

Jason Reynold's Graduation Speech

1. At the beginning of the speech, how does Reynolds charm his audience?
2. "Confucius" is the name of a famous Chinese philosopher, whose work concerned morality. What is the significance of the fish's name in this story?
3. Mr. Williams says that sometimes doing the right thing has consequences. Can you think of a time in your life in which this was true?
4. Reynolds says that the incident in Mr. Williams' classroom was "the single most important day in my entire academic experience and one of the most transformative moments in my life." Why might this be true?
5. Thinking locally, what groups of people might be described as those whose "wings have been clipped" and which with those who "dwell in unknown spaces," and "exist in environs too deep and murky to be seen from any stable surface." What groups of people might be described as such when you think more globally?
6. Do you think the story about the fish is true? Why or why not? Does the idea that it might not be true change its impact? Why or why not?
7. Reynolds identifies a flaw in the message that graduates should "spread their wings and take flight." What is that flaw?
8. What rhetorical devices does Reynolds use to enhance his speech's effectiveness?
9. Identify the three levels of Reynolds' thesis.