Bud’s Suitcase

A Study of Christopher Paul Curtis’ Bud, Not Buddy

By: Dewey G. Melton
Bud’s Suitcase

- In *Bud, Not Buddy*, Christopher Paul Curtis utilized the imagery of a suitcase to symbolize everything of importance to the main character, Bud Caldwell.
The Contents of Bud’s Suitcase

• Bud’s blanket symbolized security.
• An old tobacco bag with Bud’s rocks in it symbolized a connection to Bud’s Mother.
• The flyers symbolized a connection to his family and, as far as Bud knew in the beginning, his father.
• An extra set of clothes symbolized poverty and the Depression setting of Curtis’ story.
• An envelope with a picture of his mother in it symbolized family.
Rememory

- All the objects in Bud’s suitcase are important to him because they help him to remember his mother, better times, and clues to his past and future concerning his grandfather, Herman Calloway.

- Rememory, in *Bud, Not Buddy*, is this author’s way of expressing how a ten year old boy might think. For other authors, such as Toni Morrison, rememory has a completely different meaning.

- Bud’s rememory turned out to be a guiding light to him during his journey from “the shed” in Flint all the way to the “Log Cabin” in Grand Rapids.
• Gave him warmth;
• Gave us insight into how a foster child thinks when Bud wondered why no one else carried a blanket around with them;
• Symbolized security, home, family, and a sense of belonging;
• And provides a link to Linus’ blanket in the comic strip, “Peanuts.”
Bud kept his rocks in an old tobacco bag.

The rocks were symbolic as markers for events of the past. Bud probably did not understand what the dates and other inscriptions meant, but Herman Calloway did.

The rocks were important to Bud’s mother, thus for Bud they were a significant connection to his mother.
Bud’s flyers
Herman Calloway and the Dusky Devastators

• Come one, come all and enjoy your Fourth of July holiday with some jazz, singing, dancing, food, and fun all provided by Herman Calloway and the Dusky Devastators
• Admission price: One can of food for the needy.
• Place: The Blue Light Lounge, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
• Time: 7:00 p.m.
• Date: Independence Day! July 4, 1934.
Bud's Extra Set of Clothes

- Symbolized the poverty in which children live, especially foster children;
- Symbolized the Depression era setting of the book;
- And makes one aware of how blessed one is who has whole wardrobes from which to choose an array of clothes.
The Envelope
Bud's New Suitcase

- Bud now has a new place to keep his treasures and valuables as Ms. Amos calls them.
- Bud can now keep his treasures in his mother’s closets now that he has moved into her old room.
- What are some things you think he may like to keep as mementoes to be placed in his rememory?
These are pictures of items which Bud might choose to keep in his closet.

Can you tell how they relate to the story?

For example, the bug symbolizes his friend “bugs.” The story of how “bugs” got his name is a play within a play.

Can you think of other items?
• Hopefully you have enjoyed this slide show!
• Whenever the going gets tough, remember all Bud endured on his journey from “the shed” in Flint, to the “Log Cabin” in Grand Rapids. You too, can overcome adversity!
Bud’s Suitcase: A Study of Christopher Paul Curtis’ “Bud, Not Buddy.”

- This presentation was produced by Mr. Dewey G. Melton.
- Mr. Melton earned his B.A. in Religion from Campbell University in Buies Creek, NC and studied Christian Education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary where he has almost completed a Master of Divinity degree.
• Mr. Melton produced this presentation as a partial requirement for the course, Adolescent Literature, instructed by Dr. Beverly Miller.

• Mr. Melton plans to complete his English degree courses soon and will then teach English in local high schools.

• Date: April 16, 2003.