

Opinion: What Have Other People Thought About *Tuck Everlasting*?



“Flawless”

When *Tuck Everlasting* was first published in 1975, the reviews were exceptional. A reviewer for *The Horn Book* wrote, “Rarely does one find a book with such distinctive prose. Flawless in both style and structure, it is rich in imagery and punctuated with light fillips of humor.” The reviewer was not only impressed with the beautiful language that Natalie Babbitt used, but also by the funny moments she included.

A review in *Harper’s* stated that *Tuck Everlasting* was “probably the best work of our best children’s novelist.” Evidently many people agree with this statement because it was named one of the most important children’s books of the twentieth century by *School Library Journal*. It is so popular, in fact, that it was made into a feature film that was released in 2002.

Some people who have read the book feel that despite its historical setting, children many years in the future will also enjoy *Tuck Everlasting*. A review from *Booklist* stated that “with its serious intentions, and light touch the story is, like the Tucks, timeless.”

Controversy about the ending

Though most readers agree that the book is marvelous, others have had a negative response to the ending. They feel that Winnie should have taken a drink from the spring and found Jesse and lived with him forever. But, as Natalie Babbitt has explained, usually even the most critical reader comes around eventually. (See Natalie Babbitt's story on page 11 about a reader who changed her mind.)

In addition, some people feel that Babbitt's description of the Tuck family is not entirely realistic. A reviewer from the *New York Times Book Review* wrote that the Tucks were "nice people; their unshakable niceness is perhaps the only really unlikely part of the story." The Tucks have lived a very, very long time and experienced great loss due to their immortality. This reviewer finds it difficult to believe the Tucks could be so kind to Winnie after suffering for so long.

Thinking about what others think of *Tuck Everlasting*

- How do you feel about the ending?
- Do you think *Tuck Everlasting* deserves all the praise?
- Do you think the book's historical setting will help the story remain appealing for years to come? Why or why not?

Glossary



Here are some important words used in *Tuck Everlasting*. Some are common words that have uncommon meanings. Understanding them will make it easier to read the novel.

acrid bitter or unpleasant to the smell or taste

bovine having qualities characteristic of a cow

cahoots in partnership

catholic involving or concerning all of humankind

colander a cooking utensil with holes used for rinsing or draining food

constable a lawman

cross angry

ebbed fell back or receded

eddies currents of water moving in a circular motion

elation a feeling of extreme joy or pride

embankment a raised structure that prevents water from overflowing

exasperated irritated or out of patience

furrowed wrinkled with deep grooves

galling causing extreme irritation

gallows a frame from which condemned people were hanged

gypsies wandering people

illiterate unable to read or write

indomitable impossible to tame or subdue

jaunty showy

kingfisher a brightly colored bird

marionette a wooden figure made to move from above by strings attached to its jointed limbs

melancholy deep sadness or depression

metaphysics the philosophical study of being and knowing

parson a member of the clergy

petulance the quality of being ill-tempered

plaintive mournful

ponderous heavy or important

prostrate to reduce to extreme weakness; to be overcome

roust to wake up someone or disturb

rueful expressing sorrow or regret

searing burning or scorching

self-deprecation the act of putting oneself down

staunchly in a firm way

tangent a sudden change of course

teeming overflowing

threadbare shabby

verandah a porch or balcony