

## Exemplar Stories – Tuck Everlasting

**Babbitt, Natalie. *Tuck Everlasting*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975. (1975)  
From Chapter 12**

The sky was a ragged blaze of red and pink and orange, and its double trembled on the surface of the pond like color spilled from a paintbox. The sun was dropping fast now, a soft red sliding egg yolk, and already to the east there was a darkening to purple. Winnie, newly brave with her thoughts of being rescued, climbed boldly into the rowboat. The hard heels of her buttoned boots made a hollow banging sound against its wet boards, loud in the warm and breath-less quiet. Across the pond a bullfrog spoke a deep note of warning. Tuck climbed in, too, pushing off, and, settling the oars into their locks, dipped them into the silty bottom in one strong pull. The rowboat slipped from the bank then, silently, and glided out, tall water grasses whispering away from its sides, releasing it.

Here and there the still surface of the water dimpled, and bright rings spread noiselessly and vanished. “Feeding time,” said Tuck softly. And Winnie, looking down, saw hosts of tiny insects skittering and skating on the surface. “Best time of all for fishing,” he said, “when they come up to feed.”

He dragged on the oars. The rowboat slowed and began to drift gently toward the farthest end of the pond. It was so quiet that Winnie almost jumped when the bullfrog spoke again. And then, from the tall pines and birches that ringed the pond, a wood thrush caroled. The silver notes were pure and clear and lovely.

“Know what that is, all around us, Winnie?” said Tuck, his voice low. “Life. Moving, growing, changing, never the same two minutes together. This water, you look out at it every morning, and it looks the same, but it ain’t. All night long it’s been moving, coming in through the stream back there to the west, slipping out through the stream down east here, always quiet, always new, moving on. You can’t hardly see the current, can you? And sometimes the wind makes it look like it’s going the other way. But it’s always there, the water’s always moving on, and someday, after a long while, it comes to the ocean.”