

Model Introduction and Concluding Paragraphs (“Charles”)

Introduction Paragraph:

Shirley Jackson’s short story, “Charles” is told through the first-person perspective of the mother of a kindergartner named Laurie, who comes home everyday with tales of shocking behavior perpetrated by a bad boy known only in their household as Charles. The stories Laurie tells often have holes in them, and at the same time, his behavior at home repeatedly reflects that of Charles, yet his parents never seem to pick up on this evidence. The author’s use of foreshadowing allows the reader to see the clues missed by two parents who willfully choose to ignore tell-tale signs of their own child’s bad behavior.

Concluding Paragraph:

Avoiding eye contact, providing illogical explanations, and taking pleasure in the inappropriate behavior of others all foreshadow the fact that something is wrong in this story, but finding what is right depends on whether the characters want to know the truth or not. Like most adults, this first person narrator does not want to acknowledge her shortcomings as a parent, but the truth has a way of making its way out, which provides the narrator and reader with a surprise ending made up of equal parts humor and hurt.

