

# Chapter 40

In this chapter, Maniac Magee returns to the West End and is welcomed warmly by the Pickwell family, who treat him like a member of their family. As he enjoys dinner with them, he contrasts their kindness with his experiences with the Beales, feeling a similar sense of unity and acceptance. After this joyful visit, he goes back to stay with the McNabs, but the dynamics have shifted; Russell and Piper, no longer requiring stunts for school attendance, begin to dream of adventures, including building a raft to sail to the ocean.

Maniac finds himself increasingly frustrated as he tries to influence the McNab boys toward better behaviors. His attempts at encouragement—like organizing games and reading—yield little success. With May's warm weather, the boys' mischievous tendencies resurface and escalate, indicated by their reckless driving attempts and petty thefts. While Maniac maintains some structure with running in the mornings and reading in the afternoons, the chaotic evenings with the McNabs test his patience.

Eventually, Maniac reaches a breaking point when he finds Russell and Piper playing with a cherished glove that had been a gift from Grayson, using it for a football. His eruption signals a shift; for the first time, he asserts authority over them, leading to a temporary compliance. However, the boys soon revert to their old ways, disregarding his commands, choosing instead to pursue their recreational projects.

A confrontation ensues where Maniac destroys their toy weapons, leading to the boys' angry retorts and culminating in his departure from their home. He spends the following nights in a park, reflecting on his relationship with the McNab boys. The next day, they come searching for him, inviting him to Piper's birthday party, seemingly forgetting the previous conflict. This invitation brings forth an idea from Maniac, who agrees to attend with a condition: he wants to bring someone along, hinting at a desire for inclusivity and an escape from the previous chaos .