

The “D” word

DIRECTIONS: Read the story. Then answer the questions.

Charlie’s parents told him they were getting a divorce.

“I don’t want you to get a divorce!” Charlie said. “Don’t I get a vote? We’re a family, and we should stay together. I vote no about the divorce!”

But his parents separated, and eventually got divorced anyway. From the day that they first told him it was going to happen, Charlie’s life changed. That afternoon, his father moved out of the house and into an apartment on the other side of town. Charlie wanted to go with him.

“I will come get you and bring you to visit me very soon,” his father promised him. “But tonight I need you to stay here and take care of your mother.”

Good as his word, Charlie spent the following weekend at his father’s new apartment. It was nice, but it was unfamiliar, so Charlie didn’t like it. Charlie was so angry and unhappy that he couldn’t even say the word, “divorce.” When his father asked him what was wrong, he said, “I hate the ‘D’ word.”

“Your mother and I hate the ‘D’ word too,” his father told him. “But things will get easier for all of us, and they will get better.” Charlie just shrugged. He didn’t believe him.

Weeks went by, and then months. When he was with his mother, Charlie missed having his father tuck him in every night. When he was with his father, he missed his mother’s home-cooked meals. No matter where he went, it seemed that something was missing. Then the holidays rolled around.

With his mother, Charlie helped bake cookies, but he missed the colored lights that usually decorated the house. But the store-bought cookies that his father got for him left Charlie feeling cold and empty inside. Charlie chewed on one, mournfully, as he watched his father try to untangle the string of lights. Suddenly his father looked up and said, “Will you give me a hand with this?”

Charlie was surprised. Every year he asked his father if he could help with the lights, and every year his father told him no. His mother has always helped him, and every year, it seemed, while stringing up the lights, his parents had gotten into an argument. Charlie jumped up in excitement. “Sure!” he said.

They worked together for several hours, and when the finished, the inside of the apartment looked like a holiday wonderland.

“Aren’t these lights supposed to go outside the house?” Charlie asked.

“Yes,” his father said, “But I don’t have an ‘outside the house’ to put them on!”



Name _____

Sequence of Events

They had a pizza for dinner, and it was late when Charlie's father tucked him into bed

"I had a good time," Charlie told him. "I'm glad you let me help you with the lights."

"So one good thing has come out of the 'D' word then," his father said.

"I have a new 'D' word now," Charlie told him. "A better 'D' word."

"Oh? What's that?"

"Different!" Charlie said.

For each set of story events, put an X next to the one that happens first.

_____ Charlie calls divorce "the 'D' word."

_____ Charlie's parents tell him they are getting a divorce.

_____ Charlie's parents separated.

_____ Charlie's parents divorced.

_____ Charlie's father moves out.

_____ Charlie spends the weekend at his father's apartment.

_____ Charlie misses things when he is with each parent.

_____ Charlie starts calling divorce, "the 'D' word."

_____ Charlie's father asks him to help with the lights.

_____ Charlie bakes cookies with his mother.

_____ Charlie doesn't like the store-bought cookies.

_____ Charlie and his father work together for several hours.

_____ Charlie and his father have pizza.

_____ Charlie decides on a new 'D' word.