



Boundless Grace

By Mary Hoffman

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Accompanied by Nana, Grace travels to Africa to visit her father, who left home when she was little, and learns that love can be without bounds even in divided families. By the author of *Amazing Grace*.

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Boundless Grace By Mary Hoffman Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Irrepressible, plucky Grace charmed a multitude of readers when she debuted in *Amazing Grace*, defying the narrow-mindedness of her classmates to land the plum role of Peter Pan in the school play. In this more message-oriented sequel, Grace is older (her gap-toothed grin all filled in), but still brimming with stories and dreams. Here she must overcome her own preconceptions and fears to accept and find acceptance with her divorced and remarried father's "other" family in Africa. Traveling to The Gambia with her grandmother, Grace frets about the horrible stepmothers found in fairy tales and worries that her hosts won't need or love her ("They make a storybook family without me"). Unlike the first book, where the spunkiness of the heroine was the heart of the story, this tale revolves around the lesson that "families are what you make them." Hoffman has once again imbued her story with an abundance of familial understanding. Binch's brilliant watercolors capture the colorful clothing and scenery of the African village; her snapshot-like portraits seem to radiate light. Despite the more predictable plot line, this volume is as assured and as uplifting as its predecessor. Ages 4-8.

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From School Library Journal

Kindergarten-Grade 3?The irrepressible heroine of *Amazing Grace* (Dial, 1991) is back in this realistic adventure of the heart. A lover of stories, Grace longs for a family like the ones she reads about in her books. She has a secure and happy home with her ma, her nana, and her cat, but feels she's missed out by not having a father, a brother, and a dog. Her own father moved to Africa after her parents' divorce and began a new family there. One day her mother surprises her with the news that her dad has sent tickets for Grace and Nana to come for a visit. Arriving in The Gambia, she finds the storybook family she's been looking for, but it doesn't seem to include her. "I'm one girl too many. Besides, it's the wrong Ma," she says. Jatou doesn't fit the model of any of the stepmothers Grace has read about, but she promises her father she'll try to like the woman since they are both so important to him. Through the wonderful visit and getting to know her stepfamily Grace learns to embrace life even when it isn't picture perfect. Binch's sumptuous pencil and watercolor artwork is astonishingly lifelike and expressive in detail. The exotic locale is an extra bonus in this universal story that is validating, uplifting, and bound to please.?Luann Toth, School Library Journal
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From [Booklist](#)

Ages 4⁺-8. In the first picture book about Grace, *Amazing Grace* (1991), the wonderful upbeat story is grounded in reality: the determined black girl's dream comes true, and she gets to play the part of Peter Pan in the school play because she's talented and imaginative, and because she practices and practices. Times are tough, people are prejudiced, but she makes it, with the loving support of her hardworking single-parent mother and grandmother.

In this sequel another dream comes true, and this time, it's not nearly as convincing. It turns out her absent father has really loved her all the time. What's more, he's a rich man in Africa, and he sends plane tickets for her and her grandmother to come and visit with his new wife and children. When they get to The Gambia, it's like a fairy tale in real life, far beyond the fantasy of any child longing for a father. Grace sulks for a while (she tells herself all the stepmother stories, from *Hansel and Gretel* to *Cinderella*), but everyone loves everyone, and soon there's not a sad or frowning face anywhere. Of course it's great to see Africa without the usual primitive and exotic stereotypes, and kids will enjoy finding the cruel fairy-tale stepparent transformed.

The text on the jacket's back flap goes on and on about the book's "authenticity," reassuring us that the British author and illustrator traveled to The Gambia and took photographs and made sure every single local detail was accurate. That's all very well and good, but unfortunately, it's the story that doesn't ring true.

Still, the paintings are glorious, the landscapes filled with light and color, the people strongly individualized, whether Grace is shopping for traditional fabrics, playing with her stepbrother, looking at crocodiles with her loving father, or talking on the telephone with the mother she misses badly. *Hazel Rochman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Amy Medina:

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