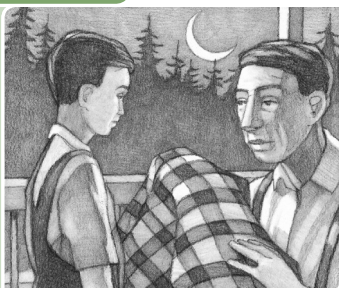


HIGHLIGHTS

CHAPTER 2



The Blanket

FLOYD DELL

A PREPARING TO READ

1 Think Before You Read

Answer the following questions:

- 1 What is a nursing home? Have you ever visited anyone in a nursing home?
- 2 Do you or did you have a grandparent you particularly loved or admired?
- 3 What are some of the things you enjoyed doing with that grandparent?
- 4 How are older people treated in your country?

2 Picture Focus

With a partner, talk about the picture. What do you think is happening?

16 Childhood Memories

IDIOMS AND EXPRESSIONS

A special focus on the meanings of idioms and expressions prepares students for authentic literature.

LITERARY TERM

Important literary terms are presented, preparing students to read fiction beyond the classroom.

THINK BEFORE YOU READ

Reflecting on the topic before reading helps students connect to the story.

5 Making Predictions

Based on the Story Preview, which of the following predictions is the most probable? Circle your choice or give an answer that you think is better.

- 1 The Old Gentleman decides not to take Stuffy to dinner on Thanksgiving Day anymore.
- 2 Stuffy decides that he doesn't want to accept the Old Gentleman's philanthropy anymore.
- 3 Stuffy cooks Thanksgiving dinner for the Old Gentleman.
- 4 _____

Journal Writing In your journal, explain why you chose your answer.

6 Idioms and Expressions

You will find these idioms and expressions in the story:

lick 'em defeat them, beat them
took his seat sat down
stared into space looked at nothing in particular; was unaware of what was happening around him; daydreamed

music in his ears something he was happy to hear
treats pays for
didn't have the heart to didn't want to

7 Literary Term: Theme

A story's **theme** is the main idea that runs through the narrative. Sometimes, a story has several themes.

Focus One of the themes in "Two Thanksgiving Day Gentlemen" is respect for tradition. As you read, ask yourself how Stuffy Pete and the Old Gentleman each show that they respect the tradition of Thanksgiving.

72 The Unexpected

B THE STORY

About the Author

Shirley Jackson (1916–1965) was born in San Francisco, California, and later moved to Rochester, New York. Jackson attended the University of Rochester, where she began her writing career, and then later attended Syracuse University. After graduation, she submitted stories to the famous *New Yorker* magazine, which published most of her work. Her fiction ranges from horror stories, like “The Lottery,” to humorous pieces, such as “Life Among the Savages,” based on her large family with many children. Jackson’s experience as a parent probably inspired the story you are about to read, entitled “Charles.”

Charles

The day my son Laurie started kindergarten, he began wearing blue jeans with a belt; I watched him go off the first morning with the older girl next door, seeing clearly that an era¹ of my life was ended, my sweet-voiced nursery tot² transformed into a tough character who forgot to stop at the corner and wave good-bye to me.

He came home the same way, the front door slamming open, his cap on the floor, and in a rough voice shouted, “Isn’t anybody here?”

At lunch he spoke insolently to his father, and spilled his baby sister’s milk.

“How was school today?” I asked.

“All right,” he said.

“Did you learn anything?” his father asked.

He looked at his father coldly. “I didn’t learn nothing,” he said.

“Anything,” I said. “Didn’t learn anything.”

“The teacher spanked a boy, though,” Laurie said, looking at his

bread and butter. “For being fresh,” he added, with his mouth full.

“What did he do?” I asked. “Who was it?”

Laurie thought. “It was Charles,” he said. “He was fresh. The teacher

¹era: a period of time

²tot: a young child

Chapter 5 Charles

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Biographical information introduces students to some of the most influential writers in North American fiction, giving context to the stories.

THE STORY

Authentic short stories depict a variety of experiences, helping students deepen their understanding of North American culture.

READING COMPREHENSION

Comprehension questions scaffold students’ understanding of the story.

GUESSING MEANING FROM CONTEXT

After each story, students guess the meaning of unknown words – one of the most important skills for independent reading.

C UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

1 Reading Comprehension

With a partner, answer these questions:

- 1 Where does the story take place?
- 2 Who is the narrator (the person telling the story)? How old is she?
- 3 Why is the day special to the narrator?
- 4 Why does Mrs. Price give Rachel the sweater?
- 5 What does the sweater look like?
- 6 What does Rachel plan to do with the sweater during lunchtime?
- 7 Why doesn’t she do what she planned? What happens instead?
- 8 How does Rachel finally get rid of the sweater?
- 9 How does she feel at the end of the story?
- 10 According to Rachel, how is growing older similar to an onion or a tree with rings?

2 Guessing Meaning from Context

The words in the list are in the story. Find the words in the story and try to understand their meanings. Choose the word from the following list that best completes each sentence below. Do not use the same word more than once.

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|---------|---------|
| alley | skinny | spit | raggedy |
| itchy | invisible | toss | pretend |
| scared | lap | hiccups | squeeze |

- 1 A(n) lap is a strange part of the body because you have it only when you are sitting down.
- 2 To get juice from a lemon, you have to _____ the lemon.
- 3 Children often get _____ when they hear stories about ghosts and monsters.
- 4 The red sweater wasn’t comfortable because it felt _____.
- 5 The red sweater looked old and _____.
- 6 People who don’t eat much are often _____.

10 Childhood Memories

4 Grammar: Count and Noncount Nouns

All nouns are either count nouns or noncount nouns.

A count noun is something that can be counted. It can be singular or plural.

Examples:

She dressed in warm clothes: a **sweater**, a **fleece jacket**, a **wool scarf**, and **leather gloves**.
She took two **sweaters**, two **jackets**, two **scarves**, and **four gloves**.
In her dream she was walking through a **meadow** and picking **wildflowers**.
Suddenly, an **ugly witch** . . . chased her into a **forest**.

Noncount nouns are nouns that are not counted. They represent things that are thought of as not being possible to separate (such as *bread*, *milk*, *water*).

Most noncount nouns are written in the singular form, and all are used with singular verbs.

Examples:

The car already had a full tank of **gas**.
She . . . went to the market for some **ice cream**, **hot fudge**, **milk**, . . . and **peanut butter**.

Application Read the sentences from the story. On the line next to each sentence, write the plural form of the **bold** word if it is a count noun. If the **bold** word is a noncount noun, write only *noncount* on the line.

- 1 When she was a little girl, people often stopped her mother to say, "What a beautiful little **girl**!" _____ *girls*
- 2 They were happy, healthy, prosperous, and blessed with good **luck**.

- 3 Just outside of Lenox, Massachusetts, Elena spotted an antique **shop**.

- 4 The prom had been a perfect **evening**. . . . _____

110 Traveling Through Time

GRAMMAR

Students improve their reading comprehension by reviewing a grammar point modeled in the story.

MAKING INFERENCES

Students practice making inferences, an important critical thinking skill in every academic discipline.

D THINKING CRITICALLY

1 Discussing the Story

Discuss the following questions with a partner or in a group:

- 1 Why does the author use Laurie's mother as the narrator of the story? If the story were told from the teacher's viewpoint, what would change?
- 2 How does Laurie describe Charles to his father? Why do you think he tells him only about Charles's size and clothes?
- 3 What are some examples of humor from the story?
- 4 At any point in the story did you suspect that Charles is Laurie? When?

2 Making Inferences

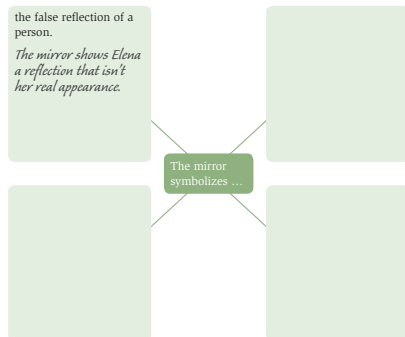
Practice making inferences. Circle the letter of the answer that best completes each of the following statements:

- 1 Laurie looked at his bread and butter when he first told his parents the teacher had spanked a boy because
 - a his mouth was full of food.
 - b his father had corrected his bad grammar.
 - c he wanted to show disrespect toward his father.
 - d he wasn't telling his parents the whole truth.
- 2 On Monday of the second week, Laurie came home late because
 - a the teacher had punished him for yelling.
 - b all the children had to stay after school.
 - c everyone stayed at the school to watch Charles.
 - d he didn't want to go home and eat lunch.
- 3 Laurie whispers the bad word to his father *joyfully* because
 - a he was happy that he had learned this new word from Charles.
 - b he was able to say the bad word to his father without getting into trouble.
 - c he was happy that Charles got into trouble for saying the bad word.
 - d he wanted his father to shout at him for saying the bad word.

68 The Unexpected

3 Analyzing the Story: Symbolism

Look back at the Literary Term on page 102. Make a diagram like the one below. In each box of your diagram, write one idea of what you think the mirror symbolizes. Then, under each idea, write in an example from the story that supports it. A sample answer is provided for you.



Pair Discussion With a partner, compare what you have written in your charts. Correct any mistakes you find. Then discuss each other's ideas about the symbolism of the mirror. Do you agree or disagree?

4 Writing

Choose one of the following writing assignments:

- 1 Write a summary of the story in two to three paragraphs.
- 2 Do you feel the main character is being rewarded or punished in the story? Write a short composition to explain your point of view.
- 3 Describe what the advertising and entertainment industries could do to place a greater value on older people.

Chapter 8 The Mirror

ANALYZING THE STORY

Students refine their understanding of the literary term in a close reading of the story facilitated by a graphic organizer.

WRITING

A variety of writing assignments mirror response writing students will encounter in college.

WEBQUEST

Engaging WebQuests send students to authentic websites, building their confidence, fluency, and ability to read across different media.

Rita agreed. We'll have to work day and night to _____ before we can _____ our furniture. It would be nice to have some help. In fact, a couple of brooms and a vacuum cleaner would _____.

Bob said, "_____ the mess. It's not important. Let's _____ the list of things we have to do. Then I'll make some lunch."

Rita asked, "Where's that _____ I wrote everything on?"

Bob answered, "It's in my bag. I'll get it when I have a chance."

Rita was impatient. She said, "Will you hurry, Bob? I'm _____."

He answered, "Relax, Rita. If we're going to get the job done, we shouldn't get in a _____ with each other." Rita replied, "OK, Bob, you're right. Let's get to work."

2 Form Review

Read the following paragraph. On a separate piece of paper, write the appropriate contraction for each of the **bold** words or phrases.

I am sorry that I **cannot** attend the concert. I **have not** been able to obtain tickets because the box office **is not** open before ten o'clock. I hope that you **are not** disappointed that I **will not** be there. However, maybe you **will** have time to meet me for dinner later. I **will** be free all evening. **Do not** forget to call me so we can make a date.

WEBQUEST

Find more information about the topics in Part One by going on the Internet. Go to www.cambridge.org/discoveringfiction/wq and follow the instructions for doing a WebQuest. Have fun. Enjoy the quest!

Summing Up 43