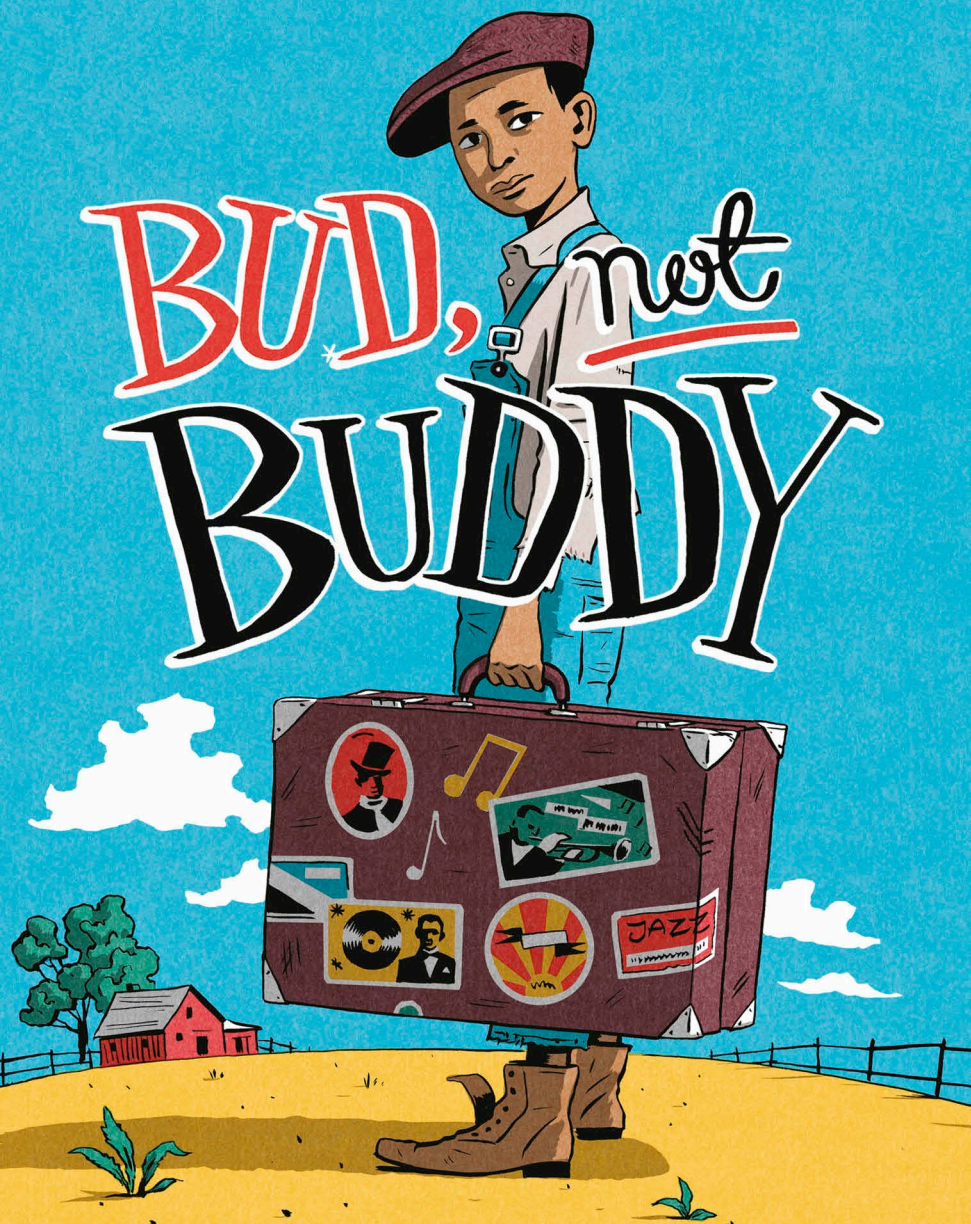


Penguin  Readers

CHRISTOPHER PAUL CURTIS

BUD, *not* BUDDY





This book includes content that may be distressing to readers, including violent or dangerous behaviour, and abusive or discriminatory treatment of individuals, groups, religions or communities.

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Contents

People in the story	4
New words	5
Note about the story	6
Before-reading questions	6
Chapter One – Here we go again	7
Chapter Two – Hornets	13
Chapter Three – Revenge	16
Chapter Four – The mission	20
Chapter Five – Hooperville	26
Chapter Six – Get on the train!	31
Chapter Seven – Herman E. Calloway	37
Chapter Eight – Home	44
Chapter Nine – Grand Calloway Station	50
Chapter Ten – The storm	56
Chapter Eleven – The rocks	58
Chapter Twelve – The truth	63
During-reading questions	70
After-reading questions	71
Exercises	72
Project work	78
Glossary	78

Note about the story

Christopher Paul Curtis is an American writer. *Bud, Not Buddy* was first published in 1999 and was Curtis's second book. Curtis got the idea for some of the people in *Bud, Not Buddy* from his grandfathers.

Bud, Not Buddy is a story about a ten-year-old African-American boy called Bud. Bud lives in a **children's home*** in a city in the United States of America during the 1930s. This was a difficult time for many Americans. Black people were not allowed to live in some towns and had to leave them before it became dark. If they did not leave, they might get hurt. During this time, many people did not have jobs or homes, and President Hoover did not do a lot to help them. Some very poor people lived in cardboard towns that they called "Hoovervilles."

Bud's mother is dead, and he has never met his father. Bud runs away from the children's home and tries to find the man who he believes is his father.

Curtis won the Newbery Medal award for *Bud, Not Buddy*. He was the first African-American man to do this.

Before-reading questions

- 1 Read the "Note about the story." How did many people in the 1930s feel, do you think?
- 2 How was life difficult for black people in America in the 1930s?
- 3 Why did people travel to the west of America in the 1930s, do you think?

*Definitions of words in **bold** can be found in the glossary on pages 78–80.

CHAPTER ONE Here we go again

"Here we go again," I thought.

We were all standing in line waiting for breakfast when one of the **caseworkers** came in. This was bad news. Either they wanted to send someone to a **foster home** or somebody was in trouble. All the children watched her as she walked down the line.

Oh no! She stopped at me. "Are you Buddy Caldwell?" she asked.

"It's Bud, not Buddy, **ma'am**," I said.

She took me out of the line. Then, she took Jerry, one of the smaller boys, out of the line, too.

"Are you Jerry Clark?" she asked.

Jerry nodded.

"Good news, boys!" she said. "You're both going to new foster homes this afternoon!"

"Together?" Jerry asked. I was thinking the same thing.

"No," said the caseworker. "You'll be in different homes. Jerry, you'll be in a family with three girls. Bud, you're going to live with the Amoses. They have a twelve-year-old son. He's only two years older than you. I'm sure that you and Jerry will both be very happy in your new homes."

I looked at Jerry, and he looked at me.

"Don't look so sad. There's a **depression**, and you two are very lucky to find homes," said the caseworker.

Me and Jerry went to our room to **pack** our suitcases. Jerry sat on his bed, and I could see that he was trying not to cry. I sat down next to him.

“I know it sounds terrible, Jerry, but you *are* lucky. I’m going to be living with an older boy. Older boys always want to fight. The girls will think that you’re special.”

“Will they?” said Jerry.

“Of course,” I said. “You’re going to be great.”

Jerry looked like he wasn’t **upset** any more, so I went across to my bed and started packing. I was the one who was in big trouble, but I felt sad for Jerry. Jerry was six years old and that is a hard age. People think that you become an adult when you’re somewhere around 16 years old, but that isn’t true. It happens when you’re six. That’s when adults stop hitting you lightly when you get in trouble. When you’re six, they hit you hard enough to knock you down. I learned that in my first foster home.

Six is a really difficult age. That’s how old I was when Momma got sick, and I came to live here in the **Home**.

I pulled my suitcase out from under my bed and opened it. I open it every day to check that nobody has stolen anything from it. At the bottom of my suitcase are my flyers. I took the blue flyer out. In big letters it said, *HERMAN H. CALLOWAY AND THE DUSKY DEVASTATORS OF THE DEPRESSION!!!!!!* Below that was a picture of some old men playing music. One was playing a giant fiddle. There were two men next to him. One was playing drums and the other was playing a horn. I have never met Herman E. Calloway, but I have a good

feeling that he is my father. Below the picture, were the words *ONE NIGHT ONLY IN FLINT*. Flint is my home city.

I remember the day that Momma came home with the flyer. I remember it because she was very upset. She put the flyer on the table and kept **picking it up** and putting it down again. I was only six, and I couldn’t understand why she was so upset. Momma had four other flyers just like the blue one, but those ones didn’t say anything about Flint.

Momma died not long after she brought the blue flyer home.

I put it back inside the suitcase and closed it.

Here we go again.

Sometimes, it’s important to know when enough is enough.

I was having this thought because Todd Amos was hitting me hard, and **blood** was coming out my nose. I fell to the floor and put my arms round my head. I tried to get under the bed. Todd kicked me, but he was not wearing shoes, so it did not hurt too much.

The bedroom door opened, and Mrs. Amos, Todd’s mother, came in.

“Toddy?” said Mrs. Amos, softly.

Todd stopped kicking me and looked at his mother.

“Toddy? Toddy, are you all right?” asked Mrs. Amos. She looked at me. “What have you done to Toddy?”

“I was only trying to help,” said Todd. “And look what he did to me.” Todd pointed at his face. There was the red **shape** of my hand on Todd’s face.

Mrs. Amos pulled me out from under the bed. “What have you done to my son, you horrible boy?”

“I was just telling him to go to the toilet,” said Todd. “I didn’t want him to **wet the bed.**”

I tell the best lies in the world, but I have to say that Todd was good, too. It was like Todd knew Number 3 of *Bud Caldwell’s Rules for Having More Fun in Life and Telling Better Lies.*

RULES AND THINGS NUMBER 3

If you have to tell a lie, choose a lie that is easy to remember.

Todd did that.

This is what really happened. I woke up because it felt like a train was driving straight into my nose. I opened my eyes. Todd was standing next to me with a yellow pencil in his hand.

“Wow!” he said. “It went up to the letter R!”

I looked at the pencil and saw the word TICONDEROGA written on the side of it.

“I’ve never gotten it deeper than the letter N on any of the others,” said Todd with a laugh. “We might have fun together, Buddy.”

That was when I hit him. I didn’t care that he was older than me, or that he was bigger than me. I didn’t care that the city was paying his mother to look after me. I wasn’t going to allow anyone to push a pencil up my nose to the R or call me Buddy.

