

Platonic Love in Nicholas Sparks’ *The Best of Me*

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Abstract

Love is antidote of all sufferings and our problems. A strong love can create a healthy mind which makes a healthy body and life. Platonic love is metaphysical and spiritual. It is beyond biological. The aim of the paper focusses the platonic love of two people in The Best of Me which revolves around Dawson Cole and Amanda Collier, the hero and heroine of the novel. The novel discusses the childhood memories of the two adults. The two had a deep and meaningful connection as teenagers before being pulled apart by the differences in their socioeconomic status. As they get back together after twenty years apart to attend their mutual friend’s funeral in their hometown. Amanda and Dawson discover that their bond endures as they spend more time together. However, Amanda is married and having children and faces the difficulties in life. Amanda and Dawson fight for their feelings for one another throughout the novel even they know it is inappropriate and possibly harmful to go for a romantic connection. Despite this, Amanda and Dawson still cherish their friendship because they know it provides them with the love and support they need to move forward in life. Through this novel the study tries to explore the complexity of platonic love, highlighting its importance and power.

Keywords: Relationship, Platonic Love, Romance, Complexity.

Love is universal and omnipotent. Without it, the existence becomes fruitless. The study revolves around the essence of love on the characters in *The Best of Me*. A strong emotional bond that exists between Amanda and Dawson in the novel despite their social and cultural differences. In the novel, Nicholas Sparks describes the reunion of Amanda Collier and Dawson Cole, two high school students have united psychologically after a long gap. Despite the difficulties, they are experiencing their first relationship, they discover when they get back in touch that their affections for one another really not faded. However, the novel also explores the theme of platonic love, as Amanda and Dawson face the reality that they may not be able to act on their romantic feelings. This paper discusses the idea of platonic love in *The Best of Me*.

The novel describes the relationship between Amanda Collier and Dawson Cole, the two major characters in the novel. They are schoolmates. They remember their school days when they meet each other in their friend’s funeral. And they regain their high school memories. While studying in the high school, Amanda and Dawson are attracted to each other but a string of unfortunate incidents ends in their union. Their social status separates them. Amanda moves on to live in a different life. The importance of timing is the crucial

factor in Amanda and Dawson's relationship. Their paths diverge throughout life and they spend many years leading separate lives. They both hold to their shared memories of one another and their love for one another never fades. Their reunion demonstrates how crucial timing is to their renewed romance. Both of them have moved on, Amanda is now married and lives with her husband and children. In spite of their differences in life, they both possess a strong sense of connection and reactivated feelings for one another. However, they are forced to recognize that this is not the best moment for them to pursue a love connection. In their school days, Amanda and Dawson's love initially grows and now it demonstrates the power of recollections. Despite coming from different families and histories, they become quite close emotionally. Their love is pure, innocent, and untainted by the complexities of adulthood. The meeting reunites them. The two come to accept the fact that their love is still standing over a period of time. Amanda and Dawson symbolize platonic love because they remain loyal to one another and show respect for one another despite their complex feelings for one another.

The course of events led to a deep affection that is preventing them from forgetting one another. Despite being apart for more than twenty years, their memories of one another are so vivid that they maintain a close bond. Their love is greatly influenced by the strength of recollections from the past. Even though they are both middle-aged in addition to spent different lives with different families, they still have a soft spot in their hearts for the childhood memories they share. They both experience the force of their recollections even though they don't engage in a romantic engagement. They move back in time to a period of their lives when they were in love, carefree and young. They rekindle their friendship, and their old memories help them to appreciate the moments they have spent together. The strength of recollections in platonic love is examined in this novel. Even after many years went away, Dawson and Amanda's platonic love is maintained by their recollections enable them to see how they evolved over time. It is a lovely illustration of the influence platonic love can have on people as well as the strength and significance that memories have in everyone's lives. Once Dawson asks Tuck about his breaking up with his girlfriend. Tuck says, "Don't know. There's a lot of magic between you, ain't no denying that. And magic makes forgettin' hard" (TBM 20).

The plot revolves around the characters' sacrifices, particularly in the present-day scenario. Dawson, made a great sacrifice by abandoning Amanda and their relationship in order to ensure Amanda's safety. And Amanda had to give up her love for Dawson in order to preserve her current position and her social standing. Dawson still demonstrates his kindness in the current lifestyle. Working in an oil rig helps him to become a responsible man who changes his life. Because of his difficult history, he puts up his social identity and puts a lot of effort into starting over. He cheerfully comes to pay his respects when he finds out that Tuck, their mutual friend who initially puts them together years ago, now has passed away, even though he is fully aware that this could be a challenging reunion for him. But Amanda in spite of her circumstances and her family's expectations, demonstrates selflessness by going to Tuck's funeral out of appreciation and respect. She is making many sacrifices in her life as well. In order to live up to the expectations that come with being from a rich Southern family, she gives up her interests and love. They start to recognize the sacrifices they made when they get back in touch and think back on their past experiences. Both of them realize that their class distinctions and the safety issues surrounding Dawson's history prevent them from living together. They understand that their love for one another is sincere and correct despite their difficulties. The novel illustrates the value of selfless and sacrifice in platonic love. It demonstrates how the protagonists suppress their love for one another in order to protect themselves and those around them. They may not bring back their romantic love, but they still have a deep emotional bond that shows how unselfish their platonic love is. The novel gives a dynamic

story which is laid out through a several kinds of flashbacks from Amanda and Dawson's past. The flashback highlights their early years, their family, their social status and their love on each other. Other themes cover in the novel include the richness of interactions between individuals, the difficulty of grieving and the study of family dynamics.

The protagonists are struggling in the war field of society throughout the novel. Despite their intense feelings for one another, they both understand that their current situation prevents them from being romantically involved. Amanda and Dawson understand that their love is evidence of their enduring respect and concern for one another. Although, they cannot be together romantically, they still maintain a strong emotional connection that demonstrates the power of platonic love. The novel explores the concept of platonic love, which is frequently ignored in favor of passionate love in literature. It is an emotional connection built on a foundation of caring, respect, and understanding between people.

Over the course of the novel, Amanda and Dawson come to terms with the limitations of their relationship in the present. Their circumstances were modified, leaving them to manage the challenges of their platonic love, despite their obvious emotional connection. They realize that even though it's real, their previous connection cannot be recreated. As a result, in the context of contemporary reality, they attempt to figure out how to start a new relationship. At the end of the novel, Amanda finds herself confronted with an unexpected disaster that puts her family's security in danger. Dawson, who is always devoted to her and protective of her, puts his own life in danger to make sure they are safe. The intensity of their platonic love is highlighted by Dawson's ultimate act of selflessness, which shows that he is willing to risk his life to keep Amanda safe. The novel *The Best of Me* explores into the issue of platonic love, without undermining the significance of romantic love. It acknowledges the complexities of both romantic and platonic love. The novel also highlights the limitations of love and the ways in which a person's circumstances or condition can limit their ability to love. However, it also demonstrates how love may overcome these obstacles and continue to exist in a person's life for many years.

The Best of Me by Nicholas Sparks is moving and heartfelt novel that examines the concept of platonic love in the context of difficult relationships. Their platonic love is still a monument to their enduring trust and affections, even some reasons that kept them apart are still difficult for them to get over. The novel shows that love may manifest itself in a variety of ways and emphasizes the value of intellectual and emotional bonds that are not based on physical attraction. The ideals of platonic love are embodied by Amanda and Dawson, who reflect the strong link of respect, consideration, and understanding. The novel shows in the end that although love includes its limitations, it can also be a strong, enduring force that passes the test of time. Amanda's monologue "Would she even recognize the woman who now looked back at her in the mirror?" (TMB 30)

From the study, it can be discussed that in the novel *The Best of Me*, Amanda and Dawson's relationship serves as a metaphor for the concept of platonic love. It becomes clear throughout the novel that their love is based more on a profound emotional bond and understanding, than it is on physical desire. Their love endures in spite of all challenges they come across, including cultural expectations and disparate backgrounds. As the story unfolds, it becomes evident that their love is sincere and selfless since they put the happiness of the other above their own. Even if it means sacrificing their own desires, they are ready to go above and beyond to ensure each other's well-being. At the end of the novel, they are unable to be together romantically, their bonds remain unbroken and they support one another for the rest of their lives. This demonstrates how strong and enduring platonic love is, as it may outlast passionate love and last a lifetime.

The novel's portrayal of platonic love emphasizes the value of close intellectual and emotional bonding in partnerships. The novel presents a rich and complex picture of the difficulties and

complications that come with platonic relationships, particularly when they involve people of different genders. The novel's protagonists serve as examples of how platonic love may endure for a very long time and it is just as strong and rewarding as romantic love. The novel presents more inclusive and expansive view of love by questioning traditional ideas of unique couples and emphasizing platonic love. Significant issues regarding the nature of love, the distinctions between friendship and romance, are all brought up in this novel. All things considered, the novel offers a compelling analysis of the continuing attraction and complexity of platonic love, emphasizing its capacity to encourage intellectual curiosity, emotional fulfillment, and personal development. Platonic love is a connection created by shared experiences, intellectual curiosity, and respect that overcomes gender, age and social standing. Platonic love, nourished by deep understanding, mutual trust, and sincere affection, is like a lovely flower that blooms in the garden of the soul. It also provides the opportunity for a profound and significant emotional bond without the complication and mystery of passionate love. And it is a monument to the eternal force of human connection, a tie that provides plenty of advantages of the heart and mind onto both the giver and recipient. Nicholas Sparks demonstrates throughout the novel that platonic love is equally as potent as romantic love. The starting point of Amanda and Dawson's love is their friendship, respect for one another, and profound understanding of one another's suffering. They are one other's confidants and provide each other with support and motivation to get through challenging times. Nicholas Sparks also emphasizes the positive changes and enhancements that platonic love may bring about in people. Over time, Amanda and Dawson both develop and mature, largely because of the impact each other is on their lives. They are inspired and motivated to grow as persons and to follow their aspirations by their love for one another. *The Best of Me* demonstrates how satisfying and wonderful platonic love can be, just as much as romantic love. Although there may not be any physical attraction, it is built on a strong emotional bond that's the potential to endure a lifetime. As Nicholas Sparks gives us an amazing representation of the transforming power of friendship and the enduring nature of real love through the narrative of Amanda and Dawson. The author Nicholas Sparks concludes the novel by saying "Amanda closed her eyes, feeling the steady rhythm in his chest. "I love you, too"." (TMB 292)

References

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