

Out of the Dust Questions

Remember to answer in complete sentences or points will be deducted.

1. Describe what life was like for Billie Jo and her family in Oklahoma. Was life easy or hard?
2. Does Billie Jo's family get along?
3. What are three adjectives, or character traits, to describe Billie Jo?
4. This novel is written in a different style than you are probably used to seeing. It's called free verse. Do you like the way the book is written and how the author is choosing to tell the story? Why or why not? Can you hear Billie Jo's unique 'voice' in her writing?
5. What are some facts you are learning about this time period and place from Out of the Dust?
6. This book is historical fiction. What do you think that means?
7. What makes Billie Jo happy in the beginning of the novel?
8. Billie Jo's family hasn't had a good crop in three years and they are struggling to get enough to eat, especially with Ma and her forthcoming baby. Nonetheless, Ma still does what to help the community?
9. What is the accident that happens to the family?
10. How does the accident affect Billie Jo? How does it affect her father?
11. How does Billie Jo feel about the accident? Describe her feelings, and find one quote from the book that shows she is feeling this way.
12. How do the townspeople react to the accident?
13. Do you think the family will recover from this accident? What do you think they will have to do?
14. Do you agree with Billie Jo when she tries to run away from her problems? Did this strategy work for Billie Jo?
15. Have you ever tried to run away from a problem? Does it work and make the problem go away?
16. What does Billie Jo think about the accident at the end of the novel? Do her feelings change throughout the book? Why or why not?
17. How does Billie Jo feel about her father at the end of the novel? Have her feelings changed for him? Why or why not?

18. Do you think Billie Jo ever gets “out of the dust”? Why do you think Karen Hesse chose this as the title of her novel? Do you think it’s a good title? What’s another title you can suggest?
19. Which character in the story do you think is the bravest? Why? Give at least two specific examples from the story that show this character’s bravery.
20. What did you think of this book? Would you recommend it to someone else?