***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 38***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Chapter 38. Maniac agrees to go to the East End and is sent off by a crowd of thirty kids at the corner of Hector Street. Maniac walks four blocks past Hector and is greeted by a taller, meaner Mars Bar. Mars challenges Maniac to a race. Children and adults show up to witness this monumental race and Bump Gilliam, a friend of Mars, starts the race. As they run, Maniac contemplates what will happen if he wins the race but his thought process is too slow. Before Maniac knows it, he beats Mars. The crowd goes wild for “White Lightning” and Maniac feels pure joy and exuberance in that moment. That feeling quickly fades and Maniac heads off. As he’s leaving, he runs into Hester and Lester who lead him to the Beale’s home on Sycamore Street.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

About 30 kids follow [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) as far as Hector Street. Maniac isn’t afraid of anyone in the East End. He’s more afraid of the problems his presence might cause. After four blocks, he hears a familiar call of “Yo—fishbelly!” It’s [Mars Bar](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mars-bar-thompson). Mars Bar brags to Maniac about how “bad” he’s become and shows off his expensive new sneakers. He also informs Maniac that he's been working out. He challenges Maniac to a footrace.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Maniac fulfills the kids’ request to make the most daring boundary-crossing of all (in their eyes) by entering the East End. He’s quickly met by his old nemesis, who still feels like he has something to prove to Maniac.

***Summary Part 2:***

The race is arranged then and there. Seemingly all the kids of the East End pour into the streets; mothers watch out windows; traffic is detoured. Even as the crowd finally grows silent and the race starts, [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) isn’t sure what to do. He wants to win, of course, but he’s also thinking about his competitor, and where he’s racing, “and what the consequences might be if he won.” Yet, when [Mars Bar](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mars-bar-thompson) gains the lead, Maniac instinctively bursts ahead—and wins.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Unlike his previous visit to the East End, Maniac is wiser now. After his experience with Cobble’s Knot, he knows that this race could have complex, unintended implications, no matter what his personal intentions. This shows how much Maniac has matured since he was expelled from town the previous summer.

***Summary Part 3:***

The crowd goes crazy. [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) won the race running backwards. Maniac can’t figure out why he did it. Was he trying to show up [Mars Bar](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mars-bar-thompson) and get back at him? Even amid the exuberance of winning, he sees the hatred in Mars Bar’s eyes. Maniac is carried along by a boisterous crowd, wishing he could just escape back to the West End, when suddenly he hears the familiar squeals of [Hester and Lester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters). He’s on Sycamore Street, and [Amanda](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/amanda-beale) and [Mrs. Beale](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mrs-beale), beaming, are coming out of their house.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Maniac’s normalcy comes through here—he’s a typical kid who instinctively wants to win, even to show off a little. Even though he’s rewarded by a reunion with his beloved Beales, he knows that his victory will prove to be costly for his relationship with Mars Bar.