***Tuck Everlasting***

***Epilogue***

***Summary and Analysis:***

***Brief Summary***

Mae and Tuck returned to Treegap but it was not the Treegap they remembered. The roads were blacktop, the woods were gone and there was a gas station where the Foster's house had been all those years ago. Their horse drawn wagon got many stares. They passed by a new jail with a police car outside of it and made their way to a diner.

Tuck talked to the waiter, asking about the woods. The waiter explained a storm had come through about three years before and the woods caught on fire. After that, it had to be bulldozed. Tuck asked about a spring in the woods, but the waiter knew nothing about it.

After eating, Mae went shopping and Tuck went for a walk. They had both seen the cemetery as they arrived in town. Tuck went to the cemetery and found what he was looking for, the headstone of Winifred Foster Jackson. She had died in 1948, two years before they returned.

As Mae and Tuck left Treegap, Tuck told Mae what he had found. Mae felt sorry for Jesse, but they had all realized long ago that she would not join them. Mae mentioned there was now no reason to return and Tuck agreed as he brought the horse to a stop. He got out and went to the front of the horse. He waited for a truck to pass and then reached down and picked up a toad from the middle of the road. He placed it in the grassy area beside the road. As he got back into the wagon, he said something about the toad thinking it would live forever. Mae said nothing and they proceed out of town with the tinkling melody of Mae's music box following them.

***Brief Analysis:***

The author gives the reader the answer to Jesse's question of Winnie. She chose to live, change and die. She had learned too much during those few short days to want anything less. The toad represents Winnie's freedom and her friends, the everlasting Tucks.

***Summary and Analysis:***

In 1950, nearly seventy years later, Mae and Tuck return to Treegap in a horse and buggy, looking very out of place. They are shocked to see that the woods and the Foster cottage are gone, and that there are many new streets and houses and stores. Some people joke about how old-fashioned they look as they pass by, but Mae and Tuck ignore them. They stop at a diner for some coffee, and ask the waiter what happened to the woods. The waiter tells them that three years before, there was a big electrical storm that caused a forest fire, and the rest of the area was bulldozed. Tuck asks what happened to the spring in the forest, but the waiter says he doesn't know what he's talking about.

After this, Tuck visits the cemetery while Mae is shopping for supplies. He finds the Foster family plot and Winnie's tombstone, which says she had died only two years prior and had been a wife and mother. Tuck is sad, but salutes Winnie, clearly thinking that she has made the right choice. When he meets up with Mae, Tuck explains what has happened to Winnie. She thinks immediately of Jesse, but really, the whole Tuck family knew what Winnie had decided long ago. They head out of Treegap, and swerve to avoid a toad who sits in the middle of the road, acting like it's immortal (in fact, this is the toad that Winnie poured the springwater on so many years before). Behind them drifts the gentle melody of the music box.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Mae](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/mae-tuck) and [Angus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/angus-tuck) ride into Treegap on a wagon, pulled by their old horse. The town is barely recognizable. The main street is the same, but it now has asphalt and many streets crossing it. [Winnie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/winnie-foster)'s cottage is gone, but there's now a pharmacy, a dry cleaner, and a hotel. They pass the jailhouse with a black and white police car parked in front. Mae suggests that they get a cup of coffee at a diner. There, they ask the counterman if there used to be a wood on the other side of town. The man says that a few years ago, a big storm blew through and a tree got hit by lightning and set the whole thing on fire. They had to clear the entire wood. Mae and Angus sip their coffee and Angus asks about a spring in the wood. The counterman doesn't know anything about it.

***Analysis Part 1:***

What the counterman says about the wood suggests that it and the stream never were found out, and also that they're no longer around to tempt people with eternal life. The fact that the wood and the stream were done away with by an act of nature--the storm--suggests that the natural world finally took it upon itself to remove this dangerous temptation from the world so that people can continue to grow, change, and die, as Angus believes nature intended them to.

***Summary Part 2:***

Later, while [Mae](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/mae-tuck) shops for supplies, [Angus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/angus-tuck) walks back through town to a little hill and the cemetery there. They'd noticed it on their way in but hadn't mentioned it. Angus studies the gravestones and notices a tall monument with "Foster" carved on it. Nearby, he finds [Winnie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/winnie-foster)'s grave. Her headstone reads that she was a wife and a mother and died in 1948, two years ago. Angus cries, salutes Winnie, and leaves the cemetery.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The fact that Winnie became a wife and a mother is, in Angus's opinion, indicative of other ways that Winnie likely contributed and made a difference in the world. She not only gave life to new people, but she probably helped guide them towards adulthood and the same kind of understanding of nature and the purpose of life that she learned as a child. Angus’s deep respect of Winnie also indicates that she acted wisely by allowing herself to die.

***Summary Part 3:***

As [Mae](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/mae-tuck) and [Angus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/angus-tuck) leave town, they discuss that [Winnie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/winnie-foster) died and feel sorry for [Jesse](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/jesse-tuck), even though he knew long ago that Winnie wasn’t coming. They say that there's no reason to return to Treegap anymore and Mae cautions Angus to not hit a [toad](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/tuck-everlasting/characters/the-toad) in the road. Angus climbs down and looks at the toad, who seems unconcerned by the passing traffic. He carries it to the edge of the road and remarks that it must think that it's going to live forever. Mae winds up her music box.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Notice that while the toad clearly isn't concerned about being hit by traffic, the fact that it's likely hit often raises a number of moral questions, such as whether or not this is truly a humane thing to do for an animal. By leaving the reader with this question, the novel encourages the reader to continue to ask these questions as they come to their own understanding of what's good, right, and moral.