***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 7***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary***

Maniac’s next location is the Little League field where a baseball game has just ended. A burly 12-year-old pitcher by the name of John McNab is gloating that he has broken the little league record by striking out sixteen batters with his signature fastball. Although the game is over, McNab makes the remaining players take turns swinging. Reluctantly, the kids are stepping up to bat, each time being struck out by McNab. Maniac steps up to the plate and prepares to bat. McNab pitches once and the ball is returned straight back to him by Maniac, narrowly missing McNab’s head. A second pitch, a slow lollipop, is poled by Maniac. This time, McNab is getting upset and puts all of his strength into his pitch only to be disappointed to watch the ball land in deep left center field. McNab pitches four more times and Maniac responds with a home run each time. An angry McNab begins aiming for Maniac’s head, belt, and knees. McNab pitches a fast frog ball and Maniac bunts it. As Maniac is halfway to second, McNab takes action by chasing the frog and attempting to herd it into a foul ball. McNab’s attempt is unsuccessful and soon he is racing to home against Maniac in an attempt to tag him out. Maniac crosses home plate first and continues jogging past a cheering crowd. All the while, McNab is yelling for Maniac to never return.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The next time somebody spots [Jeffrey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee), it’s at the Little League field. Pitcher [Giant John McNab](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/giant-john-mcnab) has just set a Two Mills Little League record by striking out 16 batters. McNab is a huge 12-year-old who only throws fastballs. Kids shake at the thought of facing his pitches. Even though that evening’s game has ended, McNab is still making the remaining kids come up to bat, hoping to extend his pitching streak for as long as possible. He laughs as he tallies up the strikeouts of the humiliated kids.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Jeffrey is again drawn to a scene where bullying is rampant—the Little League field dominated by Giant John McNab. The kids are so scared of McNab that they’ll even continue batting after the game is over.

***Summary Part 2:***

Then, suddenly, a new kid appears at the plate. He isn’t wearing a Little League uniform. He sets down his book, takes his batter’s stance, and looks expectantly at [John McNab](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/giant-john-mcnab). When McNab protests the “runt’s” presence, [Jeffrey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) calmly borrows a red cap from another player and returns to the plate. McNab laughs and pitches, and Jeffrey manages to hit the ball to center field. McNab stops laughing. He lobs another fastball, which Jeffrey again hits. As Jeffrey starts hitting one home run after another, the kids on the sidelines let loose and cheer.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Jeffrey has no obvious right to be here—he’s not a member of the team and just borrows part of another player’s uniform—but he doesn’t let that stop him. It shows that Jeffrey doesn’t see the boundaries that other kids see. Here, where other kids see an unbeatable bully, Jeffrey sees an opportunity.

***Summary Part 3:***

Finally [Giant John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/giant-john-mcnab) excuses himself to pee in the woods. When he finally returns, his eyes are gleaming. When he winds up to pitch once more, everyone sees that he hasn’t pitched a ball at all—it’s a frog. [Jeffrey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) bunts the frog and takes off around the bases. McNab can’t believe it, and by the time he finally pursues the frog—which is hopping down the third-base line—Jeffrey is on the way to a home run. McNab tries to herd the frog across the baseline so that it’ll be a foul, but the frog doesn’t cooperate. He can only chase the frog around the field as the watching kids cheer Jeffrey home. Jeffrey grabs his book and jogs off the field, with McNab yelling threats after him.

***Analysis Part 3:***

This hilarious scene adds to the legendary atmosphere of the story. Spinelli’s point with stories like this one is not to claim that they happened exactly like this, but to suggest that, when a kid is willing to cross an invisible boundary and stand up to a bully, incredible things can happen.

***Important Quotations***

***Quotation 1:***

Strike three took dead aim at the kid's knees, and here was the kid, swooping back and at the same time swatting at the ball like a golfer teeing off. It was the craziest baseball swing you ever saw, but there was the ball smoking out to center field. (7.26)

***Explanation:***

Ok, at this point even Maniac's got to know he should be scared. A giant kid just sent a fastball straight at his head, for Pete's sake. So now, we're willing to give it to Maniac, who's staying in the batter's box against this pitch and this pitcher: courageous after all.