

Chapter Charter: Questions to Guide Your Reading

Winter 1934

1. Why did Daddy name his daughter Billie Jo? How might Billie Jo's life be different if she were a boy?
2. How does Billie Jo feel about Livie Killian's moving away? Have you ever had a friend move away? How did it feel?
3. Do you think Billie Jo should be mad at Ma for not allowing her to miss school to play piano? Why or why not?

How does Ma respond to Billie Jo's scores on the state test? Did you ever feel you deserved more praise from your family than you got?

Spring 1934

1. What does Billie Jo do for comfort? Is there something you like to do when you're upset or want to relax?
2. Why does Ma allow Billie Jo to play with Arley Wandersdale on the road?

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3. Have you ever performed in a concert or play or had people watch you play in a big game? How did it feel to have an audience?
4. If you were Daddy, would you “give up on wheat”? Why does he decide to keep growing it?

Summer 1934

1. Whose fault is the accident?
2. Should Billie Jo forgive her father for leaving Ma to go drinking in Guymon?
3. How does Billie Jo spend her birthday?
4. Why does Billie Jo hide her injured hands from her father?
5. Why does Daddy want to dig a pond now?

Autumn 1934

1. Why can't Billie Jo stand to be in the same room with a piano anymore?

2. How does Mad Dog treat Billie Jo? What would you say to Billie Jo if she were your friend?

What kinds of paintings are shown at the art exhibit? Why do they mean so much to Billie Jo?

Winter 1935

1. Billie Jo writes that Christmas without Ma and Franklin “wouldn’t have been so bad,/if I’d just remembered the cranberry sauce.” Does your family make any special foods for a holiday celebration? How would the holiday feel without them?
2. In what ways is Billie Jo like her father? Who are you the most like in your family?
3. Is it right for Miss Freeland to let Buddy Williams and his family stay at the school?
4. After the Williamses’ baby is born, Billie Jo feels she must “go away for a little while/and just walk off the feelings.” What kinds of feelings do you think she’s experiencing?
5. Do you think Billie Jo deserved to win third place at the talent show?

Spring 1935

1. How does Billie Jo feel about Mad Dog Craddock? How do you know?
2. Why is Billie Jo upset with her father about the letter from Aunt Ellis? How would you feel if you were Billie Jo?

3. Do you think Daddy is being a good father to Billie Jo? Why or why not?

Summer 1935

1. If you were Billie Jo, would you have run away?
2. How does Billie Jo's father compare with the man she meets in the boxcar of the train?
3. Why do you think Billie Jo is able to call her father Daddy for the first time since her mother died?

Autumn 1935

1. How do you know that Billie Jo has accepted Louise?
2. What on Billie Jo's Thanksgiving List surprises you?
3. What do you think will happen to Billie Jo, Daddy, and Louise?