***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 26***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Chapter 26. Grayson continues to share stories of his life as a pitcher and his talks soon transition into baseball “lessons” for Maniac. Although Grayson is much too old to actually pitch, he teaches his signature move, the stopball, to Maniac. As summer turns into fall, Grayson begins to realize a collection of books is gathering in the band shell and questions Maniac. Maniac reveals he has been taking the money Grayson gives him and has been using it to buy books at the library’s used book sale. The chapter culminates with Grayson admitting he doesn’t know how to read and asking Maniac to help him learn.

***Summary and Analysis Part by part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

Pretty soon, [Grayson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/earl-grayson) and [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) start tossing a baseball back and forth during these stories. Before long, Grayson is giving Maniac informal instruction while they talk. The old man’s hands can no longer grip a baseball, except for a pitch called a “stopball,” which he claims always stops just as it crosses home plate. Maniac knows Grayson must be telling a tall tale—yet, no matter how hard he tries, he can never hit a “stopball” out of the infield.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Like Maniac, Grayson has his own improbable talents, and Maniac’s friendship and trust gradually coaxes those secrets out into the open. Love and personal connection are founded on such shared experiences and mutual recognition of each other’s value.

***Summary Part 2:***

As fall progresses, [Grayson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/earl-grayson) eventually discovers that [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) has been collecting books and spending his mornings studying. Grayson has been giving Maniac a small daily Krimpet allowance, but Maniac has been spending it all on the library’s used book sale. He’s collected everything from geometry to travel books to mysteries to astronomy. A couple of days later, as they’re tossing a baseball around, Grayson casually asks Maniac, “So why don’t you go ahead and teach me how to read?”

***Analysis Part 2:***

Grayson’s abrupt admission that he’s illiterate comes as a surprise, after he and Maniac have already established a mutually trusting relationship. Maniac trusts by this point that Grayson won’t force him to attend school, and Grayson trusts Maniac with the knowledge that he’s never learned to read.