

Pickled Potato Chips

Based on the backstory of Earl and Opal from the comic Pickles

by Brian Crane

by Charlotte H. (age 15)

Earl had grown tired of harvesting potatoes, he would rather just be sitting on his soft gray-greenish couch watching *The Lone Ranger*, with a bag of nice, salty sliced potato chips. Instead he was hand picking lumpy unsellable potatoes from the field. He was previously demoted from tractor duty when he got bored and did zig-zags instead of the route he was specifically told to take through the field.

Just then, he spotted the Slater family walking by and immediately laid eyes on Opal. Although he was just a fourteen year old boy, he felt certain that Opal Slater was his one and only true love. Earl's older brother, John walked up to him trying to get his attention. His brother was confused for only a moment, then he realized why Earl was so distracted. When he noticed Opal was there, he relished in delight and called out, "Hey Opal, Earl wants to talk to you!" Earl went from being in a daze to full on panic. Sure, he had talked to her before, but those conversations were always planned out in his head over and over. He had to quickly think of something subtle to say that would not raise any suspicion. As Opal walked over, Earl said, "Hey opal, I was just wondering if I could buy some pickles from you?" Her family owned a pickle farm not too far from there. Opal smiled and said, "Well sure Earl. Would you like me to bring them to ya?"

Earl said "Yes, yes that would be great."

Opal said, well see you then. As she walked away, Earl sighed with relief but then had a sudden realization. He would have to muster up about \$1.50 to buy the pickles and his father would never give him such an outrageous amount of money just for a dozen pickles. How would he convince him?

Later that day, Earl finished his work and calculated that he had earned 50 cents, but today was pay day so he would be getting paid \$3.50. Of course his parents would make him put the money in his lock box under his bed. Earl was determined to get the pickles and see Opal once more. He only saw her every Sunday at church, but this was about to be a second encounter and Earl had practiced what he was going to say a million times. This time was going to be perfect.

Earl opened the door to see Opal's cheery expression. "I made sure I got the freshest ones we had," Opal said.

"Thanks Opal," he said, handing Opal the \$1.50.

"No problem, I quite enjoy going for walks," says Opal.

Earl knew exactly what to say to her and he said, "well, maybe you and I can go for a walk sometime."

"I would love that, it gets lonely sometimes, being my parent's only child," she said.

"How 'bout tomorrow?" Earl said.

"Yes, I will see you then," Opal said.

He slowly closed the door and put the jar of dill pickles in the fridge. Later, he wrote in his journal June 8th, 1954. I just got some pickles from Opal and I am going to cherish those pickles. Opal showed up around nine o'clock wearing a bright red dress and a red headband. Earl had

his regular brown dirty overalls which he wished now he had bothered to give it a nice scrub. They walked down to the creek and all around town. They had been walking for so long and both of them had grown tired and hungry. As luck would have it, Earl had previously remembered to bring food for the walk with Opal. They sat down on some rocks and pulled out pickles and some potato chips. Earl had hastily stuffed them into his bag. The pickle juice had mixed with Earl's potato chips. Earl and Opal started eating the pickle chips.

"Oh my," said Opal, "these are actually really good."

"Yeah I was thinking the same thing," said Earl. Huh, I guess potatoes and pickles do go well together," said Earl.

Opal smiled and reached for Earl's hand and said, "Yes they do."



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