



Tuck Everlasting

by Natalie Babbitt

Teacher's Guide

Written By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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Synopsis

Prologue

At dawn the first week of August, as she does every ten years, Mae Tuck rides a horse toward the woods near Treegap to visit sons Miles and Jesse. At noon, Winnie Foster runs away from home. At sundown, a stranger searching for an unnamed person stops at the Fosters' gate.

Chapter 1

Near Treegap village sits the proud, disdainful house of the Foster family, who own the nearby wood. In the center of this isolated spot is an ash tree and a small bubbling spring.

Chapter 2

Mae Tuck awakens early in anticipation of reuniting with her sons. Her grumpy husband Tuck advises Mae not to enter Treegap, but she assures him that no one will recognize her. Dressed for an overnight excursion, Mae drops a painted music box in her skirt pocket. She knows without looking that she and her family have not changed for 87 years.

Chapter 3

A coddled only child, Winifred "Winnie" Foster, sits outside the scrutiny of her watchful mother and grandmother, observes a toad, and contemplates running away.

Chapter 4

At sunset, a stranger in a yellow suit approaches the Fosters' house and asks Winnie about a certain family. Winnie's grandmother cuts short their conversation. A tinkly music box melody reminds her about elves. She leads Winnie indoors; the stranger sighs contentedly as the moon rises.

Chapter 5

The next morning, Winnie wanders the woods and meets the toad she befriended the day before. Hoping to find elves, she enters a clearing and is smitten by Jesse Tuck, who sits under an ash tree and drinks from a spring near the roots. She informs him that the woods belong to her family.

Jesse at first says that he is 104 years old, then admits to age seventeen, which seems more likely. Winnie replies that she will soon be eleven. Jesse warns that the water is dirty and dangerous. With no warning, his mother Mae and Jesse's older brother Miles arrive. Mae faces something she has long feared.

Chapter 6

The Tucks apologize as they kidnap Winnie on horseback. Miles promises to explain later. Mae lies to the stranger that she is teaching her daughter how to ride. When the Tucks halt, Mae stops Winnie's tears by playing the music box.

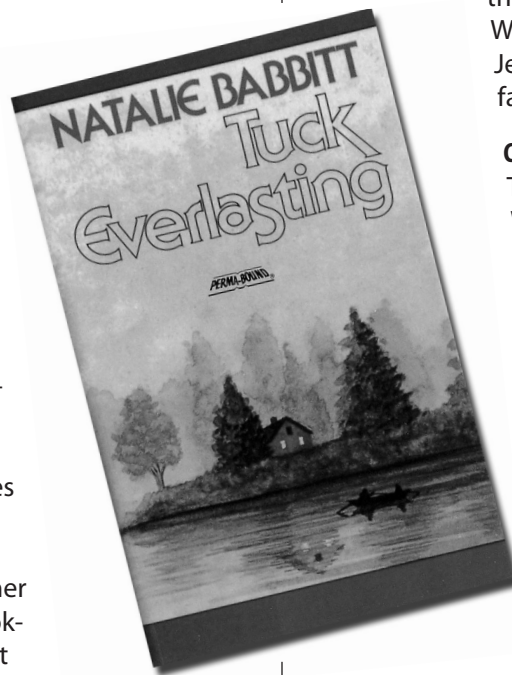
Chapter 7

The three explain that the Tucks drank from the spring in the woods 87 years before as they were moving westward. Their lives changed dramatically: nothing harmed them or their horse, which also drank from the spring. They never age. Because

the cat, which did not drink the magic water, lived a normal lifespan, the family determined that the water stops aging. To test the theory, they returned to the spring; Angus Tuck shot himself with a shotgun, but was not harmed. The Tucks are glad that Winnie did not drink and condemn herself to living forever as a ten-year-old.

Chapter 8

Winnie is the first person to hear this story. Jesse proclaims his unending life a wonderful adventure; Miles disagrees. Mae determines to take Winnie home with them and return her the next day. While Jesse shows off, Winnie exults in new friends and escape from her fenced-in yard. The group overlooks the stranger, who overhears the whole tale.



Chapter 9

The journey wearies Winnie. Miles carries her the last miles to the red house and sparkling lake. While the boys swim, Angus Tuck welcomes Winnie.

Chapter 10

The untidy three-room cottage contrasts Winnie's orderly life. Mae explains that the heaps of toys and wooden spoons are craft items that the family sells. The boys are seldom home. Miles, skilled in carpentry and blacksmithy, and Jesse, still unsettled and boyish, earn money, which they bring home to their parents. The Tucks have lived in this location for twenty years.

Chapter 11

During a casual supper of flapjacks eaten in the parlor, Winnie asks to return home. Mae promises to take her after the family explains more about their situation. Tuck promises Winnie a rowboat ride. He worries about the man Mae saw near the wood.

Chapter 12

On the pond, Tuck asks Winnie to notice how life moves and changes. He compares creation to a wheel and the deathless Tucks to rocks. Miles yells that the horse has been stolen.

Chapter 13

The stranger rides the stolen horse to the Foster house and reports that he knows where Winnie has been taken.

Chapter 14

That night, Winnie tries to sleep on the lumpy sofa. She surmises that the stranger has told her family where she is. First Mae, then Tuck tiptoes in during the night to check on Winnie. Jesse calls down from the loft that she should live with them seven years, then drink the magic water, marry Jesse, and remain seventeen forever.

Chapter 15

The stranger bargains to trade Winnie's whereabouts for title to their woods.

Chapter 16

The constable suspects the stranger of being a kidnaper and complains that he must ride twenty miles north into the foothills to rescue Winnie. Because his horse is old and slow, the stranger rides ahead.

Chapter 17

Early the next morning, Miles and Winnie go fishing. As he rows silently, she realizes that she loves the Tucks. Miles confides that his daughter Anna would be eighty and his son eighty-two. He realized that his former family would never acclimate to differences in ages, even if they drank the magic water.

Chapter 18

At breakfast, the family again eats flapjacks in lieu of fresh fish. Tuck worries that, without a horse, he can't return Winnie. Someone knocks at the door. Winnie recognizes the voice.

Chapter 19

The stranger enters and relates the stories he heard from his grandmother about Miles' wife, son, and daughter Anna. The lure of the Tucks' secret and Mae's music box drives him for twenty years. He details the deal he has made to return Winnie in exchange for title to the woods. Tuck calls him a horse thief. The stranger adds that he intends to sell the magic water and drink it himself. He expects the Tucks to help him advertise. Jesse believes that demonstrations would make them into freaks. The stranger pulls Winnie by the arm; she shrieks. He declares that Winnie will serve as his human model of longevity. Mae, realizing the danger, strikes him with the shotgun just as the constable rides up.

Chapter 20

Even though Winnie denies being kidnapped, the constable arrests Mae. He promises to send a doctor. If the stranger dies, Mae will be charged with murder. Winnie promises that Mae will soon be free.

Chapter 21

That night, Winnie sits in her child-sized rocking chair and tries to relax. Her grandmother proclaims that the Tucks bewitched her. The constable reports the stranger's death, implicating Mae in murder. Winnie resolves to save Mae from the gallows.

Chapter 22

Next morning, Winnie asks for water to cool the toad. Grandmother watches Winnie, who returns to the road, but finds no toad. Jesse appears and relates Miles' plan to remove Mae's window frame. He brings a bottle of spring water so Winnie can join him in six years. Winnie will meet Jesse at midnight and disguise herself in Mae's blankets while the Tucks escape. When the grandmother interrupts, Jesse vanishes.

Chapter 23

The remainder of the afternoon is hot and miserable. By 9:00 that evening, Winnie is miserable with anticipation and guilt. She sleeps from 11:00 until five minutes before midnight.

Chapter 24

Winnie joins Jesse on the way to the village. Miles pries nails from the window frame. Under the cover of thunder, he wrenches free the frame; Mae climbs out of her cell. Winnie kisses the Tucks, then takes Mae's place. The Tucks depart.

Chapter 25

Two weeks later, Winnie recalls how the constable discovered the jail-break. The Fosters defend her loyalty to the Tucks, yet keep her a virtual prisoner. Neighbor children admire her. She rescues the toad from a stray dog and gives it eternal life with her spring water. She intends to refill the bottle in the wood.

Epilogue

In 1950, Mae and Angus return in their decrepit horse and wagon and find the woods gone and the village of 1880 grown into a town. They learn from a café counter-man that the tree was struck by lightning in 1947 and then bulldozed. While Mae shops, Angus searches the cemetery for the Foster plot. An inscription confirms that Winnie married a man named Jackson, bore children, and died in 1948 at the age of 78. Before the Tucks drive away, they see a truck run over a toad, which miraculously survives. They drive on to the sound of Mae's music box.

Timeline

- 1776** Jesse Tuck is born.
- 1793** The Tucks drink magic water that makes them immortal.
- 1798** Miles' son is born.
- 1800** Anna is born.
- 1860** The Tucks move to a cottage twenty miles north of the magic spring.
The stranger begins his search for the Tucks.
- 1865** The constable begins his job in Treegap.
- 1870** Winnie Foster is born.
- 1880** first week in August: Mae Tuck rides to the woods in Treegap to meet her sons.
noon: Winnie Foster decides to run away from home.
sunset: A stranger stops at the Foster house.

next morning: Winnie encounters Jesse Tuck. Mae tells Winnie the story of the magic water; the stranger eavesdrops. The Tucks kidnap Winnie and ride north.

that evening: Mae, Jesse, and Winnie arrive at the cottage. The stranger steals the Tucks' horse and rides to the Foster house to make a deal—Winnie's whereabouts for the title to the woods.

that night: Jesse offers to marry Winnie when she is seventeen.

next morning: The stranger tries to take Winnie; Mae strikes him with the stock of Angus' shotgun. The constable arrests Mae.

later: The doctor reports the stranger's death, thus upgrading Mae's crime to murder.

that night: Winnie joins Jesse a few minutes before midnight and takes Mae's place in the cell.

next morning: The constable accuses Winnie of being an accomplice.

two weeks later: Winnie pours the magic water on the toad.

1947 Lightning strikes the ash tree, which is bulldozed.

1948 Winifred Foster Jackson dies at age 78.

1950 Mae and Angus eat at a café in Treegap; Angus visits Winnie's grave.

Author Sketch

A Newbery-winning writer and illustrator of children's books, Natalie Zane Babbitt recalls the influence of her Grandmother Converse, a seamstress who supported her family with needle work. Babbitt's parents, Ralph and Genevieve Zane, were both teachers.



Born July 28, 1932, in Dayton, Ohio, Babbitt treasures the encouragement of her mother, who read aloud to her daughters. At that time, Babbitt was more adept at art than writing and took as her model first Luis de Vargas, then Sir John Tenniel, illustrator of *Alice in Wonderland*. After summer studies at the Cleveland School of Art and completion of her education at Smith College in 1954, she acknowledged that the competition of other art students challenged her to higher levels of creativity. That same year, she married Samuel Fisher Babbitt, a Korean War veteran, and collaborated with him on their first mutual project, *The Forty-Ninth Magician*.

The Babbitts moved to New Haven, where her husband gave up professional writing and took a job as administrator at Yale University. Like many other women of her era, Babbitt recalls being jolted into a career decision after reading Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1973). Her response was characteristic of the daughter and granddaughter of career women and sister of a writer: "By God, I'm going to do what I've always wanted to do." Her three children—Christopher Converse, Thomas Collier II, and Lucy Cullyford—are grown. Currently, the family lives in Providence, Rhode Island, where Babbitt continues writing, drawing, and teaching at Kirkland College. Her husband serves as vice president of Brown University. They also maintain a residence in Dennis, Massachusetts.

Critic's Corner

Babbitt ventured into print in verse, believing the medium to be her best. When she began *The Search for Delicious*, she determined that the lengthy narrative required prose suitable for oral reading to children. She followed with two novels and a picture book, *The Something*, which derives from her own dislike of the dark. *Tuck Everlasting*, her most mature novel, pursues a complex assessment of evanescence and the alternate possibility of eternal human life on earth. Subsequent works—*The Eyes of the Amaryllis* and *Herbert Rowbarge*—display her preference for sophisticated topics and treatments of human situations that credit young readers with depth and sensibility.

Like most writers, Babbitt enjoys speaking engagements because she escapes the isolation that removes her from young audiences. Because of a deep regard for children and their innate curiosity, she values the intelligence of her readership, whom she describes as "far more perceptive and wise than American books give them credit for being." Identified for originality, intelligence, and purpose, she maintains a creative role as both an illustrator and a writer. In addition to children's books, she has written for *Redbook*, *School Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Horn Book*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Cricket*, *USA Today*, and *Washington Post Book World*.

Babbitt has earned her share of acclaim, including a Best Book Award from the *New York Times*, an ALA Notable book (four times), a Newbery Honor Book, George C. Stone Center for Children's Books Award, *Horn Book* Honors List (three times), *Book World* Honor Book, *Children's Book Council* Showcase title, *School Library Journal's* best of the

year list, National Book Award nominee, Christopher Award for juvenile fiction, International Reading Association Choices list, and a U. S. honor book of the Congress of the International Board on Books for Young People. Of those awards, five resulted from *Tuck Everlasting*.

Babbitt's Published Works

Dick Foote and the Shark (1967)
Phoebe's Revolt (1968)
The Search for Delicious (1969)
Kneeknock Rise (1970)
The Something (1970)
Goody Hall (1971)
The Devil's Storybook (1974)
Tuck Everlasting (1975)
The Eyes of the Amaryllis (1977)
Herbert Rowbarge (1982)
The Devil's Other Storybook (1987)
Nellie—A Cat on Her Own (1989)
Bub, or, The Very Best Thing (1994)

Illustrations by Babbitt

The Forty-Ninth Magician (1966)
Samuel Fisher Babbitt (1966)
Small Poems (1972)
More Small Poems (1976)
Still More Small Poems (1976)
Curlicues: The Fortunes of Two Pug Dogs (1980)
Small Poems Again (1986)
Other Small Poems Again (1986)
All the Small Poems (1987)

Related Reading

Richard Adams, *Watership Down*
Poul Anderson, *Boat of a Million Years*
Avi, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*
Ray Bradbury, *The Electric Grandmother* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*
Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*
Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree*
Goethe, *Faust*
Robert Heinlein, *Methuselah's Children* and *Time Enough for Love*
C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
Lois Lowry, *The Giver*
Christopher Marlow, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*
Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Blue Bird*
Ayn Rand, *Anthem*
Christina Rossetti, *The Goblin Market*
Mary Stewart, *The Crystal Cave* and *The Hollow Hills*

Gore Vidal, *A Visit to a Small Planet*
 Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince* and *The Portrait of Dorian Grey*
 Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*

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New York Times Book Review, July 2, 1967, p. 16; Nov. 9, 1969, p. 62; July 28, 1974, p. 8; Nov. 16, 1975, p. 32; Nov. 13, 1977, p. 37; Nov. 14, 1982, pp. 44, 54; Nov. 1, 1987, p. 36.
PEN Newsletter, September 1988, pp. 16-26.
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Times Literary Supplement, April 4, 1975, p. 365; July 16, 1976, p. 882; March 25, 1977, p. 348; June 29, 1984, p. 737; Aug. 31, 1984, p. 977.
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Washington Post Book World, Dec. 12, 1982.
Writer, June 1971.

General Objectives

1. To enumerate examples of manipulation, greed, and menace
2. To describe loyalty
3. To read aloud examples of verbal conflict
4. To explain the role of weather in fiction
5. To discuss concepts of immortality
6. To note the value of moral support during difficult times
7. To characterize courage
8. To contrast types of villainy
9. To account for an emphasis on nature in fiction
10. To acknowledge the importance of making wise decisions

Specific Objectives

1. To discuss the Fosters' problem of disciplining an only child
2. To explain how the stranger's death influences the plot
3. To explain the significance of bulldozing the ash tree
4. To characterize Jesse's love for Winnie
5. To study the implications of the tombstone
6. To account for the unifying effect of the music box tune
7. To evaluate changes in Winnie's self-concept
8. To explain the role of the storm and the toad
9. To describe the physical, mental, and emotional effects of coping alone among strangers
10. To project how the Tucks will cope with the rest of the twentieth century

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Natalie Babbitt’s fantasy, present the following terms and applications:

Climax: the height of an action, a crisis or turning point from which all behaviors or attitudes are permanently altered and nothing can ever be what it once was. Winnie’s assistance at the jail-break appears to be a climax, but she returns home to her former state as only child in the Foster family and resumes living a dull existence in the yard under her grandmother’s watch. The real turning point comes with the sacrifice of magic water for the toad. Winnie’s discussion with Tuck about pond life appears to have altered her thinking about the importance of all living things. Without hesitating, she gives up her own immortality by dousing the toad with a baptism of immortality. Although the story omits the remainder of her life, the details drawn from her gravestone suggest that she lived a normal existence. Tuck honors her choice with a brief “Good girl.”

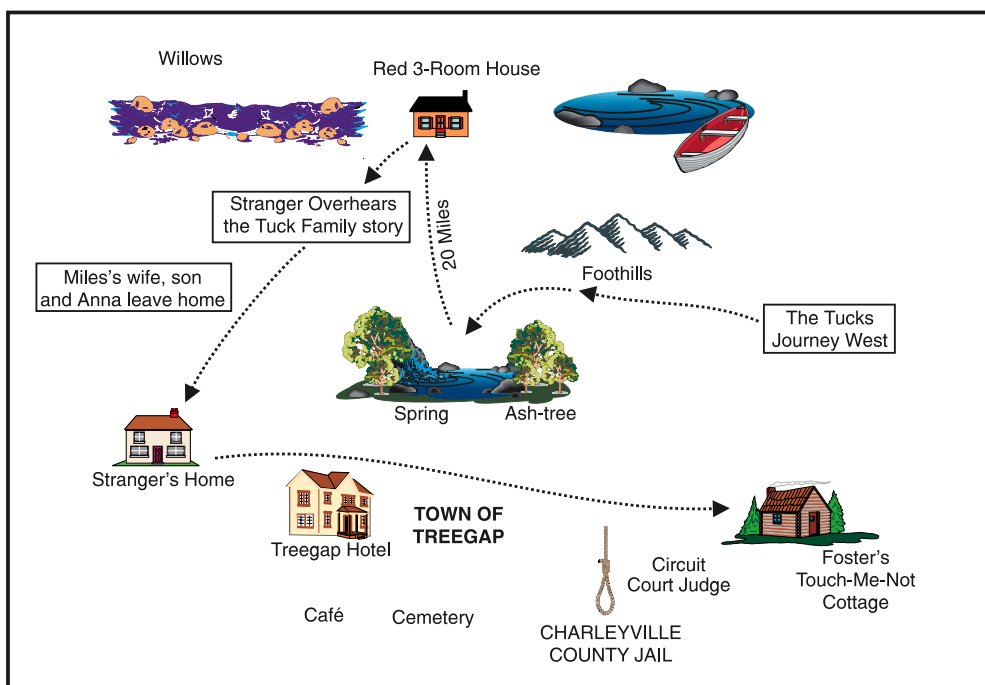
Fantasy: a dimension of imaginative literature that blends the real world with incredible characters, for instance, a family that wanders among mortals and lives a humble existence to conceal the fact that they are deathless individuals who possess the secret of endless life. Babbitt blends the fantasy with the hardships of real life by putting Winnie in both milieus and demonstrating how a young girl tries to accommodate one reality within the confines of another. The wistful love between Jesse and Winnie displays the difficulty that a teenager feels in being locked forever in an age of budding romance and having no teenage girl to share it with.

Motif: a pattern or predictable arrangement of elements to express an abstract theme in a story, as found in the oddly memorable melody of Mae’s music box that begins and ends the novel. The tinkly air teases the mind and lures the stranger for twenty years in search of a fantastic family that never ages. Babbitt implies with the sound that art, like the repeated melody and the legend that the stranger learns in childhood, is a deathless tie between normal human existence and fantasy or yearning.

The Importance of Setting

The milieu of *Tuck Everlasting* expresses much of Babbitt’s meaning. By setting the story at the wayside home of a dour family of landowners, she illustrates the themes of ownership, child rearing, and mortality. Just as the Fosters attempt to hold on to their only child and extensive property, most people cling to life. It is Tuck’s family who exemplify the flip side of possessions and the beauty of the life cycle, which requires both death and life to complete itself. Shut out of the cycle, the wandering Tucks view the precious gift of life from the bizarre vantage of people who envy those who live a normal span.

Symbolic of Tuck’s constricting immortality and Winnie’s unhappiness is the new jail. Like Winnie’s existence in the fenced yard, the walls hold Mae prisoner from the decennial visit to the tree. Similarly, the grim lockup characterizes the alternate side of constraint—the alteration in human existence that binds Tuck’s family into a span of years that eclipses anything that human beings have ever known. Her family can never enjoy a common relationship with neighbors, a job, and grandchildren. Just as Winnie yearns to escape the fenced-in yard and her grandmother’s watchful eye, Mae and Tuck wistfully observe normal families and ponder the questionable joy of living forever. Thus, both Winnie’s mortality and Mae’s immortality become a kind of jail.



Another significant factor in the story is the change in village life. In Tuck's youth, it was possible to live simply and earn a living from handicrafts. After Treegap turns into a town, Tuck and Mae become curiosities as they try to return to the clearing, meet their family, and blend inconspicuously with town folk. The disappearance of horse-drawn vehicles suggests that Tuck and Mae can expect greater hardships in future years as they witness additional modernization in villages and more complexity in town life.

Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about Natalie Babbitt, fantasy, science fiction, dilemmas, and other subjects and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources:

Characters in Crisis, Center for Humanities
Dictionary of Imaginary Places, Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi
Well, They Did It (filmstrip) Educational Impressions

Also, consult these websites:

Hobbit Hole
<http://www.alaska.net/~humpback/hobbit.htm>
 Natalie Babbitt
<http://www.ipl.org/youth/AskAuthor/babbitt.html>
 Natalie Babbitt
<http://www.iren.net/cfpl/youth/author3.html>
 Science Fiction and Fantasy
<http://www.sfsite.com/oct97a/hob18.htm>
 Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America
<http://www.sfw.org>

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Natalie Babbitt's *Tuck Everlasting* should include these aspects:

Themes

- discontent
- friendship
- dilemma
- villainy
- conflict
- loss
- compromise
- loyalty
- rescue
- decisions

Motifs

- loss of familiar comforts
- manipulation by evil
- asserting self-control
- playing outside the rules
- depending on the hospitality of strangers
- coping with supernatural powers
- acknowledging self-doubt
- taking responsibility for actions
- saying farewell to a deceased friend

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each. Chapter and page numbers are provided so that you can reread the passage from which the item is taken.

1. "Nonsense. It's elves!" crowed her grandmother excitedly. (Chap. 4, page 21)
(The term elf, derived from the Old Norse word for swan and the Latin for white, refers to a mischievous fairy, either dark or light in color, found in Germanic folklore. Lumped into a broader category with pixies, hobgoblins, leprechauns, brownies, poltergeists, sprites, and gnomes, elves are usually depicted as small beings with magical powers, but whose delight is in practical jokes. Even though elves are known to love order and neatness, they are suspected of common thievery, usually of small objects. They thrive in places that offer music, gaiety, bright colors, and nature. Students of folklore believe that elves are lost gods, Druid spirits, or pre-Celtic inhabitants of Europe who were forced to hide in caves and exist hand-to-mouth when stronger tribes overran their habitats.)
2. My wife, she finally made up her mind I'd sold my soul to the Devil. (Chap. 7, p. 39)
(The Faust legend has appeared in many forms. Always the same elements dominate the story: a man of learning barter with the powers of darkness for wisdom or the secrets of the universe. At the end of a normal lifespan, Satan returns to complete the exchange and carry the learned man to his doom. Usually the story ends tragically, with the old scholar begging for more time to enjoy his powers.)
3. You don't have to be such a parson all the time. (Chap. 8, p. 43)
(Winnie gets two views of immortality from the Tuck brothers. Jesse, forever seventeen and just below the brink of manhood, looks forward to "All the things we're going to see!" Miles, who lost a wife and two children because he could not age along with his normal family, reminds Jesse, "There's a whole lot more

to it than Jesse Tuck's good times, you know." Jesse, in retaliation for Miles' contradiction, calls his brother a parson.)

4. But everything else was motionless, dry as biscuit, on the brink of burning, hoarding final reservoirs of sap, trying to hold out till the rain returned, and Queen Anne's lace lay dusty on the surface of the meadows like foam on a painted sea. (Chap. 9, p. 47)
*(Named for Queen Anne of England, the last of the Stuart line who ruled from 1702-1714, Queen Anne's lace, commonly known as wild carrot or formally as *Daucus carota*, is a biennial herb of the parsley family native to Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America. Found in pastures, meadows, and roadsides, it springs from a fleshy, cone-shaped root. At the top of an erect stem grows a flat cluster of white flowers which turn into seed pods. In some species, the flower curls inward, giving rise to the name bird's-nest or crow's-nest.)*
5. Beyond this was the bedroom, where a vast and tipsy brass bed took up most of the space, but there was room beside it for the washstand with the lonely mirror, and opposite its foot a cavernous oak wardrobe, from which leaked the faint smell of camphor. (Chap. 10, p. 51)
(A pungent compound used from early times as both incense and curative, camphor was at one time worn about the neck in a small pouch to ward off disease. Found in the wood and leaves of a tree native to China, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Japan, it is cultivated in California and Florida and takes 45-50 years to mature. From the harvest of twigs and leaves, distillers steam out crude camphor and market the purified substance as liniment, anti-septic, stimulant, and antidiarrhetic, even though it can be deadly to infants and small children. Camphor, which was commonly found in closets and storage chests as a moth repellent, has become less common since it was listed among household carcinogens.)
6. You go for your local constable, and he and I ride out and bring back the child and the criminals. (Chap. 15, p. 75)
(The office of constable dates to medieval times, although the word itself derives from Latin for count of the stable. The title originally denoted the commander of a castle and often remained among the members of one family for generations. Today, the political importance of the title has vanished. It survives as a term for police officer.)
7. Circuit judge'll be coming through next week. (Chap. 16, p. 78)
(The practice of mobile judges dates to twelfth-century England. In the early days of the American judicial system, circuit judges

rode from town to town and held court in each community. The procedure was difficult to schedule because no one could predict the demand for judges at any particular time. Occasionally, the judge traveled with attorneys, since many frontier towns had no professionals to draw on for legal aid.)

8. I decided to devote my life to finding out if it could be true, and if so, how and why. I went to school, I went to a university, I studied philosophy, metaphysics, even a little medicine. None of it did me any good. (Chap. 19, p. 95)
(The anonymous "man in the yellow suit," spurred on by his grandmother's stories about Miles Tuck's children, tries to educate himself on the subject of immortality. Among his studies is metaphysics, the branch of philosophy that deals with what is real, as experienced by the five senses, and what is imagined or unreal. Aristotle, the father of metaphysics, lumped the study in with theology, although modern students tend more toward the study of logic, ethics, and morality.)
9. "Toads don't drink water, Winifred . . . They take it in through their skins, like a sponge. When it rains." (Chap. 22, p. 112)
(The toad, a muscular amphibian with webbed feet and a flexible tongue, lives in tree, water, and earth habitats, sometimes burrowing deeply into the soil. Its warty, rough exterior contains glands that moisten the skin. A toad can hibernate in mud or holes for long periods and extricate itself during rainy weather after moisture revitalizes it.)
10. Into her head came lines from an old poem:
*Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.
Over and over the lines repeated themselves in her head till they were altogether meaningless. (Chap. 24, pp. 122-123)*
*(Winnie is quoting a famous aphorism from "To Althea, from Prison," a poem by the English cavalier poet Richard Lovelace (1618-1658). The remainder of the stanza elaborates on the first couplet:
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty.
The poet, an elegant courtier in the uneasy times of Charles I, was imprisoned at Gatehouse from 1642-1645. During this time, his fiancée, Lucy Sacheverell, heard that Lovelace had died and married someone else. Returned to prison in 1648, Lovelace completed and published a collection of poems, which his brother added to after Richard's death.)*

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the novel.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. Describe Winnie's first meeting with Jesse.

(On an August morning in 1880, Winnie Foster contemplates running away from home but lacks the courage to go alone. She slips out of her closely-guarded yard and walks into the woods, following a toad, her only companion. In a clearing beneath an enormous ash tree, she spies a "boy, almost a man," dressed in scruffy clothes and suspenders, relaxing against the trunk and holding a twig between his bare toes.

After the boy removes pebbles from a pile and takes a drink from a spurt of water that arches up, he realizes that Winnie is watching him. The boy seems unusually defensive about the spring, but Winnie insists that her family owns the woods and that she has a right to drink the water. The two exchange names and ages: Winnie is nearly eleven; Jesse at first claims to be 104, but amends his claim to 17.

Jesse tries to keep Winnie from drinking from the spring. The more he tries, the thirstier she becomes. When Winnie proves more difficult to convince than he anticipated, he worries, "Now what am I going to do?" At that point, Mae and Miles appear.)

2. How does the man in the yellow suit learn about the Tucks?

(A native of country west of Treegap, the stranger grew up hearing his grandmother's stories about her friend who married an unidentified man who never got any older. The stranger's mother played with the woman's children [Anna and her brother]. The woman—later identified as Miles' wife—finally moved farther west.

Intrigued by the peculiarities of the stories, the stranger attended a university and studied "philosophy, metaphysics, even a little medicine," but never learned the answer to the riddle. After presenting his grandmother with a music box, the stranger discovered a single clue—the mother of the man who never got any older [Mae] kept a music box. The stranger's mother taught him the tune.

When the stranger sets out in search of the immortal family, he finds no one who recognizes their name. Then he hears the familiar tune coming from Fosters' woods. He follows the Tucks after they kidnap Winnie and eavesdrops on the story of the magic spring water.)

3. What does the stranger plan to do with the secret?

(After learning the location of the spring and manipulating the Fosters into selling it to him, the stranger plans to profit from the secret. He intends to sell the water "only to certain people, people who deserve it." With the aid of the Tucks, whom he will use for "demonstrations," he hopes to make money on his investment in Fosters' woods. Jesse, rewording the stranger's offer, comments, "Freaks. You want us to be freaks. In a patent-medicine show.")

4. Why does Mae kill the stranger?

(The Tucks, already enamored of Winnie, cry out in alarm when the stranger drags "Winnie through the kitchen to the door." Winnie screams, "I won't go with you! I won't!" As the stranger gets to the door, a cold, flat voice commands, "You leave that child be." The stranger turns to face "Tuck's long-forgotten shotgun."

The stranger, little realizing that Mae is serious about stopping him, continues berating the Tucks for stupidity and selfishness. He changes his plans to use them in his demonstrations and elects to show Winnie after she drinks the water. Mae confounds Miles by raising the shotgun toward the stranger and vowing that he will not "give out the secret." Then she bashes him in the head with the stock, smashing the back of his skull. He later dies.)

5. What does Winnie add to the Tuck family's plan to free Mae?

(When Winnie returns to her family, she is even more closely guarded by her parents and grandmother. Because of the intensity of the August heat, Winnie's grandmother leaves her unattended at the edge of the yard. Jesse, crouching near the fence, gets her attention and explains the plan. Miles, the carpenter, is going to remove the window frame from Mae's jail cell so Mae can escape and the family can leave town together.

Winnie comes up with her own addition to the jailbreak. She offers to take Mae's place and wrap up in the blanket so the constable will believe that Mae is safely locked up. By morning, the Tucks will be far away and the secret will be safe. Jesse agrees that her suggestion would be useful, but doubts that Angus will allow Winnie to take the risk. Winnie, blaming herself for the family's predicament, contends, "I want to help. I have to help." Jesse and Winnie agree to meet at midnight.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretive Level)

6. What does this story say about loneliness and isolation?

(Winnie, child of a wealthy landowner, lives in a "touch-me-not house" and is too prissy and clean for other children to seek out. She longs for contact with the world. From her fenced-in yard, she can find only a toad to entertain her. Even her trip into the woods is accompanied only by the toad, since her mother and grandmother fear and detest dirt.

During her sojourn at the Tuck house, Winnie suffers ambivalence in her longing for home and her love for new-found and supportive friends. For the first time, she realizes that not everyone lives in a spotlessly clean house behind an iron fence. She also learns that good food enjoyed among friends transcends a neat house and table manners.)

7. What is Angus' reaction to Winnie's death?
(Angus, who forms a deep and lasting friendship with Winnie, returns to Treegap seventy years after Mae's jailbreak. He and Mae stop by a diner to learn what they can about the spring. After the counterman describes the destruction of the ash tree in 1948, Mae goes on errands while Angus walks about town.)

His heart quickens as he approaches a cemetery, surrounded by a "rambling iron fence." He passes among the "weedy rows of gravestones" before finding one marked Foster and surrounded by smaller headstones for individual members of the family. There, he kneels and reads, his throat constricted and his spirit "overcome with sadness." He salutes Winnie Foster Jackson for choosing to remain a part of normal life: "Good girl," he said aloud. "Returning to Mae and the wagon, he replies to her question, "She's gone."

8. What does Winnie learn from her short association with Angus?
(Of all the Tucks, it is Angus who teaches Winnie the most about life. He takes her out on the pond in the rowboat and reveals the wonders of life as it was meant to be lived. Illustrations arise naturally from the pond setting to corroborate his words— dragonflies, frogs, fish, water lilies, and sounds of hidden wildlife. Even though Winnie absorbs only snatches of his philosophy and, like most people, recoils at the thought of death, she learns something that changes her entire life.)

Evidently, Winnie is tempted to join Jesse, but in the intervening years after Mae's jailbreak, Winnie does not elect to refill the bottle with magic spring water nor to stop her life at age seventeen so she can live forever as Jesse's companion. The book leaves the reader wondering why Winnie marries Jackson, but Angus' visit to the Treegap cemetery seventy years later clears up some of the mystery. His salute to a "good girl" indicates that he believes he made an impression that influenced her to remain mortal.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. What aspects of this book appeal to young readers?
(Natalie Babbitt fills this story with the qualities and events that most people look for in fiction. There is a plausible central character who wins the reader's sympathies, a magic spring, love interest with Jesse, a mad dash on horseback, loving humble parents to contrast Winnie's dismal home experience, a wicked

and mysterious villain, plotting and triumph over evil, and a poignant ending. The complexity of the falling action leaves the reader much to ponder. At no time does Babbitt talk down to her audience, whom she assumes is able to understand enough about life to wonder about death.)

10. Why is the music box an important symbol?
(The music box serves several purposes in the story. First, it binds together various elements of the plot, such as Mae's love of life and her eagerness to reunite with her sons, the stranger's curiosity to the secret of immortality, Winnie's desire for comfort and reassurance, and Mae's optimism in spite of the situation that sets her family apart from other human beings. Like the bowls of daisies that decorate the Tuck house and warm splashes of reflected light on the parlor ceiling, the music is proof that people who enjoy life prefer simple pleasures to grand displays of wealth.)

In contrast to the Tucks, the Fosters demonstrate little love of living. They are land-proud, supercilious, and stand-offish. Their yard and house imprison Winnie with antiseptic and fastidious caution. The only child, to fulfill a natural need for warmth, finds joy in a lowly toad, her closest companion, and looks forward to a stroll on wooded land that belongs to her family, but is forever off-limits. And, most important of all, the Fosters have no music in their lives, not even the tinkle of a music box.)

Questions 11 and 12 (Creative Level)

11. Describe Winnie's husband and children as you imagine them. Characterize evenings around the Jackson fireside as the children eat flapjacks, talk about nature walks, and listen to stories of Jesse, Miles, Mae, and Angus.
12. Act out a courtroom scene in which Mae's case is tried. Assign roles for the constable, Mae, Angus, Jesse, Miles, Winnie, the doctor, and the Fosters.

Across the Curriculum

Drama and Speech

- Write several implied conversations, such as the stranger's discussions with his grandmother about Anna and her mother and Miles' farewell to his family. Act out your dialogue for an audio or video taping.
- Describe in a short speech the effects of loneliness, insecurity, disillusion with family, danger, arrest, terror, threat of execution, greed, manipulation, boredom, and immortality on characters in the story. How does Winnie pass the time

between her return and the jail-break? Why do the thunderstorm and the end of summer signal a release of dramatic tension?

3. Form a team of readers to tape expanded, imaginative episodes of *Tuck Everlasting*, for example, a move from the valley. Vary participants so that everyone has an opportunity to represent Winnie, Angus, Jesse, Miles, and Winnie.

Cinema

1. Draw segments of a storyboard for a movie version of *Tuck Everlasting*. Show the placement of actors, music, costumes, props, sound effects, and lighting. Include Winnie anointing the toad with bottled water, Jesse showing off to impress Winnie, Mae's crawl through the jail window, a rowboat ride on the pond, Mae's attack on the stranger, and the constable's lecture to Winnie about helping criminals escape.
2. View various films about difficult decisions, e. g. *Member of the Wedding*, *The Secret Garden*, *Little Women*, and *Daughters of the Dust*. Discuss why filmmakers focus on problems with coming of age.

Science and Health

1. Make a time line of uncertainty and emotional and physical stress in the story, for example, meeting Jesse under the tree and Angus' visit to the cemetery.
2. Explain briefly the purpose of the pond. How does Angus make a strong case for normal life by showing Winnie the creatures on the pond? What metaphor explains how life begins and ends? Why is Winnie unable to see the pond water flowing into the sea? How does imagination supply the missing link?
3. Compose a short segment in which you report on the atmosphere, sound, and light of a late-summer storm. What causes heat lightning? How does the toad survive the dusty road? Why does a breeze cool the air after the storm breaks? How does lightning destroy the tree?
4. Survey the history of metaphysics. What methods did early scientists use to find a fountain of youth or a way of turning base metal into gold? Why did metaphysics fail? When did science abandon metaphysical principles?

Geography

Create a mural or web site that introduces these settings described or mentioned in the text, particularly pond, foothills, woods, clearing, town, village, yard, house, cottage, and valley. Determine how the story would change if it were set on the seashore or in a desert.

Art

1. Using desktop publishing or other media, design a page from a law text explaining the punishment for kidnapping or second-degree murder, a sign welcoming visitors to Treegap or the cemetery, a café menu naming coffee and orangeade as beverage choices, a sign offering homemade wooden toys or spoons, a monument honoring Winifred Foster Jackson, multiple views of a rowboat, a business card for the constable or the stranger, visiting hours at the Treegap jail, an epitaph for the constable or the stranger, a news headline about Winnie's recovery and her role in the jail-break, an illustrated entry on toads or ash trees for an encyclopedia or science book, a scientific explanation of springs or lightning, and a schematic drawing of the cemetery or the new jail.
2. Draw a book jacket or poster emphasizing the role of the ash tree and spring in Winnie's meeting with Jesse or of the pond in helping Winnie sort out her beliefs and hopes for a normal life.

Law

1. Launch an Internet web site characterizing disobedience and lawlessness. Contrast Winnie's outlook before and after she leaves home. Explain why rebellion is a normal part of growing up. Suggest ways that Winnie's parents and grandmother can accept her evolving maturity and independence. Explain why Winnie behaved sensibly during her kidnap.
2. Divide the class into small groups to study the background elements of the story, particularly laws regarding kidnap, juvenile delinquency, assault, second-degree murder, horse stealing, and assisting in a jail-break. Determine if the stranger breaks a law by offering information about Winnie's whereabouts in exchange for title to the wood. Explain why horse theft was a more serious crime before automobile travel.

Economics

1. Explain in a theme how the author characterizes the lot of poor, itinerant families whose inferior education marks them as yokels or objects of ridicule. Why does the loss of Anna and her brother hang on their minds and remind them that their lot is forever changed by the magic water?
2. Create a bulletin board illustrating the life of itinerant craft sellers. Suggest ways that Angus and Mae rely on simple skills to keep them in money. Note how their horse and wagon appear to the people of Treenap in 1950. Show innovations in Treenap in the years since the Tucks met Winnie.

Social Studies

1. Compose an informal essay on teaching children about life and death. What questions do children need to answer for themselves? Why does a study of nature answer some of those questions? What might Winnie have told her own children about the natural end of life? Discuss whether she revealed to them her decision to remain mortal.
2. Sketch a chart depicting the demise of the gallows as a method of capital punishment. Offer a state-by-state time line of alternate methods of executing prisoners.
3. Name a world figure who most resembles Winnie in background and appearance, greatness of heart, courage, and daring. Determine how events lead people to ignore their upbringing and establish their own morals.
4. Chart the history of gypsies. Express their difficulties as a rootless people easily victimized by others. Discuss the source of their language and customs.

Psychology and Health

1. Compose a character interaction analysis emphasizing the type of love and attention Winnie receives at the Tuck house. Why are Mae and Angus loving and concerned for Winnie's welfare? Why do the Tucks miss Anna? Why does Winnie offer the Tucks unconditional friendship, even breaking the law to save Mae from the gallows? Why do the Fosters defend their daughter's reputation, even though they don't understand her unusual behavior?

2. Characterize the illusion of imprisonment behind the fence at the Foster house. How does this form of confinement contrast with Mae's incarceration? Why does Winnie resolve to escape her miserable home life? After the jail-break, how do local children honor Winnie's courage?

Language Arts

1. Compose individual posters explaining the significance of important words and phrases from the book, such as: dog days, hub, gallows, and Hudson automobile.
2. Write a theme in which you explain the role of a minor character. How are these people affected directly and indirectly by the magic water?
3. Compose a short speech in which you describe the role of the wood in the lives of these characters: Mr. Foster, Grandmother, Anna, Anna's mother, the stranger, the stranger's mother and grandmother, Jesse, Mae, Winnie, the doctor, constable, counterman, bulldozer operator, Miles, the toad, Mr. Jackson, and Angus.

Literature

1. Contrast female characters in terms of action, control, and compassion. Include Winnie, her mother and grandmother, Anna, Miles' wife, the stranger's mother and grandmother, and Mae. Why does Jesse appear to enjoy a freedom that the Fosters deny Winnie? Why are rules of behavior and expectations for young ladies prim and rigid at the Foster house?
2. Create and discuss a list of images from the novel that appeal to the five senses, for instance "And soon they were rolling on again, leaving Treenap behind, and as they went, the tinkling little melody of a music box drifted out behind them and was lost at last far down the road."
3. Draw a character web representing the interconnectedness between the Fosters, Tucks, the stranger, the stranger's mother and grandmother, constable, Mr. Jackson, doctor, the Jackson child or children, and Miles' wife and children. Where does the toad belong on this chart? the counterman? local children?

Student Involvement Activities

1. Explain to a small group why Tuck says “Good girl” over Winnie’s grave. What did he fear would happen to her if she drank the water? Why did Jesse grieve for her? Why did Winnie choose a normal life as wife and mother? How do the Tucks honor Winnie’s memory? Why do the Tucks value life, even in a lowly toad or trout?
2. Lead a debate about how to protect only children from coddling, over-protection, and loneliness. Suggest ways that the Fosters can relieve Winnie’s boredom, such as offering her music lessons or inviting children to play in the wood. Discuss how one visit with the Tucks changes Winnie’s outlook.
3. Describe aloud the difference between the Fosters’ house and the Tucks’ cottage. Why does Winnie feel strange eating flapjacks for dinner in the parlor and licking maple syrup from her fingers? How does the disorder of the cottage reflect on the Tucks’ attitude toward themselves and their lifestyle? How does the pond complete the setting?
4. Compose a first person account of incarceration in a new jail. Why and how does the constable look after his prisoner’s welfare? How would treatment be different for a male prisoner? How does Mae’s departure through the window threaten the constable’s reputation as a responsible public servant?
5. Discuss your response toward Winnie’s humane treatment of the toad. Why does she shoo away the dog and give eternal life to a lowly being? How do the Tucks echo her beneficence? How does immortality affect a toad? How would the same change alter human life?
6. Discuss with a group the theme of challenge. Why is Winnie willing to risk reputation and repercussions at home by leaving at midnight and helping the Tucks free Mae? How does this challenge contrast with her role as a normal wife and mother?
7. Apply a Freytag diagram to the novel. Label parts of the plot that form exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Why does this clear delineation of action lend itself well to radio,

audio cassette, television drama, or the stage? What problems would a producer have in staging *Tuck Everlasting* as a play, opera, TV miniseries, tableau, or outdoor musical drama?

8. Read aloud other descriptions of coming of age. Discuss the importance of reality to Winnie’s choice of a normal life.
9. Using examples from the book, locate skillful or colorful turns of phrase. Find examples of intense emotion, sense impressions, simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, alliteration, cacophony, repetition, dialogue, realistic detail, dialect, symbolism, stock characters, and foreshadowing.
10. Compose an extended definition of friend. What qualities make Winnie a good friend for the Tucks? Why had they dreaded having to explain their unique life to others? Why does Jesse want to marry Winnie, who is only ten years old?

Alternate Assessment

1. List examples of teamwork, fear, insecurity, intimidation, loyalty, victory, fairness, poor judgment, and reward from Winnie’s encounter with the Tucks.
2. Compile a list of actions that demonstrate why Winnie is an unusual rescuer.
3. Compose a scene in which Winnie tries to locate the spring or to find Mae during a return visit to the tree.
4. Make a character list and explain the character flaws of each, including the constable’s sternness, the grandmother’s mistrust of Winnie, the stranger’s greed, and the Fosters’ pride in ownership.
5. Account for the author’s retreat from Winnie’s adulthood in the final scenes.

Vocabulary

Complete each sentence below with a pair of words from the list that follows. Place the letter of your response in the blank at left.

rueful, unflinchingly
melancholy, slack
muffled, exultant
splotches, sturdy
self-absorbed, burly
stationary, hysterical
locks, silty

reservoirs, foam
accomplice, custody
ponderous, remorseless
sloping, helter-skelter
stains, remnants
proper, catholic
disheartened, faltered

elation, wobble
prissy, galling
scoured, submission
protruding, furrowed
prostrate, gratitude
lifeless, aisle
toppling, tad

1. It was the only living thing in sight except for a _____ cloud of _____ gnats suspended in the heat above the road.
2. And in the silence, given time to think, Winnie felt her _____, and her thoughtless pleasure, _____ and collapse.
3. He was still asleep, and the _____ creases that folded his daytime face were smoothed and _____.
4. The earth, where it was worn bald under the gate, was cracked, and hard as rock, a _____ tan color; and the road was an _____ of brilliant velvet dust.
5. The sun was a circle without edges, a roar without a sound, a blazing glare so thorough and _____ that even in the Fosters' _____ parlor, with curtains drawn, it seemed an actual presence.
6. "It's going to rain, I think," she told the _____ group in the parlor, and the news was received with little moans of _____.
7. Another flash of lightning lit her face for an instant and Winnie saw an expression there of deep concentration, tip of tongue _____, brows _____.
8. Another crash of thunder _____ Jesse's bursting, _____ laugh.
9. And these new words, " _____ " and " _____ ," chilled her blood.
10. The last _____ of sunset had melted away, and the twilight died, too, as he stood there, though its _____ clung reluctantly to everything that was pale in color—pebbles, the dusty road, the figure of the man himself—turning them blue and blurry.
11. It was green and amber and alive, quivering in _____ on the padded ground, fanning into _____ stripes between the tree trunks.
12. Under the pitiless double assaults of her mother and grandmother, the cottage where she lived was always squeaking clean, mopped and swept and _____ into limp _____.
13. The parlor came next, where the furniture, loose and _____ with age, was set about _____.
14. Tuck climbed in, too, pushing off, and, settling the oars into their _____, dipped them into the _____ bottom in one strong pull.
15. Mae and Tuck clattered on into the village _____, past a _____ mixture of houses which soon gave way to shops and other places of business: a hot-dog stand; a dry cleaner; a pharmacy; a five-and-ten; another gas station; a tall, white frame building with a pleasant verandah, The Treegap Hotel—Family Dining, Easy Rates.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match the following descriptions with the characters being described. Choose your answers from the list of characters below. Some answers will be used more than once and some not at all.

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| A. constable | E. Jesse | H. Winnie's grandmother |
| B. Miles | F. Mr. Foster | I. the man in the yellow suit |
| C. Mae | G. Winnie | J. Anna |
| D. Angus | | |

- _____ 1. knows how to remove a window frame by oiling the nails and pulling them out
- _____ 2. feels drawn to Angus Tuck, who gently explains the cycle of birth and death
- _____ 3. makes a late-night visit to Mae's cell, whistling and yawning on his way
- _____ 4. connects the sound of a music box with elves
- _____ 5. smiles in his sleep and dreams of heaven
- _____ 6. suggests that the Tucks take part in "demonstrations"
- _____ 7. rides out to meet Jesse and Miles in the woods at the spring
- _____ 8. sews quilts and braids rugs
- _____ 9. warns Winnie not to drink the spring water
- _____ 10. hears stories from a grandmother about Miles Tuck's family

Part II: True/False (30 points)

Mark each statement either T for true or F if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Winnie is dismayed when the constable considers her an accomplice to criminals.
- _____ 2. Winnie marries, has children, and dies two years before the Tucks return to Treemap.
- _____ 3. Before Winnie's kidnap, the Fosters are aware of her desire to run away from home.
- _____ 4. The Tucks insist that Winnie have the loft all to herself, where she can sleep in privacy and comfort.
- _____ 5. One factor that at first makes Winnie uncomfortable at the Tuck household is their lack of neatness in housekeeping.
- _____ 6. Miles believes that the fish deserves a second chance at the wheel of life and throws it back into the stream.
- _____ 7. Jesse is the least content of the Tuck family because he will never grow older than 22.
- _____ 8. The man in the yellow suit, who was considering kidnapping Winnie, is surprised to see that the Tucks steal his idea.
- _____ 9. Winnie enjoys spending the night in jail, even if her clothes are torn when she climbs through the ragged cell window.
- _____ 10. Mae proves that she is immortal after cutting herself while slicing bread.
- _____ 11. The heat of August makes Winnie's confinement to her yard even more distressful.
- _____ 12. By 1950, the entire wood has vanished from Treemap.
- _____ 13. The counterman recognizes the Tucks, who broke out of the new Treemap jail and vanished from town.
- _____ 14. Jesse weeps beside Winnie's tombstone for the girl he wanted to join him in immortality.
- _____ 15. The constable rides up to the door just in time to see Mae pull the trigger.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: Quotation Identification (20 points)

Identify the following quotations by naming both the speaker and the person being addressed.

- _____ 1A. Two years. She's been gone two years.
- _____ 1B.
- _____ 2A. Don't sit on that dirty grass. You'll stain your boots and stockings.
- _____ 2B.
- _____ 3A. They work at what jobs they can get, try to bring home some of their money.
- _____ 3B.
- _____ 4A. Don't worry. Everything's going to be all right
- _____ 4B.
- _____ 5A. If this feller dies, you'll get the gallows, that's what you'll get, if that's what you mean by make out.
- _____ 5B.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain what plans the man in the yellow suit has for the spring.
2. Describe the Fosters' response to Winnie's participation in the jailbreak.
3. Explain why Miles does not give the magic water to his family.
4. Describe aspects of the Tucks' house that delights Winnie.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Select an answer to complete each of the following statements.

- _____ 1. Winnie discovers that the Tuck house
- lies in the foothills to the east of Treegap.
 - was built by gypsies.
 - is not as tidy as the Foster house.
 - is surrounded by a spiky iron fence.
- _____ 2. After the constable discovers Winnie's part in the jailbreak,
- he accuses her of being an accomplice.
 - Mr. Foster takes the bottle and pours its contents on a toad.
 - Winnie's grandmother accompanies her into the woods.
 - Mae denies that Winnie was kidnapped.
- _____ 3. Of the four Tucks,
- Miles is the youngest.
 - Mae knows the most about fishing.
 - only Angus returns to the spring each year.
 - Jesse is the most content with being immortal.
- _____ 4. The constable suspects that
- Anna carried a music box in her skirt pocket.
 - the man in the yellow suit took part in the kidnapping.
 - little girls who run away should be locked in jail.
 - Mr. Foster sold his woods to buy Winnie back from the Tucks.
- _____ 5. Winnie notices that the Tucks
- sleep in a loft.
 - rarely talk while they eat.
 - prefer flapjacks for every meal.
 - planned to steal a daughter just like her.
- _____ 6. Every ten years,
- Mae rides to the spring to meet her sons.
 - the spring beneath the ash tree bubbles above the rocks.
 - a man in a yellow suit walks by the Foster plot in the cemetery.
 - Miles tries to find Anna.

- _____ 7. Winnie is aware that
- Mr. Foster will sell the land to get her back.
 - Jesse mourns her marriage to Jackson.
 - the man in the yellow suit sees her ride away with the Tucks.
 - Mae will die on the gallows if Angus fails to come up with a plan.
- _____ 8. By 1950,
- Jesse has forgotten all about his plan to marry Winnie.
 - the woods near Treegap no longer exist.
 - the constable has tracked down the Tuck family in Charleyville.
 - roots have concealed the spring under the ash tree.
- _____ 9. Jesse first meets Winnie
- by the iron fence outside the Foster house.
 - at the roadside, where Winnie protects a toad from a dog.
 - in a café in Treegap.
 - under the ash tree.
- _____ 10. During the night, Winnie receives
- an extra blanket from Jesse.
 - a whispered message from the man in the yellow suit.
 - a warning that the constable will arrest Mae if her victim dies.
 - visits from Mae and Angus.

Part II: Essay (30 points)

Choose two of the following quotations from the novel and write a paragraph for each discussing the meaning.

- Everything's a wheel, turning and turning, never stopping.
- You can't pick out the pieces you like and leave the rest. Being part of the whole thing, that's the blessing.
- People got to do something useful if they're going to take up space in the world.
- When she was seventeen. If she should decide, there was more water in the wood.

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: Fill-in (30 points)

Using the list below, fill in the blanks with the correct answers to complete each statement.

Angus	fisherman	judge	nails	spring
blacksmith	Fosters	kidnapping	nightgown	toad
cafe	gallows	little girl	papers	tombstone
cat	grandmother	loft	pond	tree
constable	gun	Mae	quilt	truck
criminals	horse	melody	quotation	Tucks
elves	jailbreak	money	roots	Winnie
fish	Jesse	music	rowboat	

1. And then she put a hand on his arm and pointed. "Look out for that _____."
2. My mother was able to remember the _____, finally. She taught it to me.
3. She had refused the offer of Mae's spare _____, with its seeming miles of faded cotton flannel.
4. Miles can do carpentering, and he's a pretty fair _____, too.
5. "That was the first time we figured there was something peculiar," said Mae. "_____ fell out of a tree."
6. The _____ had lived a long and happy life on the farm, but had died some ten years before.
7. "Nonsense. It's _____!" crowed her grandmother excitedly.
8. Can you hear me? Someone's stole the _____.
9. And the _____ are friends of mine. They've—uh—sold me their wood.
10. He dropped the _____ over the edge of the boat.
11. But first we got to talk, and the _____'s the best place.
12. The Foster women had made a fortress out of duty . . . And _____ was in training.
13. You go for your local constable, and he and I ride out and bring back the child and the _____.
14. And then, after several more turns, the _____ began to play again, brisk from its fresh winding, and merry.
15. I'll take you home. I promised I would, soon's we've explained a bit as to why you got to promise you'll never tell about the _____.

Part IV: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to each of the following questions.

- _____ 1. Who gives Winnie a bottle of magic spring water?
- _____ 2. How does Winnie travel to the Tuck house?
- _____ 3. What happens to the ash tree after lightning strikes it?
- _____ 4. Where do Angus and Mae read of Winnie's death?
- _____ 5. Who lies in the bunk in Mae's place?
- _____ 6. What does Miles throw into the pond to please Winnie?
- _____ 7. Who is Anna's father?
- _____ 8. What gift from the man in the yellow suit to his grandmother reminds her of the mysterious family?
- _____ 9. How old will Jesse always be?
- _____ 10. What happens to the gallows?

Answer Key

Vocabulary

1. stationary, hysterical
2. elation, wobble
3. melancholy, slack
4. lifeless, aisle
5. ponderous, remorseless
6. prostrate, gratitude
7. protruding, furrowed
8. muffled, exultant
9. accomplice, custody
10. stains, remnants
11. splotches, sturdy
12. scoured, submission
13. sloping, helter-skelter
14. locks, silty
15. proper, catholic

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. I |
| 2. G | 7. C |
| 3. A | 8. C |
| 4. H | 9. E |
| 5. D | 10. I |

Part II: True/False (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F | 11. T |
| 2. T | 7. F | 12. T |
| 3. F | 8. F | 13. F |
| 4. F | 9. F | 14. F |
| 5. T | 10. T | 15. F |

Part III: Quotation Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1A. Angus | 4A. Winnie |
| 1B. Mae | 4B. Angus |
| 2A. Winnie's grandmother | 5A. constable |
| 2B. Winnie | 5B. Mae |
| 3A. Mae | |
| 3B. Winnie | |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. A |
| 2. A | 7. C |
| 3. D | 8. B |
| 4. B | 9. D |
| 5. B | 10. D |

Part II: Essay (30 points)

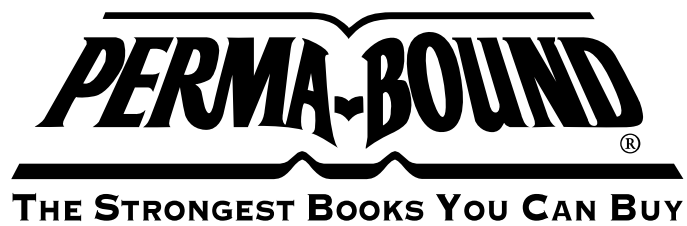
Answers will vary.

Part III: Fill-in (30 points)

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. toad | 9. Fosters |
| 2. melody | 10. fish |
| 3. nightgown | 11. pond |
| 4. blacksmith | 12. Winnie |
| 5. Jesse | 13. criminals |
| 6. cat | 14. music |
| 7. elves | 15. spring |
| 8. horse | |

Part IV: Short Answer (20 points)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Jesse | 6. a trout |
| 2. on horseback | 7. Miles |
| 3. It is bulldozed. | 8. music box |
| 4. from her tombstone | 9. 17 |
| 5. Winnie | 10. It blows over |



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