

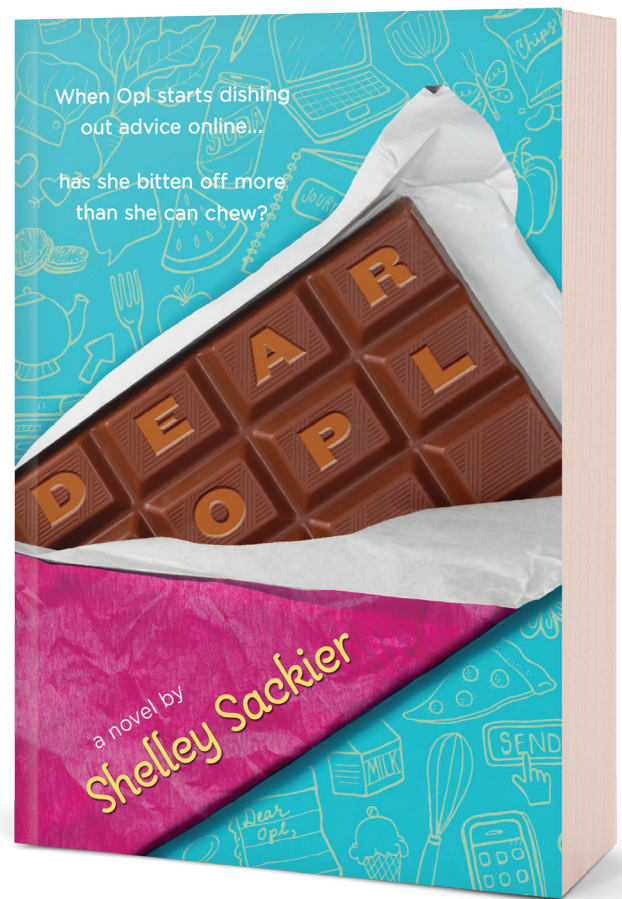
# DEAR OPL by Shelley Sackier

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### When Opl starts dishing out advice online...has she bitten off more than she can chew?

*My name is Opal, but I don't spell it that way. I figure if Mom wants me to lose weight, maybe she'll perk up if I drop the "a" and shrink my name twenty-five percent.*

Eighth-grade Opl is tired of her mom's ridiculous diets, the new "healthy food" at school, and jeans that won't fit. So she starts a blog to help cope with her insecurities. But the last thing she expects is its sudden popularity, and she soon finds herself replying to fan letters and giving advice. Will Opl finally figure out what she's truly hungering for? Or will she continue to ignore her own advice?



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

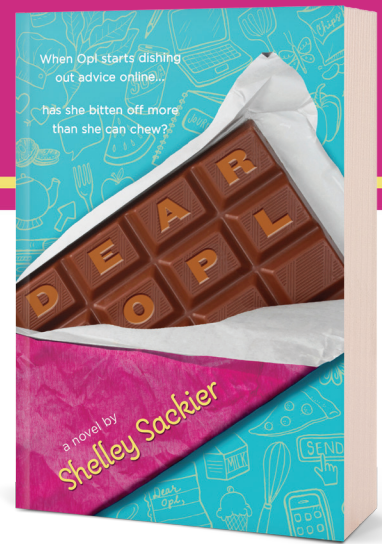
Shelley Sackier is an author and musician, and pens a weekly humor blog at [PeakPerspective.com](http://PeakPerspective.com) with illustrator Robin Gott. She lives in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.



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1. As the novel begins, readers meet Opl in her pantry. After reading the first chapter, list three emotions Opl experiences while hunting around for the Oreos. Also, what is her biggest worry as she rifles through the pantry?
2. Opl's mom wants her to lose weight, and Opl is struggling to follow through with her mom's directions. Can you think of a time when you were told to do something and you refused or put up a fight? What made you so resistant?
3. What kind of relationship does Opl have with G-pa? How does Opl feel about her grandfather? List two instances from the novel in which Opl opens up to him and shares her emotions.
4. Opl's mom suggests Opl should begin writing a blog. Why does her mom offer this idea? How did Opl end up using the blog? Have you ever read a blog? And if so, what was it that attracted you to it?
5. Opl often feels either ignored in school or bullied by her classmates. List two examples where this happened in the book. How do you think she handles each situation? Have you ever felt bullied or ignored? What did you do about it?
6. Summer is Opl's best friend and oftentimes doesn't share the same opinion as Opl on food, people, or how to behave. Describe two situations in which Summer feels differently than Opl does. Do you think friends always need to agree?
7. Opl loses Summer's friendship because of a blog post and searches to find a way to make amends. Have you ever lost a friendship because of something you did? What did Opl do to win back Summer's respect and friendship?
8. List four character traits you find likable in Opl. What is a character trait of Opl's that you don't like? Do you see any of yourself in Opl? Explain your answer.



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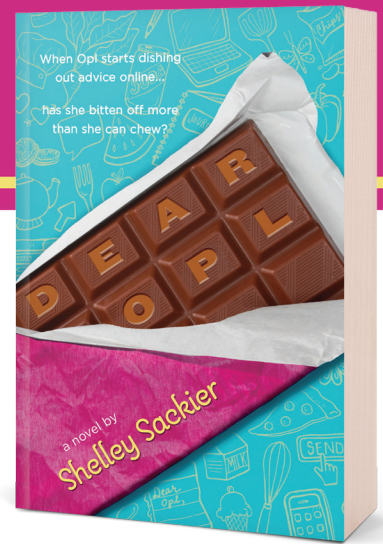
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9. Who is Rudy? What does he represent in the story? What does Opl believe she and Rudy have in common, as far as how her mother sees both of them?
10. Who is Aura? How does Opl feel about the people in her yoga class? What does she realize about herself in class? Is there somebody in your life who is similar to Aura? Why do you like him/her?
11. Opl's pediatrician tells Opl that she needs to make some changes in her life so that she will grow healthier. What are some of those changes? What changes do you think you could make in your life so that you could grow healthier?
12. Beth tells Opl that her mental health is just as important as her physical health. What are some activities that people do to feel healthier mentally?
13. How do you think Opl feels about Ollie? Do you think she does enough to figure out why he was dressing the way he does? What would you do if you found out your brother, sister, or friend was being bullied?
14. How do you think the story would have ended if Alfie Adam had shown up at the Grand Opening and taken over as Master of Ceremonies?
15. If Opl were a real person, would you read her blog? Would you want to be friends with her? Why or why not?



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# DEAR OPL by Shelley Sackier DISCUSSION GUIDE



## Cooking with Opl and G-pa

Follow the recipes for some healthy—and delicious!—fun straight out of *Dear Opl*.

### Frozen Fruit Smoothies



#### Ingredients

- 1 ripe banana
- 1 cup of frozen fruit: mango, blueberries, or strawberries
- 2 heaped tablespoons of vanilla yogurt
- 1 small handful of quick cook oats (not instant)
- 1 small handful of mixed nuts
- 1 glass of soy, almond, or low-fat milk

Combine all of the ingredients in a blender, and blend until smooth.

### Chopped Salad



#### Ingredients

- 4 green onions
- ½ cucumber
- 1 handful fresh basil leaves
- ½ head small red leaf lettuce
- ½ heart romaine
- 1 small diced avocado
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ⅛ teaspoon sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup chopped toasted walnuts (optional)

Chop and put all of the vegetables together in a bowl. Make a well in the middle and add the olive oil, red wine vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper. Sprinkle with nuts and mix everything up. Serve with warm bread and cheese.

\*Salad inspired from [www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/vegetables-recipes/everyday-green-chopped-salad/#5mDpqMR0m03AS2cY.97](http://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/vegetables-recipes/everyday-green-chopped-salad/#5mDpqMR0m03AS2cY.97)



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## Cooking with Opl and G-pa

### Vegetarian Stir-Fry

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#### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and julienned
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded, and julienned
- ½ cup thinly sliced red onion (optional)
- 1 cup sliced yellow squash or zucchini
- 1 cup small broccoli florets
- 1 baby eggplant, cut into chunks
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup snow or sugar snap peas
- Stir-fry sauce (recipe below)



#### Directions

1. Prepare all vegetables so they're ready to go in the pan.
2. In a large skillet (or a wok if you have one), heat toasted sesame oil over medium high heat until almost smoking. Add the peppers and onion while stirring constantly. While continuing to stir, add successively the squash, broccoli, eggplant, garlic, and about 1 cup of the stir-fry sauce. Cook, stirring, constantly for 4 minutes. Sprinkle in the salt and pepper.
3. Stir in peas and remove from heat. Serve immediately with white or nutty brown rice.

### Basic Stir Fry-Sauce

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- 2 ½ tablespoon cornstarch
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ cup soy sauce
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 cups vegetable broth for savory or orange juice for a sweeter sauce
- 1/4 cup vinegar (apple cider or rice wine work great)

Combine all ingredients in a large glass jar with a lid screwed tightly on. Shake. Add small amounts to your stir-fry as desired. Stir until slightly thickened.



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