***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 39***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Chapter 39. After a tearful yet joyful reunion with the Beales, Maniac takes off early the next morning. When he returns to the West End, Russell and Piper are genuinely happy for his safe return. As Maniac walks into the McNab’s house, he sees a group bringing cinder blocks into the living room. McNab is creating a “pillbox”, a type of fortress, in his house. He’s also securing the windows with bars, creating a steel door, and barricading the house. When Maniac questions why they are doing this, George McNab states he is trying to prepare for an impending East Enders’ revolt. McNab fears the East Enders will take over the city by summer looting and killing all in their path.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The next morning, [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) emerges from the Beales’ house, still overjoyed from the previous day’s reunion. He runs back to the West End. [Piper and Russell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/piper-and-russell-mcnab) are genuinely surprised and relieved to see him, thinking the East Enders had surely killed him. When they enter the McNabs’ house, he sees [George McNab](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/george-mcnab), [Giant John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/giant-john-mcnab), and some of the Cobras lugging cinder blocks inside.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Even though Maniac is happiest with the Beales, he is faithful to his commitment to the McNab boys. The boys believe that the East Enders are vicious—and when Maniac returns to their house, he gets a clearer picture of why.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) realizes that the McNabs are following through on their plans to build a “pillbox”—a defense against an expected invasion by the “rebels,” which is what they call the East Enders. Maniac talked to [Giant John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/giant-john-mcnab) about it once in an attempt to understand—Giant John is convinced that the black residents of the East End are preparing to overrun the West End. Now that the McNabs are putting their plan into action, Maniac finds that their wretched house feels more unclean than ever.

***Analysis Part 2:***

While Maniac has encountered racist misconceptions before—through Grayson, for example—those were often in a subtler form. Here, he’s confronted with the full poison of the McNabs’ beliefs about their black neighbors.