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language Arts

Period 1-2

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“Flowers For Algernon Theme”

The power of knowledge is a dangerous thing. “Flowers for Algernon”, written by Daniel Keyes is a fictional short story. Charlie is an ambitious and friendly retarded adult whose only wish is to be smart. A scientist did an experiment on a rat named Algernon and made the rat smarter. Charlie was chosen to undergo the same surgery and the experiment worked on him as well. Algernon's intelligence starts to wear off and later so does Charlie's. He becomes happier and back to his original state, but still embraces it. Over time you may realize intelligence doesn't bring happiness. To support, after surgery, Charlie realizes that people had frequently taken advantage of him, his “friends” just used him for twisted humor and his intelligence makes his co-workers feel inferior to him.

To begin with, intelligence doesn't bring happiness because after the surgery he realizes people took advantage of him. For instance in page (290) it states, “Joe Carp said I should show the girls how to mop out the toilet in the factory and he got me a mop. I showed them and everyone laughed and we had a good time”. To put it simply, Joe Carp tells Charlie to do

something that's makes charlie look dumb. Charlie does it because he does not know any better and thinks highly of Joe Carp. In addition, after his I.Q increased charlie says "It's because I'm so dumb and I don't even know when I'm doing something dumb.(295) In other words, Charlie is recognizing that people think it's funny when a dumb person can't do things the same way they can. This is why I believe that the theme is overtime you may realise that intelligence doesn't bring happiness.

The second hint, why I believe that over time intelligence doesn't always bring happiness is Charlie realizes that his so call "friends" just used him for twisted humor. According to page 290, Joe and Frank invited Charlie to muggy's for a drink. They got him potted and beat him up then abandon him. "Everybody laughed and we had a good time and they gave me lots of drinks". Charlie thinks that everyone is laughing with him, but they are laughing at him. Later when he has intelligence he's says "It's a funny thing I never knew that Joe and Frank and the others liked to have me around all the time to make fun of me. Now I know what it means when they say "to pull a Charlie Gordon."(293) I'm ashamed." To summarize, Charlie is not longer feeble minded. Sometimes having more intelligence than you know might make you unhappy when time passes because knowing something you didn't realize might hurt you.

The final reason, why I believe over time intelligence doesn't always bring happiness

is charlie's intelligence made his co-workers feel inferior to him. According to page 290, "I was the best janitor he ever had because I like my job and do it good and never come late or miss a day except for my operation". In other words charlie is good at what he does and likes his job. Later, when his intelligence increases he says "Mr. Donegan showed me the petition. Eight hundred and forty names, everyone connected with the factory. This intelligence has driven a wedge between me and all the people I once knew and loved".(297) Before, they laughed at me and despised me for my ignorance and dullness; now, they hate me for my knowledge and understanding". Charlie is forced to resign and is alone because they feel charlie is too smart. In the end intelligence isn't so great when you have to lose your friends and happiness for it.

In conclusion, over time you may realize intelligence doesn't bring happiness. This theme is important because it allows me to relate to the characters. It teaches others that you should be grateful for what you have. Even if you do try to change yourself the result may not make you happy. I think this is a universal theme because everyone can learn from this avoid a heartache. I gained from this story is to accept myself for who I am and I shouldn't change me.