***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 44***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Chapter 44. As Maniac runs every morning, he begins to sense someone is traveling with him. Although he soon realizes the person following him is Mars, the two never speak. One morning as Maniac and Mars are cruising Main Street, Piper McNab frantically runs to Maniac. Unable to understand what he’s saying, Maniac and Mars follow Piper to a tall platform of the P&W Trolley Terminal. On the trestle, high above the river, Russell is paralyzed in fear at the realization of how high he is above the water. A train is making its way down the trestle and Piper is growing ever more frantic and begging Maniac to save his brother. Maniac calmly turns around and leaves the scene as if he is unaware of the whole situation.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

As summer wears on, [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) sometimes thinks he hears a second set of footsteps during his early morning runs. And one day, he turns a corner and runs into [Mars Bar](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mars-bar-thompson). From then on, they encounter each other often—sometimes running in the same direction, but on opposite sides of the street. Eventually, without a word, they start meeting along their route and silently running together, matching their pace.

***Analysis Part 1:***

It seems as if Mars Bar is seeking something, too. In their shared search through their town, Maniac and Mars Bar gradually begin finding an unspoken harmony with one another.

***Summary Part 2:***

One day, [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) and [Mars Bar](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mars-bar-thompson) are running down Main Street when they’re stopped by a sobbing [Piper McNab](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/piper-and-russell-mcnab), who is covered in mud. They follow him to the platform for the P & W trolley. Gradually, they piece together what’s happened. Piper had been sailing his raft down the river, and [Russell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/piper-and-russell-mcnab) was supposed to “bomb” him with rocks from above. But, high on the trolley trestle, Russell got scared and froze—and now a trolley is coming. Piper begs Maniac to save his brother. But Maniac stares unblinkingly at the trestle and walks away.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Russell and Piper’s emergency looks like a prime opportunity for Maniac to rise to the occasion and be the hero once again. Yet this expectation is completely subverted by Maniac’s traumatized response. It’s not completely unexpected, given Maniac’s avoidance of the trestle earlier in the story. It’s an expression of his deep-seated grief over his losses.