***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 34***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Chapter 34. On his second night in the shelter, Maniac hears two little voices from a nearby cabin. The next morning, he steps out to investigate and finds two eight-year-old boys in the next cabin. Maniac discovers the boys are heading to Mexico and have stolen food from a local grocery store to live off of. Maniac lies to the boys and tells them he is a pizza delivery boy there to inform them that they have won a pizza contest. The boys fall for Maniac’s lie and follow him to Cobble’s Corner pizza parlor under the assumption Maniac will feed them and tell them a shortcut to Mexico. After the boys have eaten their pizza, they tell Maniac that he is welcome to stay at their house for the night. As they walk, Maniac spots John McNab heading straight toward him. The boys cling tightly to Maniac and he soon realizes the boys are McNab’s brothers.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

During [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee)’s second night in the Valley Forge cabin, he hears voices—little kids’ voices. The next morning, he drags himself out into the cold and peeks into the neighboring cabin. Two little boys, one with a missing tooth and the other with a screechy voice, stare back at him. They inform Maniac that they’re running away to Mexico. Maniac hides a smile at this and explains that Mexico is pretty far away. The kids show him the bag of candy, cupcakes, and even butterscotch Krimpets they’ve brought along for provisions.

***Analysis Part 1:***

True to his character, the only thing that can jolt Maniac out of his surrender to grief and death is the possibility that someone else needs him—in this case, two little runaway kids. In keeping with the story’s theme of community, connection with other people is a big part of what makes life worth living.

***Summary Part 2:***

The kids reveal that they’re [Piper and Russell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/piper-and-russell-mcnab), from Two Mills. [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) tells them that they’ve won a large pizza from Cobble’s Corner, and that if they walk back to Two Mills with him, he’ll show them a shortcut to Mexico. After polishing off their pizza, the boys agree to spend the night at their house before trying again for Mexico. As they leave Cobble’s, [Giant John McNab](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/giant-john-mcnab) suddenly stomps toward them. The little boys cling to Maniac as McNab demands, “So what’re you doing with my little brothers?”

***Analysis Part 2:***

Without even thinking about it, Maniac commits himself to making sure of the little boys’ safety, showing again that he’s oriented toward seeing and answering the needs of other people. What he doesn’t anticipate is that the boys will entangle him in the tensions of Two Mills once again.