**"The Lovely Bones" – excerpt**

**Directions: As you read, underline characterization about the father.**

    The first time I broke through, it was an accident. It was December 23, 1973.

    Buckley was sleeping. My mother had taken Lindsey to the dentist. That week they had agreed that each day, as a family, they would spend time trying to move forward. My father had assigned himself the task of cleaning the upstairs guest room, which long ago had become his den.

    His own father had taught him how to build ships in bottles. They were something my mother, sister, and brother couldn't care less about. It was something I adored. The den was full of them.

    All day at work he counted numbers – due diligence for a Chadds Ford insurance firm – and at night he built the ships or read Civil War books to unwind. He would call me in whenever he was ready to raise the sail. By then the ship would have been glued fast to the bottom of the bottle. I would come in and my father would ask me to shut the door. Often, it seemed, the dinner bell rang immediately, as if my mother had a sixth sense for things that didn’t include her. But when this sense failed her, my job was to hold the bottle for him. “Stay steady,” he’d say. “You’re my first mate.”

    Gently he would draw the one string that still reached outside the bottle’s neck, and, voila, the sails all rose, from simple mast to clipper ship. We had our boat. I couldn't clap because I held the bottle, but I always wanted to.  My father worked quickly then, burning the end of the string off inside the bottle with a coat hanger he'd heated over a candle. If he did it improperly, the ship would be ruined or, worse still, the tiny paper sails would catch on fire and suddenly, in a giant whoosh, I would be holding a bottle of flames in my hands.

    Eventually my father built a balsa wood stand to replace me. Lindsey and Buckley didn't share my fascination. After trying to create enough enthusiasm for all three of them, he gave up and retreated to his den. One ship in a bottle was equal to any other as far as the rest of my family was concerned.

    But as he cleaned that day he talked to me.

    “Susie, my baby, my little sailor girl," he said, "you always liked these smaller ones.”

    I watched him as he lined up the ships in bottles on his desk, bringing them over from the shelves where they usually sat. He used an old shirt of my mother’s that had been ripped into rags and began dusting the shelves. Under his desk there were empty bottles - rows and rows of them we had collected for our future ship building. In the closet were more ships - the ships he had built with his own father, ships he had built alone, and then those we had made together. Some were perfect, but their sails browned; some had sagged or toppled over after years. Then there was the one that had burst into flames in the week before my death.

    He smashed that one first.

    My heart seized up. He turned and saw all the others, all the years they marked and the hands that had held them. His dead father’s, his dead child's. I watched him as he smashed the rest. He christened the walls and wooden chair with the news of my death, and afterward he stood in the guest room/den surrounded by green glass. The bottles, all of them, lay broken on the floor, the sails and boat bodies strewn among them. He stood in the wreckage. It was then that, without knowing how, I revealed myself. In every piece, in every shard and sliver, I cast my face. My father glanced down and around him, his eyes roving across the room. Wild. It was just for a second, and then I was gone. He was quiet for a moment, and then he laughed - a howl coming up from the bottom of his stomach. He laughed so loud and deep, I shook with it in my heaven.

**Questions**

1. Name one example of DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION of the father in this excerpt.

2. What does the example in number 1 show about the father?

3. Give me an example of these four types of INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION about the father:

* Speech:
* Actions:
* How others react to him:
* Looks:

4. What do each of your examples from number 3 show?

* Speech:
* Actions:
* How others react to him:
* Looks:

5. Is the father a round or a flat character? Why?

6. Tell me if these characters are static or dynamic. If dynamic, explain why:

* Father:
* Narrator: