

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

ELA Block - Summer Assignment for Students entering Grade 7 in the fall

### Summer 2023 Reading Assignment (Entering 7th Grade)

Time to say bon voyage to Grade 6 and hello to Grade 7!! In preparation for your new literary adventures this fall, you will be required to complete the following summer assignment:

1. ***Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt**

Genre: Fantasy Fiction

- a. It is highly recommended that you purchase your own copy of the novel.
- b. **Read** the entire novel. Be sure to annotate as you read, paying special attention to figurative language and plot elements.
- c. **Complete** the *Tuck Everlasting* packet.
- d. We will have a quiz on your summer reading novel when we return to school.

2. **“Raymond’s Run” by Toni Cade Bambara**

Genre: Short Story

- a. The story will be included in your Summer Reading Packet.
- b. **Read** the short story. Be sure to annotate as you read!
- c. **Complete** the “Raymond’s Run” packet.
- d. We will discuss this short story when we return to school.

**Due Date:** Your completed packets are due by the first day of school in September.

**Helpful Tips:**

- Be diligent about when you start your summer reading! Do not wait until the very last week of break to begin.
- While vacation is a break from the routine of school, it is NOT a break from the routine of education!
- You should set aside time to read every day – even if it is a book of your choosing.

**Have a safe, restful, and FUN summer break!**

**We can’t wait to see you this fall.**

# Tuck Everlasting

by Natalie Babbitt

A Novel Study by:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Dictionary Detective!

## Prologue - Chapter 3

*Using a dictionary, find the definitions for the words below.*

**balmy**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**tangent**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**oppressive**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**melancholy**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**intrusions**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**resentful**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Vocabulary Study

## Prologue - Chapter 3

### Match Up

Match the words in the left column to their definitions in the right column.

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| balmy •      | • something uncomfortable or intense                     |
| tangent •    | • full of ill will or anger towards someone or something |
| oppressive • | • sudden change of course or plan                        |
| melancholy • | • interruptions, unwelcome visits                        |
| intrusions • | • comfortably warm and refreshing                        |
| resentful •  | • a sad or gloomy feeling or state of mind               |

### Fill in the Blanks

Complete each sentence by filling in the blanks with the provided vocabulary.

balmy      tangent      oppressive      melancholy      intrusions      resentful

1. The repeated \_\_\_\_\_ from my sister made it hard for me to do my project.
2. During the math lesson, the teacher went off on a \_\_\_\_\_ about the importance of recycling.
3. Jojo felt \_\_\_\_\_ towards her brother because he was invited to visit their aunt and uncle's ranch and she was not.
4. We were happy that the weather was \_\_\_\_\_ and rain-free during the picnic.
5. The gray clouds in the sky made Kieran feel more \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The heat of the desert was so \_\_\_\_\_ that I decided to move up north.

**A Little  
Extra!**

In your opinion, what is the most interesting word from this section? Why do you think it is interesting?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Understanding the Story

## Prologue - Chapter 3

### Multiple Choice

1. What nickname does the narrator give to the Fosters' cottage?

- (a) Run-of-the-mill cottage.
- (b) Touch-me-not cottage.
- (c) Sturdy-and-small cottage.
- (d) In-the-middle-of-nowhere cottage.

2. How long has the Tuck family looked exactly the same?

- (a) 45 years.
- (b) 87 years.
- (c) 93 years.
- (d) 114 years.

### Short Answer

3. In the Prologue, the narrator explains that three things happen that at first do not seem to be connected. What are the three things?

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### Long Answer

4. In Chapter 3, what reasons does Winnie give for wanting to run away?

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**A Little  
Extra!**

Why do you think the Tucks have looked exactly the same for so many years?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter Summary

## Prologue - Chapter 3

1. If you could give a title to this section of the book, what would it be?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happens in these chapters?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your favorite part of this section of the book?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What new words did you learn in this section?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

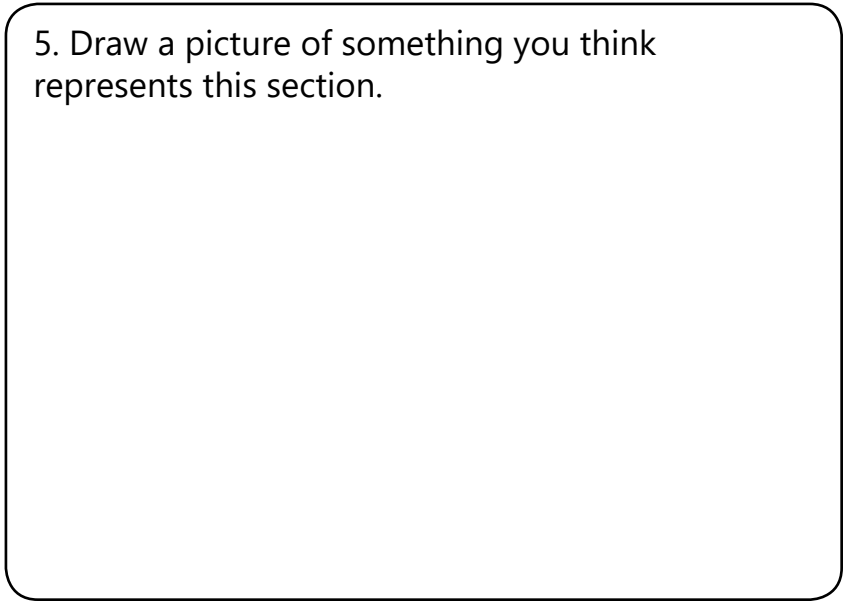
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Draw a picture of something you think represents this section.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Dictionary Detective!

## Chapters 4 - 8

*Using a dictionary, find the definitions for the words below.*

**disheartened**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**consolingly**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**irrelevantly**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**peculiar**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**scornful**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**shamelessly**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Vocabulary Study

## Chapters 4 - 8

### Which Word?

*On the provided lines, write the matching vocabulary word for each definition.*

disheartened    consolingly    irrelevantly    peculiar    scornful    shamelessly

1. Strange or unusual. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Done in a comforting way. \_\_\_\_\_
3. To feel a loss of spirit or drive. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Something said or done with little importance. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Showing strong dislike. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Done without caring how it makes one look. \_\_\_\_\_

### Making Sentences

*Make a sentence for each word below.*

1. Disheartened: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Consolingly: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Irrelevantly: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Peculiar: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Scornful: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Shamelessly: \_\_\_\_\_

**A Little  
Extra!**

The author gives a description of 'the man in the yellow suit' in Chapter 4. Find and write down six adjectives that Babbitt uses to describe this mysterious character.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Understanding the Story

## Chapters 4 - 8

### Multiple Choice

1. In Chapter 4, what does Winnie's grandmother claim is making the music they hear from the wood?

- (a) Church bells.
- (b) A radio.
- (c) Elves.
- (d) A traveling musician.

2. In Chapter 5, why does Winnie decide to go into the wood?

- (a) To find what made the music.
- (b) To hide from her family.
- (c) To hunt.
- (d) To pick pretty flowers.

### Short Answer

3. In Chapter 5, Mae Tuck says, "The worst is happening at last." What is she talking about?

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### Long Answer

4. In Chapter 8, we learn that the man in the yellow suit has heard the Tucks' entire story. Why do you think he smiles after hearing the story?

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**A Little  
Extra!**

If given the chance, would you drink the water from the spring and live forever? Why or why not?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter Summary

## Chapters 4 - 8

1. If you could give a title to this section of the book, what would it be?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happens in these chapters?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

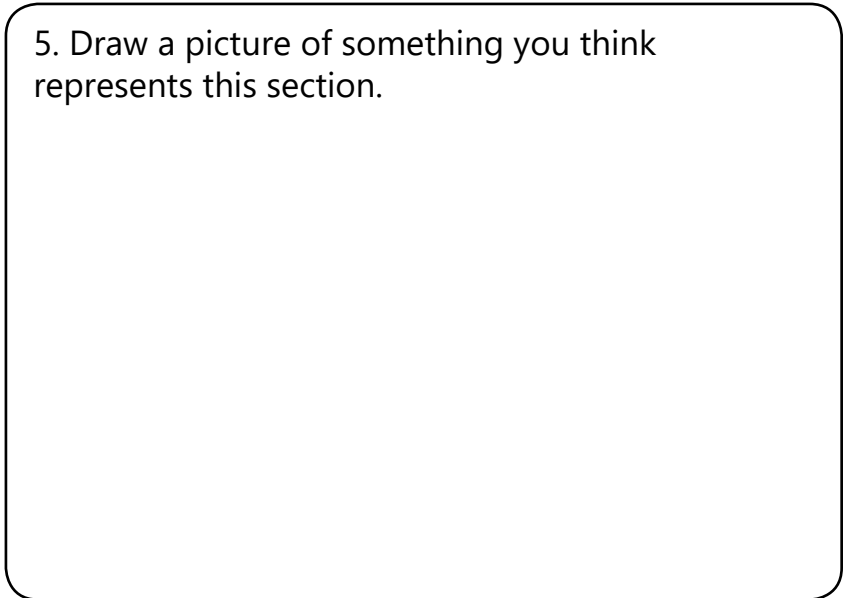
3. What is your favorite part of this section of the book?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What new words did you learn  
in Chapters 4 to 8?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Draw a picture of something you think  
represents this section.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Dictionary Detective!

## Chapters 9 - 13

*Using a dictionary, find the definitions for the words below.*

**vigorous**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**pitiless**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**indomitable**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**cavernous**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**decisively**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**silty**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Vocabulary Study

## Chapters 9 - 13

### Match Up

*A synonym is a word that means the same as another word. For example, happy and joyful are synonyms. Match the vocabulary words with their synonyms!*

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| vigorous •    | • spacious       |
| pitiless •    | • unquestionably |
| indomitable • | • unbeatable     |
| cavernous •   | • harsh          |
| decisively •  | • sandy          |
| silty •       | • lively         |

### Best Word

*Circle the word which works best in each sentence.*

1. The ( silty / pitiless ) mother would not let her child take part in the Christmas pageant because he did not get straight A's.
2. The Tigers are ( indomitable / cavernous )! We'll never beat them!" Jacob whined as he watched the other team practice before the game.
3. "It will rain this afternoon," Grammie said ( decisively / vigorous ) as she looked up at the sky.
4. It took a long time to find Nana's wedding album in the ( pitiless / cavernous ) old trunk.
5. Bree happily wiggled her toes in the ( silty / indomitable ) ocean floor.
6. The sisters played a ( vigorous / decisively ) game of soccer before running home for dinner.

**A Little  
Extra!**

A simile is a figure of speech that uses the words 'like' or 'as' to compare two things. For example, "You are as bright as the sun". Find a simile from Chapter 12 and write it below!

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Understanding the Story

## Chapters 9 - 13

### Multiple Choice

1. In Chapter 9, how does Tuck react when he is introduced to Winnie?

- (a) He is angry.
- (b) He is sad.
- (c) He is happy.
- (d) He runs away.

2. Who has the Tucks' horse in Chapter 13?

- (a) The man in the yellow suit.
- (b) Winnie's uncle.
- (c) The sheriff.
- (d) A homeless child.

### Short Answer

3. Compare the homes of the Tuck family and the Foster family.

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### Long Answer

4. If you could live forever, what age would you want to be? Why would you choose this age?

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**A Little  
Extra!**

Imagine you could live forever and see our world far into the future. What changes do you think you might see in one hundred years?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter Summary

## Chapters 9 - 13

1. If you could give a title to this section of the book, what would it be?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happens in these chapters?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your favorite part of this section of the book?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What new words did you learn  
in Chapters 9 to 13?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

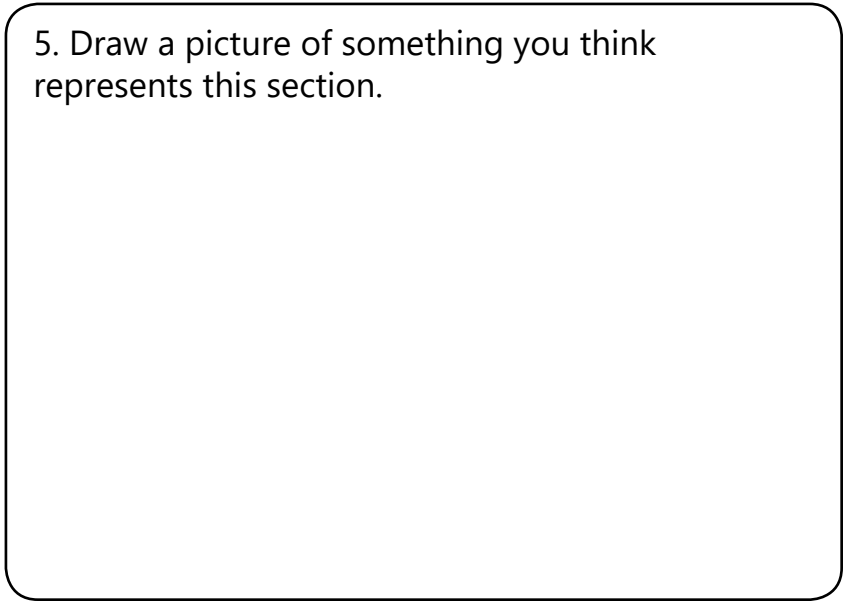
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Draw a picture of something you think  
represents this section.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Dictionary Detective!

## Chapters 14 - 18

*Using a dictionary, find the definitions for the words below.*

**shrill**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**barbarian**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**constable**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**cahoots**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**threadbare**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**teeming**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Vocabulary Study

## Chapters 14 - 18

### Match Up

Match the words in the left column to their definitions in the right column.

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| shrill •     | • thinned and worn out from too much use    |
| barbarian •  | • high-pitched sound                        |
| constable •  | • full of or with                           |
| cahoots •    | • a police officer in a small town          |
| threadbare • | • criminal partnership                      |
| teeming •    | • a person who acts in a rough or crude way |

### Fill in the Blanks

Complete each sentence by filling in the blanks with the provided vocabulary.

shrill      barbarian      constable      cahoots      threadbare      teeming

1. "Oh my, they were in \_\_\_\_\_ all along!" Paul said of the bank robber and hostage at the end of the movie.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ sound of Shay's alarm clock woke up everyone in the house.
3. Even though the quilt was old and \_\_\_\_\_, Missy would not throw it away.
4. Arnold acted like a \_\_\_\_\_ by not showering or doing any dishes.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ had an easy job in Deaconville because no one ever committed a crime.
6. The rundown motel was \_\_\_\_\_ with bugs.

**A Little  
Extra!**

Create a simile that describes Winnie Foster.

Winnie is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Understanding the Story

## Chapters 14 - 18

### Multiple Choice

1. In Chapter 15, what does the man in the yellow suit ask for in exchange for telling Winnie's family of her whereabouts?

- (a) Money.
- (b) A horse.
- (c) The wood.
- (d) Their house.

2. In Chapter 18, who does Winnie realize is the dearest of the Tuck family?

- (a) Jesse.
- (b) Miles.
- (c) Mae.
- (d) Tuck.

### Short Answer

3. In Chapter 14, what does Jesse tell Winnie she should do when she is 17? Why does he tell her to do this?

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### Long Answer

4. When Winnie goes fishing with Miles in Chapter 17, she decides that she wants to release the fish they catch instead of eating it. Why do you think she does this?

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**A Little  
Extra!**

At the end of Chapter 18, the man in the yellow suit is at the Tucks' door. What do you think will happen next in the story?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter Summary

## Chapters 14 - 18

1. If you could give a title to this section of the book, what would it be?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happens in these chapters?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your favorite part of this section of the book?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What new words did you learn  
in Chapters 14 to 18?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Draw a picture of something you think  
represents this section.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Dictionary Detective!

## Chapters 19 - 23

*Using a dictionary, find the definitions for the words below.*

**ignorant**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**petulance**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**unflinchingly**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**acrid**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**gentility**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**prostrate**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Vocabulary Study

## Chapters 19 - 23

### Which Word?

*On the provided lines, write the matching vocabulary word for each definition.*

ignorant	petulance	unflinchingly	acrid	gentility	prostrate
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1. Politeness and propriety. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Done without fear. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Irritable and childish behavior. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Physically weak and tired. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Uneducated, lacking knowledge. \_\_\_\_\_

6. A foul and strong taste or smell. \_\_\_\_\_

### Making Sentences

*Make a sentence for each word below.*

1. Ignorant: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Petulance: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Unflinchingly: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Acrid: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Gentility: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Prostrate: \_\_\_\_\_

**A Little  
Extra!**

On the other side of this paper, write a one-paragraph story using at least three of this section's vocabulary words.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Understanding the Story

## Chapters 19 - 23

### Multiple Choice

1. Who told the man in the yellow suit stories about the Tucks when he was growing up?

- (a) His teacher.
- (b) His friend.
- (c) His grandmother.
- (d) His mom.

2. In Chapter 20, who hits the man in the yellow suit?

- (a) Winnie.
- (b) Jesse.
- (c) Miles.
- (d) Mae Tuck.

### Short Answer

3. In Chapter 19, the man in the yellow suit reveals his plan to the Tucks and Winnie. What is his plan?

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### Long Answer

4. Jesse gives Winnie a bottle of the spring water for her to drink when she is seventeen. Do you think she will drink it? Explain your answer.

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**A Little  
Extra!**

An antagonist is the villain or evil person in a story. Who is the antagonist of *Tuck Everlasting* and why?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter Summary

## Chapters 19 - 23

1. If you could give a title to this section of the book, what would it be?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happens in these chapters?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your favorite part of this section of the book?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What new words did you learn  
in Chapters 19 to 23?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Draw a picture of something you think  
represents this section.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Dictionary Detective!

## Chapters 24 - Epilogue

*Using a dictionary, find the definitions for the words below.*

**exultant**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**unwittingly**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**perversely**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**apprehension**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**wistful**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**staunchly**

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Vocabulary Study

## Chapters 24 - Epilogue

### Match Up

*Match the vocabulary words with their synonyms!*

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| exultant •     | • joyous       |
| unwittingly •  | • nervousness  |
| perversely •   | • thoughtful   |
| apprehension • | • strangely    |
| wistful •      | • accidentally |
| staunchly •    | • decisively   |

### Best Word

*Circle the word which works best in each sentence.*

1. Jayna ( exultant / unwittingly ) let it slip that she was planning a surprise party for Kim.
2. My hat ( perversely / apprehension ) remained atop my head even though it was very windy.
3. While looking at the ocean view, Farrah asked the ( wistful / staunchly ) question, "How can such beauty exist?"
4. Miguel was full of ( unwittingly / apprehension ) while waiting for his test score.
5. Nina flashed an ( exultant / wistful ) grin when her mom said she could have a sleepover.
6. "You can't go to the park until your room is clean," Nic's mom said ( perversely / staunchly ).

**A Little  
Extra!**

Describe a time you felt *exultant*. What or who made you feel this way?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Understanding the Story

## Chapters 24 - Epilogue

### Multiple Choice

1. In Chapter 24, who is waiting for Winnie when she sneaks out of the house?

- (a) Tuck.
- (b) The constable.
- (c) Jesse.
- (d) Miles.

2. In Chapter 24, whose carpentry skills make it possible for Mae to escape?

- (a) The man in the yellow suit's.
- (b) Winnie's dad's.
- (c) Jesse's.
- (d) Miles's.

### Short Answer

3. In Chapter 25, how does Winnie feel when the constable finds out that she helped Mae escape by taking her place in the jailhouse?

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### Long Answer

4. At the end of the story, we find out that Winnie has passed away. If you were Winnie, would you have drank the water so you could live forever? Explain your answer.

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**A Little  
Extra!**

Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter Summary

## Chapters 24 - Epilogue

1. If you could give a title to this section of the book, what would it be?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happens in these chapters?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your favorite part of this section of the book?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What new words did you learn  
in Chapters 24 to Epilogue?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Draw a picture of something you think  
represents this section.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Plot Mountain

A story's plot is made up of five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and conclusion. After you've finished reading *Tuck Everlasting*, fill in the spaces below.

## 3. Climax

The most exciting and emotional part of the story.

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## 2. Rising Action

The things that happen to push the story forward as we head toward the climax.

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## 4. Falling Action

The events that happened during the climax are dealt with.

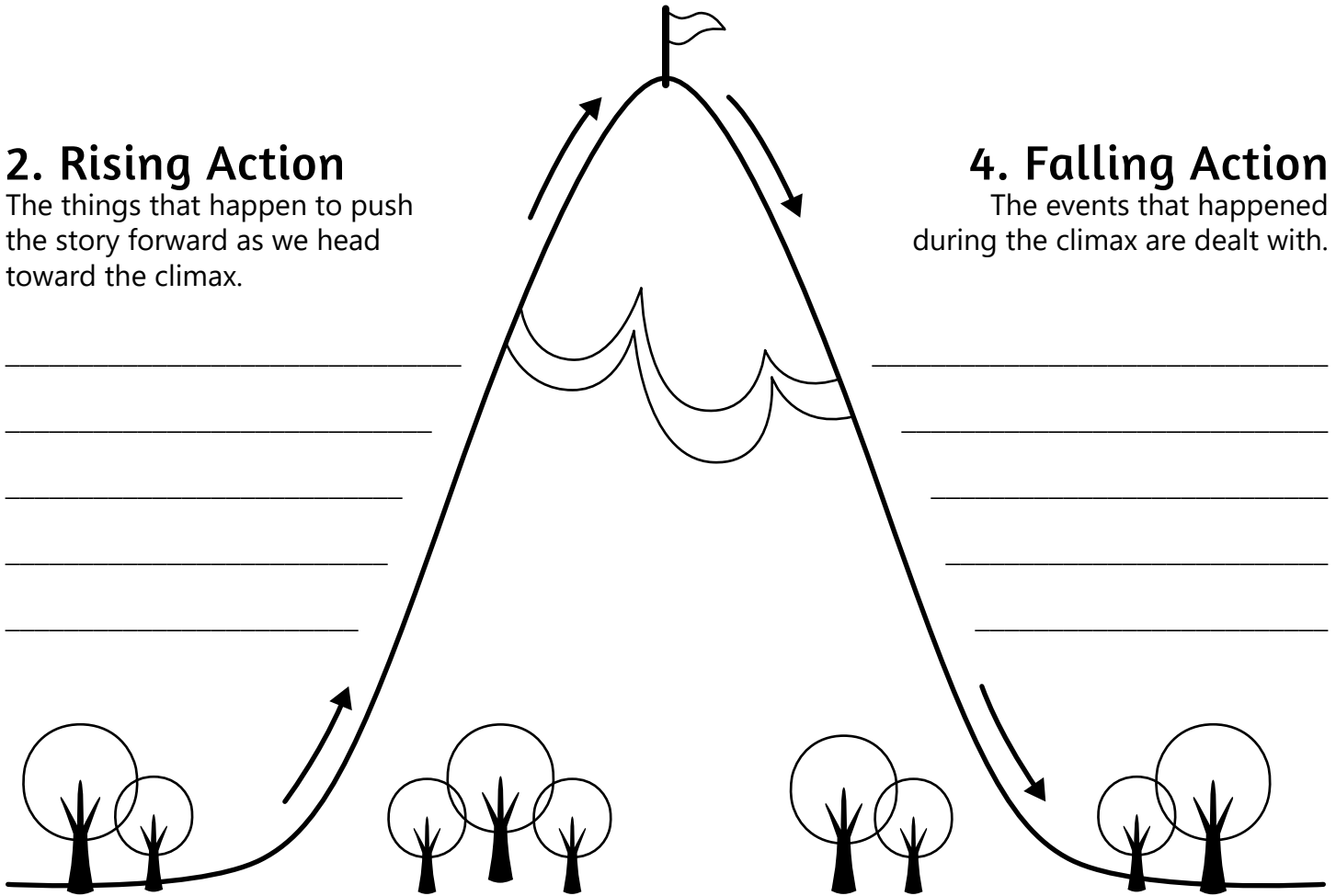
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## 1. Exposition

We learn background information about the story's characters, setting, and basic plot.

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## 5. Conclusion

The story comes to an end.

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# Raymond's Run

by Toni Cade Bambara

I don't have much work to do around the house like some girls. My mother does that. And I don't have to earn my pocket money by hustling; George runs errands for the big boys and sells Christmas cards. And anything else that's got to get done, my father does. All I have to do in life is mind my brother Raymond, which is enough.

Sometimes I slip and say my little brother Raymond. But as any fool can see he's much bigger and he's older too. But a lot of people call him my little brother cause he needs looking after cause he's not quite right. And a lot of smart mouths got lots to say about that too, especially when George was minding him. But now, if anybody has anything to say to Raymond, anything to say about his big head, they have to come by me. And I don't play the dozens or believe in standing around with somebody in my face doing a lot of talking. I much rather just knock you down and take my chances even if I am a little girl with skinny arms and a squeaky voice, which is how I got the name Squeaky. And if things get too rough, I run. And as anybody can tell you, I'm the fastest thing on two feet.

There is no track meet that I don't win the first-place medal. I used to win the twenty-yard dash when I was a little kid in kindergarten. Nowadays, it's the fifty-yard dash. And tomorrow I'm subject to run the quarter-meter relay all by myself and come in first, second, and third. The big kids call me Mercury cause I'm the swiftest thing in the neighborhood. Everybody knows that—except two people who know better, my father and me. He can beat me to Amsterdam Avenue with me having a two-fire-hydrant headstart and him running with his hands in his pockets and whistling. But that's private information. Cause can you imagine some thirty-five-year-old man stuffing himself into PAL shorts to race little kids? So as far as everyone's concerned, I'm the fastest and that goes for Gretchen, too, who has put out the tale that she is going to win the first-place medal this year. Ridiculous. In the second place, she's got short legs. In the third place, she's got freckles. In the first place, no one can beat me and that's all there is to it.

I'm standing on the corner admiring the weather and about to take a stroll down Broadway so I can practice my breathing exercises, and I've got Raymond walking on the inside close to the buildings, cause he's subject to fits of fantasy and starts thinking he's a circus performer and that the curb is a tightrope strung high in the air. And sometimes after a rain he likes to step down off his tightrope right into the gutter and slosh around getting his shoes and cuffs wet. Then I get

hit when I get home. Or sometimes if you don't watch him he'll dash across traffic to the island in the middle of Broadway and give the pigeons a fit. Then I have to go behind him apologizing to all the old people sitting around trying to get some sun and getting all upset with the pigeons fluttering around them, scattering their newspapers and upsetting the waxpaper lunches in their laps. So I keep Raymond on the inside of me, and he plays like he's driving a stage coach which is OK by me so long as he doesn't run me over or interrupt my breathing exercises, which I have to do on account of I'm serious about my running, and I don't care who knows it.

Now some people like to act like things come easy to them, won't let on that they practice. Not me. I'll high-prance down 34th Street like a rodeo pony to keep my knees strong even if it does get my mother uptight so that she walks ahead like she's not with me, don't know me, is all by herself on a shopping trip, and I am somebody else's crazy child. Now you take Cynthia Procter for instance. She's just the opposite. If there's a test tomorrow, she'll say something like, "Oh, I guess I'll play handball this afternoon and watch television tonight," just to let you know she ain't thinking about the test. Or like last week when she won the spelling bee for the millionth time, "A good thing you got 'receive,' Squeaky, cause I would have got it wrong. I completely forgot about the spelling bee." And she'll clutch the lace on her blouse like it was a narrow escape. Oh, brother. But of course when I pass her house on my early morning trots around the block, she is practicing the scales on the piano over and over and over and over. Then in music class she always lets herself get bumped around so she falls accidentally on purpose onto the piano stool and is so surprised to find herself sitting there that she decides just for fun to try out the ole keys. And what do you know—Chopin's waltzes just spring out of her fingertips and she's the most surprised thing in the world. A regular prodigy. I could kill people like that. I stay up all night studying the words for the spelling bee. And you can see me any time of day practicing running. I never walk if I can trot, and shame on Raymond if he can't keep up. But of course he does, cause if he hangs back someone's liable to walk up to him and get smart, or take his allowance from him, or ask him where he got that great big pumpkin head. People are so stupid sometimes.

So I'm strolling down Broadway breathing out and breathing in on counts of seven, which is my lucky number, and here comes Gretchen and her sidekicks: Mary Louise, who used to be a friend of mine when she first moved to Harlem from Baltimore and got beat up by everybody till I took up for her on account of her mother and my mother used to sing in the same choir when they were young girls, but people ain't grateful, so now she hangs out with the new girl Gretchen and talks about me like a dog; and Rosie, who is as fat as I am skinny and has a big mouth where Raymond is concerned and is too stupid to know that there is not a big deal of difference between herself and Raymond and that she can't afford to throw stones. So they are steady coming up Broadway and I see right away that it's going to be one of those Dodge City scenes cause the street ain't that big and they're close to the buildings just as we are. First I think I'll step into

the candy store and look over the new comics and let them pass. But that's chicken and I've got a reputation to consider. So then I think I'll just walk straight on through them or even over them if necessary. But as they get to me, they slow down. I'm ready to fight, cause like I said I don't feature a whole lot of chit-chat, I much prefer to just knock you down right from the jump and save everybody a lotta precious time.

"You signing up for the May Day races?" smiles Mary Louise, only it's not a smile at all. A dumb question like that doesn't deserve an answer. Besides, there's just me and Gretchen standing there really, so no use wasting my breath talking to shadows.

"I don't think you're going to win this time," says Rosie, trying to signify with her hands on her hips all salty, completely forgetting that I have whupped her behind many times for less salt than that.

"I always win cause I'm the best," I say straight at Gretchen who is, as far as I'm concerned, the only one talking in this ventriloquist-dummy routine. Gretchen smiles, but it's not a smile, and I'm thinking that girls never really smile at each other because they don't know how and don't want to know how and there's probably no one to teach us how, cause grown-up girls don't know either. Then they all look at Raymond who has just brought his mule team to a standstill. And they're about to see what trouble they can get into through him.

"What grade you in now, Raymond?"

"You got anything to say to my brother, you say it to me, Mary Louise Williams of Raggedy Town, Baltimore."

"What are you, his mother?" sasses Rosie.

"That's right, Fatso. And the next word out of anybody and I'll be *their* mother too." So they just stand there and Gretchen shifts from one leg to the other and so do they. Then Gretchen puts her hands on her hips and is about to say something with her freckle-face self but doesn't. Then she walks around me looking me up and down but keeps walking up Broadway, and her sidekicks follow her. So me and Raymond smile at each other and he says, "Gidyap" to his team and I continue with my breathing exercises, strolling down Broadway toward the ice man on 145th with not a care in the world cause I am Miss Quicksilver herself.

I take my time getting to the park on May Day because the track meet is the last thing on the program. The biggest thing on the program is the May Pole dancing, which I can do without, thank you, even if my mother thinks it's a shame I don't take part and act like a girl for a change. You'd think my mother'd be grateful not

to have to make me a white organdy dress with a big satin sash and buy me new white baby-doll shoes that can't be taken out of the box till the big day. You'd think she'd be glad her daughter ain't out there prancing around a May Pole getting the new clothes all dirty and sweaty and trying to act like a fairy or a flower or whatever you're supposed to be when you should be trying to be yourself, whatever that is, which is, as far as I am concerned, a poor black girl who really can't afford to buy shoes and a new dress you only wear once a lifetime cause it won't fit next year.

I was once a strawberry in a Hansel and Gretel pageant when I was in nursery school and didn't have no better sense than to dance on tiptoe with my arms in a circle over my head doing umbrella steps and being a perfect fool just so my mother and father could come dressed up and clap. You'd think they'd know better than to encourage that kind of nonsense. I am not a strawberry. I do not dance on my toes. I run. That is what I am all about. So I always come late to the May Day program, just in time to get my number pinned on and lay in the grass till they announce the fifty-yard dash.

I put Raymond in the little swings, which is a tight squeeze this year and will be impossible next year. Then I look around for Mr. Pearson, who pins the numbers on. I'm really looking for Gretchen if you want to know the truth, but she's not around. The park is jam-packed. Parents in hats and corsages and breast-pocket handkerchiefs peeking up. Kids in white dresses and light-blue suits. The parkees unfolding chairs and chasing the rowdy kids from Lenox as if they had no right to be there. The big guys with their caps on backwards, leaning against the fence swirling the basketballs on the tips of their fingers, waiting for all these crazy people to clear out the park so they can play. Most of the kids in my class are carrying bass drums and glockenspiels and flutes. You'd think they'd put in a few bongos or something for real like that.

Then here comes Mr. Pearson with his clipboard and his cards and pencils and whistles and safety pins and fifty million other things he's always dropping all over the place with his clumsy self. He sticks out in a crowd because he's on stilts. We used to call him Jack and the Beanstalk to get him mad. But I'm the only one that can outrun him and get away, and I'm too grown for that silliness now.

"Well, Squeaky," he says, checking my name off the list and handing me number seven and two pins. And I'm thinking he's got no right to call me Squeaky, if I can't call him Beanstalk.

"Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker," I correct him and tell him to write it down on his board.

"Well, Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker, going to give someone else a break this year?" I squint at him real hard to see if he is seriously thinking I should lose the

race on purpose just to give someone else a break. "Only six girls running this time," he continues, shaking his head sadly like it's my fault all of New York didn't turn out in sneakers. "That new girl should give you a run for your money." He looks around the park for Gretchen like a periscope in a submarine movie. "Wouldn't it be a nice gesture if you were . . . to ahhh . . ."

I give him such a look he couldn't finish putting that idea into words. Grown-ups got a lot of nerve sometimes. I pin number seven to myself and stomp away, I'm so burnt. And I go straight for the track and stretch out on the grass while the band winds up with "Oh, the Monkey Wrapped His Tail Around the Flag Pole," which my teacher calls by some other name. The man on the loudspeaker is calling everyone over to the track and I'm on my back looking at the sky, trying to pretend I'm in the country, but I can't, because even grass in the city feels hard as sidewalk, and there's just no pretending you are anywhere but in a "concrete jungle" as my grandfather says.

The twenty-yard dash takes all of two minutes cause most of the little kids don't know no better than to run off the track or run the wrong way or run smack into the fence and fall down and cry. One little kid, though, has got the good sense to run straight for the white ribbon up ahead so he wins. Then the second-graders line up for the thirty-yard dash and I don't even bother to turn my head to watch cause Raphael Perez always wins. He wins before he even begins by psyching the runners, telling them they're going to trip on their shoelaces and fall on their faces or lose their shorts or something, which he doesn't really have to do since he is very fast, almost as fast as I am. After that is the forty-yard dash which I used to run when I was in first grade. Raymond is hollering from the swings cause he knows I'm about to do my thing cause the man on the loudspeaker has just announced the fifty-yard dash, although he might just as well be giving a recipe for angel food cake cause you can hardly make out what he's sayin for the static. I get up and slip off my sweat pants and then I see Gretchen standing at the starting line, kicking her legs out like a pro. Then as I get into place I see that ole Raymond is on line on the other side of the fence, bending down with his fingers on the ground just like he knew what he was doing. I was going to yell at him but then I didn't. It burns up your energy to holler.

Every time, just before I take off in a race, I always feel like I'm in a dream, the kind of dream you have when you're sick with fever and feel all hot and weightless. I dream I'm flying over a sandy beach in the early morning sun, kissing the leaves of the trees as I fly by. And there's always the smell of apples, just like in the country when I was little and used to think I was a choo-choo train, running through the fields of corn and chugging up the hill to the orchard. And all the time I'm dreaming this, I get lighter and lighter until I'm flying over the beach again, getting blown through the sky like a feather that weighs nothing at all. But once I spread my fingers in the dirt and crouch over the Get on Your Mark, the

dream goes and I am solid again and am telling myself, Squeaky you must win, you must win, you are the fastest thing in the world, you can even beat your father up Amsterdam if you really try. And then I feel my weight coming back just behind my knees then down to my feet then into the earth and the pistol shot explodes in my blood and I am off and weightless again, flying past the other runners, my arms pumping up and down and the whole world is quiet except for the crunch as I zoom over the gravel in the track. I glance to my left and there is no one. To the right, a blurred Gretchen, who's got her chin jutting out as if it would win the race all by itself. And on the other side of the fence is Raymond with his arms down to his side and the palms tucked up behind him, running in his very own style, and it's the first time I ever saw that and I almost stop to watch my brother Raymond on his first run. But the white ribbon is bouncing toward me and I tear past it, racing into the distance till my feet with a mind of their own start digging up footfuls of dirt and brake me short. Then all the kids standing on the side pile on me, banging me on the back and slapping my head with their May Day programs, for I have won again and everybody on 151st Street can walk tall for another year.

"In first place . . ." the man on the loudspeaker is clear as a bell now. But then he pauses and the loudspeaker starts to whine. Then static. And I lean down to catch my breath and here comes Gretchen walking back, for she's overshot the finish line too, huffing and puffing with her hands on her hips taking it slow, breathing in steady time like a real pro and I sort of like her a little for the first time. "In first place . . ." and then three or four voices get all mixed up on the loudspeaker and I dig my sneaker into the grass and stare at Gretchen who's staring back, we both wondering just who did win. I can hear old Beanstalk arguing with the man on the loudspeaker and then a few others running their mouths about what the stopwatches say. Then I hear Raymond yanking at the fence to call me and I wave to shush him, but he keeps rattling the fence like a gorilla in a cage like in them gorilla movies, but then like a dancer or something he starts climbing up nice and easy but very fast. And it occurs to me, watching how smoothly he climbs hand over hand and remembering how he looked running with his arms down to his side and with the wind pulling his mouth back and his teeth showing and all, it occurred to me that Raymond would make a very fine runner. Doesn't he always keep up with me on my trots? And he surely knows how to breathe in counts of seven cause he's always doing it at the dinner table, which drives my brother George up the wall. And I'm smiling to beat the band cause if I've lost this race, or if me and Gretchen tied, or even if I've won, I can always retire as a runner and begin a whole new career as a coach with Raymond as my champion. After all, with a little more study I can beat Cynthia and her phony self at the spelling bee. And if I bugged my mother, I could get piano lessons and become a star. And I have a big rep as the baddest thing around. And I've got a roomful of ribbons and medals and awards. But what has Raymond got to call his own?

So I stand there with my new plans, laughing out loud by this time as Raymond

jumps down from the fence and runs over with his teeth showing and his arms down to the side, which no one before him has quite mastered as a running style. And by the time he comes over I'm jumping up and down so glad to see him—my brother Raymond, a great runner in the family tradition. But of course everyone thinks I'm jumping up and down because the men on the loudspeaker have finally gotten themselves together and compared notes and are announcing "In first place—Miss Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker." (Dig that.) "In second place—Miss Gretchen P. Lewis." And I look over at Gretchen wondering what the "P" stands for. And I smile. Cause she's good, no doubt about it. Maybe she'd like to help me coach Raymond; she obviously is serious about running, as any fool can see. And she nods to congratulate me and then she smiles. And I smile. We stand there with this big smile of respect between us. It's about as real a smile as girls can do for each other, considering we don't practice real smiling every day, you know, cause maybe we too busy being flowers or fairies or strawberries instead of something honest and worthy of respect . . . you know . . . like being people.

THE END

## Raymond's Run

## Vocabulary

A. Write the words in the blanks.

bongo  
jam-packed

clumsy  
orchard

glockenspiel  
organdy

gravel  
scale

holler  
static

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. a big field where farmers grow fruit trees
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. to yell, to talk in a loud voice
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. very crowded
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. a set of notes that we use to play music
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. a musical instrument with metal bars
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. a kind of drum that we play with our hands
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. a noisy unclear signal on a radio or loudspeaker
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. not smooth and graceful, a person falls over a lot
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. small stones used to cover a road or a track
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. thin cotton material used to make fine dresses

B. Choose the proper word to complete each sentence.

bongo

clumsy

jam-packed

orchard

scale

1. Do-re-mi are the first three notes of this \_\_\_\_\_
2. The subway is \_\_\_\_\_ with people every morning.
3. There are more than 200 peach trees in the \_\_\_\_\_
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ student tripped over his own feet and dropped all the dishes on the floor.
5. We can usually hear \_\_\_\_\_ drums in Cuban music.

## Raymond's Run

## Point of View

Authors typically use first person point of view or third person point of view to tell a story. The author's choice of point of view affects which characters' thoughts are presented to the reader.

Let's consider the point of view of the story with the following questions.

1. Is this story written in first person or third person point of view?

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2. Why do you think the author chose this point of view to tell the story?

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3. Would you describe the tone of this story as formal or informal? Why?

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4. Hazel often uses words or phrases which would be marked wrong in grammar class. For example, Hazel uses the word "cause" instead of "because". Why do you think the author included phrases like this?

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5. Do you think the story would be very different if the author had chosen a different point of view to tell the story?

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## Raymond's Run

## Writing Assignment

Write a paragraph to answer each of the following questions.

1. Describe Hazel at the start of the story. What do we learn about her?

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2. What kind of relationship does Hazel have with her peers?  
What kind of relationship does Hazel have with her family members?

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3. What happens in the race? What happens after the race ends? What does Hazel notice about Raymond? What goal does she have for Raymond?

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## Raymond's Run

## Character Development

Character development refers to the way the author presents a story character. Characters may develop during a story, starting out one way and ending up different, becoming changed by what happens to them. We may see one side of the character for a while, but then another side is revealed, proving the character to be complex.

Let's answer the questions to see how Hazel develops in the story.

1. What is Hazel most proud of?

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2. How does Hazel show that she is competitive?

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3. When does the reader first see a different side of Hazel's character?

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4. What causes Hazel to see Raymond in a different way?

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5. At the end of the race, why isn't Hazel so concerned about who won?

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6. What goal does Hazel have at the end of the story?

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7. The main character in this story is Hazel. Can you explain the story title?

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## Raymond's Run

## Figurative Language

A. Similes: We can use similes to compare two objects in an interesting way. We use the words **like** or **as** when we make a simile.

Choose the proper word to complete each simile from the story.

bell    dancer    gorilla    periscope    pony    sidewalk

1. I'll high-prance down 34th Street like a rodeo \_\_\_\_\_  
to keep my knees strong.

2. Mr. Pearson looks around the park for Gretchen like a \_\_\_\_\_  
in a submarine movie.

3. Even grass in the city feels hard as \_\_\_\_\_

4. The man on the loudspeaker is clear as a \_\_\_\_\_ now.

5. Raymond keeps rattling the fence like a \_\_\_\_\_ in  
a cage.

6. Then like a \_\_\_\_\_ or something, Raymond  
starts climbing up nice and easy but very fast.

B. Can you write your own similes on the lines below?

1. simile: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. simile: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

C. Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration for extra effect. The purpose of hyperbole is often humor or additional emphasis.

\* Cynthia Procter won the spelling bee for the millionth time.

\* Then here comes Mr. Pearson with his clipboard and his cards and pencils and whistles and safety pins and fifty million other things he's always dropping all over the place

How are these two quotations from the story examples of hyperbole?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_