

Novel Resource #1

Operation Clean Sweep by Darleen Bailey Beard

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About the Author: Darleen Bailey Beard is the award-winning author of several books for kids, including *Operation Clean Sweep*, which has been nominated for four state book awards; *The Flimflam Man*, which was chosen as a "Best Book of the Year" by Bank Street College; *Twister*, which received starred and boxed reviews; and *The Babbs Switch Story*, which won the Oklahoma Book Award and the Gamma State Author Award. Her next book will be released in Fall 2009 . . . Darleen has a degree in Professional Writing from the University of Oklahoma and appears in school author visits, festivals, and conferences throughout the U.S. She enjoys reading, gardening, and traveling. She lives in Norman, OK, with her two children, a poodle, and a tank full of fish.

Darleen's website offers lots of activities for teachers. It has a test for each book she has written along with a reader's theater section, where kids can take on the parts of the major characters and put on their own play. There are bookmarks, buttons and posters about reading to print, and even bulletin board ideas. Great website for all!!!

Darleen has some video clips on her website and one is on this book. She relates to kids very well and explains how the book was stolen out of her car, along with her laptop. She had to rewrite the entire book and it took another year to get it done. She explained how it was much better after rewriting it – a little clue to the children who might listen to her on the website. Also on her website, she receives hundred of letters from children that read her books. One of her favorites is posted above her computer – Your heart flows with good stuff.

Other books by Bailey include The Babbs Switch Story, Twister, The FlimFlam Man, and The Pumpkin Man.

Annotation:

What do your parents do? Attorney? Doctor? Teacher? Can you imagine your dad being the mayor and your mom running against him? That is one of the issues in Operation Clean Sweep. Based on a true story that helped bring attention to women and their position in politics, the women of Umatilla, Oregon, form a plan to unseat all the men in the town's government and vote for themselves on election day!

Cornelius, who goes by Corn, and his best friend Otis, spy on the women as they are having a meeting. They overhear the plan that Corn's mom has been nominated to run for mayor against his dad. Loyalty to one's family takes over as the major theme and it helps Cornelieus decide what to do. Tell his dad or keep the secret for his mom? Twelve year old children do not usually face this kind of situation, but they do have to learn about honesty and loyalty to others. It often comes down to a personal decision based on prior events and love for the individual. Beard incorporates this theme as Corn has to make a choice and she explains what he is thinking along the way to his decision to keep quiet.

Corn also bases his decision on what his mother and father share with him, which further confuses him. Today's youth can be in similar situations when it comes to separation or divorce of parents. I have been separated 3 weeks and my children are under more pressure than I could have imagined. They are very aware and take what they hear from myself and my husband and form their own opinions. Honesty and openness are two things that are so necessary for young children, and both are explored very well in relation to Corn and his decision. He does end

up making the right decision and capturing a robber in the end. With a great amount of caring and humor, Darleen Bailey Beard has a great book that will keep children's attention and teach them some major life lesson without knowing it.

Booktalk:

Cornelius and his best friend, Otis, just wanted to have fun during the election day parade. School was out for the special day and they wanted to enjoy eating hotdogs and chasing girls. However, that was not going to happen. Corn and Otis overheard the women of the town talking and they had a secret plan to unseat all the men in the government. And with whom? THEMSELVES! And Corn's mom was planning on running for mayor against his dad! What will Corn do? Does he keep the secret and be loyal to his mom, or tell his dad what the women are planning? To find out the answers to these questions, read Operation Clean Sweep and find out!

Characters: Cornelius, alias Corn, is a 12 year old boy and is the main character in the book. His best friend is Otis Gill. They enjoy fishing and girls. Corn especially likes Birdine Bain, who is a cute freckled-face girl in his class. Corn's dad is the mayor of their small town Umatilla, Oregon, and he also lives with his mother and baby sister Daisy. Corn is a very caring, loyal boy torn between love and loyalty to his parents.

Conflict: In 1916, Oregon was one of only eleven states that allowed women to vote, but in the small town of Umatilla, the voting power of women was about to be unleashed in a secret plan. Cornelius Sanwick accidentally overhears this plan -- a plan to unseat all the men on Election Day. Worst of all, Cornelius' mom is running for mayor. Since the present mayor is Cornelius' dad, he's got a serious problem. Should he keep the secret to help his mom or spill it to help his dad? And if that isn't enough worry, Cornelius also wants to find a famous pickpocket and get a chance to talk to the prettiest girl in Umatilla.

Conflict Resolution: The town's women suddenly took over the entire city government. Since they'd only had the right to vote in Oregon for four years, many people assumed the whole thing was a joke, until they won the election. The women brandish brooms on Election Day and chant, "Clean sweep! Clean sweep!" Meanwhile, a notorious pickpocket is working his way through the crowd when Cornelius spots him and decides to capture him. Corn's dad is very supportive of the new mayor and Corn is the hero of the day for capturing Sticky Fingers Fred.

Genre: This historical fiction novel was based on a true episode that brought nationwide attention to women's suffrage. Women were just getting into politics and the US was about to enter WWI.