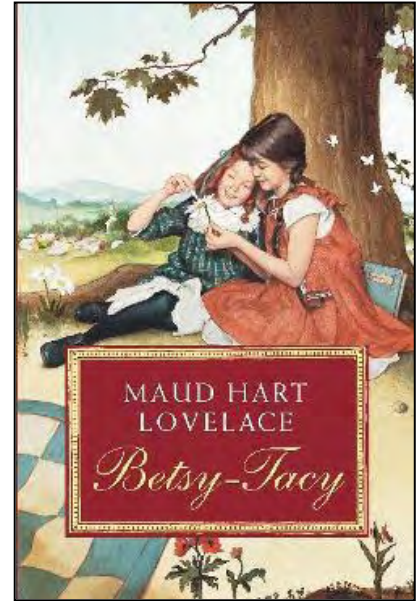


# *Betsy-Tacy*

*By Maud Hart Lovelace*

“It was difficult, later, to think of a time when Betsy and Tacy had not been friends. Hill Street came to regard them almost as one person” (*Betsy-Tacy*, p. 1). But as the series begins, the girls are strangers, and an unfortunate misunderstanding at their first meeting threatens to keep them apart. But fate intervenes in the person of Betsy’s mother, and the two five-year-olds become inseparable. The girls have many adventures in this first book, and it is here that Betsy’s storytelling gets its start. Then Tib moves into her “chocolate-colored house” and becomes the third person in the “immortal trio.” Published first in 1940, *Betsy-Tacy* is a gentle introduction to the warmth and timeless nature of this series.



## Chapter 1.

Why did Tacy run away?

How did Betsy react to this?

## Chapter 2.

How did Betsy feel when she learned Tacy’s name?

What is unusual about the Rays’ bathtub?

What is Tacy’s problem?

## Chapter 3.

The “cloud story” is our first introduction to Betsy’s story-telling gift. Do you ever tell stories like this?

Can you share a fantasy story that you have made up or have been told by someone else?

## Chapter 4.

Betsy’s mother was a firm believer in people having “private places.” Do you have one? Can you tell us about it?

How do Betsy’s and Tacy’s “treasures” (stones and moss) differ from our childhood treasures today?

What “loose end” does the author leave us with regarding the chicken story?

## Chapter 5.

Compare and contrast Betsy and Tacy on the first day of school.

How does their recess compare with your recess time?

Have you ever had a “queer frightened lump” inside when you did something wrong?

Compare and contrast the causes of Betsy’s crying with those of Tacy’s crying.

#### Chapter 6.

Describe Mrs. Ray and Mrs. Kelly.

Discuss the idea of a milkman delivering milk. (This comes up later when we read about the baker's boy delivering baked goods to people's homes.)

How is the Milkman Story magical?

#### Chapter 7.

Do/did you play with dolls? Paper dolls?

Are/were your dolls similar to Betsy's and Tacy's? Or different? How?

How do you think Betsy and Tacy feel when they mystify their older sisters?

#### Chapter 8.

Do you color Easter eggs? Do you "play" with them the way Betsy and Tacy did?

How could anyone "play" with hard-boiled colored eggs?

Was it unusual for Baby Bee to be so sick and die? What might have been her illness?

How does Betsy help Tacy deal with Bee's death?

#### Chapter 9.

What is the "foreshadowing" at the beginning of this chapter?

What is "dinner time" for the girls? What is the evening meal called?

How does George react to the girls' plan to buy the house?

#### Chapter 10.

Describe some differences between "playing" today and "playing" as Betsy and Tacy played.

How does one "go calling?" What are "calling cards?"

Who are Mrs. Vanderbilt and Mrs. Astor?

Who seems to be the decision-maker between the girls? Why do you think this is?

#### Chapter 11.

Describe the girls' fascination with Milwaukee. Why do you think they are so entranced with the name? What, if anything, does it make YOU think of?

How does Tom's arrival change the dynamics of the girls' game? Why is this?

#### Chapter 12.

What do you think Mr. Ray's surprise is?

Why is Betsy so disgusted with Julia?

Why did Betsy want to get away by herself?

How does Tacy comfort Betsy? Why does this surprise Betsy?

#### Chapter 13.

Two important things happen in this chapter. Why is climbing the Big Hill so important?

Describe the other important event. Why is it important?

#### Chapter 14.

What is Tib doing when the girls first catch sight of her?

What is rather unusual about Betsy's and Tacy's first meeting with Tib?

How do friendships usually begin today? How is it different with Betsy, Tacy and Tib?

What astounding remark does Tib make about Milwaukee?

### **GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS BOOK:**

Describe how family is an important theme in this book.

How is friendship another important theme?

What ideas do you get about life in the late 1800s in Minnesota?

Does the last page leave you wanting to read more? Why or why not?

Do you have a best friend? Two best friends? How are your friendships similar to that of Betsy, Tacy, and Tib? How are they different?

### **WRITING ACTIVITY:**

Write a short story in which you tell an incident that involved you and a best friend.

Write a paragraph in which you describe some new idea you found in this book.

### **DRAMA:**

Choose a scene or chapter from the book to act out with a partner.

Your group may contain up to four members if needed. You may use simple props and costumes if you like. Your presentation should not exceed five minutes.

