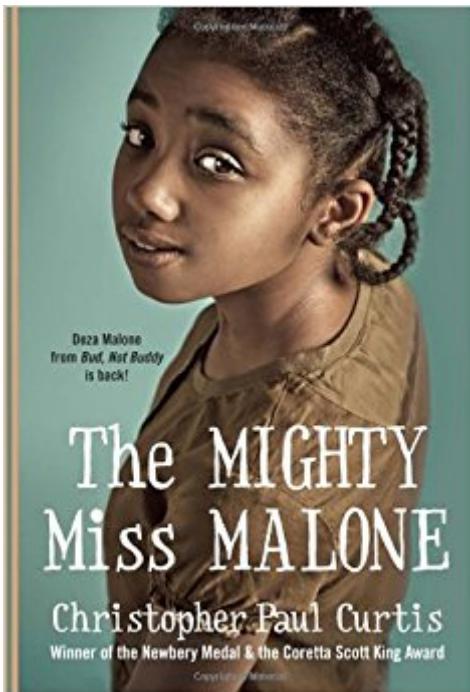


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# The Mighty Miss Malone



## **Synopsis**

"We are a family on a journey to a place called wonderful" is the motto of Deza Malone's family. Deza is the smartest girl in her class in Gary, Indiana, singled out by teachers for a special path in life. But it's 1936 and the Great Depression has hit Gary hard, and there are no jobs for black men. When her beloved father leaves to find work, Deza, Mother, and her older brother, Jimmie, go in search of him, and end up in a Hooverville outside Flint, Michigan. Jimmie's beautiful voice inspires him to leave the camp to be a performer, while Deza and Mother find a new home, and cling to the hope that they will find Father. The twists and turns of their story reveal the devastation of the Depression and prove that Deza truly is the Mighty Miss Malone.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 750L (What's this?)

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 132 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #40,686 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #68 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism #75 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s #116 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

Best Books of the Month for Kids, January 2012: The Mighty Miss Malone is one Deza Malone--dedicated student and member of a close-knit family whose motto is "we are a family on a journey to a place called Wonderful." Unfortunately, the Great Depression is taking a toll that journey, and when Deza's father leaves in search of work, the rest of the family soon has no choice but to follow. Despite the hardships, loss, and racism that defined the times, Deza never loses faith in her dreams or flags in her devotion to bringing her family together

again. Perseverance and kindness serve Deza well, and her story is a welcome new journey into familiar territory from award-winning author Christopher Paul Curtis. --Seira Wilson --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Deza Malone, 12, has a couple of big things going for her. She comes from a strong family, and she is smart as a whip. But there is plenty of bad to go along with the good. It's 1936 and her dad can't find work; her brother, Jimmie, he of the beautiful singing voice, isn't growing; and her teeth, full of cavities, require treatment of cotton soaked with camphor. Can things get worse? Certainly. Her father disappears and her mother moves the family from Gary to Flint, which lands the trio in a Hooverville shack. Then Jimmie takes off to sing. Curtis tries to do too much here. Consequently, just when readers are getting invested, the story changes course or important plot points are dropped. Deza is devastated when she overhears her father say her rotting teeth make him avert his head, but her suffering is forgotten until, at the conclusion, she goes to a dentist. On the plus side, Deza is a snappy character that will grab readers, and Curtis' portrayal of a family's love for each other feels real and true. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Newbery-winner Curtis has a huge following. Readers will be enticed by his return to the Depression-era setting of *Bud, Not Buddy* (1999) and his reintroduction of Deza, one of the characters from that book. Grades 5-7. --Ilene Cooper --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

In reading the book, *The Mighty Miss Malone*, the author shares the story of a family unit that never falters no matter the circumstances. Family comes first. Written during the Great Depression, the story unfolds of the trying times of the black community in a tough, Gary, IN. True to life are the gangs, the rotten teeth because of lack of funds to go to the dentist, and the encouragement from a wonderful teacher. While in Flint, MI for a time, character, Deza realizes that she gets a C+ for her paper not because she did badly, but because the teacher does not give grades higher than a C to a black child. I was intrigued that the history and portrayal of the Smelling vs. Lewis boxing fight. My in-laws were married on June 19, 1936 and they often spoke of this fight. I enjoyed the background history of the fight in the back of the book. This book is a true picture of the plight during the Great Depression yet the message was strong that no matter what, family stays together even if Jimmie is absent from the fold. This book is a must for purchase during 2012 and a great contribution to a church library.

Set in the Great Depression, *The Mighty Miss Malone* raises the questions of what it means to be a

family and how to keep hope alive when it seems impossible. Deza Malone is a small girl with big dreams, and she must learn to face a lot of hardships when her family is separated as her father goes out to find work. Ultimately, her resilience and creativity will serve her well as she grows up way before her time.

Deza Malone is a spitfire. She may only be twelve-years-old but her intelligence and talent at all things academic has put her on the fast track for a bright future. But when the Great Depression comes raging through her hometown of Gary, Indiana and makes it impossible for her father to find work, the Malones must now face an uncertain, ill-fated future that once looked so bright and promising. Christopher Paul Curtis writes Deza with fierce spirit despite her dire circumstances. He does not sugar coat the plight of poverty the Malone family must endure and pulls no punches for his young audience. Yet despite the fact that our young heroine experiences dashed hopes and crushed dreams, you never once feel like she's down and out. Deza's fighting spirit is a testament to her family's motto: "We are a family on a journey to a place called wonderful."

Each year, I read a novel to my children (in order to address a wide age range). This is another excellent addition to my children's library! The book gives an accurate description of the experience of many Black American families in the Depression era. Christopher Paul Curtis tells the story convincingly from the perspective of a 10-year-old girl. Excellent! We quote the book often. Read it; be sensitive to it; laugh often; be more enriched.

The book Mighty Miss Malone is a book that shows heroism and love and a lot of family bond. The characters have remarkable personalities. My favorite character was Deza, not just because she is the main character in the book ,but despite all that has happened to her she was an American girl standing up for what she wants and she is not going to back down . If she doesn't like something she says something. Deza is a loving ,warm child. Her best friend, Clarise is fortunate to have a wonderful friendship with her . They have a strong relationship. You can even say they are as close as sisters can be.

Awesome read!!!

I enjoyed spending time with Deza (the Mighty Miss Malone) and her family. I was amazed at how the author so eloquently captured the voice of a twelve-year-old girl. The relationships between

Deza and her best friend, Clarice, and her brother, Jimmie, will capture the attention of kids in this age group. I think middle school kids will love this book.

We loved this box and began reading books that dealt with the depression era last year. This is one of our favorites the characters are all memorable, we also loved Bud not Buddy by the author. My children would beg me to read them this book each night before bed. Read to and by my 4 th grader

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