***Charles***

The narrator tells the story of Laurie’s first month at kindergarten. Laurie comes home each day to report on the doings of a fellow student, Charles, who behaves in an extraordinary manner. For the first two weeks, Charles is spanked or otherwise punished almost daily for being “fresh,” for hitting or kicking the teachers, for injuring fellow students, and for a host of proscribed activities. Charles proves so interesting to the kindergarten class that whenever he is punished, all the students watch him; whenever he stays after school, all the students stay with him.

As a result of this behavior, Charles becomes an institution at the Hyman house. Whenever anyone does anything bad, inconsiderate, or clumsy, he or she is compared to Charles. During the third week, however, Charles undergoes a conversion. For several days, he becomes a model student, the teacher’s helper. Reports of this transformation astonish the Hyman household. Then, Charles seems to return to normal, first persuading a girl to say a terrible word twice, for which her mouth is washed out with soap. The next day, Charles himself says the word several times and receives several washings.

When the day of the monthly Parent Teacher Association meeting arrives, Laurie’s mother is anxious to go and to meet the mother of the remarkable Charles. At the meeting, she learns from Laurie’s teacher not only that Laurie has had some difficulty adjusting to kindergarten, but also that there is no student named Charles in her class.

***An Hour with Abuelo***

Arturo does not want to visit his grandfather in a Brooklyn nursing home but finally agrees with his mother to spend just one hour there. His grandfather is in bed writing his autobiography, the story of his life, which he calls "Así es la vida" (Spanish "that's the way life is"). Arturo dislikes this expression, for he believes in going after what he wants in life, not accepting what life throws at him. He looks at his watch and is embarrassed when his grandfather notices. Then, grandfather begins reading the autobiography, telling how he hoped to become a writer and teacher but had to settle with being a farmer back in Puerto Rico. Arturo wants to talk more with his grandfather, but an old lady comes to remind grandfather that he has promised to give a poetry reading in the recreation room. The grandfather tells Arturo that their hour is up and, smiling playfully, goes off with the woman.

***A Retrieved Reformation***

As the story begins, Jimmy is called to the warden’s office. The warden hands Jimmy his pardon from the governor and advises him to stay out of trouble: “You’re not a bad fellow at heart,” he says. “Stop cracking safes, and live straight.” Jimmy laughs, feigning surprise, denying he had ever cracked a safe or committed the bank robbery that had sent him to prison.

Jimmy leaves prison the next day and takes a train to another town where he meets up with Mike Dolan, a friend and confederate. After picking up his key from Mike, Jimmy returns to his room above Mike’s restaurant where he had lived before detective Ben Price arrested him. Jimmy finds his safe cracking tools still hidden in the wall where he had left them. A week later, a string of bank safe burglaries in the Midwest comes to Ben Price’s attention; he knows Jimmy Valentine is back in business and sets out to catch him again.

Meanwhile, carrying his burglar tools in a suitcase, Jimmy arrives in small, remote Elmore, Arkansas, where he plans to rob the bank. Walking toward the hotel, he encounters a beautiful young woman. Their eyes meet, and in that instant, Jimmy undergoes a complete reformation: “Jimmy Valentine looked into her eyes, forgot what he was, and became another man.” After talking to a boy on the street, Jimmy learns she is Annabel Adams, whose father owns the bank. Jimmy continues on to the hotel, where he registers as “Ralph D. Spencer.” In a conversation with the hotel clerk, Jimmy learns that Elmore does not have a shoe store and that business is good in the town. Jimmy Valentine does not rob the bank; instead, “Ralph Spencer” settles in Elmore, opens a profitable shoe store, becomes a social success, and makes the acquaintance of Annabel Adams.

A year elapses. Still using his “Ralph Spencer” alias, Jimmy enjoys great success. His business is growing, he and Annabel are soon to be married, and Annabel’s father and sister have accepted him as one of the family. To cut completely the ties with his past, Jimmy writes a letter to one of his former friends, asking the man to meet him in Little Rock. Jimmy plans to give the man his set of safe cracking tools. The day before Jimmy is to leave for Little Rock, Ben Price arrives in Elmore, spots Jimmy Valentine, and learns he is about to marry the banker’s daughter. Ben Price has other ideas.

The next day before leaving town, with his burglar tools in his suitcase, Jimmy goes to the bank with Annabel, Annabel’s sister, and the sister’s two little girls, May and Agatha. Annabel’s father wants to show off the new burglar-proof safe he has recently installed. While all are admiring the safe, Ben Price comes into the bank and watches the scene; he tells a bank teller “he was just waiting for a man he knew.” Jimmy is unaware of the detective’s presence.

Without warning, May playfully locks Agatha in the bank vault, throwing the bolts and spinning the combination lock as she had seen her grandfather perform the maneuver. The safe cannot be opened, Mr. Adams exclaims in horror, since the timer and the combination had not been set. Furthermore, Agatha will soon run out of air in the vault. Jimmy and the others can hear Agatha crying out in panic. Annabel turns to Jimmy, begging him to do something, at least to try.

Jimmy looks at Annabel with a “soft smile.” He asks her for the rose she is wearing. Confused, Annabel hands him the rose. Jimmy puts the rose in his vest pocket, throws off his coat, and pushes up his shirtsleeves: “With that act Ralph D. Spencer passed away and Jimmy Valentine took his place.” Using his tools, Jimmy opens the safe in record time, freeing the sobbing child.

Once Agatha is safe, Jimmy puts on his coat and walks away; he hears Annabel call out to him, but he does not stop. When he encounters Ben Price, who has witnessed the dramatic scene, Jimmy tells the detective, “Well, let’s go. I don’t know that it makes much difference, now.” Price, who seems to be acting rather oddly, replies, “Guess you’re mistaken, Mr. Spencer . . . Don’t believe I recognize you.” With that, the detective leaves.

***Raymond’s Run***

Squeaky, is a young girl growing up in the Harlem section of New York City. Squeaky prides herself on her performance on the track and her ability to care for her mildly retarded brother Raymond.

A little girl with skinny arms and a high-pitched voice, Squeaky is a self-confident, cocky youngster who boasts that everyone knows she is the fastest thing on two feet. Squeaky takes her running seriously; she is not afraid to practice high stepping out on the street where anyone can see her. She is also a responsible and caring child. Although Raymond is actually older, Squeaky thinks of him as her little brother because he is less bright than she is. She is proud of her ability to care for him, protecting him from the taunts and threats of other children.

The May Day celebration in the park includes a race, but the most important event is the maypole dancing. Squeaky has refused to participate because she is uncomfortable getting all dressed up in a white dress and shoes to dance. She is a practical girl who describes herself as “a poor Black girl who really can’t afford to buy shoes and a new dress you only wear once.” She is there to compete in the track meet. Secure in her identity as a runner, she explains that she uses her feet for running, not dancing.

Squeaky’s main competition is a new girl, Gretchen Lewis, whom Squeaky has tried to size up on the basis of a few brief contacts. When Gretchen smiles at Squeaky during one of their encounters, Squeaky does not think it is a real smile, because, in her opinion, girls never really smile at each other. As Squeaky checks out her rival on the day of the race, she notices that Gretchen kicks her legs out like a pro, and she begins to look at Gretchen with respect.

As she crouches down waiting for the crack of the pistol to start the race, she notices that Raymond is on the other side of the fence “bending down with his fingers on the ground just like he knew what he was doing.” As she runs, Squeaky glances over to watch her brother running on the sidelines. He runs in a unique style, with his palms tucked up behind him, but Squeaky sees that he has the potential to be a good runner. She remembers that he always keeps up with her when she trots around the neighborhood.

When the race ends, Squeaky is thinking of how she could give up her own career as a runner to concentrate on coaching Raymond, rather than listening for the announcement of the winner. Because she already has a room full of trophies and ribbons, and Raymond has nothing, she thinks that she could help him get some recognition as a runner. Squeaky changes as she shifts her attention from herself to her brother. As she hears her name announced as the winner, she is already focusing on Raymond’s future. Although Raymond was not actually in the race, this was really his run.

When Squeaky realizes that winning is not everything, she sees Gretchen in a new light, as a person who also works hard to achieve her goals. She looks at her former rival with new respect, thinking that perhaps Gretchen is the type of person who would help coach Raymond. The story ends with Squeaky and Gretchen exchanging a big smile of respect that is “about as real a smile as girls can do for each other, considering we don’t practice real smiling every day.”

***The Tell Tale Heart***

An unnamed narrator opens the story by addressing the reader and claiming that he is nervous but not mad. He says that he is going to tell a story in which he will defend his sanity yet confess to having killed an old man. His motivation was neither passion nor desire for money, but rather a fear of the man’s pale blue, vulture-like, eye. Again, he insists that he is not crazy because his cool and measured actions, though criminal, are not those of a madman. Every night, he went to the old man’s apartment and secretly observed the man sleeping. In the morning, he would behave as if everything were normal. After a week of this activity, the narrator decides, somewhat randomly, that the time is right actually to kill the old man.

When the narrator arrives late on the eighth night, though, the old man wakes up and cries out. The narrator remains still, stalking the old man as he sits awake and frightened. The narrator understands how frightened the old man is, having also experienced the lonely terrors of the night. Soon, the narrator hears a dull pounding that he interprets as the old man’s terrified heartbeat. Worried that a neighbor might hear the loud thumping, he attacks and kills the old man. He then dismembers the body and hides the pieces below the floorboards in the bedroom. He is careful not to leave even a drop of blood on the floor. As he finishes his job, a clock strikes the hour of four. At the same time, the narrator hears a knock at the street door. The police have arrived, having been called by a neighbor who heard the old man shriek. The narrator is careful to be chatty and to appear normal. He leads the officers all over the house without acting suspiciously. At the height of his bravado, he even brings them into the old man’s bedroom to sit down and talk at the scene of the crime. The policemen do not suspect a thing. The narrator is comfortable until he starts to hear a low thumping sound. He recognizes the low sound as the heart of the old man, pounding away beneath the floorboards. He panics, believing that the policemen must also hear the sound and know his guilt. Driven mad by the idea that they are mocking his agony with their pleasant chatter, he confesses to the crime and shrieks at the men to rip up the floorboards.

***The Finish of Patsy Barnes***

A young African American boy struggles with poverty, racism, his mother’s illness, and lingering grief from his father’s death. While the mother would like the best for her son, and tries her hardest to provide for the family, Patsy preferred the company of horsemen. Patsy was paid to dance, sing, or even warm up a horse for its owner. Eventually Patsy’s mother becomes so ill that she is bedridden, and unable to pay for proper medical attention. In desperation to pay for his mother’s doctor, and save her life, Pasty finds a job. However, he only earns enough to put food on the table. As his mother’s condition worsens, Patsy goes to the track to find extra work exercising horses. As fate would have it, the horse that was responsible for Pasty’s father’s death needed a jockey in order to compete in the race. Driven to overcome the looming grief that the horse left in Patsy’s life, and earn the money needed to save his mother’s life, Patsy agrees to ride the wild spirited horse named “Black Boy”. The race was close and exhilarating, but in the end Patsy and Black Boy won, and Patsy earned the money to get his mother a doctor and cure her sickness.

***The Drummer Boy of Shiloh***

A young drummer boy is nervous and tearful the night before the Battle of Shiloh.

Joby is only fourteen, and he has run away from home to enlist in the army as a drummer boy. Joby is scared because unlike the other soldiers, he has no weapon with which to defend himself. The general stops to talk to Joby and encourage him by telling him how important his job as a drummer is. Joby can influence the men by beating a brisk, steady rhythm. The general tells Joby that he is the heartbeat of the army. Why is this an appropriate metaphor?

We only know Joby’s first name. We don’t know his last name, the general’s name, or even which side they’re fighting for. Why did the author make this choice?

***Flowers for Algernon***

Charlie Gordon, a mentally retarded thirty-two-year-old man, is chosen by a team of scientists to undergo an experimental surgery designed to boost his intelligence. Alice Kinnian, Charlie’s teacher at the Beekman College Center for Retarded Adults, has recommended Charlie for the experiment because of his exceptional eagerness to learn. The directors of the experiment, Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur, ask Charlie to keep a journal. The entire narrative of *Flowers for Algernon* is composed of the “progress reports” that Charlie writes.

Charlie works at Donner’s Bakery in New York City as a janitor and delivery boy. The other employees often taunt him and pick on him, but Charlie is unable to understand that he is the subject of mockery. He believes that his coworkers are good friends. After a battery of tests—including a maze-solving competition with a mouse named Algernon, who has already had the experimental surgery performed on him—Charlie undergoes the operation. He is initially disappointed that there is no immediate change in his intellect, but with work and help from Alice, he gradually improves his spelling and grammar. Charlie begins to read adult books, slowly at first, then voraciously, filling his brain with knowledge from many academic fields. He shocks the workers at the bakery by inventing a process designed to improve productivity. Charlie also begins to recover lost memories of his childhood, most of which involve his mother, Rose, who resented and often brutally punished Charlie for not being normal like other children.

As Charlie becomes more intelligent, he realizes that he is deeply attracted to Alice. She insists on keeping their relationship professional, but it is obvious that she shares Charlie’s attraction. When Charlie discovers that one of the bakery employees is stealing from Mr. Donner, he is uncertain what to do until Alice tells him to trust his heart. Delighted by the realization that he is capable of solving moral dilemmas on his own, Charlie confronts the worker and forces him to stop cheating Donner. Not long afterward, Charlie is let go from the bakery because the other workers are disturbed by the sudden change in him, and because Donner can see that Charlie no longer needs his charity. Charlie grows closer to Alice.

Algernon’s intelligence begins to slip, and his behavior becomes erratic. Charlie worries that whatever happens to Algernon will soon happen to him as well. Algernon eventually dies. Fearing a regression to his previous level of intelligence, Charlie throws himself into discovering what fate has in store for him. Charlie succeeds in finding the error in Nemur’s hypothesis, scientifically proving that a flaw in the operation will cause his intelligence to vanish as quickly as it has come. Charlie calls this phenomenon the “Algernon-Gordon Effect.” As he passes through a stage of average intelligence on his way back to retardation, Charlie enjoys a brief, passionate relationship with Alice, but he sends her away as he senses the return of his old self. When Charlie’s regression is complete, he briefly returns to his old job at the bakery, where his coworkers welcome him back with kindness.Charlie forgets that he is no longer enrolled in Alice’s night-school class for retarded adults, and he upsets her by showing up. In fact, Charlie has forgotten their entire romantic relationship. Having decided to remove himself from the people who have known him and now feel sorry for him, he checks himself into a home for disabled adults. His last request is for the reader of his manuscript to leave fresh flowers on Algernon’s grave.

***The Medicine Bag***

The main character Martin is descended from are native americans, and every summer he and his sister would go visit his grandfather on the reservation. When they returned home from these visits they would tell their friends a bunch of elaborate tales about their grandfather. These tales were mostly based on the stereotypes which were formed through TV shows and movies. Their friends believed them and thought that their grandfather was amazing.

However, when grandfather visits them Martin is embarrassed because grandfather doesn't look like the Indians from the movies. When Martin's friends finally visited grandfather he put on quite the show. Grandfather was very intune with Martin’s insecurities and dressed the part of a “traditional Indian”. Martin’s friends loved his grandfather and thought that he was amazing.

Martin was embarrassed that his grandfather found out about his lies and figured out that Martin was embarrassed to introduce him to his friends. This remorse that Martin feels, and the way that grandfather covers for Martin’s lies creates a bond between them. He learned that he must not be embarrassed of his cultures or traditions. In the end the true reason for grandfathers visit comes to light. He is dying and must pass the family medicine bag along to the eldest male heir before he passes. Martin must go through the traditional right of passage ceremony that will proclaim him an adult, and make him the keeper of the family heritage, traditions, and values.

***The Dinner Party***

*The Dinner Party* is a fictional short story written by Mona Gardner. In India, a colonial officer and his wife host a dinner party and invite army officers and government attaches along with their wives, and an American naturalist. A spirited discussion sparks up between a young girl and the colonel, in which the girl believes that woman have outgrown the fright-from-seeing-a-mouse era, but the colonel denies that and says that men have more control than women in every situation. Then, the American notices that the hostess is very still and summons a native boy over to her, who then leaves the room in a hurry and places a bowl of milk on the veranda outside of the room. Knowing at that point that there is a cobra under the table, he creates a game for the guests to see who has control by staying still for three hundred seconds.When he starts counting down the last twenty seconds to finish the game, the cobra emerges from under the table, going towards the bowl of milk outside, and the American locks it out of the room. After the ordeal, the American asks the hostess, Mrs. Wynnes, how she knew that the cobra was in the room, and she replies with, "because it was crawling across my foot."

***After 20 Years***

This is a story about 2 freinds who separated 20 years ago. One went in west to make a fortune, the other one was a simpleton and a good fellow and stayed in New York. They had promised each other that they would meet exactly 20 years later at ten pm. So the first arrived. There was a patroling policeman who enquired about him and got to know about this appointment. After some time his friend Jimmy Wells comes and they talk, but due to difference in features Bob realizes as soon as he see Jimmy's face that he is not the real Jimmy. The speaker mentioned the police as Jimmy as he was no identified because 20 years was a long time. It is then that Bob is told that he is arrested and is handed a note from patrolling police man who was the actual Jimmy that he reached on time but could not arrest his friend himself

***Those Three Wishes***

Those Three Wishes” by Judith Gorog takes place while Melinda Alice, the main character, is on her way to school one morning. While cramming for a math test, she almost stepped on a snail. Because Melinda Alice was a bit malicious, she thought about stepping on it; however, the snail offered her three wishes in exchange for his life. Melinda Alice agreed and soon realized she had the power to have anyone do whatever she wanted. After arriving at school and entering homeroom, Fred, a classmate, mentioned the math test. Upset and angry that the snail made her late and forget to study, she makes the comment, “I wish I were dead.”