***From The Mixed-Up Files of Basi-E-Frankweiler***

***Chapter 1***

***Synopsis:***

Sixth-grader Claudia Kincaid wants to run away, but not in the traditional fashion. She doesn't want to run away from something; rather, to something; and decides that the best way to do this is to enlist the help of one of her three brothers and that turns out to be Jamie, a nine-year-old third -grader. The reason she chooses him is simple: he's the one she can trust the most and he's also the one who saves his allowance money better than anyone else.

The reason for Claudia wanting to run away is that she's feeling unappreciated. She is the eldest of four children and the only girl. All of the household chores seem to fall to her and, quite frankly, she's had enough, so in protest, she decides that she's going to run away until her family appreciates her more.

She has hatched an elaborate plan to run away from Greenwich, Connecticut to New York City including how she and Jamie will transport their clothes. It has been decided that they will run away on Wednesday because that is music day and they each play an instrument. Claudia has instructed Jamie to take his trumpet out of his case and fill it with clothes.

On the bus home from school one day Claudia corners Jamie and tells him of her plan. At first, he's put out at not being able to sit with his friend Bruce, with whom he plays cards on the bus every day. Then he hears about Claudia's plan to run away, and why she chose him, and he's hooked.

She asks him how much money he has saved from his allowance. He hesitates to tell her, but she finally wrestles out of him that he has almost $25 saved. A fortune! When asked how Jamie came to have all this money, he explains that he and Bruce play cards for money and he beats him each week. Claudia advises Jamie she will write out the full details of her runaway plan and give it to him but he can't show the plan to anyone and once he's read it, he must destroy it.

In this first chapter, readers meet the protagonist, Claudia Kincaid, and her ally, Jamie Kincaid. Further tension is set by the thought of children running away to New York City, and readers must continue on with the story to find out where Jamie and Claudia will go.

***Summary In Detail:***

Writing to her lawyer [Saxonberg](https://www.gradesaver.com/from-the-mixed-up-files-of-mrs-basil-e-frankweiler/study-guide/character-list" \l "saxonberg), Mrs. Frankweiler explains that she found his last visit quite dull, because he cares for nothing except his grandchildren, the law, and taxes. She is writing to him now to explain certain changes that she wants to make in her last will and testament. She also remarks that he probably never knew she could write this well, but she has spent a lot of time on this file.

The narrative then shifts from first person to third person. [Claudia Kincaid](https://www.gradesaver.com/from-the-mixed-up-files-of-mrs-basil-e-frankweiler/study-guide/character-list#claudia-kincaid) has decided to run away, but she does not want to simply sprint off into the wilderness with a backpack. She likes luxury and being indoors, so she decides that she will escape to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

She has saved her allowance and has chosen her middle brother Jamie to accompany her. He is quiet, good company, and has saved almost every penny he has ever gotten.

Claudia is careful to save money for train fare from the suburbs into the city. She has decided to run away because of the injustice she perceives in her family: she has to do all the chores while her brothers get away with everything. Additionally, she is bored with her calm, monotonous life. However, Claudia does intend to return to her home after her parents learn a lesson in Claudia-appreciation; this means she must save enough for a return ticket as well.

Claudia prepares for her trip to New York City, studying maps and tour guidebooks, and practicing dealing with the hardships involved in her adventure by giving up hot fudge sundaes.

One day, while emptying the waste baskets – a task she despises, and further evidence of the injustice committed against her in her family – Claudia finds a ten-ride ticket in the garbage with only nine rides punched out. Their cleaning lady, who comes every Friday, must have accidentally thrown it away.

This discovery means that Claudia will be able to depart on her adventure far earlier than anticipated, so she resolves to tell her brother Jamie of her plan the next day.

On the bus, Jamie likes to play a card game called ‘war’ with his friend Bruce. They play the game every day, but when they leave the bus, they promise to keep their cards in the same order - even spitting on each other's decks to seal the promise. Claudia does not feel guilty about pulling Jamie away from this game.

Claudia grandly tells her brother that she has chosen him to accompany her on the adventure of a lifetime. Jamie is less than excited. Through flattery, Claudia persuades him that he was chosen, and he agrees to accompany her.

She explains the plan: they will depart on Wednesday (which is music-lessons day), and fill their instrument cases with all the clothes they will need. Then, falsely casual, she asks Jamie how much money he has. Jamie is suspicious at first, and explains that his game of war with Bruce also involves betting. Currently he has a sum of twenty-four dollars and forty-three cents, an astonishing sum for the children.

Claudia promises that she will leave a note with more detailed instructions under Jamie’s pillow. Jamie offers to eat the note after reading it in order to destroy the evidence, but Claudia says this is not necessary.

The bus stops, and Claudia irritably walks with her littlest brother, Kevin, looking forward to the day that she can leave them all behind.

***Summary:***

* The letter is one long story. Here goes:
* Claudia Kinkaid, who only likes beautiful and fancy things, has a plan. She's going to run away, but not to some icky place like a subway station or a cabin in the woods. She's going to leave on Wednesday for the decidedly beautiful Metropolitan Museum of Art.
* She decides to bring her brother Jamie for practical reasons. After all, with his second grade gambling habit, he has the most money of them all.
* Why is she running away? Because of the injustice of it all, of course. Why else do twelve-year-olds run away?
* She doesn't tell Jamie until Monday, though. Rifling through her parents' wastebasket (not the most hygienic thing to do), she finds one leftover train fare. It's their ticket to freedom.
* Claudia sits next to Jamie on the bus on Monday, much to his annoyance—he has money to gamble and win, after all.
* She tells him that they're running away on Wednesday, as though he has no choice in the matter.
* How rich is Jamie? Well let's just say that the kid has amassed a fortune of twenty-four dollars and forty-three cents. Pretty big deal.
* Like any good mysterious spy/detective/James Bond partners, they decide that Claudia will leave him all the details in a secret note. And Jamie will eat it afterwards, to destroy all the evidence.
* Genius.
* After they get off the bus, it's back to their normal lives for our super-secret runaway duo. Claudia has to walk with Kevin Brat (nice nickname), her other little brother because it's her turn.
* Your time will come, Claudia. Your time for greatness will come.