I rounded the bases with another mom, and our circumstances put this whole chapter into perspective for me. We were both in Latvia in the adoption process with our girls. We met on first base at the McDonald's in Riga. Freaking McDonald's, this was our genesis. I hadn't been in a McDonald's in a few years, but maybe Styrofoam fries don't count on foreign soil and dang I forgot how good those are.

After our McMeeting, we commenced our first base guided tour of the historic old part of the city and an exchange of the basic information. On first, your kids share an activity that throws



**WE WERE VIRTUAL
STRANGERS
BROUGHT TOGETHER
BY MOTHERHOOD
WITHOUT BORDERS.**

PHOTO: Lovers Locks Bridge in Riga, Latvia

you together, and this was the same. Our kids were both being adopted. We shared partially freezing together as we walked around in the icy rain.

We grabbed second base with an intentional lunch at a pizza place, followed by a romp in the frigid but beautiful park filled with decorated Christmas trees. Our kids chased each other in circles and we started talking.

I made overtures toward third base, but warned her that our apartment smelled like onions and feet. She threw out a desire for fourth with an invitation to grab a cup of *kafeja* just us moms. And so we continued. In our truncated, overseas mom dating, we booked a couple more outings, then ran for third the following week.

After hitting the jackpot together with our discovery of a burger joint offering free refills on Coke, she had me back to her place and we talked until after dark. (Of course, in December in Latvia, that happens at 3pm.) Two days later, she and I met for the most extraordinary hot chocolate I've ever tasted. Melted chocolate bars in cups at a fancy chocolatier, and nary a child in sight as we savored our drinks and our uninterrupted conversation.

Our circumstances, living however briefly as expatriates and new mothers, brought us together quicker and deeper than usually happens at home. She homeschools and I proudly told her about the app I downloaded for my daughter to learn math before the zombies ate her. This is me homeschooling. She was nice enough to laugh graciously.

As we talked about new life and new families and building something together out of brokenness and pain, I felt this electric sense of unity. The usual things that slow us down were stripped away as we watched our girls play together and shriek with laughter. We were virtual strangers brought together by motherhood without borders.

We talked about love and Jesus and the challenges ahead. In the bustling beauty of this Baltic jewel, we found the joy and unity in being parents, in being women, together.

BACKSTAGE PASS

(RIGHT) We use the tub as a laundry basket. That's normal, right?

(BELOW) My friends enjoy giving me gag gifts. I enjoy receiving them.



(RIGHT) One of many dessicated bananas I keep discovering in our house. I found this one in my purse. (BELOW) Peep s'mores. Need I say more?



(RIGHT)

Our Tardis family minivan sticker – often mistaken as refrigerators and townhouses.



(LEFT) Rainbow Nerds bouquet. It only took 14 years for my husband to stop giving me actual flowers.

(RIGHT) I think 80 percent of my life is divided between dishes and laundry.



HOW TO SPEAK MELANIE

I like to defy grammar rules and make up words and figure you can do whatever you want to the English language as long as you know better. I know better, and therefore, I play maniacally like a toddler on fruit punch. I wrote the book as if I was talking to you on a playdate, so when you see a comma, assume I'm pausing for a breath. If there isn't one...well, then I'm still talking.

Here are some words and phrases you might encounter in the book:

Fourth-baser – The friends with whom you round all the bases and score. This one is a crime against baseball. It should be homer, but I like the way “fourth-baser” sounds better than “homer,” which just makes me think of The Simpsons and a bright yellow beer belly.

Momlationship – A relationship with another mom.

Chillsies – How to relax.

Barney – Barnabus from the Bible, not the purple dinosaur.

Turdtastic – Fantastically fecal-related, exhibiting an ungodly number of turds. “My home is turdtastic. Lots of turds from kids and dogs.”

Crapstick – It's a dookie, a lincoln log, ripstik, duplo, snickerdoodle, deuce ... a poopy.

Full-frontal hugging – Bear hugs. In the book, I give you step-by-step instructions for achieving this.

Kerfloofy – Really emotionally messed up about something.

Base-jumping – When you're really hot for a new mom friend and want to skip bases. See the book for tips on whether or not you're ready.

Naked Wednesday – The day after laundry day.

Man-sized floaters – When you look in the toilet and know a child is growing up.

Poopie Monster – Someone in our family.

Supreme Queentessa of the Empire of the Planet – Someone in our family.

MWGTAJSOO, AOTGGAHSAH, AND WIJWCBOTD – I didn't feel like "SAHM," "WAHM," and "working mom" were adequate enough to describe the work that we do as women, so I made up new acronyms.

Mammogram-esque – The flattening sensation that occurs when receiving a full-frontal hug.

Turkey-bastered – How I got pregnant through in vitro fertilization.

Play 'n' pray – A playdate with prayer, usually involving children on your laps sticking their fingers up your noses while your eyes are closed.

Crappery – The freaking sh-stuff in the check-out lanes for which your kids make a beeline (See how I'm capable of sticking my prepositions where they're supposed to go?).

Humpback Wookiee noises – The sound of me crying.

Frolicking donkeys – What my mom and I sound like when we laugh, which I assume sounds like two donkeys having sex, but I've never seen that and I'm afraid to Google it, so we'll just have to wonder.

OKAY, SO THAT ABOUT WRAPS UP THE SPECIAL FEATURES. HEY, THANKS AGAIN FOR ORDERING MY BOOK. I'M SO GRATEFUL. TWEET ME THAT YOU GOT IT! @UNEXPECTEDMEL, #WOMENARESCARYBOOK.

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