***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 10***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Chapter 10. Maniac makes his way through the streets of the East End, noticing there are more kids out than the day he met Amanda in the neighborhood. Soon, he is confronted by a troublemaker named Mars Bar Thompson who asks him where he’s going. Maniac replies that he is headed to Sycamore Street, the street Amanda lives on, and asks for help to find it. Mars refuses to help him and attempts to take Maniac’s book. Upon retrieving the book, Mars notices a page has been ripped. The discussion between the boys begins to get heated when suddenly a woman arrives and puts a broom between the two. The woman demands Mars give Maniac back his book’s first page and Mars reluctantly gives it back crumpled. The woman recommends Maniac leave before he finds himself in a situation she can’t get himself out of.

***Analysis (Chapters 6-10)***

Now that the author has established Maniac will be a legend, the story begins. Maniac continues his journey around town by sneaking into dinner at the Pickwell’s home. The Pickwells are kind and generous people, which Maniac recognizes. Although the Pickwells are the first welcoming family Maniac meets, he will come across many wonderful people throughout the story. The inherent kindness of these characters revitalizes him and restores his faith in people.

Maniac continues to the baseball field where he meets his first antagonist, a hateful and mean John McNab. Sensing McNab’s feeling of superiority, Maniac challenges McNab’s strikeout record and wins, much to McNab’s dismay. This act marks the first of many times Maniac will use his talents and strengths to change people’s opinions of themselves and others.

McNab and his gang of friends attempt to even the score by finding and beating Maniac up. Their attempt is thwarted, however, when Maniac crosses the invisible line separating the white West End and the black East End. The invisible line symbolizes the separation that exists in the town; a separation so clear that it can be portrayed by a line of division between the neighborhoods.

Upon crossing the invisible line, Maniac meets the story’s second antagonist, a character named Mars Bar Thompson. Mars makes it clear that Maniac is not welcome in the East End neighborhood. Maniac has yet to realize Mars doesn’t want him in his neighborhood because he is white.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

At the moment, [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) is just glad he’s no longer being chased. He catches his breath. He recognizes some of the streets from his wanderings and from the day he met Amanda. But today is Saturday, and the streets are filled with kids. One kid plants himself directly in front of Maniac. Maniac steps back, and the kid steps forward. They make their way down the block this way, the kid jumping in front of Maniac each time Maniac tries to turn around. The kid’s eating a candy bar.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Maniac is oblivious to what it means that he’s crossed into the black neighborhood—in fact, he hardly seems to recognize the fact. The kids of the East End, however—and one in particular—immediately recognize him as an outsider.

***Summary Part 2:***

When [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) asks, hoping to find [Amanda](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/amanda-beale)’s house, the kid declines to tell him where Sycamore Street is. Other kids call encouragement to the kid, who is [Mars Bar Thompson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mars-bar-thompson). Mars Bar suddenly smiles. He offers Maniac a bite of his candy bar. Shrugging, Maniac accepts and bites off a chunk. The whole neighborhood watches in silence. They’ve never seen a white kid do such a thing before. Maniac hadn’t even bitten off the unchewed end; he’d bitten right over Mars Bar’s own bite marks.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Maniac doesn’t notice Mars Bar’s sarcasm. To him, the offer of the candy bar is a gesture of friendship. This is another example of Maniac’s readiness to find friends—he assumes the best about people. When he bites the candy bar, it’s shocking to the East End kids—prevailing racist attitudes meant that most white kids wouldn’t touch food that had already been bitten by a black kid.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Mars Bar](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mars-bar-thompson) is baffled, and he gets mad, thumping [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) on the chest and asking if Maniac thinks he’s “bad” or something. Maniac is confused. He figures he’s neither bad nor very good, but somewhere in between. When Mars Bar challengingly asks if Maniac thinks he’s bad, Maniac just says that’s none of his business. Mars Bar gives up on this and steals Maniac’s book instead, ripping a page and mocking Maniac as “fishbelly” when he tries to grab it back. A housewife intervenes and shoos Mars Bar away, going back inside before Maniac can thank her.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Mars Bar can’t intimidate Maniac because Maniac is comically oblivious to Mars Bar’s tough guy persona. He continues taking Mars Bar literally, again showing how much of an outsider he is.