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Where the Red Fern Grows, Wilson Rawls

Dear Wilson Rawls,

I enjoy reading and have read many books that have “spoken” to me but the novel I loved the most was your heartbreaking story *Where the Red Fern Grows*.

Sometimes I take things in life for granted, like my dog. I got my dog at a gas station, which is unusual because most people have to get their dogs at a pet shop or the pound. There were some people there who couldn't take care of her and were trying to find her a new home so we decided to take her home with us. She was covered in stick-on fleas, had gum at the bottom of her chin and was starving. My mother said we could keep her only until we found her a home but soon we fell in love with her and kept her. Her first name was Dixie but then we changed it to Daisy. Although I didn't work to earn money to buy her like Billie did, I still try to take care of her.

I don't often enough realize how important she is in my life. She is one of the many reasons why I smile every day and have joy in my heart! However, until I read your story I had never thought, “What if one day Daisy wasn't there in my life anymore?” Your book helped me to open my eyes and see that I need to love my dog as much as possible and not take her for granted, along with an even greater lesson I'll cherish forever.

Like the character Billie, I have grown a loving bond with my dog. The breathtaking story made me cry for hours but showed me that to grow such an amazing love for a dog, and to have him/her feel so close to you that it is willing to place its life before yours is miraculous. When Old Dan fought off that mountain lion to save Billie's life, told and taught a lesson that I will never forget.

After reading *Where the Red Fern Grows*, I have really changed the way that I now care for my dog. I now recognize and value the loving partnership that a man and dog can develop. As they say, “A dog is a man's best friend,” and in your story, and in my life, that is completely true!

Sincerely, with respect and admiration,
Skye Michel