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A Miracle for Charlie

New York, 1965, a feeble minded man in his late 30's tries to find a way to be "smart", learning new things and understanding why they laugh and make fun. "Flowers for Algernon", a short story by Daniel Keyes, is a fictional story about the main character Charlie. Perseverance, steadfast despite difficulty or delay in achieving success, is a big role in this story. Three ways the idea of perseverance is explored in this story is when Charlie is tested with the inkblot, learning new languages and punctuation, learning to write words the right way.

First off, Charlie had to take a some tests in order for his mentors to see his level of intelligence. When Charlie is tested with the inkblots he is nervous and doesn't understand the question she says, "I told him I see an inkblot.... Then I don't remember so good but he wanted me to say what was in the ink. I didn't see nothing in the ink but he said there were pictures there we other people saw some pictures..... I really tried to see. I held the card close up and far away..."(285) Charlie kept trying to figure out what Bernie meant to say but since he is mentally ill he took this literally. In Charlie's perspective he thinks that he has to SEE pictures IN the ink but in other people's perspectives you have to depict and image from the ink. Charlie struggles with most things like reading and writing, he has struggled with his goal of being "smart" but through his struggles he continued to persevere to reach his goal.

In addition to Charlie being slower than other people he also struggled with punctuation but as time passed he learned this too. He says, " Today, I learned, the comma, this is a

comma(,)....I used the comma wrong. Its punctuation Miss Kinnian said....you got to mix them up, she showed?me.”(291) As you can see he still doesn't understand, by mix them up Miss Kinnian means to use different punctuation when necessary. Because of mental disability/low I.Q Charlie can't process things fast ,words go in one ear and out the other ,Due to the fact that charlie isn't “smart” he will ever understand unless a miracle is bestowed upon him (the surgery that they do on him).

Finally, Charlie has difficulty learning to write words the right way.While he was writing progress reports at beginning of story almost all words are spelled wrong and some words he doesn't finish because he doesn't know them. This is why he attends Miss.kinnians class for adults, because he's “dumb”, he can't read or write correctly. Right off the bat, on his first progress report he misspells the words progress report and March as progris riport and Martch when writing the date. On march 8 Mr.Gordon writes, “but most people with his low ment** are hoost and uncoop**.they are usually aparh** and hard to reach.”(287). He writes these word in this way because he doesn't know how many letters are left to write. After the operation he reads better which leads him to remember words so later on he will spell them correctly.

Ultimately Gordon's intelligence came to an end when he died. But through all that he went through he persevered through all of it and faced the challenges that he had before getting “smart”.

The theme is crucial to the journey charlie goes through (operation/life), Charlie Gordon is the ideal example of people that get mistreated because of their mental disabilities. Like Charlie, every person is born with his or her own special characteristics, talents and flaws. Although many people attempt to change various aspects of their own lives, they should accept who they

are and give up the desire for perfection.