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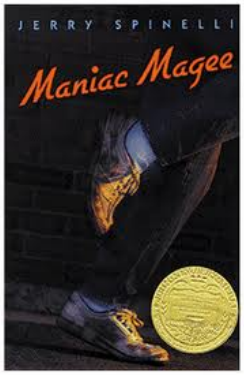

Maniac Magee
by Jerry Spinelli

Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

A Newbery Medal winning modern classic about a racially divided small town and a boy who runs.

Jeffrey Lionel "Maniac" Magee might have lived a normal life if a freak accident hadn't made him an orphan. After living with his unhappy and uptight aunt and uncle for eight years, he decides to run--and not just run away, but run. This is where the myth of Maniac Magee begins, as he changes the lives of a racially divided small town with his amazing and legendary feats.

A few interesting facts...

1. Maniac Magee was partially inspired by a motown song.
2. According to Jerry Spinelli, the South African goverment bough several hundred copies of Maniac Magee to promote anti-aoatheid efforts.
3. There's a movie adaptation of Maniac Magee and Jerry Spinelli is not a fan!
4. Maniac Magee won the Newbery Award in 1991.

Who Wrote It?

Jerry did not always want to be a writer. First he dreamed of being a cowboy and then a baseball player. When he wrote a poem about a football field in high school and that poem was published, he switched his dreams to writing. He went to Gettysburg University and afterward studied writing at John Hopkins. He worked as the editor of department store magazine and wrote in his free time... which was challenging at times because he and his wife had 6 noisy kids! But he must have managed to get some work done, because now, 30 years later he has written 21 books, some of them, like Maniac Magee, are award winning! To hear Jerry's writing advice and answers to FAQ, head to his website: www.jerryspinelli.com.

AR Reading Level: 4.7 Lexile Level: 820L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

WHAT I THINK

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Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.