

Afterward Summary

Christopher Paul Curtis uses this section of the text to give the reader some insight and explanation for some of the choices he made in writing *Bud, Not Buddy*. He explains to the reader that although it is a fictional piece, many of the situations are based on things that actually happened in the 1930s, during the era known as the Great Depression. He goes on to unveil that several of the characters in the story were based on real people in his childhood. For example, Lefty Lewis and Herman E. Calloway are each based on one of his grandfathers. Lefty Lewis was his maternal grandfather and he spent much of the depression years carrying luggage at the train station in Grand Rapids, MI. After this time, he opened up a restaurant and then became the first African American cabdriver in Grand Rapids. He also pitched in the Negro Baseball League for some time.

Herman E. Curtis was his paternal grandfather and the inspiration behind the character Herman E. Calloway. He was a bandleader for most of his life, having attended the Indiana Conservatory of Music to study the violin, bass fiddle, accordion, and piano. Much like Grandpa Lewis, Grandpa Curtis owned several businesses in cities where it was not legal for African Americans to rent or own land. Mr. Curtis explains that his grandfathers' ambitions and skills are what allowed them to provide for their families during this drab time.

Mr. Curtis goes on to give a brief history of the hardships experienced by the majority of Americans during the Great Depression. "Parents could not feed their children...some as young as eight years old...set out on their own in search of a meal and a warm place to sleep..."

Mr. Curtis ends this section of the text by offering his readers some advice. He voices the regret he feels now, looking back on a childhood of ignoring family stories and taking for granted what his grandparents, parents, friends, and other relatives had to share about their histories. He explains how valuable oral history is and suggests to his readers: “Be smarter than I was: Go talk to Grandma and Grandpa, Mom and Dad and other relatives and friends. Discover and remember...”

About the Author Summary

Christopher Paul Curtis grew up in Flint, Michigan where he graduated from high school and began working on an assembly line at an automotive factory while earning a degree from the University of Michigan at night. He now lives in Canada with his family and is a full-time writer.

He received both the Newberry Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award for this novel. In addition, he received both these honors for his first novel, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963*.

Chapter 1 Summary

Curtis begins by introducing the reader to Bud Caldwell, a ten-year-old orphan experiencing life during the Great Depression. While standing in the breakfast line at the orphanage, a caseworker tells Bud and his six-year-old friend, Jerry, that they will be placed in temporary foster homes. Bud will live with the Amoses and their twelve-year-old son, and Jerry will live in a home with three little girls. Although this will be Bud's third foster home, his "eyes no longer cry". When Jerry starts crying, Bud comforts him by telling him that living with three girls is better than living with a twelve-year-old boy. Bud and Jerry sit side by side as Bud thinks, "here we go again".

Bud is able to cheer Jerry up, but he actually feels sorry for him because he thinks six is the tough age when people stop treating you like a kid. Bud remembers that he was six years old when his mom died and he came to live at the orphanage.

Bud carries a suitcase that carries all his possessions. Among these possessions are flyers that read: "HERMAN E. CALLOWAY and the Dusky Devastators of the Depression!!!!!!" and "Masters of the New Jazz." There is a picture of the man who Bud thinks is his father. A handwritten note at the bottom says "One Night Only in Flint Michigan." Bud remembers his mom looking at these flyers with concern shortly before she passed away.

Chapter 2 Summary

After moving in with the Amoses, problems begin to occur. One night while lying in bed, Bud is rudely awakened when Todd Amos shoves a pencil up his nose. A fight breaks out and Todd beats Bud until he gives up after managing to get in one good punch. Mrs. Amos blames Bud for the incident and tells him how ungrateful he is, promising that he will not sleep one night under her roof. Mr. Amos takes Bud to a dark, cold shed in the backyard and hides his suitcase to ensure that he will stay until morning. However, Bud sees where Mr. Amos places his suitcase and feels certain that everything will be alright.

Chapter 3 Summary

After being locked up in the shed, Bud's imagination begins to have its way with him. Bud gives an explicit description of the shed from a child's eye including his own emotions as he familiarizes himself with his surroundings. He thinks of his friend Bugs who got his name after a cockroach crawled into his ear and he had to be taken to the hospital to have it removed.

Bud finally gets comfortable enough to take a little nap, and when he wakes up, he realizes that it is still nighttime. Bud notices the "vampire bat" that Todd told him was in the shed. Before long, Bud gathers up enough courage and decides that he is going to get it before it gets him. With a mighty swing, Bud hits his supposed foe with a rake. Instead of hearing what he expected, he hears the sounds of crumbling paper and a buzz saw, and feels something like a red-hot nail on his right cheek. Bud had actually hit a hornets' nest! He eventually jumps out of the window to escape the hornets. Bud's final thought is getting revenge on the Amoses for what they had done to him.

Chapter 4 Summary

After escaping from the shed, Bud sneaks into the kitchen through an unlocked window. He checks to see that his suitcase is still under the table, and picks it up to determine if everything is still in it based on its weight. He sets the suitcase outside and looks around the kitchen. A shotgun catches his eye, and he wonders why it is sitting out in the open. As he picks it up, Bud imagines seeking revenge on the family. He imagines that he would shoot Todd first and act quickly after that, but he ultimately decides not to use the gun because it is too dangerous. Setting the gun on the porch where it is out of sight, he finds the jelly jar that he drank out of at supper and fills it with very warm water. A boy at the orphanage had told him that if you dip someone's fingers in warm water while they are sleeping they will wet the bed. Carrying the jar of water, he sneaks down the hall and into Todd's room. Bud dips Todd's chubby hands into the jar, but Todd doesn't wet the bed. Bud finally decides to pour the liquid onto Todd's pants, causing Todd to finally wet the bed. Bud gives a silent laugh because one of his favorite quotes is "he who laughs last, laughs best". Bud gets his suitcase and heads for the street.

Chapter 5 Summary

After escaping from the Amoses', Bud makes his way to the library hoping that Miss Hill, the librarian, will be there to help him. When he gets there the doors are locked. He goes and sits under giant evergreen trees and looks through his suitcase to see if the Amoses had taken anything. He finds that they hadn't but he could tell they had gone through his things because they were out of order.

As he looks through his suitcase he finds a picture of his mother that brings back memories of her. Bud recalls his mother's instructions to never let other call him Buddy: "A bud is a flower-to-be. A flower-in-waiting. Waiting for just the right warmth and care to open up. It's a little fist of love waiting to unfold and be seen by the world. And that's you." (p. 42). Although he does not yet understand it, Bud also remembers his mother telling him never to worry because when one door closes another one will open. He checks the other things in his suitcase before falling asleep.

Chapter 6 Summary

As he wakes up, Bud realizes that he has overslept and rushes down the street to the soup kitchen for breakfast. When he arrives he tries to get in line but is told that the line is closed and he will have to come back for supper later that day. Bud is upset and tries to find a way into the line, but he is unsuccessful until a man grabs him by the neck and tells him to get in line with his mom. Bud is about to tell the man that he doesn't have a mom when the man hits Bud in the head. Bud gets in line with the woman who is pretending to be his mom. He eats breakfast with his pretend family and gets a special treat, brown sugar for his oatmeal. When breakfast is over, Bud and the family separate.

Chapter 7 Summary

Bud makes his way back to the library to see Miss Hill. When he arrives, he finds out that she has gotten married and moved to Chicago. The new librarian shows Bud a copy of a book called *Atlas of the United States of America*. Together they figure how far Chicago is from Flint and they calculated how long it would take for Bud to walk there. They figure out that it will take him at least fifty hours. Bud thanks the lady for her assistance and walks out the door believing that as it closes another one will soon open.

Chapter 8 Summary

As Bud is hiding outside the library he hears something moving. To his surprise, it is his best friend Bugs who has also run away. Bugs tells Bud that he is planning on catching the train and heading out west, and Bud decides he is going with him. They find out that the train will come through the town of Hooverville, just outside of Flint. While walking in search of Hooverville, they realize they are getting close when they hear someone playing a mouth organ and smell food cooking. While hiding out in the woods, they notice that this city is actually a cardboard jungle where people who move from place to place can hide from the cops. They venture into the town and the people are very friendly and offer them food. Since they have nothing to offer in exchange for the food they have to clean the dishes. Bugs and Bud take the dishes down to the creek where Bud gets his first kiss from a girl named Deza Malone.

Bud falls asleep dreaming of his mother and Herman E. Calloway. He is awakened by a man screaming that the train is about to leave. Everyone jumps up from their sleep and runs toward it. Bud forgets one of his flyers and runs back to get it. By the time he gets to the train Bugs is already on board. Bud starts running toward Bugs, but he doesn't make it onto the train. He walks back to Hooverville and sees that there are cops burning down the cardboard jungle. Bud decides that he is going to go back to the mission and try to get breakfast because Hooverville is not longer safe.

Chapter 9 Summary

After eating breakfast by himself at the mission, Bud decides to head to the library and wait for it to open. When he notices people going in, Bud gets up from under his tree and walks into the library. He asks the librarian for the cities book that he had looked at once before and calculated the miles between Flint and Grand Rapids. Deciding that it would take him twenty-four hours to walk this distance, he decides that he will walk the first half at night. Bud spends the rest of the day in the library looking at civil war pictures out of a book that the librarian gave him. As the library closes, the librarian gives Bud a sandwich and he goes back outside to sit under his tree until it is time to begin his journey.

While he eats his cheese sandwich, Bud looks up at the huge trees around him and begins thinking that ideas are like seeds. They can grow into much bigger ideas; bigger than you could ever imagine. He continues thinking about the idea of Herman E. Calloway being his father and how it started out like a tiny seed that grew bigger than he ever thought it would. He remembers that it all started while he was in the orphanage trying to explain to others about who his parents were. Taking out his flyers, he looks at each one, puts them back into his suitcase, stands up and prepares to head west.

Chapter 10 Summary

Bud has been walking for quite some time when he notices some unfamiliar sounds. Rather than the sounds of car horns and yelling people that he heard in Flint, Bud begins to hear what he describes as country; mice, cats, and “the sounds of mouse bones and big skeletons being busted up by the teeth of bigger things.”

As cars pass by, Bud ducks into the bushes in order to stay hidden. Bud becomes tired from walking and forgets to hide as a man in a passing car stops after spotting him. The man yells for Bud to come out of the bushes saying that he has no business being out on the streets of Owosso, Michigan at 2:30 in the morning. Bud continues to hide, scared to face the man. He is soon lured out with the promise of a sandwich, an apple, and pop.

As Bud comes out from the bushes, the man begins to question him about where he has run away from. Instead of telling the truth, Bud comes up with the “perfect lie,” telling the man that he ran away from Grand Rapids. The man says he just came from there and proceeds to walk Bud to his car. He tells Bud how lucky he is that someone stopped to help him. The man explains matter-of-factly that “...Owosso folks used to have a sign hanging along here that said...‘To Our Negro Friends Who Are Passing Through, Kindly Don’t Let the Sun Set on Your Rear End in Owosso!’”

As the man helps Bud into the car, Bud sees a box labeled “URGENT: CONTAINS HUMAN BLOOD!!!” Bud’s imagination decides that this man must be a vampire. As the man tells Bud that he will send a telegram to his folks in Grand Rapids and return him in the morning, Bud locks himself in the car, slides over to the driver’s seat, and attempts to escape by driving the car away from the “vampire man” who is running close behind.

Chapter 11 Summary

As the “vampire man” is chasing close behind, Bud stalls the car and is caught. He questions Bud as to why he tried to steal the car, and Bud explains that he thinks the man is a vampire since he is carrying human blood in his car. After the man gives Bud several reasons as to why he cannot be a vampire, Bud cautiously lets him in. The man begins questioning Bud about his family, discovering that they both know Herman E. Calloway, Bud’s supposed father. Bud finds out the man’s name is Lefty Lewis, and before long, Bud is enjoying a sandwich and pop. He falls asleep while thinking of “answers that would get me to Grand Rapids for sure!”

Bud eventually awakes to the sound of a woman’s voice. He hears the woman and Lefty talking about him and realizes that he is in an unfamiliar bed. Once he gets out of bed, Bud is introduced to the woman, who is Lefty’s daughter, Mrs. Sleet. She tells Bud to wash up and come downstairs for breakfast. After washing, Bud finds clean clothes waiting for him on the bed. Once downstairs at the breakfast table, he sees Mrs. Sleet, Lefty, and his two grandchildren, Kim and Scott. When Bud introduces himself as Bud-not-Buddy, Kim laughs at this and lightly teases him. When Scott asks Bud if he really is running away from home, Bud thinks for a minute about a lie. However, Scott can tell that he is going to lie. He continues asking Bud questions about his dad and his reasons for running away. Kim finally makes a deal to sing for Bud if he will answer one question; she asks him how his mother died. Bud explains that dying is only sad when the person suffers, but his mother died quickly.

Once Mrs. Sleet and Mr. Lewis reenter the room, Bud is surprised to see the family talking after saying grace. At the orphanage, he was never allowed to talk after

saying grace. Bud listens to the many conversations going on. Mrs. Sleet explains to him that a redcap is a man at the railroad station that loads trains and takes bags to the cars. This is what her husband does, and Lefty is a Pullman porter, someone who takes care of people once they are on the train. Bud carefully watches everyone for cues on how they eat, how much they eat, and the timing of their eating.

Chapter 12 Summary

Bud and Mr. Lewis have had breakfast and are now leaving the Sleets home. Once in the car, Mr. Lewis tells Bud that he has sent a telegram to Herman E. Calloway to let him know that he will be bringing Bud home today. He makes mention of the Log Cabin and asks Bud if Calloway still owns the club. Bud fakes his way through the conversation and begins to think how confused Herman Calloway must have been when he read the telegram.

As they are driving to the Log Cabin club, a siren goes off. Bud assumes he has been caught, but Mr. Lewis tells Bud to listen carefully and do what he says. He has Bud hide a box underneath the seat. As the police officer questions Lefty Lewis, Bud begins to question everything Lefty had told him. After searching the car and finding nothing, the police officer says he is on the look out for “stinking labor organizers” that have been sneaking up from Detroit. Mr. Lewis acts like he does not know about any of that and the officer finally bids them a safe drive. Mr. Lewis explains to Bud that labor organizers are like a family who work together to make things better for themselves and their children. After hearing this, Bud is even more confused. If they are good, why are the cops after them? Mr. Lewis tells Bud to get the box out from under his seat. When he looks into the box, it is just a stack of papers. Mr. Lewis tells him it is for some labor organizers to help them get the word out, but he is just picking the papers up for them. Mr. Lewis explains how much trouble they would have been in if these papers were discovered.

Before long, Bud is back to sleep again. When he wakes up, Mr. Lewis asks him if the area looks familiar; Bud lies and says yes. As they get nearer to their destination, Bud begins to get nervous. When the Log Cabin is finally in sight, Bud sees the sign

with his father's name and band on it and notices the band has a different name. He concludes that his father has joined a new band.

Mr. Lewis eventually agrees to let Bud walk into the Log Cabin alone. He gets rid of Mr. Lewis by making him believe that he has talked to his father and that his father is not even upset that he has run away. When he goes into the dark club, he sees six men on the stage. Bud listens for a while before approaching the band. Bud hears Mr. Calloway telling a story about his days as a boxer and knowing when it does not make sense to keep going. He remembers thinking the same thing when he was fighting Todd Amos. This is all it takes to convince Bud that he has found his father.

As Bud gets closer, he notices that Calloway is very old. When Calloway asks Bud what he is here for, Bud replies that he has come to meet his father. Everyone looks at the drummer who denies Bud being his son. Right away Bud tells him, "You ain't my daddy" and points at Herman E. Calloway and says, "You know it's you." Bud is glad that his eyes no longer cry; he does not want these men to think he is a baby.

Chapter 13 Summary

Bud is surrounded by the band members who get quiet when he claims that Herman E. Calloway is his father. A man named Jimmy asks if his name is Bud. He guesses this from a telegram that was sent by Mr. Lewis earlier. Mr. Calloway gets angry and tells Bud not to go accusing him of being his father. They ask about Bud's mother, and he tells them that she has been dead for four years now. Mr. Calloway says that Bud is disturbed and does not know who his father is. They want to know who was looking after Bud, but Bud is careful how he answers. Jimmy says that Mr. Calloway could not be his father and that someone in Flint is probably worried about him. Bud goes on to explain that he has no one in Flint. Bud explains the trouble he had with the Amoses and how he was on the run. After Bud explains his story, the men tell him to go wait at the door while they talk about this. After they finish talking, they invite Bud to the Sweet Pea restaurant if he agrees to do some explaining. After spending some time with him, Bud begins to wish that mean old Calloway is not his father.

Jimmy introduces himself and all of the other members of the band. Steady Eddie has Bud helping load the car with the instruments. Doo-Doo Bug told Bud to stop the "sir" stuff with everyone except the two old folks: Jimmy and Mr. Calloway. After Steady Eddie tells one band member to stop picking on Bud, Bud decides that Steady Eddie was his favorite of the group. After they finish loading up the car and get in, the Thug asks how Bud knew that Mr. Calloway was his father. Bud tells him that his mother let him know through the collections she left behind. After being silenced by the news that Bud's mother was only twenty-six when she died, Steady Eddie says that Bud is an alright guy and must be strong to have gone through that.

Chapter 14 Summary

Dining in a restaurant for the first time in his life, Bud is overwhelmed by many wonderful smells. The band members are regular customers at the restaurant, and they have a special table reserved just for them. Bud is introduced to Miss Thomas, the band's singer, and he thinks she is beautiful. Miss Thomas expresses concern about Bud's many hornet stings, and he responds by telling her all about his experience at the Amoses' house. After telling Miss Thomas that his mother passed away four years ago, Bud is asked where his father is, to which he responds with a point in Mr. Calloway's direction. Of course, Miss Thomas assures him that Mr. Calloway couldn't be his father. Despite Miss Thomas' interest in Bud, Mr. Calloway makes it clear that he doesn't want to have anything to do with him.

Within minutes Bud is served the biggest meal of his life: meatloaf, mashed potatoes, okra, and sweet potato pie with whipped cream. In all the excitement, Bud is overcome with emotion and begins to cry uncontrollably. Although he is deeply embarrassed by his tears, Miss Thomas comforts Bud by pulling him into her lap and saying, "Go ahead and cry, Bud, you're home."

Chapter 15 Summary

Bud arrives at Mr. Calloway's home, which is nicknamed Grand Calloway Station because of the nonstop traffic of people there. Once inside, Miss Thomas takes Bud upstairs to the room where he will sleep. Bud is a little afraid of the closet doors, which he describes as being the perfect size for a Frankenstein to pop out of. He asks Miss Thomas if those two doors are locked, even though he doesn't want her to think he is a baby. She laughs and tells him she doesn't think they are locked, but that the closet only contains a young girl's clothes and toys. Bud asks if the little girl will mind him sleeping in her bed, and Miss Thomas says he doesn't need to worry because the little girl is gone. Bud immediately recalls from his list of rules that "Gone = Dead!"

Miss Thomas says goodnight to Bud and leaves. As soon as she is gone, Bud jams a chair under the doorknob of one of the closets and tries to figure out how to get the dresser underneath the other one. He stops when he overhears Miss Thomas and Mr. Calloway arguing. Bud is hoping Mr. Calloway will find another place for him to sleep when the door swings open. Mr. Calloway barges into the room and proceeds to lock both of the closets. He whispers to Bud so Miss Thomas can't hear: "You've got the rest of them fooled, but not me. There's something about you that I don't like. I'm going to find out what your game is and believe you me, scamp, you're going back where you belong." Mr. Calloway slams the door, and then pops back in to warn Bud not to snoop around. Finally, Bud is able to lie down on the bed and imagine his mother reading him a story until he falls fast asleep.

Chapter 16 Summary

Bud wakes up from a good night's rest and realizes that his clothes have been neatly folded and placed in the chair. This reminds him of his mother, because she used to do the same thing. After hearing people talking downstairs, Bud ventures toward the kitchen where Miss Thomas and Mr. Calloway are talking, and he fears that they are planning to send him back to the orphanage.

Eventually, Bud enters the kitchen and is greeted by everyone except Mr. Calloway who stands up and goes outside. Miss Thomas tells Bud she would like for him to stay with them for a while if it is okay with the people in Flint, and Bud is glad to hear this. She also warns him that he will need to help out around the house and be especially patient with Mr. Calloway. In a more serious tone, Miss Thomas tells Bud he is a godsend to them and that he must always remember that.

Steady Eddie then asks Bud why he likes his old, raggedy suitcase so much. Bud says it's because his mother's things are in there, and Steady Eddie gives Bud his old saxophone case to carry those things in instead. Bud is ecstatic! As if this wasn't enough, Steady Eddie also gives Bud a recorder of his very own. All the members of the band welcome Bud to the family and nickname him Sleepy LaBone, making him an official member of the group.

Chapter 17 Summary

While mopping the floor of the venue where Herman E. Calloway and The Dusky Devastators of Depression are going to perform, Bud pretends that he is in the book Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea. Noticing that the members of the band are putting their instruments on stage, Bud wrings out his mop, and hears someone yell, “One, two, one, two, three.” As he looks up, he sees Thug brushing his sticks across the round gold metal thing next to his drums. He thinks that it sounds like a soft rain commencing to fall on someone’s tin roof. The Dirty Deed starts playing the piano in unison with the drums, sounding like what Bud imagines Niagara Falls to sound like. Then Steady Eddie puts his saxophone in his mouth and blows, making it “talk.” Miss Thomas, Mr. Jimmy, and Herman E. Calloway come in and Mr. Jimmy picks up his horn and joins in the “storm” as Bud calls it. Sitting on a stool, Miss Thomas begins to sing while Herman E. Calloway plays his giant fiddle. Bud notices that she is so good at singing that she doesn’t have to sing real words. Mostly she was saying things like, “La da de da de da da, ha whee a ho, ha whee a ho, ha whee a day.” Bud said, “Then Steady Eddie would answer on the saxophone and before you knew it, the two of them were having a regular conversation.” Finally Miss Thomas begins singing, “We haven’t met since then, gee, but it’s nice to see you again, nice to see you, to see you again” and then the storm was over. The last thing that Bud hears is the Thug and the thunder from Herman E. Calloway getting farther and farther away, like the storm had and blown itself into the next county. Then it was dead quiet. While Bud claps loudly, Miss Thomas stands up and does a curtsy bow. Bud says, “I could see now why this band got to have six exclamation points behind their name!”

Summary Chapter 18

Bud has been living with Miss Thomas and the band at Grand Calloway Station for about a week. This is his third road trip with the band. As usual, the guys in the band are giving each other a hard time. They are discussing why there is only one white guy in the band. They say that Mr. Calloway always has a white man in his band so that he can handle the business. African Americans are not allowed to own property so it is in the white man's name. He also goes out and books shows because a lot of white people will not hire the band if they know they are a black band.

They play that night, and the next morning they load the instruments back into the car. Bud has to stay with Mr. Calloway and ride back to Grand Rapids with him. Before they are about to leave, Bud notices Mr. Calloway kicking around some rocks. He tells Bud to pick one up for him. Bud does not understand why he wants the rock, so he asks him. Mr. Calloway tells Bud it is a bad habit. Then, he shows Bud all the rocks he has collected in his glove box. They all have dates and places written on them. When Bud sees the rocks he tells Mr. Calloway that he has some just like them. After they arrive back in Grand Rapids, he shows the rocks to Mr. Calloway who becomes very angry and accuses Bud of stealing his rocks. Bud finally explains that he got them from his mother. Once this is revealed, everyone realizes that Mr. Calloway is Bud's grandfather.

Chapter 19 Summary

Mr. Calloway locks himself in his room after finding out that Bud's mother is his long lost daughter. Bud does not understand why he is so upset and thinks it is because he just found out that Bud is his grandson. Jimmy and Miss Thomas ask Bud if he has a picture of his mother so that they can be certain she was, in fact, Herman's daughter. As Bud walks up to his room he finds Mr. Calloway in tears. He begins to walk away but changes his mind and enters the room. He gets his suit case and pulls out the picture of his mother, and as he leaves the room, he goes to Mr. Calloway to comfort him.

As Bud goes back down stairs with the picture and shows it to Jimmy and Miss Thomas, they are surprised to discover the little girl in the picture is really Mr. Calloway's daughter. Bud realizes that the room that he was sleeping in was not just some dead girl's room; it was in fact his mothers' bedroom. When Bud asks why Mr. Calloway never came to visit them, Miss Thomas explains that he did not know anything about Bud or where his mother had gone. Miss Thomas sends Jimmy upstairs to get a more recent picture of Bud's mother. Handing the picture to Bud, she tells him that she has been holding on to it until its "rightful" owner came. She tells him not to worry anymore because now he is home.

Miss Thomas tells Bud that his mom's mysterious collections had been given to her by her father. When she was a little girl, she told him that she wanted a "wock" from Chicago. He had been collecting rocks from each city he played in, writing the name of the city and the date on each one. Miss Thomas explains to Bud that his mom's death is a shock to Mr. Calloway and with time his hurt would subside. Miss Thomas goes upstairs to console Mr. Calloway while the rest of the band members walk through the back door,

placing a suitcase on the table. Steady Eddie tells Bud that the band members have a surprise for him. Bud opens the case, finds a saxophone, and is very excited about his gift. He promises the band members that he will be playing on stage with them within three weeks.

He returns to his mother's room, pulls out his sax case and begins to unpack. Keeping the Flint rock for himself, Bud carries the rest of the rocks and his collection of flyers to Mr. Calloway. Bud goes back to his room and begins to experiment with his new instrument, realizing that it may take a little longer than three weeks before he can play with the band. He turns to his mother's picture and says, "Here we go again, Momma, only this time I can't wait!" He closes his eyes and begins to practice some more.