5. Critical Thinking Questions & Vocabulary Words…

PART I:

Chapters 1-3

- How do you think Jeffrey felt when he ran away?
- The author says that Jeffrey said, “Hi,” to the strangers he passed as he was running (p.9). What do you make up about the kind of person Jeffrey is?
- Who lives on the West End of Two Mills? Who lives on the East End?
- What assumptions do you think Amanda first has about Jeffrey? (include a page # that helped you come up with your answer)

Vocabulary Words: legacy (p. 2), trolley (p. 5), scraggly (p. 9), deserted (p. 11), grungy (p. 13)

Chapters 4-6

- Why do you think James “Hands” Down has the nickname “Hands”?
- What do you think Finsterwald looks like? Draw your answer in your Sketching & Journal section. Please write “Finsterwald” on the top of the page.
- Describe Jerry Spinelli’s writing style. Do you enjoy reading his writing? What makes it enjoyable or not to you?
- Have you ever met a family like the Pickwells? If so, what ways were the two families similar? If not, in what ways are the Pickwells similar OR different from your own family?

Vocabulary Words: commotion (p. 16), infamous (p. 16), cardinal (p. 17), mirage (p. 18), scanned (p. 21)

Chapters 7-9

- Who would you root for, Jeffrey Magee or John McNab, on the Little League Field? Why?
- What do you think the author meant when he said, “The town was buzzing,” on page 28?
• Do you think “Maniac” is a good nickname for Jeffrey Magee? What other names might you choose for him?
• What did the Cobras assume would happen to Maniac once he crossed into the East End? What do you predict will happen to him?
Vocabulary Words: automatically (p.24), runt (p. 24), pandemonium (p. 25), lumbered (p.26), blemish (p. 30)

Chapters 10-12
• Why do you think Mars offered Maniac a bite of his candy bar?
• Maniac chooses to try to get Amanda’s book back from Mars rather than running away. What does this say about his character? (In other words, what kind of person do you think Maniac is?)
• Why do you think Amanda stopped Mrs. Beale from telling Maniac what she said about him?
• How do you think Maniac felt to “finally” have an address? Why?
Vocabulary Words: befuddled (p. 35), lingered (p.37), hoisted (p. 39), solemnly (p. 42), quiver (p.43)

Chapters 13-15
• Spinelli used the phrase, “Such as:” several times in a row. What is the effect on you as a reader?
• What is your opinion about Maniac getting into the tub with Hester and Lester?
• What time do you think the “before-the-working-people time” takes place? Have you ever been out during the “before-the-working-people time?
• Maniac describes the skin colors on the East End as gingersnap, light fudge, dark fudge, acorn, butter rum, cinnamon, and burnt orange, not as black (licorice). Use a food or plant to describe the color of your skin.
• Why did Maniac say, “I love you,” to Mrs. Beale after she slapped him for trash-talking?
Vocabulary Words: blotches (p. 48), pulpit (p.51), gingersnap (p.51), vacant (p.55), unbeknownst (p.56)

Chapters 16-18
• Write a journal entry about something that you were once blind to. **Write your entry in your Sketching & Journaling section. Please entitle this entry, “Once I Was Blind.”**

• When the old man asks, “What happens when we go over there?” (pg. 61), what do you think he means? Make an assumption.

• Who wrote (F)ISHBELLY GO HOME on the wall of the Beale’s house?

• What did Amanda say that hurt maniac’s feeling so badly? Why do you think he felt so hurt?

**Vocabulary Words:** veering (p.57), blaring (p.59), clotted (p.60), gawked (p.62), coot (p.64)

**Chapters 19-21**

• Why would someone expect a famous magician or an infamous pick-pocket to be able to undo Cobble’s Knot?

• Does anything happen to the town of Two Mills when Maniac decides to attempt to untie the knot? Who comes to watch?

• Do you think the public assumed that Maniac could or could not untie Cobble’s Knot? Why?

• Think about all of the emotions Maniac must have been feeling in Part I of *Maniac Magee*. In your Sketching & Journaling section, draw the “ride” of his feelings. Entitle your entry, “Maniac’s Emotional Rollercoaster.” **Mark off important feelings in blue and important events in red.**

**Vocabulary Words:** pickpocket (p.69), testimony (p.70), cunning (p.73), leering (p.75), escort (p.76)

**PART II:**

**Chapters 22-24**

• Make some assumptions about Grayson. What kind of person do you think he is? Is he rich? Poor? Where do you think is he from?

• Why doesn’t Maniac want to go to school? How do you feel about his decision?
• Grayson makes a lot of assumptions about black people, and he is surprised to find out his assumptions are not true. How do you think it was possible for Grayson have gone so long without knowing that his assumptions about black people were false?

Vocabulary Words: minor (p.85), prompt (p.85), recognition (p.86), piped (p.87), dumbfounded (p.87)

Chapters 25-27
• Why do you think Grayson opened up and shared his stories with Maniac?
• Describe how Maniac and Grayson’s relationship is changing.
• In what ways do you think Grayson and Maniac will help each other? Dig deep!
• Use the map provided to mark the locations of the teams that Grayson played on. (chapter 25) Make a key. Please use your Sketching & Journaling section, and entitle this, “Map of Gayson’s Teams”
• What new things did you learn about Grayson in these chapters? Were your assumptions correct?

Vocabulary Words: stubble (p.91), weariness (p.91), robust (p.92), repertoire (p.97), anxious (p.102)

Chapters 28-30
• Maniac uses the phrase, “A-men” in a different way than they use it in most churches. Describe when you might use “A-men” according to Maniac. Give a real-life example.
• Do you think there was any significance that Maniac chose the color black to paint the number on his door? Why or why not?
• Draw a picture of the inside of 101 Band Shell Boulevard. Please use your Sketching & Journal section. Entitle this entry, “101 Band Shell Boulevard.”

Vocabulary Words: climax (p.103), preposterous (p.105), deputized (p.106), pursuers (p.106), proclaimed (p.109)

Chapters 31-32
- Pretend you are Maniac. Write a journal entry about December 30th. Include details and emotions. **Please use your Sketching & Journal section. Entitle this entry, “December 30th.”**
- Were you surprised by the ending of Part II? What do you think will happen to Maniac in Part III?

**Vocabulary Words:** meandering (p.113), crudely (p.114), stoic (p.115), mourner (p.116), pallbearer (p. 117)

**PART III:**

**Chapters 33-35**
- The author says that Maniac, “would not beg,” on page 122. Why wouldn’t he beg?
- Describe the new characters that Maniac meets in chapter 34. What is their connection to Maniac’s past?
- Why did Maniac make up the story about McNab and the stopball?
- Several “loony” scenes are shared from Maniac’s experience at the McNab’s house. **Make up another scene in your Sketching & Journaling section. Entitle it, “A Loony Scene.”**

**Vocabulary Words:** Find 5 vocabulary words and list their page #.

**Chapters 36-37**
- What made Maniac encourage Russel and Piper to go to school?
- The McNabs “felt important” just for knowing Maniac. What does this sentence tell you about how they might have felt before they met Maniac?
- The author references a jump-rope song about a bull on page 142. Make up a jump-rope song about a baby buffalo. You can use nonsense words! Have fun! **Do this in your Sketching & Journaling section. Entitle it, “Baby Buffalo Jump-Rope Song.”**
- Why did Piper and Russel think that sending Maniac into the East End was the most perilous (risky) challenge of all?
Chapter 38-40

- What does Mars mean when he calls himself “Bad?” How does Mars react to Maniac’s responses to him?
- Maniac made considerations about whether or not he should try to win the race, and one was what the consequences might be if he won. What consequences do you think Maniac was considering?
- How did McNab’s father feel about the people of East End? What in the text gives you that impression?
- Why do you think Maniac stayed with the McNab’s for so long? If you were in his shows would you have done the same? Why or why not?
- Who is the librarian?

Chapter 41-43

- Jerry Spinelli says, “But the East Enders stayed in the east and the West Enders stayed in the west, and the less they knew about each other, the more they made up.” (page 159). Do you agree with the idea that the less we know about someone, they more we make up about them? Write your response in your Sketching and Journaling section, and entitle it, “The Less We Know”
- How are Mrs. Beale and Mrs. Pickwell similar?
- What was the impact of George McNab calling Mars “it” when he says, “Let me know when it leaves,” on page 163?

Chapter 44-46

- Why didn’t Mars and Maniac say a word to each other when they were running?
- What was so significant about the P & W trolley to Maniac?
- What happened to Piper and Russel after Maniac walked away?
• Why do you think Maniac says he can’t go to Mars’s house?
• **Draw a picture of the ending of *Maniac Magee* in your Sketching & Journaling section. Entitle it, “The End.”**

Vocabulary Words: Find 5 vocabulary words and list their page #.