

### A Change in Charlie's Life

Charlie Gordon's life changed when he had the opportunity to become smarter although, it did not last for long. "Flowers for Algernon," is a short story written by Daniel Keyes. Charlie, a 37-year-old man, has an IQ of 68 and has a chance to triple it with a surgical operation, he has the operation done and gets smarter. As time passed by, he started losing his knowledge. He was then told that the operation would only last a while and would slowly fade away with its gained knowledge. In the story, the author explored change as events occurring overtime. Change is explored through surgery, reality, and false hope.

First, change is explained in the story through surgery because he was selected by Dr. Strauss and Dr. Nemur to have an operation to triple his IQ. One example that helps explain why surgery is a way of change throughout the story is the fact that Charlie will have an operation that will give him the chance to be smart (287). This shows that Charlie is determined to become smart. The surgery that he will have is performed on his head and will make him smarter. Before the surgery, his IQ was 68 and if the operation went well, he would have an IQ of 204 which is above the average IQ scores. Another example is that Miss. Kinnian recommended Charlie to Dr. Strauss and Dr. Nemur so that he could have the operation (286). The doctors are looking for a patient that can be used for an experiment and as Miss. Kinnian heard, she interfered and told them about Charlie. This links to the theme because it shows how

Charlie's life could change if he is accepted for the experiment due to the fact that the surgery will triple his IQ and will make him feel smart and like the other adults he talks with.

In addition, reality is another way to show that change is expressed in the story because he realizes something that changes the way he thinks others view or think about him. To support this statement, the author mentions that it is funny how he didn't notice that Joe, Frank and the others like to have him around to make fun of him (293). In other words, Charlie realized that his friends did not laugh with him but at him. Before the operation, he thought that they would laugh with him and that they enjoyed his company. He noticed that they were laughing at him because as he walked home everyone looked at him as he passed by. After the surgery they also stopped talking to him because they noticed that Charlie was becoming smart. After Charlie thought about the situation he came to a conclusion and that was that they laughed at him. Another example can be that Charlie realized what it meant when his friends said, "To pull a Charlie Gordon (293)." This proves that Charlie understood what the phrase meant because he said that he was ashamed of himself. He was ashamed of himself because he had never realized before and he had been living in a fantasy when it came to having friends. "To pull a Charlie Gordon" is said when you did something dumb because they all knew that Charlie did dumb things. This connects to the theme because as Charlie realizes the truth about his friends, his view toward them also changes.

Lastly, false hope also explains how change is expressed in the story because Charlie began to lose his gained knowledge. False hope is a way of change throughout the story because he begins to forget things that he recently learned. As said on page 303, "I'm forgetting things that I learned recently. It seems to be following the classic pattern—the last things learned are

the first things forgotten.” This shows that the operation was temporary and the results were not the ones that Dr. Strauss wanted because his hope was to have it be life-lasting. This situation affected Charlie like it did to Dr. Nemur because they both had hopes for having the operation effect last for the rest of Charlie’s life. This situation reveals that Charlie lost hope in being smart because the operation that was done to him was only temporary. Another example is that Charlie noticed that he forgot how to read in different languages. In the book, it talks about Charlie realizing that he couldn’t read in German and when he tested himself, he couldn’t either (303). This proves that Charlie is forgetting how to read in different languages and that this could result in the operation only being effective temporary. Charlie learned how to read in different languages after the surgery so, this could be a sign of him losing his gained knowledge. This ties to the theme because now that Charlie knows that his IQ will go back to 68, he lost the hope of ever being smart.

In conclusion, through surgery, reality, and false hope the story explores change as events occur overtime. Change is important in the story because it shows how as things happen, it can impact people’s lives. Change affects the world because it can bring problems or unexpected things to happen. Charlie Gordon’s life was impacted when he had an operation, realized that his friends laughed at him, and when he began to lose all the knowledge that he had gained because those were important events in his life.