

Operation Clean Sweep

By Darleen Bailey Beard

Farrar Straus Giroux, New York 2004

Annotation

Twelve year old Cornelius (Corn) Sanwick is a typical boy living in Umatilla, Oregon in 1916. He enjoys fishing, hanging out with his best friend, Otis, and teasing a cute red-headed girl in his class named Birdine Bain. He is looking forward to the town's upcoming Election Day parade and the prospect of catching Sticky Fingers Fred, a notorious pickpocket. His enthusiasm is short lived when he overhears his mother and the other women of Umatilla plotting to run for mayor against his own father, who happens to be the current mayor. The women of Umatilla believe it is time for a change and, with finally being granted the right to vote only four years earlier, they believe that by voting for themselves they can throw the men out of public office and replace them with women. Cornelius finds himself struggling between his love for his mother and believing that she could help make needed changes and with his loyalty to his father and all of the men in Umatilla. Ultimately, Corn decides to keep his mother's secret and let fate decide who would become the next mayor.

Darleen Bailey Beard depicts the heavy historical event of women's suffrage through the eyes of a twelve year old boy in a lighthearted, moving way. The reader will forget that a piece of history is being learned while drawn into the book waiting to see what happens next with the adventurous duo of Corn and Otis. This charming book about family loyalty, friendship, and standing up for what you believe in will keep the reader coming back for more.

Interest Level/Reading Level

Ages 10-12 Grades 4-6

Point of View

First person, as told by Cornelius Sanwick

Themes

Anything is possible if you set your mind to it.

The power of friendship

Family loyalty

Equal rights

Genre and Setting

Historical Fiction in 1916 Umatilla, Oregon

Book Title Meaning

The novel receives its title from the women in Umatilla, Oregon in 1916 who are unhappy with the way the men are running the town and decide to make a clean sweep of the men in public office and replace the positions with women on election day.

Read Alouds

Ch. 3, p. 22 "A woman can't be mayor! Why, that's - that's a man's job!"

Otis's reply upon hearing from Cornelius that the women of Umatilla are planning to run for office in the next election.

Ch. 22, p. 138 That seemed odd to me. Here women had the right to vote, and some of them didn't even use it.

Cornelius was thinking to himself and trying to understand why some women who finally had the right to vote were not taking advantage of the opportunity.

Conflict/Conflict Resolution

The conflict is internal. Upon overhearing his mother and her friends making plans for a clean sweep of the men in public office in the upcoming election, Cornelius struggles with feeling disloyal to his father for not telling him the women's secret, and finding himself agreeing with his mother about the town's current problems. Ultimately, Corn did not reveal his mother's secret and decided to let fate decide who would be the next mayor.

Characters and Traits

Cornelius Sanwick, age 12, main character

Loyal Courageous

Loving Dependable

Sincere Compassionate

Otis Gill, age 12, best friend of Cornelius

Persistent Adventurous

Loyal Cooperative

Annoying

Flora Sanwick, mother of Cornelius

Ambitious Decisive

Persistent Independent

Crafty Courageous

Mayor Sanwick, father of Cornelius

Lackadaisical Dismayed

Arrogant Astonished

Competitive

If you liked *Operation Clean Sweep*, you'll also enjoy *You Want Women to Vote, Lizzie Stanton?* Written by Jean Fritz, the novel depicts the hardships women suffragists faced while trying to earn their right to vote. Other books written about women earning their right to vote include *Girls Can Be Anything They Want* by Patricia Foote and *Learning About Fairness From the Life of Susan B. Anthony* by Kiki Mosher. In addition, other books written by Darleen Bailey Beard include *The Babbs Switch Story*, *The Flimflam Man*, and the picture book *Twister*.

About the Author

Born in 1961, award winning author, Darleen Bailey Beard knew she wanted to be an author when she was in the fifth grade and was inspired by her teacher, Mrs. Jacqui Schickling. She received a bachelor's degree in Professional Writing from the University of Oklahoma in 1986. Her first book, a picture book called, *The Pumpkin Man From Piney Creek*, was published in 1995 and she dedicated it to her fifth grade teacher. Since then Beard has published other books including *Twister*, *The Babbs Switch Story* (winner of the 2003 Oklahoma Book Award and Gamma State Author Award), *The Flimflam Man*, and *Operation Clean Sweep* (selected for Young Hoosier Book Award 2007-08 and nominated for the Oklahoma Sequoyah Award, South Carolina Children's Choice Award, and Kansas William Allen White Award). When not spending her time writing, editing, or visiting classrooms, Beard enjoys gardening, traveling, and spending time with her two children in Oklahoma.

For more information on Darleen Bailey Beard, please visit:

<http://www.darleenbaileybeard.com> or <http://www.inspire.net>

Booktalk

The year is 1916 in Umatilla, Oregon where women gained the right to vote only four years earlier. Cornelius (Corn) Sanwick is a typical 12 year old

boy who enjoys fishing with his father (the current mayor of Umatilla), hanging out with his best friend Otis, and he even has his eye on pretty, freckle-faced Birdine Bain. Life is good until Corn overhears his mother and the other women of Umatilla plotting to run for mayor and make a clean sweep of the men from public office in the upcoming election. Corn is torn between agreeing with his mother that there is a need for change in the town of Umatilla and the feeling of being disloyal to his father if he doesn't reveal the women's secret plot to overthrow the men. Will Corn keep his mother's secret to run for mayor against his father? Or will Corn reveal his mother's plan to his father before the election?

Across the Curriculum Connections

I. Subject: Social Studies

Connection to novel: In 1916, when the novel takes place, Oregon was one of a few states to give women the right to vote. What steps had already been taken and what steps still needed to be taken until the passage of the 19th Amendment allowing women in all states the right to vote?

Assignment: Students will research the history behind women's suffrage and be able to identify key women who helped make changes to voting laws. The following questions will be researched and answered in a research paper written by the students:

- Why did women ask for the right to vote?
- What were arguments for and against allowing women to vote?
- When did women start the fight for suffrage?
- What events happened in the U.S. and in the world to change public opinion on whether women should be able to vote?
- What tactics were used to win the right to vote?

Resources:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/suffrage>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/vjwhtml/vfwhome.html>

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/usasuffrage.htm>

<http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/suffrage.htm>

II. Subject: Math

Assignment: The students will create a timeline of women's suffrage events beginning with the year 1869 when Wyoming was the first territory to allow women to vote and ending with the year 1920 when the 19th Amendment was passed giving women in all states the right to vote. After completing the timeline, students will generate math questions from their timelines and provide the answers to their own questions. Example: How many years passed between the time the first state allowed women to vote (1869) until the 19th Amendment was passed giving women in all states the right to vote (1920)?
Answer: 51 years

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Activities

I. Newspaper Article

Standards: 5.2.2 5.2.3 5.2.4 5.3.2 5.3.3

Assignment: With a partner, pretend you are a newspaper reporter for the town of Umatilla in 1916 the day after the clean sweep election. Write the front page headlines/news articles announcing how the women overthrew the men in the election. Be sure to include who, when, where, what, how, why. Also include reactions from the townspeople.

II. Vocabulary Crossword

Standards: 5.1.3 5.1.6

Assignment: Given a list of vocabulary words from the novel and a crossword puzzle with clues, determine the vocabulary word used by reading the clues. This may be completed with a partner or individually. See attached crossword puzzle.

Discussion Questions

Pre-Reading

1. Cornelius has a nickname that you will find out soon. What is your nickname and why?
2. Have you ever traveled out West? Where?
3. Cornelius has to keep a secret. Have you ever let a secret out? What was the effect?

Post-Reading

1. The women made changes in Umatilla. What changes would you make if you were the mayor of your home?
2. Sticky Fingers Fred went to jail for 15 years. If you were the sheriff, tell me what sentence/punishment you would hand down.
3. Tell how you felt when you read about the Sundown Law and its effect on the Chinese people during The Gold Rush.
4. Are you more like Otis "Oatmeal" or like Cornelius "Corn?"
5. Compare and contrast Otis and Cornelius using a Venn Diagram.

Chapter 1

1. Why did Corn kind of hope his dad would not get reelected for mayor?
2. What foreshadowing is used to make the reader believe Corn may be chosen to blow the bugle at the Election Day parade?

Chapter 2

1. Why did mom and her friends call each other sisters?
2. Why were mom and her sisters considered to be lucky?

Chapter 3

1. What did Corn overhear mom and her sisters discussing at their meeting?
2. Why did the women stand a better chance of getting elected than the men?
3. What laws did mom say she would pass if she were elected mayor?
4. Why was it hard for Otis to believe what Corn overheard?
5. What does operation clean sweep?

Chapter 4

1. Why didn't Corn think his mom should run for mayor?
2. Why did Corn think his father didn't make a good mayor?
3. What advice did mom offer dad for capturing Sticky Fingers Fred on election day?
4. What annoying habit does Otis have?

Chapter 5

1. Why did Corn like writing?
2. Why was Corn going to write about pigeons as his Great War topic?
3. Explain what the sundown law was during the Oregon gold rush.

Chapter 6

1. Why did Otis think he and Corn should be on the men's side in the election?

2. What plan did Otis and Corn have to eavesdrop on the women's next meeting?

Chapter 7

1. Explain how animals were used in the *Great War*.
2. Why did Corn kick Otis under the table for mentioning that a million men had already died in the *Great War* in front of Miss McKee?
3. Explain the analogy between cats and dogs that Miss McKee used to show why women should be able to vote.

Chapter 8

1. What did mom mean when she said, "If countries were run by women there would be no war?"
2. What excuse did Corn use to get out of the house to spy on the women?

Chapter 9

1. Why do Otis and Corn rub Elmer's tombstone when passing by?
2. How did Birdine know Otis and Corn were spying?
3. What are Otis and Corn going to say if Birdine asks them about spying?

Chapter 10

1. Why was dad disgusted with Mr. Lanier?
2. Why do dad and Mr. Lanier have an ongoing feud?

3. Why did Corn tell his dad that the best "person" would win the election?

Chapter 11

1. How did corn and Otis respond when Birdine asked them about spying on the women?

Chapter 12

1. Why can't mom tell dad she's planning to run against him for mayor?
2. What did mom mean when she said, "If it weren't for me your father would not be mayor?"
3. Why would mom make a good mayor?

Chapter 13

1. What would Corn like to ask Sticky Fingers Fred if he ever saw him?
2. Why does mom feel bad about Corn knowing the truth?

Chapter 14

1. Why did Birdine tell her mother about the boys spying?
2. Explain the connection between Birdine's eyes and seaweed.

Chapter 15

1. What surprise did dad have for Corn when he got up in the morning?
Why is this significant?
2. Why did Otis tell Corn to imagine Birdine with a nose full of boogers?

Chapter 16

1. Why was Corn's homework assignment changed to Wednesday instead of Tuesday?
2. What does Corn want to be when he grows up (2 things)?

Chapter 17

1. Why does Corn ask dad if women should be able to vote?
2. Why does Corn panic when dad says he wants to talk to him?
3. How did dad respond when Corn asked him if a woman could become mayor of Umatilla?

Chapter 18

1. Why did Corn think his mom would be a good mayor? Why did he think his dad is a good mayor?
2. Why is Corn mad at his mom?
3. Why did mom say dad couldn't forbid her to be mayor?
4. What does Corn fear if his mom becomes mayor?
5. Why does mom feel she HAS to run for mayor?

Chapter 19

1. What do the brooms the women are carrying in the parade represent to them?
2. Why did mom become angry when dad tried to tell her who to vote for?
3. Explain how Corn helped Sam.

Chapter 20

1. Why was Corn worried about having onion breath?
2. Why is Corn suspicious when he realizes he has lost his pocket watch?
3. What does the sheriff tell the boys to do if they think they see Sticky Fingers Fred?

Chapter 21

1. Why did Corn and Otis grab the ladies' banner?
2. What struck Corn as being humorous after catching Sticky Fingers Fred?

Chapter 22

1. Why did Corn feel like he swallowed a whole batch of Indian sinkers?
2. Why was it odd to Corn that some women were not voting?
3. What is the significance of dad saying, "Cows are flying?"
4. How did the men react to the women being elected?
5. Explain what is meant by petticoat coup.
6. How does Corn feel about his mom winning the election?
7. What did the boys do with their reward money?
8. What are dad's plans now that he is no longer mayor?
9. What were some of the changes the women of Umatilla helped make to the town?

Vocabulary

1. ***Amendment*** (p. 151): revision; change
2. ***nomination*** (p.17): choice; selection
3. ***suffragist*** (p. 14): a supporter of the right to vote, especially to women
4. ***archenemy*** (p. 6): opponent, enemy
5. ***eavesdrop*** (p. 20): spy, snoop
6. ***allies*** (p. 43): partners
7. ***democratic*** (p. 46): elected
8. ***brawl*** (p. 58): fight
9. ***meticulous*** (p. 109): careful, thorough
10. ***privilege*** (p. 109): freedom
11. ***chagrin*** (p. 134): sorrow, annoyance
12. ***scalawag*** (p. 63): rascal, troublemaker
13. ***gall*** (p. 65): nerve
14. ***flourish*** (p. 75): thrive, grow
15. ***emphatically*** (p. 74): forcefully, insistently
16. ***offend*** (p. 83): hurt, upset
17. ***candidate*** (p. 88): nominee, runner

18. *pseudonym* (p. 101): false name
19. *speculation* (p. 102): rumor, gossip
20. *intercept* (p. 103): come between
21. *forbid* (p. 112): stop, prohibit
22. *acceptance* (p. 115): taking, receiving

Indiana Standards Met by Content Novel

Social Studies 4.2.3 4.2.4 4.5.1 5.1.21 5.1.22 5.2.1 5.2.7 5.2.8 5.2.9
5.2.10 5.2.11 5.3.11 5.4.7 6.1.16 6.1.20 6.2.4 6.2.6 6.3.5

Language Arts 4.1.2 4.1.3 4.1.6 4.1.7 4.3.2 4.3.3 4.3.5 4.3.6 4.3.7
4.2.2 5.1.1 5.1.2 5.1.3 5.1.5 5.1.6 5.3.2 5.3.3 5.3.4 5.3.5 5.3.8
5.4.7

Math 4.5.1 4.5.2 4.5.3 4.5.4 4.5.5 4.5.6 4.5.7 4.5.8 5.5.1 5.5.2 5.5.3
5.5.4 5.5.5 6.5.1 6.5.2 6.5.3 6.5.4 6.5.5 6.5.7 6.5.8

Music 4.3.3 4.9.1 5.3.3 5.4.4 5.4.2 5.9.1 6.3.3 6.3.4 6.6.2 6.9.1

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<http://www.inspire.net>

<http://www.edhelper.com>

www.myshelf.com/kids/fiction/04/operationcleansweep.htm