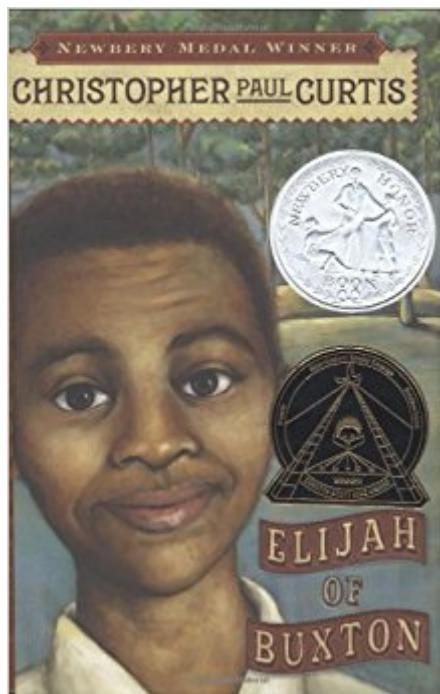


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# Elijah Of Buxton



## Synopsis

Newbery Medalist and CSK Award winner Christopher Paul Curtis's debut middle-grade/young-YA novel for Scholastic features his trademark humor, compelling storytelling, and unique narrative voice. Eleven-year-old Elijah is the first child born into freedom in Buxton, Canada, a settlement of runaway slaves just over the border from Detroit. He's best known for having made a memorable impression on Frederick Douglass, but that changes when a former slave steals money from Elijah's friend, who has been saving to buy his family out of captivity in the South. Elijah embarks on a dangerous journey to America in pursuit of the thief and discovers firsthand the unimaginable horrors of the life his parents fled--a life from which he'll always be free, if he can find the courage to get back home.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1070L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Press; First Edition edition (August 6, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0439023440

ISBN-13: 978-0439023443

Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 5.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 155 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #337,479 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Canada #27 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Canada #398 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

\*Starred Review\* After his mother rebukes him for screaming that hoop snakes have invaded Buxton, gullible 11-year-old Elijah confesses to readers that "there ain't nothing in the world she wants more than for me to quit being so doggone fra-gile." Inexperienced and prone to mistakes, yet kind, courageous, and understanding, Elijah has the distinction of being the first child born in the Buxton Settlement, which was founded in Ontario in 1849 as a haven for former slaves. Narrator

Elijah tells an episodic story that builds a broad picture of Buxton's residents before plunging into the dramatic events that take him out of Buxton and, quite possibly, out of his depth. In the author's note, Curtis relates the difficulty of tackling the subject of slavery realistically through a child's first-person perspective. Here, readers learn about conditions in slavery at a distance, though the horrors become increasingly apparent. Among the more memorable scenes are those in which Elijah meets escaped slaves; first, those who have made it to Canada and, later, those who have been retaken by slave catchers. Central to the story, these scenes show an emotional range and a subtlety unusual in children's fiction. Many readers drawn to the book by humor will find themselves at times on the edges of their seats in suspense and, at other moments, moved to tears. A fine, original novel from a gifted storyteller. Phelan, Carolyn

Christopher Paul Curtis was born in Flint, Michigan. After high school graduation, he worked on the assembly line of the Fisher Body Plant for 13 years, until Christopher took a year off work to write his first novel. *The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963* won a Newbery Honor and a Coretta Scott King Honor book citation in 1996. *Bud, Not Buddy* received the Newbery Medal and Coretta Scott King Award in 2000. His most recent book, *Elijah of Buxton*, has garnered multiple awards, including a Newbery Honor, the Coretta Scott King Author Award, and the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, the TD Children's Literature Book Award and the CLA Book of the Year, and was a finalist in the Governor General's Literary Award for Children's Literature. "This novel came to me in a way that was far different than any other," says Curtis. "From the word 'go' Elijah and I became close friends. When I'd go to the library to write, it was as if he were anxiously waiting for me, waiting to tell about his life, his worries, his adventures."

This is a book everyone should read. Normally I don't enjoy books that other people say, "You \*should\* read." I did learn a lot from this book, but I also enjoyed it immensely. I think it would be very difficult NOT to like Elijah. He is a very complex young man, living what seems to be a very simple life. The dialect is sometimes a bit difficult to understand. I think I would have enjoyed it even more if I had listened to someone read the first few chapters, but eventually I was able to "hear" the dialect in my head. School, riding an old mule vs. horse, fishing, parents -- it all seems normal until suddenly it doesn't. The "normal" to "oh!" can happen in a paragraph, sometimes in a single sentence. It's a book that kept me doing some mental gymnastics. It didn't just hold my interest - it kept me fascinated. In places it shocked me. In places I cried. And then I got to that amazing final chapter... It's been weeks since I first read this book (I've reread it twice) and I still don't know

exactly what I'm feeling throughout that final chapter. I feel sick. I feel proud. I'm horrified. And elated. I put the book down and try to think, but I'm feeling too much to think. I've learned a lot from Elijah of Buxton. And I'm still learning.

This has been a staple in my 5 th grade classroom. Mostly the boys tend to gravitate toward the novel. One my focus reading group selected it as their novel choice. Although the dialect was/is a little tough. Group meetings help to clarify any misinterpretations. My other groups kept asking "what's so funny" as there were many outburst of laughter. I love love this book. I included the audio with the group so they could hear the dialect from a different person. I have also done this as a whole class book and that went well. Some of my other colleagues borrowed my class set and their students enjoyed this book as well.

Joyful and tragic. Spirit soaring and gut wrenching. Laughter and tears. Such is the story of Elijah of Buxton. Only Christopher Paul Curtis can take me to the lowest depths of man's inhumanity and then bring me back on the path of hope and resilience. As always, his ability to capture the child's voice and experience is superior. Curtis will have you feeling you are that young boy growing up as the town's first child born in freedom. A must read for children and adults, for schools and for homes.

Don't tell the kids that Elijah of Buxton is an historical fiction, or they will refuse to read it. Tell them it is about an eleven year old boy who runs away from home and sneaks into another country to right a wrong he feels is his fault. Christopher Paul Curtis has once again created a young male character with brains, honor, and the innocence of youth. Elijah is the first native born child in the town of Buxton, a highly successful Canadian community of ex-slaves from the states. Through Elijah's eyes we see how the physically and emotionally beaten down adults create a strong vibrant free world for their children. We also see through Elijah's eyes, when he runs off to the USA, the terror slaves lived with every day, and the faith that allowed them to keep going in spite of the terror.

Purchased for 10 year old Daughter 4th Grade Battle of the Books. It was a challenging book to read, but one of my daughter's favorites out of the 20 books they were asked to read.

Confusing at first to see where the story was going... spent a lot of time living the life of Elijah... but then, the plot thickens and it all makes sense why we needed that build up. Nicely done. There is

always HOPE.

Elijah of Buxton is a wonderful addition to any YA novel collection. A work of historical fiction, the novel tactfully and respectfully educates readers about issues related to slavery and freedom, all while entertaining us with moments of humor and humbling us with scenes of loss and sadness. Curtis has created yet another masterful work! This novel is a must read for any middle school student and those who teach, coach, or parent them.

Buxton is a community just north of the Canadian border to which escaped slaves could flee for freedom. Elijah's parents were two such slaves, but Elijah himself was the first free child born in the community. Here he is a pre-teen, working alongside an adult, attending school and Sunday school, and engaging in mischief appropriate for his age and the time. As a character, he is easy to relate to and care for. His unique rock-throwing, chunking, skill plays interesting and sometimes humorous roles in the story. His basic good nature and sensibilities merge gracefully with his "fra-gile" side. The opening funny chapters draw the reader in well, but the characters and events keep one firmly with Elijah. A very appropriate book for an intermediate-grades reader, especially one studying U.S. history, a lone reservation is that, because the speaking is dialectically true, there are times when the speech or era-appropriate words may be unclear to a young reader ("I'm-a" or "our'n" for example or "spectacles" or "brogans"). Those moments are largely addressed if a reader's context-decoding skills are strong. In that case, I recommend this without reservation as a book to both learn from and enjoy greatly.

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