

Chaper 30

If Thanksgiving was wonderful, Christmas was paradise for Maniac Magee and Grayson. They had settled into a new home at 101 Band Shell Boulevard after Grayson officially moved out of the Y. Their long-standing relationship with the locker room attendant allowed them to use the Y's shower facilities whenever they pleased, providing a sense of continuity in their lives.

The outside of their home was simply adorned; they nailed a wreath to the door, while the solitary window lacked a sill for a candle, so they creatively used spray snow instead. Inside, however, was a different story filled with holiday spirit. It was decorated so festively, it would make even Santa's elves feel at home. Strings of popcorn paraded across the ceiling, and evergreen branches infused the space with the delightful smell of pine. They filled any available space with Christmas cheer— from a matchbox crèche to a porcelain Santa and even a partridge in a pear tree.

Grayson took it a step further one day by bringing in tree limbs and crafting a wooden reindeer, which was grand enough for Maniac to ride. Yet, the highlight of their decorations was undoubtedly the Christmas tree. Their enthusiasm for trimming had been dormant for many Christmases, but once they got started, they lost themselves in the task. Soon, every inch of the tree was adorned with an abundance of tinsel and ornaments, leaving hardly a pine needle visible.

Feeling the urge to spread their holiday spirit even further, they ventured outside after completing their tree. They crossed the creek and wandered through the woods until they discovered a magnificent evergreen. There, ensconced in a blanket of pine needles and surrounded by the crisp winter air, they decorated a second tree. This time, nature's offerings served as ornaments—red and yellow bittersweet, aromatic pinecones, clusters of wine-red sumac berries, and delicate milkweed boats adorned their creation, making their holiday experience truly magical.