

There is a bad seed.

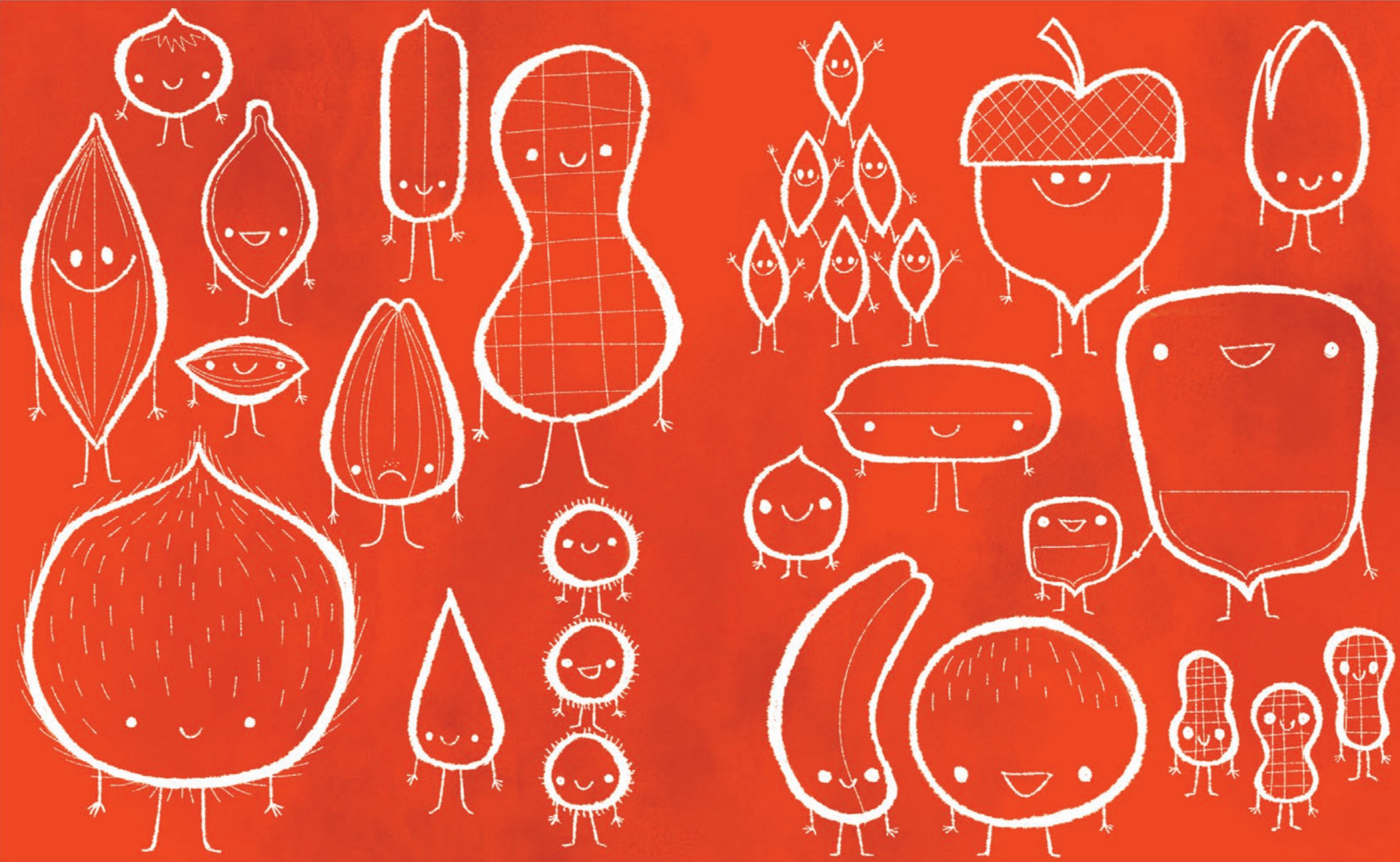
He's not so bad.



THE BAD SEED

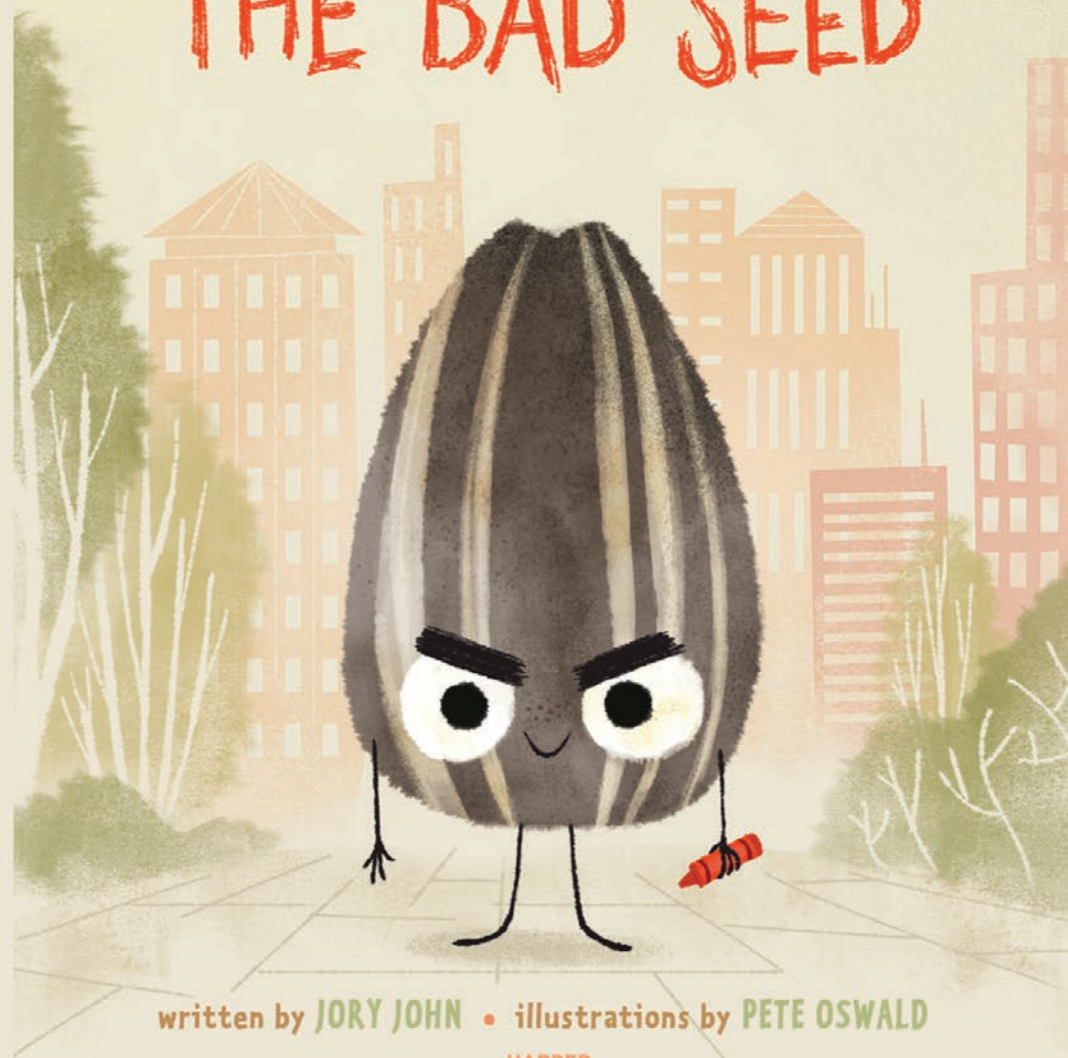


written by JORY JOHN • illustrations by PETE OSWALD





THE BAD SEED



written by **JORY JOHN** • illustrations by **PETE OSWALD**

HARPER

An imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers



I'm a bad seed.



A baaaaaaaaaad seed.

Oh yeah. It's true.

The other seeds, they look
at me, and they say,

That seed is SO bad!

When they think I'm not listening, they mumble,

There goes a baaaaad seed.





But I can hear them. I have good hearing for a seed.

You really want to know?

Well . . .



I never put things back where they belong.



I'm late to everything.

I tell long jokes with
no punch lines.



I never wash my hands.

Or my feet.



I lie about pointless stuff.



I cut in line. Every time.



I stare at everybody.



I glare at everybody.

I finish everybody's sentences. And I never listen.

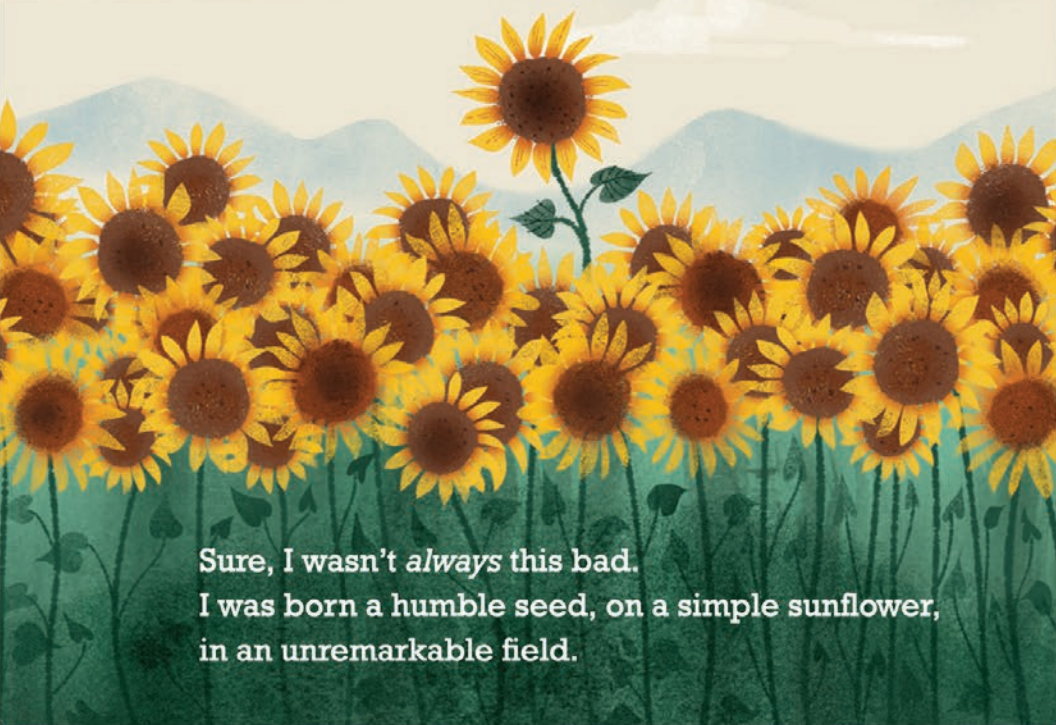


And I do *lots* of other bad things, too.
Know why? Because I'm a bad seed.



A baaaaaaaaaad seed.

I just can't help it.



Sure, I wasn't *always* this bad.
I was born a humble seed, on a simple sunflower,
in an unremarkable field.



I had a big family.
Seeds everywhere.
We found ways of having fun.
We were close.



But then the petals dropped.



And our flower drooped.

It's kind of a blur.



**SUNFLOWER
SEEDS**

DELICIOUS

I remember a bag. . . .



Everything went dark . . .

. . . and then . . . *then* . . .



... a giant!



I thought I was a goner. . . .
I thought I was done for. . . .
I screamed and I hollered. . . .



AHHHHHHHHH!

A cartoon illustration of a person's open mouth, showing white teeth and a dark red tongue. A small, striped fly is flying inside the mouth. The text 'AHHHHHHHHH!' is written in white, slanted capital letters across the tongue area.



“PTOOOOOOOOOO!”

A cartoon illustration of a person's face, showing the nose and mouth. A large, curved line representing a spit stream is coming out of the mouth. The text '“PTOOOOOOOOOO!”' is written in white, slanted capital letters along the curve of the spit stream.

But I was spit out at the
last possible second.

I flew through the air, and I landed
under the bleachers with
a huge thud.

THUD!



When I woke up, it was dark outside.
A wad of gum had softened my fall.
I felt OK. But something had changed in me.
I'd become a different seed entirely.

I'd become a bad seed.





A baaaaaaaaaad seed.



**That's right.
I stopped smiling.
I kept to myself.
I drifted.**

**I was friend to nobody
and bad to everybody.
I was lost on purpose.
I lived inside a soda can.**



**I didn't care.
And it suited me.**



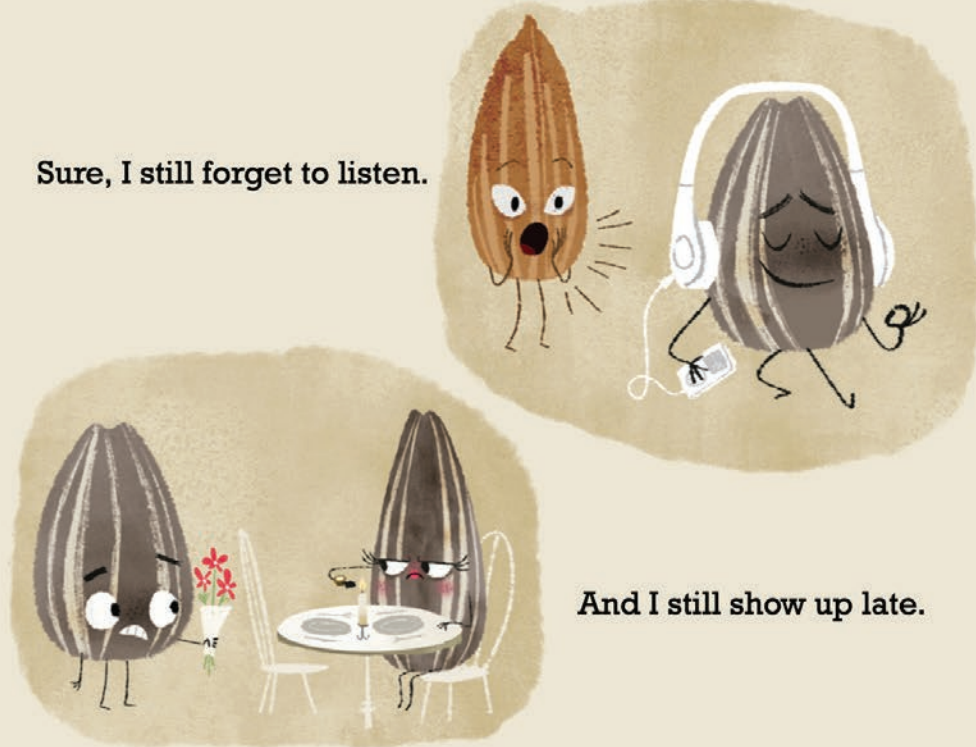
Until recently.



I've made a big decision.
I've decided I don't want to be
a bad seed anymore.
I'm ready to be happy.

It's hard to be good when
you're so used to being bad.
But I'm trying.
I'm taking it one day at a time.

Sure, I still forget to listen.



And I still show up late.



And I still talk during movies. And I do all kinds of other bad stuff.



But I also say thank you.



And I say please. And I smile.




And I hold doors open for people.
Not always. But sometimes.

And even though I still feel bad, sometimes,
I also feel kind of good.
It's sort of a mix.



All I can do is keep trying.
And keep thinking,
Maybe I'm not such a bad seed after all.



*Hey, look, there goes
that bad seed. . .*

*Actually, he's not
all that bad anymore.*

I heard that.

