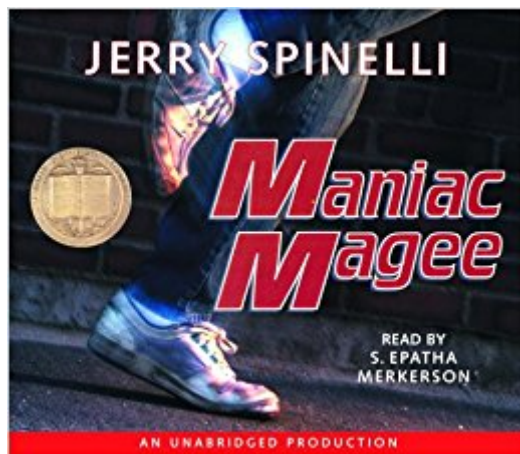


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# Maniac Magee



## Synopsis

He wasn't born with the name Maniac Magee. He came into this world named Jeffrey Lionel Magee, but when his parents died and his life changed, so did his name. And Maniac Magee became a legend. Even today kids talk about how fast he could run; about how he hit an inside-the-park "frog" homer; how no knot, no matter how snarled, would stay that way once he began to untie it. But the thing Maniac Magee is best known for is what he did for the kids from the East Side and those from the West Side.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 1,044 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #430,641 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Runaways #154 in Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction > General #361 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Orphans & Foster Homes

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Maniac Magee is a folk story about a boy, a very excitable boy. One that can outrun dogs, hit a home run off the best pitcher in the neighborhood, tie a knot no one can undo. "Kid's gotta be a maniac," is what the folks in Two Mills say. It's also the story of how this boy, Jeffrey Lionel "Maniac" Magee, confronts racism in a small town, tries to find a home where there is none and attempts to soothe tensions between rival factions on the tough side of town. Presented as a folk tale, it's the stuff of storytelling. "The history of a kid," says Jerry Spinelli, "is one part fact, two parts legend, and three parts snowball." And for this kid, four parts of fun. Maniac Magee won the 1991 Newbery Medal. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

In this modern-day tall tale, Spinelli ( *Dump Days* ; Jason and Marceline ) presents a humorous yet poignant look at the issue of race relations, a rare topic for a work aimed at middle readers. Orphaned as an infant, Jerry Magee is reared by his feuding aunt and uncle until he runs away at age eight. He finds his way to Two Mills, Pa., where the legend of "Maniac" Magee begins after he scores major upsets against Brian Denehy, the star high school football player, and Little League tough guy, John McNab. In racially divided Two Mills, the Beales, a black family, take Maniac in, but despite his local fame, community pressure forces him out and he returns to living at the zoo. Park groundskeeper Grayson next cares for the boy, but the old man dies and Maniac moves into the squalid home of the McNabs, who are convinced a race war is imminent. After a showdown with his nemesis, Mars Bar, Maniac bridges the gap between the two sides of town and finally finds a home. Full of snappy street-talk cadences, this off-the-wall yarn will give readers of all colors plenty of food for thought. Ages 8-12. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

*Maniac Magee* was published 25 years ago, but it is as relevant today as it was when first written. The narrative is different from most books for middle school children. The diction is easy to follow, but the content is "quirky" enough (sorry I can't find the precise word) that it keeps interest active and the mind challenged. Spinelli develops Magee's character in the novel less by what he does (as is the usual way to develop character) but more by what happens around him. The dominant theme of the book seems to be race relations. This book goes much much deeper. These deeper themes are developing honest relationship with others, being true to one's ownself, and the power of giving. I cannot recommend this book strongly enough. It is a great book to read aloud to children . . . and to adults.

I read this book for my adolescent literature course the summer between my sophomore and junior years in college. Many people told me it was a good book including my professor, and various other students in the class. I took their word for it and decided to dive into the book to see what was so exciting about Jerry Spinelli's "*Maniac Magee*." The book begins with a young boy, Jefferey Lionel Magee, running into a town in which no one recognizes him. Orphaned after his parents' deaths, Maniac has no place to live. The town is a racially divided town with the blacks living on the East end and the whites living on the West end. "Maniac" comes into town and begins to make his mark. He can do everything from hit multiple homeruns off the the best little league pitcher in town, to intercept passes to the best receiver on the football team. After Maniac is rescued by from "Mars

Bar" Thompson by Amanda Beale, she takes him to her house to live with her. After he hurts Amanda's feelings, he does not want to cause her anymore pain so he runs away to the zoo where he meets a former minor league baseball pitcher, Earl Grayson, who takes him in and allows Maniac to teach him to read. Just when it seems like Maniac has found a place to stay, Grayson dies, and Maniac is forced to leave. Maniac starts to run again, but runs into John McNab's (the best little league pitcher in town) two younger brothers, who are running away to Mexico. Maniac takes them home to the West end and begins to live with them; however, when Maniac beats Mars Bar in a race, and crashes a birthday party at the McNab's, he is forced into homelessness again. Maniac's final chance comes when one of the McNab kids is facing death in the same place where Maniac's parents died. Maniac and Mars Bar go to save him, but Maniac is too afraid and he leaves. Amanda Beale tracks Maniac down and finally invites him to come live with her and her family for as long as he wants to, and this is how the story ends. While there are many ups and downs in the story, it is a story that truly teaches all about friendship and love. Jerry Spinelli does a fantastic job of creating a story that can be seen as true in all minds and hearts. While it may not satisfy everyone's wants and needs for a good book, I can honestly say this is one of the greatest if not the greatest book I have ever read. SEVEN THUMBS UP!!!

I liked it because it show how to live when you run away and have no parents with you and you still can find places to sleep and also make friends and family

Had to purchase due to required reading for my child. After reading some reviews I decided to pre-read the book. I think this is a great book. This book is filled with many learning lessons.

I'll admit that I didn't think much of this book when I started reading it. The voice of the book in the opening chapters, were not appealing to me. I think that the vocabulary and the style of the book just didn't resonate with me. For whatever reason I didn't like it, and I almost put the book down. But I'm glad I didn't, because I found that whatever bothered me in the beginning quickly faded away as the plot of the book began to unfold. Maniac Magee is set in the north-eastern United States sometime after World War II, the exact date is not specified. It's the story of a boy that struggles through the many losses in his life, all while being educated about the reality of racism in our world. The young man also does this without losing the spark of his personality that really shines in this book. What I liked: 1. I loved the characters: The children were all very interesting, I especially liked Maniac and Mars Bar. I also found the adult characters very interesting especially the old man

Grayson who befriends Maniac. His story is so interesting and heart-breaking you could almost write a whole book about this one character (and I wish Spinelli would).<sup>2</sup> The setting: I loved the places Maniac went and how they were described, very creative.<sup>3</sup> The writing: I didn't like the writing at the first, but I found the imagery created by the writing towards the end were some of the best I've read in any newbery book. Maniac Magee won the Newbery Medal in 1991, and Jerry Spinelli went on a Newbery Honor medal with his book *Wringer* a few years later. It was a great read, I highly recommend it.

Nice, easy, enjoyable read. Great to be entertained and smile at the end. I bought this for my 12 year old daughter but I think I liked it more.

There was dark boring at times and sometimes saddening at times throughout the book sorry for the incorrect grammar and spelling there I did not like it that much but if you are still intrigued go on a head and get it (perfectly in the audio version) and I hope you have a better time reading than me

this is a fabulous book. Read it to my 4th - 8th graders and they couldn't put it down.

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