

The Jellies of Jagger Court
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FADE IN:

INT. STAIRWELL OF A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING - DAY

The sounds of three people climbing the steps above. The CLICK of high-heeled shoes sets a slow pace. The brisk FOOTSTEPS of rubber-soled shoes stop as if held up behind the heels. The uneven SLAP of a child's flip-flops.

A RUSTLING of packages and an intermittent BUMPING.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Careful with Grandma's suitcase,
Daisy.

LITTLE GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)
I am.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
You don't want to scratch Grandma's
suitcase, do you?

A SCRAPING sound.

ELDERLY WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Why are you letting her...?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Watch the turn, Mother. Daisy, try
lifting instead of dragging.

LITTLE GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)
I AM lifting it!

Scraping again.

ELDERLY WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Why don't you carry it, Lorraine?

WOMAN'S VOICE
I have to put down...

LITTLE GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)
Oops!

The CLUNKING sound as an old-fashioned hard-cased suitcase tumbles end over end down the stairs. It stops with a THUMP on the landing.

The quick SLAPPING of flip-flops as DAISY, 6, runs down the stairs after the suitcase. She wears inexpensive, possibly second-hand, play clothes.

Ladies clothing spills out of the open suitcase. Brightly printed silk dresses. Nylon stockings. A plastic shower cap.

Daisy crouches by the suitcase. She lifts a crimson negligee from the pile of spilled clothes.

DAISY

Mommy, Grandma already has a pretty nightie.

Underneath the nightgown is a white towel with the monogram "Jagger Court."

INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING - DAY

Two women stand by an apartment door at the top of the stairs.

Lorraine, 35, carries an electric fan and a shopping bag stuffed with a fur coat. She sets the fan on the floor and pulls keys from her jeans pocket.

DOROTHY, 70, in an elegant dress, matching handbag, and heels, looks anxiously down the stairs. She has red lipstick smeared around the edges of her mouth.

Lorraine pushes open the apartment door.

LORRAINE

Just let me put these down.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Dorothy is sandwiched at the kitchen table between Daisy and a large teddy bear. She wears a different, but no less elegant, dress and holds her handbag on her lap.

Daisy's face looks like it's been dipped in milk and coated with cracker crumbs.

Lorraine, in a sloppy shirt, serves canned chicken soup and crackers.

Lorraine and Dorothy eye each other with curiosity--almost like strangers.

DAISY

How come Grandma's sleeping in your room?

LORRAINE

So she can have some privacy.

Dorothy nibbles the crackers and stirs the soup.

DAISY

Why didn't she stay at the home?

LORRAINE

She wanted to be here with us,
Daisy.

DAISY

Is she going to die now?

LORRAINE

Daisy.

Daisy presses her cheek against Dorothy's arm.

DAISY

Don't worry, Grandma.

Dorothy wipes her sleeve with a napkin.

LORRAINE

I'm going food shopping today. Is
there anything special you'd like
to eat?

Lorraine opens the refrigerator. She lifts the lid of a
plastic container of leftovers, takes a whiff, and puts it
back on the shelf.

DOROTHY

I don't want to be any trouble.

LORRAINE

It's no problem.

Lorraine shifts some items to put away the milk jug. There's
an economy-sized jar of grape jelly on the shelf.

DOROTHY

I like a little red currant jelly
on my morning toast. Do you think
you could pick up a jar?

LORRAINE

(to Daisy)

Be a big girl and remember that.

Lorraine tries to keep the soup bowls from spilling as she
clears the table.

DOROTHY

I'm expecting visitors from Jagger Court. Is that all right?

LORRAINE

Of course.

Dorothy dabs some more at her sleeve. Her smile is tense.

DOROTHY

Clever of you to wear a smock.

She hands Lorraine a couple of dollars from her purse.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Daisy is at the helm of a shopping cart. She blocks the aisle while Lorraine studies boxes of tea.

Lorraine selects chamomile.

Lorraine checks the price on a box of scones. She places them at the bottom of the jiggling shopping cart.

A colorful spectrum of jellies and jams beckon from a bank of shelves. Daisy careens past them, riding the shopping cart like a scooter. Lorraine racewalks after her.

The jelly jars disappear into the distance.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Lorraine carries a tray with tea and scones arranged on paper doilies to the master bedroom. The door is closed.

MUSIC: Big Band or similar, from within

Lorraine smiles to herself. She dances a few steps and knocks.

LORRAINE

Mother, I brought you some...

RALPH (O.S.)

Don't open that door!

Lorraine stops in her tracks. She waits.

RALPH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Okay, come on in.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Dorothy drops into an arm chair as the door swings open.

Tea sloshes onto the scones as Lorraine startles.

LORRAINE

Oh, my God!

RALPH, 80, lounges on the bed. He smoothes the bedspread with his cane.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

How did you get here?

RALPH

The Senior Shuttle.

DOROTHY

This is my daughter, Ralph. The one my sister Andrea raised.

RALPH

Pleasure to meet you. Pleasure to be here. Complete. Unmitigated. Real pleasure. See you got your mother's looks.

He winks at Dorothy.

Dorothy smiles giddily.

RALPH (CONT'D)

We miss her at Jagger Court. Just isn't the same without her. The rest of 'em are a bunch of old biddies. Jealous as hell.

Lorraine clutches the tray nervously.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Set that right on the bed.

Ralph shakes tea off a scone.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Wonderful! Excellent! Got any jelly for these things?

Now Lorraine remembers. She glances guiltily at Dorothy.

Dorothy looks out the window.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Back in the jelly aisle, Lorraine searches a sea of jellies and jams.

She zeroes in on the red currant jelly. It's right between the red raspberry jam and the peach preserves.

But, a STOCKBOY parks a towering cart of boxes between Lorraine and the red currant jelly.

Lorraine stretches her arm behind the cart. It's too much of a reach.

The STOCKBOY cuts opens a box. He stocks the opposite shelf with peanutbutter.

LORRAINE

Excuse me.

The STOCKBOY tosses an empty box by her feet.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Could I just get in there?

STOCKBOY

Oh, sure.

He moves the cart about a foot in the wrong direction.

Lorraine tries reaching from the other end of the cart. No luck.

LORRAINE

Excuse me, could I just grab some jelly?

The STOCKBOY slices open another box and hoists it off the cart.

This leaves an opening between the cartons. Lorraine sees the red currant jelly.

She reaches between the stacks of boxes.

She gropes blindly for the jelly jar, her cheek pressed against a cardboard box. Her fingers make contact with a jar of red jelly. The red currant jelly is right next to it, but this one is red raspberry jam. She closes her hand around the jar.

Lorraine swings the jar by her side as she heads for the checkout.

INT. SUPERMARKET CHECKOUT - DAY

The cashier scans the red raspberry jam.

Lorraine watches the price display on the cash register:
\$3.59.

The CASHIER drops the jam into a plastic bag.

Lorraine thumbs through a thin wad of one dollar bills.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daisy's small hand rotates a jigsaw puzzle piece, hesitates for a split second, and snaps it into place.

DAISY

Piece.

Ralph snaps another puzzle piece into place.

RALPH

Piece.

And so on. They're a crackerjack team, and the coffee table is their arena.

Daisy takes a breather. She grabs a cookie from an open box and stuffs it in her mouth.

LORRAINE

It's pretty close to dinner time.

Lorraine leans in the doorway. She holds a plastic grocery bag.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Where's Grandma? I thought she was watching you.

Daisy puts her finger to her lips and points down the hall.

DAISY

(whispering)

Grandma's having a nap. Uncle Ralph's watching me.

LORRAINE

Uncle Ralph?

The sound of the bedroom door opening.

MUSIC: New Age or similar, from the bedroom

DAISY

I guess she just woke up.

Dorothy teeters down the hallway on the arm of a blind man. FRED, 75, carries an empty plastic bottle. He taps his white cane on the walls and furniture.

Dorothy grasps Fred's arm tighter as Lorraine gapes.

Ralph clears his throat loudly.

Fred pauses to consider this signal.

FRED

Did I hear the lady of the house
come in?

DAISY

Mommy, that's you.

Lorraine offers her hand.

LORRAINE

Hello, I'm Lorraine.

DAISY

Uncle Fred can't see your hand.

FRED

Nice comfortable place you've got
here, Lorraine. Quality mattresses!

RALPH

Not such a bad idea, getting thrown
out of Jagger Court, was it
Dorothy?

LORRAINE

Thrown out? Why were you thrown
out?

Dorothy finds a window to look out of.

RALPH

She was a naughty girl, weren't you
Dorothy?

Ralph puts his arm around Dorothy and leads her to a chair.

FRED

Do you suppose you folks could
recycle this bottle for me?

LORRAINE

Of course. We recycle everything.

The label on the bottle reads "Red Current Massage Oil."

FRED

At Jagger Court, they recycle nothing.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dorothy's smaller suitcase lies on the low bureau. On top of that is a partially unwrapped gift package. Inside is a flannel nightgown.

Dorothy pushes the gift aside and opens her suitcase.

She takes a worn, framed photo from the suitcase. The little girl in the photo looks a little like Daisy, but not quite.

Dorothy's hand trembles as she moves the photo to the nightstand.

She's too feeble to kick off her shoes. She lies on the bed with her shoes on and closes her eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Lorraine sleeps on the pullout couch.

A KNOCK on the door.

RALPH (O.S.)

We're here!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Dorothy, Daisy, Ralph, and Fred squeeze around the kitchen table. They help themselves to scrambled eggs and bacon.

Dorothy hasn't changed her dress--and it's wrinkled. She moves her food around her plate, but she doesn't eat.

Lorraine gets the coffee pot.

FRED

(with great disdain)

The jellies of Jagger Court.

RALPH

Most mornings you get strawberry jam. Pedestrian enough. But on special occasions...

FRED

Thanksgiving, Halloween, Labor Day...

RALPH

You get some insipid substitute that is supposed to be a great treat. For example, blackberry.

Lorraine ceremoniously places a plate of whole wheat toast with jam on the table.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Like eating tar off the road. Or some sort of watered-down marmalade. Or grape jelly, as if we were children.

Daisy lunges for the toast.

FRED

Almost as bad as those gritty, seeded jams.

RALPH

The gritty jams are an affront.

LORRAINE

(to Dorothy)

A little more coffee?

DOROTHY

I'm fine.

Daisy spits out her toast.

DAISY

Uncle Fred?

FRED

Yes, Daisy?

DAISY

This jelly has seeds in it.

Ralph takes a careful look.

Fred takes a tentative taste.

DAISY (CONT'D)

This is not red currant jelly.

Dorothy gives Ralph a helpless, little-girl smile. She slides an uneaten slice of toast back onto the serving plate.

LORRAINE

You've never even tasted red currant jelly.

An open jar of jelly sits on the kitchen counter. Lorraine checks the label: red raspberry jam. She turns the jar so the label faces the wall.

DAISY

This bread has seeds in it too.

Daisy dissects her bread. She plucks out a "seed" and holds it up.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Look.

Lorraine looks at Fred stroking Dorothy's arm.

INT. SUPERMARKET CHECKOUT - DAY

Lorraine waits in the checkout line with Daisy and groceries.

She places a jar of red currant jelly on the conveyor belt.

A box of cereal falls against it. She uncovers the jelly.

The groceries bottleneck at the scanner. A bottle of apple juice CLINKS dangerously against the jelly jar.

DAISY

Did you get the right kind?

Daisy reaches for the jelly jar.

Lorraine swats Daisy's hand away with a package of English muffins.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Oww!

A concerned CUSTOMER comes to the rescue.

CUSTOMER

Next time you start to lose control, count to ten.

Daisy starts to sob.

Lorraine proffers the English muffins.

LORRAINE
(to Daisy)
Did you know you can split these
with a fork?

Daisy shoves the English muffins away.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Lorraine backs into the kitchen with a bag of groceries in each arm. Daisy squeezes past her.

MUSIC: loud opera, in the kitchen

DAISY
I smell something yummy!

BEEBE, 70, is in a too-small woman's apron and has several pots going on the stove. He looks a little healthier than Ralph and Fred. Definitely, well-fed.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Hi, Uncle Beebe!

He pulls a chocolate cake from the oven.

DAISY (CONT'D)
You can cook cake?

Cooking utensils and spilled ingredients cover every surface of the kitchen. There's barely room to set the groceries down. The English muffins are on top.

LORRAINE
Who are you?

DAISY
He's Uncle Beebe. Don't hit him,
Mommy.

Beebe lowers the volume.

BEEBE
I need heavy cream for the icing.

He paws through Lorraine's grocery bag.

LORRAINE

(testily)

I didn't buy any heavy cream.

She takes the grocery bag back.

DAISY (O.S.)

Are you giving Grandma a manicure?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dorothy sits between Fred and Ralph on the couch. The men have Jagger Court towels spread on their laps.

Fred massages hand cream into Dorothy's left hand. Ralph applies nail polish to her right. They work like professionals.

RALPH

Beebe's making your mother's favorite meal. He's a fabulous cook. Creative. Sublime. Knows all the health effects.

LORRAINE

That's nice.

FRED

They fought at Jagger Court.

RALPH

But he's recovered now. And she's taken him back. Fred and I, we'd do anything for her. But Beebe, he reads her mind. Doesn't he, Dorothy?

Dorothy tries to smile, but exhaustion wins.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Never fear. Beebe is here.

FRED

Leave it to Beebe.

RALPH

All problem's solved. Everything back on track.

FRED

At Jagger Court, they won't even let him in the kitchen.

RALPH
Sit down, Lorraine. Relax.
Everything's under control now.

Lorraine takes Daisy's reluctant hand and heads for the door.

LORRAINE
I have more groceries in the car.

She slams the door.

EXT. FRONT OF BUILDING - DAY

Lorraine pulls Daisy by the hand.

DAISY
I want to be with Grandma! I want
my uncles!

LORRAINE
(under her breath)
One. Two. Three.

EXT. PARKING AREA - DAY

Daisy plops herself on the pavement with her arms folded.

LORRAINE
Four. Five.

Lorraine snatches a bag of groceries from the trunk of her subcompact car. The bag tears. Jelly and apple juice fall back into the trunk.

Lorraine picks up the jelly jar. Almost throws it, but doesn't.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
Six.

She straps a pouting Daisy into her booster seat.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
Seven. Eight.

She closes the door.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
Nine.

She leans against the car door for a moment. Then, back to the trunk.

Daisy twists around to the rear window.

A THUD and then GLASS BREAKING.

EXT. LORRAINE'S CAR - DAY

Lorraine backs out of her parking space, carefully avoiding the broken apple juice bottle.

Her face is grim, but determined.

INT. SUPERMARKET CHECKOUT - DAY

Lorraine staggers under the weight of a sleeping six year-old. She hoists Daisy onto her hip so she can open her purse.

With one hand, Lorraine digs out change from the bottom of her purse. She makes a little pile of money on the conveyor belt.

She has just one item: a carton of heavy cream.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Daisy dashes through the door ahead of her mother.

Beebe tries to help Lorraine with her torn grocery bag. She holds on to it--tight.

She hands him the heavy cream.

He bows deeply.

While Beebe beats the icing, Lorraine hides the red currant jelly in a cabinet--behind a box of salt.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daisy stands at one end of the living room, her back to Dorothy and the Uncles. Her hands cover her eyes.

DAISY

What time is it Uncle Ralphie?

RALPH

One o'clock, beautiful.

DAISY

What time is it Uncle Freddie?

FRED

Sunrise.

DAISY

What time is it Uncle Grandma?

DOROTHY

(faintly)

Teatime.

DAISY

Is that Mommy? What time is it
Uncle Mommy?

LORRAINE

Midnight!

Daisy whirls around. She wears garish lipstick, applied
outside the lines.

DAISY

That's not the game, Mommy. You
can't say that. You can say
anything but that.

The Uncles look shocked and hurt.

Ralph leads Lorraine into the hallway. Fred follows.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Ralph leans in too close to Lorraine. Fred lowers his head
respectfully and rests his hands on his cane.

RALPH

This is her last night, Lorraine.

Lorraine wrests a little space for herself.

LORRAINE

What do you mean?

RALPH

She's dying.

Lorraine stares.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Dorothy's dying.

LORRAINE

She's playing a game with her
granddaughter.

FRED
She didn't know, Ralph.

RALPH
I thought everyone knew.

FRED
Dorothy didn't want her to worry.

RALPH
Your mother's terminal. That's why they threw her out.

FRED
Nobody dies at Jagger Court.

RALPH
And now, she's sent for Beebe.

LORRAINE
That doesn't mean anything.

RALPH
He's making the last meal. After that, we'll start a vigil. Everything's worked out.

LORRAINE
No, it's not. She just got here.

RALPH
It's all we can do.

LORRAINE
It's very nice of Beebe to do all this cooking, but that's it. After dinner, you go back. Nobody dies at Jagger Court.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - EVENING

Ralph and Beebe struggle with a card table and chairs. They carry it all into the master bedroom.

Fred balances an elaborate frosted cake.

Lorraine rushes to steady the cake.

Inside the master bedroom, Dorothy is propped up in a chair with pillows. Her eyes quietly meet Lorraine's.

The door closes--leaving Lorraine in the hallway.

The apartment is very quiet.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Lorraine cleans up the kitchen. Daisy "helps."

DAISY

Do you want to send out for pizza?

INT. FRONT OF BUILDING - EVENING

The three Uncles" and Daisy fill Lorraine's car to capacity.

She puts the car in reverse and backs up. A CRUNCHING sound.

She drives forward and backs up again. More CRUNCHING.

She does it again.

Lorraine gets out of the car.

Both tires on the driver's side are flat. Broken glass glitters on the ground around them.

Like a mother duck, she leads the dazed Uncles back into the building.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ralph and Fred sleep on the pullout couch.

INT. DAISY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daisy takes up most of the little girl's frilly bed. Lorraine is squeezed in next to her--wide awake. She listens to loud SNORING.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Beebe snores in an arm chair.

Lorraine stands by Dorothy's bedside.

DOROTHY

Lorraine?

LORRAINE

I'm right here.

DOROTHY
Did you get the jelly?

LORRAINE
It's in the kitchen.
(beat)
Would you like some?

DOROTHY
No.

Lorraine pulls a wooden chair to the side of the bed.

She sits--and waits.

The childhood photograph of Lorraine is on the nightstand.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Beebe opens and closes cookbooks. He pulls cooking utensils from drawers. He sifts flour directly onto the table. He adds spices.

Lorraine leads him out of the kitchen.

BEEBE
I fell asleep.

LORRAINE
She loved your cake.

EXT. FRONT OF BUILDING - DAY

The PARAMEDICS wheel Dorothy's body to the ambulance.

The Uncles, in undershirts and bare feet, stand at attention.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daisy sits on the couch with lipstick.

The Uncles look old and vulnerable.

FRED
There was a time when I could see,
but I never saw her face.

DAISY
Were you a sailor like Uncle Ralph?

There's coffee, but they don't drink.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Lorraine splits English muffins with a fork.

She toasts English muffins.

She reaches behind the salt box for the red currant jelly.

The seal POPS when she opens the jar.

She scoops the jelly into a bowl.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lorraine sets the English muffins and jelly on the coffee table.

Beebe spreads jelly on two English muffin halves. He hands one to Fred.

BEEBE
English muffin, Fred.

He tries one himself.

BEEBE (CONT'D)
Good jelly.

FRED
Not your Jagger Court fare.

Ralph takes a spoonful of jelly.

RALPH
(with reverence)
Red currant jelly. Tart, yet sweet.
Supple and translucent. Vibrant in
color.

Daisy holds the bowl of jelly in the light.

DAISY
Wobbly.

She grins at Lorraine.

LORRAINE
Shimmering.

They eat.

FADE OUT.