26 Jellybeans to Ginormity

by Stan Owocki
Because she wanted very much to be big, Sal loved BIG things. So one day she asked her Grandpa,

"What's the biggest, most gigantic, enormous, humongous, ginormous thing ever?"
“Hmmm.. that’s kind of hard to explain”, he replied.

“So instead, let me show you with these super-magic Jellybeans, 26 in all.”
“With each bean you eat, YOU, and all the beans left in the bag you hold, will grow TEN TIMES BIGGER!”
Sal took the beans, and on swallowing the first one, POP, she was bigger than her house!
With a second she was as big as her neighborhood, and a third made her as big as her hometown village.

POP, POP!

Sal’s house
Two more and she stretched across several counties, and with two more still — 7 in all — she found herself as big as the whole planet Earth!

“Wow!” she exclaimed, “as big as the whole wide world. That must be as big as it gets.”
“Not really”, replied Grandpa, speaking through the magic mics and earbuds they both wore. “Things in space are MUCH bigger. Take two more, and you’ll be as big as the Sun!”
“But the Sun looks so small”, she puzzled?

“That’s only because it’s so far away”, answered Grandpa.

"But if you take yet another two, you’ll be able to stretch all the way from Earth to the Sun.”

Indeed, with now 11 Jellybeans in all she could even touch the Sun, which seemed to have shrunk to a yellow marble, with Earth now just a tiny bluish speck of dust.
And with two more beans, she became as big as our whole solar system, reaching beyond even icy Pluto.

Comets out there buzzed around her giant head like tiny flies, much as the 13 Jellybeans buzzed inside her.
It took 3 more beans, 16 in all, to be able to reach near the nearest star, Alpha Centauri, which she now could see was actually 3 'suns', locked together by gravity in a slow, graceful dance.
With 10 Jellybeans left, she was getting tired, so decided now to eat them 5 at a time.

After the first 5, she was as big as our Milky Way galaxy, with its spiral arms swirling around like the 21 Jellybeans in her now very swollen, giant tummy.
And with the last 5, she was finally as big as our whole Universe, itself grown big in the 14 giga-years since its own tiny birth in the Big Bang.
“Congratulations, you made it! The most ginormous thing we will ever know, with just 26 Jellybeans”, noted Grandpa proudly.
Then, like a bubble that’s gotten TOO big, there was another loud POP, and suddenly she was back home, at her normal size.
Excited, she ran to her Mom, saying, “Grandpa just gave me super-magic Jellybeans to make me as big as the whole Universe!”
Then her smile turned to a frown, as she added, “But now I have a bad tummy ache... and a BIG headache.”
“I know Sweetie”, said her Mom as she turned with a grin to her own Dad.

“I felt the same when he did that for me, when I was a little girl, who more than anything just wanted to be BIG.

The End
Sal’s Jellybean journey, from here to ginormity, and back
NGC 6302
The Butterfly Nebula
16 Jellybeans across
more than 19 Jellybeans away
NGC 2392
The Eskimo Nebula

NGC 7293
The Helix Nebula

M 2-9
The Twin Jet Nebula

NGC 6543
The Cat's Eye Nebula
Stan Owocki received his Ph.D. in Astrophysics in 1982 from the University of Colorado. Since 1987 he has been a Professor at the University of Delaware, where he teaches astronomy and astrophysics, and carries out research on mass loss from bright, massive stars. He is co-author on more than 200 scientific papers.

In 2018 he became a proud “Dziadzi” (Polish for Grandpa) to Saloma Maryam.

While dedicated to Baby Saloma, the book here is aimed at ages around 4+.

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