

# Dida's Dad

by **Lisa Teasley**

Illustration by **Steven Calcote**

Curriculum developed by **Katy Eybert**

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## OVERVIEW

### Quick Glance 10 Points for Usage Guide

Student Population	
Age/Grade Level Appropriateness	* Ages 15+ * Grades 10+
Genre/s	* Fiction
Length	5,146 words
Content Advisories	* Descriptions of alcoholism and domestic disputes * Minor drug reference * Mention of teen depression and suicide.
One Sentence Summary	Dida, a fourteen-year-old girl, has a difficult first visit with her estranged mother who lost custody of Dida and moved from Los Angeles to Hawaii with her new husband.

Lesson Planning	
Topics & Key Themes Overview	<b>Topics</b> * Divorce * Alcoholism * Mental health * Homosexuality * Family relationships * Lying * Adolescence * Coming of age
Topics & Key Themes Overview	<b>Themes</b> * Divorce has the potential to permanently damage family ties * Alcoholism has the potential to permanently damage family ties * Individual perceptions of an event may not correspond to reality

Lesson Planning	
Historic Events / Time Periods for Study	<p>* Hawaiian History (<a href="http://www.hawaiihistory.org">http://www.hawaiihistory.org</a> (<a href="http://www.hawaiihistory.org">http://www.hawaiihistory.org</a>))</p> <p>* Hawaiian History: Statehood (<a href="http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/25769">http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/25769</a> (<a href="http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/25769">http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/25769</a>) &amp; <a href="http://statehoodhawaii.org/hist/sctl.html">http://statehoodhawaii.org/hist/sctl.html</a> (<a href="http://statehoodhawaii.org/hist/sctl.html">http://statehoodhawaii.org/hist/sctl.html</a>))</p> <p>* History of Alcoholics Anonymous (<a href="https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/historical-data-the-birth-of-aa-and-its-growth-in-the-us-canada">https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/historical-data-the-birth-of-aa-and-its-growth-in-the-us-canada</a> (<a href="https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/historical-data-the-birth-of-aa-and-its-growth-in-the-us-canada">https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/historical-data-the-birth-of-aa-and-its-growth-in-the-us-canada</a>))</p>
Complementary Classic and Historic Texts	<p>* <i>The Awakening</i> by Kate Chopin</p> <p>* <i>Catcher in the Rye</i> by J.D. Salinger</p> <p>* <i>The Outsiders</i> by S.E. Hinton</p> <p>* <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i> by Sherman Alexie</p> <p>* “Babylon Revisited” by F. Scott Fitzgerald (<a href="http://gutenberg.net.au/fsf/BABYLON-REVISITED.html">http://gutenberg.net.au/fsf/BABYLON-REVISITED.html</a> (<a href="http://gutenberg.net.au/fsf/BABYLON-REVISITED.html">http://gutenberg.net.au/fsf/BABYLON-REVISITED.html</a>))</p>
Author and Artists Information	<p><b>Lisa Teasley</b> is an award-winning writer and writing professor living in Los Angeles, CA.</p> <p><b>Steven Calcote</b> is a filmmaker living in Los Angeles, CA.</p>

Lesson Planning	
Key Common Core Standards (found in detail following the curriculum)	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3 ( <a href="http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/9-10/3/">http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/9-10/3/</a> ), CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5 ( <a href="http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/5/">http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/5/</a> ), CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3 ( <a href="http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/">http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/</a> ), CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A ( <a href="http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/a/">http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/a/</a> ), CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D ( <a href="http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/d/">http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/d/</a> ), CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D

## Author Biography

**Lisa Teasley** is the author of the acclaimed novels *Heat Signature* and *Dive*, and the award-winning story collection, *Glow in the Dark*, all published by Bloomsbury. Lisa Teasley's essays, stories and poems have been much anthologized, appearing in publications and media such as National Public Radio, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Zyzzyyva*, *Black Clock* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, where she is currently a fiction editor. Her BBC television documentary *High School Prom* was in long-term rotation in the UK. Lisa has taught fiction writing at the UCLA Writers Program, University of California, Riverside, CalArts MFA Writing Program and Antioch University, as well as in other parts of the world such as Indonesia, Nigeria and Haiti.

## Artist Biography

**Steven Calcote** is an award-winning filmmaker who has created film, television, commercial, and web projects for such clients as Sony Pictures, Disney, BBC America, Nickelodeon, and HBO.

## SYNOPSIS

Dida, a fourteen-year-old girl, visits her estranged mother in Hawaii for the first time since she lost a custody battle with her ex-husband over Dida in Los Angeles. As Dida confronts various challenges related to race, sexual orientation and growing up, she struggles to connect with her mother, whose behavior is cold and distant. Tensions between Dida and her mother mount as they disagree about traumatic details of the custody case. Lies, anger, and confusion eventually erupt in an explosive argument that reveals lingering pain that has torn Dida's family apart. By the end of the story, it is clear that both of Dida's parents have failed her.

## CURRICULUM

### Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

#### Topic and Main Ideas

Respond to the following journal prompt in 4-5 complete sentences:

What is one challenge you have faced in your adolescence? Do you think this challenge will be one you face in the future? Describe as much of your personal experience(s) as you feel comfortable sharing.

Select one word from your journal response to share with a partner and/or out loud to the class.

#### Passage-Specific Themes

Read the following excerpt from "Dida's Dad":

Her mom talked about her husband and what they'd been up to, but Dida wasn't listening. She wanted to put her iPod in but knew it would hurt her mom's feeling so she sang her own favorite song in her head. Then she put the iPod on anyway.

What can you infer about Dida's relationship with her mother from the passage?

#### Universal Themes

With a partner, discuss different challenges families face. You may consider your personal experiences or those you've read about or seen portrayed on television.

Focus on one specific example of how families struggle and write down 4-5 key details of this challenge. Share your ideas with the class.

## Key Vocabulary

Definitions are very context-dependent. Make sure that any definitions you look up or work from are the ones that most correctly fit in the context of the story.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
therapist	Hilo	facile
jutted	Big Island	Lexapro
dimension	kelly green	Banyans
doormat	Maui	patina
python	Pahoa	cigarette jeans
infinite	latter	AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)
invincible	fiberglass	fecund
imitation	Hawaii	verdant
furthermore	suction cups	parallelogram
intimate	octopus	psychotherapist
brightened	emphasize	
stark	blankly	

## Vocabulary Activity Options

1. Instruct students to select ten words from the vocabulary list, with at least three words from each level. Students will then write down their ten words and find where they appear in the text. Students will then guess what each word means based on its context in the story. Students will present their written guesses to you before they may continue the activity. Once they've finished guessing, students will look up each word and copy its dictionary definition on the same sheet of paper. Students will pick at least one word and share the following with a partner: the word, their guess at its definition based on context, and the word's actual dictionary definition.
2. Instruct students to find a partner and review the vocabulary list together. They will select at least ten words that have multiple meanings. They will then create flashcards for each of the ten words that provide at least two meanings (one per side) with a corresponding picture.
3. Instruct students to select all of the vocabulary words on the list that have something to do with Hawaiian geography. Students work in pairs to create an original map of Hawaii, focusing on the whole state, one specific part of it, and/or just the vocabulary words for this story. Students will color and present their maps to the class.

## Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

1. Why do you think the author titled this story “Dida’s Dad” when Dida’s dad isn’t in it?
2. Do you think Dida is right to favor her father over her mother? Why or why not?
3. As you read this story and learned more details about the nature of Dida’s parents’ separation and custody battle, did your feelings toward Dida and/ or her parents change? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think Dida’s mother chose to move to Hawaii when it’s so far away from Dida?

## Text-Dependent Question Options

1. How does Dida’s mother behave toward Dida during the first four pages of the story? Use textual evidence to support your answer.
2. What are some challenges Dida faces, aside from her parents’ divorce? Describe at least three different challenges, aside from divorce. Use textual evidence to support your answer.
3. What is revealed about Dida’s father throughout the story? Track when different information about Dida’s father appears in the story by writing down appropriate textual evidence and page numbers.
4. How does Dida resemble her mother? Explain with textual evidence to support your answer.
5. What is the climax of this story? Describe it with relevant textual evidence.
6. In the following excerpt, the author uses auditory imagery (underlined) to reveal Dida’s mother’s Tone: “Oh, here’s my kid,” [Dida’s mom] said to the woman, before greeting Dida. She said this as if Dida were always late. How does this auditory imagery impact the story’s overall mood? Why do you think the author chose to include this auditory imagery? What does it reveal about Dida and her mother?
7. How does the illustration reflect the relationship between Dida and her mother? Support your answer with specific artistic details from the illustration and specific textual details from the story.

## Writing Exercise Options

### Narrative

Creative writing: Write a short, first-person narrative about an awkward encounter between you and someone else. Try to put the reader in your shoes with vivid descriptions, imagery, and literary devices.

### Descriptive

Select a two- or three-page excerpt from “Dida’s Dad” and rewrite it from the perspective of Dida’s mother. While staying true to the original story, be sure to include vivid descriptions, imagery, and literary devices to help your reader understand Dida’s mother’s perspective.

## Analysis

Think about the beginning and end of “Dida’s Dad.” Contrast your first and final impressions of Dida, Dida’s mother, and Dida’s father based on details in the text. Write a brief essay that analyzes how the author’s gradual inclusion of specific details enhances and/or complicates your impressions of one character in the story.

## Complementary Reading Text Option

“Babylon Revisited” by F. Scott Fitzgerald, available here: <http://gutenberg.net.au/fsf/BABYLON-RE-VISITED.html> (<http://gutenberg.net.au/fsf/BABYLON-REVISITED.html>)

Note: This short story is fairly long and divided into five parts. You can omit the first part of the story to meet time constraints and still use the remainder for this exercise.

## Writing Exercise

Write a brief essay that compares and contrasts Dida’s and Honoria’s respective experiences with alcoholic fathers. Be sure to include relevant textual evidence.

## Activity Options

### Classroom Activity One: Inside-Outside Class Discussion

1. Allocate at least one day of class time so students can prepare for the inside-outside class discussion prior to it occurring. Make sure to cover the following material during this preparation day:

A. Announce to students that they will be participating in an inside-outside class discussion of this short story. Emphasize that this class discussion is student-centered and that you, the teacher, will make minimal interruptions (if any) during it. Also be sure to inform students that you will be actively listening and grading them accordingly during this discussion.

B. Assure students they will do well in this discussion if they adequately prepare for it. Print and pass out copies of the following discussion requirements so students can know how they'll be evaluated:

I. Bring your copy of "Dida's Dad" to class on the inside-outside class discussion day. (10 points)

II. Select at least 3 specific quotations from "Dida's Dad" to reference and discuss with your classmates. (10 points each) III. Create at least 3 original ideas about the story's language, theme, style, and/or plotline to discuss with your classmates. (15 points)

IV. Make at least one real-life connection to the story to discuss with your classmates. (10 points)

V. Respond to at least one of your peers' ideas during the discussion (5 points)

2. Arrange the class desks into two concentric circles. Make sure the inner concentric circle is much smaller (e.g., 7 desks) than the outer one (e.g., 20 desks).

3. Print out a roster of your class so you can track who has participated and manage grades throughout the class discussion.

4. At the beginning of class on discussion day, inform students that only those sitting in the inner concentric circle will be allowed to speak — everyone else must sit in the outer concentric circle, remain quiet, and listen to the conversation. When those in the outer concentric circle hear something they want to respond to or are otherwise motivated to enter the conversation, they must stand up and tap the shoulder of someone sitting in the inner concentric circle as a signal to leave the conversation.

5. Explain to students that it is their responsibility to participate in the conversation and cover all the graded components.

6. Listen to the conversation that follows, giving students credit for different portions of the graded requirements. Interrupt only to urge students who are reluctant to participate to enter the inner circle before class ends.

7. Conduct the inside-outside class discussion for one or two full class periods, according to time constraints. Ideally, only one class period will be necessary for all students to participate.

## **Classroom Activity Two: Body Biographies**

1. For this activity, gather large sheets of butcher paper (must be long enough for students to lie down on them) and markers.

2. Announce to students that they will be creating body biographies for characters in “Dida’s Dad.” To do this, they will divide into three groups, one group per major character: Dida, Dida’s mother, and Dida’s father.

3. Instruct student groups to select one of the three major characters.

4. Students will then find 5-10 quotations that describe their chosen characters. Students should select quotations that describe their character’s:

Appearance Attitude / behavior Hobbies Strengths Weaknesses

Students will then create 5-10 symbols that represent something important about their chosen characters. Ideally, these symbols should come directly from the text, but some can be original creations.

6. Finally, students will write a 4-5 sentence paragraph describing their chosen character.

7. Once all of this preparation work has been completed, students will then put their body biographies together. They will do this by taking one full-body-length sheet of butcher paper outside and tracing an outline of one of their group member’s on it.

8. Students will use the markers to place their selected quotations and symbols around the body biography. They will add as much color as possible.

9. Once completed, students will present their body biographies and read their corresponding paragraphs to the class.

### **Home Activity**

1. In this story, Dida finds comfort in a physical possession: her iPod. Instruct your students to go home and find a physical possession of their own that gives them comfort. If possible, students will bring their possessions (or a picture of them) to class for show and tell.

2. Instruct students to go home, find a possession that brings them comfort, and write a short essay about their possession that explains at least the following:

How did this object come into your life? What’s the story behind this item?

Why is this object meaningful to you? How does this item comfort you?

What will you do with this object in the future?

During the next class period, students will ideally show their actual possession (or a picture of it) to the class and read/paraphrase their essays out loud.

### **Guest Speaker**

Option One: Lisa Teasley, author of “Dida’s Dad.”

Email Lisa at <[info@lisateasley.com](mailto:info@lisateasley.com) (<mailto:info@lisateasley.com>)> to inquire about her availability.

Option Two: Speaker from the Museum of Broken Relationships

Email the Museum of Broken Relationships by submitting a form through this link: <http://brokenships.la/contact-us/> (<http://brokenships.la/contact-us/>)

Inquire about the availability of either Alexis Hyde, Museum Director, or Amanda Vandenberg, Assistant Director

### **Field Trip**

1. Organize a field trip to the Museum of Broken Relationships in Los Angeles.
2. Call the museum at (323) 892-1200, or contact the museum director at this link: <http://brokenships.la/contact-us/> (<http://brokenships.la/contact-us/>) to coordinate a visit.

## **TEST PREPARATION COMPONENT**

### **Writing Exercise**

In the story, Dida says she keeps her sexuality a secret from her dad because she doesn’t want to put unnecessary pressure on him. She compares if she were to come out to the moment when she told her dad about her depression and “it just about killed [him].” She fears her dad will struggle with her sexuality as he did with learning that she was in pain. Do you agree with Dida’s prediction? Write a one-page letter to her explaining your reasoning.

## **COMMON CORE STANDARDS REFERENCE**

### **Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

## Vocabulary Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career-readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

## Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

## Text-Dependent Question Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3 (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/9-10/3/>): Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5 (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/5/>): Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

## Writing Exercise Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3 (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/>): Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/a/>): Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/3/d/>): Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## Complementary Reading Text Writing Exercise

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

## Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.