

Readers pay attention to setting.

How can setting help me understand the character?

MIDNIGHT FOR CHARLIE BONE

people who lived at number nine complained about the large chestnut tree in front of it—how dark it made their rooms, how damp and creaky it was, and how it would probably fall on the roof one day and kill them all in their beds. Needless to say, no one at number nine did anything about it. Complaining to one another was as far as they went. They were that sort of family. Or, rather, those sorts of families.

As Charlie ran up the steps to his front door, the tree sighed and rained a handful of chestnuts on his head. Luckily his thick, wiry hair softened the blows. Thick hair had its uses, though not many. Charlie was always being told to smarten himself up, an impossi-

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Which details lead us to make which inferences about these characters?

or anything. There's no time travel at all. People *are* going to die, though—and in strange and mysterious ways, too, if you're into that kind of thing.

Me, I was just trying to help a friend. I never meant for it to blow up like a giant Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon that gets taken away by the wind.

Which, by the way, is exactly how the whole thing began.

On Thanksgiving morning, my friends Howie and Ira and I were hanging out in my recreational attic. We used to have a recreational basement—you know, full of all our old cruddy furniture, a TV, and a big untouchable space in the corner that was going to be for a pool table when we could afford it in some distant *Star Trek*-like future. Then the basement gets this toxic mold, and we have to seal it off from the rest of the house, on account of the mold might escape and cause cancer or brain damage, or take over the world. Even after the mold was cleaned out, my parents treated the basement like a radiation zone, uninhabitable for three generations.

So now we have a recreational attic, full of new old furniture and space maybe for a Monopoly board instead of a pool table.

Anyway, Howie, Ira, and I were watching football the Thanksgiving morning, switching to the parade during commercials to make fun of the marching bands.

"Oohl Oohl Look at this one!" said Ira, with an expressive

What does the description imply?

What is the inference the author wants us to make about the parents?

Is there an inference we can make about the culture?

The filling-station itself had only two pumps. There was a wooden shed behind the pumps that served as an office. There was nothing in the office except an old table and a cash register to put the money into. It was one of those where you pressed a button and a bell rang and the drawer shot out with a terrific bang. I used to love that.

There are several descriptive details here. What does the author want me to consider regarding setting and what it says about the characters?

