



The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963 Storyboard

This performance is approximately 70 minutes without intermission

This performance is about the Watson family and a trip from their home in Flint, Michigan, to Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963.

The characters in the story are the Watson children: Kenny, his older brother Byron, and his little sister Joetta (or Joey); their parents, Daniel and Wilona; and Grandma Sands.

Another main character is the now grown up Kenny who will narrate the story.



The show begins with the stage curtain lowered. The band will begin playing but you will not see the band until the curtain rises.

When the curtain rises, you will see the band and a singer who are on different levels of platforms.

Behind the band **there are several screens shaped like the windows and the roof of a house**. There are music stands and chairs on stage where the actors will either stand or sit during the performance.



Byron has been getting into trouble and not going to school. His parents are worried about his behavior and don't know what else to do.

When the family decides to go to their aunt's house to be warm, **Daniel tells Kenny and Byron to get their car, the "Big Brown Bomber," ready.**

Kenny and Byron **will use actions to mimic scraping ice off of a car.** You will not see their car.



While Kenny is scraping ice, Byron gets his lips stuck to the mirror of the car!

Wilona has to tear Byron's frozen lips off of the car mirror and it hurts!

Byron enjoys pretending to film action movies. He does this **using toilet paper to create soldiers and matches to make fire** even though he knows he isn't supposed to.

Wilona catches Byron lighting matches and is **very upset.**

Daniel and Wilona tell Byron that they are bringing him to live with Grandma Sands in Birmingham. They are hoping this will help him stay out of trouble.

While Daniel gets the "Big Brown Bomber" ready for their road trip, he explains to Kenny how some people in Birmingham **may not like them because of the color of their skin.**



Before the Watsons leave, Byron tries to run away so he doesn't have to go live with Grandma Sands. Joetta tells her parents so they can catch him before he gets away. **The Watsons have some fun times and some scary times on the road.**

You do not see it happen but at one point during the trip, a police officer pulls the Watsons over. Daniel and Wilona explain that they had to lie about who they were to keep the family safe.

The trip takes a very long time but eventually they make it to Grandma Sands's house in Birmingham.

Grandma Sands is happy to see her family. **She warns the children not to go to certain dangerous places** in the city, especially the park.



Kenny wants to be independent like Byron and talks Joetta into going to the park with him.

When Kenny and Joetta get to the park, they think it looks like fun to play in the water.

It turns out that **people are being sprayed with powerful water hoses** that are very painful.

There is screaming, police dogs barking, and loud announcements being yelled through a bullhorn.

Historical photographs of people being sprayed with hoses are projected on the screens.

Byron finds Kenny and Joetta and brings them to safety.

When the Watson children get back to Grandma Sands's house, the grownups are impressed that Byron did the right thing by finding his siblings.

Kenny feels very bad about what happened at the park and decides to stay home from church. Joetta gives him her angel figurine to help him feel better while she goes to church.

Right after Joetta leaves, Kenny settles down to take a nap. **He wakes up when there is an explosion!**

Sounds of panic build as the Watsons realize a bomb went off in the church. **You can hear sirens as the Watsons scream trying to find Joetta.** Historical photos of the event are shown on the projection screens.

Kenny thinks he finds Joetta under the rubble. He is only able to free a little girl's shoe. Kenny thinks Joetta is dead.

When Kenny gets back to Grandma Sands's house, he hears Joetta's voice but thinks she is a ghost.



It takes Joetta some time to convince Kenny that she is not hurt and wasn't at the church when it exploded.

The whole Watson family is relieved. Daniel thinks it may be time to take his family back to Flint, Michigan.

After the explosion, Kenny can't get all of the bad things that have happened in Birmingham out of his head. He hides away in a closet with his toys where he pretends he runs a pet hospital.

Byron tries to get Kenny to come out of his hiding place, but Kenny refuses. Kenny doesn't understand why he can't make himself feel better.

Byron tells Kenny that he may not be able to make himself feel better about the bad things that happened.

He tells Kenny that he shouldn't hide away but, instead, they should all watch out and take care of one another.



At the end of the performance, grown up Kenny joins child Kenny in the middle of the stage.

They deliver a joint message that each person can help bring about the change they want to see

The End