Aphasia Book Club

Flowers for Algernon

Pages 196-221

Worksheet A

1. On page 197, during Charlie’s “anti-intellectual binge”, he finds himself walking in and out of different movies. He eventually realizes, “I knew it wasn’t the movies I wanted, but the *audiences*. I wanted to be with the people around me in the darkness.” What do you think Charlie means by this?

Can you relate to this feeling?

2. On page 198, Charlie witnesses customers in a restaurant making fun of a “retarded” dish boy after he dropped some plates. Charlie ultimately stands up for the boy. Do you think Charlie wishes people stood up for him before the operation? Or would it have not made a difference since Charlie didn’t know any better? Why or why not?

Before the operation, when Charlie was being made fun of, he would “unknowingly” join the others and laugh at himself. Charlie now describes this aspect as hurting the most. Does knowing how he was treated before the operation benefit Charlie or hurt him? Why or why not?

3. On page 214, we find out that Algernon bit Fay and Minnie had been found “bleeding from a gash in her chest.” This violent behavior is new for Algernon. Why do you think Algernon is acting this way?

Charlie also noted that Algernon has been crashing into the barriers of his maze and having a “strange sense of urgency in his behavior.” Have we seen this sense of urgency in Charlie’s behavior thus far? If so, when? If not, do you think Charlie will develop it?

4. On page 220, Charlie finds out that if the operation fails, he will be sent to the Warren House. Knowing this, Charlie demands that he visits it now while he still has “enough control to be able to do something about it.” Why do you think Charlie wants to go and visit?

Is there any downside in going to visit the Warren House? If so, what is it? If not, how do you think visiting will benefit him?