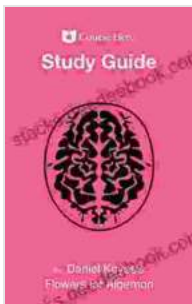


# Study Guide for Daniel Keyes' Flowers for Algernon

*Flowers for Algernon* is a science fiction story that explores the ethical implications of human experimentation. The story follows the journey of Charlie Gordon, a mentally disabled man who undergoes an experimental surgery that increases his intelligence. As Charlie's intelligence grows, he experiences both the joys and challenges of being a 'normal' person. Ultimately, the story raises questions about the nature of intelligence, the meaning of life, and the value of human connection.



## Study Guide for Daniel Keyes's Flowers for Algernon (Course Hero Study Guides) by Course Hero

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1138 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 33 pages

Lending : Enabled



## Characters

- **Charlie Gordon:** The protagonist of the story, Charlie is a mentally disabled man who undergoes an experimental surgery that increases his intelligence. As Charlie's intelligence grows, he experiences both the joys and challenges of being a 'normal' person.
- **Dr. Strauss:** The lead scientist on the experimental surgery that Charlie undergoes. Dr. Strauss is a brilliant scientist, but he is also

driven by ambition. He is more interested in the potential benefits of the surgery than in the potential risks.

- **Dr. Nemur:** The assistant scientist on the experimental surgery that Charlie undergoes. Dr. Nemur is a kind and compassionate man. He is concerned about Charlie's well-being, and he tries to protect him from the potential risks of the surgery.
- **Algernon:** A laboratory mouse who has also undergone the experimental surgery. Algernon is a symbol of the dangers of the surgery. He is brilliant, but he is also unstable. He eventually regresses to his original state of intelligence.

## Plot Summary

*Flowers for Algernon* is told through a series of progress reports that Charlie writes as his intelligence grows. In the beginning of the story, Charlie is a mentally disabled man who works as a janitor at a bakery. He is kind and gentle, but he is also lonely and isolated. When Charlie is offered the opportunity to participate in an experimental surgery that could increase his intelligence, he jumps at the chance.

The surgery is a success, and Charlie's intelligence grows rapidly. He is able to learn new things quickly, and he begins to make friends and develop relationships. However, as Charlie's intelligence grows, he also begins to experience the challenges of being a 'normal' person. He becomes aware of the injustices in the world, and he begins to question the meaning of life. Ultimately, Charlie's intelligence begins to decline, and he regresses to his original state of mind.

## Themes

*Flowers for Algernon* explores a number of themes, including:

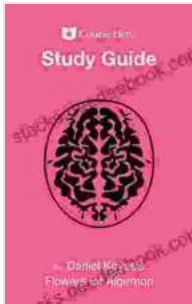
- **The nature of intelligence:** The story raises questions about the nature of intelligence. Is intelligence simply a matter of IQ? Or is it something more? Charlie's journey shows that intelligence is not the only thing that matters in life.
- **The meaning of life:** The story also raises questions about the meaning of life. What is the point of life if we are all going to die eventually? Charlie's journey shows that even though life is short, it is still worth living.
- **The value of human connection:** The story also explores the value of human connection. Charlie's journey shows that we all need human connection to be happy and fulfilled.

*Flowers for Algernon* is a powerful and moving story that explores the ethical implications of human experimentation. The story raises questions about the nature of intelligence, the meaning of life, and the value of human connection. It is a story that will stay with you long after you finish reading it.

## **Discussion Questions**

- What do you think of the ethical implications of human experimentation? Do you think that it is ever justified to experiment on human beings?
- What do you think is the nature of intelligence? Is it simply a matter of IQ? Or is it something more?

- What do you think is the meaning of life? What is the point of life if we are all going to die eventually?
- What do you think is the value of human connection? Do you think that we all need human connection to be happy and fulfilled?



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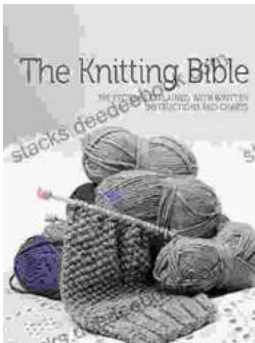
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