

The Watsons Go To Birmingham—1963

Response Questions

Preview the questions before reading each chapter. Use the questions to guide your reading. You should be able to discuss these questions thoroughly in class.

Chapter One: “And You Wonder Why We Get Called the Weird Watsons”

1. Curtis plants a seed in the reader’s mind by suggesting that the Watsons may be weird. Is Byron someone you might think of as weird? How?

Chapter Two: “Give My Regards to Clark, Poindexter”

2. What are the two qualities that set Kenny up for teasing? How does being Byron’s brother help Kenny?

Chapter Three: “The World’s Greatest Dinosaur War Ever”

3. What does Kenny do that makes him feel “like someone had pulled all [his] teeth out with a pair of rusty pliers”?

Chapter Four: “Froze-Up Southern Folks”

4. Explain why you would or would not like to have Byron as your big brother.

Chapter Five: “Nazi Parachutes Attack America and Get Shot Down over the Flint River by Captain Byron Watson and His Flamethrower of Death”

5. Why is Mrs. Watson so upset about the parachute game? How does she punish Byron?

Chapter Six: “Swedish Cremes and Welfare Cheese”

6. What proves to Kenny that Byron feels badly about killing the mourning dove?

Chapter Seven: “Every Chihuahua in America Lines Up to Take a Bite out of Byron”

7. How does Byron describe his relationship with Kenny as they are waiting for Mr. Watson to arrive to decide By’s punishment?

Chapter Eight: “The Ultra-Glide!”

8. Where are the Watsons going and why is it necessary to make the trip?

Chapter Nine: “The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963”

9. What gift does Joetta receive and why does she hide it in her socks drawer?

Chapter Ten: “Tangled Up in God’s Beard”

10. Describe the Buster Brown trademark Kenny sees inside Joetta’s shoe.

Chapter Eleven: “Bobo Brazil Meets the Sheik”

11. Give one reason to explain why Mrs. Watson is angry about her husband driving straight through to Birmingham and one reason to explain why she is pleased.

Chapter Twelve: “That Dog Won’t Hunt No More”

12. Why does Birmingham seem to Kenny to be a serious punishment?

Chapter Thirteen: “I Meet Winnie’s Evil Twin Brother, the Wool Pooh”

13. How does Byron reveal his true feelings for Kenny in chapter thirteen?

Chapter Fourteen: “Every Bird and Bug in Birmingham Stops and Wonders”

14. When Kenny holds the shiny, black shoe with the Buster Brown trademark and believes Joetta died in the bombing, he worries about how he had been treating her. Describe how he had treated her earlier that day.

Chapter Fifteen: “The World-Famous Watson Pet Hospital”

15. To what place does Kenny disappear more and more often and what is he looking for there? Explain his internal struggle.

16. Does Kenny find the “magic powers” he was looking for to heal himself? Explain.