

ELLEN. Didn't you feel a little ridiculous sitting there and reading *Goodnight Moon* to a six week-old baby?

CHAR. Yeah – gotta get the reading part of the brain working – the things I read to my daughter...

STEF. Between three children over the past six years I've now read like 9,260 children's books.

CHAR. And aren't some so awful that you can barely stand to read them?

ELLEN. Or how about when you're tired and you secretly skip over words or pages to get to the end quicker...

STEF. How about when they catch you doing that?

MARIA. How about getting jealous of the characters you are reading about? You see a character sitting on the beach reading – and you think – I'd love to do that for just one day. Except the really pathetic part is...

CHAR. ...that the character is an orange dinosaur.

MARIA. ...So you're jealous of an orange dinosaur in a book with three sappy words on each page. It doesn't get much lower than that...

ELLEN. I just hate when it's been a long day, and they pick out the two books you hate the most and they are reaaaally loooong ones....

STEF. Oh, you let them pick out their own books?

MARIA. (*sarcastically*) Uh, yeah! Why, what do you do?

STEF. OK, I know I'm the biggest nerd, but I always go upstairs sometime before dinner, and pick out three books for each kid...

CHAR. ...Cut it out

STEF. ...And leave them out for bedtime. I just can't fight another battle with them at that point, and I guess I just want to read them what I want to read them...

CHAR. OK, Miss Scary Anal Person...

ELLEN. Hey, actually that's not bad, I might try that...

STEF. I've just gotten so I know I can't control a lot, but what I can control I need to... I just really miss, really long for those things that are gone forever, or at least it feels like forever.

ELLEN. Like going shopping by yourself...

MARIA. ...or going out at night without being in a panic about the new babysitter, and what it costs, and how your kids will act for the babysitter...

STEF. ...and I better be home by a certain time because she's only thirteen and she has school tomorrow...

ELLEN. And yet, we're supposed to "cherish this time with our children"...

CHAR. Yeah, I cherish them, I cherish them when they are ASLEEP – IN THEIR BEDS – AT NIGHT, looking like little angels, instead of...

STEF. ...during the day, when you know this is everything you ever wanted, and you should be counting all your blessings, but instead you just want to go...

ELLEN. ...quietly, permanently insane...

MARIA. I can't believe what I hear myself saying, sometimes over and over again...

CHAR. You mean please may I have some more?

MARIA. Don't talk with your mouth full.

STEF. (*walks downstage, playing out*) I'll be there IN A MINUTE.

ELLEN. (*walks downstage, playing out*) Not right now...

CHAR. (*walks downstage, playing out*) What do you mean you burped in your underwear?

MARIA. (*walks downstage, next to CHARLOTTE, plays out*) Don't touch yourself down there; you'll get an infection.

CHAR. (*to MARIA*) You didn't say that!

MARIA. (*to CHARLOTTE*) Okay, only once, and I regretted it.

STEF. Let's play a game! Let's see who can be quiet the longest!

ELLEN. Face over the plate, chew with your mouth closed.

CHAR. (*back to playing out*) It is not okay to hit your brother.

MARIA. (*back to playing out*) Use words please.

STEF. We'll see...

MARIA. I need you to listen.