

Novel Resource #5- The Great Sockathon

The Great Sockathon
Michael C. Delaney
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About the Author

“My hope, my dream, is to write a book that one day finds its way into the “Classics” section of the Children’s Department of the bookstore.”

<http://wf2la3.webfeat.org/>

Address- 25 Sherwood Place, Greenwich, CT 06830

Email- chauck@discovernet.net

Michael Delaney was born in 1955 to a mother who was an author and illustrator of children’s books. He has many family members that have influenced him to where he is today. Along with his mother, his older brother Ned has written and illustrated dozens of picture books and his sister has also written and illustrated a picture book. He says that his life is normal, and that everyday he tries to exercise, take his daughter to school and write.

Other Books By the Author:

The Marigold Monster

Henry’s Special Delivery

Not Your Average Joe

The Great Sockathon

Deep Doo Doo

Deep Doo Doo and the Mysterious Email

Birdbrain Amos, Mr. Fun

The Great Sockathon

Genre- Friendship, Mystery, Fiction

Lexile- 630 L

Reading Level- 3.9

Interest Level- 4-7

Best friends Sabrina, Megan, Connie, and Daisy are looking forward to a carefree summer before sixth grade—long, lazy days of doing whatever they want. But then Sabrina receives an eerie message—from a ghost girl! She died in a fall from the big tree on the town green more than seventy years ago. The ghost needs the girls’ help—the town is about to cut down the historic, but dying, tree she haunts.

The girls dream up a plan to save the tree. They’ll have a sockathon—a wacky fundraiser involving a chain of socks—and then buy a brace for it. But can

Kathleen Barry
Cedar Elementary
krbarry@avon-schools.org

collecting socks raise enough money in time? And what does the mysterious spirit really want?

The four girls take turns telling their strange story as they cope with creepy supernatural visions and a project that's bigger than they could have imagined. Their unforgettable summer will bring losses, victories, a surprising new friend, and the kinds of challenges that bond friendships forever.

- front cover of book

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Author's Connection

I could not find any information about this story.

Annotation

The balm of Gilead tree in the town square is haunted. At least, that is what everyone believes. When Sabrina hears the ghost speak, everything changes for her and her friends. The balm of Gilead tree is going to be cut down this year, and Sabrina, Megan, Connie and Daisy want to save it. So, they plan a sockathon- a fund raiser collecting socks and making a sock chain across the town. At first, the sockathon seems silly, but everyone in the town joins in and donates their old socks.

Throughout the story, each of the girls is trying to find themselves in different ways. They are very different people, and have different opinions about everything. As the summer comes to an end, the girls are afraid they will not raise enough money for the brace. They also find out more about the ghost that speaks to them, and her friend, who turns out to be a big surprise. When the balm of Gilead tree is knocked down in a horrible storm, the girls fear that 275 years of history has left with it, but when they use their fundraising money to buy a new tree for the town square, they realize that they are making history.

This is a wonderful book about friendship, and about four girls who become closer through hard work. The girls find the courage to stand up for what they believe in, and find out what it means to do something for another person.

Booktalk

Four girls are planning on having the best summer of their lives, doing nothing all summer long. That changes when Sabrina is standing by the balm of Gilead tree one June evening and she hears a voice...of a ghost. When she tells her friends, she gets a mixed reaction. However, when the girls find out that the balm of Gilead tree is going to be cut down at the end of summer, they realize that the ghost wanted help saving the tree.

Megan, Sabrina, Daisy and Connie decide to have a great sockathon to save the tree. The idea is like hands across America. People will donate socks and money, and the girls will make a sock chain to go across town. The plan turns out great, for awhile.

Will the girls save the balm of Gilead tree? Will they find out more about the ghost of Eliza Baker? What happens with mean, old, Mrs. Campbell? The girls learn more about friendship and hard work than they ever imagined, as well as other lessons along the way.

Kathleen Barry
Cedar Elementary
krbarry@avon-schools.org

Characters

Sabrina

- 12 year old main character
- first person the ghost speaks to
- excited, hard worker

Megan

- 12 year old main character
- African American
- cynical, believes sockathon is a waste of time

Connie

- 12 year old main character
- Chinese
- smart, small, quiet

Daisy

- 12 year old main character
- loud, noisy, says what she thinks

Eliza

- ghost of the balm of Gilead tree
- speaks to the four girls

Mrs. Campbell

- grouchy old woman who gives the girls a hard time
- Ginny, Eliza's friend

Setting

This story takes place in present-day. Most of the action takes place in the village green near the balm of Gilead tree.

Point of View

The story is told from the limited omniscient point of view of all four main characters, Sabrina, Megan, Connie and Daisy.

Conflict and Resolution

One conflict in this story is an external conflict between the four girls and the town's decision to cut down the balm of Gilead tree. The town decides it is best for the tree to be cut down, but the girls want to save it with their sockathon. In the end, the girls raise almost \$2,000 dollars with their sockathon, but the tree ends up being blown over in a horrible storm.

Another conflict is an internal one that Megan has with herself. Megan is very cynical about the entire sockathon, and does not believe in ghosts. She also has a hard time with her great aunt Carrie, who is in a nursing home. However, when she is the only one the ghost hadn't spoken to, she decides she

needs to change something. She goes to visit her aunt all alone, and discovers that it isn't as bad as she thought. She also becomes more positive at the end of the story.

Finally, the girls have an external conflict with Mrs. Campbell, a mean old lady who always is giving Connie a hard time. The girls always complain about Mrs. Campbell, but at the end of the story, they find out that Mrs. Campbell is Ginny, Eliza Baker's friend. They all have an understanding now and their combined care for the balm of Gilead tree brings them together.

Theme

The main theme in this story is about friendship and hard work. The girls learn more about working together and cooperating with each other by creating the sockathon. They also learn about following through with a plan that takes all summer long, even though it seems tedious and difficult. See how a tree strengthens the girls' friendship, brings a town closer together, and even mellows out the meanest woman in town.

Read Aloud Passages

The following passage is at the beginning of the story, and is what sets the rest of the story up for the adventure that will take the girls through the summer.

“As I say, the ghost was just a local lore. So far as I knew, nobody had ever witnessed a ghost at the balm of Gilead tree. All that changed, however, one hot, muggy evening in June when a girl in town heard one. That girl was me.”

--Sabrina, p. 12

The following passage is near the end of the story, and is the end of all of the hard work the girls put into saving the balm of Gilead tree.

“The balm of Gilead tree was no longer standing. It had blown over in the storm. The tree lay stretched across the village green, from one end to the other, like a huge dead giant. It had just missed smashing the gazebo. The storm had split the trunk right in half, about ten feet up from the ground. Huge, jagged splinters of yellow wood rose up into the air. A small crowd stood around the tree, gawking. Some kids were climbing on the leafy branches as if the tree was some sort of amusement- park attraction.”

--Daisy, p. 171

Other Suggested Readings

1. If you like *The Great Sockathon*, you'll love *Operation Clean Sweep* by Darleen Bailey Beard.
2. If you like *The Great Sockathon*, you'll love *The Stupendous Dodgeball Fiasco* by Janice Repka.

Kathleen Barry
Cedar Elementary
krbarry@avon-schools.org

3. If you like *The Great Sockathon*, you'll love *The Marigold Monster* by Michael Delaney.

Across Curriculum Suggestions

Social Studies-

This is a great book to use before exploring your own community. The girls do a lot of research on their own community to find out more about the balm of Gilead tree. After reading this book, students can find things in their own community they want to research. They can go to the library and learn to use different resources to find out more about their topic, and then write a research report. When they are finished, students can present their topic to the class.

Science-

This book has a lot to do with nature, so students can explore the life expectancies of different trees. The balm of Gilead tree had been alive for 275 years. The students can find out more about the trees that are prosperous in their community and find out those tree's life expectancies. When they find the information, the students can put everything together in a graph to compare and contrast the trees.

Non Fiction Suggestion-

My Favorite Tree- Terrific Trees of North America by Diane Iverson—

Trees are important in children's lives. For many children, trees are play places, dreaming places, building scientist places, escape from the world places. Trees are also important in the life of North America. They play a significant role in our history, our traditions, our ecology, our economy, and the natural glory of our diverse and beautiful land.

Video-

The Oldest Tress on Earth by Dr. Reese

Activities

Individual Activity-

Journal Entry- If you were one of the characters in the story, what would you think about your friends telling you they saw a ghost? What would your reaction be?

What is something that you might want to raise money for? How could you raise the money? What would it be used for? Who would this affect?

Class Activity-

Find a charity that you want to support, and come up with an idea about how to get information and awareness out to others. What would your fundraiser be? How would you take care of the money? As a class, come up with a year long fund raising project that you can do together. Plan your project, then follow through during the school year.

Discussion Questions for Each Chapter

Chapter 1

Have you ever been scared of something, but done it anyway because your friends want you to?

Why are Eliza and Ginny climbing the balm of Gilead tree?

What happens at the end of the chapter? How do you think it is going to affect the rest of the book?

Chapter 2

Who do you think haunts the balm of Gilead tree?

Why is the tree important to the town?

What do you think the ghost says to Sabrina?

Chapter 3

Why does Megan not believe Sabrina's story?

What was Megan doing before she met Sabrina at the balm of Gilead? P. 14

Why did Sabrina get into a fight with her mother? P. 16

What do you think is going to happen?

Chapter 4

Why does Sabrina ask Connie about ghosts? P. 18

Does Connie believe her?

What would you say if one of your friends told you a story like Sabrina tells?

Chapter 5

Why is Daisy upset at the beginning of the chapter? p. 22

What is Connie's theory on the ghost? P. 24-25

What does Connie find out in the newspaper? P.26

Chapter 6

Why is the tree being cut down? P. 27

Who does Connie say is an evil old woman? P. 29

What do you think Mrs. Campbell has to do with the rest of the story?

Chapter 7

What does Mrs. Campbell say to the girls when they give her the newspaper? P. 30

Why do they think she is a witch? P. 31

Chapter 8

Where do the girls go to find more information about the tree? P. 32

What important article do they find, and what does it say? P. 35

How do you think this new information is going to affect what they do?

Chapter 9

What do the girls want to do to help the ghost and tree? P. 37

How do they want to raise the money? p. 38

Who comes up with the sockathon idea? P. 41

Chapter 10

Why is Sabrina upset with her mother? P. 43

Who of the group does not like the sockathon idea and why? P. 44

Who do the girls want to get to help them with the sockathon? P. 45

Chapter 11

Why is Megan not excited about the sockathon? P. 47
Who does Sabrina quote at the end of the chapter? p. 48

Chapter 12

Who is Denver? P. 49
What does Denver think about the girls' idea? P. 51
What do you think about the girls' idea?

Chapter 13

Who do the girls have to talk to for the sockathon to be approved? P. 53
What do they find in the cemetery? P. 55
Do you think the mayor will like the idea of the sockathon?

Chapter 14

Who is going to talk to the mayor? P. 57
What does the mayor say about the sockathon? P. 59
Why is Sabrina's mom surprised at the end of the chapter? p. 63

Chapter 15

Why doesn't Megan want to do the sockathon? P. 64
Why does Megan have a problem with great-aunt Carrie? P. 66
If you were one of the girls in the story, what do you think your parents would say about the idea?

Chapter 16

What is the sign that Connie believes in at the beginning? P. 69
What sign do the girls put up at the end of the sock chain? P. 70
What do the girls find on the tree? P. 71

Chapter 17

What is the date on the tree carving? P. 72
What does Megan's mom do to help the girls with the sockathon? P. 74
Would you be embarrassed like Megan?

Chapter 18

What changed after the radio announcement? P. 79
What letter do the girls get? P. 81
What does Sabrina go back to get at the end of the chapter? p. 82

Chapter 19

Why is Megan upset with her mom? P. 84
What does Boom-boom Brogan want to do for the girls? P.86
How would you react to this?

Chapter 20

What do the other girls think about the prospect of being on the radio? P. 88
What does Daisy want to put in the newspapers? P. 89
Why does Connie think she will lose her job?

Chapter 21

What is Daisy's highlight of the summer? P. 93
Who loves talking on the radio? P. 96
Have you ever gotten to talk on the radio or TV?

Chapter 22

What happened after the radio broadcast? P. 99
What does Sabrina's mom think she should do with the money? p. 101

Why does Sabrina feel grown up? P. 103

Chapter 23

Why does Megan hate visiting Great aunt Carrie? P. 105

Why is Megan scared at the nursing home? P. 106

Who do you think put flowers on Eliza Baker's grave?

Chapter 24

How much money had the girls raised by August? P. 108

Who ate the candy that Connie left? P. 110

Who does the ghost speak to next? P. 111

Chapter 25

What does the ghost say? P. 112

What is Megan's problem, according to Daisy? P. 113

Do you believe in ghosts?

Chapter 27

Why do the girls have a séance? P. 119

What happens during the séance? P. 121

Why is Megan so cynical?

Chapter 28

What is Connie going to do and why? P. 123

What happens when Connie is up in the tree? P. 124

What do you think will happen to Connie?

Chapter 29

What happens to Connie? P. 126

Why did she fall? P. 127

Who got the socks down for the girls? P. 128

Chapter 30

Who is the only girl Eliza hadn't spoken to? P. 129

Why do you think Megan hasn't heard her yet?

Would you care if you were the only one who hadn't heard the ghost?

Chapter 31

What does Megan decide to do? P. 133

What is coming to the town? P. 135

What does Denver tell Megan about? P. 137

Chapter 32

How many days did Connie deliver a newspaper without seeing Mrs. Campbell?
P. 140

Why does Mrs. Campbell say the girls are wasting their time? p. 141

Why is Connie surprised at the end of the chapter? p. 143

Chapter 33

What do the girls do to try and save the sock chain? P. 144

Do you think their idea will work?

Chapter 34

Who do the girls see at the tree? P. 145

What happens when Mrs. Campbell comes to the tree? P. 147

What do the girls think of Mrs. Campbell now? P. 149

Chapter 35

What does Megan decide to do on her own? P. 151
What happens with Great aunt Carrie? P. 153
What doe Megan do when she leaves the nursing home? P. 154

Chapter 36

Why are the girls worried about Megan? P. 155
Are the girls surprised when they find out where she has been? P. 157
Do you think the sock chain will hold up through the storm?

Chapter 37

What is banging against the windows of Daisy's house? P. 158
Why is she upset?
Would you be upset if your hard work was lost?

Chapter 38

Why is Sabrina worried at the beginning of the chapter? p. 160
Have you ever taken anything that wasn't yours?
Why is Sabrina's mom proud of her? P. 162

Chapter 39

What did Megan do to upset her mom? P. 164
What happened to Great aunt Carrie? P. 165

Chapter 40

Why is Connie's mom furious? P. 167
What does Daisy call about? P. 168
How would you feel if you were one of the girls?

Chapter 41

Why is the town a disaster? P. 170
What happened to the balm of Gilead? P. 171
What do you think happened to Eliza Baker?

Chapter 42

What kind of tree do the girls decide on p. 175
How much money did the girls raise with the sockathon? P. 176
What is the agreement Sabrina made with her mom? P. 177

Chapter 43

Where you expecting Mrs. Campbell to be Ginny?
What happens with the new tree at the end? P. 184
What did you think of this story?

Language

Balm of Gilead tree- a large tree that grows in North America
Congregation- p. 62- group of people in a church
Feasible- p.27- doable, practical
Charity- p. 114- group that raises money to support something

Indiana Academic Standards

Third Grade

Language Arts

3.2.1 3.2.9 3.2.4

Kathleen Barry
Cedar Elementary
krbarry@avon-schools.org

3.2.6	3.3.1	3.3.2
3.3.3		
3.3.6		
Science		
3.4.1	3.4.4	
Social Studies		
3.1.3	3.1.6	3.2.1
3.3.3	3.3.5	3.5.4
3.5.5		

Fourth Grade

Language Arts		
4.3.2	4.3.3	4.3.4
Science		
4.4.5	4.4.9	4.5.4
Social Studies		
4.5.1	4.5.3	4.5.6

Fifth Grade

Language Arts		
5.3.2	5.3.3	5.3.4
5.3.5	5.3.7	
Science		
5.4.4	5.4.5	5.4.7
5.4.6		
Social Studies		
5.1.6	5.3.5	5.5.2
5.5.3	5.5.4	

Sixth Grade

Language Arts		
6.3.2	6.3.3	6.3.6
6.3.9	6.3.4	6.3.5
Science		
6.4.8	6.4.9	6.4.13
Social Studies		
6.3.15	6.5.2	

Resources

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/>- Indiana Academic Standards

www.amazon.com

Kathleen Barry
Cedar Elementary
krbarry@avon-schools.org