



Bud, Not Buddy

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It's 1936, in Flint, Michigan. Times may be hard, and ten-year-old Bud may be a motherless boy on the run, but Bud's got a few things going for him:

He has his own suitcase full of special things.

He's the author of *Bud Caldwell's Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself*.

His momma never told him who his father was, but she left a clue: flyers advertising Herman E. Calloway and his famous band, the Dusky Devastators of the Depression!!!!!!

Bud's got an idea that those flyers will lead him to his father. Once he decides to hit the road and find this mystery man, nothing can stop him--not hunger, not fear, not vampires, not even Herman E. Calloway himself.

Bud, Not Buddy Details

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Author : Christopher Paul Curtis

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From Reader Review Bud, Not Buddy for online ebook

Teresa says

4.5

One of my husband's grandsons (the 5th grader) asked me if I'd read this book and when I said 'no' (I hadn't heard of it), he told me it was good. Well, if a boy, about to turn 11, takes the time to recommend a book to me, odds are I'm going to read it.

The voice of the 10-year-old, Bud (*not* Buddy), in this novel is irrepressible and the setting of Flint, Michigan, during the Depression comes to life with tons of details but not a one of them ponderous. While keeping its tone age-appropriate, there's no talking down to the reader or even the tying-up in a pretty bow of all the loose ends.

There's sadness (reality), of course, (one scene brought tears to my eyes, but that's from an adult's perspective) but most of it is just fun, and even funny. (There's one gross (to me) description of soda-backwash that I almost couldn't read, the kind of thing many boys seem to love.)

And though there's lots of heart to the story, there's no moralizing. As Bud says:

I'd learned that it was best to be asleep before Momma finished the story because if she got done and I was still awake, she'd always tell me what the story was about. I never told Momma, but that always ruind the fun of the story. Shucks, here I was thinking I was just hearing something funny about a fox or a dog and Momma spoilt it by telling me they were really lessons about not being greedy or wishing for things you couldn't have.

It was interesting to this adult to learn in the Afterword that two of the older characters were based on the author's grandfathers, one of whom pitched in the minors of the Negro Baseball Leagues, one of my interests.

Book Concierge says

Audio book performed by James Avery.

5***** and a ♥

In Depression-era Flint, Michigan, 10-year-old Bud Caldwell (BUD, not Buddy) is plucked from the “home” to go to a foster family. This will be the third foster home he’s been in, and he’s not impressed. But he takes his worn, cardboard suitcase with his few but treasured possessions and tries to make the best of it. Before he knows it, he’s on the lam, determined to find his own way and sure that the things his Momma left him are clues to his father’s identity and whereabouts.

I love Bud. He’s imaginative, intelligent, resourceful, well-mannered, curious, and ever-hopeful. Once he’s decided to find the man he is sure is his father, nothing will stop him. He endures hunger and fear, but also comes across kind-hearted men and women who help him (though he isn’t always forthcoming about his goal, and outright lies about his situation more than once). He’s also quite the philosopher – having compiled

a list of *Bud Caldwell's Rules and Thing for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself*. Among my favorites: Rule # 83 - **If a Adult Tells You Not to Worry, and You Weren't Worried Before, You Better Hurry Up and Start, 'Cause You're Already Running Late.**

Curtis doesn't gloss over the difficulties faced by many during the Great Depression, giving the reader a history lesson on the conditions in Hooverilles across America. But he also shows that with determination, hard work, and compassion people survived the hardships and formed lasting bonds. As an adult, I really appreciated the afterword wherein Curtis explains some of his own family history and suggests, no orders, the reader to "Go talk to Grandma and Grandpa, Mom and Dad, and other relatives and friends."

James Avery is marvelous performing the audio book. Heck, **I** was scared when Bud was in the shed with the "vampires" and fish-guards! And at the end, my eyes started that same "stingy-eyed blinking" that afflicted Miss Thomas.

Kristen says

I need to learn to stop reading the last pages of books for my Children's Materials class in coffee shops. It always sounds like such a good idea, but ends in my crying, surreptitiously wiping tears away, while the people in the shop look away from me in embarrassment. And *Bud, Not Buddy* was no exception to this rule. I am an overwrought, emotional sucker.

I loved this book. I laughed out loud in several places--most notably when Bud would tell his "Bud Caldwell's Rules and Things to have a Funner Life and Make a Better Liar Out of Yourself." I think my favorite was "If an adult tells you not to worry, and you weren't worried before, you better hurry up and start 'cause you're already running late." He also has great quotes about libraries and librarians, which of course made me happy.

I don't know how to sell Christopher Paul Curtis stories to kids. I think they'd like them--he really gets kids, and talks authentically from their viewpoint. Although his books deal with issues such as class, racism, and child abuse they never feel like "issue" books. They are funny, smart, and interesting. But how do you give a kid a book, tell them it's about the Great Depression, and expect them to be interested in reading it? *I* didn't even want to read this book. It's a problem. But I'm going to try to play up the fact that it's a funny adventure story and see if I can get some kids at my library to want to read it. We shall see.

I highly, highly recommend this book.

Jacquelyn says

Genre: Historical fiction Reading level: Ages 9-12

A young boy decides to run away from his foster home and travel across country in search of a man he believes to be his father. His only knowledge of this elusive figure lies in his most precious possessions, a handful of flyers that his mother held dear featuring a musician in a series of jazz bands. Bud uses his wit, humor, and his "Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself". Food and jobs may be hard to come by in this time of depression, but help abounds for this young man on his

own. When he plucked from danger and dropped into the arms of the very man he seeks, he stands to gain the most precious gift of all. This book has won many awards, including prestigious Newbery. The grim reality of Bud's situation is tempered by the humor and hopefulness depicted in Curtis' witty style. One can't help liking clever Bud and admiring his tenaciousness in following his dream.

Other historical fiction set in the depression era:

The Babe & I, David. A. Adler (picture book for ages 5-9)

Dust for dinner, Ann Warren Turner (easy reader for ages 8-10)

Macaroni boy, Katherine Ayres (chapter book for ages 8-12)

Amanda says

When Bud Caldwell decides to run away from his most recent foster family in Depression-era Michigan, he has no destination in mind. After a few days (and a failed attempt to hop a train), he realizes that the only place he knows to go is Grand Rapids, Michigan, to look up the man that he is convinced is his father. Unfortunately Herman E. Calloway, a famous jazz musician, has no interest in taking care of a 10-year-old orphan who could not possibly be his son. Bud lands on his feet, though, thanks to the interest of the other members of Calloway's band.

Bud is an endearingly naive narrator who has collected all of the things he knows about life into "Bud Caldwell's Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself." Regardless of what kind of situation is in front of him, Bud looks for wisdom in his rules about how the world works. I listened to this as an audio book narrated by James Avery. The inclusion of jazz music throughout the story added an extra dimension to an already enjoyable book. Bud, Not Buddy is a funny, tender, ultimately positive book that illustrates the difficulties in growing up as an African-American orphan in the 1930s. Recommended for ages 8 to 12.

Linda Lipko says

Christopher Paul Curtis did it again! In writing this 2000 Newbery Medal and Coretta Scott King award-winning book, he wove another magical, enchanting, complex, well crafted and spell binding tale filled with poignancy, sadness and laughter while teaching history in a captivating way.

I've raved about this author before, so please indulge my obsession one more time in encouraging you to take a few hours of solitude to savor every word, phrase and nuance of this incredible writer.

What's in a name? The answer is a tremendous asset and sole identity to Bud, NOT Buddy! As a ten year old orphan in 1936 hard-hit depression filled Flint, Michigan, Bud has little else. Four years ago his beloved mother died, leaving him his name and a few possessions he guards with his life.

The sum total of his existence is held in a raggle taggle suitcase he lugs from one orphanage or foster home to another. The string-bound cardboard container holds some rocks with dates painted upon them, a photo of

his mama as a child riding a pony, and a few fliers listing a jazz group led by Herman E. Calloway.

When the last foster home experience culminated in a beating and fearful night of imprisonment in a back yard shack, Buddy knows he has had enough! Believing that his mother kept the fliers for a reason and that his unknown father must be Herman E. Calloway, Buddy runs away from Flint to Grand Rapids, seeking love and a home to call his own.

Christopher Paul Curtis masterfully writes about such complex issues as homelessness, poverty, racism, cruelty and poverty.

Living in a cardboard Hooverville community for a few days, Bud meets likable, down and out characters. Finally reaching his destination and claiming his identity to the great jazz artist Mr. Calloway and The Dusky Devastators of the Depression, leads to unexpected discoveries for all with quite a surprising ending.

I loved this book! I loved the spunky, determination of Bud, the complexity of the characters, the historical backdrop of the jazz age and the skillful depiction of a bleak period of time in American history.

Five Stars!!!!

Lstirl says

On an adventure to find a family, Bud charms and moves the reader with both his fortitude and wit.

Ages 9-12

This is a very moving and heartwarming book. The adventurous nature of the book will appeal to children, as will the optimistic and humorous protagonist, Bud. Along his journey to find a family, Bud meets many interesting and well-presented characters, such as the mouth organ playing man at "Hooverville," his friend, Bugs, and Miss Thomas. While the setting is bleak and sad, Bud remains funny and hopeful, popping up with bits of his "Rules and Things To Have a Funner Life and Make a Better Liar Out of You."

This book is richly layered with complex characters and numerous themes. A great book for children to begin to analyze literature with, as it is rich enough to contain many subject topics to discuss. However, it is not lacking in the 'fun' factor either. There are also lots of historical elements to open up discussions. This is a magical mix of education and entertainment. An all around winner. A well deserved award winner.

Publishers Weekly

As in his Newbery Honor-winning debut, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham--1963*, Curtis draws on a remarkable and disarming mix of comedy and pathos, this time to describe the travails and adventures of a 10-year-old African-American orphan in Depression-era Michigan. Bud is fed up with the cruel treatment he has received at various foster homes, and after being locked up for the night in a shed with a swarm of angry hornets, he decides to run away. His goal: to reach the man he--on the flimsiest of evidence--believes to be his father, jazz musician Herman E. Calloway. Relying on his own ingenuity and good luck, Bud makes it to Grand Rapids, where his "father" owns a club. Calloway, who is much older and grouchier than Bud imagined, is none too thrilled to meet a boy claiming to be his long-lost son. It is the other members of his

band--Steady Eddie, Mr. Jimmy, Doug the Thug, Doo-Doo Bug Cross, Dirty Deed Breed and motherly Miss Thomas--who make Bud feel like he has finally arrived home. While the grim conditions of the times and the harshness of Bud's circumstances are authentically depicted, Curtis shines on them an aura of hope and optimism. And even when he sets up a daunting scenario, he makes readers laugh--for example, mopping floors for the rejecting Calloway, Bud pretends the mop is "that underwater boat in the book Momma read to me, Twenty Thousand Leaks Under the Sea." Bud's journey, punctuated by Dickensian twists in plot and enlivened by a host of memorable personalities, will keep readers engrossed from first page to last. Ages 9-12. (Sept.) Copyright 1999 Cahners Business Information.

Children's Literature

A great review that keys into the magic of the book. I agree and was "engrossed from the first page to last." I read this aloud to my 10 and 11 year old, and they would beg me to keep reading. This is an indicator of a sure winner. It also had us talking about issues like the depression, being an orphan, being African American and other topics introduced in this book.

It has really been hard for Bud since his Mama died--one foster home after another. When he runs away from a family that really mistreats him, all he knows is that his long lost father must be the famed jazz musician Herman E. Calloway. Otherwise, why would his Mama have kept the posters? Good luck and friendly folk help Bud reach Mr. Calloway, but his supposed daddy is none too welcoming. The band members and vocalist are just the opposite. Bud is a spunky and likable kid, and this book has a fairy tale ending--it all works out for Bud and readers are left with a truly warm and happy feeling. However, the hard times during the Depression and especially the difficulties faced by African Americans are not ignored. A fast read for individual readers and a great book to read aloud.

I really like the tone of this review. It is light and incites the reader to read more.

School Library Journal

Gr 4-7-When 10-year-old Bud Caldwell runs away from his new foster home, he realizes he has nowhere to go but to search for the father he has never known: a legendary jazz musician advertised on some old posters his deceased mother had kept. A friendly stranger picks him up on the road in the middle of the night and deposits him in Grand Rapids, MI, with Herman E. Calloway and his jazz band, but the man Bud was convinced was his father turns out to be old, cold, and cantankerous. Luckily, the band members are more welcoming; they take him in, put him to work, and begin to teach him to play an instrument. In a Victorian ending, Bud uses the rocks he has treasured from his childhood to prove his surprising relationship with Mr. Calloway. The lively humor contrasts with the grim details of the Depression-era setting and the particular difficulties faced by African Americans at that time. Bud is a plucky, engaging protagonist. Other characters are exaggerations: the good ones (the librarian and Pullman car porter who help him on his journey and the band members who embrace him) are totally open and supportive, while the villainous foster family finds particularly imaginative ways to torture their charge. However, readers will be so caught up in the adventure that they won't mind. Curtis has given a fresh, new look to a traditional orphan-finds-a-home story that would be a crackerjack read-aloud.-Kathleen Isaacs, Edmund Burke School, Washington, DC Copyright 1999 Cahners Business Information.

A little too much plot description here, without keying into what makes this a great book. I feel that the reviewer liked the book, however, I'm left wondering what was so great.

Rebecca says

This was no *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*. Just a little too predictable. But it's powerfully told, and Curtis has the rare ability to get inside the head of his young narrators. Especially smart, sassy, sensitive little boys... Bud is definitely a winner.

Audiobook minuses:

While younger readers might find them really funny, these two things drove me CRazy. Especially trapped in the car wishing my eyes could glaze over a line or two.

1) The slang seemed vaguely era-appropriate (see Rebecca's Fictional Pet Peeve #10) but was super overused, and not really cute the first time - "woop, zoop, sloop." This was slightly redeemed by slipping "dollars to donuts" in there a few times.

2) I started to cringe every time he launched into another of the "Bud Caldwell Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself." (Characters who make precocious lists? That's Rebecca's Fictional Pet Peeve #29)

Audiobook plusses:

1) It's read by James Avery, aka Uncle Phil from Fresh Prince!

2) Author's note read by author. Y'all know if there's anything I like better than historical fiction, it's the real history lesson at the end. Curtis talks about how he modeled the two important male influences in the book on his two grandfathers, who both managed to be successful black businessmen in Michigan during the depression.

AND his little daughter sings her own composition featured in one of the scenes... I knew it was too awesome for an adult to come up with!

Mommy says no

Mommy says no

I listen you don't

Wha-ha-ha-ha

The building falls down

The building falls down

You get crushed I don't

Wha-ha-ha-ha

Mrs. Posmer says

I will never look at a 'ticonderoga' pencil the same again!

Yusra ? says

don't have a lot of recollection about this book, other than it was full of jazz music and a boy finding his dad :)

Stephanne Stacey says

My daughter had to read this for school. This is the daughter that doesn't like to read. She loved it, and told me that I had to read it as well! Any one that knows me would know how weird and remarkable that is. So I borrowed the class addition and read it this weekend. Amazing! For a young adult book this should be a must read.

The story will make you laugh, cry, and hope that the protagonist will find what he is looking for. I even enjoyed the way it ended, resolved yet leaving you hoping that the future will be special for everyone. You will figure out who H.E.B. turns out to be long before everyone else in the book does. But that's okay because you end up hoping and rooting for the truth to be exposed.

Chris's writing style is nicely periodesk and flows so well that you don't focus on how things are said, just that they were said. The vocabulary is appropriate for the story, protagonist, and young adult readers. A parent will not have to worry about the context or language of this book.

It's easy to see why this is an award winning book. What is truly remarkable is that Chris's first book is also award winning and he only has the two books written as of yet. I will be looking forward to reading his first book and any others that will come.

Short Reviews says

Dnf at around 80%.

It's not that book wasn't good. The writing was fun to read, the main character Bud not Buddy was adorable and his determination to make his life better was so uplifting.

But I just kept it under my bed for so long that I'm no longer interested in finishing it. That, and it was overdue at my library so I had to return it today.

So I doubt I'll be reviewing this properly. Looks like I'm just as lazy trying to type words to describe this book now as I was reading the book.

I won't be rating this because had I actually finished it I might have loved it... but I guess I'll never know. I don't re-read books I DNF.

Ash R. says

Bud, Not Buddy is a tense book that took place during the Great Depression. It is about an Orphan thats an African Boy looking for this father with only few clues of finding him. He use to live with his mother all his life, but after his mother got sick for awhile, she dies and Bud is sent to "The Home". His mother did tell him his father was in a jazz band and Bud escaped and was on his way to look for his dad.

I can make a text to world connection to Bud trying to find his dad because there are many people who don't grow up with their dad and hopes to find them one day. Their are people who are so serious about finding a

family member they search for along time! Bud and some kids want a dad and want to have the opportunity to have one and see how its like.

This is a very good book because it makes you not want to put it down. It is so interesting how a boy so young is so determined to find his father that he didn't grow up with. He is a very brave and courageous boy thats what makes this story so good. I would rate his book a 4 because it was very good for a history book. You learn a lesson and have fun reading it!

David Sof 2014 says

Bud, Not Buddy is a book by Christopher paul Curtis. It is about an lonely african boy who is a orphan looking for this dad with only a slight amount of clues to seek him. His mother was sick and she died. Bud was sent to a place called the Home. His mother gave him some of what hes father was and he learned he was in a jazz band and more. So he gets out of the place and the search had begun.

I can connect this to the world and other books of Orphans never knowing what their parents were or who some are. They were always curious and never hd the courage to go out and find their missing love ones. sdome do and some don't. In books there was once a boy that was lonely and lost so he found clues to find hes father. Also in the movie wanted Weaslyfaced a lot through hes life and later find out who hes father really was and who the bad one really are.

I rated this book a 4 its historical in some ways. It is very detailed and pages filled with adventure of hes plan and goal to find his father and on a young age too. It sometimes at first gets boring but you should wait until the real action begins. Bud not Buddy i think is recommanded for anyone.

Jill says

I have to say, for one of the newer Newbery winners I wasn't particularly impressed. It's funny, Mandy told me she thought it started off slow and became a little more interesting toward the end. I had the opposite experience--after the first few chapters I thought the story had great potential. I had high hopes, but for me the writing started to drag in the middle and fizzled out toward the end. I thought the author could have done more to resolve the relationship between Bud and Herman.

"Most folks think you start to be a real adult when you're fifteen or sixteen years old, but that's not true, it really starts when you're around six. It's at six that grown folks don't think you're a cute little kid anymore, they talk to you and expect that you understand everything they mean."

"Everything moved very, very fast when Momma was near, she was like a tornado, never resting, always looking around us, never standing still. The only time stuff didn't blow around when she was near was when she'd squeeze my arms and tell me things over and over and over and over."

"She would tell me every night before I went to sleep that no matter what happened I could sleep knowing that there had never been a little boy, anywhere, anytime, who was loved more than she loved me. She told me that as long as I remembered that I'd be OK."

"Yeah, he's puny. Good thing his legs don't touch when he walks 'cause if those two twigs got to rubbing

against one another he'd have a fire going in no time."

"Sounds like a case of diarrhea of the mouth and constipation of the brain."

"Some folks can look at you and tell if you're even thinking about slacking off, they'll add some work to you faster than you can say Jack Robinson. Some folks will find a excuse to strap you even if you're working as hard as you ever did in your life."

"I think it's because he expects so much out of everybody, himself included. And when you set your standards so high, you get let down a lot."

"Deza Malone was right, I was carrying Momma inside me and there wasn't anyone or anything that could take away from that or add to it either."
