



Overview of Scene 11

In Scene 11, the Watson children are in the living room watching television while their mother, Wilona, is making a grocery list in the kitchen. During this time, a historically accurate news broadcast report about the **Children's Crusade in Birmingham** comes on the television. The news captures the attention of Byron and Wilona. A reporter tells us what is going on:

REPORTER

On Tuesday the Negroes gave vivid evidence
that they would no longer accept the patterns
of the last one hundred years... the crowd
surged into downtown... And outside the south
voices were roused to ask why the federal
government was not involved...

Wilona and Byron stare at the television. Kenny and Joetta appear oblivious. Then she snaps the TV off.

WILONA

You shouldn't watch that in front of Kenny and
Joetta.

Byron looks towards Kenny who is now paying attention to
this conversation.

BYRON

Yeah, I understand. Grown-ups only.

WILONA

Byron, please don't start.

Film to Text Connection

Scene 11 is not in the book, but supplements the book's narrative with a strong link to historical events happening during the time of the story. In the movie script, the screenwriter lets us know that Momma does not want Kenny or Joey being exposed to the news.

Why would the scriptwriters include this scene? Why is the Children's Crusade in Birmingham significant for the Watsons?

Does the scene meaningfully support the overall plot of the book? In what ways?

DISCUSS MOVIE

Whole Class Discussion

This scene is an excellent opportunity for students to practice one of the most important competencies in the Voices approach, their perspective taking skills. It is also a good way to build students' background understanding of civil conflict in the 1960's.

Why doesn't Wilona want Kenny and Joetta to see what is reported on the news?

Why are Momma and Byron so interested in the news, yet Kenny and Joetta are so oblivious?

What do you think Byron's opinions are of the Children's Crusade?