***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 35***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Chapter 35. John’s brothers, Russell and Piper, convince him Maniac wasn’t kidnapping them but rather had been helping. Maniac is granted permission to stay over and when he goes into the McNab’s house he finds it in a state of utter chaos. As Maniac walks through the house, he finds trash piled on the floor, paint peeling from the walls, and gaping holes in the ceilings. A burly tattooed father, Big John, shows up with hamburgers and the boys fight bitterly over them. The remainder of the night consists of a visit from the Cobras who drink beer and smoke with the younger kids while playing football in the house. Maniac finally drifts off to sleep while asking himself, “Who’s the orphan here, anyway?”

***Analysis (Ch31-35):***

Christmas has arrived and Maniac and Grayson celebrate with a special gift exchange. Grayson gives Maniac his baseball mitt from the minors and the young boy is touched by Grayson’s generosity and selflessness. Maniac has found an address and a father figure in Grayson. However, Maniac’s pinnacle of happiness is short-lived.

Grayson dies 5 days later and Maniac is in a state of shock. Rather than report his death, Maniac spends the day with the man he looked at as a father figure. Grayson’s death is yet another shocking blow to a boy who has lost virtually everything important to him.

At Grayson’s funeral, Maniac is the only mourner. This further solidifies the idea that Grayson and Maniac were both alone in the world without each other.

In a state of depression, Maniac struggles to survive and has all but given up hope. Upon finding two rough and tumble boys, Russell and Piper, Maniac is once again given a small purpose and a reason to return to Two Mills. Maniac attempts to get the boys back home where they are safe and soon discovers they are the brothers of John McNab. Although he is stepping right back into the problems that led him to leave Two Mills, Maniac feels he’s right where he needs to be. He understands Russell and Piper are in need of guidance and direction and their situation leads him to wonder who the orphan of this situation really is.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) learns that [Piper and Russell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/piper-and-russell-mcnab) run away from home almost every other week. When the little boys find out who Maniac is, they can’t stop laughing—they know the story of Maniac bunting [Giant John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/giant-john-mcnab)’s “fastfrog” pitch. Maniac doesn’t like seeing the kids laugh at their older brother, so he invents a story about John throwing a pitch he couldn’t hit (he’s actually describing [Grayson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/earl-grayson)’s “stopball”). After that, Giant John lets his brothers bring Maniac home.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Even though Maniac has every reason to dislike and fear Giant John, he doesn’t want John’s little brothers to shame him, so he helps him save face—again showing Maniac’s character and concern for the dignity of others.

***Summary Part 2:***

The McNabs’ house reeks. The first thing [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) sees is a mutt peeing on the floor. Nobody cleans it up. The whole house, in fact, is covered with waste and trash of various kinds. There’s a hole in the ceiling. The refrigerator contains nothing but mustard and beer. And there are roaches everywhere.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The minute Maniac steps inside the McNabs’ house, he realizes it’s not much of a home. The kids are obviously neglected, and it’s a far from nurturing environment.

***Summary Part 3:***

A tattooed man in a sleeveless sweatshirt—[George McNab](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/george-mcnab)—comes home with a Burger King bag. He immediately starts chugging a beer, unconcerned about [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee)’s presence in his kitchen. [Piper and Russell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/piper-and-russell-mcnab) run in and start squabbling over the food.

***Analysis Part 3:***

As reflected by the neglected environment, the boys’ father seems to put the minimum of effort into caring for them, too.

***Summary Part 4:***

To [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee), the rest of that night is like “scenes from a loony movie.” The Cobras come over to smoke and drink beer with [Giant John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/giant-john-mcnab). [Piper and Russell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/piper-and-russell-mcnab) join the bigger kids in smoking and drinking. There’s a football game in the living room. A box turtle randomly appears from behind the stove. Russell and Piper fire toy machine guns at the departing Cobras, telling Maniac that this is how they’re going to take down the “enemy”—from the East.

***Analysis Part 4:***

The McNabs’ home is the opposite of a place of love and flourishing. The little kids don’t receive any guidance or encouragement, and they’ve been taught to harbor hostility toward people who are different from them—namely, toward people from the East End.

***Summary Part 5:***

Early in the morning, [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) lies between [Piper and Russell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/piper-and-russell-mcnab) in bed and wonders what he’s doing here—and who is truly the orphan in this situation. Downstairs, he hears [George McNab](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/george-mcnab) come home, drunk.

***Analysis Part 5:***

From this sad situation, Maniac recognizes that, though he’s technically an orphan, he’s known far better homes than the McNab kids have.