

Sample Pages from
Maniac Magee

by Jerry Spinelli
1991 Newbery Medal Winner



A Novel Teaching Pack

by Margaret Whisnant

ISBN 978-1-934538-07-4

Copyright © 2007 Margaret Whisnant
U.S. Copyright Office
Taking Grades Publishing Company
Conover, NC

Permission to copy for classroom use only.
Electronic distribution limited to classroom use only.

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter Summaries	1-12
Before You Read	13-14
Vocabulary	
Definitions	15-16
Dictionary Discoveries	17-20
Tangled Terms	21
Sentence Sense	22
Reading Assessment	
Short Answer	23-28
Objective Tests	29-46
Think, Write, Create	
Chapter Activities	47-58
Whole Book Activities	59-64
Graphic Organizers	65-74
Keys	75-81

Chapter Summaries

Part I

1

- Maniac is born in a house in Bridgeport. When he is three years old his parents are killed in a high-speed trolley crash.
- Jeffrey Lionel Magee is shipped to Hollidaysburg in western Pennsylvania to live with his Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan, who hate each other.
- Around the time of Jeffrey's arrival Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan stop sharing, and pretty soon there are two of everything. Jeffrey is split as well, eating dinner with Aunt Dot on Monday and with Uncle Dan on Tuesday, for instance.
- Jeffrey lives with his aunt and uncle for eight years.
- The night of the spring school musicale, Jeffrey is in the chorus. After the singing of "Talk to the Animals" ends, Jeffrey stands on the risers, pointing to his aunt and uncle, and continues screaming "Talk! Talk, will ya! Talk ! Talk! Talk!" It is the birth scream of a legend.
- Jeffrey springs down the risers and runs out the side door into the night, never returning to his aunt and uncle or to school.

2

- The year that Maniac runs the two hundred miles from Hollidaysburg to Two Mills is known as The Lost Year.
- Some say Maniac stayed in Two Mills because Bridgeport, where he was born, is right across the Schuylkill. Other theories say he got tired of running, liked the butterscotch Krimpets, or it was because he was so happy to make a friend.
- The few people who remember the day Jeffrey Maniac Magee came to Two Mills see a scraggly little kid jogging toward them, the loose soles of both his sneakers flopping open on the pavement.
- Maniac sticks in their minds because he says "Hi" as he passes them, something people just didn't say to strangers.

3

- Amanda Beal is the first person to actually stop and talk with Maniac. He stops to say "Hi" because she is carrying a suitcase, and he thinks she is running away.
- Amanda explains that she is going to school. Her suitcase is full of books.
- Amanda asks Maniac if he is from the West End, where the whites live at that time. The Blacks live in the East End.
- Maniac says he is from Bridgeport, but he can't tell Amanda where he lives.
- Maniac walks along with Amanda as she talks about her little brother and sister, who love to crayon every piece of paper they can find, and the dog, Bow Wow, who chews everything. They are the reason she takes her whole library to school.
- The first school bell rings, and Maniac runs along with Amanda. He asks to borrow a book and promises to return it.
- Amanda tells Maniac her address is seven twenty-eight Sycamore, but *he* can't come there and *he* isn't supposed to be where he is.
- At the second bell, Amanda takes a book from the suitcase and throws it at Maniac. It is the story of the Children's Crusade.
- For the only time in her life, Amanda Beale is late for school.

4

- Jeffrey makes three other appearances his first day in Two Mills. The first is on one of the high school fields where he intercepts Brian Denehy's sixty-yard football pass to James "Hands Down."
- Jeffrey runs with the football to the soccer field, turns, and punts it back into the outstretched hands of Hands Down. Then he runs off.

Word Lists with Definitions

Arranged in Story Order
(Some words may appear on more than one page.)

Set One: Chapter 1-Chapter 26

- pastel** A soft, subdued shade of color; a chalk-like crayon made from a dried paste of pigments ground with chalk and mixed with gum water; a drawing made with such crayons. (p. 7)
- lunging** Moving forward suddenly; thrusting forward suddenly, as with a sword or a knife. (p. 7)
- scraggly** Shaggy; ragged; unkempt; lacking neatness or order. (p. 9)
- grungy** Ugly, run-down, or dilapidated; dirty; filthy. (p. 13)
- hurled** Threw with great force; flung; uttered vehemently; *Slang*: vomited. (p. 13)
- varsity** Any first-string team, especially in sports, that represents a school, college, university, or the like; of or pertaining to a university or school team, activity, or competition. (p. 14)
- infamous** Having an extremely bad reputation; notorious; disreputable; disgraceful. (p. 16)
- matinees** Entertainments, especially dramatic or musical performances or movies, held in the daytime, usually in the afternoon. (p. 16)
- hoisted** Raised or lifted; raised or hauled up with or as if with the help of a mechanical apparatus; raised to one's mouth in order to drink. (p. 17)
- maw** The mouth, throat, or gullet of an animal, especially a carnivorous mammal; a cavernous opening that resembles the open jaws of an animal. (p. 18)
- clamoring** Making a loud sustained noise or outcry; exclaiming discontent or protest. (p. 18)
- mirage** Something illusory without substance or reality; an optical phenomenon, especially in the desert or at sea, by which the image of some object appears displaced above, below, or to one side of its true position as a result of refraction. (p. 18)
- emanations** Things flowing out or proceeding as if coming from a source or origin; outpourings; beginnings. (p. 18)
- phantom** An apparition or specter; a ghost; an appearance or illusion without material substance, as a dream image, mirage, or optical illusion. (p. 19)
- carcass** The dead body of an animal; *Slang*: the body of a human being, whether living or dead; anything from which life or power are gone. (p. 19)
- stupefied** Put into a state of little or no sensibility; benumbed the faculties of; stunned as with a narcotic, a shock, or a strong emotion. (p. 19)
- flinched** Recoiled, as if from something unpleasant or difficult; started or winced involuntarily, as from surprise or pain. (p. 24)
- slithered** Glided or slid like a reptile; walked with a sliding or shuffling gait. (p. 24)
- lobbed** Threw or hit in a high arc, as a ball. (p. 24)
- pandemonium** Wild uproar or unrestrained disorder; tumult or chaos. (p. 25)
- lumbered** Walked or moved with heavy clumsiness; moved with a rumbling noise. (p. 26)
- befuddled** Confused; bewildered; dazed. (35)
- jutted** Extended beyond the main body or line; projected; protruded. (p. 35)
- cringed** Shrank, bent, or crouched, especially in fear or servility; cowered; drew back. (p. 38)
- solemnly** Gravely, soberly, or mirthlessly, as the face, speech, tone, or mood; seriously. (p. 42)
- solitude** The state of being or living alone; social isolation; lack of human activity. (p. 50)
- veering** Altering the direction of; swerving; turning aside from a course or direction. (p. 57)
- eons** Indefinitely long periods of time; ages; the longest division of geologic time, containing two or more eras. (p. 68)
- cunning** Skill used in a shrewd, deceiving, or sly manner; craftiness; sly; pleasing or cute. (p. 73)
- nuzzle** To touch or rub with the nose, snout, muzzle, etc.; cuddle or snuggle up. (p. 79)
- slleazy** Filthy; dilapidated; contemptibly low, mean, or disreputable; cheap; flimsy. (p. 94)
- grappled** Engaged in a struggle; seized another, or each other, in a firm grip as in wrestling; tried to overcome or deal with (usually followed by *with*). (p. 97)

Dictionary Discoveries

(Set One: Chapter 1—Chapter 26)

Use a dictionary to answer the following questions about some challenging words from Chapter 1-Chapter 26. Write the **letters** of the correct answer in the blanks to the left.

- _____ 1. The word **slithered** is usually used to compare some type of movement to that of a (A) cat, (B) snake, (C) bird.
- _____ 2. A *synonym* for **scraggly** is (A) unkempt, (B) neatly, (C) constantly.
- _____ 3. Which of the following is the correct definition of **varsity**? (A) the best players on a sports team, (B) having more than one option or method, (C) reliable and truthful.
- _____ 4. Which of the following is *most likely* to be associated with the word **nuzzle**? (A) a shark, (B) gear needed to control an unruly animal, (C) a colt.
- _____ 5. A performer's **repertoire** is (A) a list of accomplishments, training, and experiences, (B) references from professionals with whom he or she had worked, (C) the skills that he or she possesses and is prepared to perform, such as comedy, drama, or particular pieces of music.
- _____ 6. Which of the following are the *most likely* **emanations** from a fireplace? (A) joy and security, (B) heat and light, (C) noises and distractions.
- _____ 7. The historical character who could *best* be described as **infamous** is (A) Sam Houston, (B) Wyatt Earp, (C) Jessie James.
- _____ 8. An *antonym* of **befuddled** is (A) focused, (B) astounded, (C) perplexed.
- _____ 9. Which word can be substituted for **cringed** in the following sentence *without* changing its meaning? *Two students cringed on a bench outside the principal's office.*
(A) napped, (B) cowered, (C) slouched
- _____ 10. Which of the following situations is the *most likely* situation to leave a person **stupefied**? (A) meeting one's most admired singing idol, (B) accidentally running into a friend while shopping, (C) finding a ten dollar bill in the pocket of an old pair of jeans.
- _____ 11. In *slang*, the word **carcass** refers to (A) the body of a human being, living or dead, (B) only the dead body of an animal, (C) very large dead bodies, human or animal.
- _____ 12. What kind of talk is **blarney**? (A) inspirational, motivating, and uplifting, (B) flattering, deceptive, or misleading, (C) frightening, intimidating, and brash.
- _____ 13. **Grappled** is associated with a (A) type of marking on a horse, (B) superior being, (C) struggle.
- _____ 14. An *antonym* of **hoisted** is (A) boosted, (B) lowered, (C) encouraged.
- _____ 15. A state of **pandemonium** is characterized by (A) serenity and peace, (B) chaos and unrestrained disorder, (C) teamwork and focus.
- _____ 16. Which of the following is **not** a correct definition of **pastel**? (A) a soft shade of color, (B) a chalk-like crayon used for drawing, (C) a type of dough used in Italian cooking.
- _____ 17. If you enjoy attending **matinees**, what time of day do you prefer to see movies or plays? (A) in the daytime, probably the afternoon, (B) after six p.m., (C) in the morning before noon.
- _____ 18. Which of the following sets of vocabulary words are *synonyms*? (A) **scraggly** and **pastel**, (B) **hurled** and **cringed**, (C) **grungy** and **sleazy**.

Tangled Terms

(Anagrams)

Untangle the word, phrase, or sentence in **bold print**, rearrange the letters, and reconstruct them into a vocabulary word that matches the definition. Write the untangled words in the blanks at the left. Spelling counts.

- _____ 1. **oh cacti** Untie the prickly plant and find a word that means *completely confused or disordered*.
- _____ 2. **huge island** Convert a large water-surrounded retreat into *lost strength or vigor*.
- _____ 3. **staple** Prove that a small wire connector is also *a soft, subdued shade of color*.
- _____ 4. **I told Sue.** From the information given to Sue, fashion *the state of being or living alone*.
- _____ 5. **mud rebel** Start with a messy insurgent and create *walked or moved with heavy clumsiness*.
- _____ 6. **dear moon** Use a cherished heavenly body as a basis for *left behind or isolated with little hope of rescue or escape*.
- _____ 7. **stupid fee** Illustrate the technique for converting idiotic charges into *stunned as with a narcotic, shock, or strong emotion*.
- _____ 8. **bald toe** Explain how a hairless digit is the same as *swollen, puffed up, or conceited*.
- _____ 9. **pure soil** How can uncontaminated dirt be converted into *involving danger, hazard, or risk?*
- _____ 10. **calipers** Slip the knots from a measuring device to reveal *copies or reproductions or a work of art or other objects*.
- _____ 11. **Try VISA.** From a suggested credit card devise *any first-string team, especially in sports, that represents a school*.
- _____ 12. **no smelly** Demonstrate how the absence of stink can transform into *gravely, soberly, or mirthlessly*.
- _____ 13. **ground trip** Change an earth journey into *pushing outward*.
- _____ 14. **nose** Unblock a face part and allow it to be *indefinitely long periods of time*.
- _____ 15. **I am so fun.** Disentangle a statement of ego and retie it as *having an extremely bad reputation*.
- _____ 16. **giant lambs** Hidden in the huge baby sheep is *scolding sharply or harshly*.
- _____ 17. **car engine** Eradicate the motor mystery and reveal *lurching or swerving while in motion*.
- _____ 18. **ears tuned** Begin with adjusted listening devices and end with *walked at a leisurely pace*.
- _____ 19. **Read a title.** Dismantle a teacher's assignment into *got revenge*.
- _____ 20. **Be bold.** Go ahead! Unknot *threw or hit in a high arc*.

Short Answer Questions

Part I

1

1. How old was Maniac when he became an orphan?
2. What was Maniac's full name?
3. Where did Jeffrey's Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan live?
4. Why did Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan have two of everything?
5. How long did Jeffrey live with his aunt and uncle?
6. Where was Jeffrey and what was he doing when he ran away?

2

1. What is the name given to the year that it took Maniac to travel the two hundred miles from Hollidaysburg to Two Mills?
2. Maniac was three when he was orphaned. He lived with his aunt and uncle for eight years. How old was he when he arrived in Two Mills?
3. What are **two** of the possible reasons Maniac stayed in Two Mills?
4. What did people hear that made Maniac stick in their minds?

3

1. Why did Maniac think Amanda Beale was running away?
2. How did Amanda know Maniac wasn't from the East End?
3. Why was Amanda carrying her whole library to school?
4. When the bell rang and Amanda started running, what did Jeffrey do?
5. What book did Amanda throw to Jeffrey?

4

1. Why didn't the football that Brian Denehy threw to James "Hands" Down reach its destination?
2. How did Hands Down come back into possession of the football?
3. What unbelievable thing did all the kids see?

5

1. What explanation did the town give to explain how a bright, happy, normal child could change into a poor, raggedy, nicotine-stained wretch shuffling through town?
2. Describe the condition known as *the finsterwallies*.
3. What are the two stories about how the kid from the sports field got into the Finsterwald's back yard?
4. Where did the kid sit to read his book?

Part I: 1-4 Pages 5-15

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Maniac Magee was born in (A) a dump, (B) an ordinary house, (C) a jail.
- _____ 2. Maniac Magee's parents (A) left on vacation and disappeared, (B) left him at an orphanage, (C) were killed in a high-speed trolley accident.
- _____ 3. Maniac Magee's real name was (A) Jeffrey Lionel, (B) Lionel Walter, (C) Walter Jeffrey.
- _____ 4. Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan (A) were loving people, (B) were happy to have their nephew living with them, (C) hated each other.
- _____ 5. Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan had two of everything in the house because (A) they had five children, (B) they refused to share, (C) they broke a lot of things.
- _____ 6. On the night of the spring musicale, after the chorus finished singing, Jeffrey (A) kept screaming, "Talk! Talk, Will Ya! Talk! Talk! Talk!" and pointing to his aunt and uncle, (B) fell off the risers, (C) couldn't quit laughing.
- _____ 7. The running started when Jeffrey (A) left his aunt and uncle and school, (B) had to escape the music director and principal, (C) was chased away by angry parents.
- _____ 8. When he left his aunt and uncle, Maniac was (A) eight years old, (B) three years old, (C) eleven years old.
- _____ 9. To get from Hollidaysburg to Two Mills, Maniac traveled (A) forty miles, (B) two hundred miles, (C) one hundred miles.
- _____ 10. Since no one knew what happened to Maniac during the time he traveled from Hollidaysburg to Two Mills, this period was called (A) The Unknown, (B) The Lost Year, (C) The Learning.
- _____ 11. When he came into Two Mills, Maniac Magee was (A) jogging, (B) riding a bicycle, (C) walking.
- _____ 12. Two Mills was right across the river from Bridgeport where (A) Maniac's parents lived, (B) Aunt Dot was born, (C) Maniac was born.
- _____ 13. When he passed the few people who saw him come into town, Maniac said (A) "Hi," (B) "Follow me," (C) nothing.
- _____ 14. Maniac stopped to talk to Amanda Beale because he thought she was (A) beautiful, (B) running away, (C) carrying food.
- _____ 15. What was Amanda Beale carrying in her suitcase? (A) a flute, (B) clothes, (C) books.
- _____ 16. Why was Amanda suspicious of Jeffrey? (A) She was black and he was white. (B) He asked for money. (C) She knew he wasn't from Bridgeport.
- _____ 17. Amanda took her whole library to school every day (A) because she loved to read, (B) to protect it, (C) for exercise.
- _____ 18. Amanda was late for school because (A) she stopped to loan Maniac a book, (B) Maniac wouldn't stop following her, (C) she lost track of time.
- _____ 19. On his first day in Two Mills, Jeffrey ran onto one of the high school fields and (A) sat on the bleachers reading a book, (B) intercepted a football pass, (C) was knocked down by some high school boys playing football.
- _____ 20. Everything Maniac did on the sports fields was done with (A) lightning speed, (B) all the other kids chasing him, (C) one hand.



Think, Write, Create

Chapter Activities

Chapter 1—Chapter 4

Jeffrey Magee was three years old when he became an orphan. He lived with his Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan for eight years.

- Use the above information to determine what grade Jeffrey was in when he ran from Hollidaysburg.
- How old was Maniac when he arrived in Two Mills?
- Explain how you determined each answer.

Hollidaysburg is the name of an actual town in Pennsylvania—6.2 square miles, population approximately 6,000, zip code 16648. Two Mills, however, is fictitious.

- Create statistics for the town of Two Mills.
- Draw a map of Pennsylvania showing the actual location of Hollidaysburg.
- On the same map, indicate the location of the imaginary town of Two Mills, which according to the author was *two hundred miles away*.
- Include a *legend* on your map.
- Using the locations of a few real towns, plot what you believe to be Maniac's wanderings during the lost year.
- Write a short explanation of Maniac's movements during the lost year, including mileage, where he was during certain months and seasons, how and where he found shelter, and his food sources.

By the time Jeffrey came to live with them, Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan had stopped talking to each other. Maniac endured eight years of life with them.

- Explain how Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan did not fit the definition of a "normal" married couple.
- When Jeffrey was with Aunt Dot, what are **two** things that you think might have been done or said?
- What are **two** events or conversations that could have occurred when Jeffrey and Uncle Dan were together?
- In your opinion, what were the **two major** reasons Jeffrey ran away from his aunt and uncle?
- What do you suppose Dot and Dan did after Maniac left? (See **Graphic Organizer #1**)

Which **two** of the theories about why Maniac stayed in Two Mills do you think are the most likely explanation? Why did you choose these two?

As Maniac passed by he said "Hi" to people he met.

- Why were people surprised when the scraggly little kid said "Hi" as he passed them?
- Are people in your hometown startled when a stranger says "Hi"? Elaborate on your answer.

Amanda's solution for keeping her library safe from her little brother and sister and the dog was to carry it with her.

- Do you think Amanda chose an appropriate solution to her problem? Why or why not? What other ideas would you have suggested?
- How did Amanda's "mobile library" play an important part in her meeting Jeffrey Magee?

Suppose Amanda kept a diary. Write her entry for the day she met Jeffrey.

Think, Write, Create

Whole Book Activities

Maniac's Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan hated each other, didn't talk to each other, and didn't share; but they wouldn't get a divorce, and they continued to live in the same house.

- How were the people of Two Mills like Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan?
 - Did Maniac run from both his aunt and uncle and the people of Two Mills for the same reasons? Explain your answer.
 - Why do you think Maniac kept going back to and associating with the people of Two Mills but not to his Aunt and Uncle?
-

Hector Street was the boundary between the East and West ends of Two Mills.

- In addition to dividing the physical town, what else did the street divide? What did it represent?
 - What does the fact that Maniac crossed Hector Street many times tell you about him?
 - John McNab and the Cobras wouldn't cross Hector Street, not even to beat up Maniac Magee. How is this a clue to their thinking?
 - In addition to streets, what are some other boundaries that people create between themselves?
-

Which **three** of the following characteristics do you think Amanda Beale and Jeffrey Lionel Magee **had in common**? Find events and conversations from the story to support your choices. Explain how these common traits enabled them to become friends the first time they met.

courteous
unselfish
flexible
self-reliant

studious
bossy
friendly
nurturing

tolerant
self-confident
optimistic
perseverance

intelligent
open-minded
creative
loving

From the list of characteristics below, choose the **four** that you think **best** describe Amanda Beale. Use her actions and words to explain your choices. Include definitions of your four choices with your explanation.

sympathetic
amiable
friendly
personable
unselfish

curious
creative
flexible
decisive
loving

cheerful
resilient
diplomatic
studious
insightful

bossy
intelligent
determined
controlling
influential

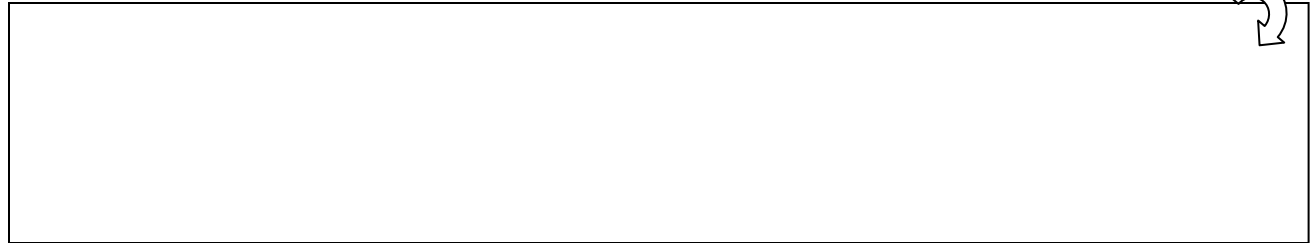
- How were Cobble's Knot and the town of Two Mills alike?
- How did Maniac untangle Two Mills just as he untangled Cobble's Knot? Did he tackle both tasks with the same attitude and techniques? For example, how did the nap Maniac took before he finished the Knot and his walk right out of town serve the same purpose?
- Once the Knot was untangled, there was a celebration. How do you think the town of Two Mills should celebrate the fact that East End and West End began to know each other?

A Peculiar Pair

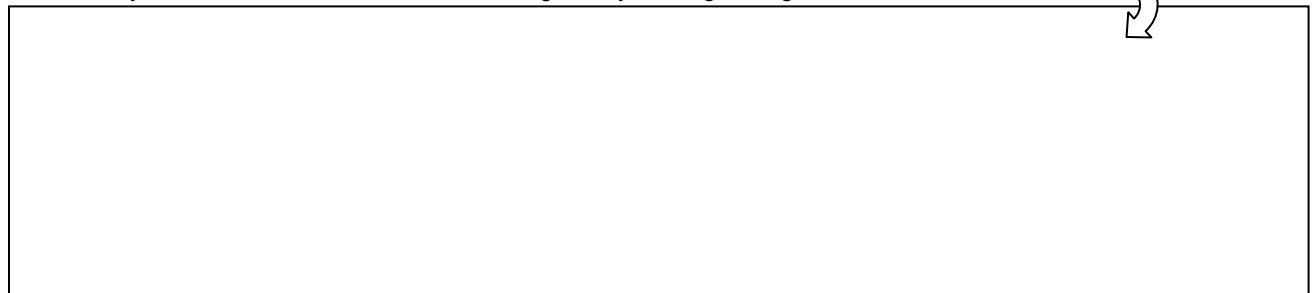
By the time Jeffrey came to live with them, Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan had stopped talking to each other. They did not fit the definition of a loving married couple. Maniac endured eight years of life with them. Finally, the night of the spring musicale, he rescued himself.

Use the organizer below to gather facts and ideas that can be translated into a clear picture of Jeffrey's life with Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan. Write a composition about **A Peculiar Pair**.

List **two or more** ways in which Aunt Dot and Uncle Dan did not fit the definition of a "normal" married couple. . .



When Jeffrey was with Aunt Dot, what are **two** things that you imagine might have been done or said?



What are **two** events or conversations that could have occurred when Jeffrey and Uncle Dan were together?



In your opinion, what were the **two major** reasons Jeffrey ran away from his aunt and uncle?



What do you suppose Dot and Dan did after Maniac left?

