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## **Family Plays**

# AMAZING GRACE AND HER JELLYBEAN TREE



Drama by  
**R. EUGENE JACKSON**

# AMAZING GRACE AND HER JELLYBEAN TREE

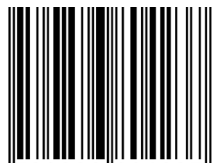
**Drama. By R. Eugene Jackson.** *Cast: 12+ actors, flexible.* Grace is an amazing girl, overcoming a near-fatal condition at birth and a serious accident later. Now she faces another important battle in her struggle for happiness: Her parents have decided to separate, and Grace is convinced it's her fault. Her early traumas, however, have given her great strengths: her incredible power, with the help of the jellybean tree, to visualize new worlds. From this fantastic tree comes not only delicious, chewy jellybeans but also a colorful young alien from outer space who thinks he has been rejected by his parents. Grace convinces Jellybean that his parents love him deeply and want him to return home. When he finally returns to his alien mother, Grace realizes she was talking about her own relationships. Suddenly she understands that both her parents love her despite the problems between them. In fact, she makes her own demands on them. "Hug me," she says, "and don't ever let go." The power of hugs is demonstrated sensitively and creatively. *One simple set (the jellybean tree). Modern costumes. Approximate running time: 35 to 40 pages. Code: AH5.*

## Family Plays

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Amazing Grace and Her  
Jellybean Tree

***AMAZING GRACE  
AND HER  
JELLYBEAN TREE***

A Play for Young People

By  
R. Eugene Jackson

**Family Plays**

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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## **ABOUT THE PLAY**

Grace is an amazing girl. Her parents said so when she overcame a nearly fatal condition at birth. Her friends said so when she survived a serious accident several years later. And now she faces another important battle in the struggle for happiness in her young life. Her parents have decided to go their separate ways. And *Amazing Grace* is caught in the middle, convinced she is at fault.

Her early traumas, however, have given her great strengths. Among these is her incredible power, with the help of the Jellybean tree, to visualize new worlds. She shares this special gift with her friends and with the audience.

There is no such thing as a Jellybean tree, you say? Well, when Grace puts her imaginative mind to it, you will see it—and so will everyone else. And from this fantastic tree comes not only delicious, chewy jellybeans, but a colorful young alien from outer space who thinks he has been rejected by his parents.

*Amazing Grace* and Jellybean strike up an immediate friendship. And, through a series of flashback and flashforward scenes, Grace convinces Jellybean that his parents love him deeply and want him to return home. When he finally leaves to return to his alien mother, Grace realizes she was talking, not about his relationships, but about her own. Suddenly she understands that both her parents love her despite the problems between them. In fact, she makes her own demands on them. "Hug me," she says. "And don't ever let go." The power of hugs is demonstrated sensitively and creatively.

This play is a striking departure for Eugene Jackson's plays for child audiences. He commented: "I was concerned that kids might not enjoy a play with such a serious topic, but I was totally wrong. Every audience was fully attentive and very responsive. After the show many wanted to 'hug'."

The "children" in the cast may be any age from little tots to pre-teens or early teens. (All cast members in the University of South Alabama premiere were college students capably portraying children, as shown on the video available from the publisher.)

Playing time is about 75 minutes.

*Characters*

**\*Children:**

**GRACE**

**LEXINGTON**

**JA-VAHN**

**BOZO**

**WORLEY**

**SHIRLEY**

**NURF**

**WISHY WASHY**

**Adults:**

**MR. CHARLES LIGHT**—Grace's father

**MRS. NORA LIGHT**—Grace's mother

**DR. OTTERBERG**

**Alien (sort of):**

**JELLYBEAN**

**\*Most of the children may be male or female. Simply change their names as needed and alter references in the script to proper gender.**

**TIME**—The Present

**PLACE**—A yard

The play was originally produced at the University of South Alabama directed by R. Eugene Jackson; lights and scenery designed by Lyle Miller, costumes by Rebecca Britton, with the following cast:

Grace .....	Jackie Sprinkle
Lexington .....	Jodie Cain
Ja-Vahn .....	Sofia C. Golfos
Bozo .....	Demetrios Chris Golfos
Worley .....	Amy Leveritt
Shirley .....	Stephanie Tate
Nurf .....	Monica Anne Elizabeth Gardner
Wishy Washy .....	Joellen Bach
Mr. Charles Light .....	Christopher W. Shiver
Mrs. Nora Light .....	Jamie Yerby
Dr. Otterberg .....	Jonathon Robinson
Jellybean .....	Stephen P. Couvillion



**PRODUCTION NOTES***Properties*

**ON STAGE:** One big branch to the left of the tree (used by BOZO to threaten Jellybean)

A small six-inch stick Down Left (to be used by Lexington to play hopscotch);

Brightly colored crepe paper cut into leaf sizes scattered on the ground as if they have fallen from the tree

**GRACE:** A book bag that contains: 1 book, a long jump rope, a lunch bag, a zip-lock style bag of jellybeans (the original cellophane bags make too much noise), a stuffed doll that looks exactly like a miniature of Jellybean the alien)

**LEXINGTON:** A purse containing a piece of sidewalk chalk, an address book, and a cellular telephone.

**JA-VAHN:** A book bag, a math textbook, a pencil with an eraser

**BOZO:** A horrible/funny Halloween mask, a bicycle horn, some cake icing for his fingers, boxing gloves, a space helmet preferably with antennas projecting from the ears (an old football helmet with attached antennas would work; we found a cheap, old pilot's helmet in an Army/Navy store and glued on one-half of Nurf baseballs at each ear and added spring type antennas)

**NORA:** A hair brush, a powder compact, cosmetics for applying, a coffee cup, a telephone (a cordless one works best), a big spoon

**CHARLES:** A briefcase, some loose papers, a telephone (preferably cordless)

**WORLEY:** Purse, tablet, school book, ballet shoes to carry (or a ballet bag)

**NURF:** Steno pad, three pencils (2 in her hair)

**SHIRLEY:** A stuffed gym bag

**WISHY WASHY:** Possibly a wheel chair, a big sketch pad with doodles on the first page, a drawing pencil or fat felt tip pen so the doodles may be seen from the audience

**DR. OTTERBURG:** A doctor's operating room mask and cap

**JELLYBEAN:** Lunch box (when he is picked up at school)

### *Costumes*

The cast members are dressed in current styles befitting their age and characterizations. Suggestions are given in the script. A video tape available from the publisher and photos in this playbook also offer suggestions. Jellybean, of course, must be dressed like the doll.

### *The Sound Effects Tape*

(The director certainly may use whatever music and sound effects s/he desires. The ones used in the original production are available from the publisher on a cassette tape and are listed here)

As the curtain rises, a Music Box plays one instrumental verse of "Amazing Grace."

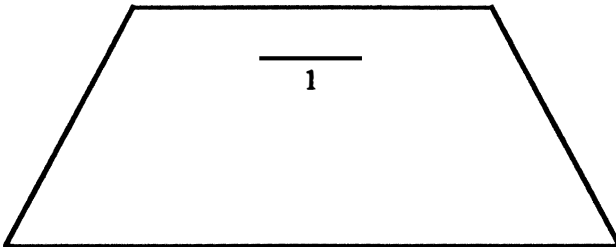
When Jellybean and Grace first touch hands, there is the sound of electricity sparking.

When Bozo raises his branch to strike Jellybean, the latter points his finger at Bozo and there is the same, though longer, sound of electricity sparking.

When the lights beam from the tree, music is heard.

Likewise when Jellybean retreats into the tree, the same music is heard. Near the end of the show, the Music Box version of "Amazing Grace" is heard again.

### *The Setting*



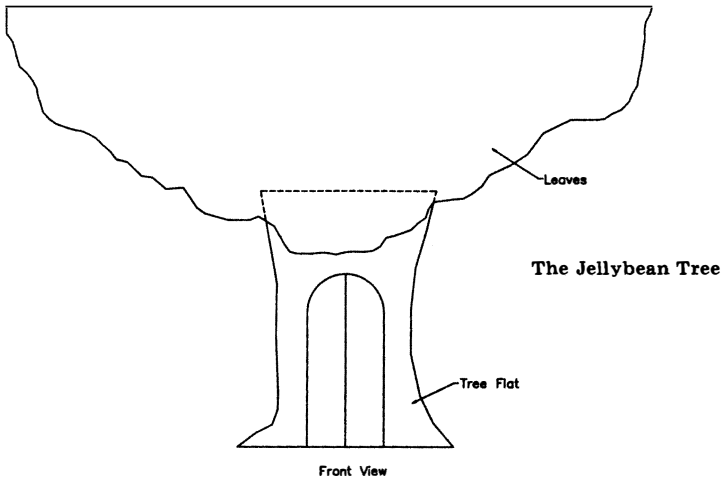
#### 1. The Jellybean Tree

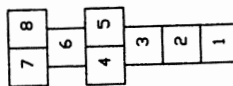
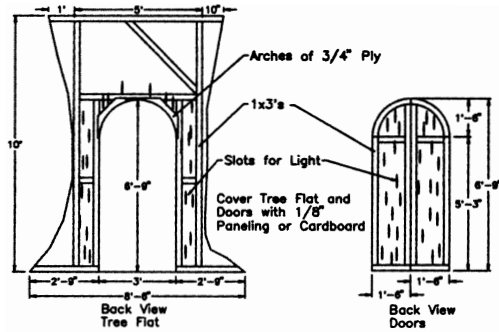
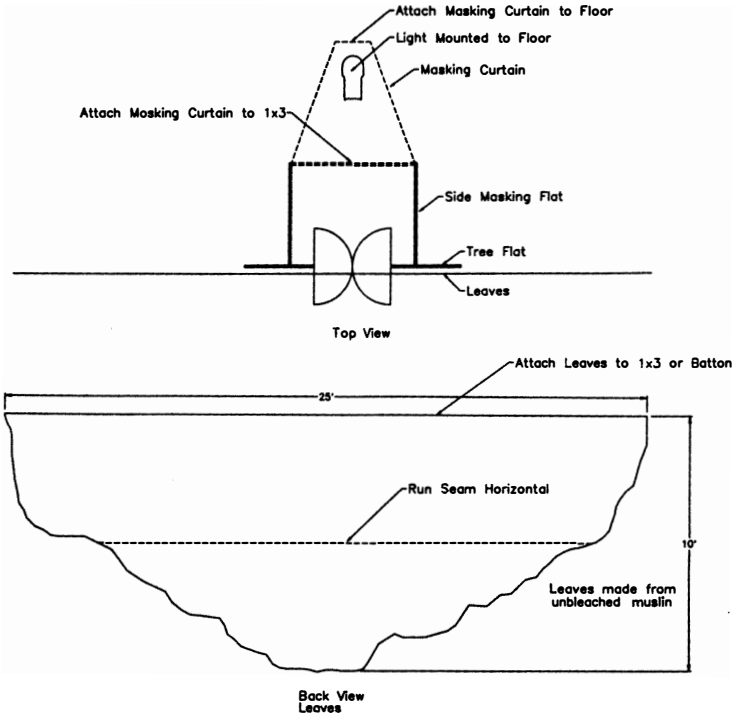
The rest of the stage is bare. (The author suggests that "splashes of autumn color appear elsewhere.")

For the original production, the director wanted a giant, unrealistic “Jellybean” tree isolated on an otherwise empty stage. The leaves should suggest in color and shape both autumn and jellybeans. Appropriately colored crepe paper was cut up in leaf sizes and spilled onto the floor under the tree.

The tree itself had to be wide to accommodate the doorway and the equipment behind it. A set of double doors hinged so they could open in and out were set into the base of the tree and painted so they appeared as a regular part of the tree. A number of slits were cut in the doors so that light could be seen through them later. A black curtain then had to be hung several feet behind the doors so that the audience could not see through the slits. A powerful light was mounted behind the tree. We discovered that this light would not cast observable rays of light through the slits, however, unless smoke was steaming in front of it. So our designer cut holes above the doorway and ran hoses to the holes. Pumped through the holes, the smoke, because of its weight, dropped to the floor as it came out, forcing it across the light from the slits and making the beams visible and enchanting. Then, when Jellybean opened the doors and stood in the doorway with the bright light behind him and the smoke in front of him, the effect was mysterious and thrilling.

At the end of the show when the beams were seen again—this time with twinkling stars (perhaps tiny Christmas tree lights) on the backdrop—smoke was still necessary to make the rays of light visible. So the smoke machines had to begin a little early in order to be present when the lights came on.





## AMAZING GRACE AND HER JELLYBEAN TREE

*[SCENE: An exterior open area is dominated by a huge non-realistic tree with a tough, wide trunk, thick upwardly arching branches, and brightly colored drooping fall leaves. Splashes of autumn colors appear elsewhere, but the overall sense is that the enormous tree survives uniquely alone and privately (see end of script for more details).*

*AT RISE: As the house lights dim, a MUSIC BOX version of "Amazing Grace" is heard (available on the Sound Effects tape, see p. 39). The stage is empty. The MUSIC ends as GRACE enters Stage Right on her way home from school. She wears particularly unique school clothes, including a hat or cap with flowers protruding from it. She carries a book bag. It is important that there is always a sense of determination about her, even at times of greatest stress. At present, she appears thoughtful. She sees the audience, crosses Down Stage Right, and addresses it:]*

GRACE. *[She opens her book bag]* What do you think is the most important thing I carry to school? *[She pulls out a book]* Books? *[She drops it on the ground and pulls out a lunch bag]* My lunch? *[She drops it on the ground and pulls out a jump rope]* A jump rope? *[She drops it on the ground]* Nope. It's... *[She pulls out a bag of jellybeans and holds them up]* Jellybeans! That's right. Jellybeans. *[Pause]*

I never eat them. I just like to keep them with me. *[She stuffs them back into her bag]* Back in second grade, my teacher brought a huge jar of jellybeans to class and asked us all to guess how many were in it. I was the closest. I guessed one thousand three hundred and two. *[Pause]* Well, I said it was a *big* jar. She gave us each a handful of the jellybeans. I planted mine. *[She pulls a colorful strange stuffed doll from her bag]* And this is what I won. Neat, isn't he? Different. I call him Jellybean. You can guess why. He's... well, he's an alien from outer space. At least, that's what I like to think. *[She puts the doll back into her bag]* But what I want to know is what was she doing with all those jellybeans? My teacher, I mean. I've wondered about that a lot. I wonder about a lot of things. Do you ever wonder about things? Deep things? Like why we have five fingers on each hand instead of four? Or six? Or why we have toes at all? They're so useless. Or why our ears are on the sides of our head instead of where our nose is? I wonder about things all the time *[pause]*.

My name's Grace. Amazing Grace, they call me. Today, I don't feel so amazing. *[She hears NOISES from Off Right and turns in that direction]* Uh-oh. I hear the gang coming. I'll tell you all about it later. Don't go away. *[She picks up her book bag and turns back to the audience]* I also wonder why your friends have to show up just when you don't feel like talking. *[Leaving her book, lunch bag, and jump rope behind, she rushes behind the big tree and hides]*

*[JA-VAHN, with her head buried in a textbook, and LEXINGTON, an attractive, prissy girl dressed in the latest fashion, enter from Right. They carry school items]*

JA-VAHN. But, Lexie, if we don't get this problem, we'll lose. You don't want to lose, do you? *[She calculates in her head]* Now, let's see. If I multiply this times fifty-eight... No. Maybe I should divide. But I can't...

LEXINGTON. Ja-Vahn, there are more important things in life than winning a silly math contest.

JA-VAHN. Yeah? Like what?

LEXINGTON. Like going to the mall and watching boys. Like going to a game and watching boys. Like calling boys on a telephone. *[She pulls a cellular telephone from her purse or pocket and shows it]*

JA-VAHN. Calling boys on the telephone? Ugh! That's one thing the world could do without.

LEXINGTON. What—telephones?

JA-VAHN. No. Boys. Why do we need boys anyway? What good are they?

LEXINGTON. *[Incredulous]* What good are they? What good are they? Is that what you're asking?

JA-VAHN. Yeah.

LEXINGTON. Well, they're good for... uhhh... *[She thinks hard]* I can't think of anything.

JA-VAHN. You see?

LEXINGTON. *[She smiles]* Except watching. I like watching boys.

BOZO. *[He leaps into the area wearing a scary Halloween mask, screeching horribly, and honking a bicycle horn]* Arrrrrgggggghhh! Boo!

*[The two GIRLS scream and run in a circle with BOZO barring their way each time. Finally, he laughs and takes off the mask, screeching horribly, and honking the bicycle horn]*

JA-VAHN/LEXINGTON. *[Screaming louder]* Aeeiiiiii!

JA-VAHN. *[Circling him as she studies him]* It's the munching monster that steals cookies from lunch sacks!

LEXINGTON. *[Circling in the opposite direction]* No, no! It's the ogre that hides under the sliding board and pinches kids as they slide down!

BOZO. *[He doesn't know what to make of all this]* Uh, girls. It's me—Bozo.

JA-VAHN. No, it's not! It's the smelly demon that comes up out of the garbage dump during lunch time!

LEXINGTON. Uh-uh. It's a creepy creature with thirty-three legs and ninety-nine noses from a far-off planet!

BOZO. I'm not a monster, I'm not an ogre, I'm not a demon. I'm not a creepy creature!

JA-VAHN/LEXINGTON. Then what are you?

BOZO. I'm Bozo, your classmate!

JA-VAHN. *[Pretending]* Well, I'm not so sure. What about you, Lexington?

LEXINGTON. Me, neither.

JA-VAHN. It looks pretty alien to me.

LEXINGTON. Definitely not of this world.

BOZO. I can prove it's me.

JA-VAHN. How?

BOZO. By telling you everything I did today. For instance, in first period, I tripped and knocked over Mrs. Teller's chair—while she was still sitting in it. *[He chuckles]*

LEXINGTON. That's dumb.

BOZO. In second period, I accidentally stepped in the trash can and got it stuck on my foot. They had to use a can opener to get me out of it. *[He chuckles]*

JA-VAHN. That's crazy.

BOZO. At recess, I hit the ball to right field and ran around the bases backwards.

LEXINGTON. That's icky.

BOZO. Yeah. Especially since we were playing football at the time. *[He chuckles and honks his bicycle horn]*

JA-VAHN. All right, all right. We're convinced. You're Bozo—the school clown.

LEXINGTON. Bozo—the goof off.

BOZO. *[Smiling, he puts the mask back over his face]* But I sure had you going, didn't I? Scared you two to death. Boo!

JA-VAHN/LEXINGTON. Aeeeeiiii! *[They pull themselves together]*

JA-VAHN. We were pretending.

BOZO. *[He takes the mask away from his face]* You looked scared to me.

LEXINGTON. We're good pretenders.

BOZO. *[Looks around]* Where's Grace?

JA-VAHN. Haven't seen her since the last bell.

BOZO. She always stops off here after school. Under her Jellybean tree, as she calls it.

LEXINGTON. It doesn't matter. We don't need to practice anyway. *[Pause]* Bozo, you need to rush on home.

BOZO. Why?

LEXINGTON. So I can call you. *[She indicates her telephone]*

BOZO. Call me what? *[He laughs and honks his horn]*

JA-VAHN. Oh, Bozo! *[She looks in her book]* I still don't know what to do on number twelve. Where's Grace? We need Grace. She'll know how to do it. She's great at math.

BOZO. Yeah. She's great at everything—except sports.

LEXINGTON. *[Seeing Grace's things on the ground, she gestures to the others]* Oh, but she's probably already left. Couldn't possibly be hiding behind... *that tree.* *[She points to the Jellybean tree]*

JA-VAHN. *[She calls]* Graaaaaace! Grace, are you hiding behind that tree?

GRACE. *[From behind the tree]* No, I'm not. I went home.

JA-VAHN. *[She motions to Lexington and Bozo]* Shhhh. *[She tiptoes around the left side of the tree]* You went home—but left your voice here? Mighty strange, if you ask me.

LEXINGTON. *[As she and BOZO tiptoe around the right of the tree]* She must have gone home, Ja-Vahn. I don't see her.

BOZO. And I'm sure we won't find her if we tiptoe around this big tree. Boo! *[He honks his horn]*

GRACE. Ayyyiii! *[Frightened by his "Boo!" she runs into JA-VAHN's arms]* Oh!

JA-VAHN. Oh, look, everybody. She came back.

GRACE. No fair.

BOZO. No fair? Anything's fair when you're hiding.



GRACE. I wasn't hiding, Bozo.

BOZO. Then what do you call it?

GRACE. I was having a private conversation.

BOZO. With whom—the tree?

GRACE. Well, yes, as a matter of fact.

JA-VAHN. The interesting thing about Grace is not that she talks to a tree—but that she thinks she gets answers from it.

GRACE. *[She pats the tree]* We're old friends, that's all—this Jellybean tree and me.

BOZO. And that's another thing. Why do you call it a Jellybean tree? It's not a Jellybean tree.

LEXINGTON. There's no such thing as a Jellybean tree.

BOZO. It's just a plain old... well, some kind of plain old tree.

GRACE. *[Animatedly]* It's not a plain old tree, Bozo. Can't you see? Can't you see all the jellybeans hanging from it? Look. There's a yellow one, a green one... a red one. And up there is a...

LEXINGTON. Those are called leaves, Grace. All trees have leaves.

GRACE. Lexie, use your imagination. Think jellybeans. Close your eyes and see jellybeans in your mind. Then open your eyes—and there they are. Luscious, colorful, gigantic jellybeans hanging from every limb.

LEXINGTON. Grace, I think you've got jellybeans in your head.

BOZO. Yeah, jellybean brain! *[He honks and laughs]*

LEXINGTON. *[She pulls a piece of sidewalk chalk from her purse and draws a hopscotch on the ground at Down Left]* While you children play, I hope you don't mind if I do something constructive.

JA-VAHN. Like what?

LEXINGTON. Like playing hopscotch.

JA-VAHN. We have math to do. Math!

BOZO. *[Still looking at the tree]* I still don't see any jellybeans hanging from this tree.

GRACE. You're not imagining hard enough. Close your eyes. Go on. Close them.

BOZO. They're closed

GRACE. Hold out your hand—and think real hard.

BOZO. I'm thinking, I'm thinking. *[She takes a jellybean from her bag and drops it into his hand. He opens his eyes and looks at it]* A jellybean, a jellybean! Look, Lexie! A real jellybean. It dropped off the tree into my hand. It did. It really did. I saw it.

LEXINGTON. Oh, Bozo! Grace put it in your hand.

BOZO. No, she didn't. It fell off the tree. I saw it... I... [*He turns to Grace*] Did you put this in my hand?

GRACE. What do you think?

BOZO. Well, I uh...

GRACE. When I won that guessing contest in the second grade, Jellybean and I came out here and sat right there. [*She indicates directly in front of the tree*] I dug a big hole, and we dropped a handful of jellybeans into it, and covered it over with dirt. Every day we stopped by here on the way home from school. Took care of it. And our jellybeans grew into this gigantic tree. That's how I know it's a Jellybean tree.

LEXINGTON. Grace, you make up things. This tree has been here for—I don't know—a million years or more.

JA-VAHN. Forget the tree. What about this number twelve, Grace? I don't know whether to multiply or divide. You're so good at math.

GRACE. You know, Ja-Vahn. Doing math is like being a kid: the further you go, the more complicated it gets.

JA-VAHN. What?

LEXINGTON. Grace, sometimes you talk in riddles.

GRACE. Just thinking out loud.

JA-VAHN. I get a different answer every time I do it.

GRACE. I'm at a loss.

JA-VAHN. Well, it might help if you looked at it.

GRACE. I look at my life every day... and wonder about it.

JA-VAHN. [*To Bozo and Lexington*] She's off in one of those daydreams again. [*To Grace*] Grace, you're something else. [*Pause*] Without you, you know, we're going to lose.

BOZO. Well, I don't know about that. I'm good at numbers.

JA-VAHN. Oh, yeah? What's two plus two?

BOZO. Uh... twenty-two! [*He honks his horn and laughs*]

JA-VAHN. See what I mean?

BOZO. Hey, I was kidding.

LEXINGTON. With Bozo on our side, Ja-Vahn, we'll be laughed off the stage.

BOZO. Hey, I'm not so dumb, you know.

JA-VAHN. How would we know? You never do any school work.

BOZO. Ahh, who needs that stuff? School work is busy work. I know enough to get along. Parents just keep us in school so we'll stay out of their

way. They don't really care about us learning anything. They don't care a bit. Do they, Grace? *[Struck by his words, GRACE snuffles and turns away]* Grace? What is it? What's the matter? *[GRACE shakes her head]*

JA-VAHN. What's the matter! *You're* the matter, Bozo. Aren't you always?

BOZO. What did I say? Our parents don't care? Well, they don't. *[GRACE moves away from them]*

JA-VAHN. What is it, Grace?

GRACE. Nothing.

JA-VAHN. *[She isn't sure what to do]* Well, umm, do you want to practice the math now? *[GRACE shakes her head]* Ummm, later? *[GRACE nods]*

LEXINGTON. Yeah. Later. As in next week.

BOZO. As in next year. That math stuff is for the birds. Coo-coo, coo-coo. *[He honks and laughs]*

JA-VAHN. Well, I guess I can go over this chapter at home. Why don't we meet back here, say, after dinner? Maybe we'll be more in the mood by then.

LEXINGTON. All right. Okay. As soon as I call a...few...boys I know. *[She pulls out her telephone and begins dialing]* See you. *[She exits Left]*

JA-VAHN. Maybe my parents can help me. I want to win this thing, kids! I don't want to come in second or fourth or last. I want to win! *[She looks at the others. They are not listening]* Okay. Well, later. *[She exits Left. GRACE turns Left. BOZO waves to her and smiles. She turns away. He shrugs and trots off Left]*

GRACE. *[Slowly, she extends her right hand toward Stage Right, opening and closing it several times. Then, quietly, as if in a trance, she speaks:]* Mom? Mother? Are you there?

*[At Down Right, a circle of LIGHT appears, and into it steps Grace's mother, NORA LIGHT. She is combing her hair and/or otherwise getting ready for the day. It is another time. Earlier]*

GRACE. Mom?

NORA. *[She looks Off Right and calls in her most pleasant voice]* Grace? Grace, honey? It's about that time. Ready or not, the car is leaving in five minutes.

GRACE. *[Taking her book bag, she runs above the circle of light to her Mother's right. Then she enters the light smiling and happy]* Oh, Mom, you wouldn't leave without me.

NORA. *[Smiles, teases]* Of course I wouldn't, honey. But I'm just trying to get you moving. Did I scare you?

GRACE. *[Laughs]* Mom, Amazing Grace does not scare easily.

NORA. Well, that's good. *[She holds out her arms to Grace]* Hey-hey-hey! *[GRACE rushes into them and they hug]* A hug a day...

GRACE. Keeps the bugs away... *[They release]* Mom, what does that mean: "Keeps the bugs away?" Like mosquitoes and crickets and roaches?

NORA. It means anything bad, honey. A hug a day keeps all the bad things away. *[Pause]* Now, did you brush your teeth? Comb your hair? Put on your underwear?

GRACE. Mom! I'm not a baby any more.

NORA. Well, you're my baby, and you always will be.

GRACE. *[She pulls her stuffed doll from her book bag]* And Jellybean is my baby.

NORA. Grace, all the girls I know have dolls and teddy bears. You're the only one on earth who has an alien as a... friend.

GRACE. Well, he's a good friend. And I want to take him everywhere I go.

NORA. Even to get your ears pierced?

GRACE. Yeah, sure. He wants to watch.

NORA. Well, maybe we'll let him get his done too. *[She exits Right]*

GRACE. *[She laughs]* Jellybean with pierced ears? I don't think so. I like him just the way he is. *[She hugs him]* Remember, Jellybean—a hug a day keeps the...

NORA. *[She re-enters from Right drinking a cup of coffee]* Your appointment is at three-thirty, so I'll be picking you up right after school. Okay? *[She turns up away from Grace]*

*[Grace's father, CHARLES LIGHT, enters in a good mood, also in preparation for the morning]*

CHARLES. Appointment for what? *[To Grace]* Hi, pumpkin. *[He kisses her]*

NORA. *[Coming down to Charles's right]* To get her ears pierced.

GRACE. Dr. Otterberg is doing it.

CHARLES. Dr. Otterberg? *[His good mood slackens. To Nora]* You're taking her to the doctor's office just to have her ears pierced?

NORA. That's right

CHARLES. But don't they do that in the mall for free?

NORA. I'd feel better if a doctor did it. To prevent infection. You know. *[She exits Right again]*

CHARLES. The people in the mall know how to prevent infection. They poke holes in ears every day and nobody complains.

NORA. *[She re-enters without the cup]* I know. I'd just feel a lot safer if...

CHARLES. What does it cost for a doctor's visit these days—forty dollars *[insert proper amount]* or so?

GRACE. Hey, Mom, the mall's okay with me. Really.

NORA. *[She picks up the book and lunch bag that Grace had earlier dropped to the floor and hands them to Grace. She leaves the jump rope on the ground]* It may cost a little more, Charles, but so what? Grace is worth it.

CHARLES. I didn't say she wasn't worth it. I just don't want to spend the extra money if we don't have to. You know what our budget's been like lately.

GRACE. I don't care who does it. Just so it's done. Jellybean says...

NORA. *[Heatedly]* I'm taking her to Dr. Otterberg, and that's final.

CHARLES. Oh. I guess I don't have any authority in my own home. Is that it?

GRACE. Mom, Dad, please don't fight over me.

NORA. *[As both of them turn to her]* Grace...

CHARLES. You stay out of this, young lady! *[GRACE's lips quiver as she hesitates. As the special LIGHT fades out, NORA and CHARLES exit Right. As they go, NORA takes Grace's book and lunch bag from her and exits with them. GRACE, who still has her book bag, is again in the present. She pauses. Then she rushes to the tree and throws her arms around it, depositing the book bag at its base]*

GRACE. *[She whimpers]*

Oh, Jellybean tree, Oh, Jellybean tree,

Please, please don't ever yell at me!

*[GRACE hugs the tree. WORLEY, SHIRLEY, NURF, and WISHY WASHY enter from Right giggling and carrying school books and*

*bags. Either male or female, they are classmates of Grace. WORLEY is bossy and a ballet dancer, SHIRLEY is sassy and a Kung Fu student, NURF is flustered and the school paper reporter, and WISHY WASHY is an artist (the latter was in a wheel chair in the original production))*

WORLEY. *[To her group]* I've got ballet rehearsal at seven o'clock. Who else is going to club night at school tonight?

SHIRLEY. I'm going to my Kung Fu lesson. *[She does a few Kung Fu gestures and accidentally falls to the ground]*

NURF. I'm going to the school paper meeting—if this, this chatterbox, Wishy Washy, doesn't talk my ears off.

WISHY WASHY. *[Enters, possibly in a wheelchair. She is in the middle of a conversation though no one is listening]* So, you know, she turned to me and... I still can't believe she said this. But then maybe I could believe it—even if I don't believe it—because she...

WORLEY. *[Sees Grace. Taunts her]* Ewww! Look who's here. Why, it's Grace Light. Hugging a stupid tree. What's the matter, Grace? Got no friends? *[GRACE turns to her]*

SHIRLEY. You're gonna kill that tree if you squeeze it any tighter.

WISHY WASHY. Oh, Worley, Shirley, trees don't die just because you squeeze them. On the other hand, I had a pet tree once and it died. I think it was because I squeezed it too much.

NURF. Wishy Washy, can't you ever make up your mind?

WISHY WASHY. Of course, I can, Nurf. Well, maybe, sometimes I can't. But sometimes I can. I remember once I did. *[Reconsiders]* No, I didn't. I just thought I did. *[NURF grits her teeth]*

WORLEY. *[To Grace]* Are you ready for the math contest tomorrow, Grace? Our side is going to trash your side.

SHIRLEY. Yeah. Trash you, bag you, and stuff you into the garbage can.

WISHY WASHY. Well, I doubt that she can actually fit into a garbage can. Still, some garbage cans are great big and she's pretty small, so...

NURF. *[Great frustration]* Will somebody please gag Wishy Washy? I can't listen to her any more.

WORLEY. You gag her. We won't need her for the competition. Not when we have me.

SHIRLEY. And me.