

## BookClub Questions - Tuck Everlasting

### QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT

#### COMPREHENSION AND RECALL

1. Why is Winnie discontent at the beginning of the story? *(She's an only child who is watched all the time and has to obey lots of rules. She would like to get out and explore.)*
2. Why is Winnie afraid to run away? *(She's been told it would be dangerous; she believes it would be.)*
3. Why does Winnie talk to the toad? *(She's lonely; has no one else to talk to.)*
4. Why doesn't Jesse want Winnie to drink from the spring? *(He says it will be bad for her; there's something he doesn't want her to know.)*
5. How do the Tucks show kindness to Winnie? *(They come to see her at night and tell her how much they like having her with them.)*
6. How does the man in the yellow suit blackmail the Fosters? *(He says he'll bring back Winnie if they sell him the wood.)*
7. Why is the constable surprised that the Fosters agree to sell the wood? *(He says they're proud—"family-proud and land-proud.")*
8. What is the motive of the man in the yellow suit? *(He wants to use the spring to make a fortune and have power.)*
9. Why does Winnie tell the constable that she wasn't kidnapped? *(She now thinks of the Tucks as her friends and doesn't want them to get in trouble.)*
10. How does Winnie help Mae escape? *(She takes Mae's place in the jail so the constable won't know Mae has gone right away.)*
11. How does Winnie's image in the village change after she helps Mae? *(Children come by to see her and are impressed. They used to think she was too prissy.)*

#### HIGHER LEVEL THINKING SKILLS

1. What does Mae mean when she says, "The worst is happening at last."? *(Their secret is out.)*
2. How could someone look exactly the same for 87 years? *(Possible: magic)*

3. Why does the stranger remind Winnie of funeral ribbons? *(Possible: something about him seems sinister or unpleasant.)*
4. Why doesn't Winnie ask the man in the yellow suit for help when she is being kidnapped? *(Possible: She doesn't trust him; isn't really afraid of the Tucks; is having an adventure at last; isn't thinking clearly.)*
5. Why does Winnie feel reassured when she hears the music box? *(She's heard the music before; it connects her to home. The box is pretty and she doesn't think someone who owned it could be too terrible.)*
6. Why does Winnie begin to feel happy about being kidnapped? *(She starts to think of the Tucks as her special friends; is no longer afraid and alone; thinks living forever is exciting.)*
7. Why do you think the stranger is following Winnie and the Tucks? *(Possible: He plans to harm Winnie or the Tucks; he is interested in the spring.)*
8. Why has living forever not always been fun for the Tucks? *(Miles lost his wife and children; people think they are strange and shun them; they can never stay in one place.)*
9. Why does Winnie say she wants to go home? *(She's suddenly homesick; has never been away before. She sees how different life at the Tucks' house is from her own home.)*
10. How is the pond water like life itself? *(It's always moving on, changing.)*
11. Why does Tuck say he and his family are "like rocks beside the road?" *(They're not living, growing, or changing; they are just there.)*
12. Why is it so important for Winnie to understand and keep the Tucks' secret? *(If others find the spring and drink from it, their lives will be frozen in time also.)*
13. Why doesn't Winnie want to fish? *(She's upset at the thought of death.)*
14. Why does Winnie think that Tuck is the "dearest of them all?" *(Possible: He is kind and so truly wretched at their fate and the dangers to others.)*
15. Why does Tuck stare "entranced" at the man in the yellow suit after Mae hits him? *(He's jealous. The man is near death.)*
16. Why is Tuck distressed about Mae being hung on the gallows? *(When she doesn't die, everyone will know the secret.)*
17. How do you think the Fosters feel about the stranger's death? *(Probably relieved—they won't have to sell their wood.)*
18. Why is Winnie conflicted about helping Mae escape? *(She knows it's important, but she doesn't want to deceive her family again.)*

19. Why does Winnie save the toad from the dog? (*She thinks of it as hers because she's seen it often before. She doesn't want it to die.*)

20. Why does Tuck say, "Good girl!" when he sees that Winnie is dead? (*He knows she didn't drink the spring water. He believes she made the right choice.*)

21. What important decision does Winnie make when she pours the spring water on the toad? (*She won't drink it herself, nor live forever, nor marry Jesse.*)

## LITERARY ELEMENTS

1. **Characterization:** How does the author show that the Fosters aren't very neighborly? (*They live in a cottage with a "touch-me-not-appearance." They don't let Winnie out to play, and aren't friendly to strangers. People aren't supposed to go in their wood.*)

2. **Genre:** What part of the story is fantasy? (*The Tucks will live forever because of the spring water.*)

3. **Foreshadowing:** Why does the author say, "Across the pond a bullfrog spoke a deep note of warning" when Winnie and Tuck go out in the rowboat? (*The bullfrog foreshadows trouble ahead.*)

4. **Foreshadowing:** How does the author foreshadow the use of Tuck's gun? (*It's mentioned in the description of their home.*)

5. **Symbolism:** How does the author connect Winnie and the Tucks at the end of the story? (*The Tucks find Winnie's grave and see the toad that, like them, will never die.*)

6. **Significant detail:** Why does the author put the stranger in a yellow suit? (*Possible: It makes the reader notice him and understand that he is different.*)

## PERSONAL RESPONSE

1. Winnie learns an incredible story from the Tucks. How would you have felt about it? What would you have done?

2. Mae has a music box as her special possession. What special possession do you have?

3. What is your reaction to the Tucks' home? Is it a place you would like to be?

4. Have you ever been homesick? How did you feel?

5. What do you think about Jesse's offer to Winnie? Would you agree to drink the water? Should Winnie?

6. How do you feel about Mae's reaction to the stranger?

7. Is Jesse being selfish when he gives Winnie the bottle of spring water?

8. How does the ending make you feel?