Flowers For Algernon Essay, Research Paper

Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes . Test and Key 1. Where is this story set? Future, in western Europe or North America 2. How old are Charlie and Miss Kinnian? 37, and 34. 3. What was the first test Charlie did, and what was it for/ What did Charlie call it? A Rorschach test, which asks the patient to say what he/she thinks of inkblots on cards. This test is to determine if Charlie is intelligent or truly retarded. Charlie called it a raw shok test. 4. How did Charlie do on the test, and why is it important? He sees no inkblots, showing that he has very little advanced thinking. He has little imagination. His brain can’t do much difficult thinking, proving that he is “dumb” enough for the test. 5. What was the Thematic Apperception Test? It asked that Charlie look at pictures of people and make up stories about what they are doing in the pictures. This test also proves that Charlie is not very smart. 6. Who is Algernon? How does Charlie race against Algernon? Algernon is a mouse. Charlie is given pictures of a maze that Algernon must run through to get food. Charlie must draw the proper route out of the maze in the picture before Algernon finds it himself. 7. How is Algernon special? Why does Charlie need to do this race? Algernon is 3 times smarter than other mice because he has had an operation. Charlie must race against him now so that after his own operation, the doctors can see how much progress Charlie has made. 8. What is Charlie’s IQ before the operation? After? What does the operation do? 68. ~204 to 210. The operation triples intelligence in the subject. 9. How do the two doctors decide if Charlie is right for the experiment? 1. He is mentally retarded. 2. He has motivation (like Algernon, but the mouse wants food), because he works hard to learn. 10. What kind of class does Charlie go to at night? A night school class for adults that are mentally retarded. Miss Kinian is the teacher. 11. Where does Charlie work? What is his job? Who is his boss? He is a janitor at a plastics factory. Mr. Donnegan is his boss. 12. Who are his “friends”? How do they treat him? What does it mean to “do a Charlie Gordon”? Frank and Joe. They make fun of him. When someone makes a mistake or does something stupid, they call it “doing a Charlie Gordon”. 13. Who are the two doctors who perform the experiment? What are the differences between them? Dr. Nemur is an unpleasant man who wants to become rich and famous. He is in a rush to publish his experiment as a success. Dr. Strauss is a surgeon who thinks they should wait before they say anything. He is worried about Charlie. 14. What does Dr. Strauss ask Charlie to do while he sleeps? Leave the TV on low so he can learn in his sleep. 15. What happens when Charlie drinks at the party? Joe and Frank get Charlie to “show the girls” how he mops toilets, so they can laugh at him. Charlie gets a little drunk, gets sick, and a policeman brings him home. 16. Who is Charlie’s landlady? What nice things does she do for Charlie? She is Mrs. Flynn. She lets him pay his rent late after he gets sick. She worries about him. She brings him food, and tries to encourage him to go out to work again. 17. Give examples of how the reader can tell that Charlie is getting smarter. He beats Algernon in the race. His spelling and writing get better. His dialogue with other people is more intelligent. He reads more and more books, or higher and higher difficulty. His learns several languages. He leans much math and science. He begins to think the doctors aren’t that smart. He starts to think other people are boring because they don’t understand what he is talking about. He falls in love with Miss Kinnian, seeing her as an equal, not as an old teacher. He studies the Algernon-Gordon Effect. He predicts his own demise. 18. Why does Charlie have so much sympathy for Algernon? Algernon must pass a test every time he wants food, which Charlie thinks is not very kind. 19. What happens with Ellen? What does this make Charlie realize about his “friends”? Joe and Frank get Charlie to dance with Ellen. Everyone watches and someone trips Charlie. Charlie realizes this and understands that his “friends” are just making fun of him. 20. Why does Charlie feel sick all the time? He is afraid to see the people at work. 21. Why does Mr. Donnegan fire Charlie? What is the motivation behind it? He fires Charlie because he has been missing work, but mostly because the other workers signed a petition demanding that Charlie be fired. They want him fired because they are afraid of his new intelligence. They feel threatened by his new powers. They ostracize him and alienate him because he is different. 22. How does Charlie do on the Rorschach test after the operation? What does this tell us? He starts to “see” things in the inkblots, which tells us that he is developing an imagination and an advanced brain. 23. What does Mrs. Nemur do to make Dr. Nemur make quickly to publish his experiment? She wants to be married to a famous person. She is greedy. 24. How do Charlie’s feelings change towards Miss Kinian? What is different? He falls in love with her. He is now her equal, or her superior. He no longer sees her as an old teacher, but as a woman his age, beautiful and appealing. 25. Why does Dr. Nemur develop an “inferiority complex” around Charlie? What does it mean? He feels angry and envious that Charlie is smarter than he is. 26. How many ancient languages does Dr. Strauss understand, and how is this important to Charlie? Dr. Strauss can only understand ancient Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Charlie thinks this is surprising, that Dr. Strauss should know more. 27. What happens in the restaurant? How is this important in Charlie’s life? He sees a young busboy drop and break some dishes. The people in the restaurant laugh at the boy, and Charlie laughs too. Then Charlie realizes that people once laughed at him, and he gets angry with the people in the restaurant, screaming at them. He now understands what it is like to be dumb and smart. 28. What does Charlie decide to do with his new abilities after this? To spend his life increasing the levels of intelligence for all people, for the good of humanity, and for fairness among people. 29. What does Algernon do to Charlie that tells us that something is wrong with Algernon? What is happening to Algernon? He bites Charlie. The effects of the operation are wearing off. He is “getting dumb” again. This is important because Algernon had the same operation as Charlie. What happens to Algernon will also happen to Charlie. 30. What is the Algernon-Gordon Effect? What does it prove? It is what happens to both Algernon and Charlie. Their brains lose the effects of the operation, and they must die. 31. Why does Charlie bury Algernon in a cheese box? Because he loves Algernon and cheese is what mice love. 32. What starts to happen to Charlie? Describe his deterioration. He starts to lose his memory. Reading and spelling become difficult. 33. What does Charlie remember about his family? That they were not very happy. His father was a drunkard and never kept his promises. He ran away with another woman, but Charlie’s mom insisted that his dad was dead. This shows that we often deny the truth even when it is clear. 34. Why does Charlie chase the strange doctor out of his room? Because he makes fun of Charlie like the others once did. 35. What does Charlie tell Miss Kinnian when she comes to his door? Why? What does Miss Kinnian do for him, and why? He tells her that he doesn’t like her anymore, and doesn’t want to be smart any more. He is lying – he wants to be smart, and he loves her, but he says these things to make her leave. Miss Kinnian pays Charlie’s overdue rent because she loves/loved him, and she is terribly sad about what has happened. 36. When Charlie goes back to the job at the plastics factory, how do Joe and Frank act, and why? They don’t make fun of him anymore. They threaten to beat up a guy who makes fun of Charlie. They do it because they feel guilty for hurting his feelings before. 37. What does Miss Kinnian do when Charlie returns to the night school? Why? She cries and leaves. She is heartbroken -she can’t live with Charlie the way he is now – she is so sad about what happened. 38. Where is Charlie going at the end of the story, and why is her going there? He thinks her will go to New York to find new friends and start a new life. He takes a couple of books to read. 39. What does he say to Miss Kinnian in his final letter, and who does Charlie blame for what has happened? He says good-bye to her and tells her not to worry. He thinks that perhaps he didn’t try hard enough to stay smart, even though the reader knows that isn’t true. 40. What is important about the last sentence, asking someone to put flowers on Algernon’s grave? Charlie will die too, soon. He doesn’t realize it. He will die for the same reason Algernon did. It shows that in spite of the fact that Charlie isn’t very smart, he is still kind and loving in his own way. 41. What is the irony of this story? The main irony is that society pushes away someone (Charlie), when he has the power to solve many great problems. Dr. Nemur and the workers at the plastics factory are jealous and hateful of Charlie, even though they should like him and be happy he is so smart. 42. What is the theme of the story? People are so competitive that they would rather push away a great person like Charlie rather than be near him, fearing that they will look stupid compared to him. When Charlie is dumb, everyone likes him because he isn’t a threat. Society is foolish because it alienates the people who have the greatest potential to advance humanity. 43. What are the conflicts in the story: Internal: Man vs. Himself: Charlie vs. himself – can he succeed? Can he fit it? Miss Kinian vs. Herself: Should she love the new Charlie, or will this be a foolish thing to do, because he may go back to being dumb. External: Man vs. Man: Charlie against Dr. Nemur Charlie against the plastics workers – they think they’re normal. They make fun of Charlie for being dumb. They hate him for being smart. Dr. Strauss vs. Dr. Nemur: Nemur wants fame and fortune. Strauss wants to test the experiment and see if it really works. Man vs. Circumstances: Charlie vs. Society: He cannot be accepted as a dumb or a smart person. Man vs. The Unknown: Charlie vs. Universal Ethics: Charlie broke the rules by being “made” smart. He is paying a price of losing all the intelligence he gained, losing his love (Miss Kinnian), and losing his life.