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 parents deny his behavior is anything other than that of a victim. As a result, Bud is punished for having been beaten up by the older boy. This is the catalyst that sets him on his journey to find his father.

Deza Malone - She is a young girl who teaches Bud how to do dishes in the cardboard jungle known as Hooverville. She gives him very wise advice about how to remember his mother and even gives him his first kiss, telling him she’ll see him seven years just like the characters in the song “Shenandoah.”

Lefty Lewis - This is the very kind black man who picks Bud up along the road to Grand Rapids. He takes him to his daughter’s home where he is fed and given clean clothes. He is a kind of courier who brings blood needed at hospitals and sneaks in union flyers to illegal organizations. He shows Bud basic kindness and compassion, two emotions he has felt little of in his life.

Miss Grace Thomas - She is the “vocal stylist” of Herman Calloway’s band. She knew and loved Bud’s mother and even before she knows Bud’s relationship to Mr. Calloway, she offers him a motherly love and comfort. Bud thinks she is very beautiful and the music that comes out of her mouth is something so special that he is dazed by it. She believes that Bud is a godsend.

Steady Eddie, The Thug, Dirty Deed, Doo-Doo Bug and Mr. Jimmy - These are the band members who tease Bud unmercifully, but also show him how to be a good and loving person. They buy him his own saxophone and give him a name in a secret ceremony that makes him one of them.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Bugs - He is one of the boys at the Home who was nicknamed Bugs, because he got a cockroach stuck in his ear. He claimed that he could hear the cockroach screaming as they pulled its legs off with the tweezers. He finds Bud and after swearing to be brothers, the two decide to ride the rails to Chicago. Unfortunately, fate intervenes and Bud is unable to get on the train and he loses track of Bugs.
Mrs. Sleet, Scott, and Kim - These are Lefty Lewis’ daughter and her children. She gives Bud a place to sleep and food to eat and shows him what a real family can be like.

Miss Hill - She was a librarian at the Flint Public Library who had befriended Bud when his mother was still alive. When he runs away, he thinks of her first as someone who can help him. Unfortunately, she has gotten married and moved to Chicago.

The man with the mouth organ - He is the first one Bud speaks to in Hooverville. He gives him information about what draws people to this little cardboard jungle and when the train will leave the next day.

Jerry Clark - He is the little boy who is being taken to a new foster home the same day Bud is being taken to the Amos home. He is only six and very afraid, but Bud, in spite of his own nervousness, takes the time to comfort the boy and explain why he will be going to good place. Jerry reminds Bud of himself when he was six and his mother died.

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 trying to escape the foster home system and find his father, Bud learns all about life and people and eventually finds the place where he is meant to be.

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 into their home. The third antagonist Mr. Calloway who is convinced Bud is up to no good. He is a very unhappy man and has a hard time giving of himself. Bud must be patient and learn how to break down his defenses so they can be a family. The final antagonist is the unwritten laws of segregation that affect Mr. Calloway’s right to own land and Bud’s right to walk the streets at 2:00AM. It is a sad indictment of America in the early twentieth century.

Climax - The climax occurs when Bud is forced to blurt out his mother’s name and the band members and Mr. Calloway now know that she was Mr. Calloway’s daughter and Bud is his grandson.

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 that has happened in his life.

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 lessons he can take with him in his life.

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 of being to ride the rails with Bugs, he can’t run fast enough to jump on a boxcar. This turns out to be good, because Mr. Calloway is in Grand Rapids not Chicago.

**People Helping People** - A third theme involves the idea of people helping people. In spite of abusive people like the Amoses, there are many examples in the story of people banding together to help each other survive the Depression. It leaves the reader with a sense of hope for what Bud called “human beans.”

**The Impact of Segregation** - A final theme is more subtle, but nonetheless important: the impact of segregation. Blacks like Bud were treated as second-class citizens during this time period. They couldn’t own land or enter into contracts and the Depression was even harder on them. However, out of this comes the sense that many African-Americans became stronger for it.

**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 Flint branch of the University of Michigan. Today he is a full-time writer.

He and his wife, Kay, have two children, Steven and Cydney. The Curtis family lives in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Awards Won by *Bud, Not Buddy*

Newbery Medal Winner, 2000
The Coretta Scott King Award For Narrative
International Reading Association Children's Book Award
William Allen White Children's Book Award
NCSS-CBC Notable Children's Trade Book in Social Studies
An ALA Notable Children’s Book
An ALA Best Book for Young Adults
Best Book of the Year by *School Library Journal*
Best Book of the Year by *Publishers Weekly*
Notable Book of the Year by *New York Times*
Winner of a Golden Kite Honor Plaque for Fiction
Texas Bluebonnet Award Master List
A *Parent's Choice* Story Book Award
Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award Program Master List
Tennessee Volunteer State Award 2001-2002 Master List
Virginia Capitol Choices Award
Hawaii Master Reading List Award
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 senses 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 started. Todd’s mother reacts toward Buddy exactly as Todd has hoped. He accuses him of wetting the bed and that he had been attacked by Buddy after he had awakened him to go to the bathroom. The truth is that Todd had awakened Buddy by shoving a pencil up his nose as far as he could shove it. Then, being bigger and stronger, when Buddy punched him, he beat the younger boy silly.

Buddy is actually impressed with Todd Amos, who he recognizes is a better liar than he is. He thinks of what he calls *Bud Caldwell’s Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself*. Rule No. 3 states that “if you got to tell a lie, make sure it’s simple and easy to remember.” Bud thinks Todd has accomplished just that. However, Todd’s accomplishment is somewhat negated by the fact that Mrs. Amos believes that her son’s mouth is a prayer book. Mrs. Amos calls Bud a beastly, little brute and decides he will not spend one more night in her house. She intends to call the Home and send him back the next morning. In the meantime, she has her husband give Bud a blanket and pillow and lock him in the shed. Todd tells him as he’s led away that there are spiders and bugs in the shed and a blood stain from the previous boy on the floor. They also will not give him back his suitcase (which they had looked through after promising they wouldn’t) as assurance that he won’t steal anything from them. Just before Mr. Amos leads him away, Mrs. Amos lectures about how he is unwilling to be uplifted and be a credit to their race. To her, he is vermin and his so-called bad behavior may prevent her from taking in any more children. She tells him that if other children fail to receive a good home, it’s all his fault.

Mrs. Amos also threatens Bud with a strapping if he doesn’t apologize to them all. Bud immediately acts contrite and says everything she wants to hear, which fulfills Rule No. 118: “You have to give adults
something that they think they can use to hurt you by taking it away. . . “Bud has learned that you have to manipulate adults to protect what is really important to you.

Bud sees his suitcase under the kitchen table, which makes him feel better. However, his entrance into the shed is a whole, different scarier kind of dark. Nonetheless, he refuses to beg Mr. Amos to keep him out of it, even though he sees what he thinks is the blood stain on the floor. The padlock snaps shut with the loudest click he had ever heard.

Notes
This chapter reinforces the abuse that Bud has experienced now in two of his foster homes. He is the one who is punished for the behavior of others. They claim to be great examples of black people, but Bud is a much better character than any member of the Amos family. Fortunately, his character grows and matures as he is exposed to such abuse.

CHAPTER 3
Summary
Bud is in the shed and the only sound he can hear is his breath, which is so loud that it sounds like there are six scared people locked up. He concentrates on breathing more slowly and conquering his fear. He gets to the “get-excited-and-want-to-move-around kind of scared.” His eyes become accustomed to the dark and he sees that Mr. Amos has stored many common objects in the shed. He decides he’ll try the doorknob to see if Mr. Amos actually left it open for him. However, he goes from calm to “being in that stand-on-one-place-with-spit-drooling-down-the-front-of-your-shirt kind of scared.” He sees on the door knob three little flat monster heads with two little staring eyes and a sharp set of pointy teeth. He calls them the doorknob guards. Soon, he discovers that they are three dried fish heads that have been nailed to the door. He takes some old rags and covers them.

Then, Bud has to decide where he’ll sleep. He knows there’s no way he wants to sleep on the floor where a cockroach might climb into his ear. He remembers the experience of Bugs, a boy who had also lived at the Home. Bugs had gotten a cockroach in his ear and had to be held down while four grown-ups tried to remove it with a pair of tweezers. The adults only succeeded in pulling off the cockroach’s legs while Bugs screamed bloody murder. He eventually was taken to the emergency room where the insect was removed. He told Bud when he returned that he hadn’t screamed once at the hospital, but he had screamed at the home, because he could hear the cries of pain and fear from the cockroach. Bud had never forgotten this experience. So now, Bud decides spread his blanket on the woodpile. He sits in front of the one small window and plays shadow puppets against the yellow paper the Amoses had put over it. He can see the light in the Amoses’ bedroom, and it calms him enough that he falls asleep.

He awakens awhile later and notices that the light in the bedroom is out. Then, he sees the vampire bat Todd had warned him about, hanging in the corner of the shed. He knows that he must kill it by following Rules and Things No. 328: “If you make up your mind to do something, hurry up and do it . . .” So, Bud picks up a rake and slashes the bat in two. Unfortunately, it’s not a vampire bat at all, but a hornet’s nest. They fly out and begin to sting him, fulfilling Todd’s warning that he might come out all swollen like another boy who had lived at their house. The only thing he thinks to do is to jump on the woodpile and go out the window. The window is hard to open, but Bud manages to do it and finds himself on the ground in front of the Amoses’ back door. Now Bud “starts getting madder and madder . . . at the Amoses . . . but most of all at himself for believing there really was a vampire in the shed and for getting trapped like this where there wasn’t anybody who cared what happened to him.” Now he is thinking about getting revenge, even to how he might shoot the gun the Amoses have in their kitchen. The only thought he has now is, “Aha, you doggone Amoses, that hurt, but now I get my revenge!”
Notes
This chapter is an example of abuse at its most cruel. The Amoses have definitely done the same thing to other boys that they are doing to Bud. Telling him about the blood stain and the vampire bat terrifies Bud and they have to have known that the hornet’s nest could have been dangerous to him. This family is totally the opposite of what they think of themselves. They call him a beastly little brute, but they are actually describing themselves.

CHAPTER 4
Summary
Bud finds that the Amoses hadn’t locked the kitchen window. He finds his suitcase still under the kitchen table and puts it on the screened porch in case he has to make a quick getaway. He also puts the gun on the porch, because he fears that they might use it on him, if they wake up and find him, and then tell the Home it was an accident.

However, Bud can’t leave without exacting his revenge. Bud doesn’t blame Todd all the way, because he understands that Todd must feel threatened by having other boys come into his home. Nonetheless, torturing those boys is just wrong, and Bud wants to make them safe from Todd, should any other boys be brought there to live. He remembers how he had been made to sleep on a hot, uncomfortable rubber liner on his bed, because Mrs. Amos figured he’d wet the bed during the night. So, he finds a jelly jar that he had been given to drink water from and fills it with hot water from the spigot (he is amazed that they have warm running water in their home). Then, he takes the glass of hot water to Todd’s room where the bully sleeps peacefully. Bud had been told by one of the older boys at the Home that if you put a sleeping person’s hand into a glass of hot water, it will open up a valve in his guts and . . . woop, zoop, sloop . . . he wets his bed. Unfortunately, Todd’s hand is too big for the jelly jar, so Bud just pours the water over his pajama bottoms, and it works! Todd wets his bed! When his mother sees this, it will affect her impression of her son and maybe force Todd to leave other boys alone.

Bud tiptoes away with his favorite saying on his mind, “He who laughs last, laughs best.” Then, he picks up his suitcase and walks into the street. He is on the lam and if J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI see him, he’ll be in some real serious hot water!

Notes
This short chapter is one of the most delightful of the novel. Bud makes his escape, but not before leaving a message behind that might help others who come along after him. Maybe the Amoses will treat them more fairly now that they know their son is just as bad as they judged other boys who came into their home.

CHAPTER 5
Summary
Bud begins this chapter by declaring, “Being on the lam was a whole lot of fun . . . for about five minutes.” After all, he knows that at the age of ten, he is in for a lot of trouble walking the streets alone, let alone bleeding from sting spots and the bite on his hand from a dried fish head. His immediate plan, then, is to walk to the north side library. He feels that Miss Hill will be able to help him, to understand what happened and tell him what to do. He also thinks he can sleep in the library basement by sneaking in through a basement window. He is frightened of the cops catching him, because it is much too late for him to be up and he’s sneaking around like Pretty Boy Floyd.

When Bud arrives at the library, he stays to the dark side of the building with the giant Christmas trees. Unfortunately, the windows have all had bars added to them. So Bud is forced to use the blanket he carries with him in his suitcase and curl up under the Christmas trees for the night. Before he does, he opens his suitcase to inspect the contents. He can tell right away that the Amoses had been fumbling through his things, because the blanket wasn’t carefully folded on top to keep the other items from mashing up against each other. He could
tell, however, after looking at each item that they had not stolen anything. They were mean old nosy folks, but they weren’t thieves. He is especially glad to see that they hadn’t hurt his only picture of his mother. He reminisces about the picture as his mother explained it to him. It always agitated her to look at it and her facial expression in the picture is agitated as well. She had told Bud that her father had insisted on having her picture taken astride a miniature horse wearing an oversized, ten-gallon cowboy hat. His mother had been angry because the horse was mistreated by its owner, the photographer, and the hat was filthy. She could never understand why her father had insisted she pose for the picture when she didn’t want to. He had ruined her day and everyone else in the family as well. She always reacted to it the same way and Bud had always responded to her story in the same way. It was a conversation they had had many times always with her grabbing his arms and squeezing them to make her point. It was one of the few times his mother, with her usual tornado movement around the house, would actually slow down a bit.

Bud’s mother had four favorite things she would always tell him. One was the story of the picture. Two concerned his name: she told him to never allow anyone to call him Buddy, because she had intended him to be called Bud, like a flower-in-waiting for the just the right warmth and care to open up and be seen by the world. Third, she told him that when he became a young man, she had a lot of things to tell him. That worried him a little, because it made him think of Rule #83: “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.” Also, this favorite saying of his mother would now never come true, because she had died before he became a young man. The last word of advice she had repeated to him was to remember that no matter how bad things looked to him, when one door closes, another opens. To Bud, however, his mother was wrong in some ways. He thinks she should have told him all the things she held back until he became a man, because now it is too late. Also, telling him about the doors just frightened him, and it’s only now that he’s seeing the truth of the saying.

Now Bud curls up and falls asleep knowing he has to be up early to get to the mission on time for breakfast, because if he is one minute late, they won’t let him in for the food.

Notes
This chapter reinforces what the reader is beginning to realize: Bud Caldwell is a fairly self-sufficient young man who seems to understand, if only semi-consciously, what he must do to survive. The rules he has set up in his imaginary book help him cope with situations that may be more than a normal ten year old could handle. His memories of his mother are also part of his psyche and even though she never told him many of the things she promised, she did leave him with ideas that now are coming to bear on his survival skills.

CHAPTER 6
Summary
Bud sleeps a little late and must run with his suitcase to the mission. When he arrives, he sees that there are people still waiting in line and he rushes to the end of it. Unfortunately, the line stretches for two blocks and has been cut off with the people just in front of Bud. He tries to reason with the man who has cut off the line, but the guy is unwilling to listen to him. He tells the boy that all the other people in line had arrived early to get breakfast and so it wasn’t fair that Bud could take advantage of sleeping in. Furthermore, he emphasizes that the rest of the people in line are just as thin and hungry as Bud. Then, he slaps his hand with a strap to show Bud that he’s willing to beat him to get him to go away.

Bud is just turning to go, unwilling to be beaten and still be hungry afterward, when a big hand comes down on his neck. Fearing that the man is going to strap him anyway, Bud tries to escape. However, the new fist belongs to a strange man, who calls him Clarence. When he still struggles, the man and then his wife both slap Bud and continue to call him Clarence, punishing him for being late as if he belongs to them. Bud finally realizes that this family is pretending he is their son, so he can get some breakfast. He quiets down then and stands in line with them, even though he figures they could have chosen a better name than Clarence. He gets a bowl of oatmeal, an apple, and some milk on a tray from a very kind lady, and he reads all the signs that ask him to be
quiet and clean and not ask for a job. He also eats quietly with his pretend family. The mother brings out some brown sugar and asks her real children to share with Bud. They don’t look too happy about it, but they don’t complain and Bud enjoys his first sugar in a long time. The family walks away after breakfast with his pretend mother warning him to be early the next morning and her son sticking out his tongue at Bud. Bud isn’t hurt by the son’s mean goodbye, because he figures he’s be angry, too if he had to share his brown sugar with strangers.

**Notes**

Bud’s breakfast experience gives the reader the opportunity to see that people are both mean and kind during this time when everyone is suffering because of the Depression. The man who controls the line lacks basic compassion if he’s willing to turn away just one child while the pretend family takes the chance of being turned away themselves by including him in their group. Their kindness comes out of nowhere and continues with their willingness to share their sugar supply. They are part of a population who understands that basic kindness can make all the difference in a time of struggle.

**CHAPTER 7**

**Summary**

After his breakfast, Bud heads for the library. It is obvious that he is a regular visitor, because as soon as he walks in the door, he recognizes the special smells of a library. No other place smells quite the same to Bud. He closes his eyes and gets a whiff of leather, the cloth that covers the books, and the special smell of the paper, which he calls a soft, powdery, drowsy smell. This smell he feels is hypnotizing and can make people reading at the various tables fall asleep and drool into the books. Their faces fall completely down... whoop, zoop, sloop... and they’re out cold with their faces smack-dab on the book. He says this is what makes the librarians angry, even more than laughing out loud in the library, because it ruins what is so important to them, books.

Bud leaves his suitcase at the desk and goes in search of Miss Hill. Unfortunately, he doesn’t find her, and when he asks the librarian at the desk where Miss Hill is, the answer begins with, “My goodness, haven’t you heard?” Immediately, Bud is reminded of Rule Number 16: “If a grownup ever starts a sentence by saying, ‘Haven’t you heard,” get ready, because what’s about to come out of their mouth is gonna drop you headfirst into a boiling tragedy.” It will be like your grandmother getting her whole body pulled through a wringer on a washing machine or something like hearing that a horse slipped on the ice and landed on some kid you go to school with. Humorously, the answer is nowhere near as tragic as Bud expects. Miss Hill has just gotten married and moved to Chicago. When Bud asks how long it will take to walk there, like a typical librarian, the lady pulls out three different books to tell Bud that it will take 54 hours to walk to Chicago. To Bud, Miss Hill might now be a million miles away from Flint, a squashed, crunched up mess in a washing machine when it comes to helping him.

Bud sits down at a table to think about his next step. Going back to the Home is out, because he knows that the place is more and more crowded with orphans, many of whom are just sick, little babies. The overworked caseworkers and staffers don’t even give out their names or call the children by their own, because they are no quickly moved in and out. So, he picks up his suitcase and walks outside into the regular air and stinking smells of Flint. The closing of the library door is exactly the kind of door his mother had told him about. He know that another is about to open. Then, Bud returns to the Christmas trees and curls up with his blanket, falling fast asleep.

**Notes**

Not finding Miss Hill places Bud once again in a situation where he must begin to think about finding the next door and reaching deep within himself to find a way to survive. He uses wonderful imagery and symbolism to describe his experience which in turn tells the reader what an imaginative, intelligent boy Bud is. He is filled with hope and determination even though he is in a situation where most adults would fail to survive.
CHAPTER 8
Summary
Bud is still asleep under the Christmas trees at the library when he hears the sound of someone stepping on a stick. Someone is sneaking up on him. Bud thinks that he can feel two eyes staring real hard at him, and he knows they’re not critter eyes. They’re the kind of eyes that can make the hair on the back of his neck raise up the way only “human bean eyes” can do. He pulls his jack knife out carefully with the intention of pulling the blanket back and stabbing whoever is above him. Suddenly, the intruder jumps on top of him, but Bud is able to begin pulling his arm back to stab him. Only the voice saying, “If you ain’t a kid called Bud from the Home I’m really sorry about jumping on you like this.” Bud knows it’s Bugs. Bugs explains that everyone at the Home knew about Bud’s knife and how well he could use it, so he jumped on him to make sure he could stop the knife until he could identify himself. Bud also realizes then that Bugs is on the lam as well. Bugs explains that he’s going back to riding the rails, and when the Home heard that Bud had beaten up the son of his foster family, he figured his friend would be somewhere near the library and came looking for him to go along. Bugs answers all of Bud’s many questions about riding the rails, and then, they each spit on their hands and rub their palms together to seal the deal as brothers. Then, they go to the mission to get information about the running of the trains.

The two boys find out that they’ll have to go to a city called Hooperville, outside of Flint. Unfortunately, no one knows exactly where it is. It takes them until after midnight to find the right trail through the woods. They eventually can hear the sound of a mouth organ and smell food cooking. However, they are surprised that the town of Hooperville is no more than a “cardboard jungle,” a collection of huts and shacks thrown together from pieces of boxes, wood, and cloth. There are at least 100 people milling about, with one man stirring clothes in a large pot while another hangs them on a line while three other pots hold some kind of food. There is a family of white people sitting around their own small fire with a baby who is obviously ill.

The two boys flip a coin (a contest Bugs rigs against the less aware Bud) to determine who will ask for help. Bud loses and steps forward to ask where the city of Hooperville is. The man playing the mouth organ advises him that it’s not Hooperville, but Hooverville after the former President of the United States, and that there are hundreds of them all over the country. When Bud asks if he is in the right one, the man asks him three questions: Is he hungry? Is he tired? and Is he scared? When Bud answers all three with a yes, the man tells him this is exactly the one he is looking for. He goes on to explain that it doesn’t matter where he rides the rails, there’s always a Hooverville at the next stop. People all over the country are in the same fix as all the people there and need to band together for food and help. He offers Bud and Bugs food, but they have to do KP afterwards. A woman hands them their “china” – flat, square tin cans – which they fill with muskrat stew twice! The woman even offers to keep watch over Bud’s suitcase while they wash up all the cooking utensils and the “dishes.” The two boys are led to the river by a young girl who has lived there a long time and knows the ropes about KP. She says her name is Deza Malone and she is full of questions and a romantic interest in Bud. She is obviously a child who has learned from her time on the road and passes on her comments to Bud as a way to help him learn what he will face. Then, she leaves him with his first kiss – he scooches his lips up and mashes his face on Deza’s and stays there for what is not more than a second, but feels like a long time. She smiles and takes his hand and leads him back to the camp. On the way there, they hear the mouth organ playing “Shenandoah.” She recites the lyrics, and he agrees with her that it’s a sad song, one that reminds her of her parents. She tells him she’ll never forget this night, and he’s sure he never will either. When Bugs sees Bud, he asks what’s happened, because the younger boy looks like he’s been chunked in the head with a rock. Bud can only say that the song is making him sad.

Bud asks Deza about the white family who have their own fire and sit off by themselves. She says they’ve been invited to join the big fire and have been offered clothes, food and blankets, but they won’t accept anything. Their answer is that they’re “white people and they won’t take handouts.” The man with the mouth organ tells the boys that if they’re heading out on the west-bound train for Chicago, they’ll need to get up by 5:15. They find a shack filled with boys and bed down there. Bugs falls asleep immediately, but Bud has a harder time of it.
He can’t help but think about heading west when it’s more likely that any family he might still have would be around Flint. He takes out his blanket and checks all his belongings to make sure they’re still there. He opens the tobacco pouch which holds the stones he found in a drawer after the ambulance took his mother away. Someone had taken a pen and had written on all of them in some sort of code he couldn’t understand. One says, “Kentland ill. 5.10.11.” Another says, “loogootee in. 5.16.11,” and the last says, “flint m. 8.11.11.” He doesn’t know what they mean, but he’s unwilling to leave them behind. He double-checks all his treasures and once he’s satisfied that everything is still there, he uses a trick that has helped him fall asleep before: he pulls his blanket over his head and breathes in very deeply the smells of the blanket, the smells that reminded him of his momma and how she used to read to him every night. His last thoughts are about pretending to be asleep so his momma wouldn’t tell him the end of the story, about a man with a giant fiddle and how he just keeps walking away because he can’t turn back, and about Deza Malone who smiles and says, “See you in seven years.”

Suddenly, Bud is awakened with a man’s screams telling them all to get awake, because “they’re” (the authorities) trying to sneak the train out early. Bugs tells Bud to hurry, because they have to get on that train. Bud puts everything in his suitcase and ties it shut only to have another boy hand him the blue flyer which he had forgotten to put away. It seems like there’s a million men and boys running as fast as they can, so Bud decides to wait until they hop the train and then return the blue flyer to the case. He just tucks it between the rope and the case itself. They break out of the woods where he sees the steam coming off the engine and what looks like a million cars behind it. Nonetheless, none of the men or boys is trying to jump on the train. When Bud pushes his way to the front of the crowd, he sees four cop cars and eight cops standing between the crowd and the train. One of the cops yells at them that they can’t get on this train and to go back to their Shantytown. He also warns them that the Flint police are on their way and will shoot anyone who tries to hop the train. One man says he’d rather be shot than sit around and watch his kids go hungry. They all need to head west to try to find some kind of work. The poor men trying to ride west are enough of a threat that the cops, one by one, begin to throw down their billy clubs just as the big engine begins its shushush sound of movement. A million men and boys break for the train. Bud gets pushed to the side and is nearly trampled until someone reaches down and pulls him up and helps him keep running. Bugs gets on first and yells to Bud to throw him his case. Bud uses both hands to throw it up there, but the blue flyer escapes the rope ties and blows, miraculously, right back at Bud. It makes Bud slow down, fold it, and put it in his pocket. Meanwhile, Bugs screams for him not to slow down. But it’s too late. So Bugs picks up Bud’s suitcase and throws it back out at him. Bud props himself down by the tracks and watches the train chugging on to Chicago. He has just found some family in Bugs and now he’s lost it again. Six or seven other people also miss the train, and the police who are still there warn them that the big fire they see in the distance is really the Flint police burning down Hooverville.

When Bud reaches the camp, he and the others who missed the train spread out in the woods and watch from behind trees as the cops destroy the makeshift town. Bud sits down a distance away and looks again at the blue flyer. He thinks it is perhaps then when he truly comes to believe that Herman Calloway is really his father. For the first time, he sees the similarity between his name and the musician’s name. Then, he reminds himself that he’s on the lam and heads for the mission for breakfast.

Notes
This unusually long chapter relates in many ways how destiny might be a real force in human lives. Bugs just happens to remember how much Bud liked the library and when he heard the younger boy was on the lam, he went there looking for him. Bud thinks Bugs is his new family, but Deza’s explanation of family and Bud’s inability to hop the train make him think his family might still be in Flint. Going to the mission leads them to Hooverville which in turn leads them to Deza Malone, who gives Bud many answers to his questions about life. Out of character, Bud forgets to place the blue flyer back in his case and that’s what keeps him from hopping the train. The stones and their strange code seem obvious to the reader as places where Bud’s mother may have been with his father. The police burn down Hooverville, which forces Bud to head back to Flint. He finally sees how similar his name is to that of Herman Calloway, the musician on the blue flyer. It seems at this point that Bud is made to stay at least for while in the city where he’s lived all his life.
CHAPTER 9
Summary
Bud makes it to the mission in plenty of time, but his pretend family is not there. So, he has to eat his oatmeal without the brown sugar they had shared with him. When he finishes his breakfast, he heads once again for the library, hiding his suitcase under one of the Christmas trees. Inside, the same librarian is manning the desk, and so he asks her for a piece of paper, a pencil, and one of the books she had shown him showing how far one city is from another. She strikes up a conversation about him and his mother whom she remembers coming to the library together. She even remembers that his momma liked fairy tales and mysteries, but he had liked books on the Civil War. Then, she gives him the book he requested and tells him that when he returns it, she has a surprise for him. Bud doesn’t get too excited by this, because he knows what librarians think of as surprises! At a table, he begins to leaf through the book until he finds information that tells him Flint is 120 miles from Grand Rapids and that it will take 24 hours to walk it. He writes down all the names of the towns in between and then takes the book back. The librarian gives Bud a huge book on the Civil War and tells him, “Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy!” Bud doesn’t want to tell her that he isn’t interested in history, but only in the gory pictures taken after Civil War battles. This is a great book, because there are lots of gory pictures!

Bud then remarks to himself that time is a strange thing in a library. One minute you open the first page of the book and the next minute it’s closing time. The librarian tells him it’s time to go, but hands him a lunch in a paper sack as he leaves, because she knows he hasn’t eaten all day. What’s more, he knows he won’t make it to the mission on time, so the librarian’s gift is more than welcome. He returns to the Christmas tree thinking that this time tomorrow he will see his father. He eats the sandwich and before he heads out for Grand Rapids.

Bud then begins to think about how ideas begin like seeds: when you first look at seed, you can’t imagine that it will ever be a tree so high you get a “crick” in your neck trying to see the top. This is also true when he thinks of how the idea that Herman Calloway is his father first poked its head out of the dirt when he and the other boys at the Home were getting their nightly teasing from the biggest bully there, Billy Burns. Like all the other boys, Billy said his momma was coming any time to get him out. This led to his assertion that none of them even knew who their parents were. That’s when Bud spoke up without thinking and said that his father played a giant fiddle and was named Herman Calloway. That idea continued to grow when he’d sit alone at night and ask himself why his momma had kept the flyers. As he grew older, he began to think that she might have known she wasn’t going to be around very long and was trying to leave him a message with the flyers. Now the idea is so big and so strong that he’s willing to walk across the state of Michigan. He takes out each of the flyers and repeats the names of the band. The picture is always the same, but the band’s name changes on each flyer. He looks at them carefully once more, replaces them in his suitcase, and heads west, just like Bugs!

Notes
There are some wonderful thoughts that come from Bud in this chapter: the basic kindness of the librarian, his determination to walk for 24 hours to reach Grand Rapids, and his comparison of his belief that his father is Herman Calloway to the growth of a giant tree from a bitty seed.

CHAPTER 10
Summary
Bud is amazed at how Flint just suddenly ends and the country begins. He even spends a few moments jumping back and forth across the imaginary line that marks the city’s boundary. It doesn’t take him too long after that to realize that 120 miles is a lot farther than he thought. Furthermore, it’s just too scary out there. He can hear the sounds of mouse bones and bug skeletons being “busted up” by the teeth of bigger things. Then come the yowls and howls of cats which make the hair on his neck stand on end. Nonetheless, Bud keeps on walking. Eventually, he stops jumping into the bushes when a car goes by and that gets him into just a little trouble.

He has gone through three small towns when a car bounces up over the hill, its headlights momentarily blinding him. He decides he better jump into the shrubs along the road. The guy in the car puts on the brakes, puts it into
reverse, and stops about thirty giant steps away from Bud. He steps out of the car, putting on a hat that makes Bud think he’s a soldier. He comes to that conclusion, because the man is black, and black men are never cops. The man stops, looks around and lets out a huge whistle. Even the animals in the bushes stop moving and eating. The man then begins to talk in such a way as to get Bud to come out. He tells the boy that he needs to come out, because neither one of them should be out at that time of the night. Bud stays silent, the only sound now being the “wugga, wugga, wugga,” of the car the man had not shut off. He finally gets Bud to come out through bribery: he has a baloney sandwich with mustard, an apple, and some real red pop. He knows Bud hasn’t eaten for awhile. Bud finally comes out, but the man withholds the food until they do some talking.

The man tells Bud that he has a problem and needs Bud’s help to figure it out. That’s when Rule Number 87 pops into Bud’s head: “When an adult tells you they need your help with a problem, get ready to be tricked – most times this means they just want you to go fetch something for them.” The man tells Bud that he feels very uncomfortable standing alongside the road at that time of night and he needs Bud to put his mind at ease. He finally gets Bud to tell him where he’s from; but of course, Bud must lie, and he tells the man he’s from Grand Rapids, and that he had run away. He tells Bud that he’s from Grand Rapids, too, and he just left there not an hour and a half ago. Then, the man starts walking Bud toward the idling car. Bud stops and insists that he fetch his suitcase. The man says he knew he was carrying something when he first saw him and he reminds Bud that he’s lucky he came along because of how the people of Owosso feel about Negroes. However, he doesn’t trust Bud enough to let go of him while the boy picks up his suitcase. Then, he leads Bud to the passenger side of the car. When Bud climbs in, the man puts a box marked “Urgent: Contains Human Blood!” from the front seat to the back. When Bud sees this on the box, he panics and comes to believe that the man is a vampire! The man tells him he’ll send a telegram from Grand Rapids to Bud’s parents the next day.

Then, the man makes his first mistake – he lets go of Bud’s arm. Bud slides into the car and as the man closes the door behind him, Bud locks it. Then, quick as he can, he slides across the seat and locks the driver’s side door. He pulls out his knife just in case, puts the gearshift into drive, stretches his leg as far as he can to reach the gas pedal, and takes off in the man’s car. Bud thinks to himself as he drives away, “Wow! If I keep things like this up I will knock Baby Face Nelson off the FBI’s ten most wanted list!”

Notes
This chapter is full of humor even though Bud would no doubt find it not funny at all. However, the humor lies in a little boy, who thinks funny is jumping back and forth across and imaginary boundary line, getting the best of grown man all because of a baloney sandwich, some red pop, and fear of vampires. In the end, what excites him the most is that his actions may bump Baby Face Nelson off the FBI’s most wanted list! What pleases him most is that he doesn’t have to walk all the way to Grand Rapids!

CHAPTER 11
Summary
Unfortunately for Bud’s plans to escape, the car floods out and stops. When the man catches up to him, he makes Bud, who is a victim of his well disciplined upbringing, wind down the window just enough to talk, but not get in. They quickly get into a conversation about whether the man is a vampire. Bud is finally convinced when he sees the man’s teeth – he has no fangs. Also, he explains that the blood is being delivered to Hurley Hospital for someone’s operation. Bud opens the door and slides into the passenger seat. The man declares that he’ll take the picture in his mind of Bud taking off with his car to his grave. He even insists that he’ll wake up in a terrible sweat whenever he dreams about it.

They head back to Flint with the man asking a whole slew of questions. He gets Bud to say that his mother is dead and that his father is Herman E. Calloway. The man shouts in recognition of the name, because everyone in Grand Rapids knows Mr. Calloway and even comes to think that Bud looks like him. Eventually the man tells Bud that his name is Lefty Lewis, but that Bud must call him Mr. Lewis. He teases the boy by saying he
has a peanut head and that he has so much backwash in the bottle of red pop that it looks like red stew. Finally, he gets Bud to climb into the back seat and fall asleep.

Bud sleeps so deeply that he has a hard time waking up when a woman shakes him the next morning. He pretends to still be asleep so he can learn more about where he is. He remembers Rule Number 29: “When you wake up and don’t know for sure where you’re at and there’s a bunch of people standing around you, it’s best to pretend you’re still asleep until you can figure out what’s going on and what you should do.” So, Bud learns that he is in the home of Mr. Lewis’ daughter and that they think he’s much too thin. Her father tells her that Bud’s father is Herman Calloway, but in spite of the man’s fame, Mr. Lewis’ daughter wonders what kind of father he can be when Bud is in such poor condition. He also learns that Mr. Calloway had been married before, but that Mr. Lewis believes he’s just a no-nonsense kind of man, not a mean one.

When Mr. Lewis’ daughter shakes him once more and mentions food, Bud slowly comes alive. He soon realizes that teasing is the way the Lewis family shows their love. He learns that the daughter’s name is Mrs. Sleet, and her children are Scott and Kim. She sends him to wash up and gives him some of Scott’s clothes that no longer fit. Bud is excited, because he is wearing his first pair of long pants! At breakfast, the two children tease Bud as well, with Kim making him a deal that she’ll sing him a song, if he will answer any one question she asks him. Her song is silly and not at all pretty, but he willingness answers her question, because lying is different with kids than adults. She wants to know all the details of his mother’s death. Her brother kicks her for asking such a question, but Bud tells her everything she wants to know. He emphasizes that some people die long, horrible deaths, but that his momma died so quickly and painlessly that she didn’t even have time to close her eyes.

Then, Mrs. Sleet came in from the kitchen with the sausages, something Bud has never had, and they all sit down to breakfast. They say grace and begin passing the food. Bud watches carefully so he doesn’t take more than the others, and he’s really surprised when they talk all through the meal. At the Home, they were expected to stay quiet while they ate, so Bud is unfamiliar with so much conversation. During the meal, there is more teasing, and Bud learns that Mrs. Sleet’s husband is a redcap, or a Pullman porter, with the railroad company. He takes care of people once they’re on the train. By the end of the meal, Mr. Lewis has teased his daughter so much about her cooking that even though she laughs along with everyone else, when she goes into the kitchen, she brings back a wooden spoon and whops him a good lick on the head.

Notes
This chapter is a wonderful interlude for Bud whose has known little comfort in the last four years. They take under their wings and provide him with a place to sleep, new clothes to wear, and a good meal in the company of good people. It is an amazing experience for him.

CHAPTER 12
Summary
After breakfast, Bud leaves with Mr. Lewis for Grand Rapids. The first thing he notices when he gets in the car is that someone stole all the blood from the back seat. Mr. Lewis is amazed that Bud doesn’t remember anything after he fell asleep the night before. In the time before they arrived at the Sleet home, Lefty had delivered the blood to the hospital, gassed up, and got in touch with Herman Calloway. When Bud asks what his father had to say, Mr. Lewis tells him that he had sent a telegram from Western Union. When Bud reads the telegram, he can’t understand it at all, so Mr. Lewis explains how the words work and the meaning of the word stop.

Just as they drive past the sign that marks the boundary of Flint, a police siren sounds behind them. Lefty has Bud place the white box he had brought with him under his seat. Then, he tells him to listen very carefully and do what he says. This immediately makes Bud wonder if a man by the name of Lefty isn’t also on the lam. No mother would name her son Lefty so it must be an alias. Besides, Rule Number 8 says, “Whenever an adult tells you to listen carefully and talks to you in a real calm voice, do not listen. Run as fast as you can because
something real terrible is just around the corner, especially of the cops are chasing you.” Lefty reminds him to stay put and not to say anything. Then, the older man gets out of the car and goes back to speak to the policeman. Bud keeps telling himself to jump out of the car and run for it on the count of ten. While he counts to ten three or four times, Mr. Lewis opens and shuts the trunk of the car, making Bud think a gun has gone off. Then, he hears the cop tell Mr. Lewis that he’s free to go and that he only stopped him, because they are watching for labor organizers sneaking in from Detroit. He then leaves them with a tip of his hat.

When Mr. Lewis returns to the car, he reminds Bud that he’s mighty lucky. He’s been saved from vampires, survived Mrs. Sleet’s pancakes, and avoided labor organizers! Lefty then explains what labor organizers and unions are, but Bud doesn’t understand why the cops are after them. So, Mr. Lewis offers to allow Bud to open the white box under his seat. Of course, he can’t just let the boy open the lid without teasing him by scaring him. Bud just wants to take a nap, but Mr. Lewis insists that he open the box. He also makes the boy promise to keep his lips locked about it. When Bud finally gets the lid open, all he sees inside are some papers with writing on them. It’s dangerous paper, because it announces a meeting of the Brotherhood of the Pullman Porters. Lefty laughs when Bud realizes that this is labor organizing and asks if the older man is an organizer himself. He explains that no one in Grand Rapids will print these flyers and so he takes them to someone in Flint. He further explains that the trouble the policeman had been talking about concerned sit-down strikes and that factory owners were really scared of them. They must believe, says Mr. Lewis, that if a worker has any dignity or pride, he can’t be doing a good job.

Bud falls asleep again in the car, and when he awakens, they have arrived at The Log Cabin, the club where his “father,” Herman Calloway is working. This time the sign announces that the band is called “Herman E. Calloway and the Nubian Knights of the New Deal.” He mentions that Mr. Calloway has a beautiful Packard, and Bud agrees just as if he knew that all along. Then, he knows that he must separate himself from Mr. Lewis before he goes inside the club. So, he convinces the older man that he needs to explain why he ran away to his father all by himself. Mr. Lewis doesn’t want to leave him there, but finally gives in by telling him he’ll hold his suitcase and give him five minutes to talk to his father alone. Bud then goes through the door of the club and is gratified to see there are inner doors which he can enter, and Mr. Lewis won’t be able to see him. He goes through them, thinking of his momma’s theory of God closing one door only to open another. Then, after five minutes, he goes back out and convinces Lefty that he has spoken to Mr. Calloway. He retrieves his suitcase and bids the kind man, who had helped so willingly, goodbye.

Bud then goes back inside the club where he sees six men sitting in a circle on a little stage at the other end of the room. The guy who he thinks is his father is sitting with his back to Bud, but he is talking just like Bud, and the boy believes he has finally found him. The man is talking about how he boxed an older guy who he thought would be easy to put down. Instead, the guy hit him with such force that his mouthpiece flew all the way into the fourth row of seats. Then, he says the words that really cement Bud’s belief that he is his father: “There comes a time when you’re doing something and you realize that it just doesn’t make any sense to keep on doing it . . .” words that he had told himself when he was fighting Todd Amos.

At this point, the old guy cleaning his horn sees Bud and asks him if Miss Thomas sent him. Bud tells him no. When Mr. Calloway turns around to see who’s speaking, Bud is amazed that his face is old. When he asks Bud what he’s doing there, Bud tells him he has come all the way from Flint to see his daddy for the first time. Then, he points at Mr. Calloway and says, “You know it’s you.” The man quits smiling and looks at him a lot harder. Bud just repeats that he knows it’s him.

Notes
This chapter is a reinforcement of the idea that when God closes one door, he always opens another. Bud has closed the door offered him by Lefty Lewis and now is finally entering the door where he thinks he has found his father.
CHAPTER 13

Summary
The reaction to Bud’s comment is a circle of men sitting very quietly, saying nothing. The younger ones look like they want to laugh but are afraid of the guy named Jimmy and Mr. Calloway. Those two look at Bud like they’re getting ready to give him some bad news or deciding which hand to smack him with. Then Jim begins to talk. He asks Bud if his name is Bud, and when Bud excitedly answers yes, Jimmy reminds Herman of the crazy telegram he had received that morning. Herman then begins to question Bud: he asks him about his mother, whether he has any family, and whether he has been living in an orphanage. Bud answers with the truth, but he talks so fast that the men ask him to wait by a door by the stage, and then they talk quietly to each other. Bud hears Herman tell Jimmy he’ll go along with his plan, but it’s “his little red wagon, and he can pull it if he wants.” Jimmy then tells Bud that they’re going to feed him at a restaurant called The Sweet Pea, and that once his belly’s full, he’ll have some explaining to do. Bud agrees, but he feels bad that Herman E. Calloway seems like he’s going to be hard to get along with.

Jimmy then introduces himself and all the members of the band who have funny names like “Steady Eddie Patrick.” Jimmy and Herman leave to go to the restaurant while the rest of the band and Bud load up all the instruments and follow them. While they are loading up the cases, Bud learns that the band is full of teasers just like Lefty Lewis. They try to get Bud to be willing to kiss Mr. Calloway on his shiny, bald head, but Bud is wise to their tricks. One of the guys tells him not to call Herman daddy or poppa, and before he thinks what he’s saying, Bud blurts out, “Isn’t just my luck to come clean across the state to find my daddy and he turns out to be a mean, old coot?” He immediately slaps his hands across his mouth and is reminded of Rule Number 63: “Never, ever say something bad about someone you don’t know – especially when you’re around a bunch of strangers. You never can tell who might be kin to that person or who might be a lip-flapping, big-mouth spy.” Of course, that comment leads to even more teasing.

They finally get in the car and head out for the restaurant. On the way, one of the band members asks Bud if his momma was as old as sand when he was born. Bud says yes, she was old, but her eyes hadn’t gone bad. She was twenty when he was born and twenty-six when she died. That news killed the conversation quickly. However, one of the guys makes the observation that things are hard all over. Another band member observes that Bud had taken a lot of teasing and hadn’t cried. Bud replied that it seemed like his eyes just don’t cry any more. The band member then comments that Bud is just all right, and he rubs his head.

Notes
This short chapter shows how Bud has the ability to be accepted wherever he goes. The band members are aware of the hardships he has suffered and admire him for facing them with courage.

CHAPTER 14

Summary
The restaurant is someone’s living room with ten card tables and folding chairs. Bud can tell right away why people are lined up to eat there. The smells make him think that someone took one big pot and threw in apple cider, coffee, sweet potato pies, meat loaf, and mashed potatoes. He thinks this must be the way heaven smells.

Herman C. Calloway is sitting at a table with Jimmy and a woman. An empty table beside him is marked RESERVED NBC. The NBC means “Nobody But Calloway,” because he changes the name of the band so much. Bud is steered toward the open seat at Mr. Calloway’s table. He’d rather sit with the band, because Herman is so mean, but he’s unable to move there. Mr. Jimmy introduces Bud to Miss Thomas whom he calls a vocal stylist. When she sees that Bud doesn’t understand this, she says she is the singer in the band and shakes his hand. Bud is overwhelmed by that hand, because it seems as if she has nine diamond rings on that one hand! She’s pleased at what a gentleman he is, but is concerned with all the marks on his body. When she questions where they came from, Bud tells her all about the Home and the Amos family. He emphasizes that when fighting Todd, he had the good sense to know when enough is enough. He hopes Mr. Calloway hears how his
own words have been repeated. However, Mr. Calloway says that it sounds like “a case of diarrhea of the mouth and constipation of the brain.” Miss Thomas just glares at him. Bud then insists that Mr. Calloway is his father and points at him. Miss Thomas admonishes him about pointing, and Bud apologizes to both her and Mr. Calloway. Herman gets up and makes one of the band members move to his place, while he decides to eat with the band.

Miss Thomas orders supper for Bud: meat loaf, mashed potatoes, okra, and apple cider. After he eats every single bite, she gives him a piece of sweet potato pie with whipped cream. While he eats, she talks to him about why he thinks Mr. Calloway is his father. He tries to tell her and is about to open his case, when the waitress returns. Miss Thomas tells him that they’ll talk again tomorrow which makes Bud happy that they’re not immediately going to send him back to Flint. Then, Bud breaks into a big smile, because he hadn’t noticed before just how beautiful Miss Thomas is. When she talks, she moves her hands around, and the rings reflect the ceiling lights. The light bounces off Bud’s eyes, and it reminds him of fairy dust. She also hums when she’s not talking, but hum isn’t the right word for what she does. Instead, it reminds Bud of the feeling you get when you walk barefoot on the train tracks, and you can feel a train coming from far off. Now, he understands why Mr. Jimmy didn’t call her a singer. It just isn’t a big enough word to describe the music that jumps out of Miss Thomas’ chest.

What makes the meal even better is how funny all the guys are, so funny that people at other tables end their own conversations to listen to them. Unfortunately, the table where Herman sits is quiet, because Mr. Calloway could make it so you just want to sit and watch your hands with a sad look on you face! However, Bud isn’t sure just when it happens, but he discovers that of all the places he might want to live this is the one where he’s supposed to be. He even tells himself that Herman Calloway can “kiss his wrist” if he thinks he’s going to scare him out of this.

Bud is smiling and laughing so hard he thinks he’s going to bust a gut. Then, all of a sudden, for the first time in a very long time, the tears begin jumping out of his eyes, and he has to cover his face with a big red and white napkin. He’s so embarrassed, but he can’t stop them now that they’ve started. Eventually, he lays his head on his arms and sobs. This prompts Miss Thomas to gather him up in arms and hold him close, speaking in a language that Bud doesn’t have any trouble understanding, saying: “Go ahead and cry, Bud, you’re home.”

Notes
This wonderful restaurant seems to welcome Bud into a family, something he has never known. He is among happy, loving people, and it triggers tears that have been held in for a very long time. He may be ten years old and he may have been forced to be a survivor all on his own. But he also has needed a mother, someone to let him cry and tell him all will be well.

CHAPTER 15
Summary
Bud has arrived with Miss Thomas at the “Grand Calloway Station,” Mr. Calloway’s home to which he had given this nickname, because so many people were in and out all the time just like Grand Central Station in New York. She takes him right to his room, because it is late, and everyone is tired. The room has a bed, a window with curtains, and a little table which looks like one that Bud has seen women sit at when they put on their lipstick. The table sits in a space between two little doors. Miss Thomas doesn’t think he should use the closet, because Mr. Calloway has lots of old things in there. She tells him just to put his suitcase on the table and asks him if he’ll be alright. However, Bud has one important question: “Are those doors locked?” He doesn’t want her to think that he’s just a big baby, but the doors make him nervous. Miss Thomas tells him that behind the doors are nothing more than a girl’s clothes and some toys. Bud is worried that she might not like him in her room, but Miss Thomas tells him that the girl is gone. That prompts two more rules to pop into Bud’s head: Rule Number 547 (or something) which said, “Don’t worry;” and Rule Number 28 which says, “Gone = dead!” That means he’s going to have to spend the night in a dead girl’s room, and there’s bound to be monsters
in the closet or even in a drawer. Then, Miss Thomas leaves. Bud jams the chair under one doorknob and is just about to jam the other when he hears Mr. Calloway and Miss Thomas arguing. Bud climbs on the bed with his suitcase on his lap, hoping that they’ll take him to another room.

Suddenly the door bangs open, and Mr. Calloway bursts in. He immediately locks the little doors with the girl’s clothes and toys. He then sort of whispers to Bud that he knows the boy has everyone else fooled, but that there’s something about Bud he doesn’t like. He warns him that he’s going to find out what his game is and take him back where he belongs. He leaves the room, slamming the door, but just as suddenly as he leaves, he rushes in again. This time he warns Bud that he better not snoop around or steal anything, because he has secret bells that only he can hear on everything in the house. This reminds Bud about how the lifeguard at the pool had told the kids that they knew they were urinating in the water and they had put in a special chemical that would turn red and burn them if they did. Then, everyone would know what they had done. He observes to himself that nothing makes you want to do something more than when an adult tells you not to. However, Bud knows he is a liar, but he’s not a thief. Besides, there doesn’t seem to be anything worth stealing in that room.

So Bud just looks around the room at the horse pictures on the walls. Then, he checks out the bed and is amazed at how soft it is and how there is a bottom and a top sheet. He thinks about climbing between those sheets, but he is just so tired that begins to drift off to sleep with the memory of his mother reading aloud to him. Bud doesn’t care that a monster sneaks into his mother’s story along with the sheep and the horse, because nothing can hurt him now.

Notes
Any other child would have been in tears at the thought of sleeping in dead girl’s bed, but Bud feels as if nothing can hurt him now. Even Mr. Calloway’s warnings don’t bother him. He feels sure that this is where he’s supposed to be.

CHAPTER 16
Summary
Bud finally wakes up the next morning to find himself between the sheets and his shirt and pants folded neatly on a chair. This brings some tears as well, because he remembers his mother folding his clothes the same way before she went to work and leaving him a note on top to show she loved him. There’s no note on these clothes, but they’re folded just like a mother would fold them.

Very quietly, he gets up and gets dressed and goes as far as the kitchen door. He overhears Mr. Calloway and Miss Thomas talking again about him. Mr. Calloway seems determined to take him back to the orphanage, but Miss Thomas holds him to the promise that had been made the night before. He’ll go to Flint to find out what Bud is all about, while Miss Thomas insists that Bud isn’t lying. She reminds Herman that she knows when people are lying and Bud is not. Steady Eddie responds that he’s glad to hear that Bud is staying there, because he didn’t want to go digging around the basement for nothing. That excites Bud, because it sounds like Eddie has something for him. He quietly goes back upstairs and then, clumps around to let the band know he’s awake.

Downstairs, he learns that he has slept until noon. He says good morning to everyone, even Mr. Calloway who says he has work to do on the Loudean rather than stay in the room with Bud. The rest of the band is very kind to him, talking to him like he’s been one of them for a long time. Miss Thomas explains that they had talked about him for a long time the night before, and they need his help in deciding what to do. She tells him that they have to talk to someone in Flint about him, but that if they say everything’s alright, they want him to stay at Grand Calloway Station. Bud is ecstatic. She warns him that it won’t be easy for two reasons: Mr. Calloway’s attitude and all the hard work he’ll be expected to do. Bud assures her that his legs are stronger than they look, and his spirit is strong enough to handle whatever they throw at him. She explains that they will be traveling around Michigan for a few months on long car trips. He tells her he doesn’t mind that at all to which she responds that she believes he’s godsend for them.
Steady Eddie then declares that since he’s going to be part of the family Bud needs to become less attached to his suitcase. When Bud says that it holds everything he has of his mother, Eddie says that it’s not what’s inside the case that bothers him; it’s the case itself. He gives Bud his old saxophone case so that it looks as good as all their other cases when they travel. Then, he explains that Bud must follow “Herman E. Calloway’s Rules to guarantee you have no female companionship, no alcohol, and no fun at all.” Rule Number One is practice two hours a day. Then, he gives Bud a recorder, an instrument similar to a flute. It will help him develop his wind before they move him on to a more complicated instrument.

Finally, Eddie tells Bud that it’s time they gave him a name. At that, Miss Thomas rises and leaves, explaining that the giving of a name is a man thing and she doesn’t want to be there. The Band members set up the giving of Bud’s name like a knighting ceremony. They lick around all different ways to describe him and end up with “Sleepy LaBone.” They all love it and actually tap him on the head with his recorder three times like he’s being knighted. Bud loves it and thinks it’s a name that is great enough to make him practice four hours every day, just to live up to it.

Notes
Even though Mr. Calloway doesn’t trust Bud and wants him back in the orphanage, the others are coming to love him. He receives a recorder and a new name to officially make him part of the band. For the first time in a very long time Bud has found a family. Now it is his job to break down Mr. Calloway’s gruff façade and make him care about him, too.

CHAPTER 17
Summary
Bud is washing down the floor of The Log Cabin for the second time while the band sets up on the stage. He pretends that the bucket is from a book his mother had read to him and which he calls Twenty Thousand “Leaks” Under the Sea. Bud knows that Herman Calloway is trying to work him like a dog, but Bud thinks that the man doesn’t know he’s good at hard work. He also can make work go faster and be more pleasurable when he pretends.

Suddenly, Bud hears someone yell, “One, two, one two three,” and he raises his head to listen. The band member called The Thug is brushing his sticks across the round gold metal thing next to his drums and making it sound like soft rain was beginning to fall on a tin roof. Dirty Deed, another member, begins to play the piano with sounds that take off like Niagara Falls. Steady Eddie snaps his fingers softly and then puts his ax (his instrument) into his mouth and the sound is not just musical notes but someone talking. Then, Miss Thomas, Jimmy, and Mr. Calloway come in behind him, acknowledge him with a ruffle of his head, calling him LaBone, and grunting as they walk by. They climb on the stage and join the practice. Mr. Jimmy’s horn joins in the storm of notes while Mr. Calloway’s fiddle seems like something wide and heavy is walking slow and easy. Just like the smells in the library, Bud finds it hard to decide which sound is his favorite until Miss Thomas begins to sing. She doesn’t even say words, but uses syllables like “la and de and da and ho, ha, and whee.” Nevertheless, once he hears her, he swears that it’s the only sound he will want to hear again. Finally, it is over and for a moment, there is dead quiet. Then, Bud begins to clap and say, “Wow!” Now, as he watches Miss Thomas curtsey, Bud realizes why this band has six exclamation points behind their name!

Notes
This chapter is a wonderful descriptive explanation of a jazz band that creates music that touches Bud’s soul. It is also a metaphor for the family he has craved since his mother died.

CHAPTER 18
Summary
As this chapter opens, the band is traveling to a dinky town called Mecosta. Bud has been living with Miss Thomas and the band for about seven days and this is his third road trip. As they drive along, The Thug teases
Dirty Deed that the only reason he got the job on the piano is because he’s Dutch, white and doesn’t have the strongest personality in the world. The truth is that Mr. Calloway must have a white man in his band, because Negroes are not allowed to own property and engage in contracts. So, Dirty Deed does all of that and plays a mean piano as well. They play a gig at the Laughing Jackass, and Bud sleeps on the stage to guard the instruments.

The next morning, Bud gets bad news: he has to ride back with Mr. Calloway. Bud isn’t pleased with the thought, but he loads the car and prepares for an hour and a half with Herman. Finally, Mr. C (as all the band members call him) appears. When Bud gets up next to him, the older man is pushing a rock with his toe. When he gets it worked out of the ground, he bends over to retrieve it, but his big belly won’t let him bend over far enough. So he gets Bud to do it for him. It looks like a perfect throwing rock, but Mr. Calloway shoves it in his pocket. When they get to the car, Bud says, “What in Sam Hill are you going to do with a doggone rock?” So, Mr. Calloway opens the glove box of the car, and there inside are a bunch of perfect throwing rocks. There is writing on each one that perfectly matches the writing on the rocks that Bud has carried with him since his mother died. He tells Herman that he has some just like them. The older man acts disinterested, so Bud opens his sax case and pulls out the rocks. However, he won’t show them until Mr. Calloway asks to see them. Unfortunately, Mr. Calloway says nothing. Finally, when they arrive back at the house, Bud shoves the rocks in his face and tells him, “See, I told you I had some of these rocks.”

Mr. Calloway becomes very angry when he sees the rocks and demands to know where Bud got them. He even goes so far as to accuse him of stealing them from his house. Jimmy becomes involved in the conversation and reads each of Bud’s rocks and interprets what each one says. They date from 25 years before, and Bud insists that he got them from his momma. Finally, Mr. Jimmy asks if he knows his mother’s name and Mr. Calloway threatens him for having a disrespectful, smart-mouthed streak in him. So Bud screams out that her name was Angela Janet Caldwell. Both Jimmy and Mr. Calloway are struck dumb and Mr. Calloway staggers into the house. Bud screams out that he knows now that he was right – Mr. Calloway is his father. But Jimmy crouches down in front of Bud and gently tells him that Mr. Calloway is not his father. Angela Janet Caldwell is Mr. Calloway’s daughter’s name, so Bud is his grandson. Bud’s reaction is his typical humor: “Who’d want a daddy that on top of being so old and so doggone mean had such a big belly? No me.”

**Notes**

Finally Bud learns the truth about his family and how his Momma has led him straight to his grandfather. So, what she hadn’t had the time to tell him before she died, has come to him through his search for love and family.

**CHAPTER 19**

**Summary**

The chapter opens with Mr. Calloway locking himself in his room and refusing to come out. Miss Thomas and Jimmy try to get him out, but they come downstairs after awhile. They then question Bud about whether he’s sure Angela is his mother and how she passed. He explains it in detail – she was sick for about a week and then she died. He doesn’t think she hurt. Then, they want to know what she looked like. Bud finds it difficult to describe her and so runs upstairs to get her picture out of his case. He finds Mr. Calloway in his daughter’s bedroom, sobbing into his hands. Bud walks over to the sax case and takes out the envelope with his mother’s picture. He wants to run downstairs immediately, but the sight of the sobbing man prompts him to walk over to Mr. Calloway. He remembers Rule Number 39: “The older you get, the worse something has to be to make you cry.” So, he reaches out with his hand and touches Mr. Calloway’s back. When the older man tries to explain to Bud, he is unable to speak through his tears, so Bud pats his shoulders and rubs his back for a few minutes. Then, he returns to the kitchen.

Jimmy looks at the picture and immediately remembers the old con man who had the broken down horse. The realization that they recognize his Momma makes Bud suddenly realize that he’s not sleeping in a dead girl’s
room, but in his Momma’s room. Then, Miss Thomas and Jimmy explain why Mr. Calloway had never called on him and his Momma. Miss Thomas explains that Herman didn’t know anything about Bud. Angela ran away one day, because he had been so hard on her. He had wanted her to go to college to become a teacher and had placed an enormous amount of pressure on her. The rocks were the result of her asking her father, when she was just three or four, to bring her back a present. Ironically, instead of a doll, she asked for a “wock” and ever after, he would bring rocks back from each place the band played, always hoping that someday she would come home.

Miss Thomas then goes upstairs and brings back a picture of his Momma that she had kept on her dressing table for thirteen years. The picture shows his mother as if she’s coming out of a cloud, and Miss Thomas demonstrates how, no matter which way you turn the picture, his mother is still looking at him. She gives it to Bud as a gift. She follows this with an explanation for why Mr. Calloway acts the way he does. She reminds Bud about how he has felt the last four years without his Momma. Then, she applies it to Mr. Calloway and tells Bud he has to be patient and remember that now both she and Mr. Calloway must mourn Angela, too. Then, Miss Thomas goes upstairs to comfort Mr. Calloway.

At that moment, Doo-Doo Bug and Steady Eddie enter the back door with another gift for Bud. It’s an alto sax from a pawn shop, and Eddie has repaired everything but hasn’t polished the horn. He tells Bud that’s the job of its owner. Bud tells the two that he’ll have the music ready in three weeks so he can perform for the band. Then, he takes everything he’s been given upstairs to his room. Mr. Calloway has gone to Miss Thomas’ room where Bud can hear them talking quietly. Then, he begins to arrange his Momma’s old room to make it his own: he puts her smiling picture on the dressing table and remakes his bed with his old blanket. He takes all the other treasures in the sax case, except the stone that says Flint on it, and gives them to Mr. Calloway. Once he returns to his room, he thumbtacks the picture of his mother on the broken down pony among the horse pictures already there. He feels like she fits in there just right. He knows now that he doesn’t need to carry that picture around with him anymore, because he has the thought of the smiling picture in his head, and he has all the memories of her that have never faded. He puts the Flint rock in his case, because that’s all he needs of her with him now.

Finally, Bud picks up his new saxophone and tries to blow a note. At first, the sounds are squawks and groans. However, the second time, to Bud, sounds great. It tells him he can play and that someday he’ll be good at it. He looks at his Momma’s picture and smiles, saying, “Here we go again, Momma, only this time I can’t wait!” He closes his eyes and begins practicing. Things are going good for him at last.

Notes

Everything in this chapter ties up the loose ends of Bud’s story and the reader is left with the feeling that a greater power has orchestrated his reunion with his family. Furthermore, the chapter shows how Bud has grown through his adventures “on the lam,” being able to give up his grief and move on to the next open door.

AFTERWORD

Summary

In the afterword, the author reveals the source of his inspiration for Bud, Not Buddy. He chose the era of the Great Depression and based some of his characters on real people. For example, Lefty Lewis is the actual name of his maternal grandfather who was, like Lefty’s son-in-law, a Pullman Porter, job of some prestige in the African-American community at the time. However, as the author points out, it was an extremely difficult job that paid very little. His grandfather did very well during the Depression, supporting his family on his generous tips. He received so much change this way that the author’s grandmother had to reinforce his pockets to keep the change from ripping out the lining. When the train station in Grand Rapids let go two of their redcaps, Curtis’ grandfather lost his job, but then opened a small restaurant and even became the first African-American cabdriver in Grand Rapids.
Lefty also pitched for many years in the Negro Baseball League. He even pitched twice against Satchel Paige who hung him for two losses!

His paternal grandfather was Herman E. Curtis, hence the first name and middle initial of Herman E. Calloway. He, too, was a band leader for most of his adult life and his band’s name was Herman E. Curtis and the Dusky Devastators of the Depression!!!!!!. He was a classically trained violinist and played the bass fiddle, the accordion, and the piano. His kind of band was an important part of life during a time when people were looking for a way to forget their troubles. Also, his grandfather worked as a chauffeur, a boat captain, and a truck painter as well as owning several businesses at a time when Negros were forbidden from holding titles to or renting of land. Like Dirty Deed, who helped Mr. Calloway own The Log Cabin, Curtis’ grandfather had a white friend who did the same for him.

Both of his grandparents were examples of the hustle and willingness to work that allowed blacks to keep their families together and survive not only the Depression, but also unfair laws and situations they faced everyday. The author also doesn’t hesitate to point out that the success of his grandparents during this period was often the exceptional rather than the rule. The time period was particularly hard on African-Americans. Children being abandoned and fending for themselves by riding the rails, picking fruit, doing odd jobs, begging, and stealing was commonplace for all races.

The author ends his novel by pointing out that he had to research the Depression before his could write this book, a fact that shames him. When he was a child and he heard his grandparents talking about what they endured at that time, he would tune it out as boring tales and look for an excuse to get away. Then, his grandparents died and everything they had to pass on was lost. He admonishes the reader to not make his same mistake and to talk to the older generation to discover what they have to say and what they learned growing up. He asserts that by keeping their stories alive you make them, and yourself, immortal.

Notes
By writing this Afterword, Christopher Paul Curtis passes on what he learned by writing Bud, Not Buddy. By using his down-to-earth writing style, he really emphasizes to young people how important it is to hear all the old stories of the previous generations. He also gives a lesson in being a writer that he doesn’t even intend: write about what you know!

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 his mother and had been able to create his own rules for life in his imaginary book called Bud Caldwell’s Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar of Yourself. He is innovative, inventive, and resourceful and what’s more, he is much wiser about the world than most ten year olds are. He also seems to have an innate sense that there’s somewhere in the world that he’s meant to be, and he strives to find that place, no matter the cost. He is a hard worker and so imaginative that work becomes play to him. He is also compassionate and strong when he needs to be, able to weep when grief finally overcomes him and then accept compassion from others. In the end, Bud is a role model for any young reader who immerses himself in his story. Bud teaches us all that life is what you make it and we should never give up searching for our own place in it.

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 he always hopes for her return. He is difficult to talk to and basically trusts no one very much, especially Bud. He has hardened his heart, because of his anguish that his daughter is gone, and it will take a great deal of patience on Bud’s part to break through to him. Mr. Calloway is a very good man, however, opening his home to many people who need help and playing his music not just to earn a living, but also to ease the burden of poverty brought on by the Depression. At the end, we see a great deal of hope that Mr. Calloway will finally receive the comfort and support he deserves.

**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 has taught him constantly emerges, especially when he is in trouble or needs help. It is almost like she is walking with him and steering him toward Mr. Calloway, who needs Bud as much as Bud needs him. In the end, we learn that she had run away from her father’s dominance, and perhaps regretted it very much, given that she kept all the flyers about his band and the rocks he had given her every time he came home. Those mementos are the only things Bud has to find his way to his grandfather, and her influence, therefore, brings about the reunion she may have wanted herself had she lived. She is always on his mind as well when he finds himself in front of the next open door.

**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 the foster children and his mother always believes him. Unfortunately for Bud, when he fights back and beats up Todd, he is locked away in a shed and told he’s being returned to the Home. This is the catalyst that makes him run away and try to find his father. In this sense, then, the Amoses represent the adversity that makes us stronger and heads us in the right direction.

**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 and romance of the song “Shenandoah” where the lovers have been separated for seven years. She then gives him his first kiss from a girl and tells him she’ll see him in seven years. Her decent treatment of him and her touching kiss reveal her to be a good person who has learned so much about life that she can’t help but pass it on. When he leaves her, the reader can’t help but believe that Bud will never forget her and may even see her again someday.

**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 daughter’s home and makes sure he has a good meal or two and some clean clothes. Then, he takes him to Grand Rapids after sending a telegram to Mr. Calloway. He is another example of one of those people who is always there to help people in need. He never leaves Bud until he is sure he is in the right hands, even though, unbeknownst to him, Bud is a stranger to Mr. Calloway. He is strong and compassionate and has a tremendously good influence on Bud.

**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 and cradles him when the sobs finally escape and yet she treats like a man when she needs him to be strong. She is very beautiful both inside and out, and Bud comes to love her very much. One sign of her great compassion is the gift she gives Bud of his
mother’s picture. Unlike the one he has when his mother was frowning, this one has a great big smile, and her eyes seem to follow him no matter which way he turns. It is an amazing gift that will help come to terms with his momma’s death.

_Steedy 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 him his own saxophone and encourage him to work hard to be a part of the band. They also accept him into their mysterious male society by giving him his own special nickname, Sleepy LaBone. They are obviously great role models who will take the place of the father he never knew and help him break through Mr. Calloway’s gruff exterior.

**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 accepting him into their group even though they know nothing about him; and Bud seeing Mr. Calloway digging up a stone and writing on it just like his own stones. All these events seem to occur just when Bud feels like he’s at the end of his rope. Then, God opens another door, just like his mother always said. It fulfills the idea that no matter how dark life can seem, there is always an answer or solution to bring back the light.

All of the previous examples exemplify the theme of _fate or destiny_. Bud is meant to be with his grandfather, just as his mother was. However, she died before any reunion could take place and so, as if a higher power has intervened, Bud carries with him the mementos his mother had left behind until he’s old enough to understand what they mean and act on them. The path isn’t always clear, but it never disappears, and Bud perseveres to follow the way. Miss Thomas calls him a godsend, because he is needed at the Calloway home as much as he needs the ones who live there. They are meant to be a family, and fate determines that outcome for them all.

The theme of _people helping people_ is evident through the compassion seen in such people as Miss Hill, the librarian, who befriends him, Lefty Lewis who protects him, Miss Thomas who cradles and mothers him, the mission where people are fed, and Mrs. Sleet who gives him food and new clothes. These people are examples of how people helped each other throughout the Depression. Because the country’s financial stability was compromised, people could no longer rely on traditional sources of help. They had to turn to each other in order to survive. Of course, there were many who did not, but our country would have collapsed completely without the strong sense of duty and obligation that emerged.

The final theme, _the impact of segregation_, is not loudly emphasized, but is present, nonetheless. African-Americans during the 1930’s had few, if any, civil rights anywhere in our country. Like Mr. Calloway, they couldn’t have land titles or enter into contracts. Like Mr. Lewis, they had to be careful not to be out late at night, especially in areas where white people live. When jobs are eliminated, they are the first let go, and they often suffer more than the white race. The author doesn’t want that idea to dominate his story, but he does present it as the problem it was at that time. He doesn’t in any way whitewash history.
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 reflects the vernacular of the time.

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 his first home. Bud reassures him that he will have great experience. Then Bud runs away from his foster home and begins his journey to find his father. The rising action ends when Bud tells Mr. Calloway and his band that his mother’s name was Angela Janet Caldwell. That’s when they all know that Bud is Mr. Calloway’s grandson.

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 will be well between them. Bud is content now to learn how to play the sax and make his momma’s room his own. He is able to put the mementos aside and keep her in his memory, and like he tells her picture, “Here we go again, Momma, only this time I can’t wait!” He knows he has found the place where he belongs.

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.
3. Buddy remembers his mother bringing the blue flyer home with her from work one day and that she was very upset. 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. This foreshadows Bud’s strong desire to find the man his mother keeps looking at.
4. Someone had taken a pen and had written on all of the rocks in some sort of code Bud couldn’t understand. One says, “Kentland ill. 5.10.11.” Another says, “loogooitee in. 5.16.11,” and the last says, “flint m. 8.11.11.” He doesn’t know what they mean, but he’s unwilling to leave them behind. This foreshadows Bud’s reaction when Mr. Calloway digs up a rock after one their gigs.
5. Deza Malone smiles at Bud and says, “See you in seven years.” This foreshadows that he might up with her again or at the very least, what she has taught him will stay with him forever.
6. Mr. Lewis tells the boy that he needs to come out, because neither one of them should be out at that time of the night. This foreshadows the policeman stopping them and questioning why they’re on the road so late.
7. Mr. Lewis tells Bud that he’s from Grand Rapids, too, and he just left there not an hour and a half ago. This foreshadows Bud getting a ride to the city where he thinks he will find Mr. Calloway.
8. Mr. Lewis shouts in recognition of the name Calloway, because everyone in Grand Rapids knows him, and he even comes to think that Bud looks like him. This foreshadows the truth about Mr. Calloway being his grandfather.
9. Jimmy introduces Bud to Miss Thomas whom he calls a vocal stylist. This foreshadows that she is not just an ordinary singer, but has a voice from heaven.
10. Miss Thomas tells Bud that behind the strange doors are nothing more than a girl’s clothes and some toys. Bud is worried that she might not like him in her room, but Miss Thomas tells him that the girl is gone. This foreshadows that the room is actually his Momma’s.
11. Miss Thomas believes Bud’s a godsend for them. This foreshadows that he will discover Mr. Calloway is his grandfather and be the one that helps the older man heal from the pain of losing his daughter.
12. The one that Mr. Calloway digs up looks like a perfect throwing rock, but Mr. Calloway shoves it in his pocket. This foreshadows that Mr. Calloway has rocks just like Bud’s momma’s.
13. Bud screams out that her name was Angela Jane Caldwell. Both Jimmy and Mr. Calloway are struck dumb and Mr. Calloway staggers into the house. This foreshadows that Bud will learn Mr. Calloway is his grandfather.

**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.
2. Mrs. Amos lectures Bud about how he is unwilling to be uplifted and be a credit to their race when she abuses him.
3. The Amos family is totally the opposite of what they think of themselves. They call him a beastly little brute, but they are actually describing themselves.
4. Factory owners must believe, says Mr. Lewis, that if a worker has any dignity or pride, he can’t be doing a good job. Ironically, they fail to recognize the basic humanity of their employees.
5. As he falls asleep in the Calloway home and remembers how his mother read to him, Bud doesn’t care that a monster sneaks into his mother’s story along with the sheep and the horse, because nothing can hurt him now. Ironically, he has finally lost his fear.
6. The Thug teases Dirty Deed that the only reason he got the job on the piano is because he’s Dutch, white, and doesn’t have the strongest personality in the world. The truth is that Mr. Calloway must have a white man in his band, because Negroes are not allowed to own property and engage in contracts.
7. Ironically, instead of a doll, Angela asked her father for a “wock” and ever after, he would bring rocks back from each place the band played, always hoping that someday she would come home, too.

**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.)
3. He sits down shoulder to shoulder with Jerry while they wait to be summoned to their new homes. Buddy thinks, “Here we go again.” (pg. 8; This becomes what Buddy feels every time he’s moved to another home.)
4. “There comes a time when you’re losing a fight that it just doesn’t make senses 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.” (pg. 9; This is Bud’s acceptance of how to survive someone who is bigger and stronger than you are. He will hear the same idea echoed by his grandfather at the end of the story.)
5. “Mrs. Amos believes that her son’s mouth is a prayer book.” (pg. 12; Bud knows that he has no chance to tells the truth about Todd, because his mother believes every thing he says.)

6. He gets to the “get-excited-and-want-to-move-around kind of scared.” (pg. 21; Here Bud is expressing what he feels inside the shed.)

7. However, he goes from calm to “being in that stand-on-one-place-with-spit-drooling-down-the-front-of-your-shirt kind of scared.” (pg. 22; This is Bud’s reaction when he sees the dried fish heads hanging from the doorknob.)

8. Rules and Things No. 328: “If you make up your mind to do something, hurry up and do it . . .” (pg. 27; This is Bud’s attitude when he winds up to kill what he thinks is a vampire bat.)

9. The only thought he has now is, “Aha, you doggone Amoses, that hurt, but now I get my revenge!”

10. “He who laughs last, laughs best.” (pg. 35; This is Bud’s favorite saying.)

11. “Being on the lam was a whole lot of fun . . . for about five minutes.” (pg. 36; This is when Bud realizes that being alone with no one to help you isn’t glamorous at all.)

12. Rule Number 16: “If a grownup ever starts a sentence by saying, ‘Haven’t you heard,” get ready, because what’s about to come out of their mouth is gonna drop you headfirst into a boiling tragedy.” (pg. 56; This is Bud’s feeling when the librarian explains that Miss Hill has gotten married and moved away.)

13. Rule Number 87 pops into Bud’s head: “When an adult tells you they need your help with a problem, get ready to be tricked – most times this means they just want you to go fetch something for them.” (pgs. 102-103; This how Bud feels when Mr. Lewis first stops him on the highway.)

14. He thinks to himself as he drives away, “Wow! If I keep things like this up I will knock Baby Face Nelson of the FBI’s ten most wanted list!” (pg. 107; This is Bud’s thoughts as he tries to drive Mr. Lewis’ car away.)

15. Rule Number 29: “When you wake up and don’t know for sure where you’re at and there’s a bunch of people standing around you, it’s best to pretend you’re still asleep until you can figure out what’s going on and what you should do.” (pg. 116; This how Bud behaves when he awakens in mrs. Sleet’s home.)

16. Rule Number 8 says, “Whenever an adult tells you to listen carefully and talks to you in a real calm voice, do not listen. Run as fast as you can because something real terrible is just around the corner, especially of the cops are chasing you.” (pg. 133; Here Lefty reminds Bud to stay put and not to say anything while he talks to the cop.)

17. Rule Number 63: “Never, ever say something bad about someone you don’t know – especially when you’re around a bunch of strangers. You never can tell who might be kin to that person or who might be a lip-flapping, big-mouth spy.” (pg. 157; Bud thinks this when he calls Mr. Calloway a mean name in front of his band members.)

18. Mr. Calloway says that it sounds like “a case of diarrhea of the mouth and constipation of the brain.” (pg. 165; This is Mr. Calloway’s reaction to Bud’s story.)

19. Rule Number 28 says, “Gone = dead!” (pg. 178; Bud knows that when Miss Thomas says Mr. Calloway’s daughter is gone that she’s actually dead.)

20. Rule Number 39: “The older you get, the worse something has to be to make you cry.” (pg. 219; Bud brings this idea to mind when he finds Mr. Calloway sobbing in his momma’s old room.)

21. “Here we go again, Momma, only this time I can’t wait!” (pg. 236; Bud makes this final observation about how he’s going through yet another door, but this time the other side will be great.)

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 read it. The idea of a decoder ring makes the items in the suitcase take on an air of mystery.
4. Bud Caldwell’s Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself is an imaginary book in Bud’s mind. It symbolizes the help he needs to cope with a world that gets out of his control.

5. He remembers the experience of Bugs, a boy who had also lived at the Home. Bugs had gotten a cockroach in his ear and had to be held down while four grown-ups tried to remove it with a pair of tweezers. The adults only succeeded in pulling off the cockroach’s legs while Bugs screamed bloody murder. He eventually was taken to the emergency room where the insect was removed. He told Bud when he returned that he hadn’t screamed once at the hospital, but he had screamed at the home, because he could hear the cries of pain and fear from the cockroach. The cockroach is a metaphor for how these young, orphaned kids cope with their own fear and pain.

6. The last word of advice his mother had repeated to him was to remember that no matter how bad things looked to him, when one door closes, another opens. The door then comes to symbolize hope.

7. The white family with a separate fire in Hooverville represents pride, because they refuse anyone’s help, especially blacks.

8. He opens the tobacco pouch which holds the stones he found in a drawer after the ambulance took his mother away. The stones represent a link with his mother and the path to finding his father.

9. “Shenandoah” is a song that represents love once lost but hopefully found in the future. It applies to Deza Malone and to Bud’s mother.

10. Bud uses a trick that has helped him fall asleep before: he pulls his blanket over his head and breathes in very deeply the smells of the blanket, the smells that reminded him of his momma and how she used to read to him every night. The smells of the blanket and the smells of his mother are a metaphor for lost love not yet forgotten.

11. Bud dreams about a man with a giant fiddle and how he just keeps walking away because he can’t turn back. This a metaphor for Bud’s journey to find a father he feels won’t want him.

12. The blue flyer escapes the rope ties on his suitcase and blows, miraculously, right back at Bud. It makes Bud slow down, fold it, and put it in his pocket. As a result, he missed jumping on the train. This is a metaphor for fate which seems to lead Bud on path to Grand Rapids, not Chicago.

13. Bud begins to think about how ideas begin like seeds: when you first look at a seed, you can’t imagine that it will ever be a tree so high you get a “crick” in your neck trying to see the top. That’s what he thinks about his ideas about the mementos in his suitcase and finding his father.

14. Teasing is a symbol of love in the Lewis family.

15. Bud’s first pair of long pants, instead of knickers, is a symbol of growing up.

16. Then, Herman says the words that really cement Bud’s belief that he is his father: “There comes a time when you’re doing something and you realize that it just doesn’t make any sense to keep on doing it . . .” The words symbolize the link between them.

17. “Grand Calloway Station” is a metaphor for a home whose doors are always open to those in need.

18. Bud finally wakes up the next morning between the sheets and his shirt and pants folded neatly on a chair. This brings some tears as well, because he remembers his mother folding his clothes the same way before she went to work and leaving him a note on top to show she loved him. There’s no note on these clothes, but they’re folded just like a mother would fold them. The folded clothes represent his mother’s love for him.

19. The Band members set up the giving of Bud’s name like a knighting ceremony. Thus it comes to represent a rite of passage in young boy’s life.

20. Just like the smells in the library, Bud finds it hard to decide which sound is his favorite until Miss Thomas begins to sing. The library smells and the sounds of the band are metaphors for those memories that can be easily evoked by sounds and smells.

21. Bud’s description of the band playing is a wonderful explanation of a jazz band that creates music that touches Bud’s soul. It is also a metaphor for the family he has craved since his mother died.

22. Miss Thomas then goes upstairs and brings back a picture of his Momma that she had kept on her dressing table for thirteen years. The picture shows his mother as if she’s coming out of a cloud, and Miss Thomas
demonstrates how, no matter which way you turn the picture, his mother is still looking at him. The picture is a metaphor for how his momma seems to be watching over him even though she is gone.

23. Bud begins to arrange his Momma’s old room to make it his own: he puts her smiling picture on the dressing table and remakes his bed with his old blanket. He takes all the other treasures in the sax case, except the stone that says Flint on it, and gives them to Mr. Calloway. Once he returns to his room, he thumbtacks the picture of his mother on the broken down pony among the horse pictures already there. These activities are a metaphor for Bud letting go of his mother and finding the place he really belongs.

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.
3. Bud’s entrance into the shed is a whole, different scarier kind of dark, meaning even more frightening than just being normally in the dark.
4. The hot water on Todd’s back will open up a valve in his guts and . . . woop, zoop, sloop . . he wets his bed, meaning all at once he’ll wet his bed.
5. Then, Bud picks up his suitcase and walks into the street. He is on the lam and if J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI see him, he’ll be in some real serious hot water! This means that he thinks by running away, he can be arrested by the FBI
6. Bud’s sneaking around like Pretty Boy Floyd, meaning he’s acting like the famous criminal.
7. Mashing up against each other means falling against each other.
8. You get a “crick” in your neck trying to see the top of a tree. This means you pull a muscle in your neck.
9. Bud stays silent, the only sound now being the “wugga, wugga, wugga,” of the car the man had not shut off. The words express the sound of a running engine.
10. Bud knows they’re not critter eyes. They’re the kind of eyes that can make the hair on the back of his neck raise up the way only “human bean eyes” can do. These words refer to the eyes of an animal and the eyes of person.
11. They are surprised that the town of Hooperville is no more than a “cardboard jungle,” a collection of huts and shacks thrown together from pieces of boxes, wood, and cloth.
12. She brings back a wooden spoon and whops him a good lick on the head, meaning she struck him with the spoon.
13. Bud hears Herman tell Jimmy he’ll go along with his plan, but it’s “his little red wagon, and he can pull it if he wants.” This means that Herman doesn’t want anything to do with the boy.
14. Now, he understands why Mr. Jimmy didn’t call Miss Thomas a singer. It just isn’t a big enough word to describe the music that jumps out of Miss Thomas’ chest, meaning the music she produces.
15. He even tells himself that Herman Calloway can “kiss his wrist” if he thinks he’s going to scare him out of this. This is a polite way of saying he can kiss his ass, but either way, it refers to the point that Mr. Calloway doesn’t intimidate him.
16. The tears begin jumping out of his eyes, meaning they begin to flow.

**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.  
**Setting:** Flint and Grand Rapids, Michigan in the 1930’s  
**Protagonist:** Bud Caldwell
**Antagonists:** The foster home system, the Amos family, Mr. Calloway, and segregation

**Mood:** At times, it’s sad and frustrating, but mostly it’s hopeful and happy.

**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.

**Tense:** The story is told in the past tense.

**Rising Action:** The rising action begins when Bud is about to be sent from the Home to a foster home. Then Bud runs away from his foster home and begins his journey to find his father. The rising action ends when Bud tells Mr. Calloway and his band that his mother’s name was Angela Janet Caldwell. That’s when they all know that Bud is Mr. Calloway’s grandson.

**Exposition:** The author tells us the story of Bud Caldwell who was orphaned when his mother died at the age of six. He carries with him a suitcase filled with mementos of his mother and the man he believes is his father. Using these clues, he runs away from the foster home and sets out to find the man named Herman E. Calloway. His memories of his mother and the adventures he experiences along the way finally lead him to the happiness he has been seeking since he lost his mother.

**Climax:** The climax occurs when Bud is forced to blurt out his mother’s name, and the band members and Mr. Calloway know that she was Mr. Calloway’s daughter and Bud is his grandson.

**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 that has happened in his life.

**Major Themes:** When God closes one door, he opens another; Fate or Destiny; People Helping People; and Segregation.

**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.
   c.) the family is black.

3. When Bud says that Mrs. Amos thinks Todd’s mouth is a prayer book, she means
   a.) Bud always lies.
   b.) Bud always tells the truth.
   c.) Bud is always wrong.

4. Todd tells Bud that there is a vampire bat hanging in the shed, because he knows that Bud will try to kill what is really
   a.) a hornet’s nest.
   b.) a dead crow.
   c.) a bird’s nest.

5. Bud gets revenge on Todd by
   a.) short-sheeting his bed.
   b.) sending a bigger, stronger kid from the Home to beat him up.
   c.) making him wet his bed.

6. Bugs knows to look for Bud at
   a.) the library.
   b.) the Home.
   c.) the coffee shop.

7. Bud and Bugs seal their deal to travel west together by
   a.) cutting thumbs and smearing their blood.
   b.) spitting in the palms and smearing it together.
   c.) cutting a piece of hair and tying it together.
8. Bud misses the train, because
   a.) he stops to grab the blue flyer and put it in his pocket.
   b.) he stops to grab his suitcase which falls off the boxcar.
   c.) he’s knocked to the ground when hundreds of others try to on the train as well.

9. When Bud goes to the library, he’s looking for
   a.) a book on the Civil War.
   b.) a book which shows distances between towns in Michigan.
   c.) a book with fairy tales and mysteries.

10. Bud is picked up on the road to Grand Rapids by
    a.) Mr. Calloway
    b.) a policeman
    c.) Lefty Lewis

11. The Lewis family shows its love for each other by
    a.) hugs and kisses.
    b) teasing each other.
    c.) tickling each other.

12. The Calloway Band all accept Bud except
    a.) Miss Thomas.
    b.) Mr. Jimmy.
    c.) Mr. Calloway.

13. Ironically, Bud found out he was sleeping, not in the room of a dead girl, but in
    a.) Miss Thomas’ childhood room.
    b.) his mother’s childhood room.
    c.) his grandfather’s childhood room.

14. The band members give Bud a saxophone and a new name which is
    a.) Skinny Minny.
    b.) Peanut Head.
    c.) Sleepy LaBone.

15. Miss Thomas cautions Bud that he must
    a.) understand that his grandfather probably won’t accept him.
    b.) allow himself to finish grieving.
    c.) have patience with his grandfather.

**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.
2. Describe why the way Bud was raised in his first six years helped him find his grandfather. Cite specific instances.
3. Explain the reason why Bud’s momma left home and how the mementos she left behind help Bud know all the things she never told him.
4. Why must Bud have patience with Mr. Calloway?
5. Name some of the images Bud uses to describe how the Calloway band plays.
6. Discuss the situation in the Amos home when Bud is living there. How are they both physically and emotionally abusive?
8. How does the author use his own background to create the characters and the plot of this novel? 
9. How does the band help Bud to be accepted and to become a man?
10. Explain whether you believe Bud and his grandfather will ever come to love each other. Why or why not?
11. Compare your own grandparents and/or great-grandparents experience during the Great Depression with that of Bud.

12. How would Bud's life be different if he were growing up today.

**COMMENT ON THE STUDY OF LITERATURE**

The study of literature is not like the study of math or science, or even history. While those disciplines are based largely upon fact, the study of literature is based upon interpretation and analysis. There are no clear-cut answers in literature, outside of the factual information about an author's life and the basic information about setting and characterization in a piece of literature. The rest is a highly subjective reading of what an author has written; each person brings a different set of values and a different background to the reading. As a result, no two people see the piece of literature in exactly the same light, and few critics agree on everything about a book or an author.

In this study guide, we have tried to give an objective literary analysis based upon the information actually found in the novel, book, or play. In the end, however, it is an individual interpretation, but one that we feel can be readily supported by the information that is presented in the guide. In your course of literature study, you or your professor/teacher may come up with a different interpretation of the mood or the theme or the conflict. Your interpretation, if it can be logically supported with information contained within the piece of literature, is just as correct as ours; so is the interpretation of your teacher or professor.

Literature is simply not a black or white situation; instead, there are many gray areas that are open to varying analyses. Your task is to come up with your own analysis that you can logically defend. Hopefully, these booknotes will help you to accomplish that goal.

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