

Flowers for Algernon - Comprehension and interpretive questions

(285) progress report 2-March 6

In the opening progress report, Charlie Gordon says that he doesn't think he passed Dr. Strauss' "raw shock" test. **What is Charly talking about? Why was he being given this test?**

(286) When Dr. Strauss and Dr. Nemur asked Charly why he had chosen to go to night school, he responded, "I told them because all my life I wanted to be smart and not dumb. But it's very hard to be smart. They said you know it will probably be temporary. I said yes. Miss Kinnian told me. I don't care if it hurts." **What do they think might be temporary? What does Charly think might hurt?**

(2860) progress report 4-Mar 8

When Dr. Strauss and Dr. Nemur choose Charlie for their experiment, Dr. Strauss says to Dr. Nemur, "I know Charlie is not what you had in mind as the first of your new breed of intellect _____ (couldn't get the word) superman. But most people of his low mental _____ are hostile _____ and uncooperative _____ they are usually dull apathetic _____ and hard to reach." **Fill in the blanks in the discussion.**

Dr. Strauss continues: "Look at how well he's learned to read and write for his low mental age. It's as great an achievement _____ as you and I learning Einstein's theory of _____ without help. That shows the intense motivation. Its comparative _____ a tremendous _____ achievement _____ I say we use Charlie. **Fill in the blanks in the discussion.**

(287) progress report 5-Mar 10

In this report, we read, "They didn't give me anything to eat this morning. I don't know what that eating has to do with getting smart. I'm very hungry and Dr. Nemur took away my box of candy. That Dr. Nemur is a grouch. Dr. Strauss says I can have it back after the operation." **Why did the doctors take away Charlie's food?**

(288) There is a change in the March 25 progress report. What is that change?

(290) Explain the following from Charlie's April 3 progress report: "Joe said Charlie is a card when he's potted. I don't know what that means but everybody likes me and we have fun." **What had happened? What did Joe mean by "potted"?**

(290) On April 6, Charlie reveals a major achievement. What was it?

***(291) What do Charlie's April 9 observations about Robinson Crusoe reveal about Charlie's feelings?**

(292) What does the following April 17 entry reveal about Charlie: **(Punctuation, is; fun!)**

(292) What major change occurs on April 18?

* (293) In the April 20 progress report, Charlie writes, "Now I know what it means when they say 'to pull a Charlie Gordon.' I'm ashamed. **Why does Charlie feel naked and ashamed?**

***(295) The April 25 entry reveals that Charlie is lonely. Why is he lonely?**

(297) Why does Charlie leave his job at the factory?

(298) Why has Charlie chosen to remain “alone in [his] apartment at Mrs. Flynn's boardinghouse most of the time and seldom speak to anyone.”

***(300 and 301) The entries from May 23 to May 31 are short. Why would Keyes choose to make them short? What do they reveal?**

***(301) Charlie closes his letter to Dr. Strauss with the following sentence: “I am sorry, however, that t my own contribution to the field must rest upon the ashes of the work of two men I regard so highly.” What does Charlie mean when he says that his contribution will rest upon their ashes?**

(302) Charlie concludes in his Algernon-Gordon Effect that “Artificially increased intelligence deteriorates at a rate of time directly proportional to the quantity of the increase.” Paraphrase.

***(302) Charlie cries when he buries Algernon? There may be more than one reason for his emotion. List a few possibilities.**

***(303) What is revealed about Charlie's father in the July 7 entry?**

***(304) In the July 14 entry, Charlie reveals that he he doesn't have money to fix his broken TV and thinks he may have lost his month's check from the lab. There is dramatic irony in this entry. What do you suspect happened to the check?**

***(304) In the July 25 entry, Charlie reveals that he tells Miss Kinnian to go away because he is afraid she would make fun of him. Miss Kinnian cries Charlie cries and she pays Charlie's back rent. Charlie says he doesn't want that. Explain why he wouldn't want that and explain why the two cry.**

***(305) On July 27 when Charlie returns to the box factory and a new employee makes fun of him, Joe and Frank stand up for him. Why would they have made fun of him before but stand up for him now?**

***(305) On July 28, Charlie decides to leave New York City. Why?**

***(306) Charlie adds this P.S. to his letter to Miss Kinnian Dr. Struass and the others: “And P.S. please tell Dr Nemur not to be such a grouch when pepul laff at him and he woud have more frends. Its easy to make frends if you let pepul laff at you. Im going to have lots of frends where I go.” What discovery has Charlie made about human nature? Is his observation accurate?**

***Indicates interpretive question for group discussion.**