***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 12***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary:***

Chapter 12. As Maniac and Amanda walk into her home, they are greeted by Mrs. Beale, Amanda’s mother, who is scrubbing a mess that Amanda’s brother Lester (age 3) and sister Hester (age 4) have made. Maniac greets Amanda’s mother with a handshake and she informs him that Amanda has told her all about him.

Over the course of the evening, Maniac soon finds out how destructive Amanda’s brother and sister can be and why she guards her books so carefully. As Maniac reads and wrestles with Amanda’s brothers and sisters, they develop an instant connection with their new friend. Mr. Beale, Amanda’s father, offers to take Maniac home and he lies about where his home is. Mr. Beale quickly realizes that Maniac is lying because he asks Mr. Beale to stop at a house in the East End not the West End. Knowing Maniac, a white boy, wouldn’t live in a home on the East End, he quickly discovers Maniac is homeless. Mr. Beale goes back home with Maniac and, after a short discussion with Mrs. Beale, it is decided that Maniac will now be living with them.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

At [Amanda](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/amanda-beale)’s house, [Mrs. Beale](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mrs-beale) is busily scrubbing purple crayon marks off the TV. Amanda introduces him, and Mrs. Beale remembers him as “the book boy” Amanda had mentioned. They’re interrupted by a crash from the kitchen, where a little girl, four-year-old [Hester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters), and a little boy, three-year-old [Lester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters), have just broken a jar. Maniac romps with the kids and their dog, Bow Wow, in the backyard while the mess is cleaned up. He ends up staying for dinner and helping Amanda repair her book. He even reads a bedtime story to the little kids.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Maniac immediately makes himself at home at the Beales’. If it’s unusual for a white kid to blend right into a black family’s life in this neighborhood, Maniac again appears to be oblivious to this. Maniac responds to the warmth of true family love wherever he finds it.

***Summary Part 2:***

When [Mr. Beale](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters) offers to drive [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) home, Maniac doesn’t know what to say, so he just gets into the car. When Maniac points to a random house after just a couple of blocks, claiming it’s his, Mr. Beale quickly figures out what’s going on. He points out to Maniac that this is a black neighborhood. Maniac, almost in tears, tells Mr. Beale the truth. Mr. Beale takes Maniac back to his house. No sooner is the explanation out of Mr. Beale’s mouth than [Mrs. Beale](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/mrs-beale) tells Maniac he’s staying with them.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The Beales, on the East End, are much like the Pickwell family over on the West End—when someone is in need, they’re quick to welcome that person into their home, no matter how it might look to outsiders.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Amanda](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/amanda-beale) is tucked in with [Hester and Lester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters) so that [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) can have her bedroom. Before he goes to sleep, however, Maniac steps outside. He stares at the house number on the doorframe, smiling. Then he says goodnight to the Beales. He finally has an address of his own.

***Analysis Part 3:***

To Maniac, the house number symbolizes that he’s finally landed in a concrete, specific place he can call home.