

Unit 1 *Personal* *Narratives*

Lesson 2: Character Traits



Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

illegal, adj. against the law

confiscated, v. taken away

beneficiary, n. person who receives a benefit or advantage

paralyzed, adj. unable to move

sin, n. violation of a moral principle

Literary Vocabulary

character trait, n. an adjective that describes a character

A Good Lie

Activity 2.1

- What is the narrator's main point in the first paragraph?
- What words, phrases or examples *from the text* helped you answer the first question?
- The narrator says, "some lies are a gift." What do you think the rest of the essay's main point will be?

A Good Lie

by Laurel Snyder

Laurel Snyder is a poet and writer. She has written five novels for children, six picture books, and two collections of poetry.

Lying is generally a bad idea. Most lies are sneaky and selfish, and some lies are even **illegal**. Maybe you know this because you've been lied to, and it hurt your feelings. Maybe you know this because your parents have grounded you or yelled at you or **confiscated** your favorite video game when you've lied in the past. If that is the case, I really hope you learned your lesson! Yes, lying is a terrible idea *most* of the time. However, some lies are gifts. Some lies are made out of kindness. I was once the **beneficiary** of a very special lie, and it changed my life.

A Good Lie

Reader pages 2-6

Finish the Story

I was eight, and I had a new best friend. We'll call her Lily. Lily was having a slumber party at her house, and because I was her brand-new very best friend, she and I were supposed to share the plaid pullout sofa, while all the other girls slept on the floor around us in their sleeping bags. I felt extremely special.

It was a great party! Because it was almost Halloween, we told ghost stories in the dark, with flashlights. We ate candy and popcorn as we watched a spooky movie. At last, we fell asleep. Then, in the

middle of the night I woke up, **paralyzed** with shame and fear. Horror of horrors—I had wet the bed!

What would you have done in my shoes? At first I simply lay there in the darkness, with my cold pee drying sticky on my legs. I listened to all the other girls snoring and breathing, and worried about what would happen when Lily woke up. Would she stop being my best friend? Would she tease me? Would she have her mom call my mom and send me home right away? Surely all the other girls would laugh. Probably I would never be invited to another slumber party for the rest of my life.

It was awful, lying there, frozen in the bed. But finally my nightgown was soaked all the way through, and I couldn't stand the waiting anymore. I tapped Lily on the shoulder. "Lily?" I whispered in the darkness. "I peed. I peed myself. I'm sorry." I thought I might cry.

Lily just stared at me. "Oh," she said. She was quiet for a minute. She looked like she was thinking things over. I waited, terrified. But that was when Lily told her wonderful lie, the amazing lie that would change my life and make me love Lily until the day I die. "You know what?" she said. "Me too! I peed myself too." Then she smiled.

"What?" I asked. I was so confused. I was certain she had *not* peed in the bed. Her side was dry. I knew it was dry because I'd sort of been trying to creep over onto it, to get out of my own wet spot. "What do you mean?"

Lily nodded her head. "Yes," she insisted. "I did! I peed in the bed



too. I'll go get my mom. She'll take care of the mess."

Then Lily got out of bed and walked up the stairs. I followed her, and watched as she woke up her parents and told them we had both peed in the sofa bed. They seemed surprised, but they didn't get mad. Lily's mom found us both clean pajamas, and then came down to the basement with us, to change the sheets.

Some of the other girls woke up, but incredibly, nobody laughed at us. Not even Sandy, the meanest girl in our class. "I peed the bed," said Lily with a laugh. She made a silly face, and everyone laughed along with her. Lily didn't act like peeing in the bed was a big deal, so nobody else acted like it was a big deal. Everyone went back to

sleep, and nobody even mentioned it in the morning. We all just ate yummy pancakes and went home with our goodie bags.

Now, I ask you—was Lily's lie a bad thing? A **sin**? I certainly don't think so. I think it was a gift. It changed me and made me a better person. From that day forward, I tried really hard to be a better friend. I tried to be kinder and more generous. I tried not to laugh at people so much. I tried to grow. Lily had shown a kind of strength I'd never seen before in another kid, and I wanted to be like her. Though I must confess, there was one thing I couldn't fix about myself—sometimes I still peed in my bed. But that was all right because I had Lily, who knew the worst and was willing to be my best friend anyway.

(And still is, to this day!)



A Good Lie

Activity 2.1

- **Now that you have read the whole essay, what do you think is the narrator's main point in "A Good Lie"?**
- **What words, phrases, or examples *from the text* helped you answer question 4?**
- **How is this story a personal narrative?**



Describe Lily



Describe Lily

- **Kind**
- **Brave**
- **Leader**
- **Dishonest**
- **Strong**
- **Clever**

What part of speech are words that we use to describe things?



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ADJECTIVES



Describe Lily

➤ **How did you come up with the character traits? The author does not write “Lily is kind” anywhere in the essay. What evidence *from the text* supports each character trait?**

- **How is Lily *kind*?**
- **How is Lily *a leader*?**
- **How is Lily *dishonest*?**
- **How is Lily *brave*?**
- **How is Lily *clever*?**



Describe Sandy

- **How would you describe Sandy? What character traits does she have?**



Describe Sandy

- **How would you describe Sandy? What character traits does she have?**

- **Mean**



Describe Sandy

- **How would you describe Sandy? What character traits does she have?**

- **Mean**

- **What evidence *from the text* do you have?**



Describe Sandy

- **How would you describe Sandy? What character traits does she have?**
 - **Mean**
- **What evidence from the text do you have?**
 - **"Sandy, the meanest girl in the class"**



Compare Lily and Sandy

- **What is the difference in the evidence for Sandy being mean and Lily being kind?**



Compare Lily and Sandy

- **What is the difference in the evidence for Sandy being mean and Lily being kind?**
 - **Lily is more detailed and "shows" her kind behaviors.**
 - **The narrator "tells" that Sandy is mean.**
- **Who is a more important character in this story?**



Compare Lily and Sandy

- **There are two different kinds of evidence - "showing" and "telling".**
- **What is "showing" evidence?**
- **What is "telling" evidence?**



Character Traits in “A Good Lie”

Activity 2.2

Character Trait	Evidence from Text

***"A Good Friend"* Paragraph**

Activity 2.4

- **Look at the list of character traits!**
- **Highlight the 5 traits you think are important to have in a friend.**
- **Put a star next to the most important trait.**



***“A Good Friend”* Paragraph**

Activity 2.4

- You have selected the most important character trait in a good friend!
- Now you will write a paragraph using real-life examples of friends showing this trait!
- How does it make you feel when your friends show this trait?



"A Good Friend" Paragraph

Activity 2.4

Remember the sections of a good paragraph!

➤ **Topic Sentence**

➤ **Supporting Sentences**

➤ **Concluding Sentence**

A Good Friend Paragraph Sentence Frames

A good friend should be _____. I know my friends are _____ because they _____

_____.

My friends _____

_____.

They _____

_____.

Having friends who are _____ makes me feel

_____.

