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## **Sample MonkeyNotes**

**Note: this sample contains only excerpts and does not represent the full contents of the booknote. This will give you an idea of the format.**

# ***Bud, Not Buddy***

by

**Christopher Paul Curtis**

**1999**



MonkeyNotes Study Guide by Diane Clapsaddle

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## KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

### SETTING

Flint and Grand Rapids, Michigan in the 1930's during the Great Depression.

### LIST OF CHARACTERS

#### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Buddy Caldwell** - Bud is the absolute soul of the novel. He is a little ten-year old African-American orphan boy who has seen and suffered through a great deal in his short ten years, but who is definitely a survivor. His determination to find his father and his ability to use his survival skills to do so make him a heroic character for the reader.

**Mr. Herman E. Calloway** - He is the band leader of a Depression Era Negro Band whom Bud believes is his father. He turns out to be a rather cranky old man who doesn't trust Bud and acts mean to nearly everyone. He is actually a very sad man who yearns for the daughter he drove away with his need for her to be what he wanted her to be.

**Angela Janet Caldwell** - Although she has died before the story begins, her character is a very real presence for most of the other characters in the story. The lessons she taught Bud and his memories of her pervade the ideas of the plot and she seems as real as if she were interacting with the characters in the story.

**Todd Amos and his parents** - This is the foster family from whom Bud runs away after he is abused. They are typical of some foster families who would take in children just for the money the state would pay. They often mistreated them or at best, just ignored them. In this case, Todd is a terrible bully and his.....

Many additional major and minor characters are identified in the complete study guide.

### CONFLICT

**Protagonist** - The protagonist is Bud (not Buddy) Caldwell who has been an orphan since he was six. He seeks his father whom he believes is Herman E. Caldwell, a local band leader. In the process of.....

**Antagonist** - There are several antagonists. The first is the foster home system which often places children like Bud in unsuitable homes or warehouses them in over-crowded orphanages. The second set of antagonists is the Amoses. This family tortures Bud for no reason other than they like to bully the foster children they bring....

**Climax** - The climax occurs when Bud is forced to blurt out his mother's name and the.....

**Outcome** - Bud is fully accepted into the Calloway family and even into his grandfather's band. Bud knows that he must be patient until his new-found grandfather can come to terms with all.....

### SHORT PLOT / CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)

A young boy named Bud (not Buddy!) Caldwell, who has been an orphan since he was six, runs away after being abused in a foster home. He sets out to find his father, a man named Herman E. Calloway, a bandleader in Michigan during the Depression. He has many adventures along the way and learns many.....

### THEMES

***When God closes one door, he always opens another*** - The first and most important theme is when God closes one door, he always opens another. Bud learns this every time something eventful happens in his life and is followed by another path that leads him to what seems to be his destiny.

***Fate or Destiny*** - Another theme involves the idea of fate or destiny. All the way through the story events occur that keep Bud walking a continual path to Herman Calloway. For example, instead .....

Additional themes are identified in the complete study guide.

## **MOOD**

The mood is at times troubling and even dark, but for the most part is continuously hopeful and uplifting. This is the result of a young boy like Bud who won't allow society, adults, or even kids his own age to hold him back from achieving his goal.

## **AUTHOR INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY**

Christopher Paul Curtis is the author of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*, one of the most highly acclaimed first novels for young readers in recent years. It was singled out for many awards, among them a Newbery Honor and a Coretta Scott King Honor, and has been a best seller in hardcover and paperback.

Christopher Paul Curtis was born May 10, 1953. He grew up in Flint, Michigan. After high school, he began working on the automobile assembly line at the Fisher Body Plant No. 1 while attending the .....

## **CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES AND ANALYSIS**

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **Summary**

The novel opens with Bud (not Buddy) Caldwell as the narrator. He is living in an orphanage with many other children during the Depression. He is waiting in line for his breakfast when one of the caseworkers comes in and begins walking down the line. This usually means one of two things- either someone is going to be placed in a foster home or someone is about to be paddled. Unfortunately for Buddy, she stops right at him and asks if he is Buddy Caldwell. He quietly informs her that it's Bud, not Buddy. She pulls him out of line along with another boy named Jerry Clark. She tells them enthusiastically that they are going to be placed in new temporary homes that very afternoon. They wonder if they'll be together, but she quickly informs them that Jerry will be going to a home with three little girls and Buddy will be living with a family that has a twelve year old son. She cautions them not to look so glum, because, given that the country is in the midst of a depression, they are lucky that two families have opened their doors for them. She makes them recite what is evidently the mantra of this orphan home: “. . . we show our new foster families that we're very cheerful, helpful, and grateful.” She also tells them that they won't have time for breakfast and that she'll put fruit in a bag for them. Then, they are sent to the sleep room to strip their beds and gather all their things.

On the way to the sleep room (where the beds are all “jim-jammed” together), Buddy is surprised that even after leaving for three foster homes before, he is still feels his nose getting runny and his throat getting choky and his eyes sting-y. However, the tears have stopped coming out for some reason, his eyes don't cry anymore.

Nonetheless, Jerry, who is only six, has tears popping out of his eyes and running down his face. Buddy takes the time to sit down beside the younger boy and explain how he has it so much better. He'll be treated by those little girls like a special pet, and even though he'll have to put up being treated like a little baby when he plays with them, he'll be much better off than Buddy. Buddy will be in a home with an older boy who will probably want to fight. It makes Jerry feel better so Buddy goes to his own bed to pack his own belongings.

While he works, Buddy thinks about how hard it is for Jerry to be six years old. To Buddy, it is the age when adults stop thinking you're cute and stop giving you little swats and jump to slugging you so hard you see stars. He learned that at his first foster home. He also humorously points out that it's the age when you begin to lose your teeth. At first, it's kind of funny, but then it becomes scary, because what seem to be perfectly good parts of your body start falling off, and you're never sure what might be next, like an arm or a leg. Six is also tough, because that's how old he was when his mother died, and he was the one that found her lying there.

Buddy pulls out his suitcase. He's the only boy there who has one, a seeming luxury even though it needs twine to keep it closed. Inside are his many treasures covered by a blanket to protect them. At the bottom are the flyers. He pulls out the blue one which is starting to wear out from him looking at it so much. He likes checking it to see if anything has changed since he last looked at it. It was like he was sure there was a message for him there somewhere, but he didn't have a decoder ring to read it. He once again reads each part of the flyer – the top has the words LIMITED ENGAGEMENT with smaller letters under it saying, "Direct from S.R.O. engagement in New York City." Then, in big letters again, the flyer announced, "Herman E. Calloway and the Dusky Devastators of the Depression!!!!!" The six exclamation points make it seem like this is the most important news anyone can think of. After this information come the words, "Masters of the New Jazz," and then in the middle of the paper is a blurry picture of a man that Buddy feels strongly is his father. The man is standing beside what Buddy calls a giant fiddle, and he looks like he's tired, because he has a droopy, dreamy look on his face. Buddy is sure from this picture alone that the man is real quiet, real friendly and smart. Under his picture, someone had written in pen, "One Night Only in Flint, Michigan, at the Luxurious Fifty Grand on Saturday June 16, 1932. 9 Until ?"

Buddy remembers his mother bringing the flyer home with her from work one day and that she was very upset, and after laying it on the dinner table, she kept picking it up and putting it down and looking at it over and over. Buddy couldn't understand at the time why it upset her so much, because the only difference that he could see was the message in pen about Flint. Not long after she brought this flyer home, he knocked on her bedroom door, and when she didn't answer, he found her dead inside.

Now Buddy puts everything back in place and carefully ties up his suitcase with his only other set of clothes inside. He sits down shoulder to shoulder with Jerry while they wait to be summoned to their new homes. Buddy thinks, "Here we go again."

## Notes

This opening chapter is only eight pages long, but it is chock full of information important to the story: Buddy being sent to yet another foster home, but having had terrible experiences at least one of them; a flyer about a musician that Buddy believes is his father; his mother being upset about the flyer and then suddenly dying when Buddy was six; and Buddy being unable to cry any more. What's more, the chapter immediately presents a wonderful description of a ten year old orphan during the Depression in 1936. Buddy is a very gentle, kind child. However, he's also a child who has experienced the trauma of his mother's death and finding her body at the age of six. He's a child who has been abused in at least one foster home, and who also is very much alone.

## CHAPTER 2

### Summary

Buddy is in the middle of a fight. He tells us, "There comes a time when you're losing a fight that it just doesn't make sense to keep on fighting. It's not that you're being a quitter, it's just that you've got the sense to know when enough is enough." His feeling that he would have it worse than Jerry has come true. He decides that he has to scooch under the bed to save himself. Bud is living with the Amos family, African-Americans just like him. However, color has no influence, because the mother believes that her son, Todd, can do no wrong. The twelve year old boy uses his asthma as an excuse for his behavior and takes advantage of his mother's

protective attitude by singling out all of the foster children who have come to live there. He bullies them and batters them and then finds a way to blame them for what he has.....

## OVERALL ANALYSES

### CHARACTER ANALYSIS

**Bud Caldwell** - He is a little boy in a very big world who must find a way to survive when he is orphaned at the age of six. He suffers through many tragic events: finding his mother's body, living in abusive foster homes, being little more than a number in the children's Home, and having to run away to find his father and his real place in the world. He is a wonderful young man who even in six years had been taught proper manners by.....

**Mr. Herman E. Calloway** - This man is actually Bud's grandfather, but for a long time, Bud believes he is his father. He is the leader of a Depression-era jazz band and is a consummate musician. He is older and has a large belly which makes it hard for him to bend over, but not hard enough to play the bass fiddle. He lost his daughter thirteen years before the story opens and this has led to his depressed state of mind as.....

**Angela Janet Caldwell** - This is Bud's mother and when the story opens, she has been dead for four years. Nonetheless, her character resonates throughout the plot. She had been a very good mother to Bud, teaching him proper behavior, reading to him every night, and doing her best to support them both. Then, she dies suddenly, and Bud is sent into the orphanage system. Fortunately, her memory and what she.....

**Todd Amos and his parents** - This family is the stereotypical abusive family who would take on foster children for the money alone and never show them the love or give them the compassion they sorely need. Bud moves into their home at the beginning of the story and discovers that, just as he thought, their son is a bully who picks on all the children who have ever lived there. Then, he proclaims himself the victim of.....

**Deza Malone** - This young girl has been living for a long time in Hooverville and really knows the ropes about living homeless. She teaches Bud and Bugs all about cleaning up after a meal with hundreds of people and how and why people live there along the rails. She gently makes Bud see that he doesn't need all the mementos of his mother, because he carries her inside of him. She also introduces him to the beauty.....

**Lefty Lewis** - This man is a kind of courier who travels back and forth between Cedar Rapids and Flint delivering such things as blood to a hospital and dangerous, illegal flyers to the Brotherhood of Pullman Porters. He sees Bud along the road and stops to help him, knowing that a young black boy out at 2:00AM could be headed for trouble. Without really knowing who he is, he takes Bud to his.....

**Miss Grace Thomas** - She is the "vocal stylist" of Mr. Calloway's band and the music that comes from her chest is the most beautiful that Bud has ever heard. But what's more, she is a mother figure for Bud who has not allowed himself to cry for his real mother for the last four years. She holds him.....

**Steady Eddie, The Thug, Dirty Deed, Doo-Doo Bug, and Mr. Jimmy** - These band members are the ones who open their arms wide and accept Bud even when they know nothing about him. They buy.....

### PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

The novel is divided into nineteen chapters chronologically presenting Bud's search for his father. They are followed by an "Afterword" which explains how the author used his own past to structure his plot.

### THEMES - THEME ANALYSIS

The first theme – **when God closes one door, he opens another** – is very dominant throughout the tale. Examples include: Bud being sent to the Amos home where his abusive is a catalyst to send him on the road

toward his father; Bugs finding him at the library which leads them to Hooverville; Bud being unable to catch a ride on the train because he slows down to catch the flyer out of the air, and so deciding to walk toward Grand Rapids; Lefty Lewis finding Bud on the road before a white policeman can; Lefty believing his story about his father being in Grand Rapids and so driving him there; the band and Miss Thomas .....

## **AUTHOR'S STYLE**

Christopher Paul Curtis writes clearly and plainly on a young person's reading level. He uses uncomplicated vocabulary and often inserts language that is filled with imagery and.....

## **RISING ACTION**

The rising action begins when Bud is about to be sent from the Home to a foster home. He is nervous and apprehensive about living where the only other child is a twelve year old boy. He has had bad experiences in foster homes, but he doesn't tell this to Jerry who, at age six, is going to.....

## **FALLING ACTION**

After Mr. Calloway and his band learn the truth about Bud's mother, they all accept him as a part of their family. Miss Thomas warns him that he must have patience with Mr. Calloway and all.....

## **POINT OF VIEW**

The point of view is first person, told from Bud's viewpoint. This allows the reader to personally experience how Bud learns and grows from his experiences.

## **OTHER ELEMENTS**

### **FORESHADOWING**

There are several literary devices that pop up at various times in the story. One of the most prevalent ones is **foreshadowing** which frequently presents clues of something that will happen later in the novel. Some examples of foreshadowing include:

1. When caseworkers come into the Home and begin walking down the line, it usually means one of two things- either someone is going to be placed in a foster home or someone is about to be paddled. Bud is then chosen to go to a foster home.
2. Bud pulls out the blue flyer which is starting to wear out from him looking at it so much. This foreshadows his need to find the man pictured on it.....

## **IRONY**

Another important element is **irony** – when something happens, or is seen, or is heard that we may know, but the characters do not, or that appears opposite of what is expected. Some examples of irony include: It is ironic that Bud's tears have stopped coming out for some reason, because he needs to cry for his mother.

1. Buddy is actually impressed with Todd Amos, who beat him up, but who he recognizes is a better liar than he is.....

## **IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS - QUOTES AND ANALYSIS**

The following quotations are important at various points of the story ( Delacorte Press, 1999):

1. He quietly informs her that it's Bud, not Buddy. (pg. 2; Here Bud asserts who he is and won't allow anyone to change him.)
2. She makes them recite what is evidently the mantra of this orphan home: “. . . we show our new foster families that we're very cheerful, helpful, and grateful.” (pgs. 2-3; The Home forces the children to reflect an attitude that is seldom true.).....

## SYMBOLISM / MOTIFS / METAPHORS / IMAGERY / SYMBOLS

Other elements that are present in this novel include **symbols and metaphors**. Symbols are the use of some unrelated idea to represent something else. Metaphors are direct comparisons made between characters and ideas. There many symbols and metaphors used by the author such as:

1. The flyers symbolize Bud's path to his father.
2. The suitcase represents Bud's only link to his dead mother.
3. He likes checking it to see if anything has changed since he last looked in his suitcase. It is like he is sure there is a message for him there somewhere, but he doesn't have a decoder ring to.....

Another element that is very dominant in this novel is **imagery** – the employment of figures of speech, vivid descriptions, or mental pictures in writing or speech. Much of the imagery in this book comes from the language Bud and other characters use. Some example include:

1. The beds in the home are all “jim-jammed” together, meaning they're crowded closely together.
2. Bud decides that he has to scooch under the bed to save himself, meaning crawl under there.....

## IMPORTANT / KEY FACTS SUMMARY

**Title:** *Bud, Not Buddy*

**Author:** Christopher Paul Curtis

**Date Published:** 1999

**Meaning of the Title:** It refers to the main character's insistence that his name is an adult name and not that of a child. Bud has had to grow up quickly, but the name is one of pride as well since that's how his mother expected him to be called.

**Genre:** Historical Fiction.....

## STUDY QUESTIONS - MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ

1. When Bud is forced to move to yet another home, the phrase he uses is:
  - a.) Oh no, not again!
  - b.) Here we go again!
  - c.) I'm still afraid.
2. It's ironic that the Amos family abuses Bud, because
  - a.) the parents were both abused as children.
  - b.) the family is white.the family is black.....

## ANSWER KEY

1.) b 2.) c 3.) b 4.) a 5.) c 6.) a 7.) b 8.) a 9.) b 10.) c 11.) b 12.) c 13.) b 14.) c 15.) c

## ESSAY TOPICS - BOOK REPORT IDEAS

1. Describe all the events in the story that are the result of fate or destiny. Describe why the way Bud was raised in his first six years helped him find his grandfather. Cite specific instances.....

**END OF SAMPLE MONKEYNOTES EXCERPTS**

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