

Ellen Espeland
Johnston Lawson Elementary

Dear Kate DiCamillo,

Wait just one minute. Did India Opal Buloni just say that scruffy old carpet looking dog was hers? If I saw a dog like that running around I wouldn't take it in to be part of my family. Would you?

Reading your book *Because of Winn-Dixie* taught me that everyone needs to be loved by someone even "Melvin" the boy in my class who always has late work. Your character Gloria Dump was said to be a witch because no one really knew her. Even her name sounds terrible. She just seemed unlovable. Until Winn-Dixie ran into Gloria's yard, that's when Opal realized that Miss Gloria Dump wasn't really a witch. "Melvin" and I both have the same piano teacher. When I'm leaving and he's coming in he always says hello to me. That's when I realized that "Melvin" wasn't as weird as I thought he was.

At school "Melvin" is kind of a pest because he always wants to know what's going on. Most of the kids think he's weird and disgusting. At time he is a little disgusting. Most of the time "Melvin" is just trying to live his life one day at a time. Even though he does get picked on by the other kids. That's just life.

Okay Opal go ahead take Winn-Dixie into your family. I understand now. After reading the book I just might help those dogs running around my neighborhood by taking them to the Animal Rescue League. Even though they do look scruffy and they might look like old carpet. I just might. BARK!

Sincerely,
Ellen Espeland

Copyright © The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Used by permission.