

Charly's New Year's Revolution

A Reading A-Z Level R Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,113




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Charly's New Year's Revolution



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

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Glossary

allowance	a small amount of money paid by parents to children so they can buy their own things (p. 11)
behavior	the way in which a human acts in a specific situation (p. 6)
cooperate	to work together to get something done (p. 13)
drought	a long period of dry weather with little or no rainfall (p. 13)
literally	based on the exact meaning of a word or words (p. 3)
permit	an official paper allowing someone to do something (p. 9)
plaque	a flat decoration fixed to a surface that is inscribed to honor somebody or something (p. 12)
refreshing	restoring energy (p. 4)
revolutions	great personal or political changes in ideas or behaviors (p. 7)
study	a room used for work on reading, thinking, or writing (p. 11)

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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 two.

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

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Reading Recovery	30
DRA	30

What will Charly do next? Find out in part three, “Charly Dances ‘til It Drops.”



“Let everyone drink soda pop instead,” I said, but nobody listened. Anyone watering his or her garden would get a fine. Now, you might think that something named “fine” is a good thing. But it is not. Gattie told me a fine means you have to pay money for doing something against the rules. That sounds more like an UNfine if you ask me.

So, with no rain, and no watering allowed, it looked as if my New Year’s revolution garden would never grow. It wouldn’t bring a smile to anyone’s face, except maybe Mr. Rooney’s, who would get *two* rare flower gardens and a playground with his name on a plaque.

I didn’t want to water my garden and pay an UNfine. Plus, it was wrong to waste water during a drought.

What my garden needed was rain. But with no rain headed my way, I’d have to come up with another solution.



*In part one, ten-year-old Charly made a New Year’s resolution to “turn over a new leaf,” as her Dad suggested. But he didn’t mean for Charly to take his advice **literally**!*

That old saying, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away,” really works. I know, because I made a point to eat an apple for breakfast every day when I was less mature, or nine years old. I only went to the doctor once that year—not counting the time I woke up with an earache, sore throat, and fever. It doesn’t count because I didn’t eat an apple that day. My throat was too sore to eat anything but soup!



I ate an apple on all the other days, and I didn't have to go to the doctor—well, except for that other time. It was during a hot spell in the summer. I cooled off by eating watermelon. All that juice was **refreshing**. *Mmmm*. I wanted even more watermelon, but we ran out. Then I remembered what Gattie (that's what I call my Great Aunt Tess) said: "Charly, don't swallow watermelon seeds or watermelons will grow in your stomach."

Despite some harrumphing, Mr. Rooney and his nose seemed to be totally in joint with Aunt Dee's offer. My New Year's revolution had officially begun. Now, if only I could get the weather to **cooperate**.



I made a tiny error in planting my garden when I did. The whole town was in the middle of a **drought**. It had not rained for six weeks. According to the local TV news, the reservoirs that hold our drinking water were "dangerously low."

"I had to special order the flowers from South America," said Mr. Rooney. "Then there was the labor, and overtime pay . . ."

Oops! Make that 35 years.

"Wait!" said my Aunt Dee. "Let's give Charly's garden a chance. If no one likes it, I promise to pay for *two* special rare flower gardens *and* a new playground for the park. I'll even pay for a **plaque**. We can name the new playground . . . *Rooneyland*."



Perfect! I thought if a watermelon grew in my stomach, I'd have my own supply inside me to keep me cool. I wouldn't have to eat watermelon to cool off! So I ate a watermelon seed. Nothing happened. So I ate another watermelon seed . . . and another . . . and about twenty more. Finally, something happened. I didn't feel so good. Gattie rushed me to the doctor. He made me drink this stuff that made me . . . well, it wouldn't be mature of me to tell you. Let's just say the watermelon seeds were no longer in my stomach.



Well, I did that back when I was a lot younger, when I was nine. Now I am ten, and more “ma-toor,” as Gattie would say. And since the new year, I have tried to make some changes in my **behavior**. Dad calls it turning over new leaves. My Aunt Dee, who is my mother’s sister and takes care of me sometimes, said I should go sow some wild oats and have fun. I think she meant *sow*, as in planting stuff to grow, not *sew*, as in putting a button on a shirt.

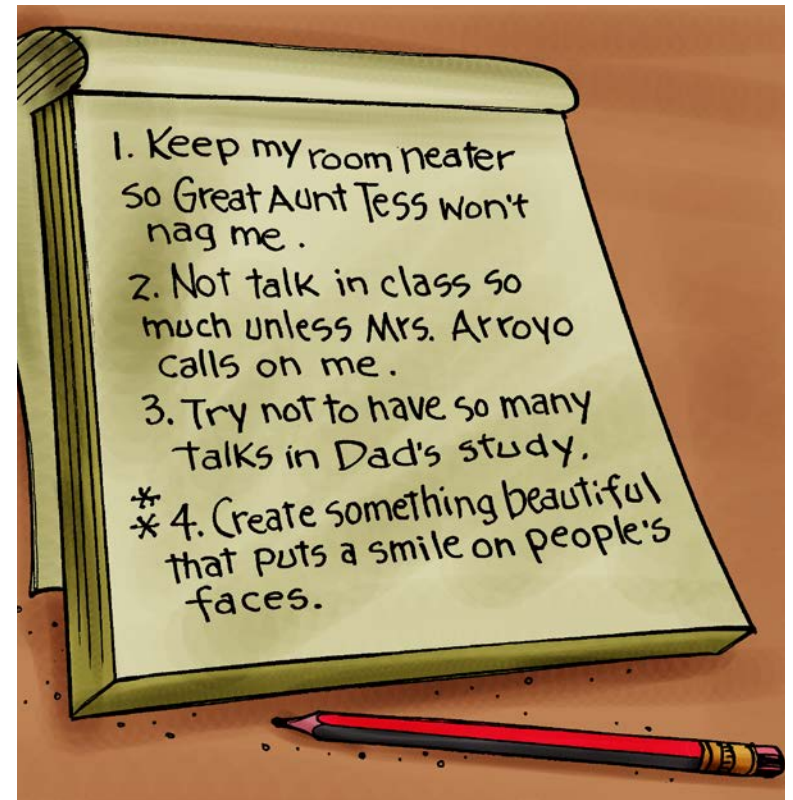


“What’s done is done,” said my dad with a sigh. It was one of those long sighs with a pause in the middle that might have come out as “What in blazes did you think you were doing, young lady?” as if he had been in his **study** talking to me alone instead of in the park with a bunch of people. “I’ll pay for the damages,” he added.

That meant I’d pay for them out of my **allowance**, probably for the next 25 years.

Mr. Rooney happened to be in charge of the Parks Department. It turned out the leaves in those flowerbeds were protecting rare flowers that Mr. Rooney personally had planted for a special flower show he had planned for the spring. That's why, as my Aunt Dee explained, his nose was out of joint over what I did.

His nose looked perfectly straight to me, and I never even touched the guy!



Since I love my dad and my aunt, I figured I should do what both of them say. Plus, I wanted to do something for everyone else, which was one of my New Year's **revolutions**. A New Year's revolution is when you write down a list of things you want to do in the coming year to make yourself and the world better. One of my revolutions was to create something beautiful that puts a smile on people's faces.



Seeds, oats, and leaves swirled around my brain in a dizzying dance. Then I remembered that the huge flowerbeds on the big hill in Brewster Park were covered in leaves! I knew what I had to do. I had to rake them out. I would plant wild oats there instead, so everyone could have a good time; some watermelons, so everyone could cool off in the summer; and . . . apples, so everyone could stay away from the doctor (most of the time). If only I knew what fruit kept the dentist away.

I thought everyone in my neighborhood would be so happy when they saw what I did to those dull flowerbeds. Well, I thought wrong. When everyone in my neighborhood saw what I was doing, they got as mad as a swarm of hornets.

They called Mr. Rooney from the Parks Department. He rushed right over. “This is public property!” he cried, just as I was sowing my last wild oat. “You can’t tromp in here and plant whatever you like. You have to get a **permit**.”

