Aphasia Book Club

Flowers for Algernon

Week 12: pages 259-285

Worksheet A

1. On pages 259-278, Charlie went to go visit his mother, Rose, and his sister, Norma. What were your initial thoughts after reading about the visit?

Are you happy or sad with the visit? Are you pleased or disappointed? Was there anything you wish went differently?

2. It seems as though Charlie is still looking for his mother’s acceptance and love. On page 267, Charlie says, “I wanted to see her smiling and know I had been the one to make her happy. For the first time in my life, I had brought a smile to her lips.” Why do you think Charlie still craves his mother’s acceptance, despite her being horrible to him?

On page 264, Charlie tells Rose, “I don’t hate you.” If you were Charlie, would you have forgiven Rose? Why or why not?

3. On page 269, Norma tells Charlie that she doesn’t want to put Rose into a nursing home. She says, “I can’t stand to think of her in one of those institutions.” Are there similarities between Rose being sent to a nursing home and Charlie being sent to Warren State Home? Why or why not?

On page 272, Norma tells Charlie, “I hated you because they fussed over *you* all the time…[the kids at school] scribbled things on the sidewalk in the schoolyard—*Moron’s Sister* and *Dummy Gordon Family*.” Do you think these are ‘good enough’ reasons for why Norma was so horrible to Charlie? Why or why not?

4. On pages 282-284, Charlie describes this out-of-body experience while at a therapy session with Dr. Strauss. What do you think of this ‘experience’?

On page 284, Charlie says, “I am afraid. Not of life, or death, or nothingness, but of wasting as if I had never been.” What do you think Charlie means by this?