

LEVELED BOOK • R

# Charly Did It



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

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Okay, it's true. I admit it. I did a lot of things when I was younger that maybe I shouldn't have. Like when I put a dead goldfish into Dr. Green's fish tank. I never thought the other kids in the waiting room would scream, "Dead fish!" so loud. And how was I to know that their screaming would get babies crying, moms all **jittery**, and nurses jumping around like, well, fish out of water.



And, technically, it wasn't my fault that the fish tank got knocked over—spilling fishy water and little fishy castles all over the carpet. Then again, you might have done the same thing if you wanted to find out whether a dead fish floats upside down or right side up. (It actually floats on its side, which I'll tell you to keep you from making the same mistake I did.)

Remember, also, that I did that back when I was nine. Now I am ten and in fourth grade, so I have become **mature** and responsible. Well, that's what my Dad says he wants me to try to be, especially now with it being a new year.

By the way, if you want to be mature, you can say it like Gattie, my Great Aunt Tess: "ma-toor," which rhymes with *door*; not "ma-chewer," which rhymes with *sewer*. That's how she said it the other day when she came over for tea. "Please, Charlemagne, if you want to be treated like a young lady, you must act ma-toor."



First off, I don't want to be a young lady for at least another 20 or 30 years. Secondly, I don't like tea, except for the cookies that go with it. The third thing is that I hate that name Charlemagne! I didn't pick it; my parents did. That name is like . . . drinking tea out of little white cups with your pinkie out. Come to think of it, my third thing should have been my first. But I'm stuck with the name Charlemagne, which I guess I might end up using in 20 or 30 years. I did pick my nickname from it: Charly. That name is more like dunking cookies into hot cocoa, which I adore.





But let's get back to being mature, any way you say it. It started this morning when Dad came down to breakfast in a grumpy **mood**. When I asked him what was the matter, he said, "I got up on the wrong side of the bed."

That's my Dad for you, always saying these sayings that I don't understand. I never even knew there was a right side of a bed. So, I went to Dad's room to **investigate**.

I saw the problem immediately. One side of Dad's bed was up against a wall. I figured he must have banged into that wall trying to get out of bed, and that's what put him in a grumpy mood. If I could just move the bed so there was no wall in the way, then Dad couldn't get up on the wrong side! No more grumpiness!

The bed wouldn't budge. I tried bracing myself, but as I pushed against the floor, my feet slipped on the rug, which knocked over the nightstand, which sent Dad's reading lamp crashing to the floor.

"Charlemagne!" Uh-oh. It's never a good sign when Dad calls me by my full name, the one I did not pick. "To my study—now!" It's an even worse sign when Dad calls me into his study. That's where we have our talks about stuff that I did that I wasn't supposed to do, and stuff that I didn't do that I was supposed to do.



He said, “Now that you are into double digits—”

“Double what?”

“Double digits. Two numbers in one. Ten or more. One and zero.”

“One and zero is one,” I said, but to myself, figuring now wasn’t the time to correct Dad’s math. Plus, he had on that being-a-Dad face that he uses when he wants to look I-mean-it serious.

“Do you know what being at an age of double digits means?” he asked.





“Hmmm,” I hmmed. “That I get my allowance doubled?” This time, I had to say out loud what I was saying to myself. And it was okay, because Dad let down his being-a-Dad face for a moment, and I saw his doting-Dad face peeking out.



“No. It means you are getting to an age when you need to be more responsible for your actions. It’s time you turned over a new leaf.”

“Why would I turn over leaves?” I asked.  
“I’m not looking for worms.”

“That’s just an **expression**. Why do you always take things so literally? It means you need to change some of your ways—be a new you.”

That's when I was saved by the bell, to use another one of Dad's sayings, except the bell was actually a knock. Actually, the knock was a "knock-na-na-knock-knock . . . knock-knock."

"I'll bet that's Delilah," said Dad. "She must have lost her key, again."

Aunt Dee was here! Aunt Dee was my mom's younger sister. Aunt Dee lived with us whenever she wasn't somewhere else; at least she had since my mom died. And she was somewhere else a lot since she was an airplane pilot. I hadn't seen Aunt Dee in weeks.





“Aunt Dee, Aunt Dee, what did you bring me?” I sang out, which I always did when she came back from her travels. It had been our game since I was much less ma-toor.

Aunt Dee chuckled and handed me a snow globe from the Play World Amusement Park in Sandusky, Ohio. Inside was a model of “The Rattler,” one of the oldest wooden roller coasters in the United States.

“I rode that coaster 24 times, and it rattled 205 of the 206 bones in my body,” Aunt Dee said.

“Still the same old Dee,” said Dad with one of his sad-smile looks. “Isn’t it time you settled down and stopped **sowing** your wild oats?”

“Jimmy, you’re never too old—or too young—to sow wild oats.”



First it's turning over leaves, and now it's sowing oats? Was everyone becoming a farmer?

"Delilah, you are truly Francesca's sister," said Dad.

"And glad of it, too," said Aunt Dee. "She grabbed the bull by the horns!"

"Whoa!" I said. "I knew Mom had been a firefighter, but I never knew she had been a bullfighter, too."

That's when Dad and Aunt Dee laughed and threw their arms around each other.

"Good to have you back, Dee. Let me take your bags," said Dad. Then he put his Dad face back on and said to me, "We'll finish our conversation later, young lady."

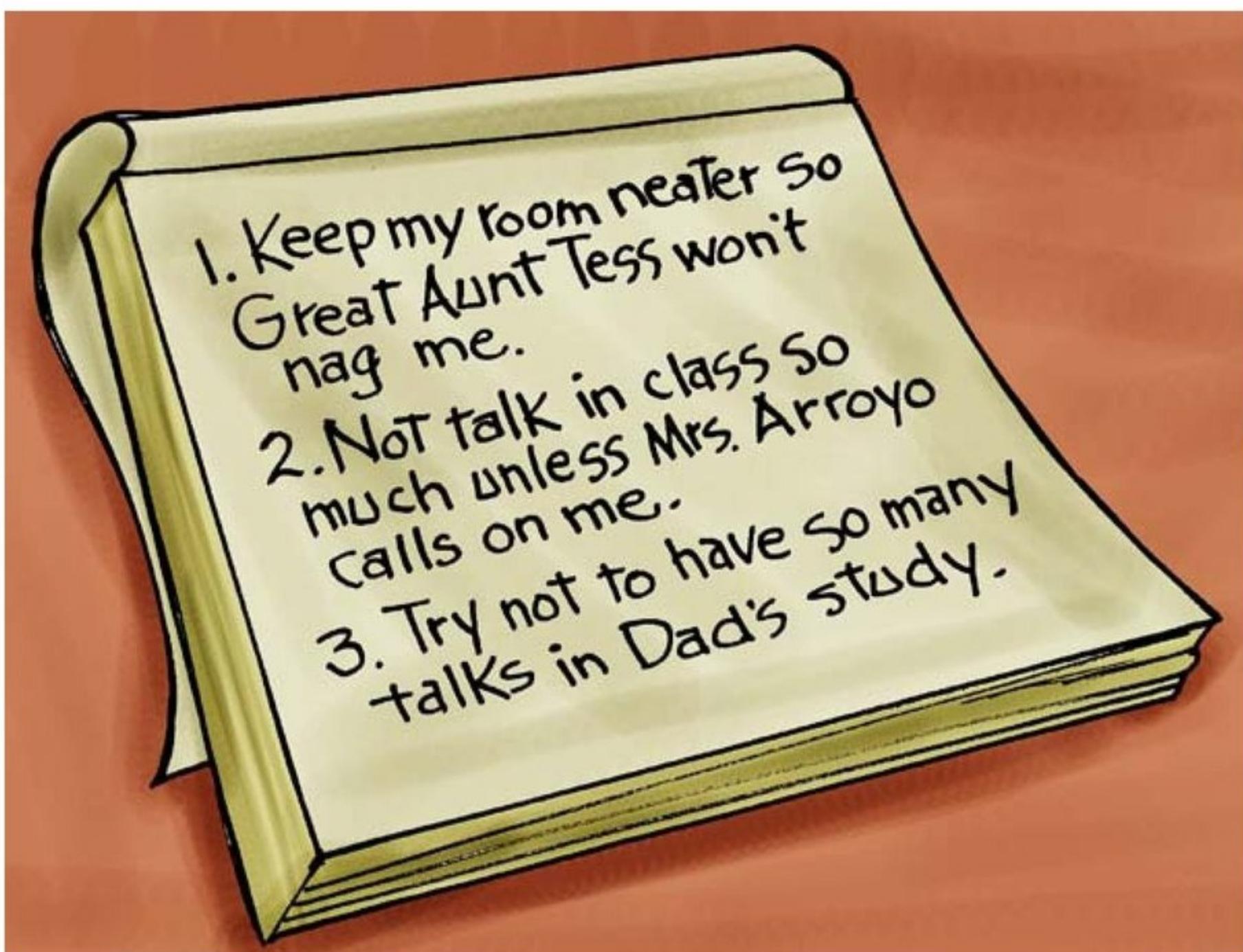


"Young lady?" said Aunt Dee to me with a wink after Dad had gone upstairs.

"Dad says that now that I am ten and it's a new year, I need to turn over leaves."

"He means make some New Year's **resolutions**. That's a good idea, Charly. What do you hope to accomplish this year?"

I had to think about that one for a while.



"Those are all solid goals," said Aunt Dee. "But the world's future is in its youth, like you, so what are you going to do to make the world a better place?"

"Whoa, heavy **responsibility**." I had to think about that one for another while.

"I would like to create something beautiful that puts a smile on everyone's face," I finally said.

"Ah, you are succeeding already," said Aunt Dee. "That idea has already put a smile on my face. Let's say we go turn over some leaves and sow some wild oats, starting with ice cream for dinner."

"Sounds great to me," I said.

While walking to the diner for ice cream with Aunt Dee, I came up with an idea about how I could start my leaf-turning New Year's revolution.



*Uh-oh! What will Charly do? Find out next time in “Charly’s New Year’s Revolution.”*



## **Glossary**

<b>digits</b>	the numerals from 0–9 that can be used to write any number (p. 10)
<b>expression</b>	a group of words used to communicate a thought, feeling, or idea (p. 12)
<b>investigate</b>	to attempt to discover the facts (p. 7)
<b>jittery</b>	feeling nervous to the point of making rapid, jumpy movements (p. 3)
<b>mature</b>	showing mental or physical characteristics or qualities of an adult (p. 5)
<b>mood</b>	a state or frame of mind (p. 7)
<b>resolutions</b>	firm decisions to do something (p. 17)
<b>responsibility</b>	something a person is required or expected to take care of (p. 18)
<b>sowing</b>	scattering; extending something, especially seeds for planting, to its fullest area (p. 15)
<b>technically</b>	having to do with the details of a subject (p. 4)

**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 one.

**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 Did It  
Part One of a Five-Part Story  
Level R Leveled Book  
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