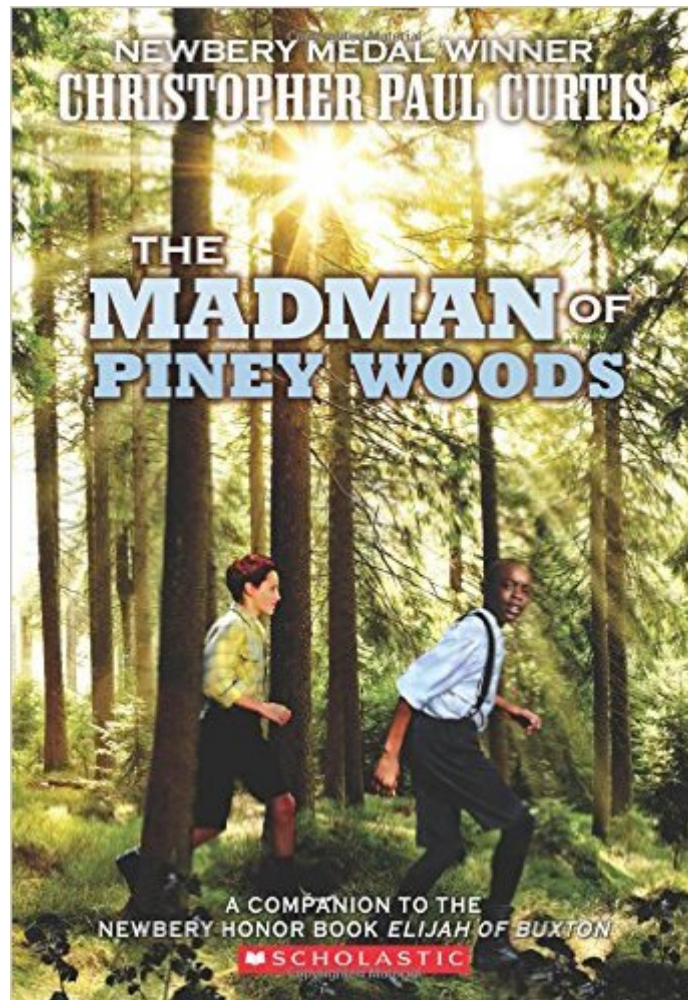


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# The The Madman Of Piney Woods



## Synopsis

Benji and Red couldn't be more different. They aren't friends. They don't even live in the same town. But their fates are entwined. A chance meeting leads the boys to discover that they have more in common than meets the eye. Both of them have encountered a strange presence in the forest, watching them, tracking them. Could the Madman of Piney Woods be real? In a tale brimming with intrigue and adventure, Christopher Paul Curtis returns to the vibrant world he brought to life in *Elijah of Buxton*. Here is another novel that will break your heart -- and fill it with joy and laughter, too.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #523,435 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Canada](#) #3661 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction](#) #6666 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Friendship](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Two boys from different cultures learn that their lives can share the same feelings of joy, hardship, love, and loss. Benji and Red appear different on the surface. Benji is from a free Black family that still can recall the outrages of slavery. Red is from an Irish family that knew the suffering of the Great Potato Famine in Ireland. Both families moved to Canada to start new lives. Benji loves the forest and spends as much time as he can surrounded by nature. Red is out of place in the woods, more of a townie. Benji loves the power of words and wants to be a newspaper man. Red is a believer in facts and wants to be a scientist. Little do they know that their shared meeting with the Wild Man of Piney Woods will teach them, and perhaps us, the meaning of friendship and love. This

is a deeply moving story. It's powerful words reach into your heart and soul. Love, hate, prejudice, and sorrow, each in their own way, sweep the reader through the pages of this excellent book. I think some of the material, most notably the descriptions of war and its savagery, may be too harsh for some readers in the suggested age group, 8-12. The book overall can be an excellent learning tool for these and older readers. Book provided for review by Scholastic Inc.

Mr. Curtis is a magician with words. His books a delicacy - savor slowly- before digesting the wisdom. Although it is not a sequel to *Elijah*- it should be shared immediately afterward. Warning to grade 4-6 teachers -as with *Elijah* there are powerfully graphic images so please read the novel before sharing. *Elijah of Buxton*, forever my favorite, but boys who are mature enough to follow two story lines will learn deep lessons.

Benji lives in Buxton and wants to be a newspaper reporter. He knows the woods around his home and he has seen the Madman of Piney Woods with his own eyes. Alvin, known as Red, lives in Chatham, wants to be a scientist and he has seen the Lion man in the woods. The woods separate the two towns of Chatham and Buxton. This story follows Benji and Red through to the climax where they must work together. Both boys have families with histories of mistreatment. Benji's family comes from slavery and Red's grandmother comes from the Irish potato famine. Considering this it is possible that these boys might not ever be able to be friends or work together. Christopher Paul Curtis has written another quality book for young readers. This is a companion book to *Elijah of Buxton*, but it is not necessary to have read that book to understand this one. How he intertwines the stories of these two boys and come to the climax of the book is wonderful writing. If I were still in a classroom I would use this text to study author craft. Excellent book for boys, action, woods, fishing, pranks and the frightening man who lives in the woods alone.

Christopher Paul Curtis provides a wealth of literature that connects historical fiction with fact. *THE MADMAN OF PINEY WOODS* by Christopher Paul Curtis is an outstanding followup to the award-winning *ELIJAH OF BUXTON*. While both are set in Ontario Canada, Curtis' latest work of historical fiction takes place in 1901 forty years after the first novel. The story follows two children one African Canadian and the other Irish Canadian living in nearby towns. After a chance encounter, the boys become friends and ultimately connect with the mysterious man living in the woods. Like *ELIJAH OF BUXTON*, Curtis' latest work weaves together a series of short adventures connecting the themes of friendship and family. Humor is used to bring these anecdotes

to life for readers, while elements of intrigue keep readers engaged. Although the two books can be read separately, youth will have a more rounded experience by reading both books while exploring the history of the area. The region is known for its involvement in the Underground Railroad and abolitionist movement of the early and mid 19th century. Also during this time period, many immigrants arrived from Ireland to escape the Potato Famine. This history lays the foundation for this turn-of-the-century story. The areas of Buxton and Chatham Ontario play an important role in this story. Use Google Maps to visit this area online. Find the Buxton National Historic Site. Visit their virtual exhibits at <http://www.buxtonmuseum.com>. To learn more, explore the Scholastic Discussion guide at <http://goo.gl/XY4ovp>. (

I loved this companion book to *Elijah of Buxton*. A tender telling of a good story, and a well-done take on black-white friendship. And a pretty good plot...so it's enjoyable on several levels. And there's nothing quite like this one.

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