

LEVELED BOOK • R

# Charly Dances 'til It Drops



Part Three of a Five-Part Story  
Written by J.F. Blane • Illustrated by Joel Snyder

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*In Part Two, ten-year-old Charly dug up the leaf-covered flowerbeds in Brewster Hill Park to sow her wild oats. Now she has to find a way to make the oats grow in the middle of a drought.*

Another picture-perfect Saturday shined down on Brewster Hill; not a cloud in sight—**unfortunately**. Normally, I would have joined the other kids at the park in a game of tag. But today I had work to do.

“Rain, rain, come and stay. Pour and soak the day away,” I sang as Ethan Jordan, a boy in my class, came running by.





"That's not how the song goes," Ethan said.  
"You've got it backward."

"I know," I said. "That's why I am standing  
on my head to say it."

"You sure are weird sometimes, Charly,"  
said Ethan. "Or should I call you by your real  
name—Char-the-Pain."

Did I mention that Ethan is also my number  
one enemy?

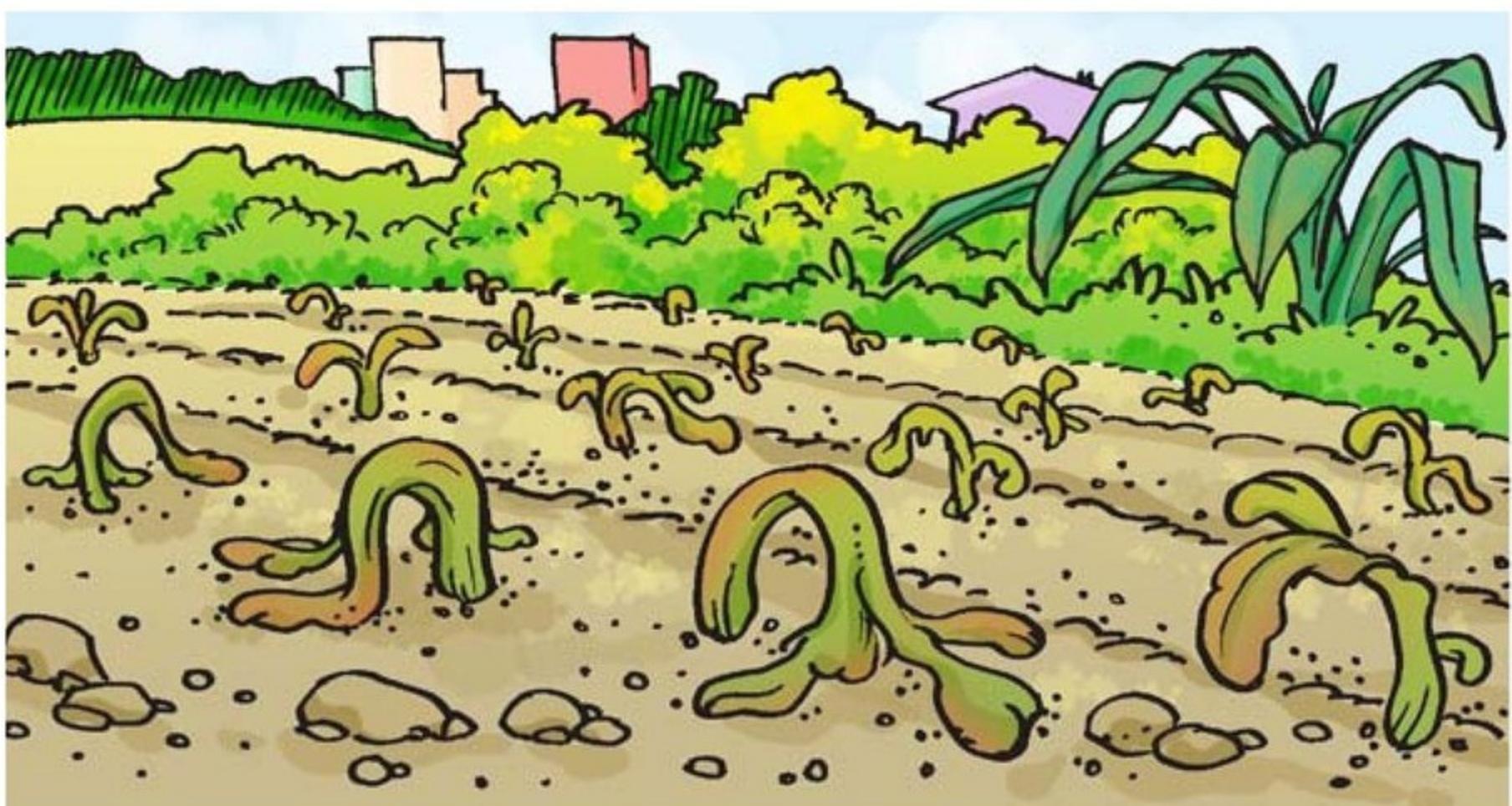
"It would be just like you to **spoil** everyone's  
fun," Ethan continued.

“I’m not trying to spoil anything! I just don’t want Mr. Rooney to get that plaque!” I explained.

If Mr. Rooney got that plaque, it meant the special garden I planted on Brewster Hill didn’t grow. It meant that my New Year’s resolution to put a smile on everyone’s face didn’t happen. (That’s right, it’s resolution, or resolving to do something; not revolution, or turning circles around something. Or so Gattie explained, saying I was getting more “ma-toor” and needed to know the difference.) It meant that my Aunt Dee paid for two gardens, that plaque, *and* the new playground it went on.

It meant that I did it, again. But I didn’t mean to do it! I didn’t know I needed **permission** from Mr. Rooney, who is head of the Parks Department, to plant on **public** property. I thought *public* property meant it was *for* the public; and, after all, I’m a part of the public.

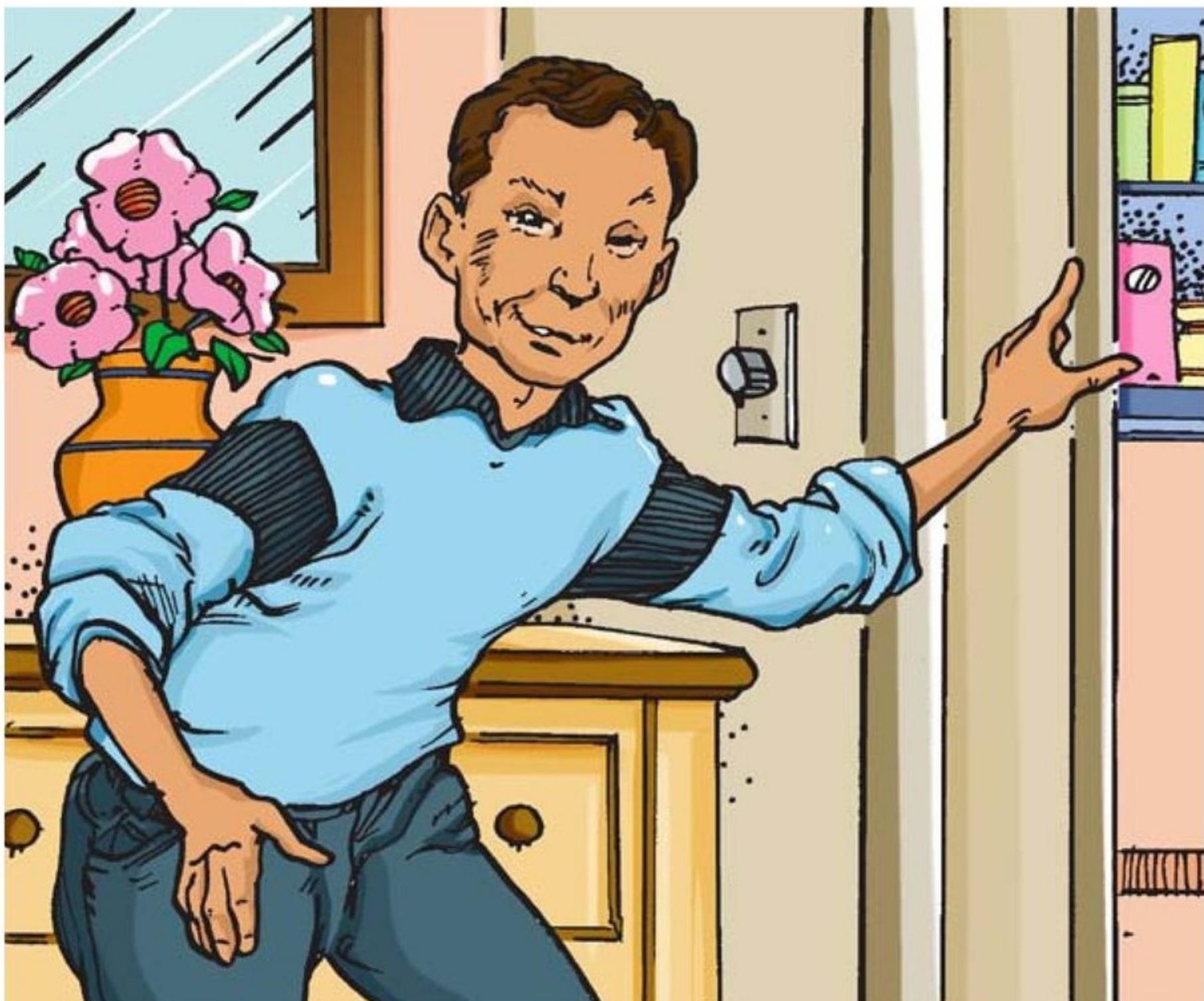
My only chance of undoing what I did was to get my garden of wild oats, watermelons, and apples to grow. But gardens need water and it had not rained for two months. My town was on drought watch. It was against the law to use water on **nonessential** things, like gardens, lawns, and cars. I offered to give up showering, but my dad nixed that idea.



My rain song wasn't working, plus my arms hurt from being used as legs, so I got off my hands and went to the library. I looked up clouds, which I knew I needed before I could get rain. I learned that clouds form when cold air smacks into warm air. Great! Now where would I get cold air on a warm spring day?

I couldn't carry an air conditioner to the park, so I loaded up my old red wagon with ice cubes and a portable fan. On the way out, Dad stopped me. Uh-oh! Did I do something again that I didn't know I did? (I knew I had refilled the ice cube trays and put them back in the freezer.)





"Where are you going?" he asked. I explained about my rain song failing and about Ethan teasing me and how I was going to make rain clouds so my garden could grow. He gave me one of his "Charly!" looks. But his eyes **glistened**, like when he makes me a special dessert. "That won't work, Charly."

"Why not?" I asked.

"That fan needs fresh batteries," he chuckled as he went off to the kitchen to get some new batteries.



Then I heard a “Yoodle-hoo, what’s new!”  
Aunt Dee was back from piloting a plane to Schenectady. As a pilot, she goes to all kinds of **exotic**-sounding places.

“Rain clouds . . .” she murmured after I explained what I was doing. “That gives me an idea.” She went to Dad’s study and made some phone calls.

I told Dad my plan. “First off, I will make clouds appear over the garden. Secondly, I will sing my rain song. The third thing is to do a **rain dance**. But I need other people to join me.”

“I’d love to help, Charly, but I have to go to the store now to get some things for the street fair. The Swing Into Spring Parade starts at two this afternoon. I thought you were going to march with your baseball team.”

“I will. I’ll be there,” I said.

“See you later then,” Dad said. “Take Murray with you.” Murray is our dog, an old chocolate lab, which is the perfect dog for me. First off, because I love chocolate; and secondly, because I love labs.



"Count me in on the plan," said Aunt Dee, coming out of Dad's study. "Bring your raincoat, Charly."

On the way to the park, Aunt Dee explained about a cloud-making **experiment** different from the ones I thought up. She knew pilots who dropped teeny-weeny specks of a silver **chemical** into the sky that could help clouds grow. Then, they flew up and added other chemicals to help the clouds soak up water that's in the air. When clouds get heavy with moisture, tiny water droplets join together to make raindrops, which drop to the ground, she explained.



When we got to the park, Ethan and the other kids had gone, getting ready for the parade, no doubt. I didn't want to miss the street fair, but there was work to do!

I set the wagon filled with ice cubes in front of my garden. I blew air from the fan onto the ice cubes. Cold air was now smacking into warm air right over my garden. Clouds would be forming any minute.

Then I sang my rain song. I sang it right-side up this time partly because my arms still hurt, but mostly because I wouldn't have been able to do my rain dance otherwise. Aunt Dee and I held hands. We danced in a circle around the ice-filled wagon.

"Rain, rain, come and stay. Pour and soak the day away," we sang.

"Ow-oo, ow-oo," sang Murray.

We danced to the left. We danced to the right. We danced in place. We danced up a storm, but unfortunately it wasn't a rainstorm!

"My garden will not grow. Mr. Rooney will get his plaque," I cried.

"Don't give up," said Aunt Dee. That's when we heard, and then saw, a small airplane fly overhead.

"That must be your experiment," I said.  
"I hope it works better than mine."

"About that . . . , " Aunt Dee started to say. Then someone came running up the hill. It was Dad! He carried something that looked like a small tree trunk.



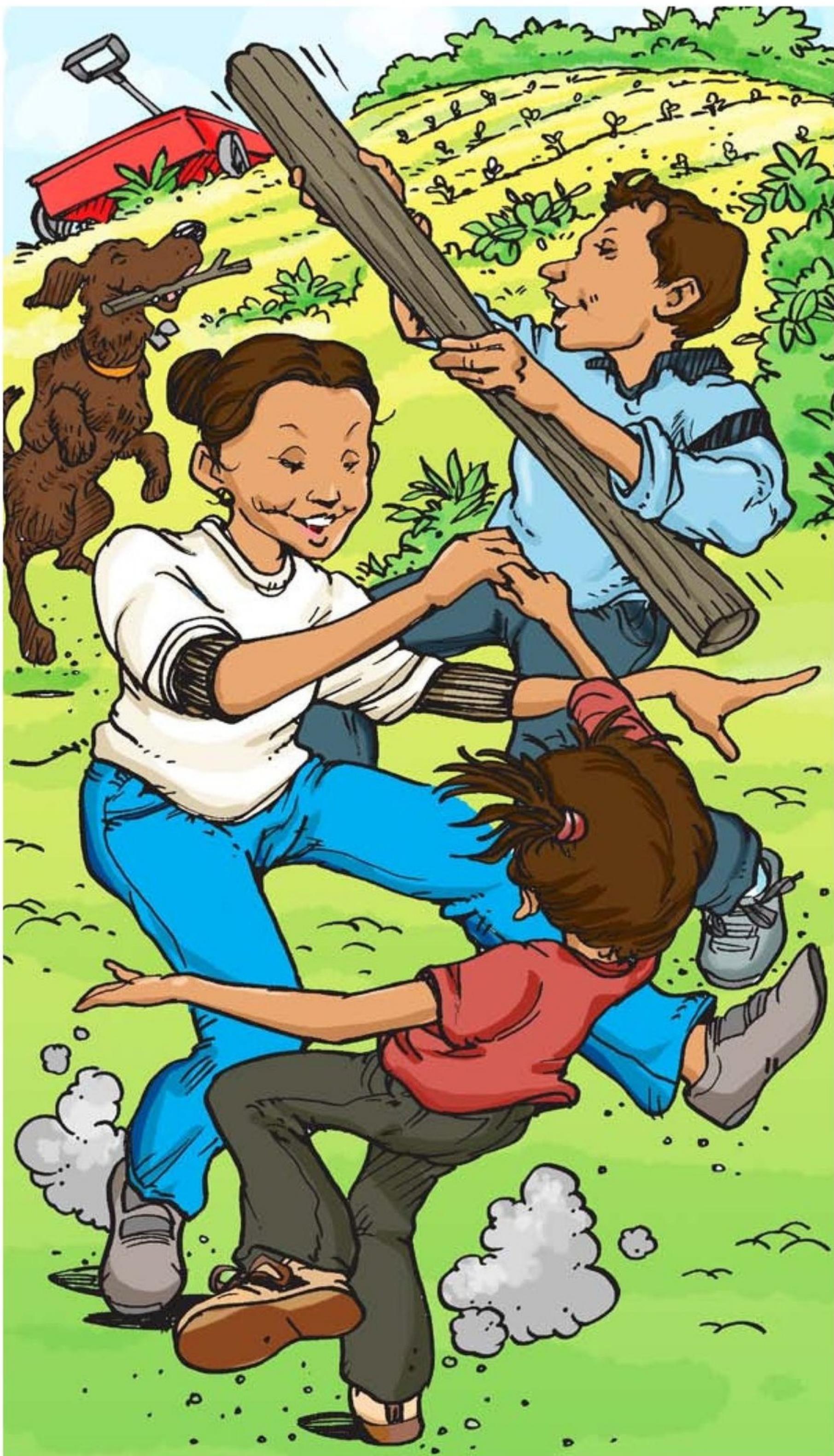
"I couldn't let you two have all the fun," Dad said. "I went to Grace's International Market and bought you this rain stick. It's from a tribe that lives in the desert in Chile, South America. It's a hollowed out piece of wood with seeds inside. Listen when I turn it over."

"It sounds like . . . rain!" I cried.

"Exactly. It's supposed to wake up the sleeping rain gods. When they hear rain, they get **jealous**, and make it rain for real."

We spent the next half hour singing, dancing, rain-stick shaking, and cloud-making.





A loud “Boom!” echoed above. Thunderclouds? No, it was the bass drum of the marching band.

“The parade is starting,” said Dad. “Let’s head back to town. We did our best.”

“Maybe the gods are slow to wake up,” said Aunt Dee.

I tried to hold back my tears. *If only I could get my tears to fall onto the garden . . .* I thought. Then, suddenly, the wind picked up. Maybe it was just the wind whistling through the trees, but I am pretty sure I heard my garden whisper, “Thanks, Charly.”





By the time we got to the street fair, thick, dark clouds swirled overhead. Boom! Crash! The nearly forgotten sound of thunder—not bass drums—filled the sky. I stuck out my tongue and tasted the first sweet drops of rain in two months. Pour and soak the day away! This would be no passing shower, either. This was a flat-out storm. Thanks to Aunt Dee, we had raincoats. Everyone else in town scattered for cover.

"The rain gods heard us!" I shouted above the din of rain pounding the pavement.

Just then, Ethan Jordan ran past me, his thick hair slicked down like a mop overdue for a wringing.

"You!" he cried out. "You made it rain on our parade."

*I guess I did, I thought.*





*What will happen next? Find out in Part Four,  
“Raining Cats, Dogs, and Other Animals.”*

## Glossary

<b>chemical</b>	a substance that is produced by or used in a chemical process (p. 11)
<b>exotic</b>	suggesting something exciting and unusual from a different country or culture (p. 9)
<b>experiment</b>	a scientific test (p. 11)
<b>glistened</b>	shined brightly from a wet surface (p. 8)
<b>jealous</b>	feeling unhappy or mad due to a longing for what another person has (p. 14)
<b>nonessential</b>	not necessary (p. 6)
<b>permission</b>	agreement between people to allow something to be done (p. 5)
<b>public</b>	open to everyone (p. 5)
<b>rain dance</b>	traditional dance found in many cultures that is used to bring rain to crops (p. 10)
<b>spoil</b>	to ruin something (p. 4)
<b>unfortunately</b>	in a regretful manner, as in wishing something that is true were not so (p. 3)

**Editor's note:**

Charly's adventures span five parts in a leveled book format. Each part of the series can be read on its own, but Reading A-Z encourages using the across-text connections in the five-part series. This is part three.

**CHARLY SERIES**

1. Charly Did It
2. Charly's New Year's Revolution
3. Charly Dances 'til It Drops
4. Raining Cats, Dogs, and Other Animals
5. Let a Smiley Face Be Your Umbrella

Charly Dances 'til It Drops  
Part Three of a Five-Part Story  
Level R Leveled Book  
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