

# **Wolf Hollow Study Guide**

## **Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk**

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## Plot Summary

Wolk's children's novel revolves around twelve year-old Annabelle as she attempts to deal with a local bully named Betty while defending local recluse and World War I veteran Toby against lies and accusations of violence during World War II. Annabelle lives with her parents, grandparents, Aunt Lily, and younger brothers James and Henry on a farm in the hills above the small town of Wolf Hollow, Pennsylvania. They are a close family and Annabelle is especially close to her parents. Annabelle befriends Toby, who lives in an abandoned smokehouse at the edge of their property. Toby is quiet, keeps to himself, enjoys photography, always carries three guns, and causes no one any trouble. Annabelle's parents know he is a good but troubled man. Annabelle loves her life, but the fourteen year old Betty throws her life out of order.

For unknown reasons, Betty's father is no longer in her life (it is believed he is dead). Unable to handle her daughter, Betty's mother sent Betty to live with Betty's grandparents, the Glengarrys, above Wolf Hollow. Betty enjoys harassing other kids, but especially comes to delight in torturing Annabelle because they live so close to one another. Most of Betty's confrontations occur in the woods on the way to school, where Betty beats Annabelle with a stick when Annabelle refuses to give in to her demands that Annabelle give her something valuable. When Toby comes to Annabelle's defense, Betty is only angered further. Betty begins spending time with a local boy named Andy. The two often skip school together. One day, Annabelle and her friend Ruth talk with an apple farmer named Mr. Faas who is on his way to market outside of their school. Someone throws a rock crushes Ruth's eye. The attack, supposedly accidental, is believed to have been directed at Faas due to anti-German sentiments. Betty and Andy blame Toby, as a World War I veteran, and claim to have seen Toby from the school belfry.

When Betty and Andy tie a sharpened wire across the path in the woods and injure Henry, Annabelle has had enough and tells her parents. Her parents confront Betty and the Glengarrys, but Betty blames everything on Toby. Annabelle's parents are not convinced. Further doubt is cast when it is discovered that the door to the belfry is locked. Consequently, Betty and Andy could not have seen the rock attack. When Betty suddenly goes missing a short time later, Toby is once again blamed. Annabelle sneaks Toby into the family barn and provides him with clothing, food, water, and reading material while search parties form to find Betty. With a haircut and a beard trim, Toby looks like a totally different person. Toby reveals that it was indeed Betty who threw the rock that hit Ruth and that he had nothing to do with Betty's disappearance. He also explains to Annabelle many of the horrors he witnessed during World War I –horrors which left him lonely, depressed, and a drifter. Andy confesses that he and Betty had planned to go down to cause Toby some trouble, but that with the rain, Andy figured Betty would not have gone and so did not go either. Annabelle comes to realize that the only place Betty could be is in the old well by the smokehouse, and tells her father this.

Annabelle's father and the other members of the search party find Betty at the smokehouse. Toby, in disguise, joins the search party and volunteers to be the one to



be lowered into the well to bring out Betty. It is apparent Betty fell into the well while not paying attention, but later, in the hospital, she blames Toby. Betty dies a short time later due to infection. A search party is formed for Toby. Toby has had enough harassment and heartache, and so leaves and heads west toward Ohio. Just before the border, the searchers catch him. Believing he intends to fight because of the guns he carries, Toby is shot to death. The news devastates Annabelle and her family. Annabelle's mother believes that Toby intentionally had himself killed, because he was so tired of living. The family buries Toby, who has no family of his own, on their land. Annabelle visits the grave for years afterward, having learned many important lessons from that year in her life.



# Prologue – Chapter 5

## Summary

In the novel's prologue, Annabelle McBride, many years after the events of the novel, explains that in 1943 when she turned twelve, she learned how to tell real lies based on real fears. Annabelle relates that, between World War II and a dark-hearted girl coming to town, she felt confused. Annabelle also explains that when she turned twelve, she learned that her actions mattered. It was a burden she was not prepared to handle.

Annabelle accidentally smashes her piggy bank when trying to get a penny out and buries the broken pieces in Chapter 1. She hides all the coins, including a silver dollar her grandfather gave her on her eleventh birthday, in an old handkerchief in a boot under her bed. Her mother believes she has hidden the pig to prevent theft. Annabelle lives not only with her parents and brothers, but her grandparents and Aunt Lily as well on a farm above Wolf Hollow, Pennsylvania. The family has clung together to weather the Great Depression and now World War II. Wolf Hollow is so named due to the pits dug there many years before for catching wolves, when wolves became too numerous and too violent. Annabelle believes the wolves could have been tamed, but her grandfather explains that such a thing would not be possible. He reminds her of how he smashed the head of a poisonous copperhead snake the spring before.

Each day, Annabelle walks to school down in Wolf Hollow, with her younger brothers, nine year old Henry and seven year old James. Annabelle looks forward to sitting beside her friend, Ruth, who like Annabelle loves to read. Annabelle dreads encountering Betty, a mean and unruly fourteen year-old girl who sent to live with her grandparents, the Glengarrys, who live above Raccoon Creek near Annabelle's farm. Betty spends class shooting spitballs at Annabelle, and jabbing Annabelle with a pencil. Betty uses bad words, spills ink on Emily's sweater, and tells the little kids where babies come from, threatening to kill them if they told their parents on her. Mrs. Taylor, who has her hands full with a class of forty students of all ages, cannot keep an eye on everything going on.

In Chapter 2, Annabelle heads out of Wolf Hollow. On the way, Betty confronts her. Betty mocks Annabelle's name, and accuses Annabelle's family of being rich not because they have electricity, a telephone, and indoor plumbing, but because Annabelle's house has a purple window. Betty tells Annabelle to bring her something the following day or she will beat Annabelle with a stick. If Annabelle does not show, Betty says she will go after her little brothers. It is the first real fear Annabelle knows beyond her general trepidation of the war. Annabelle's mother, who is twenty-eight, tells Annabelle not worry. Naturally anxious, Annabelle does worry about many things including as her grandmother's poor health.

In Chapter 3, in order to travel to Wolf Hollow, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances cross through Annabelle's farm rather than going the long way by the road. Some days,



vagabonds come through, who seem unsure of who they are and where they belong. One such stranger is a man named Toby, who takes to circling the hills rather than simply passing through. Toby is a World War I veteran with a scarred left hand who carries three guns and keeps to himself. He squats in the old, abandoned Cobb smokehouse between Annabelle's farm and the Glengarry place. He also borrows Annabelle's family's camera frequently, which the family won in a contest some years before, along with free film. Annabelle thinks about Toby with the camera. She recalls that Toby first approached her when she took photos of the sky and the peach orchard.

At home, Annabelle's mother can tell something is wrong in Chapter 4. Annabelle denies anything is bothering her. She heads up to the top of the farm's hill, where she finds Toby. She waves, but Toby does not wave back. This does not mean he is not friendly, but just different. Annabelle reflects on how good Toby has been to her and the family over the years, such as the day he carried her home when she sprained her ankle or when he helped the family harvest pumpkins when her father hurt his back. The next day, Betty again confronts Annabelle who tries to please Betty with a penny. Betty does not want a penny, throws it, and begins smashing Annabelle with the stick. Betty tells Annabelle to bring her something better the following day. At home, Annabelle asks to borrow Aunt Lily's sweater frog, even though Annabelle has already borrowed it. Aunt Lily reminds Annabelle of this, and believes it must be somewhere in Annabelle's room. After dinner, Annabelle's mother sends up to the hill with extra food for Toby. She tells Annabelle to leave it in the crate they often leave things for Toby in if he is not around.

In Chapter 5, Annabelle meets Toby to give him the food. She asks him if he still has enough film for the camera. He replies that he does. Annabelle and her family always have film developed for Toby. Sometimes, he shows them his work, which is primarily of wildlife. It impresses Annabelle that someone shoots wildlife with a camera rather than a gun. Toby hands Annabelle the penny she attempted to use to placate Betty. Annabelle realizes Toby must have seen or overheard everything. At home, Annabelle's father tells her to tell him if Toby ever worries her, but does not explain further. That night before bed, Annabelle looks at her bruises from the stick and decides she must give Betty the sweater frog. Annabelle knows she will tell her mother if things get worse, but also knows she has nothing to fear with Toby around. At school, a large, older boy who has not been in school for months due to farm work finally returns. His name is Andy Woodberry and Betty takes to him quickly. Annabelle hopes this means Betty will leave him alone.

## Analysis

Early in her novel *Wolf Hollow*, Lauren Wolk lays down thematic groundwork which will guide the rest of the story. Many years after the events of the novel, a much older Annabelle reflects on the year she turned twelve and how it changed her life. Growing up, Annabelle explains in her introduction, is never easy. It is a time of great confusion, of conflicting emotions, and having to confront adult problems even though one is still a child. The course of the novel will involve such problems and will demonstrate



Annabelle's evolution in handling these problems. Annabelle hints that such methods will include lying and discovering that even the things she does as a child have a tremendous impact on the events unfolding around her.

When Annabelle steps back in time to 1943, traditional, rural-small-town America enchants the reader. Family matters most of all, while neighbors are always friends who watch out for one another. Not everyone has electricity or telephones and often multiple generations of families live together. The one prevalent feature of people in this time period is kindness. As Wolk argues consistently, kindness is never overrated. Kindness speaks to the human spirit and the human condition and unites people. The novel so far is full of examples of kindness –from Annabelle's family allowing people to use their farm as a shortcut into Wolf Hollow to how Annabelle's family and Toby watch out for one another as best they can.

Indeed, Annabelle's family (with the exception of Aunt Lily) accepts Toby. Here, Wolk presents another important thematic argument in that people must be accepting of those who are different. This kindness of acceptance means the world to Toby, who suffers after his experience in World War I. The three guns which Toby carries symbolize his burden. Although the family knows relatively little about Toby, they know that he is honest, trustworthy, and kind. Annabelle especially likes him because, not only for his kindness and protectiveness toward her, but also because of his love of photography. Nevertheless, Annabelle's parents worry about Toby, not because they are suspicious of him, but because they are concerned about him due to the post traumatic stress he clearly suffers.

The arrival of Betty, however, throws Annabelle's world into disorder. Annabelle must, for the first time in her life, confront genuine fear. At first, Annabelle simply gives in to Betty, but as time passes, she learns to summon courage to deal with Betty, no matter how horribly Betty treats her. Fear must always be confronted, and never allowed to flourish, Wolk argues through these confrontations. Even then, however, Wolk begins forming yet another thematic argument which will remain invaluable in the novel: trust and honesty are utterly important. Annabelle attempts to handle Betty on her own without telling anyone –her parents or her teacher –are a breakdown in trust between Annabelle and those who must watch out for her until she is old enough to do so on her own. Annabelle's decision confront Betty by herself displays her growth, but she is out of her depth with Betty. Annabelle's decision to refuse to entrust her parents with such a problem at such an early stage will have important consequences later on.

## Discussion Question 1

What is Annabelle's relationship with Toby like? Why has she taken such a liking to Toby? How does she know she can trust him?



## Discussion Question 2

Why does Betty seem to target Annabelle to pick on? How does Annabelle initially respond to Betty's cruelty? How does Annabelle's response to Betty change over time? Why?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Annabelle refuse to tell her parents right away about Betty's bullying? Do you agree or disagree with Annabelle's decision? Why?

## Vocabulary

incorrigible, dainty, contemptuous, tedious, dismemberment, freighted, vagabonds, squats, oblige, miasma, hooligan, dubious





# Chapters 6 – 11

## Summary

In Chapter 6, Betty leaves Annabelle alone for the next few days, as she and Andy spend time together. On a summer day, Annabelle discovers James and Henry sitting before Betty, who is sitting on a log and holding a young quail. Annabelle sends Henry and James to school, then fails to stop Betty from crushing the quail's neck. Betty throws the dead bird at Annabelle who falls backwards. Toby suddenly appears, telling Betty never to touch Annabelle again or she will regret it. Betty is shocked and falls to the ground while Toby helps Annabelle up and runs off with the quail. Betty calls him a nut, but contracts poison ivy from her fall. At home, Annabelle's mother makes her help collect jewelweed to boil it into a broth at the request of Mrs. Glengarry so that it can be used to help Betty's poison ivy blisters. Annabelle's mother then makes Annabelle join her and her grandfather in delivering the medicine. At the Glengarry place, Annabelle's mother and Mrs. Glengarry apply the first treatment to Betty. Annabelle helps as best she can, noticing a photograph of two people in Betty's room. Betty explains that her father is gone, but Annabelle does not know what this means. On the way home, Annabelle helps her mother pull up some beets, which are hard and ugly on the outside, but delicious and beautiful on the inside.

In Chapter 7, the jewelweed works quickly, allowing Betty to return to school two days later. Betty says hello to Annabelle with a smile and a raised fist. Annabelle asks her why she is so mean. Betty explains she is just older and that Annabelle will learn to look out for herself too. Andy also returns to school that day, though he is late in arriving. Annabelle desperately wishes Betty could go back to where she came from. At recess, Annabelle and Ruth see Mr. Ansel Faas head to market with a wagon full of apples. They say hello to him, but suddenly, a small rock strikes Ruth in the face. Mrs. Taylor rushes Ruth to the doctor while Annabelle heads off to tell her parents. Annabelle sends Henry, her younger brother, home to bring back their parents since there is no adult at the school now. Annabelle's parents arrive a short time later in their truck. Annabelle explains everything to her father, noting that the rock came from the wooded hillside.

Ruth loses her left eye in Chapter 8. Annabelle is horrified. Annabelle's mother does not believe anyone intended to hurt anyone, but that the rock was meant for Faas, his horses, or his apples, because he is German. He is the nearest thing people have to blame for the war. Annabelle's father reminds her and the boys to stay on the other side of school at recess. He tells them that he will look into the matter. On the way to school, Annabelle encounters Betty once more. She feels a mix of anger, fear, and courage facing Betty. Betty says that no German is to be trusted because they are bullies. Annabelle counters that the only bully she knows is Betty and that Betty had better leave her alone. Betty steps aside and lets Annabelle pass. At school, Annabelle notices Betty and Andy speaking and passing notes to one another. On the way home, Henry and James race ahead. Annabelle then comes across James, sprawled on the ground, his head bloody from running into a wire strung between two trees across the path.



Annabelle brings her father to the spot after seeing her brothers safely home. The wire is gone, but her father sees the traces from the wires on the trees. At last, Annabelle tells her father about Betty. Annabelle's father says he wishes she would have told him sooner, but that he and her mother will take care of everything.

In Chapter 9, on Saturday afternoon, Annabelle's parents decide to visit the Glengarrys over what has happened. Before they leave, they tend to farm chores and visit Ruth. Ruth reveals that because of what happened, she and her family will be moving back to the town of Sewickley. Ruth also explains that she did not see her attacker clearly, but did see someone moving on the hillside. At the Glengarrys, Annabelle is surprised to find that the Glengarrys wish to talk about Ruth while Annabelle's parents say they wish to talk about Annabelle and James. Betty stares down Annabelle. Annabelle begins by detailing Betty's cruelties, possibly with Andy's help, but Betty denies everything. Annabelle says Toby can provide proof.

The Glengarrys do not have a good opinion of Toby to begin with, and doubt this claim. Betty then blames Ruth's injury on Toby, saying Toby intended to hit Mr. Ansel Faas. Betty claims to have seen it from the school's belfry. Betty says the wire was probably intended for her by Toby. Mr. Glengarry calls Toby crazy. Annabelle's parents realize the conversation is going nowhere and leave. Annabelle's mother says that if anyone threatens her again, there will be no more talking about it. At home, Annabelle reflects on how Toby might be sad, quiet, and odd to live alone in a smokehouse, but is not crazy. Annabelle wonders if Betty and Andy saw the attack from the belfry. Except for Aunt Lily who believes Toby is crazy, no one else believes Toby should be blamed. Annabelle's father explains he has spoken with Toby, who in turn said he had no reason to throw a rock at anyone, German or not. He also explains that Toby said Betty and Andy made scratches on the Turtle Stone, a big boulder in Wolf Hollow in the shape of a turtle shell with gridlines of quartz, believed to have once been used in Indian ceremonies.

In Church the next morning, the Glengarrys do not say hello to Annabelle or her family in Chapter 10. Reverend Kinnell speaks about the seasons changing. After services, Annabelle is surprised to find the Glengarrys waiting outside with Constable Oleska. Oleska asks to speak with Annabelle's parents, John and Sara. Annabelle does not hear much of what is said as she gets into the truck, but does hear her mother defending Toby. The conversation ends abruptly with Annabelle's parents getting into the truck, though Aunt Lily lingers a little longer to speak to Oleska. At dinner that evening, Annabelle's parents tell her to say away from Betty, and to tell Mrs. Taylor if Betty does anything bad. Aunt Lily defends Betty, so Annabelle shows off her bruises. Aunt Lily does not speak for the rest of the meal. At her bed, Annabelle's mother tends to her bruises, saying she does not believe Aunt Lily at all. She explains that Oleska does not have enough evidence to have the state troopers arrest Toby, which the Glengarrys want. Oleska will be speaking with Andy, maybe Annabelle, maybe Toby, and will be looking into the wire. Still, Annabelle and her mother both worry for Toby. Annabelle wonders if Toby will leave and find a new home.



In Chapter 11, Annabelle does not see Toby on Monday morning, but thinks about his comment about Turtle Stone. It is raining. She wonders if Betty and Andy used the Turtle Stone to sharpen the wire that hurt her brother. At school, Mrs. Taylor tells the class she wishes to speak to them about Ruth while Annabelle notices both Andy and Betty are not present. Mrs. Taylor is already blaming Toby for the attack, but Annabelle asks to see the view from the belfry, saying that this is where Betty and Andy claimed to see the attack from. Mrs. Taylor goes to the belfry door, but it does not open. Andy later comes to school looking for Betty, but when he learns she is not there, he leaves. That afternoon, Mrs. Taylor comes to visit Annabelle's parents. Mrs. Taylor explains that Betty and Andy could not have been in the belfry, since it has been locked since she caught them up there long before the injury. Mrs. Taylor explains she will pass this information along to Constable Oleska.

## Analysis

Human kindness is never an overrated thing, Lauren Wolk continues to argue as her novel unfolds. Toby's protective kindness and intervention spares Annabelle from another bout of bullying, but he unintentionally makes himself a target for Betty as well. Nevertheless, there is great irony in Annabelle kindly pitching in with her mother to brew, deliver, and help apply a jewelweed broth for the poison ivy that Betty contracts when she falls into the undergrowth in the woods during Toby's intervention. The reader should note the scene at the end of Chapter 6, in which Annabelle and her mother pull beets from the ground. The beets are described as rough and ugly on the outside, but sweet and soft on the inside. At first, the reader suspects this is a symbolic reference to Betty, that the bout with poison ivy and Annabelle's learning that Betty's father is "gone" (presumably dead, more than likely killed in the war) means she will now become kind and open up. This is not the case at all. Instead, the beets serve not as a symbolic reference to Betty, but as a symbolic reference to Toby. Toby appears wild, tough, and crazy on the outside, but Annabelle knows otherwise.

Despite Betty's bout with poison ivy, in addition to marginal knowledge of her past, Betty continues to harass, bully, and harm others. This includes the rock that destroys Ruth's eye, the wire that injures Henry, and Betty's determination to blame everything on Toby. Annabelle fiercely defends Toby, for she values truth and honesty. When Betty injures Henry with the wire, Annabelle has had enough and finally commits to telling her parents about what is going on. Betty, however, had told her grandparents an alarmingly different version of events, one which leads to a cooling of the friendship between Annabelle's family and the Glengarrys. What is critical here to remember for readers is that the closeness of family means that one unhesitatingly trusts and defends loved ones. The Glengarrys love and trust Betty, and have no reason to doubt her (although the reader and Annabelle both know she is lying). The same is true of Annabelle and her parents, who have no reason to distrust anything Annabelle says. Only Aunt Lily doubts Annabelle, but is silenced when Annabelle shows off the bruises gained from Betty.



Annabelle's defense of Toby comes not only as a matter of honesty, but as a question of human kindness as well. Like the symbolism of the beet mentioned earlier, Toby is not what he appears to be. True, he is a loner, and true, he is quiet and a little strange, but this does not make him a bad or evil person. Annabelle's kindness is what helps her to accept Toby as he is (and as Lauren Wolk continues to argue, that people must be accepted for who they are). Human kindness is not an overrated thing, especially when kindness is directed toward those who are most in need of it. Consider not only the example of Toby, but of Mr. Faas. Although the truth behind why the rock was thrown is never known, it is automatically believed that the rock was intended for Faas because Faas is German, and the Germans in Europe are the enemy in World War II. Annabelle and Ruth demonstrated simple human kindness by stopping to speak with Faas, knowing full-well that the man, despite his German heritage, is a good, kind, and loyal American citizen. He might be different given the circumstances, but he must be accepted for who he is.

Annabelle's struggles with all of these issues provide further demonstration of Wolk's consistent theme that growing up is very difficult. Not only has Annabelle had to deal with a bully, but must now deal with adults who do not believe her and who have arrayed themselves against her family. She is awakened to the quiet bigotry against German-Americans that runs throughout much of the area, things which she had never before either noticed or believed to exist. Likewise, she sees how quickly and angrily others react against Toby based on no real evidence at all except rumor and hearsay only because he is different and considered an outsider. Annabelle, because of Betty's arrival, is seeing the very worst of the real world and the very worst of the adults she used to think so highly of in the past.

## Discussion Question 1

Why, despite Annabelle's kindness to her, does Betty not stop bullying Annabelle?

## Discussion Question 2

Which adult situations are the most difficult for Annabelle to confront?

## Discussion Question 3

Why, when Annabelle and her parents confront Betty and the Glengarrys, do the Glengarrys take Annabelle's side?

## Vocabulary

sporadically, dominion, traipsing, jewel, subdued, peevishly, reprieve, indifference, belfry, poultice, fathom



# Chapters 12 – 17

## Summary

Chapter 12 – In the middle of the night, just as the rain lets up, Constable Oleska comes to see Annabelle's house, waking everyone up. He explains that Betty has gone missing, which he learned just before making up his mind to visit the Glengarrys with the new information provided by Mrs. Taylor. Oleska reveals that Betty went missing between leaving home and arriving at school. Oleska explains he went to see Toby, only to discover Toby gone. He relates that his first ever visit to Toby about Ruth resulted in angry looks. Only the pictures in Toby's smokehouse remain, Oleska reveals, including a photograph of Annabelle in the sunlight and shadow of the woods. Oleska does not like the photograph. Aunt Lily then reveals that Toby's latest batch of photos have come in. Oleska opens them to discover that one of the photos is of Mr. Ansel Faas, his horses and wagon, Ruth lying the road, injured, and Annabelle. Annabelle says the picture does not prove anything, but Oleska says it all adds up. While Toby must be found, finding Betty must be the priority, he explains. Oleska asks for Annabelle's father's help, then explains he is going to go see Andy.

Chapter 13 – Annabelle has difficulty sleeping, wondering what has happened to Betty, and wondering where Toby is. She believes Toby had nothing to do with Betty, and that Toby must be nearby or he would have not run off with the family's camera. It is later learned from Oleska that Betty and Andy were supposed to meet at Turtle Stone, but that Betty never showed up. So far, the searches have revealed nothing. Aunt Lily believes Toby is holding Betty against her will somewhere. Annabelle realizes that, outside of her own family (except for Aunt Lily), everyone is likely to blame Toby for Betty's disappearance. Annabelle pretends to go upstairs to go back to sleep, but dresses warmly and leaves the house. Annabelle heads to the smokehouse Toby uses as a shack, to discover Toby there.

Chapter 14 – Toby does not know that Betty is missing, and explains he has been fishing under the creek bridge to trade fish to Mr. Turner for jerky, and stayed in their barn until the rain let up. Annabel explains what has happened. Toby denies throwing the rock that hit Ruth, but did try to take Betty's picture throwing the rock with Andy looking on, but they saw him and ran. Annabelle says no one is going to believe him after waiting so long to tell the truth. Toby says there is nothing he can do about that. Annabelle tells Toby she will bring him to safety until things can be sorted out. He tells her she reminds him of her mother, which Annabelle likes. She then brings Toby to hide in the hayloft of their barn after she lets the animals out. Toby agrees, but hates heights. Up top, Annabelle finds that Toby suddenly looks more like an older boy than a man in his mid-forties.

Chapter 15 – Annabelle, having put the horses and cows to pasture, now collects milkweed for their floss for lifejackets for the war effort, all of which Annabelle uses as an excuse to explain her absence from the house when she returns. Annabelle loads up



a pail with food and brings it to Toby, though she tells her mother she is going for more milkweed. She discovers that Toby has arranged the bales of hay allowing him to hide, and also discovers he has removed his coat. He is very thin which worries Annabelle. Toby only eats some of the food after Annabelle accepts an offer from him to eat some of it. She asks Toby what his favorite food is, to which Toby responds hickory nut pie. She asks him about his comment regarding scratches on Turtle Stone, to which he explains Andy and Betty were sharpening a wire there. He confirms that Betty removed the wire after it hurt James. He says Betty “was” a bad girl, which confuses Annabelle. She heads off to gather milkweed, promising to bring back a book for Toby later.

Chapter 16 – Gathering more milkweed takes a lot of time, but Annabelle is glad to do it for the troops. She then commits to her regular chores, which includes gathering eggs, plucking chickens, and then helping her mother and grandmother make a huge pot of soup and rolls for the search party members. Annabelle then sneaks around upstairs to gather Robert Louis Stevenson’s book “Treasure Island,” some clothes, soap, a towel, and other odds and ends that Toby could use. Annabelle then asks to help search, to which her mother allows but tells her not to leave the farm hill. She asks Annabelle if Anabelle knows something she is not saying. Annabelle suddenly bursts into tears, saying everything that is going on is difficult to deal with. Annabelle’s mother comforts her, after which Annabelle asks her mother to make a hickory nut pie. Annabelle’s mother agrees as Annabelle heads out and delivers her collected goods to Toby. He thanks her for everything. Annabelle then commits to cutting Toby’s hair, making him look neat and tidy. But as Annabelle’s father returns home, Annabelle leaves Toby to cut his own beard.

Chapter 17 – Annabelle discovers her house full of men from the search party, including a state trooper named Officer Coleman. Annabelle’s grandfather suggests that perhaps Betty has fallen into an old wolf pit, while Coleman says he wants to talk with Andy. He also reveals he has discovered a coil of sharp wire with blood on it in Toby’s smokehouse. Learning of the men’s failure to find Betty, Annabelle begins to seriously consider what may have happened to Betty. When the men leave, Annabelle goes back to see Toby. With his beard now also cut, and in her father’s old clothes, he looks normal, new, and unrecognizable. Annabelle asks Toby that, if she had a way to do it, would he help clear up things about Betty. Toby says it depends on what she has in mind. She explains that he can hide in plain sight, joining the search pretending to be a man from Hopewell. It is a bad situation, Annabelle explains, but it must be done because it is only a matter of time before Toby is found. Toby then begins crying explaining that the last war (World War I) was supposed to be the last war, ever. He talks about the terrifying things he saw, such as men screaming like cows as they died, innocent civilians being killed, and the terror of trench warfare and killing other men. Toby believes himself to be a horrible person, but Annabelle knows otherwise. She tells him God will understand, while she hopes she will never have sons of her own.



## Analysis

Annabelle, who has already faced some very adult situations and challenges, now faces her greatest such situation and challenge yet. The disappearance of Betty immediately leads everyone, already suspicious of Toby, to accuse Toby of being complicit in Betty's disappearance. Annabelle's position in defending Toby earlier now becomes not only more difficult, but more desperate as well. Annabelle values honesty and trust like highly, and honesty and trust are utterly important as Wolk continues to argue in the novel. Annabelle so deeply trusts Toby that she brings him to hide in the family's barn, and provides him with everything from good clothes and good food to a haircut. This trust is repaid by Toby's confession of his wartime experiences –things which do not surprise but still trouble Annabelle. She recognizes now why Toby keeps to himself so much, because of the terrible things he has seen.

Annabelle recognizes here that, not only is growing up difficult, but life itself is difficult as well. Toby's confession demonstrates that becoming an adult, or growing older, does not mean the difficulties become any easier. Often, they become more challenging, such as in Toby's case. Annabelle's own difficulties continue as she attempts to understand the world of adults in which trust and honesty are so highly prized, but in Toby's situation, are not relied upon at all. Part of the refusal to trust Toby comes through the lies told about him –but also comes as a fact of desperation to find Betty. Between Betty's lies and Toby being different, it is only natural that the community should blame Toby for Betty's disappearance.

It is one of the confusing and difficult aspects of growing up, Annabelle realizes. In a larger sense, the adults of the community cannot be blamed for their immediate assumptions regarding Toby: they have a lifetime of adult experience to go off of, and have lost the trusting innocence of childhood which has allowed Annabelle to grow so close to Toby to discover the truth. Yet, at the same time, Annabelle's own parents are kind enough –and given where Toby lives –able to get to know who Toby actually is. They trust their daughter, who trusts Toby, and their own experience with Toby has never given them reason to doubt him.

Nevertheless, the fear that has gripped the community regarding Toby and Betty has to be confronted. The search parties believe they are confronting their fear by blaming Toby and trying to find Betty. However, Annabelle knows that the adults must confront their fear through reason and understanding. This, however, will not happen. In such situations, people who are different –and again, given Toby's situation fed by Betty's lies –are targeted as culprits. Wolk argues through Annabelle that people must be accepting of those who are different, allowing their trust and honesty to help make this possible. In a sense, Annabelle herself is confronting the fear that has plagued the adults of the community.

## Discussion Question 1

Why do the adults blame Toby for Betty's disappearance?



## Discussion Question 2

Why, despite danger of hiding Toby could mean for her and her family, does Annabelle chooses to hide Toby in the barn?

## Discussion Question 3

How and why does Annabelle choose to confront the fear that plagues the community?

## Vocabulary

askance, interjected, gnarled, threshing, shorn, bellows





# Chapters 18 – 22

## Summary

In Chapter 18, after Toby falls asleep, Annabelle leaves the barn, noticing that everything looks brighter, sharper, and more colorful. Back in the house, Annabelle helps her mother and grandmother prepare dinner, because the search party might come back for food. Coleman returns a short time later and explains that Andy confessed to sneaking off all the time with Betty, and that the two made plans to go down to Cobb Hollow to make trouble for Toby. Andy believes Betty would never go to the smokehouse in the rain, so when she was not in school, he went home. Coleman explains he will now dedicate his time to finding Toby. Annabelle's father returns with some of the men later to report Betty still has not been found and that Betty's mother has come in. They bring bloodhounds from Waynesburg. Annabelle thinks she knows where Betty is, but does not tell anyone. Instead, she goes to see Toby. Toby is beside himself for having unloaded his past on Annabelle and apologizes for it. Annabelle shrugs it off. She says that Toby must be the one to find and save Betty. Annabelle gives Toby her grandfather's old plaid hunting coat, but tells him he cannot bring his guns. This worries Toby, though he will not explain why he carries them. At Annabelle's urging, he follows her down from the loft.

In Chapter 19, Annabelle lies to her father, saying she just remembered something. She explains she learned from Coleman that Betty meant to go cause trouble for Toby at the smokehouse. She explains she believes Betty is in the old well near the old Cobb place ruins and the smokehouse, which is difficult to spot. As they drive to Cobb Hollow, Annabelle remembers sounds she heard in the night that seemed like animals, but now on reflection must have been a terrified Betty. Annabelle, her father, the constable, and five other men begin searching Cobb Hollow. The well is found, and Betty is found in the well, badly hurt. Toby blends into the group saying he is not local, but has come to help, and offers to be lowered down the well to secure Betty. Toby gives his name as Jordan. The Glengarrys, including Betty's mother, arrive a few moments later. Toby is lowered down. Betty screams, at which time Toby discovers she has been impaled by one of the pipes along the wall of the well. Betty screams again as Toby removes her from the pipe, grabs hold of her, and is raised out of the well. Betty is rushed to the hospital. The other search party members congratulate Toby for his heroism. As the men prepare to return home, Annabelle's father announces that Jordan (Toby) will be coming home with them.

In Chapter 20, back home, Annabelle's father invites Toby in to eat. Toby has no choice but to accept. He keeps his gloves on, pretending his hands are still very cold. He is introduced to everyone in the family. Annabelle suspects her mother sees through the ruse, but her mother says nothing. Annabelle's father explains the rescue to everyone. When the conversation turns to Toby's whereabouts, Annabelle's mother changes the subject. As much of the family heads off to bed, Annabelle's mother asks Jordan (Toby) where he is from. He explains he is originally from Maryland. Annabelle's mother then



announces she has hickory nut pie for dessert. The constable calls and reveals through Annabelle's father that Betty will live, but blames Toby for pushing her into the well. Annabelle says none of this is true, but her father explains he is merely passing along what Betty said. Annabelle realizes that Mrs. Annie Gribble, the eavesdropping telephone exchange operator, will already be circulating the rumors about Toby. It is then that Annabelle's mother gently confronts Toby. Toby admits who he is, saying his full name is Tobias Jordan, that he is a carpenter from Maryland, and that he did not push Betty down the well.

In Chapter 21, Annabelle defends Toby saying it was she who urged him to change his appearance, join the search, and hide in the barn. Annabelle's parents are surprised, but not angry. Annabelle's mother gets coffee and dessert out. Toby and Annabelle explain everything that happened in the past two days, including how Toby came to be in the barn, and how Annabelle figured out where Betty must be based on Andy's confession. Unfortunately, Annabelle's father reveals that the hunt for Tobias intensified. Toby continues to hide out in the hayloft. The next morning, Annabelle's mother reminds Annabelle that Toby, as good and likable as he is, is confused. She worries about Annabelle spending time with a man they do not really know and points out that her father has figured out that only one of Toby's three guns is in working condition. Annabelle defends Toby, saying Toby has his reasons that they do not understand. Her classmates give Annabelle a round of applause. She enjoys the day without Betty or Andy around. Annabelle spends much of the day figuring out how Andy can be made to tell the truth of how Betty came to be in the well.

In Chapter 22, Annabelle goes to Turtle Stone. The scars Betty and Andy scratched on the rock anger her. She thinks about how short life is compared to the march of time, thinks about history, and thinks about all the people in her life. She realizes that if she is like a note in a symphony, she must sound out for as long and as loud as she can. Back home, Annabelle discovers Toby helping her father and brothers in the haymow. Her father explains that all of Toby's belongings are hidden. Annabelle reveals she now has a plan. They will get Andy to confess by saying they have a photo of Betty throwing the rock, even though they do not. It will mean Toby had no reason to push Betty down the well. Suddenly, Henry and James come running forward with a hat and a camera, saying they know that Toby has been in the barn. Annabelle's father sends the boys up to the house, and says to let the constable worry about Toby. Annabelle, her father, and Toby realize they are short on time. Annabelle urges her father to go and confront Andy. Toby announces he is tired of the games and thanks Annabelle and her father for what they have done. He puts on his old hat, gathers his things, and heads out. Before he leaves, Annabelle's father tries to give Toby the camera, but Toby refuses.

## Analysis

Human kindness is never overrated, Wolk continues to argue in her novel. The human kindness that Annabelle shows Toby not only by sheltering and caring for him, but allowing him to unload emotionally (something for which he later apologizes and Annabelle kindly brushes off) helps her better understand Toby. After the truth comes



out, everything makes more sense regarding Toby. The trust they give one another – Annabelle in hiding Toby and Toby in revealing his past to Annabelle – leads both to a better understanding of one another. The reader should note carefully that Annabelle’s return home after Toby’s unloading is symbolically important. She notices things in the world seem lighter, sharper, and more colorful –evidence not only that she has made another step toward adulthood, but also that the unburdening of the past means it releases its hold on the present. Letting go of the past means being able to better live in the present. Annabelle has her own awakening in reaching out and understanding another human being down to his soul.

Fortunately, Annabelle’s advice helps the search party find Betty. Annabelle’s quickness of thought, and Toby’s thinness, save Betty from the well. Tragically, Betty’s brush with death is not enough to change her. Instead, it only makes her worse. She blames Toby for pushing her into the well. This lack of change horrifies Annabelle. In the importance of trust and honesty, Annabelle confirms to her parents that Jordan is Toby, and in the vein of trust and honesty, Annabelle’s parents willingly become part of the charade to hide Toby in plain sight. Nevertheless, they retain their perspective on Toby. While he is a good person, he is also a troubled man and needs real help. Like any good parents, they understandably worry about the time that Annabelle is spending with Toby. However, at the moment, he needs all the help they can give him to survive. They, too, know fear must be confronted.

Truth and honesty remain vital to Annabelle and her family who continue to protect Toby as a result. However, Betty’s lack of truth and honesty only inflame the situation, and cause the adults of the area to redouble their efforts to find Toby. Annabelle only uses the situation to further her defense of Toby. Adult situations affect her. Annabelle knows in her heart that people must be accepting of those who are different. Extending kindness to them is not a bad thing, and kindness itself is never an overrated thing in such situations. Annabelle knows that, without her or her parents, Toby would be totally alone. In the end, Toby decides to leave because he does not wish to bring trouble to those who have given him so much. Saying goodbye, Annabelle recognizes, is a hard part of growing up.

The reader should pay careful attention to Annabelle’s time at Turtle Rock. She has some very adult reflections on life in general, further evidence that not only is Annabelle getting older, but that she is confronting the hard truths of growing up as well. Annabelle realizes that her life might only be one of many, and might be very short compared to the extent of time, but her life must be made to be worth every second it is lived. She compares herself to a single note in a symphony, and determines that she will sound as loudly for as long as she can. She determines to do this because she has come to learn that, child or not, adult or not, comparatively short life or not, her life very much matters, and the things she does do have an impact on the world.

## Discussion Question 1

When Annabelle’s parents confirm that Jordan is Toby, how do they react?



## Discussion Question 2

What revelations does Annabelle have about life in general, and her own life while at Turtle Stone?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Toby decide to leave Annabelle and her family and how does Annabelle feel about this?

## Vocabulary

bloodhounds, winch, impaled, barrage, intensified, abashed, resilience



## Chapter 23 – 27

### Summary

In Chapter 23, Aunt Lily is angry and scared that Toby is in the barn. She calls the State Police barracks and tells them what happened. She then explains to the family that Coleman will be there by that evening. Aunt Lily says it is a shame that Jordan has left, but then asks about Toby's hat. She is told it has been left in the barn because it is so dirty. Annabelle remembers that Treasure Island must still be in the barn, so she sneaks out to retrieve it. She is stunned to discover Toby in the barn. Toby explains things have been changing too quickly, that he stopped by the smokehouse to gather some pictures, but then realized he was rude to have left without saying goodbye. He tells Annabelle he would have liked a daughter like her, shakes her hand, and leaves. As he leaves, she realizes he still hasn't actually said goodbye, and that he is only carrying two guns. She realizes that Toby has carried the guns so long not only out of fear, but because they are heavy. He has lightened his load, but Annabelle does not know why. Annabelle then collects Treasure Island, cries, and returns home.

In Chapter 24, at the house, Henry and James take the book back, saying it belongs to them. A small paper flutters out of the book, which Annabelle quickly grabs. It is a photograph of a fishing hole looking down from a bridge. She realizes Toby's vague reflection can be seen in the water. It is a self-portrait transformed by the water in which it was taken. In the morning, Annabelle learns from her mother that Officer Coleman could not find a trace of Toby in the barn, but did find the single, working gun in the smokehouse. With the hat not being in the barn, and photographs missing from the smokehouse, Coleman believes Toby is nearby and dangerous. Women and children have been ordered to remain in their homes while the men of the area are out looking for Toby with renewed energy. Annabelle and her mother decide to hide the gloves and coat that Toby wore pretending to be Jordan, since bloodhounds have been brought in.

In Chapter 25, Betty dies at 10:08 that morning of an infection that spread and could not be stopped. Annabelle begins to blame herself, saying she could have found Betty faster. Her mother tells her not to blame herself, because if it hadn't been for Annabelle, no one would have ever found Betty at all. Annabelle now knows that Toby is in serious trouble. The death is being called murder, which means Toby could be shot on sight. When Annabelle's father, Constable Oleska, and the dog handlers arrive, the news of Betty's death is given to them. Annabelle then puts in a call to the Woodberry residence, to speak to Andy. She then puts her plan into motion about the photograph to get Andy to confess. Andy does not see what good telling the truth now will do, and hangs up. Annabelle feels horrible. Her mother tells her that everything will soon be over, one way or another.

In Chapter 26, Mrs. Gribble spreads word of the photograph, having eavesdropped once more. The constable says proof must still be had. Oleska also explains that Toby's trail leads toward Ohio. If the trail goes into Ohio, Ohio State Police will take over. This



means things may go easier on Toby. Annabelle's mother begins preparing dinner. Henry and James, surprisingly, volunteer to help. Aunt Lily says the Lord has His reasons for bringing Betty home. That night, Annabelle sleeps in her grandfather's coat, the coat which Toby wore. Early the next morning, Coleman calls to relay that Toby has been shot and killed, having been caught beneath the Mahoning River Bridge. It is learned that Toby was shot while removing a gun from his shoulder after refusing an order to get down on the ground. Annabelle cannot imagine Toby would try violence, but Annabelle's mother explains that perhaps Toby simply had grown tired of living.

In Chapter 27, when Aunt Lily wakes up, she says she can't understand how Toby could not be terrifying to Annabelle. Henry explains it is because Toby was her friend. When Aunt Lily notices the coat and gloves that Annabelle is wearing as being similar to Jordan's, her grandfather jumps in and says his coat looks good on her. He explains he does not know why Jordan was wearing his coat and gloves, but that he does not care. Henry says that Jordan must have been Toby. Aunt Lily will hear none of it. Annabelle confirms Henry's theory. Aunt Lily struggles to make sense of this as Annabelle finds something in the pocket of the coat. It is a gold star in a gold wreath with an eagle, bearing the word "valor". It is a Congressional Medal of Honor with the name Tobias Jordan inscribed upon it.

Annabelle goes to visit the old wolf pits where many wolves once spent their final moments. She also visits Toby's smokehouse one last time and takes down all of his pictures to keep. She realizes the sap he used to pin them up meant either that he had nothing else to use, or meant to stay in the smokehouse forever. Back home, Annabelle and her brothers decide to begin using the camera in earnest. Betty's funeral comes and goes and Betty is buried. Annabelle and her family scrape together enough money to bury Toby on their farm. Aunt Lily declares she regrets passing judgment on Toby. For years, Annabelle visits Toby's grave overlooking the hollow, and wonders how many things the hollow has heard and seen over time. Annabelle comes to see the hollow as a dark place despite its beauty. She comes to reflect on how it was Wolf Hollow where she learned to tell the truth as well as to lie, and now tells Toby she does not blame him for fleeing the evils he had known, and thanks him for letting her try to right some of the wrongs in his life.

## Analysis

Toby's departure and temporary return destroy Annabelle. While Toby considers Annabelle something of a daughter, Annabelle sees Toby as a true friend. Their friendship is built on trust, honesty, and loyalty against community scandal caused by Betty. Betty and Toby emerge as polar opposites to one another in Annabelle's life. Betty brings drama, cruelty, and lies. Toby brings peace, kindness, and honesty. Betty cruelly kills wildlife while Toby photographs it. Betty causes other people trouble and involves herself in drama. Toby looks to help others as he can and to leave them alone otherwise. When Betty dies of infection, Toby himself should later be killed. Betty and Toby act as foils to one and other. Their differences extenuate their own features in a way that simultaneously develops both characters.



Toby's death devastates Annabelle. Annabelle has only wanted happiness for Toby, but Annabelle's mother believes that, perhaps, life had just become too much for Toby to take anymore. The kindness that Annabelle demonstrated to Toby may have been instrumental in his apparent decision to become a permanent resident in the smokehouse, a kindness denied to him by so many other people. At the same time, Annabelle's kindness in alerting her father to where she believed Betty to be ensured that Betty's final hours, cruel as Betty might have been, were not spent alone in a cold, dark well. The reader sees that kindness must sometimes extend to one's enemies. Even Aunt Lily comes to regret having passed judgment so quickly on Toby.

What is perhaps most devastating to Annabelle regarding Toby's death is the fact that the two guns he carried could not actually fire. Annabelle realizes the three guns he always carried were physical, symbolic representations of the emotional pain and heartache he carried around with him. His experience with Annabelle meant he could lighten his load because, through her acceptance, kindness, and understanding, he was able to let go of much of the past. The guns were therefore not only a measure of comfort and security, but almost like self-imposed chains for the past. Annabelle spends years reflecting on the past and thanks Toby for what she learned through her friendship with him.

## Discussion Question 1

Why is Toby's death so devastating to Annabelle, even though she knew that Toby could very well be killed by the posse hunting him down? Why does Toby's death trouble Annabelle when Betty's own death troubles her little?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Annabelle find it so difficult to make sense of Toby's death? What does Annabelle's mother have to say about Toby and his death? Do you believe she is correct? If so, why? If not, why not?

## Discussion Question 3

Why do Annabelle and her family decide to bury Toby on their farm? Why does Annabelle, in turn, continue to visit Toby's grave even many years after he has died?

## Vocabulary

vague, braying, frantically, proclamations, fractious, scrutinized, capricious



# Characters

## Annabelle

Annabelle McBride is the main character and narrator of Wolk's novel *Wolf Hollow*. Annabelle is twelve, pretty, kind, dark haired and dark eyed. She is an avid reader and deeply loves her family, especially her parents. Annabelle also becomes friends with Toby, in whom she recognizes a troubled soul that needs kindness, a kindness which she is happy to provide. Annabelle also comes to feel real fear for the first time in her life because of Betty's bullying, initially refusing and later deciding to tell her parents about things after Henry is harmed. It is also through Betty's bullying in which Betty eventually comes to target Toby after Toby defends Annabelle.

When Toby is accused of harming Ruth, Henry, and Betty, it is Annabelle who leaps to defend Toby, telling lies and telling the truth as necessary to protect him and clear his name. She even takes the grand step of hiding Toby in the barn and caring for him until the situation with Betty can be cleared up. Using reason and her knowledge of the area, Annabelle correctly determines that Betty must be trapped in an old well. However, Betty blaming her entrapment on Toby before she dies means Toby must flee the area. This breaks Annabelle's heart, and Annabelle is roundly devastated when Toby is killed. Through the tragedy of being forced to grow up so early and confront many adult situations, Annabelle comes to learn that her life matters, and that what she does truly makes a difference in the world around her.

## Betty

Betty Glengarry is a fourteen year-old girl who becomes the primary antagonist of the novel. Betty moves in with her grandparents, the Glengarrys, after her father presumably dies in World War II. Betty is cruel, unkind, and delights in bullying others at school though she has something of a romance with a local boy named Andy. She targets Annabelle not only because she lives so close, but because Annabelle seems to have everything Betty does not, specifically a whole family and wealth. Betty's repeated misfortunes- from contracting poison ivy to falling down a well while seeking to cause trouble for Toby in revenge for Toby defending Annabelle- do nothing to change her heart. Instead, Betty only becomes more cruel and blames her well entrapment on Toby. Betty ultimately dies of infection caused by the fall in the well, and her lies and death become the catalyst which directly leads to Toby's death.

## Toby

Tobias "Toby" Jordan is a recluse who lives in an old smokehouse at the edge of the property between the old Cobb place, the Glengarry place, and the McBride place. Formerly a carpenter from Maryland, Toby is a World War I veteran and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient who, decades later, still struggles with the horrors he





experienced in combat in Europe. It has left him a hollow, broken, and lonely man. He carries around three rifles as a symbolic manifestation of the weight of his pain and experience from the war. Slowly, over time, Toby becomes friends with Annabelle and her family, but it is with Annabelle that Toby becomes especially close.

He comes to see her as something of a daughter, and becomes very protective of her – especially against Betty. When Betty causes drama down in Wolf Hollow, and begins harming others, she blames Toby who finds himself an easy target. Toby is deeply moved by how much Annabelle cares for him and how she consistently defends him. In disguise, Toby participates in finding Betty, and is the one to actually pull Betty from the well. When Betty dies a few days later, Toby decides to leave in order to protect Annabelle and her family. Having grown tired of life, being chased, and being harassed, Toby decides to give up when he is caught. He ignores an order to drop to the ground by the men hunting him, and begins to pull up a rifle when he is shot to death. He is buried on Annabelle's farm, for he has no family of his own.

## **Sara McBride**

Annabelle's mother, Sara McBride, is a pretty brunette of twenty-eight years of age, who tends to the farm and domestic chores. She also raises the children and cares for her parents-in-law and sister-in-law, Lily. Sara is kind, patient, and very wise. She is especially close with Annabelle, and provides a wonderful womanly example to Annabelle, demonstrating toughness and femininity, courage and gentleness, love and compassion. Annabelle loves being compared to her mother, for she looks up to her mother as a perfect role model.

## **John McBride**

Annabelle's father, John McBride, is a kind, strong, and loving man who not only works the farm but does his best to involve himself in the lives of his wife and children. This shows through how close John is to his wife, Sarah, and how close John is especially to Annabelle. indeed, it is to her father that Annabelle first opens up about Betty's bullying, demonstrating the trust, loyalty, and closeness between father and daughter. John provides a perfect manly example to Annabelle, demonstrating not only masculine toughness but compassion as well.

## **Aunt Lily**

Aunt Lily is Annabelle's deeply religious, deeply skeptical aunt who has a strong opinion about almost everything. Her strongest opinion is her dislike of Toby, whom she claims is of brimstone. Aunt Lily does not initially believe that Betty is harassing Annabelle, but realizes her error when Annabelle shows off the bruises she received from Betty. Aunt Lily later comes to blame Toby for all of the wrongs caused by Betty, along with everyone else in the community. Ironically, Aunt Lily comes to respect Toby when he is dressed up as Jordan, and must admit she is wrong when she discovers this and Toby



later dies. In fact, Aunt Lily goes so far as to say that she was wrong to have judged Toby.

## Ruth

Ruth is Annabelle's closest friend. She is pretty, petite, unfailingly kind, and dainty. Although not a local originally, Ruth is fast accepted among the kids of Wolf Hollow. When Ruth loses her eye thanks to the rock that Betty throws, Ruth's parents decide to move away from Wolf Hollow, back to the town from where they originally came.

## Mrs. Taylor

Mrs. Taylor is the teacher at the school in Wolf Hollow. She teaches children of all ages, and does her best to keep on top of misbehavior. Unfortunately, she misses much of what transpires between Betty and the other students, especially Annabelle. It is Mrs. Taylor who later provides critical evidence that Betty and Andy could not have been in the school belfry to witness Toby throwing the rock below, for the belfry is locked up and Mrs. Taylor has the only key.

## Constable Oleska

Constable Oleska is the local law enforcement agent whose job is uneventful apart from an occasional drunk. This changes after Betty comes to town. Oleska does his best to remain objective when Betty blames everything that she has done –including injuring Ruth –on Toby. Oleska ends up calling in the Pennsylvania State Police when Betty goes missing and Toby is believed to be responsible for it.

## Officer Coleman

Officer Coleman is the point man for the Pennsylvania State Police who responds to Wolf Hollow and the disappearances of Betty and Toby. Coleman's authority and levelheadedness allow him to get to much of the truth that had previously been unknown –such as Andy and Betty wanting to cause trouble for Toby. Coleman helps organize efforts to find both Betty and Toby, and later has the difficult duty of reporting news relating to Toby's death.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Piggy Bank

Aunt Lily gives Annabelle a piggy bank for her eleventh birthday. It represents the first time that Annabelle ever told a lie to her parents. Annabelle accidentally breaks the piggy bank when she drops it trying to get out a penny to appease Betty's bullying. Annabelle buries the remains of the pig outside, and hides the money from the piggy bank in a boot under her bed. She allows her parents to believe that she has hidden the entire bank away.

## Camera

Annabelle's family wins a Kodak camera in a contest. Toby takes pictures with the camera. The camera, Annabelle realizes, allows Toby to shoot wildlife in a different way than with a gun, and brings her closer to Toby as a result. Toby finds the capturing of beauty through the camera to be a way of preserving, rather than destroying beauty as is done in wartime. The camera thus becomes the first real connection Annabelle and Toby have with one another.

## Jewelweed

Jewelweed is a flowering plant which comes to symbolize Christian kindness. Jewelweed is a natural way of treating poison ivy, such as the kind that Betty contracts. Annabelle is enlisted by her mother to help collect and transform jewelweed into a medicinal broth to be used on Betty. Annabelle's decision to be kind to her enemy, rather than refusing to help Betty, is emblematic of the strengths of the Christian faith Annabelle and her family practice.

## Beets

Annabelle and her mother pull beets from the ground which represent Toby. Beets appear tough and bitter on the outside, but on the inside are soft and sweet. Annabelle and her mother gather beets directly after visiting Betty, making it seem at first as though the beets might symbolize Betty. This turns out clearly not to be the case. The beets instead come to symbolize Toby, who by all appearances, should be strange and cruel, but in reality, is merely hurt and kind.

## Seasons Changing Sermon

At church, the Reverend Kinnell delivers a sermon about seasons changing, which in turn symbolizes the changes in Annabelle's own life. Annabelle is just beginning the



transition between childhood and what will be her teenage years, in turn leading to adulthood. Annabelle's age is not the only thing that changes, as her experiences with Betty and Toby force her to confront the darker side of human life, between war and Betty's cruelty. The changes Annabelle undergoes make her a stronger, better, and more capable girl.

## Wire

Andy and Betty string a wire across the path in the woods between the hill farms and Wolf Hollow hoping to injure Annabelle or her brothers. The wire ends up catching Henry in the head, slicing his forehead and causing him to bleed badly. This is too much for Annabelle, who decides to finally tell her parents about the trouble Betty is causing. Betty, however, lies and blames the wire on Toby.

## Turtle Stone

Turtle Stone is an old, large, turtle-shaped rock crisscrossed by beautiful lines of quartz that is a meeting place and area of folklore, legend, and mystery to locals. Turtle Stone is believed to have been a site of religious ceremonial significance to the Indians who once lived there. It is where Betty and Andy sharpen the wire that hurts Henry, and it is where Annabelle later visits and discovers the evidence of the act by the lines left by the wire on the rock—a destruction of beauty. Annabelle reflects on her life in particular, and on life in general at Turtle Rock.

## Three Guns

Three guns are carried by Toby throughout most of the novel, and symbolize the weight of the burden he carries inside based on his wartime experiences in Europe in World War I. The guns are also carried for safety and reassurance. Annabelle's father first notices that only one of the guns is operable, which in turns allows Annabelle to understand why the guns are being carried at all. When Toby leaves the area permanently, he leaves behind the working gun, demonstrating that his burden has been lessened by his time with Annabelle and her family, and primarily because of Annabelle's kindness.

## Cobb Well

The old Cobb well, now not much more than a hole in the ground bounded by stone, is where Betty falls in when seeking to make trouble for Toby. Betty becomes trapped in the well after her shoulder is impaled on an old pipe. Annabelle comes to suspect that the well is the only logical place Betty could be based on having heard strange animal sounds passing by on a previous night, and because Andy explained he and Betty sought to cause trouble for Toby, possibly even burning down his smoke shack.



## Self-portrait

A self-portrait is among the last photographs that Toby ever takes, and demonstrates his struggle to find himself, and that he is only just beginning to see himself again. The photograph, at first glance, seems to be nothing more than that of a fishing hole looking down from a bridge. However, Toby's vague reflection can be seen in the water, distorted by the ripples and transformed by the water itself. Toby's desire to actually look at, and photograph himself after admitting to Annabelle he believes himself to be a horrible person signifies that he is coming to accept himself as something other than a horrible person –but that the journey is incomplete because the reflection is not clear. Likewise, the fact that the reflection is to be seen in the water signifies greater acceptance of the self because water is traditionally seen as being cleansing, both literally and figuratively. A self-portrait in water means that Toby is becoming self-accepting because of the kindness and time spent with Annabelle, which in turn has cleansed him of much of his heartache.



# Settings

## Wolf Hollow

Wolf Hollow is a small town in Pennsylvania surrounded by hills given up to woodland and farming, and serves as the main setting of the novel. It is on a farm in the hills above Wolf Hollow that Annabelle and her family live, as well as Toby in his smokehouse, and Betty with her grandparents. Wolf Hollow, until Betty's arrival, is a friendly, quiet, and peaceful town where people consider neighbors to be friends and where the worst violence experienced is when someone gets drunk and needs to be taken home. Wolf Hollow is so-named for the wolf traps dug during a period of time when wolves grew in number, and became violent toward people. Despite the beauty of the place, Wolf Hollow has a dark side, just beneath the beauty, one brought to light through Betty's arrival in which prejudice and overreaction compel an otherwise welcoming town to turn against Toby. In many ways, Annabelle comes to see Toby as a wolf trapped by the hollow, with Toby himself being something of a hollow wolf thanks to his wartime experiences.

## Annabelle's Farm

Annabelle's farm is located in the hills beyond the woods above Wolf Hollow. It is a beautiful, warm, and welcoming place that Annabelle is delighted to call home. Annabelle's family not only grows crops and raises livestock, but also lives off the land and lives in coexistence with nature, using things like jewelweed to cure poison ivy and milkweed for its twine for the war effort. Annabelle's farm is frequently crossed by friends and vagabonds on their way to town or to other places. It is on the farm that Annabelle and Toby first become friends, and it is on the farm much later that Toby is buried.

## The Glengarry House

The Glengarry place is located just beyond Annabelle's farm, and is located near the smokehouse which serves as Toby's house. The Glengarry place includes not only the house in which the Glengarrys live, but the farmland they tend to as well. Betty is sent to live with her grandparents there, in the hopes that her grandparents will be able to deal with Betty because her mother cannot. Annabelle and her parents confront the Glengarrys at their place over Betty's cruelties, but Betty lies and denies everything. It is also at the Glengarry place that Annabelle and her mother bring jewelweed broth to cure the poison ivy that Betty contracts.



## **Cobb Smokehouse**

Toby squats in the old, abandoned smokehouse on the old Cobb property. The house and most of the buildings have either been destroyed or fallen into disrepair, but the smokehouse remains standing, well-hidden by brush and foliage. The smokehouse has sparse furnishing, with only one chair and a bed of pine boughs for sleeping, along with a few other small but rough comforts here and there. The walls, however, are covered with the photographs that Toby has taken, demonstrating perhaps his intent to remain living in the smokehouse forever.

## **Toby's Grave**

Toby's grave is located on Annabelle's farm, and features stunning views of Wolf Hollow and the surrounding area. Because Toby has no family, Annabelle and her family willingly bury Toby on their property. Annabelle visits the grave for years, praying and speaking to Toby, contemplating life, and looking out over Wolf Hollow. Annabelle comes to thank Toby for being a part of her life, for teaching her so much about life, and for allowing her to try to correct some of the wrongs in his life.



# Themes and Motifs

## Kindness

Human kindness is never an overrated thing, argues Lauren Wolk in *Wolf Hollow*. Perhaps most striking about Annabelle, her family, and the people of Wolf Hollow is how much they treasure and value simple kindness toward one another. Even when dealing with enemies, kindness is considered the Christian thing to do in many such situations.

In *Wolf Hollow*, neighbors are never only neighbors, but are considered friends; and strangers, though watched, are always treated friendly—especially those the McBrides allow to come across their farm. Rather than try to chase away Toby, or have the law root Toby out, Annabelle's family and the local residents allow Toby to squat in the smokehouse. Annabelle and her family (especially Annabelle) take to Toby and do everything from leaving him old clothes to providing him with meals. Annabelle particularly grows attached to Toby based not only on his kindness and protectiveness toward her, but his desire to shoot animals with a camera rather than with a gun.

Betty challenges the status quo in *Wolf Hollow*, initially by bullying other kids, and in particular, bullying Annabelle. When Betty comes down with poison ivy, despite her treatment of Annabelle, Annabelle consents to helping her mother prepare a broth of jewelweed to treat Betty's poison ivy. It is a Christian act of human kindness in which doing the right thing matters more than seeing an enemy suffer. Unfortunately, this does nothing to improve relations between Annabelle and Betty. Even at their worst, Annabelle chooses to be kind, deciding to tell her father about her well theory even though being stuck in a well may serve Betty right. Annabelle also does this out of kindness to Toby, seeking to protect him against lies accusing him of harming Betty.

Indeed, Annabelle's human kindness toward Toby proves to be tremendously important. Because of the kindness she shows Toby, she gains a protector who defends her against Betty. Because of the kindness she shows Toby in listening to his recounting of his experiences in Europe in World War I, Annabelle helps Toby to lighten some of the emotional load he is carrying. Because of Annabelle's kindness and faith in Toby, Toby is able to finally begin to find himself, to come to accept himself, and to come to settle down in a particular place, evidenced by his sole self-portrait.

## Fear

Fear must be confronted, not allowed to prosper, argues Lauren Wolk in *Wolf Hollow*. Fear comes in all different kinds of forms, and many of them are experienced for the first time by Annabelle in the novel. Annabelle challenges fear as best she can, often to important outcomes.

Up until Betty's arrival, Annabelle knows only limited kinds of fear—such as of getting in trouble for accidentally breaking her piggy bank, then hiding it to avoid getting in trouble.





Annabelle herself admits that Betty presents her with a new kind of fear in life. Betty makes demands of Annabelle to “give her something,” threats which Annabelle first tries to placate, then realizes placating will do nothing to help. Annabelle begins standing up for herself, confronting the fear that Betty means. When Betty steps up her game to harm Henry, Annabelle overcomes the fear of humiliation in telling her parents what is happening.

Annabelle comes to experience another kind of fear when Betty turns almost all of Wolf Hollow against Toby. Annabelle comes to fear not for herself, but for Toby. She goes to great lengths to defend him by word and deed –going so far as to hide Toby in the family barn in order to protect him. When Toby leaves and is pursued by a posse, Annabelle’s fears become even stronger that something bad may happen to Toby. Her fears here are totally outside of herself, and rest wholly with concern for the wellbeing of another person. It is a sweet and gentle thing to worry in such a manner, and demonstrates the size of Annabelle’s heart.

Annabelle also learns about the fears of others through Toby –both from his fears faced in the war, and from his fears faced long after the war in remembering the past and carrying it with him. Annabelle learns that Toby is afraid of himself and afraid to live life because of his past, but she comforts him and assures him he is not the monster he believes himself to be. Because Annabelle helps Toby to confront his own fears, he is able to begin living again –though this cut short just as it is beginning to bud by Betty and her lies.

## Honesty

Trust and honesty are utterly important, argues Lauren Wolk in *Wolf Hollow*. Trust and honesty are essential values, commitments, and ideals between people which ensure relations between them. Trust and honesty not only play a significant role in human interaction, but also in the events, situations, and circumstances that people either create, or find themselves a part of.

Annabelle knows from the start that she can trust Toby, especially when she sees him shooting animals with a camera rather than with guns. She sees in Toby a haunted by decent man who deserves compassion and friendship –things which Annabelle is happy to supply. Over time, she gains the trust of Toby, and because of this, his friendship and protection. Toby comes through for Annabelle by protecting her from Betty, and by helping out her family on the farm, such as when Anabelle’s father puts his back out. This trust also leads Annabelle to spending much time with Toby, and hiding him in the family barn when things with Betty get really bad. Toby agrees to hide in the barn not only as a matter of trust, but because someone he trusts so much asks him to hide there.

Annabelle herself also has a tremendous relationship of trust and honesty with her parents. Although she delays telling them about Betty until things get bad following Henry’s injury, the trust and honesty between her and her parents is telling in their



immediate decision to believe their daughter is telling the truth about Betty. They even confront the Glengarrys and Betty on behalf of Annabelle, and believe Annabelle even then in the face of the lies Betty tells, and the support Betty's grandparents give her version of events. Their decision to so loyally and unfailingly support Annabelle comes not only as a matter of family loyalty, but on the trust built by Annabelle's honesty and never having had a reason to doubt Annabelle before about anything.

Annabelle's family also maintains a balance of trust and honesty with Toby as a whole. While her parents are wary of Toby to the extent that they know relatively little about him, and know he suffers confusion and heartbreak from his wartime experiences, they trust Toby enough to allow their young daughter to spend so much time with him. They also trust him enough to continue to allow him to stay in their barn until such hiding becomes impossible. This loyalty comes by way of the trust and honesty with one another that exists between Annabelle's family and Toby, based on Toby never having given Annabelle's family a reason to doubt him.

## Growth

Growing up, and life in general, are difficult things, argues Lauren Wolk in *Wolf Hollow*. Indeed, *Wolf Hollow* as a whole may come to be seen as something of a coming of age experience for Annabelle as she finds herself thrust into the world of adults, their drama and their intrigue, and cruelty for the first time at the hands of Betty. Annabelle begins the novel as an innocent child, but ends the novel on the doorstep of maturation.

Annabelle introduces the novel's events many years after they have occurred by reflecting on the things she first learned how to do at the age of twelve, such as lie (done in order to protect Toby); and by reflecting on things she first realized at the age of twelve, such as having an impact on the world around her (her efforts to defend and protect Toby when few others will). Likewise, by the end of the novel, Annabelle explains she has learned how much telling the truth matters (such as the truth regarding Betty actually being responsible for all the things she accused Toby of doing), and about things from which escape, avoiding, or making better is impossible (such as Toby's wartime memories and the damages sown by Betty against Toby).

Having to experience Betty's utter cruelty and lies are things which Annabelle has never before had to contend with. Her life in *Wolf Hollow* has been, up until Betty's arrival, almost like a storybook fantasy of common decency and human kindness between friends, family, and neighbors. Betty's arrival disorders everything, and her decision to begin targeting Toby in order to turn the village against him in response to his defending Annabelle upends everything Annabelle thought she knew before. A rush to judgement, bigotry, and violence break out because of Betty's actions. Annabelle must suddenly reconsider the place she thought she knew, the people she thought she knew, and the life she thought she had been living.

Annabelle learns that the world of adults is not like the world of children because of all of this, and because of her coming to learn about Toby's wartime experiences. She



learns about the horrors he witnessed and participated in, and realizes just how difficult adulthood can be—especially for men in that day and age. It makes her pray that she will never have sons so they will never have to experience such horrors. Through protecting and comforting Toby on her own at first, Annabelle learns what it is like to actually be an adult, and to be responsible for caring for someone else in a way that is complete and total. Because of this, and because of all her experiences, Annabelle comes to recognize Wolf Hollow as a deeply flawed place.

## Acceptance

People must be accepting of those who are different, argues Lauren Wolk in *Wolf Hollow*. Wolf Hollow, proper, is full of people who look after one another and remain on good terms in even tough times. However, World War II, and Betty's arrival have both brought light to the fissures and fractures in Wolf Hollow that have been previously suppressed, glossed over, ignored, or unrealized. Among these is a tribal mentality of rallying against someone who is different given certain circumstances.

While most everyone in Wolf Hollow consider Toby to be harmless, they do find him strange, and do not hesitate to judge him for his reclusive ways. They know next to nothing about him, but are still not afraid to draw judgement and opinions about him. Only Annabelle and her family (excepting Aunt Lily) are forgiving and accepting of Toby's seemingly strange ways. Annabelle's family is on friendly terms with Toby, while Annabelle herself actually becomes friends with Toby. She accepts him for who he is, a man haunted by war trying to find peace with himself and in the world around him through his isolation.

World War II also brings to light bigotry against Germans—in some cases, bigotry that had been hidden or suppressed, and in other cases, bigotry newly arising out of anger over the German-caused war. When Ruth is hit with a rock, the conclusion most jump to is that whoever threw the rock was taking aim at Mr. Faas, because Mr. Faas is of German descent—even though Faas is a patriotic American citizen who loves his home in Wolf Hollow. Such feelings are said to have manifested themselves throughout the community, something which Annabelle struggles to make sense of. Annabelle's mother explains that such bigotry comes from anger over the war, and hurt over the loss of loved ones. Nevertheless, the community is not entirely accepting of who Mr. Faas is because Mr. Faas is from German ancestry and is different than most others in Wolf Hollow.

Perhaps the greatest demonstration of refusing to accept another for being different is Betty and her attitude toward Wolf Hollow. It is clear she is not happy to be in Wolf Hollow, and hates anyone who is either not miserable like she is, or anyone who is unlike her regarding her place in life. She resents Annabelle because Annabelle has a full family, and because she mistakenly assumes Annabelle and her family to be very rich. She enjoys picking on other kids as well, and enjoys turning the community against Toby without being willing to accept Toby, the community, or Annabelle and her family

for the way they are. Instead, she uses her hatred of those who are different from herself to fan flames of dissent and disharmony.



# Styles

## Point of View

Lauren Wolk tells her novel *Wolf Hollow* in the first-person, reflective narrative mode from the point of view of main character, Annabelle McBride. Annabelle, in the introduction, explains the events the reader is about to learn about occurred to her when she was twelve years old, indicating that Annabelle is relating these events at least some time –perhaps many years –after they have happened. Because of this, the narrator takes on a reflective tone, using phrases such as “The year I turned twelve (pp. 1-2),” and also interrupting the narrative to provide contextual information or to explain herself to present-day readers (such as in Chapter 13 when Annabelle explains her thought process rejecting accusations that had just arisen that Toby had anything to do with Betty’s disappearance). The first-person narrative mode not only allows Wolk to provide important contextual information through Annabelle, but allows the reader to gain exclusive and intimate insight into Annabelle’s thoughts and feelings –things which no one else would have had access to at the time. Likewise, the intense personal struggle Annabelle has with standing up to Betty and defending Toby when almost no one else will mean that no one else can tell her story except her.

## Language and Meaning

Lauren Wolk tells her novel *Wolf Hollow* in language that is gently poetic but with occasional large words. This is done for several reasons. Annabelle is a sweet, gentle, and observant girl who finds beauty in the world around her. Because she is able to sense a deeper beauty and understanding in and of nature, in her home, and in the people around her, the language she uses becomes emblematic of that knowledge through how she describes these things. For example, consider Annabelle’s description of Toby’s self-portrait in Chapter 24: “The photograph was marbled with rough handling and shadows, but I could still see the sun-struck surface of a fishing hole as if I were looking down from the bridge above it... But when I flattened it out, I could see a vague reflection in the water, of the man with the camera on the bridge. A self-portrait. The kind Toby would permit himself. How he looked, but secondhand, transformed by the water (pp. 249-250).” The occasional large words which dot the poetic language throughout the novel –words such as fractious, capricious, and askance –reflect Annabelle’s intelligence and love of reading.

## Structure

Lauren Wolk divides her novel *Wolf Hollow* into twenty-six consecutive, linear, numbered chapters preceded by an Prologue. The Introduction, told by Annabelle at some unspecified point after the events of the novel to come have happened, prepare the reader for what is to come. Annabelle lays out enigmatically that the story about to



be read is the story of her twelfth year –and it being the year she learned to lie and learned that what she did had an impact on the world around her. The following twenty-six chapters recount the events of the autumn of the year Annabelle turned twelve, tracing a story made dramatic and violent by way of Betty’s lies, and Toby’s unwitting inclusion in them. These events fulfill the mysterious clues Annabelle has dropped into the Introduction, such as the circumstances surrounding her learning to lie. The final paragraphs of the final chapter conclude much where the novel began, with Annabelle describing some of the other things she learned at age twelve –such as telling the truth –and noting that, for many years after Toby’s burial, she routinely visited his grave and reflected on the past.



## Quotes

The year I turned twelve, I learned how to lie.  
-- Annabelle (Prologue)

**Importance:** When the novel begins, Annabelle sets the stage for the events of the novel, reflecting on them many years after they have occurred. Those circumstances – World War II and a new, cruel girl named Betty coming to the hills, set the stage for a seminal period in Annabelle’s life. Annabelle’s innocence, much like the innocence of a generation of Americans, is shattered by real-world events.

The year I turned twelve, I learned that what I said and did mattered.  
-- Annabelle (Prologue)

**Importance:** As Annabelle continues to set the stage for the novel, she also relates that, at twelve, she learned the things she said and did mattered. This is not only a question of Annabelle getting older physically, but getting older emotionally and mentally as well. The weight of age will have an incredibly important bearing in the time to come—especially relating to Toby.

But I confessed to myself that I was afraid in a way I hadn’t known before.  
-- Annabelle (Chapter 2)

**Importance:** When Betty first confronts Annabelle in the woods along the path back up to the hills from Wolf Hollow, Betty demands Annabelle bring her something, else Annabelle will be beaten with a stick. If Annabelle refuses, Betty will hurt Annabelle’s brothers. Annabelle is deeply disturbed by this encounter, and explains it is a new kind of fear she now has. In the past, she has been afraid of things like war and afraid for her grandmother’s health, but now, Annabelle is afraid for her own safety, and the safety of her brothers.

For some people it doesn’t make any difference. He’s the nearest thing they have, and they want someone to blame.  
-- Annabelle’s mother (Chapter 8)

**Importance:** When Ruth loses her eye due to a thrown rock, Annabelle’s mother explains to Annabelle that she believes the rock was intended for Mr. Faas, his horses, or his apples. She explains that people who have loved ones fighting in the war, or who have lost someone in the war, want to lash out and blame someone close –such as Mr. Faas. When Annabelle protests, saying that Mr. Faas has lived all his life in the hills, Annabelle’s mother explains this does not make any difference because of the feelings people have.

I didn’t believe that Toby was crazy. Sad, maybe. Quiet. Odd, even, to choose a life alone, sleeping in a smokehouse, walking the hills day after day. But not crazy. Not dangerous-crazy.



-- Annabelle (Chapter 9)

**Importance:** When Annabelle's parents finally confront the Glengarrys and Betty about Betty's behavior, Betty blames everything on Toby. The Glengarrys believe Toby is crazy, and so have no doubt that he is to blame for Ruth's injury and James getting hurt. Annabelle is angered. She knows Toby is not crazy as he has been described.

I hoped Andy knew where Betty was... I couldn't imagine that Toby had anything to do with it.

-- Annabelle (Chapter 13)

**Importance:** When Betty goes missing, and Toby disappears, Constable Oleska believes Toby is to blame. Annabelle cannot imagine that Toby has had anything to do with Betty's disappearance, but Oleska's mind seems to be made up. Annabelle has difficulty sleeping, imagining what has become of Betty and what will become of Toby.

Nothing I can do about that.

-- Toby (Chapter 14)

**Importance:** Toby reveals some important information to Annabelle when she sets out to find him. He explains he was fishing and took shelter in the Turners' barn during the storm, and had no idea Betty was missing. He also reveals he witnessed Betty throwing the rock that hit Ruth, and that he tried but failed to take a picture of the act in progress. Annabelle wants to know why Toby did not come forward sooner, especially because everyone blames him for what is going on. Toby explains his life's philosophy: there is nothing he can do about what is going on. Annabelle calls this an odd and frustrating way of looking at the world.

Until now, I had spent all my time fighting the suggestion that Toby had done her harm... But now I began to wonder where she really was and why no one had found her.

-- Annabelle (Chapter 17)

**Importance:** As the search party fails to find Betty, Annabelle begins to consider that maybe something did actually happen to her. All along, she has not only believed Toby to be innocent, but that Betty has been playing a game or has run off. Now, Annabelle wonders if some actual harm has come to her.

Finding Betty wouldn't clear Toby, though.

-- Annabelle (Chapter 18)

**Importance:** With Andy's confession to Coleman about trying to cause trouble for Toby with Betty, Annabelle wonders now how to tell the truth about Toby himself. Yet, Annabelle realizes that presenting her evidence, or even finding Betty will not be enough to clear Toby. Betty has lied before, and will more than likely lie again.

Here was everything I'd feared. How was Toby supposed to prove something he hadn't done?





-- Annabelle (Chapter 20)

**Importance:** After Betty is saved from the well, she is taken to the hospital. There, she begins to tell people that Toby was the one who pushed her into the well after catching her snooping around his place, and in anger for being told on about throwing the rock and putting up the wire. Annabelle protests, saying Toby had nothing to do with any of it –but also knows what she has most feared has come true.

If my life was to be just a single note in an endless symphony, how could I not sound it out for as long and as loudly as I could?

-- Annabelle (Chapter 22)

**Importance:** When Annabelle visits Turtle Stone, she begins to think about how short life is compared to all of time and history. Annabelle compares herself to a single note in a vast symphony, and decides that she must make her life all she can. Even though she is only a single note, she will sound out as loud and for as long as she can to make a difference.

I don't know why he did what he did. Except maybe he had had enough of this world, Annabelle."

-- Annabelle's mother (Chapter 26)

**Importance:** When Toby is caught, he removes a gun from his shoulder and his killed. Annabelle cannot imagine that Toby would have ever intended violence against any of his pursuers. Annabelle's mother believes that perhaps he was looking for a way out, that he had had enough of the world after having seen such horrors and after having been treated so badly.