***Maniac Magee***

***Chapter 8***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Brief Summary***

An angry John McNab has decided he is going to find Maniac and beat him up since he couldn’t successfully strike him out. Armed with a group of friends called the Cobras, McNab finds Maniac running on the railroad tracks. Maniac notices the group throwing stones at him and begins to run past the rails and down a boulevard of faces staring out a window. Maniac finds the voices are growing faint and the boys are laughing and have stopped at Hector Street, the border between the predominately black East End and the predominately white West End. The boys know Maniac will be in danger if he crosses the border into the East End and feel regardless of whether they are able to catch him, Maniac will get the beating they feel he deserves.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Giant John McNab](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/giant-john-mcnab) can’t get over his failure to strike out [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee). He sees it as a blemish on his record. The only way he can think of to erase that blemish is to beat the kid up. So he and his friends, who call themselves the Cobras, search town for Maniac. They find him at the tracks, running along the rail. The Cobras start throwing stones and chasing Maniac. Maniac runs and runs, weaving desperately through town, everything a blur. Then, suddenly, the Cobras’ voices grow faint. Maniac turns to see them stopped a block away, waving their fists and then starting to laugh.

***Analysis Part 1:***

When the Cobras try to get back at Maniac for doing the unthinkable and publicly showing up Giant John (crossing an invisible line), they chase him across a more visible line without his knowing it.

***Summary Part 2:***

The Cobras stopped short at Hector Street, which is the boundary between Two Mills’s East and West ends. Kids never cross that line, except for school or sports, and even then, they never act as if they belong on the other side. The Cobras laugh because they figure that [Maniac](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/maniac-magee/characters/jeffrey-lionel-maniac-magee) will discover the truth quickly enough.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Maniac doesn’t know just how racially divided Two Mills is or the consequences of crossing its boundaries. The Cobras laugh because they assume that crossing into the East End will be its own punishment.

***Important Quotations***

***Quotation 1:***

The Cobras were standing at Hector Street. Hector Street was the boundary between the East and West Ends. Or, to put it another way, between the blacks and whites. Not that you never saw a white in the East End or a black in the West End. People did cross the line now and then, especially if they were adults, and it was daylight.

But nighttime, forget it. And if you were a kid, day or night, forget it. Unless you had business on the other side, such as a sports team or school. But don't be just strolling along, as if you belonged there, as if you weren't afraid, as if you didn't even notice you were a different color from everybody around you. (9.16-17)

***Explanation:***

What would it be like to not being able to go into an entire neighborhood because of the color of your skin? Do you know places like this? Do they still exist?