**“The Scarlet Ibis” Guided Discussion Questions**

With a partner, use the indicated passages to help you answer and analyze “The Scarlet Ibis.” Please write your answers on a separate sheet of paper. You will then be asked to share your responses with the class.

1. **Pg. 554; 1st and 2nd paragraph** - List a few of the descriptive details (words and phrases) in this first paragraph. What mood do they create? Then look at the 2nd paragraph and list a few descriptive details. What mood do they create?

2. **Pg. 555; 3rd and 4th paragraph** – What side of the narrator’s character is revealed in this paragraph?

3. **Pg. 556; 2nd full paragraph** – What character traits does the narrator’s behavior reveal?

4. **Pg. 556-557; last paragraph of 556-1st paragraph of 557** – Why do you think the beauty of the swap caused Doodle to cry? What does that tell us about Doodle? What is Doodle’s brother learning from Doodle during their visits to the swamp?

5. **Pg. 557; 3rd paragraph (beginning with “There is within me. . .”)** - Ambivalence means the presences of simultaneous and contradictory attitudes or feelings (such as attraction and repulsion) toward an object, person, or action. How is it possible to have two opposite and conflicting feelings towards someone at one time?

6. **Pg. 557; 3rd paragraph**- What does the following lines mean? What is the narrator saying about love and cruelty?

*“There is within me (and with sadness I have watched it in others) a knot of cruelty borne by the stream of love, much as our blood sometimes bears the seed of our destruction, and at times I was mean to Doodle”*

7. Looking at the above lines, answer the following. What does the comment in the parentheses mean? Why do you think the author included them? What does that show the reader, as far as his capacities as a narrator?

8. **Pg. 557; 3rd -8th paragraph** - Look at the conversation between Doodle and the narrator at the loft. - Is the narrator’s behavior cruel? Explain.

9. **Pg. 557; 9th paragraph of 557- top of 558**– Why does the narrator want to teach Doodle to walk? What is his motive? What is your opinion of this motive? Have you ever been motivated by this? Explain.

10. **Pg. 558; 8th paragraph**– What do the following lines mean?

*“I did not know then that pride is a wonderful terrible thing, a seed that bears two vines, life and death.”*

How does this story demonstrate the truth of this statement? How can pride produce both life and death?

11. **Pg. 558; 2nd full paragraph from the bottom** – Why is this an important moment in the story?

12. **Pg. 559; 2nd full paragraph**- The whole family is rejoicing in Doodle’s success at walking. However, the narrator is crying. Why do you think he was crying? Look at the following lines to help.

*“They did not know that I did it for myself; that pride, whose slave I was, spoke to me louder than all their voices, and that Doodle walked only because I was ashamed of having a crippled brother. “*

Do you agree that the narrator was a slave to pride? Why? How does this statement relate to this earlier confession about having a “knot of cruelty”?

13. **Pg. 559; 3rd -4th paragraph** – What does this passage reveal about Doodle?

14. **Pg. 559-560; last paragraph- top of the next page** – Are the narrator’s goals for Doodle sensible? Explain. What does that tell us about him?

15. **Pg. 561; 5th paragraph from the bottom (The description of the ibis at the end of pg. 561- the top of 562) –** What qualities of the ibis does the author stress? Why do you think he does this?

How does the fact that the bird is out of place relate to Doodle?

16. **Pg. 562; 7th paragraph from the bottom** – What is Doodle’s reaction to the bird’s death? What is his family’s reaction to the bird’s death? Why is Doodle’s reaction to the bird’s death different from that of the rest of the family?

17. **Pg. 562; 2nd to last paragraph (Aunt Nicey’s comment)** – How might Aunt Nicey’s remark foreshadow what will happen in the story?

18. **Pg. 563; 2nd paragraph**– Why is the narrator irritated at Doodle? Look at the words in the parenthesis of the 2nd full paragraph. What is the meaning of these words? Why is the narrator’s “pride cracked”

19. **Pg. 563; 2nd paragraph**– What larger meaning might be read in to Doodle’s cry, “Brother, don’t leave me! Don’t Leave me!” at this point in the story?

20. **Pg. 563; end of the 2nd paragraph** – Why does the narrator’s cruelty emerge at this moment?

21. **Pg. 564** – Compare the description of Doodle to that of the ibis after it had fallen from the tree? How does that incident foreshadow the ending of the story?

22. What does each of the following show about Doodle?

a. his reaction to his brother’s plans for him.

b. his favorite “lies”

c. his response to the scarlet ibis

23. The story opens with the narrator, now an adult, remembering the events from long ago.

Find at least two examples that demonstrate that he is reflecting on a past event as an adult.

How does this passage of time change people and their feelings about past events?

24. Answer questions # 5 and 6 on page 564 in your text book.