

## Nigel Hinton portrays Buddy as having a somewhat miserable and unstable childhood.

I agree that Buddy's childhood is somewhat miserable and unstable, because he gets picked on at school, his mum leaves home, his dad is unemployed and they are poor. However in some ways Buddy's childhood life does have its good times, because he has some friends and he knows that his mum and dad love him a lot.

Buddy is always miserable because, Mr Normington, his teacher and the pupils in 3E constantly pick on him. They bully him, because he doesn't have any proper school trousers, so he has to wear scruffy jeans and he doesn't have a strong, tidy rucksack, so he has to carry his equipment in a plastic carrier bag. The pupils call him a dustbin man and Mr Normington said, "since you talk and look like a dustbin man, you can do a dustbin man's job." So Mr Normington made Buddy pick up the rubbish, which other people had dropped. Buddy always feels left out because; his mum and dad can never afford to give Buddy the money, to go on a school trip. So Buddy stole a £5 note from his mum's purse and his problems at home followed on soon after.

When Buddy arrives home from school his mum shouts at him for stealing the money and yells, "like father, like son – that's what you are!" She then storms out of the room and that is the last time Buddy sees her. Buddy is hurt by what his mum said, but realises that what he did was wrong. In the morning Buddy wakes up and finds out that his mum has left home and he blames himself for his mum's departure. His dad is unemployed and goes into dept. Buddy's dad can't pay the council man, so he has his Harley Davidson motorbike taken away from him and then he blames Buddy for wanting money all the time. Buddy misses his mum and he always pictures her in his mind, wishing she was there to put things right. He is sure that his dad misses her too because, one day he came in from school and caught his dad looking at a picture of his mum. Eventually Buddy gets in touch with his mum and notices how

much she has changed since he last saw her. She has short hair, she looks smart, she has a job, she has friends who laughed with her and she looks happy. Buddy every so often goes to visit her at her flat, which she shares with her friend, Joyce, but he has to be careful that his dad doesn't find out.

Buddy's dad, Terry is very irresponsible because he is never makes proper meals for Buddy, instead he buys Chinese takeaways and he is never there to help Buddy with his homework. He wears Teddy Boy clothes from the 50's, which can sometimes embarrass Buddy, e.g. when he went to Buddy's parents evening he wore a full Teddy Boy outfit. He nearly endangered Buddy's life once when he rode his bike up on to the cliffs and went too near the edge. His accent is different and Buddy sometimes finds himself correcting his dad. Terry is never at home because; he is out doing his new job, which is stealing for Des King. Buddy finds out about his dad's illegal deals with Mr King and tries to get Mr King arrested, so his dad will be safe from getting caught and so he will be able to stop stealing.

In the end Buddy's dad and a man called Ralph James Campbell are put under arrest and Mr King gets away with it. Ralph is innocent, so Terry pleads guilty and tells the court that Ralph didn't have anything to do with the crime. Terry goes to gaol for 12 months and Buddy hates himself for his dad's arrest.

The book "Buddy" tells me that Buddy's life is miserable and unstable, however it also tells me that Buddy's childhood life does have its good days. Even though Buddy does get picked on at school he still has friends such as, Julius and Charmian, who are friends with him because, they too stand out from the crowd and they can make him think that life is worth living.

His dad buys Buddy a new pair of school trousers and a new rucksack, so he doesn't have to wear his jeans or carry his equipment in a plastic bag. Mr Normington and the pupils in 3E don't pick on him as much, now that he looks a lot tidier.

Buddy knows that even though his mum left, she still loves him and only did it because, she thought it was for the

best. He also knows that his dad was only stealing so he would be able to provide Buddy's needs, (e.g. new school trousers), buy his Harley Davidson back and so they wouldn't be poor. This makes Buddy feel happier and more loved, but he knows that life doesn't always have those fairytale endings.

**By Rebecca Johnson**

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