

"because of winn dixie" by kate dicamillo essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Because of Winn-Dixie is a novel about a girl and her dog, whose names are Opal and Winn Dixie, respectively. While dog lovers will enjoy it most, the novel also touches on an array of topics from friendship, love, single parenthood, moving on, and even alcoholism.

The power of Littmus Lozenge started when Miss Franny Block told Opal and Amanda the origin of the sweet and sad candy concoction that Miss Franny's great grandfather built. Eating the candy, Opal could taste the sweetness of it, a combination of root beer and strawberry and something else, something that tasted sad (DiCamillo 113). Even Opal's father said that it tasted a "little melancholy" (121). That "sad" taste, it turned out, was the power of Littmus Lozenge. Littmus Lozenge was created by Littmus W. Block as a reminder that life is a mixture of happiness and sadness, of sweetness and bitterness. Opal knew exactly- her mother left them, they moved to a new town where she didn't know anybody, and the Dewberry boys' constantly teased her. Yet, in spite of all the sadness in her life, Opal had some wonderful things that cheer her up- finding a friend in Winn Dixie, Miss Franny, and Gloria Damp, and most importantly, having her father beside her.

At the start of the story, Opal was not friends with the Dewberry boys- Dunlap and Stevie. They would simply ride their bikes behind Opal and whisper things behind her back (DiCamillo 60). One time, while riding her bike, Winn Dixie ran to a yard and the Dewberry boys told Opal that she should get her dog lest the witch living in the house would at Winn Dixie. Opal often called the boys " bald-headed babies" for they had shaved heads

(62). What Opal did not know at that time was that the so-called witch was in fact a very friendly old lady who became friends not just with Opal but Winn-Dixie, too. One time, after finishing her work at Gertrude Pets and visiting Miss Franny at the library, she saw Stevie and Dunlap. Stevie started to tease her and Dunlap told him to "lay off her" (89). But Opal was no longer listening. Her emotions got her and started yelling at the two boys. When she told Gloria Dump, the old lady became her friend, about it; Gloria told her that perhaps it was the boys' way of befriending her, that Opal should not judge them without even knowing them first. Opal was not convinced. It took a taste of Littmus Lozenge and her's father's words that Opal's feeling towards the boys changed. The next time Opal saw the boys, instead of sticking her tongue at them, she waved (116). And Dunlap, waved back, and said two words that changed their relationships- " Hey, Opal" (117).

It is interesting how Gloria and Miss Franny helped Opal, in their own subtle way, become friends with Dunlap and Amanda, respectively. Gloria was a former alcoholic who whom Opal befriended. On the other hand, Miss Franny was the librarian at the Herman Block Memorial Library where Opal always visits to borrow books. Gloria and Opal became unexpected friends after Winn Dixie loitered in her yard. Opal was simply a child yet she chose to become friends with adults. It goes to show that friendship is not limited to age. She could have chosen to befriend kids her age like Amanda and Dunlap but Amanda was rather snobby and Dunlap was always picking on her.

Opal was content on becoming friends with the two older women but perhaps the two thought that Opal could also be friends with people her age. When Gloria asked Opal why she resented Dunlap and his brother, Opal said that it was because they were always picking on her and that the boys called Gloria a witch. Gloria said that maybe it was the boys' way of trying to win her friendship and that judging others without giving them the benefit of doubt is not good. Opal gave it some thought and in the end, she realized that Gloria was right. In the case of Amanda, Opal described as "pinch-faced," turned out to just a sad girl who missed her brother who died in a drowning accident. Amanda, like Opal, spends her time in the library. One time, when Miss Franny was telling a story to Opal, she invited Amanda to listen along. Although the two girls were still not going along well, it was a start. Then Opal found out about the drowning accident. Together with Gloria, they set a party. It was Miss Franny who told Opal to invite Amanda. Gloria was the one who convinced Opal to invite the two boys.

Opal was missing her mother so her father told her 10 things about Opal's mother. Opal memorized these descriptions, a mix of good and not-so-good traits, so she could remember her mother: an alcoholic, a poor cook, a fast runner, funny person, had freckles and red hair, had a green thumb, a good storyteller and listener, loved astrology, resented to being a preacher's wife, and despite her leaving them, loved Opal very much.

Works Cited

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DiCamillo, Kate. Because of Winn Dixie. Massachusetts: Candlewick Press, 2000.