

Chapter 2

In the beginning of the tale of Maniac Magee, whose real name is Jeffrey, we learn about his journey from his hometown of HoUdaysburg to the city of Two Mills—an impressive trek of two hundred miles on foot. However, it was not the distance itself that was perplexing, but rather the duration of the journey, which took him a year—far longer than anticipated given his exceptional running ability. This period has come to be referred to as "The Lost Year."

The narrative then poses an intriguing question: Why did Jeffrey choose to settle in Two Mills? Some speculate it was simply because Bridgeport, his birthplace, was so close by. Others suggest various factors for his decision—perhaps he grew weary of his relentless running, was drawn to the local delicacy of butterscotch Krimpets, or found a sense of belonging after making a friend in the town.

As the story unfolds, the town's reception of Jeffrey is depicted as somewhat grandiose, with exaggerated claims of him being greeted by a crowd of thousands and a parade of fire trucks at the town limits. However, the reality was far more modest. Only a handful of individuals clearly remember that day, recalling a scraggly young boy jogging toward them. His sneakers were in poor condition, hanging on their last threads and flopping against the pavement as he ran.

What stood out most to these witnesses, and what etched Jeffrey's image into their memories, was a simple yet unexpected gesture: as he passed by, he greeted them with a friendly "Hi." This casual acquaintance was remarkable in its spontaneity; it was unusual for people to speak to strangers in such a way. This brief moment created a lasting impression, leaving others wondering if they knew this extraordinary kid, who had the audacity to reach out to them in such an offhand manner. Thus, the journey of Maniac Magee begins, laden with questions and the promise of adventure.