

*Mischief Miracle* is a story that illustrates the transformative power of kindness and compassion to those around us. A bystander to a cruel joke, the story follows Ryan on his journey of growth as he attempts to make amends and learns how even the smallest act of kindness can have a profound impact.

You have written a beautiful story that any reader can connect to, and learning from our mistakes is an important part of growing up. I particularly liked how Ryan's father used the prank as a moment to teach him about Earl – who he was and what happened to him. Cliff's character is a dad we could all benefit from knowing – he is taking the responsibility upon himself to teach his son to be better and to do better.

The tone and messaging of the story is well-written, and appropriate for a teenager learning about life and how to be a better person. You have crafted a defined beginning, middle, and end to the story that follows a logical progression: the prank, the learning, the amends. By the end of the story, you can see the growth of Ryan's character and how this moment in time will shape his future.

The character of Steve feels unnecessary if he does not appear later in the story – the same effect could be achieved with a stranger, or “kids from school” pulling the stunt. While the pacing is effective for a short story, Ryan's journey of growth happened too quickly with not enough substance. Ryan's dad pointed out who Earl was, that he was in an accident where he suffered from brain damage, and was living in a state home after the death of his parents – while this was enough to make Ryan feel bad about his actions, it seems he only started to feel regret after doing menial labor and seeing Earl turn away from him. Additionally, while a beautiful moment, the emotion of the final scene fell a little flat without further connection between Ryan and Earl.

To make your story more dynamic, I do have a few suggestions for you.

- Character development: It would be more impactful to add additional layers of depth to Earl's character and his background. While he was an impressive record-setting athlete, who was he? Was he kind? Did he volunteer in his community? Was he academically proficient? Adding more to his character would make Ryan's getting to know him as a person more powerful.
- Plot development: Ryan's dad is intent to teach him to be better – requiring Ryan to volunteer at the state facility is a great way to include consequences and build character. Completing menial tasks, such as shoveling and cleaning windows, creates a missed opportunity. Perhaps consider having Ryan volunteering in such a way that

he is interacting with the patients and learning their stories – particularly learning more about Earl.

- Emotional development: For the final scene to be more believable, with Ryan hugging and crying with Earl, a stronger connection between the two would be beneficial. Consider including a brief dialogue from Earl, if he is verbal, even something as simple as a tearful “thank you”, or an “I forgive you” would be impactful.

The Reflections at the end of your story was heartwarming. That moment with your dad and “Earl” clearly left a profound impact on you, which could be felt in your writing of *Mischief Misery*. Thank you for sharing your work with me – I enjoyed reading it and look forward to the final result.