

# **THE EARTHLING**

By

Catherine Burford

# THE EARTHLING

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# THE EARTHLING

*For my family, who are truly out of this world.*

## THE EARTHLING

*The Earthling* was originally produced at MTSU's Deborah K. Anderson's Studio Theatre in Murfreesboro, TN by Alpha Psi Omega featuring the following cast:

Polly.....Parker Chase  
Ellen.....Cailin Hurley  
Buzz.....Andrew Gately  
Dr. Amy Grandin.....Erin Burrow  
Daryl.....Luke McGuire  
Logan.....Samuel Grimes  
Tessa.....Mars Marshall  
Ms. Harper.....Kaitlynn Newcomb

*The Earthling* received its 2nd production at Lakewood Theatre's Playwright Festival in Old Hickory, TN featuring the following cast:

Polly.....Jordan Young  
Ellen.....Jenni Lee Trent  
Buzz.....Andrew Gately  
Dr. Amy Grandin.....Anna Voorhees  
Daryl.....Blake Allen  
Logan.....Myndie Gondzar  
Tessa.....Hannah Chapman  
Ms. Harper.....Jessica Young

## THE EARTHLING

*The Earthling* received its 3rd production at Agape Church in Pinson, AL featuring the following cast:

Polly.....Danyelle Small  
Ellen.....Rachel Small  
Buzz.....Will McConnel  
Dr. Amy Grandin.....Anna Kate Hindman  
Daryl.....Lane Kuykendall  
Logan.....Gabe Hicks  
Tessa.....Lucy Kuykendall  
Mr. Harper.....Thomas Gagliano

## THE EARTHLING

CAST: 5 Women and 3 Men

**Polly-** 3-years-old at first, then 14 going on 15. Purple-haired alien. Curious, afraid, and mostly nonverbal.

**Daryl-** 14 years old. Accepting, yet cautious.

**Buzz-** 30s-40s. Optimistic father and husband. Photographer.

**Ellen-** 30s-40s. Hesitant and worrisome mother and wife.

**Dr. Amy Grandin-** 30s-40s. Flexible and welcoming therapist.

**Logan-** 14-years-old. Bully. Questionable friend to Daryl and manipulative twin brother to Tessa.

**Tessa-** 14-years-old. Reluctant. Daryl's friend and Logan's twin sister.

**Ms. Harper-** 30s-40s. Logan and Tessa's struggling single mother.

PLACE: A backyard in a present-day suburban neighborhood.

TIME: Over the course of fifteen years.

# THE EARTHLING

## **A NOTE TO THE DIRECTOR AND DESIGNERS:**

Although this show does teach neurotypicals about autism, it is first and foremost for the autistic community. It's very important that you make this show with them in mind from the staging to the acting. I'm leaving you this guide to understand this script and provide a fantastic show for autistics and neurotypicals.

I would advise you to not rely so much on over-exaggerated lighting and sound designs. While you might have to increase the intensity a bit for neurotypicals to have a better understanding of how we autistics view our surroundings, you also want to be sure that you can bring in an autistic audience so they can enjoy a story written about them and for them. Make sure that you can have some sensory-friendly performances available if you plan to have over-exaggerated effects. Some changes that you might make include:

- Lowered sound level, especially for startling or loud sounds.
- Lights set at a low level.
- Reduced strobe lighting or lighting focused on the audience.
- Designated quiet areas adjacent to the theatre.
- Designated spaces throughout the theater for standing and movement.
- Trained staff members to assist in case of an emergency.

Please make sure that you use the proper research when doing this show. Proper autism representation is so hard to find in entertainment because nobody does the proper research. If you can't find any autistic people to play Polly, then have whoever you pick watch autistic creators and hang out with autistic people to have a better understanding of their role.

What you really need to keep in mind is that this play is pretty much based on the inside of my mind when I was a child. Imagine how a child would view the world, and then imagine if that child were autistic. Just about everything is amplified for us autistics from our sense of hearing to our sense of touch. While not all of our senses are on the same level of intensity, at least one of them is too intense when we reach over-stimulation. You need to create a realistic world that is a little over-exaggerated so that the neurotypical audience can understand. For instance, the cat and lizard should be played by puppets controlled by actors to exaggerate the intensity of Polly's perception while also entertaining younger members of the audience. Talk to children on their level, but don't belittle them.

Thank you for bringing my world to life and break a leg!

Catherine Burford

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## SCENE 1

*It is late at night in a backyard. The entire space is surrounded by a white picket fence, and a back porch is connected to the back of a house. A baby crib is seen in a shed in the middle of the stage. BUZZ enters from the house with a camera in hand. He walks over to the shed and checks out the crib. His wife ELLEN steps out of the house.*

**ELLEN.** Buzz, what are you doing out here?

**BUZZ.** Oh, nothing! Nothing at all! I just needed to clear my head.

**ELLEN.** Let me guess. You had no luck today.

**BUZZ.** Yeah, it's all the same. They tell me that my work is fantastic, but I'm "inexperienced".

**ELLEN.** Inexperienced? You've been taking photos since you were eight! Your photography is fantastic!

**BUZZ.** Yeah, but they say I need to "breathe in some new life". I should've known that I wouldn't make it as a nature photographer.

**ELLEN.** That's not true! You started out strong with that one magazine!

**BUZZ.** True, but I think I should take that last place's advice and "breathe in some new life". If I don't, I'll be stuck working in that tiny little office forever.

**ELLEN.** Where are you going to get some new life?

**BUZZ.** Found it. *(He takes a photo of Ellen.)*

**ELLEN.** Do you want to go inside? The lighting is better.

**BUZZ.** Nah, we can stay out here. You can pose in the moonlight.

**ELLEN.** But it's a new moon.

**BUZZ.** Then I'll use the flash on my camera. Smile! *(He takes photos of Ellen, who moves toward the shed.)* Hey, why don't we move over here?

**ELLEN.** Why?

**BUZZ.** The lighting is a little better over here.

**ELLEN.** Ok, then.



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**BUZZ.** A little further. There! Perfect! *(He continues to take pictures. ELLEN moves toward the shed.)* Hey, come a little closer.

**ELLEN.** What's wrong?

**BUZZ.** Nothing. I just want you to come a little closer.

**ELLEN.** You've been acting strange lately. You haven't been enthusiastic about anything at all, you're not very vocal anymore, and you spend most of your time out here.

**BUZZ.** It's just the job search. That's all.

**ELLEN.** You promise you're not hiding anything from me?

**BUZZ.** I promise. Now smile! *(He takes more photos as Ellen moves closer to the shed again.)* You know what, I think you're right. The lighting is so much better inside the house.

**ELLEN.** You're keeping something in the shed, aren't you?

**BUZZ.** No! Keep posing for the camera! *(Ellen ignores him and looks at the crib inside the shed.)*

**ELLEN.** I thought I told you to get rid of this.

**BUZZ.** You said you didn't want it in the house.

**ELLEN.** I want it in the garbage.

**BUZZ.** Don't throw it out! We need it!

**ELLEN.** Need it? Need it for what?

**BUZZ.** For when we finally have a baby.

**ELLEN.** How are we going to have a baby?

**BUZZ.** I don't know. Maybe a stork will fly by and place a baby in the crib.

**ELLEN.** When you're ready to be realistic, I'll be inside.

**BUZZ.** Oh, come on Ellen! You give up too easily!

**ELLEN.** And you never know when to quit.

**BUZZ.** You sound like that's a bad thing.

**ELLEN.** It *is* a bad thing!

**BUZZ.** How is not giving up on something you want more than anything a bad thing?

**ELLEN.** Don't be smart with me!

**BUZZ.** At least I'm not a quitter like you.

**ELLEN.** That's it! If you want that crib so badly, you can sleep in it tonight!

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**BUZZ.** Wait! Baby, I'm sorry!

**ELLEN.** No, just sit in that stupid crib. You seem to be comfortable in there, anyway.

**BUZZ.** Are you calling me a baby?

**ELLEN.** I'm not calling you a grown up. *(They try to hold in their laughter, but they can't help it.)*

**BUZZ.** I knew you wouldn't stay angry for long.

**ELLEN.** I mean, you are one of the few people who can truly make me laugh.

**BUZZ.** Besides, if I were to sleep in the crib, there would be no room for the stork to place the baby.

**ELLEN.** I know that you mean well, but this is just ridiculous. Do you really expect me to believe that a baby is going to fall from the sky? *(Suddenly, the stage experiences a blackout. A green spotlight is then set on the crib as if it were a beam from a UFO. A large egg is now sitting in the crib. The beam disappears and everything goes back the way it was before. Buzz and Ellen rush to the shed.)*

**BUZZ.** You were saying?

**ELLEN.** Oh, please. It's not even a baby.

**BUZZ.** Eggs have babies inside them.

**ELLEN.** Not human babies! It just beamed down through the roof! For all we know, there could a flesh-eating beast in there! *(The egg suddenly cracks open. A baby is heard crying.)*

**BUZZ.** She doesn't look like a flesh-eating beast.

**ELLEN.** Wait, how do you know it's a girl?

**BUZZ.** Take a look.

**ELLEN.** It's a girl. Why does she have purple hair? Normal babies don't have purple hair.

**BUZZ.** I think she looks cute.

**ELLEN.** She may be cute now, but she could be one of those Gremlin creatures.

**BUZZ.** And you say that *I* need to be realistic.

**ELLEN.** I'm serious! We have no idea where she came from! I don't know if we should even touch her!

**BUZZ.** We can't just let her cry!

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**ELLEN.** Don't touch her, Buzz! (*Buzz reaches down to touch the baby and lets out a small yell.*) What is it?

**BUZZ.** She just shocked me with her hands!

**ELLEN.** What should we do?

**BUZZ.** Oh, I'm fine. It was just a little spark. (*Buzz takes off his jacket and wraps the baby up in it.*)

**ELLEN.** Not you! I meant her! We can't take care of her! We're humans and she's-she's-she's not human! (*She shouts at the sky.*) Hello! We have your baby! You can come down and get her!

**BUZZ.** Honey, I don't think they're coming back.

**ELLEN.** But why would they do that? Why would they beam their own daughter down here?

**BUZZ.** Maybe their ship was going to crash and they had to make sure that she survived.

**ELLEN.** What if they didn't want to deal with her? What if I was right about that whole Gremlin thing?

**BUZZ.** Ellen, will you please stop shouting? I'm trying to get her to stop crying! (*To the baby.*) It's ok, little girl. I've got you. Shh, it's going to be ok. (*The baby is finally quiet. Buzz turns to Ellen.*) Ellen, we've been married for five years, and we finally have a baby. Aren't you happy?

**ELLEN.** Buzz, I am happy to finally have a baby, but most women I know don't receive their babies from a mysterious beam from the sky. I'm just not sure.

**BUZZ.** Think about it, Ellen. When are we ever going to have an opportunity like this again?

**ELLEN.** She *is* really cute. What should we name her?

**BUZZ.** How about Zsa Zsa?

**ELLEN.** That doesn't sound like a name for a human girl.

**BUZZ.** She's not human.

**ELLEN.** If we're going to raise her on Earth, she needs to have a human name.

**BUZZ.** Cleopatra?

**ELLEN.** I meant a common name.

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**BUZZ.** Nah, she needs an uncommon name, so she won't get mixed up with the others. Like, if we name her Kate, she'll get mixed up with every other Kate in the world.

**ELLEN.** What uncommon name do you suggest?

**BUZZ.** Eh...how about Polly? It's cute, simple, and uncommon.

**ELLEN.** I like that. Welcome to the family, Polly.

### SCENE 2

*Three years later. It's a cloudy day in the backyard. The shed now has a jar full of bottle tops on a small shelf, some toys on the ground, and POLLY napping inside the crib. She is three years old and wears silver gloves. Ellen walks out of the house with baby food and goes to the shed. She wakes up Polly and takes her outside.*

**ELLEN.** I've brought you some lunch, Polly. We're going to try this pea-flavored baby food. *(She puts a small spoon-full of baby food into Polly's mouth, which she spits out almost immediately onto Ellen's shirt.)* Polly! This is the seventh time you've done this! I'll go get Daddy to watch over you while I go change, so don't move. *(Ellen goes into the house. Polly pulls off one of her gloves out of boredom as a cat peeks through the gate. Curious, she crawls over to it and nearly touches it when Buzz steps outside and rushes over.)*

**BUZZ.** No! No! No! Don't touch the kitty, Polly! *(He removes the cat from the yard and helps Polly with her glove.)* Honey, you have to keep your gloves on. You've already shocked two cats, and we really don't need to deal with a third one. It's ok, I'm not mad. I just want you to be careful. Look what I've brought you! *(He pulls a bottle cap out of his pocket. Polly squeals with glee.)* I knew you'd get excited! Look! It has grapes on it! I'll go get your bottle cap jar! *(As he goes into the shed to fetch the jar, a lizard crawls over to Polly and bites her finger, causing her to scream. Buzz hurries back to her with the jar, picks up the lizard by the tail, and throws it over the fence. He kisses Polly's finger.)* It's ok, Polly. A little kiss will make the boo-boo go bye bye. Now, let's look at your collection!

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Let's see...here's the cap from that Coca-Cola I had last week. This one is from this party I went to last month. You see this pretty gold-colored cap right here with the black flower? I got this from a beer I had at a bar. Don't tell your mother. And this last one here has a monkey on it. I have no idea where I got it, but it looks cool. Which one do you like? *(Polly picks one and puts it in her mouth. Buzz quickly takes it out and throws all the caps back into the jar in shock.)* First the cat, and now this! Why don't I get you some apple juice instead? Wait here. *(He steps inside the house as thunder is heard. Polly looks around in curiosity. As lightning flashes, she laughs. Ellen rushes outside and tries to put Polly back in the crib.)*

**ELLEN.** Buzz! Help me get Polly back in her crib! *(Buzz runs outside with the juice.)*

**BUZZ.** Polly, I'll give you the apple juice if you get back in your crib! *(The three of them get in the shed and Polly gets in her crib.)*

**ELLEN.** Polly! Don't scare us like that! Don't you know that you shouldn't be outside when there's lightning?

**BUZZ.** Honey, she's three years old.

**ELLEN.** Why didn't she scream or cry? Toddlers always cry when there's thunder and lightning.

**BUZZ.** Why do you automatically assume that all three-year-olds are the same?

**ELLEN.** You are no help at all. I asked you to watch over her, and you left her outside.

**BUZZ.** I went inside to get her some apple juice. She tried to swallow a bottle top after she almost fried another cat.

**ELLEN.** Again? We have to do something about her.

**BUZZ.** What do you mean?

**ELLEN.** Buzz, do you remember Amy Grandin?

**BUZZ.** Yes, why do you ask?

**ELLEN.** Well, I was thinking about bringing her over here to observe Polly.

**BUZZ.** And why would you do that?

**ELLEN.** Something is wrong with Polly. Yes, I know that she's not human, but I'm worried about her. She's a three-year-old girl who still

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sleeps in a crib, hates nearly everything I feed her, fries cats, and laughs at lightning. Dr. Grandin is an amazing therapist who specializes with adolescents and children. If she can diagnose and treat hundreds of disturbed children, I'm sure—

**BUZZ.** Do *not* call our child disturbed. I know that she's not like other children—

**ELLEN.** That's because she's not human!

**BUZZ.** Shh! She'll hear you!

**ELLEN.** She barely listens to us. She'll never know.

**BUZZ.** Look, I have no doubt that Amy is a great therapist, but it's too risky to tell her that we have an alien in our backyard.

**ELLEN.** We don't even have to tell her that Polly's an alien.

**BUZZ.** What about her hair?

**ELLEN.** We'll give her a wig.

**BUZZ.** I don't think she'll like that.

**ELLEN.** I don't think she'll like being teased for having purple hair. Look, I want Polly to leave this backyard and interact with others, and the only way she can do that is to act like a human. Please let me call Amy.

**BUZZ.** I don't see why she has to completely—*(A police siren is heard, causing Polly to scream. Buzz and Ellen try to calm her down. The siren and crying soon die down.)* Ok, go ahead and call Amy.

### SCENE 3

*Two days later. Polly is sitting in her crib with a blonde wig next to her. Ellen walks out of the house with DR. AMY GRANDIN and leads her to the shed. Amy waits outside as Ellen goes to get Polly.*

**ELLEN.** Polly, you're supposed to wear the wig. Put it back on. *(Polly throws the wig out of the shed.)* Don't do that!

**AMY.** Why is she wearing a wig?

**ELLEN.** Just toss it to me! *(Amy looks inside the shed and sees Polly, who grabs onto Ellen.)*

**AMY.** You didn't tell me that she had purple hair!

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**ELLEN.** Now is *not* the time to be a baby! Let go of me!

**AMY.** Should I come back another time?

**ELLEN.** No, that won't be necessary. We just need to get her to behave.

**AMY.** Ellen, it's normal for children her age to misbehave.

**ELLEN.** Is it normal for children her age to grab onto people with tight grips, spit out food, and fry cats?

**AMY.** Yes, yes, and...I beg your pardon?

**ELLEN.** Forget that last one. Please get her off me.

**AMY.** Can you lift her out of the crib and take her outside?

**ELLEN.** Yes, but I don't think she'll let go. (*Polly is taken outside, but she doesn't let go.*) Told you so.

**AMY.** Ok, give me a second.

**ELLEN.** Just tear her off me.

**AMY.** That is *not* the proper response. (*She pulls a doll out of her bag.*)

Look, Polly. You see this doll? Isn't she pretty?

**ELLEN.** I told you she doesn't listen to anyone.

**AMY.** At least let me try. Polly, do you think the doll is pretty? (*Polly lets go of Ellen and waddles to the doll.*) Her name is Rose. Would you like to hold her? (*She gives Polly the doll.*) You can have her if you'd like.

**ELLEN.** She-she just walked! She's never done that before!

**AMY.** My name is Amy. It's nice to meet you. (*She reaches her hand out to Polly, who recoils.*) It's ok! I'm not going to hurt you. I want to be your friend. (*She pulls another doll out of her bag, which Polly tries to grab.*)

No, Polly! This is my doll. We can play together. What should we do with our dolls? (*We see the next twelve years fly by as Polly quickly changes from a three-year-old to a fourteen-year-old who's about to turn fifteen in a month. Amy takes out some note cards with drawings and words on them.*)

Ok, can you tell me what kind of animal gives milk? (*Polly makes gurgling sounds and shows a card with a cow on it.*) Good! Can you tell me what your favorite food is? (*Polly holds up a card with a chocolate bar on it. She then replaces it with a card with an apple on it, but then holds the chocolate bar card back up.*) It's ok if you have more than one favorite food. Now, what's the name of the doll I gave you? (*Polly gurgles and holds up a card with a rose on it.*) That's right! I'm afraid we're out of time. I'll see you next week. (*She hugs Polly, who won't let go.*) Polly, I

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need to go. Please let go of me. (*Polly lets go.*) Thank you. (*Amy goes to Ellen, who's on the porch.*)

**ELLEN.** How is she?

**AMY.** She still makes these weird gurgling sounds, but she's used to the note cards now. She's also more polite than she was last week. However, she had another fit today.

**ELLEN.** But you just said she was polite.

**AMY.** No, not like that. A firetruck drove by, and its siren was too much for her. She slapped her hands against her ears, curled up into a ball, and screamed. I had to pull her into the shed so that none of the neighbors could hear her. We'll work on that next week.

**ELLEN.** Well, at least she's improving. She's doing well in her lessons with me, too.

**AMY.** That's good, but don't you think it's time for Polly to finally go to school with other children? It's been eleven years and I think she's ready. You've always been an excellent teacher, but you should go back to teaching in a school and let Polly be in a classroom. We can get her a teacher's assistant to sit with her in class.

**ELLEN.** Amy, I think it would be best if Polly stayed here for now.

**AMY.** Why? She can't make any friends if she stays in that shed.

**ELLEN.** I have a feeling she won't make any friends, anyway.

**AMY.** Ellen— (*Buzz enters.*)

**BUZZ.** Hi Amy! How was Polly today?

**AMY.** She's doing great! I think she's fully capable of using those note cards, now.

**BUZZ.** That's great! Now, if you'll excuse me... (*Buzz rushes over to Polly.*)

**ELLEN.** Thank you, Amy. I'll see you next week. (*Amy looks at Ellen with an astonished look and then leaves without saying a word. Ellen quietly walks over to the shed as Buzz pulls out some photos.*)

**BUZZ.** Look Polly! I got your photos developed! Let's put them in your photo album! (*Polly pulls out a photo album from the shed. The two of them go through the pages.*) Oh, I like this one. Mommy tried to feed you mashed potatoes, and you responded by throwing them at her. I took a picture right when the potatoes hit her on the nose. And look at this one. I



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still don't understand why, but you're too scared to go inside the house. You always take your doll with you every time you go inside to use the bathroom. You freaked out once because you accidentally left Rose in the house, and I took this photo of you while you were trying to calm down. Now, this one right here is my favorite. You were seven years old, and I gave you that blue princess gown. You would spend hours in that thing and spin around in the yard. Mommy would tell you to stop, but you wouldn't listen to her. You seem happy when you're spinning around. Do you want to spin right now? Come on! *(They spin around outside. Ellen notices the notebook. As she picks it up, Polly stops spinning, screams at Ellen, and grabs the notebook.)*

**ELLEN.** Calm down, Polly! I was just picking it up! It's not polite to yell at people!

**BUZZ.** Polly! Please apologize to your mother! *(Polly holds up a card that says, "I'm sorry".)* Now, before I forget, I have big news to share. I've decided to start my own photography business.

**ELLEN.** Really? *(TESSA is seen peeking over the fence.)*

**BUZZ.** Yes, but it's only part-time for the time being. My pictures of Polly turned out so good that I thought about taking pictures of other people. This one couple asked me to take pictures of their twins after seeing this one photo of Polly, and they're going to pay me well.

**ELLEN.** You mean you showed pictures of Polly to other people? What did they say about her hair?

**BUZZ.** They were black and white, so no one knew she had purple hair.

**ELLEN.** Do they know that we adopted her and are raising her in our backyard?

**BUZZ.** No. I told them that she was my co-worker's child.

**ELLEN.** Do you think this is a good idea? You did so well as a nature photographer.

**BUZZ.** I was going nowhere. I can now take pictures for weddings, family gatherings, and—

**ELLEN.** Wait, who's that? *(Buzz turns around just in time for Tessa to disappear.)*

**BUZZ.** Hey! *(Buzz runs after Tessa and then returns.)* It was some kid. They must have heard Polly screaming.

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**ELLEN.** Unless she needs to go to the bathroom, she's not leaving her shed for the rest of the day. Get her back in the crib.

**BUZZ.** Is that really necessary?

**ELLEN.** Buzz, she can't be seen. Please get her back in the crib.

### SCENE 4

*The next day. Polly is admiring her bottle top collection as the gate cracks open. LOGAN, DARYL and Tessa peek into the yard.*

**TESSA.** See? They're keeping something in that shed.

**LOGAN.** She looks ridiculous. Why is she wearing those gloves and that stupid wig? It's not Halloween.

**DARYL.** I don't think she looks ridiculous.

**LOGAN.** Daryl, only clowns wear that kind of get-up. I think she ran away from the circus.

**DARYL.** Come on, guys. Let's get out of here.

**LOGAN.** Don't be boring, Daryl. Let's have some fun. *(Logan sneaks into the yard.)*

**DARYL.** Logan! Get back here! *(Daryl tries to stop Logan, but Tessa holds him back. Logan sneaks behind Polly and then grabs her hair. Polly screams in pain and lashes out at Logan, causing him to run away.)*

**LOGAN.** IT'S NOT A WIG! IT'S NOT A WIG! IT'S NOT A WIG!  
*(Tessa runs after him.)*

**TESSA.** LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! *(Daryl starts to leave, but then he looks back at Polly. Feeling bad for her as she sits in pain, he walks over to her. She sees him and runs into her shed and jumps back into her crib. He sees her jar full of bottle tops and picks it up. She shrieks as he steps inside the shed.)*

**DARYL.** It's ok! It's ok! They're gone! I'm sorry Logan did that. Uh, you left this outside. Do you want me to put this somewhere or give it to you? *(She doesn't respond. He puts it on the shelf, but it's not in the same spot as before. She notices this and starts frantically pointing at the correct spot on the shelf. He doesn't understand.)* What? Do you not want it on the

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shelf? Do you want to hold it? *(He takes it off the shelf and hands it to her. She starts making strange sounds and keeps pointing at the spot on the shelf.)* What? Do you want it or not? *(Irritated, she gets out of her crib, snatches the jar out of his hands, puts it on the correct spot on the shelf, and returns to the crib.)* You could've told me that you wanted it there. Oh, you can't speak? But I heard you screaming. So, you can scream and make other sounds, but you can't actually speak? How does that work? Oh, never mind, you can't tell me. So, is your hair dyed or were you born with that hair color? *(He reaches out to touch her hair, but she recoils.)* I'm sorry, that was stupid. I'm Daryl, by the way. What's your name? Is there some way you can tell me? Do you have anything I can write on? *(Ellen exits from the house, looks inside the shed and is startled by Daryl. She pulls him out of the shed as fast as she can.)*

**ELLEN.** Who are you and what are you doing here?

**DARYL.** I didn't mean to intrude or anything! I was with my friends—  
*(As this is going on, Buzz enters with his camera. He doesn't really notice Daryl as he gets his camera ready and walks toward the shed.)*

**ELLEN.** What? Who else saw her?

**DARYL.** Just two other people! We were peeking in here—

**ELLEN.** Have you ever heard of "minding your own business"? *(Buzz's camera suddenly flashes in Ellen and Daryl's faces as he takes a picture.)*

**BUZZ.** You're not Polly.

**DARYL.** Polly? Is that her name?

**ELLEN.** Buzz, I caught this boy in the shed with Polly.

**BUZZ.** Doing what?

**DARYL.** I was just returning her bottle top jar.

**BUZZ.** And that's it?

**DARYL.** Yes.

**ELLEN.** Look, I want you to leave and never tell anyone about this. Is that clear?

**DARYL.** But what about Logan and Tessa? They ran off.

**BUZZ.** Who are Logan and Tessa?

**DARYL.** My friends. Logan pulled Polly's hair because he thought it was a wig.

**ELLEN.** Well, go stop them from telling anyone!

## THE EARTHLING

**DARYL.** How?

**ELLEN.** I don't know! Tackle them! Bribe them! Do whatever you kids do! Just go! *(Daryl exits.)* Buzz, if those two other kids bring any grownups over here, we need to hide Polly.

**BUZZ.** Ellen, I doubt that they're going to do that. I mean, who listens to teens nowadays?

**ELLEN.** Some people do, so we might as well take caution. Now, get Polly in the house.

**BUZZ.** You know she goes berserk whenever she goes inside the house.

**ELLEN.** The first thing they're going to check is the shed. She'll calm down if she has her doll.

**BUZZ.** How long do I need to keep her inside?

**ELLEN.** It might take an hour.

**BUZZ.** An hour? I've never had her in the house for that long!

**ELLEN.** I said it might take an hour. Now go! *(Buzz takes Polly and her doll inside, but it's clear that she's scared. Logan and Tessa return to the gate with their mom, MS. HARPER. Daryl enters behind them.)*

**LOGAN.** She's in the shed, Mom! She tried to eat me!

**DARYL.** Logan, what are you doing?

**MS. HARPER.** Excuse me, but my kids have been screaming about a monster in your backyard.

**ELLEN.** I beg your pardon?

**MS. HARPER.** I know it sounds absurd, but they wouldn't shut up.

**LOGAN.** But Mom, she was right there!

**TESSA.** Yeah! She had purple hair! And she may or may not have had fangs!

**DARYL.** They're lying! There's nothing in there!

**MS. HARPER.** I'm sorry, but may I check the shed?

**ELLEN.** Sure. *(Ms. Harper looks inside the shed.)*

**MS. HARPER.** What's with the cradle?

**LOGAN.** That's where the freak sleeps.

**ELLEN.** Actually, no one sleeps in there.

**MS. HARPER.** Then why is this here?

**LOGAN.** Yeah. Why?

**TESSA.** Yeah. Why?

## THE EARTHLING

**MS. HARPER.** Will you two stop? I'm sorry. You know how kids can be. Do you have any kids?

**LOGAN.** No! She just has that thing that almost killed me!

**MS. HARPER.** One more outburst and you're grounded.

**ELLEN.** No, I don't have any kids. My husband is a photographer, and he's trying to set up a studio in our house. We're still remodeling the room, so we've got all these props out in this shed.

**MS. HARPER.** Why is the crib so old?

**ELLEN.** It's my husband's old crib. I don't like it, but my mother-in-law demanded that I keep it. You know how in-laws can be.

**MS. HARPER.** Tell me about it.

**LOGAN.** Mom, the beast must be inside the house! Let's go check!  
*(Logan and Tessa head toward the house as Ms. Harper grabs them.)*

**MS. HARPER.** Oh no, you don't! We're leaving right now, and you are both grounded for two weeks!

**LOGAN.** Daryl! Do something!

**DARYL.** I told you there was nothing in there, Ms. Harper.

**TESSA.** You traitor! *(Everyone but Ellen exit through the gate. Polly runs back outside as Buzz follows her.)*

**BUZZ.** I'm sorry, but she couldn't stand it in there.

**ELLEN.** It's fine. They just left. We've got to do something about that fence so that they can't get back in here.

**BUZZ.** I doubt that they're going to come back.

**ELLEN.** Kids will do anything to prove that they're right. They called Polly a beast, and—

**BUZZ.** Shh! Don't let Polly hear you!

**ELLEN.** She doesn't listen.

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