

“The Scarlet Ibis” by James Hurst – Questions

1. How do you feel about the narrator’s behavior at the end of the story? Is he responsible for Doodle’s death? Could he be partially responsible?
2. Is the narrator’s emotion at the very end of the story sorrow, guilt, or something else?
3. At the story’s end, whom do you pity more – the narrator or Doodle? Why?
4. Do you think the narrator makes any kind of discovery at the story’s end, as he cradles his brother’s little body?
5. In the last sentence, the narrator calls his brother his “fallen scarlet ibis.” In what ways could the ibis be a symbol for Doodle?
6. Why do you think this story is so popular and is remembered for a long time by many readers? What feelings do you think it taps into?
7. What incidents from life could illustrate the good and bad effects of human pride?
8. What do we know about the narrator of the story?
9. What details at the start of the story tell us that the events he is about to relate took place many years ago?
10. Why does the narrator teach Doodle to walk, and why does he cry when his family congratulates him for his effort?
11. After Doodle has learned to walk, what does his brother try to teach him, to prepare him for school?
12. How does Doodle respond to the scarlet ibis and to its death?
13. Write a headline for a newspaper using the word *imminent*.
14. Use the word *infallibility* in a description of a person.
15. Write a sentence supporting a political candidate, using the word *doggedness*.
16. Write an instruction your teacher might give using the word *reiterate*.
17. Write a sentence about Doodle using the word *precariously*.