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Charlie Gordon is the protagonist of this story. He is a young, mentally disabled man who is kind and good-hearted and harbors a deep desire to become smart so he can become popular. He undergoes brain surgery which makes him a lot more intelligent than most people. However, this Charlie is bitter, angry, and despises his old self. He makes a lot of progress and wins accolades for his mental prowess and academic research but he is a lonely man. Charlie loses his mental abilities and as he declines into his old self, he is back to becoming likeable, helpful and popular. Charlie's character embodies the impact of ambition versus acceptance of one's fate. Algernon is a mouse used for a brain experiment to enhance intelligence. Although he is merely a rodent, he plays an important role in Charlie's life and is a mirror for Charlie's own life and self. One of the scientists behind the brain experiment, Professor Nemur is a rude man who only cares about his own success and does not really consider Charlie a human being. Although he is a brilliant academic, he lacks sorely in empathy and understanding human behavior. He is a psychotherapist who is perhaps one of the most empathetic people in Charlie's life. He is crucial to Charlie's development and is always kind and understanding toward Charlie. His therapy sessions help Charlie unearth a lot about himself and his memories. Charlie's former teacher, she has a deep fondness for him and they eventually fall in love. It is a problematic relationship as the old Charlie is deeply respectful of her and the new Charlie is desirous of her. The boss at the bakery, Mr Donner helps Charlie remain independent and magnanimously also takes him back into his fold when Charlie's mental decline begins. He is a compassionate man and a keen businessman, who is honest and fair to everyone around him. Fay is the only girlfriend Charlie ever has and the first woman he sleeps with. She is a carefree young woman who helps the smart Charlie relax and accept that people can be different. Chapter Summaries & Analyses She stared down at the bride and groom on the wedding cake she was decorating and I could see her lips barely move as she whispered: "It was evil when Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge. It was evil when they saw they were naked, and learned about lust and shame. And they were driven out of Paradise and the gates were closed to them. If not for that none of us would have to grow old and be sick and die." There was nothing more to say, to her or to the rest of them. None of them would look into my eyes. I can still feel the hostility. Before, they had laughed at me, despising me for my ignorance and dullness; now, they hated me for my knowledge and understanding. Why? What in God's name did they want of me? Related Characters: (speaker), (speaker) Related Symbols: Page Number: 107-108 Explanation and Analysis: 0 ratings0% found this document useful (0 votes)436 viewsThis character analysis chart summarizes the key characters in Flowers for Algernon through a description of their appearance, actions, dialogue and role in the story. It analyzes 14 character. Al-enhanced title and descriptionSaveSave Name Sam Atkinson Core 5 Date . . . For Later0%0% found this document useful, undefined Flowers for Algernon: A Critical Analysis BUNDLESStudents are guided through a close reading of "Flowers for Algernon" through a series of handouts that help students understand the plot, character motivation, and conflicts as well as a rhetorical analysis of text structure, literary devices, and narration. This bundle includes the following resou\$18.40Price \$18.40\$23.00Original Price \$23.00Save \$4.60 Algernon Algernon is a mouse that earlier underwent the same operation as Charlie. Algernon becomes an expert at running highly complex mazes. Charlie competes with Algernon in maze races. As the experiment progresses, Algernon's demeanor becomes unpredictable and aggressive. This signals a problem with the experiment. Eventually, Algernon's abilities radically regress, and he dies. Charlie comes to love the mouse and buries Algernon in his backyard, often placing flowers on the mouse's grave. Mr. Donner Mr. Donner is Charlie's boss and the owner of Donner's Bakery. He hires Charlie at the request of Charlie's Uncle Herman, promising that as long as he lives Charlie will have a job. Donner believes in Charlie, but eventually dismisses him at the request of his other employees. Gimpy, Joe Carp and Frank Reilly Gimpy, Joe Carp, and Frank Reilly are Charlie's co-workers at the bakery. Initially, these men delight in playing pranks on and making fun of Charlie. They resent the more intelligent Charlie when he returns to his job after the operation and eventually get Charlie fired. However, at the end of the novel, when Charlie's intellectual level has dramatically receded and he returns to the bakery, they defend and vow to protect him. Charlie Gordon Charlie Gordon is the novel's main character. He is a 32-year-old janitor employed at a bakery. At the beginning of the novel, Charlie has a very low IQ but attends remedial night classes for reading and writing at Beekman School for Retarded Adults, part of Beekman University in New York. He attends the classes because he has always had a desire to learn. Though he is of limited intelligence, Charlie is a hard-working, honest man. He lives on his own and feels that he has true friends at the bakery. Unfortunately, he is gullible and is frequently the butt of jokes by his co-workers. Charlie agrees to participate in an intelligence-enhancing experiment and undergoes an operation. The procedure dramatically increases Charlie's intelligence, tripling his IQ. As a result, he experiences a tremendous change in his intellectual ability. At the same time his emotional and personal life are also radically transformed, causing him much mental pain and anguish. Unfortunately, the procedure's effect is not permanent, and Charlie eventually regresses to his original state of mind. Matt Gordon Matt Gordon is Charlie's father. Matt is more realistic than Rose about Charlie's abilities and is more comfortable with Charlie as he is. In the beginning of the novel Matt is a salesman of barber shop supplies. He eventually leaves Rose and Norma and opens his own barber shop. He does not recognize Charlie when Charlie returns to visit him. Norma Gordon Norma Gordon is Charlie's younger sister. Other children tease her about Charlie; as a result, she develops a strong dislike of him. When Charlie visits his mother and sister late in the experiment, Norma is shocked, stating that Rose informed her that Charlie had died years ago at the Warren Home. Norma tells Charlie that she would welcome his return to the family. Rose Gordon Rose Gordon is Charlie's mother. For the first few years of Charlie's life, she desperately wants to see her son as normal and steadfastly defends him. She takes Charlie to numerous doctors in an attempt to improve his mental ability. However, when Norma, Charlie's sister, is born, Rose's position reverses; she begins to distrust and to even dislike her son. She eventually forces her husband to remove Charlie from their home and remand him to the care of the Warren Home. Dr. Guarino Charlie is taken to Dr. Guarino at his mother's insistence. Guarino claims he can enhance Charlie's intelligence with a procedure that involves strapping Charlie to a table and subjecting him to a visual/auditory stimulus device. Charlie later comes to view Guarino as a charlatan. Uncle Herman Charlie's Uncle Herman, an overweight house painter, is responsible for getting Charlie discharged from the Warren Home and for getting him the job at Donner's Bakery. Hilda Hilda is Charlie's first nurse after his operation. She suggests that perhaps the operation should not have been performed because it was tampering with God's will. Miss Alice Kinnian Miss Alice Kinnian is Charlie's teacher at Beekman School for Retarded Adults, where Charlie attends remedial night classes in reading and writing. She develops a close personal relationship with Charlie and eventually falls in love with him. She enjoys their relationship in the initial stages of Charlie's intellectual rising, but feels alienated when his intelligence surpasses her own. Though they become estranged, she returns to take care of Charlie when his intelligence eventually declines. Fay Lillman Fay Lillman is Charlie's artistic neighbor at his second apartment in Times Square. She is a painter, and Charlie finds her attractive. They engage in a whirlwind romance predicated on nightly drinking and dancing in local clubs. As Charlie's time runs out, he tires of the routine and spends less and less time with her. Charlie attempts to reconnect with Fay when his intelligence begins to recede, but she is frightened of him. Bertha Nemur Bertha Nemur is Professor Nemur's overbearing wife. She has played a large role in her husband's career and is responsible for procuring the funding for the experiment from the Welberg Foundation. Professor Harold Nemur Professor Harold Nemur is a psychology professor at Beekman University and is the senior scientist in the experiment. Nemur is somewhat insecure personally and professionally, and he enjoys taking credit for Charlie's enhanced intelligence. He usually treats Charlie more as a test subject than an individual human being. Burt Selden Burt Selden is a graduate student majoring in psychology at Beekman University. He administers various tests to Charlie throughout the experiment. Selden seems to genuinely care about Charlie as an individual. Dr. Jay Strauss Dr. Jay Strauss is a psychiatrist and neurosurgeon at Beekman University. He is a colleague of Professor Nemur and is co-director of the experiment. He performs the operation on Charlie and also psychoanalyzes Charlie throughout the experiment. Novel Author(s) Best summary PDF, themes, and quotes. More books than SparkNotes. HomeStudy GuidesFlowers for AlgernonCharacter List Flowers for Algernon The protagonist of the story who end thors the writings or "progress reports" throughout the book. Charlie is a 32-year-old mentally disabled man who resides in New York City. He works at a small shop called Donner's Bakery where he is the Janitor and Delivery Boy. He always has an eager and happy attitude and when he enrolls in a literature class for mentally disabled adults he excels (at least in comparison to his peers). He undergoes a surgery to become more intelligent and soon after gains a massive amount of knowledge becoming a genius in a matter of days. However, his maturity and intelligence are not parallel and this becomes a large internal conflict for him throughout the story. The white laboratory mouse who was the original test of the experiment that was later performed on Charlie. This mouse becomes three times as smart as all other mice and is able to solve complex puzzles. Charlie's teacher in his literature class for mentally disabled adults who is impressed by his hard work and motivation. She recommends him for the procedure originally, and oversees that he is doing well in the hands of the scientists throughout the book. She is the only woman who Charlie loves while he is intelligent, and it is only for a brief period. The scientist who runs the experiment that boosts Charlie's intelligence. He does not care for Charlie and merely sees him as a laboratory animal like Algernon. He has little to no concern for the well-being of his patient. The neurologist and psychiatrist who performs the surgery on Charlie. He works with Professor Nemur but is much more concerned about Charlie's health and wellness, and conducts therapy sessions with him to ensure he is in good condition. A graduate student who assists Nemur and Strauss in their experimentation. He is always very kind to Charlie. Charlie's neighbor and a fun-loving, free-spirited, sexually-active individual who has sexual relations with him at one point, knowing nothing of his background. Charlie's abusive mother who did not accept the fact that her son was disabled. When she had a daughter after him, Norma, she focused all her energy on her instead. At times when Charlie was sexually confused, Rose punished him even though he knew no better. Charlie's dad who works at a barbershop. Oftentimes he tries to save his son from Rose's abuse but fails and gives in to her bullying. Charlie's sister who is a caretaker for her unstable mother. When she was young, she disliked Charlie because she believed he received "special treatment" and treated him poorly. She is regretful, however, when she sees him all grown up. Charlie's uncle who takes him in after being sent away from his own house. Herman treats Charlie respectfully and ensures that he has a lifetime job at the bakery before he passes away. Owner of Donner's Bakery where Charlie works. Donner is an old friend of Uncle Herman and promises to look after Charlie when Herman passes. He gives Charlie a lifetime job so he won't have to go into a home and treats him as family. Employees at the bakery where Charlie works. They often pick on him and play jokes on him that Charlie does not understand. However, they defend him when others mistreat him. Employee at the bakery where Charlie works who steals from his boss. He has a similar relationship to Charlie as Frank and Joe. Employee at the bakery who is the only one consistently nice to Charlie. She gets suspicious when he becomes intelligent that he struck a deal with the devil. A quack doctor who Charlie is taken to be seen by his mother. Gaurino uses fake methods to improve Charlie's intelligence, and swindles money from the Gordons. The nurse on duty when Charlie is recovering from his surgery. She believes he is defying the will of God. A mouse Fay purchases to befriend Algernon. A new employee at the bakery when Charlie resumes his job after losing his intelligence. Next Section Glossary Previous Section Flowers for Algernon Video Buy Study Guide Cite this page The Question and Answer section for Flowers for Algernon is a great resource to ask questions, find answers, and discuss the novel. Asked by meliane l #518893 Answered by jill d #170087 on 4/13/2016 1:09 PM View All Answers Asked by asher H #118432 Answered by Aslan on 2/25/2021 6:32 PM View All Answers Asked by David M #1285974 Answered by Aslan on 1/26/2023 6:30 AM View All Answers Ask Your Own Question Estimated read time: 9 min readCharacter NameRoleCharlie GordonProtagonistAlice KinnianTeacher/mentorDr. StraussPsychologistAlgernonExperimental subjectFay LillmanLove interestNorma GordonSisterRose GordonMotherMatt GordonFatherAs the protagonist, Charlie Gordon is the central character whose journey forms the core of the narrative. His transformation from a mentally challenged adult to a highly intelligent individual drives the story forward.Alice KinnianAlice Kinnian serves as Charlie's teacher and mentor. She plays a crucial role in Charlie's development, providing emotional support and guidance throughout his journey.Dr. StraussDr. Strauss is the psychologist who leads the experiment to increase human intelligence. He is directly involved in Charlie's cognitive enhancement and closely monitors his progress.AlgernonAlgernon is the experimental subject—a white lab mouse whose intelligence is artificially augmented. His experiences parallel Charlie's, serving as a key element in the narrative.Fay LillmanFay Lillman is a love interest, providing Charlie with emotional support and companionship during his intellectual transformation.Norma GordonNorma Gordon is Charlie's sister, who has known him since childhood. Her character adds depth to Charlie's background and the impact of his transformation on his familial relationships.Rose GordonRose Gordon, Charlie's mother, plays a significant role in the early stages of the story, providing insight into Charlie's upbringing and family dynamics.Matt GordonMatt Gordon, Charlie's father, contributes to the exploration of Charlie's familial relationships and the challenges he faces due to his cognitive limitations.Character DescriptionsCharlie is initially depicted as mentally challenged, with an IQ of 68. He is characterized by his eagerness to learn, kind-hearted nature, and determination to overcome his cognitive limitations.Alice KinnianAlice is portrayed as empathetic, patient, and dedicated to helping her students succeed. She exhibits a nurturing and supportive demeanor, which becomes crucial in Charlie's intellectual journey.Dr. StraussDr. Strauss is presented as a highly intelligent and ambitious psychologist. He is committed to the experiment and demonstrates a rational and methodical approach to his work.AlgernonAlgernon is a white lab mouse with enhanced intelligence. He is curious, adaptive, and becomes a symbol of the potential and risks associated with artificially increasing cognitive abilities.Fay LillmanFay is depicted as vibrant, free-spirited, and compassionate. She brings a sense of joy and emotional fulfillment to Charlie's life during his moments of intellectual growth.Norma GordonNorma is portrayed as caring, protective, and deeply concerned about Charlie's well-being. Her character offers insights into Charlie's past and family dynamics.Rose GordonRose is depicted as loving, nurturing, and supportive of Charlie. Her character contributes to the understanding of Charlie's childhood and the challenges he faced due to his intellectual limitations.Matt GordonMatt is portrayed as a hardworking and dedicated individual. His character provides context for Charlie's familial relationships and the impact of his cognitive limitations on family dynamics.Character TraitsEagerness to learnKind-heartedDeterminedVulnerableAdaptiveEmpatheticPatientSupportiveDedicatedNurturingHighly intelligentAmbitiousRationalMethodicalCommittedCuriousAdaptiveSymbolicExperimentalIntelligentVibrantFree-spiritedCompassionateJoyfulEmotionally fulfillingCaringProtectiveConcernedSupportiveInsightfulLovingNurturingSupportiveMaternalUnderstandingHardworkingDeterminedSupportiveFamilialInsightfulCharlie's background is marked by a challenging childhood, limited educational opportunities, and social isolation due to his intellectual disability. His determination to improve himself is evident despite the hardships he faces.Alice KinnianAlice's background is rooted in her role as an empathetic and dedicated teacher. Her commitment to supporting her students, including Charlie, reflects her nurturing personality and passion for education.Dr. StraussDr. Strauss's background is characterized by his professional expertise, academic accomplishments, and a steadfast commitment to scientific research. His involvement in the experiment stems from his deep interest in cognitive enhancement.AlgernonAs an experimental subject, Algernon's background is centered on his life within the laboratory. His experiences as the first successful recipient of enhanced intelligence provide valuable insights into the potential consequences of the experiment.Fay LillmanFay's background is portrayed through her vibrant and compassionate personality, reflecting her desire for connection and emotional fulfillment. Her role in Charlie's life brings a sense of joy and companionship during his intellectual transformation.Norma GordonNorma's background is intertwined with her familial relationships, particularly her bond with Charlie. Her caring and protective nature stems from her experiences growing up with Charlie and witnessing the challenges he faced due to his cognitive limitations.Rose GordonRose's background is depicted through her nurturing and supportive role as Charlie's mother. Her character provides context for Charlie's upbringing, highlighting the love and warmth present in his family despite the difficulties they encountered.Matt GordonMatt's background is characterized by his hardworking nature and dedication to his family. His insights into familial relationships offer valuable perspectives on Charlie's upbringing and the impact of his cognitive limitations on their family dynamics.Character ArcsCharlie undergoes a profound character arc, transitioning from a mentally challenged individual with limited cognitive abilities to a highly intelligent and emotionally complex person. His journey is marked by personal growth, self-discovery, and the challenges of navigating newfound intellectual capabilities.Alice KinnianWhile Alice's character arc is more subtle, her role in Charlie's transformation allows her to witness his evolution firsthand. Her arc is defined by the emotional impact of guiding Charlie through his journey and the bond that develops between them.Dr. StraussDr. Strauss's character arc is centered on the ethical and moral implications of the experiment. His professional ambitions are tested as he grapples with the consequences of enhancing human intelligence, particularly through Charlie's experiences.AlgernonAlgernon's character arc revolves around the progression and eventual regression of his enhanced intelligence. His experiences serve as a cautionary tale, highlighting the potential risks and limitations of artificially increasing cognitive abilities.Fay LillmanFay's character arc is intertwined with her relationship with Charlie. Her presence brings emotional fulfillment and joy to Charlie's life, and her arc is marked by the impact of their connection on both characters as Charlie's intelligence grows.Norma GordonNorma's character arc is shaped by her evolving understanding of Charlie's transformation. Her protective nature and concern for Charlie's well-being undergo development as she witnesses his journey and its effects on their familial relationships.Rose GordonRose's character arc is defined by her unwavering support for Charlie throughout his transformation. Her maternal instincts and love for her son drive her arc, as she navigates the complexities of Charlie's intellectual enhancement and its impact on their family dynamics.Matt GordonMatt's character arc is influenced by his relationship with Charlie and the challenges they face as a family. His supportive nature and dedication to understanding Charlie's experiences contribute to his arc, offering insights into their familial dynamics.RelationshipsThe relationship between Charlie and Alice is rooted in mentorship and emotional support. Alice's guidance and care play a crucial role in Charlie's development, leading to a deep and meaningful bond between them.Charlie and Dr. StraussCharlie's relationship with Dr. Strauss is professional and experimental. Dr. Strauss's role as the psychologist overseeing Charlie's transformation shapes their dynamic, as Charlie becomes central to the ethical implications of the experiment.Charlie and AlgernonCharlie's relationship with Algernon is symbolic, reflecting the parallel nature of their experiences. Their connection serves as a poignant exploration of the consequences and limitations of artificially enhanced intelligence.Charlie and FayThe relationship between Charlie and Fay is characterized by emotional fulfillment and companionship. Fay's presence brings joy and connection to Charlie's life, offering a sense of love and support during his intellectual journey.Charlie and NormaCharlie's relationship with Norma is rooted in familial love and protection. Norma's concern for Charlie's well-being and her understanding of his past create a bond that evolves as she witnesses his transformation.Charlie and RoseCharlie's relationship with Rose is defined by maternal love and unwavering support. Rose's presence serves as a source of comfort and understanding for Charlie, shaping their familial bond as he navigates his intellectual enhancement.Charlie and MattCharlie's relationship with Matt is characterized by familial support and understanding. Matt's dedication to his son's well-being and his efforts to comprehend Charlie's experiences contribute to their evolving dynamic as a family.ConclusionThe characters in "Flowers for Algernon" are intricately woven into a narrative that explores themes of intelligence, human relationships, and the ethical implications of cognitive enhancement. Through their individual traits, backgrounds, arcs, and relationships, each character contributes to the rich tapestry of the story, providing insights into the complexities of human nature and the transformative power of intellectual growth.