



Forever and Ever

Reading Guide

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Preliminary Remarks

- The following assignments offer tasks and activities, which the teacher or students can choose from.
- Many tasks are suitable for talks or presentations to the class.
- Some tasks overlap with others.
- The material can be edited and students may copy instructions, questions, and answers into their exercise books.

The Author Talks

Though they began to lose popularity as early as the end of the 19th century, I have always loved ghost stories. They scare us, but they also call up a kind of sadness, epitomized by the terrible loneliness of the ghost and the way it mirrors, however distortedly, what it means to be alive.

I also like the possibilities for ambiguity that the ghost story provides. Did he see a ghost or was it just bit of drifting mist? Was that distant keening the howling of a neighbor's dog? (But the neighbor doesn't have a dog, you say.) Or was it the sad complaint of the departed, echoing in the corridor that separates the living from the dead?

For me, the setting for a ghost story is as important as the spirits that populate it. I live in New Hampshire, beautiful, but with its old cemeteries (there are seven in my town of two thousand people), its deserted hills, and its many unpopulated lakes, it is surely one of the spookiest states.

Lake Winnepocket is about ten miles from my house. We swim there sometimes.

About the Author

David Elliott is a children's author whose titles include *The New York Times* best selling **And Here's to You!**, the poetry series **On the Farm, In the Wild, In the Sea,** and **On the Wing, This Orq! (He cave boy.)** and several middle grade novels. **Forever and Ever** is his second Open Door. **The Tiger's Back** was published in 2012. David and his wife live in New Hampshire.

Pre-Reading Questions

COVER:

The cover of **Forever and Ever** shows a foggy lake at twilight. What kind of mood does this image evoke?

TITLE:

Think about the vocabulary and phrasing of the title. Who uses the term “forever and ever?”

Activities While Reading

SETTING:

This story has one central setting, Lake Winnepocket. How does Lake Winnepocket set the stage for what happens?

How do Jannie’s parents prepare Jaimie for the cabin? Would you go there by yourself?

CHAPTER SUMMARIES:

Write a brief (two to three sentence) chapter summary tracking Jaimie’s grieving process.

Post-Reading Questions

SETTING:

How does Lake Winnepocket change as the story progresses? What is it about this specific lake that takes on a sinister tone?

CHARACTER:

How would you describe Jaimie?

How would you describe Jannie? Can you describe Jannie without Jaimie?

What role does Moses Eldred play in the story? What other figures in books and movies could he be compared to?

Is Jaimie dealing with Jannie's passing in a healthy way? Is there a healthy way to deal with death?

Why do you think Jaimie goes into the lake at the end of the story?

POINT OF VIEW:

This novel is told through the first-person view of Jaimie. How do you think this view colors our understanding of Jaimie's relationship with Jannie? How does this point of view add to the creepiness of this story? What would change if this story were in third person?

THEME:

Forever and Ever deals with the idea of a one true love. Do you believe in soul-mates? Do you think that Jaimie and Jannie have a healthy relationship?

This story also deals with the theme of transition. Jaimie finds himself in a time of transition between the past and the present, while Jannie is caught in the realm between life and death. A ghost lives between two worlds. Jaimie is living in a world before and after Jannie. Is Jaimie a type of ghost?

TITLE:

Now that you have finished the book, what other meaning does the phrase *Forever and Ever* take on?

SUMMARY:

Write a 90 to 100-word summary about the events that take place on Lake Winnepocket.

BOOK CRITIQUE:

Explain what you liked or did not like about **Forever and Ever**. You can use specific passages to prove your point.

Did **Forever and Ever** change the way you think about ghosts? If so, in what way?

WRITING ACTIVITY:

Write a short story about what happens after Jaimie steps into the lake. Think creatively and don't be afraid to think outside of the box. Unexpected twists are encouraged!