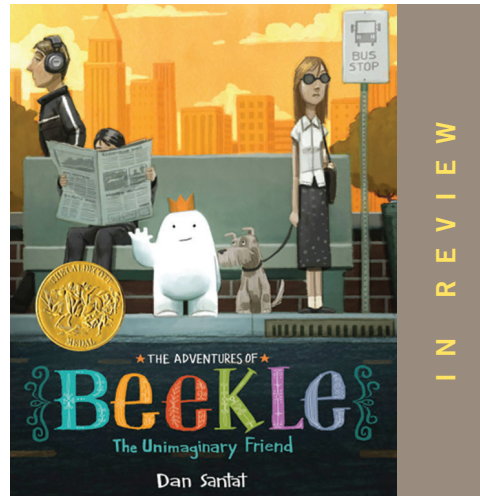


Reviewed by Sarah Red

The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend

Written and Illustrated by Dan Santat
New York, NY: Little Brown and Company, 2014



Author Dan Santat's book, *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend*, details the journey of Beekle who, instead of waiting patiently for a real child to imagine him as a friend, decides to do the "unimaginable" and find his own friend. Although he does many things that scare him as he ventures out, the thought of finding his perfect friend gives Beekle "the courage to journey on" When he arrives in the human world, however, he is shocked to find that kids are not eating any cake, no one is stopping to listen to the music around them, and everyone is in need of a nap. Beekle persists and eventually meets Alice, his perfect person.

The story offers engaging and creative openings to add music, movement, and exploration to music class. For students, the "unimaginable" may be learning to play the ukulele, reading notes on the treble staff, or even trying a new activity for the first time. We have all accomplished something in our lives that might seem unimaginable, and this is an important lesson to share with our students.

The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend is the perfect book for the first day of school or the first week of music class when students are getting used to new surroundings, a new teacher, and making new friends. The story provides engaging opportunities to add creative music, movement, and exploration activities to the classroom, for example, introducing the concept of singing a round when paired with the song *Make New Friends*.

Beekle sets a goal to find his perfect person in the human world. Although he struggles, he finally accomplishes what he set out to do. Use the story to show the importance of setting a goal and following it through to completion, a valuable lesson especially for older elementary students. For teachers in a Leader in Me school, goal setting ties into the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Students and Leadership Notebooks.

Students will love Dan Santat's bright and colorful artwork—and his dreamy illustrations tell as much of the story as his words. Present students with the idea of telling the story through pictures, through tableau, and watch the creativity flow! Let them choose a page, moving and freezing to show their interpretation of one of the scenes, or create pantomimed, play-inspired movement ostinati. Consider adding boomwhackers or other classroom instruments. How would body language and music evolve as the story progresses? Experiment with puppets, scarves, and fanciful takes on real and imaginary play. When we allow our students to use their imaginations, the "unimaginable" takes shape and truly comes to life. ■

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