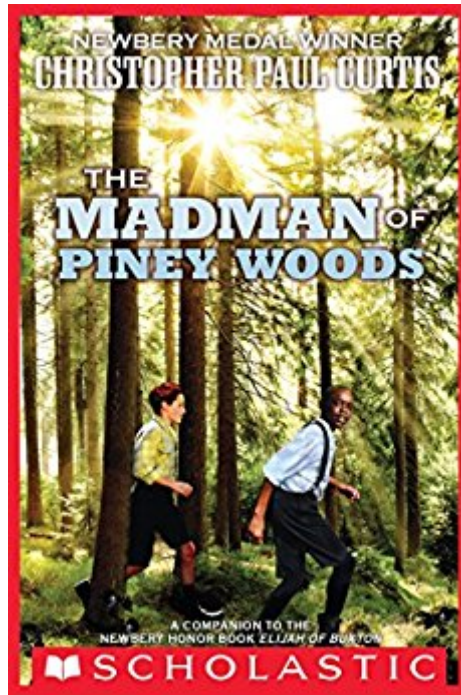


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The Madman Of Piney Woods



Synopsis

Bestselling Newbery Medalist Christopher Paul Curtis delivers a powerful companion to his multiple award-winning ELIJAH OF BUXTON. 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 expand it, too. "Humor and tragedy are often intertwined, and readers will find themselves sobbing and chuckling, sometimes in the same scene. Though this story stands alone, it will be even more satisfying for those who have read Elijah of Buxton." KIRKUS, starred review "Woven throughout this profoundly moving yet also at times very funny novel are themes of family, friendship, community, compassion, and, fittingly, the power of words"- THE HORN BOOK MAGAZINE, starred review

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Customer Reviews

No author hits it out of the park every time. No matter how talented or clever a writer might be, if their heart isn't in a project it shows. In the case of Christopher Paul Curtis, when he loves what he's writing the sheets of paper on which he types practically set on fire. When he doesn't? It's like reading mold. There's life there, but no energy. Now in the case of his Newbery Honor book *Elijah of Buxton*, Curtis was doing gangbuster work. His blend of history and humor is unparalleled and you need only look to *Elijah* to see Curtis at his best. With that in mind I approached the companion novel to *Elijah* titled *The Madman of Piney Woods* with some trepidation. A good companion book will add to the magic of the original. A poor one, detract. I needn't have worried. While I wouldn't quite put *Madman* on the same level as *Elijah*, what Curtis does here, with his theme of fear and what it can do to a human soul, is as profound and thought provoking as anything he's written in the past. There is ample fodder here for young brains. The fact that it's a hoot to read as well is just the icing on the cake. Two boys. Two lives. It's 1901, forty years after the events in *Elijah of Buxton* and Benji Alston has only one dream: To be the world's greatest reporter. He even gets an apprenticeship on a real paper, though he finds there's more to writing stories than he initially thought. Meanwhile Alvin Stockard, nicknamed Red, is determined to be a scientist. That is, when he's not dodging the blows of his bitter Irish granny, Mother O'Toole. When the two boys meet they have a lot in common, in spite of the fact that Benji's black and Red's Irish. They've also had separate encounters with the legendary Madman of Piney Woods. Is the man an ex-slave or a convict or part lion?

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