

Chapter 12

In a family home, Amanda's mother is scrubbing marks off the TV when Amanda introduces her friend, Jeffrey Magee. However, Mrs. Beale interrupts, busy with her task, only to engage with Jeffrey once she's finished. They share a moment of excitement, recalling how Amanda lent him a book, much to her dismay when Mrs. Beale goes on about it.

Suddenly, their attention shifts to a chaotic scene in the kitchen: Hester, aged four, is on the countertop, and her three-year-old brother Lester is on a chair below, amidst shattered glass and the smell of sauerkraut. Soon, they all head outside to play with Maniac Magee, who is quickly integrated into their family.

Mr. Beale returns home from work to find Maniac at dinner, joining in with the family fun, even helping Amanda repair her book. The evening continues with Maniac enjoying family time, reading "Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile" to Hester and Lester as well as the adults, all of whom pretend to be uninterested. After the kids are sent to bed, Mrs. Beale reminds Maniac that it's time for him to go home.

Maniac awkwardly asks Mr. Beale to drop him off. When Maniac points out a house, Mr. Beale realizes that it's in a neighborhood inhabited by black families, which surprises Maniac who claims he has no real home, except for a deer shed he has been staying in. Understanding the gravity of the situation, Mr. Beale makes a U-turn and returns to their home.

Upon entering, Mrs. Beale immediately insists that Maniac stay with them, and soon after, he finds himself in Amanda's bed while she is taken to sleep with her younger siblings. Before he goes to sleep, Maniac takes a moment to appreciate the numbers on the Beale's front door with a smile, realizing that he finally has an address. This marks a significant turning point in his journey, providing him with a sense of belonging he has long sought.