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Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963 Study Guide Questions

Chapter One: Pages 1-19

1. Who is the narrator of this story? What do we know about him?
2. What is the weather like at the beginning of the story?
3. What does Momma say about Birmingham? Does Dad agree with her?
4. How do Byron and Kenny get along?
5. Who eventually gets Byron free from the Brown Bomber's mirror? How?

Chapter Two: Pages 20-31

- pg 20
1. Who is Larry Dunn?

- pg 22
2. Why does Miss Henry take Kenny to different classrooms?

pg 23

3. What does Mr. Alums say to his class about Kenny?

pg 25

4. What is wrong with Kenny's eye?

pg 28

5. What does Kenny think of the new kid on the school bus?

Chapter Three: Pages 32-46

1. Why does Kenny give Rufus part of his lunch? What does Rufus do with it?

2. What does Rufus say about the squirrel in the tree? What does he say would happen to the squirrel in Arkansas?

3. Is L.J. Jones a good playmate? Why or why not?

4. What two things are wrong with Rufus?

5. What does Momma tell Kenny to do about Rufus?

Chapter Four: Pages 47-63

pg 55 (1.) Why doesn't Momma understand cold weather? What does she do as a result of this?

pg 55 (2.) When do Momma and Dad buy the kids' leather gloves? Why?

55-56 3. What does Kenny do to help Rufus?

57-58 4. How does Rufus know Larry stole Kenny's gloves?

62 5. What is the Great Carp Escape?

62-63 (6.) Why do Rufus and Kenny leave the school grounds?

Chapter Five: Pages 64-74

(1.) What does Momma say she will do if Byron plays with matches again?

2. What does Byron do when he locks himself in the bathroom?

3. When Momma goes to the kitchen, what does Kenny say to Byron?

4. Why does Joetta decide it's okay for Momma to burn Byron?

5. Does Momma really ever burn Byron? Why?

Chapter Six: Pages 75-85

1. What arrangements has Dad made with Mr. Mitchell?

2. What does Byron do once he and Kenny have everything Momma wants?

3. What does Mr. Mitchell say when Kenny says to put the food on the welfare list?

4. According to Byron, what welfare food has the family eaten in the past?

5. What happens to the mourning dove on the telephone wire? How does Byron react?

6. Why does Kenny have a hard time understanding Byron?

Chapter Seven: Pages 86-99

1. What has Byron done to his hair?

2. What does Momma say about Byron's hair?

3. Why does Kenny tease Byron?

4. Why does Dad take Byron upstairs?

pg 98 5. Why does Dad say Byron has Sands blood in him?

pg 99 6. Whom do Dad and Momma call on the telephone?

Chapter Eight: Pages 100-120

pg 100 1. How do Momma and Dad start acting "real strange" after talking to Grandma Sands?

100-108

(2) What has Dad added to the car?

109

3. How does Momma react when she sees the record player?

118-119

(4) What are some of the things Momma says Byron has done wrong?

119-120

(5) Kenny never thought his parents would send Byron to Grandma Sands. Why?

Chapter Nine: Pages 121-137

1. What does Kenny ask his father when he gets up?

2. Why does Dad say Byron must go to Birmingham?

(3) What has been happening in the South? What does this have to do with Byron?

4. What do Kenny and Dad say about being a grown-up?

5. What does Joetta think of Mrs. Davidson's gift?

6. Where does Byron sleep the night before the family leaves? Why?

7. Why does Momma say Day Three will be tough for Dad?

8. How does Byron plan to get back at his parents? Does he follow his plan?

Chapter Ten: Pages 138-148

1. What does Kenny find inside Joey's shoe? What does that make him think about?

2. Why is Momma upset with Dad?

3. What frightens Byron about being in Appalachia?

4. According to Dad, what does the air feel like? What literary device is this an example of?

Chapter Eleven: Pages 149-161

1. What kind of music is playing on the radio? Why does this surprise Kenny when he wakes up?

2. What surprises Kenny when he first sees Birmingham?

3. What does Kenny expect Grandma Sands to look like? Is he right?

4. How does Grandma Sands act when she sees the family?

5. What does Grandma Sands say about Joey?

6. What has Kenny expected to happen when Byron and Grandma Sands see each other? Is he right? Is he disappointed?

Chapter Twelve: Pages 162-168

1. Why do Kenny and Byron have trouble sleeping?

2. How did Mr. Robert save Toddy's life?

3. Who does Grandma Sands say Mr. Robert is?

4. Why does Momma stop asking about Mr. Robert?

Chapter Thirteen: Pages 169-179

1. What warning does Grandma Sands give about Collier's Landing?

2. What is a whirlpool?

3. What is the Wool Pooh? What does Byron tell Kenny about the Wool Pooh?

4. What warnings does Kenny say he could have listened to?

5. According to Kenny, what does the Wool Pooh look like?

6. What does the Wool Pooh do to Kenny?

7. Whom does Kenny see as the Wool Pooh pulls him? What does that person tell Kenny?

8. What does Byron do to Kenny once he gets him back to shore?

Chapter Fourteen: Pages 180-190

1. Where is Joetta getting ready to go?

2. What wakes Kenny as he naps under a tree?

3. Where is Byron going when he runs out of the house?

4. What does Kenny see inside the church?

5. Why does Joey think Kenny is trying to scare her?

6. What does Joey say happened at the church?

Pg 190

7. What does Kenny decide happened at the church?

Chapter Fifteen: Pages 191-206

1. When do Momma and Dad talk about what happened in Alabama?

2. What does Grandma Sands tell Momma and Dad?

3. Why are Momma and Dad worried about Kenny?

4. Where does Kenny go when he disappears? Why does he go there?

5. Why does Byron start spending more time on the couch?

6. How does Byron react when Kenny cries?

7. What does Kenny ask Byron? What is Byron's answer?

8. Why does Kenny say he is ashamed of himself? What does Byron tell him?

9. What does Byron tell Kenny about things being fair?

10. What does Kenny say Byron is wrong about?

11. Where does Kenny think there could be magic powers, genies, and angels?

Epilogue: Pages 207-210

1. What was the civil rights movement?

2. Before the civil rights movement, what was life like for African Americans in the South?

3. What happened in Birmingham on September 15, 1963?

4. According to the author, Christopher Paul Curtis, why was the civil right movement successful?

5. According to the author, who are the true American heroes?