

Discussion Questions for Bud, Not Buddy

Courtesy of:



Living in Foster Homes

Why do you think life in foster homes was especially difficult during the 1930s?

How did you picture Bud's everyday life in "the home"? In the Amos's home?

Independence

Bud chose to leave the foster system and set out on his own. Why do you think Bud made this choice, while other kids chose to stay?

Bud's independent spirit helped him survive a difficult life. How might an independent spirit be helpful to a young person in different situations?

A Real Family

What makes a real family?

Are there any things we can do to help kids who are still in a difficult family situation?

The Great Depression

What did you learn in history class about the Great Depression that might apply to this story?

How did the Great Depression affect the everyday lives of parents and kids in America?

Poverty

What does it mean to live in poverty?

Poverty may cause people to take desperate measures that they wouldn't ordinarily try (such as "riding the rails" west in hopes of finding work). Do you think this still happens today? Explain.

Jazz Music

The 1920's was a time for fun. People enjoyed going out, dancing, and listening to jazz music. The 1930's was completely different, but people still enjoyed listening to jazz. Why do you think jazz was popular during this time?

In the story, Jazz music provided a good living for Herman E. Calloway's band. What do you think the life of a professional musician would be like?

Characters

Each of Bud's young friends is an interesting character, even though they are not main characters in the story. How would you describe each of these characters?

Jerry (Bud's friend at "the home")

Bug's (Jerry's friend "on the lam")

Deza (the girl Bud met at the Hooverville)

Herman E. Calloway, the band leader who turned out to be Bud's grandfather, is a character who seems to change throughout the story, or at least what we know about him changes. How would you describe Mr. Calloway during most of the story? How would you describe him at the end?