



Because of Winn-Dixie

Kate DiCamillo



Chapter One

❖—My name is India Opal Buloni, and last summer my daddy, the preacher, sent me to the store for a box of macaroni-and-cheese, some white rice, and two tomatoes and I came back with a dog. This is what happened: I walked into the produce section of the Winn-Dixie grocery store to pick out my two tomatoes and I almost bumped right into the store manager. He was standing there all red-faced, screaming and waving his arms around.

“Who let a dog in here?” he kept on shouting.
“Who let a dirty dog in here?”

At first, I didn't see a dog. There were just a lot of vegetables rolling around on the floor, tomatoes and onions and green peppers. And there was what seemed like a whole army of Winn-Dixie employees running around waving their arms just the same way the store manager was waving his.

And then the dog came running around the corner. He was a big dog. And ugly. And he looked like he was having a real good time. His tongue was hanging out and he was wagging his tail. He skidded to a stop and smiled right at me. I had never before in my life seen a dog smile, but that is what he did. He pulled back his lips and showed me all his teeth. Then he wagged his tail so hard that he knocked some oranges off a display, and they went rolling everywhere, mixing in with the tomatoes and onions and green peppers.

The manager screamed, "Somebody grab that dog!"

The dog went running over to the manager, wagging his tail and smiling. He stood up on his hind legs. You could tell that all he wanted to do was get face to face with the manager and thank him for the good time he was having in the produce department, but somehow he ended up knocking the manager over. And the manager must have been having a bad day, because lying there on the floor, right in front of everybody, he started to cry. The dog leaned over him, real concerned, and licked his face.

"Please," said the manager. "Somebody call the pound."

"Wait a minute!" I hollered. "That's my dog. Don't call the pound."

All the Winn-Dixie employees turned around

"Take one disarmingly engaging protagonist and put her in the company of a tenderly rendered canine, and you've got yourself a recipe for the best kind of down-home literary treat. Kate DiCamillo's voice in *Because of Winn-Dixie* should carry from the steamy, sultry pockets of Florida clear across the miles to enchant young readers everywhere."

—KAREN HESSE, Newbery Medal-winning author of *Out of the Dust*

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