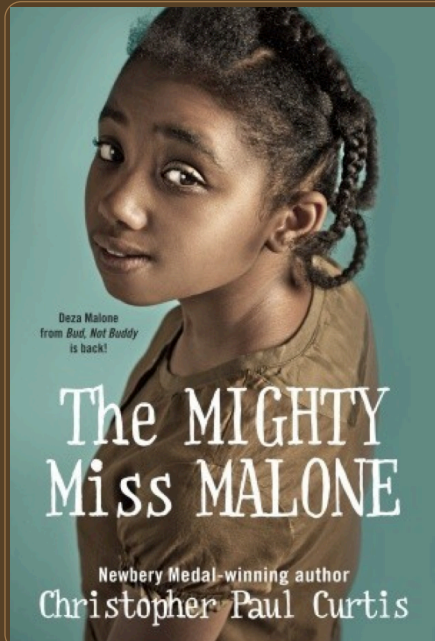


Mighty Miss Malone Reading Guide



Questions and Ideas for Consideration

History: In what ways does this book meaningfully contribute to a narrative about history in American? Does it portray the time period in realistic, authentic, and engaging way? How is the Great Depression portrayed uniquely?

Poverty: Consider the book's depiction of a family struggling in poverty during the depression. How does the book do interesting work to explore issues related to poverty, and does this have relevance to contemporary society?

Culture: How does the text uniquely portray issues related to race and culture? How does it differ in doing so from other historical and realistic fiction?

Tone and Humor: In what ways does the book effectively use humor? How does the use of humor and Deza's narration add to the story?

Family: Describe some of the family relationships within the Malone family, and think about the commentary this text makes on family.

Character: How does the book demonstrate individual's talents and complexity? How is characterization used in complex and/or effective ways?

Daybook Possibilities

- Visit Christopher Paul Curtis's website and learn a little about him through videos and other resources. Write about what you discover and how it changes your perception of the book.
- Look up and describe other books that have been written about the Great Depression. Then research the authors of these books and write about what you can learn about children's literature written about this historical time period.
- Do an internet search for "children" with various terms you associate with past events like the Great Depression. What do you discover about perceptions of children/childhood?
- Do some research into the places described in the text, including Gary, Indiana and Flint, Michigan. Research a little about the history of these locations and describe how this fits with the novel.
- How might you use or teach *Mighty Miss Malone* or other books about history in your classroom? Brainstorm some lesson plan ideas, and write about limitations or considerations for doing so.
- Read *Bud, Not Buddy*, which is a text connected to *Mighty Miss Malone* by Christopher Paul Curtis. Or check out *Watsons Go to Birmingham*, Curtis's most famous text (which was also made into a film).

Resources and Critical

"Naive Narrators and Double Narratives of Racially Motivated Violence in the Historical Fiction of Christopher Paul Curtis" by Jani L. Barker

"'Straighten Up and Fly Right': HeteroMasculinity in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*" by Amina Chaudhri

"An Evolving Past: The Story of Historical Fiction and Nonfiction for Children" by Suzanne Rahn

Background and Context

The *Mighty Miss Malone* was written as a follow up to Christopher Paul Curtis's Newbery winning *Bud, Not Buddy*, and follows the Malone family during the Great Depression. Narrated by 12-year-old Deza Malone, the historical fiction novel comments on prejudice, poverty, and family as readers come to love the family who believes, "We are a family on a journey to a place called Wonderful."