

**Reflections:**

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *Tuck Everlasting*

*by Natalie Babbitt*

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## **Prologue**

1. Authors often use weather to help set a mood in a story. In the first paragraph of this story, a hot, silent August day is described. As you read this section, what mood do you think the author is trying to get across? Can you relate to this mood? Have you experienced such a day before? What kind of a mood did it put you in, or, if you haven't experienced it, what kind of mood do you think it would put you in?
2. Another way this author is trying to set a mood is through the use of a metaphor. She says that first week of August "hangs at the very top of the summer, the top of the live-long year, like the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning." Describe what it feels like to be stuck at the top of a Ferris wheel, either by remembering your own experience, or by using your imagination.
3. At the end of the prologue, the author talks about fixed points of turning things, such as the hub of a wheel, the sun, and the wood in the story to come. Look around or use your imagination and come up with other things that revolve around a fixed point. Describe them or draw them to illustrate your points, if you like.

## **Chapter 1**

4. The author asks the reader to consider what owning a piece of land really means. She asks how far down does one own a piece of ground. Does one own just the top layer we see, or does ownership go all the way to the center of the earth? What do you think? How deep and how high can a person own ground and the space above it? What makes you think this way?

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*Response Journal*

5. Winnie is described as not being interested in the wood because her family owns it. The author says “nothing is interesting when it belongs to you—only when it doesn’t.” Do you agree? Describe something you own, or your family owns, that you have lost interest in, or were never interested in the first place, but that someone else might find interesting. Do you know someone who has something you think is interesting, but which that person doesn’t find interesting? Why do you suppose this happens?

## **Chapter 2**

6. The author describes the noises Tuck hears as he is waking up that he can identify only by their sounds. Think of your home as you are waking up in the morning. What sounds do you hear and what do they tell you is happening in the house?
7. Mae Tuck has a little music box she takes everywhere. Do you, or does someone you know, have a favorite thing they take everywhere with them? Why do people do this with certain things? Why do you do it? If you don’t have something, what might you like to have to carry around, and why?
8. At the very end of this chapter, we learn that Mae Tuck and her husband have looked exactly the same for eighty-seven years. What are your thoughts when you learn this? What might explain this strange fact about them?

## **Chapter 3**

9. Winnie tells a toad that she discovers how she is feeling and her plans to run away. Why do you suppose she tells a toad her deepest thoughts and feelings rather than a person? Many people talk to their pets in this manner. Make up a conversation you might have with a pet.
10. Winnie tells the toad that she wants to do something important, but feels she can't if she's made to stay in her yard all day. What kinds of important things can children and young people do in the world? Make a list of ten ways you could improve the world by doing something important. Pick one item and write a paragraph detailing what effects your choice would have.
11. Have you ever felt like running away from home like Winnie does in this chapter? Write a letter to an imaginary friend. In it tell this person why he or she should not leave home.

## **Chapter 4**

12. The author gives us a detailed description of the stranger Winnie meets in this chapter. Using the details the author provides, draw a picture of what you think this man looks like. Then, write a few sentences explaining your reaction to him. Do you like him, not like him, trust him, fear him, etc.? Explain why you feel this way.
13. Winnie's grandmother thinks she hears elves making music in the woods. Do you believe, or have you ever believed, in elves, fairies or other magical beings? Explain in a short paragraph.

## **Chapter 5**

14. If you were Winnie and were secretly watching Jesse, would you have come out to meet him when he called you or would you have turned and run home? Why do you think Winnie goes out to meet him?
15. Draw a picture of the tree, the spring and the rocks used to cover it up. Use the details in the book as your guide.

## **Chapter 6**

16. Mae Tuck helps Winnie calm down by playing her music box for the child. The music does soothe Winnie and helps them all relax. Do you have a favorite kind of music that helps you relax? Describe it. If not, can you think of some music a person might find relaxing? Describe what it might sound like. Why do you think music relaxes people?

## **Chapter 7**

17. Mae Tuck tells Winnie if she were to drink from the spring, she'd stay a little girl forever. Make a list of all the things you think would be good about staying a child forever, and what would be bad about it. Then, decide, if given the choice, whether you would stay a child or grow up. Explain why.

## **Chapter 8**

18. Mae tells Winnie that their story is a “big, dangerous secret.” What do you think might be dangerous about knowing their secret?
19. Winnie is overcome with joy by the end of this chapter because she has closed “the gate on her oldest fears as she had closed the gate of her own fenced yard, she discovered the wings she’d always wished she had.” What do you think some of those fears might have been? What feeling is she calling “wings”? Why did she have to leave her fears behind to experience these feelings?

## **Chapter 9**

20. Jesse and Miles seem very happy to be home. Describe a time you were away from home for a while and were happy to return. Use a poem to describe it. The poem does not have to rhyme. It might begin like this:

The Grand Canyon made me  
feel small  
And I longed for my crowded  
home

## **Chapter 10**

21. The author gives us great details about the Tucks’ home. Choose any room from the ones described and draw it as the author describes it. Include all the details. Label which room you’ve drawn.