

## Chapters Nine–Twelve

### *Standards Focus: Theme*

**Theme** is the central idea in a work of literature. The theme must often be inferred (figured out) by carefully examining the characters’ words and actions, as well as the plot, setting, and mood of the novel.

**Directions:** Read and answer the questions about the following excerpts from the novel. After examining the quotes, use them to try to infer a theme from the novel.

**Ex.** And Winnie, laughing at him, lost the last of her alarm. They were friends, her friends. She was running away after all, but she was not alone. (pg. 44)

Why is it important to Winnie to have friends that are just hers?

Part of Winnie’s irritation with her family is that they are everywhere, and she has nothing that is just hers. Having her own friends makes Winnie feel that she does not have to depend on her family for everything.

What theme is represented by this quote? “It is important for everyone to have friends and feel as if they have their own place in the world.”

1. Explain what Mae means when she tells Winnie, “Life’s got to be lived, no matter how long or short . . . you got to take what comes. We just go along, like everybody else, one day at a time.” (pg. 54)

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What theme is represented by this quote? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. *Sometimes I forget about what’s happened to us, forget it altogether. And then sometimes it comes over me and I wonder why it happened to us. We’re plain as salt, us Tucks. We don’t deserve no blessings—if it is a blessing. And, likewise, I don’t see how we deserve to be cursed, if it’s a curse.* (pg. 55)

What theme is represented by this quote? \_\_\_\_\_

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Explain how each character (Mae, Angus, Miles, and Jesse) views immortality. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Explain what Angus means when he tells Winnie, “Everything’s a wheel, turning and turning, never stopping. . . Always coming in new, always growing and changing, and always moving on. That’s the way it’s supposed to be. That’s the way it *is*.” (pg. 62)

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

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What theme is represented by this quote? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. *Just go out, like the flame of a candle, and no use protesting. It was a certainty.* (pg. 63)

What does Winnie realize is the only certainty in life?

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What theme is represented by this quote? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Explain how Angus feels about death in his comment, "But dying's part of the wheel, right there next to being born. You can't pick out the pieces you like and leave the rest. Being part of the whole thing, that's the blessing." (pg. 63)

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6. *If I knowed how to climb back on the wheel, I'd do it in a minute. You can't have living without dying. So you can't call it living, what we got. We just are, we just be, like rocks beside the road.* (pg. 64) Does Angus Tuck believe that he is really living? Why or why not? Why is this ironic?

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7. What do you think is the main theme of the novel? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Do you most agree with Mae, Angus, Miles, or Jesse's attitude toward immortality? Why?

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