

Character Analysis Chart, Complete

Directions: Chart the development of Daddy and Billie Jo throughout the novel *Out of the Dust*.

	Daddy — Winter 1934	Billie Jo — Winter 1934
Description (physical and emotional)	Wanted a boy, treated Billie Jo like a boy (p. 3)	long legs, wide mouth, high cheekbones, red hair, freckles, narrow hips, restless, 14, sassy, “hunger for playing fierce piano” (p. 3)
Evidence/Quotations that reveal their thoughts and point of view regarding various events	Ma says about Daddy: “Your daddy would have to believe [rain will come]. It’s coming on spring, and he’s a farmer.” (p. 27) “By the summer I turned nine Daddy had given up about having a boy. He tried making me do. I look just like him” (p. 4) “Daddy says, ‘Chocolate milk for dinner, aren’t we in clover!’” (p. 21)	“I’ve been restless in this little panhandle shack we call a home.” “I can handle myself most everywhere he puts me, even on the tractor, thought I don’t like that much.” (p. 4)
Responses to and interactions with other characters	Daddy “gets soft eyes” when he listens to Ma play piano. (p. 24) Daddy discusses getting a loan to plant more wheat. Ma and Daddy argue. Daddy angrily leaves to go to the barn. (pp. 26-27)	Billie Jo worries about Livie and her brother Reuven, and wonders what it would be like to not have a home or food. (pp. 21-22) Billie Jo asks her mom why her Daddy would think the wheat would grow. (p. 27)
Consequences of their actions	N/A	N/A
Possible lessons learned from these actions	N/A	N/A

	Daddy — Spring 1934	Billie Jo — Spring 1934
Description (physical and emotional)	Daddy's wheat crop keeps being damaged by dust storms, but he doesn't complain.	Sometimes Billie Jo is down and other times she is happy, like when she is playing piano or looking at her mother's apple trees in blossom.
Evidence/Quotations that reveal their thoughts and point of view regarding various events	"No. It has to be wheat. I've grown it before. I'll grow it again." (p. 40)	"I hope we get bonus points for testing in a dust storm." (p37) "The piano is some comfort in all this." (p. 39) "I wince at the sight of his rib-thin cattle." "I look at Joe and I know our future is drying up and blowing away with the dust." (p. 39) "I wish I could see poppies growing out of this dust." (p. 44) "It's being part of all that, being part of Arley's crowd I like so much, being on the road, being somewhere new and interesting. We have a fine time. And they let me play piano, too. (pp 50-51)
Responses to and interactions with other characters	Daddy and Ma argue about what to plant, and Daddy won't budge from planting wheat. (pp 40-41)	Ma doesn't like Billie Jo going out to play piano at first, but eventually lets her.
Consequences of their actions	Daddy continues to plant wheat, and it continues to be damaged by the dust storms.	Billie Jo agrees to play with Arley, and she has a great time.

Possible lessons learned from these actions	Daddy doesn't acknowledge that he has learned much.	Billie Jo continues to enjoy playing piano, and uses it as an escape from the dust.
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	Daddy — Winter 1935	Billie Jo — Winter 1935
Description (physical and emotional)	Daddy doesn't do much except work, and he has taken some odd jobs around town. He has begun digging the pond Ma wanted. He doesn't talk much to anyone.	Billie Jo misses Ma terribly. She also feels responsible for causing her mother's death and her and her father's unhappiness. Despite the pain in her hands, she begins to practice piano again and begins performing again. Her hands are scarred, and she feels they don't work right.
Evidence/Quotations that reveal their thoughts and point of view regarding various events	<p>"He sings sometimes under his breath, even now, even after so much sorrow. He sings a man's song, deep with what has happened to us." (p. 111)</p> <p>"We don't talk much. My father never was a talker. Ma's dying hasn't changed that. I guess he gets the sound out of him with the songs he sings." (p. 112)</p>	<p>"Being there without Ma, without the baby, wouldn't have been so bad, if I'd just remembered the cranberry sauce. My father loved Ma's special cranberry sauce. But she never showed me how to make it." (pp. 100-101)</p> <p>"I should just let them [her hands] rest, let the dust rest, let the world rest. But I can't leave it rest, on account of Ma, haunting." (p. 110)</p> <p>"I did play like a cripple at Arley's show, not that Arley would ever say it. But my hands are no good anymore, and my playing's no good. Arley understands, I think. He won't ask again." (p. 136)</p> <p>"When Ma died, I didn't want to go on, either. I don't know. I don't feel the same now, not exactly . . . I just want to go, away, out of the dust." (p. 149)</p>

Responses to and interactions with other characters	Daddy and Billie Jo don't talk much. Daddy stares at Billie Jo sometimes, and Billie Jo thinks he is trying to find Ma in her. "He's making some kind of effort to get on better with me now, since I 'did him proud' at the Palace." (p. 134)	Billie Jo feels sorry for Daddy because she knows he misses Ma terribly, too. It makes her feel good to help the family that has come to live in the schoolhouse.
Consequences of their actions	Daddy must be suffering from the guilt he feels as a result of his role in the death of his wife.	Billie Jo feels guilty about her role in Ma's death, too. She feels sorry for herself and her father.
Possible lessons learned from these actions	Daddy might have learned to listen to other people. He is now building the pond Ma wanted, and he is doing work other than tending his wheat crop. He starts to go to night school to learn new skills.	Billie Jo knows that she can't change the past. She is starting to realize that she might survive her mother's death after all.

	Daddy — Spring 1935	Billie Jo — Spring 1935
Description (physical and emotional)	Daddy has spots on his face and neck that Billie Jo is worried about.	Likes Mad Dog, but doesn't understand why he would like her. Talks about being afraid of fire. Feels sad when she sees people leave the Dust Bowl for a better life in California. "How can I remember them all?" she asks.
Evidence/Quotations that reveal their thoughts and point of view regarding various events	When the letter from his sister comes, inviting Billie Jo to live with her in Lubbock, TX, Daddy says "Let's wait and see." It seems he doesn't want her to go.	"I'm so restless." (p. 153) "I ought to keep clear of Mad Dog. But I don't." Billie Jo likes Mad Dog. Does she have a crush on him? (p. 155) Senses that people are talking behind her back. (p. 157)

Responses to and interactions with other characters	When Billie Jo storms upstairs, Daddy leaves her alone instead of trying to console her like Ma would have.	Billie Jo can't talk to Daddy. She says "we can't soothe each other." Mad Dog spends time with Billie Jo, and is kind to her, but he doesn't say much. Billie Jo and Daddy argue. When a dust storm comes, Billie Jo pitches in to help Daddy dig them out.
Consequences of their actions	Daddy has decided that he and Billie Jo will stay on the farm. Therefore, they suffer through more dust storms.	N/A
Possible lessons learned from these actions	N/A	N/A

	Daddy — Summer 1935	Billie Jo — Summer 1935
Description (physical and emotional)	Daddy has spots on his skin that Billie Jo is worried about.	Billie Jo is filled with bitterness again. She feels her father has stopped loving her and she feels very alone.
Evidence/Quotations that reveal their thoughts and point of view regarding various events	"He says the pond is done. We can swim in it once it fills, and he'll stock it with fish too, catfish, that I can go out and catch of an evening and fry up." (p. 206)	"I could've loved her [Ma] better. She could've loved me, too." (p. 195) "My father was more like the sod. Steady, silent, deep." p. 202) "My father stayed rooted, even with my tests and my temper, even with the double sorrow of his grief and my own, he had kept a home until I broke it." (p. 202)

Responses to and interactions with other characters	When she returns, Daddy meets Billie Jo at the station and really talks to her. When he hears her tell him how afraid she is that he will leave her, he says he will see Doc Rice about his skin lesions.	Billie Jo feels like she has given her father many chances to love her, but she doesn't feel he does anymore. She is afraid he is going to die like his father did, and leave her completely alone. She is afraid of being alone most of all. Later, when she returns, Billie Jo calls her father "Daddy" and finally tells him how afraid she is.
Consequences of their actions	Daddy has ignored his daughter and also his own health, and it isn't until Billie Jo runs away that he wakes up.	Billie Jo runs away, stows away on a train, and meets a man who is in worse shape than she is. She tells him about her life, and as a result, realizes how important her home is to her.
Possible lessons learned from these actions	After he and Billie Jo talk upon her return, Daddy realizes that he needs to communicate with her more, and he begins to really talk to her.	Billie Jo realizes that being away wasn't any better, and that her place is at home with her father, who she resembles both physically and emotionally. She forgives her father for his role in her mother's death, and she also forgives herself.