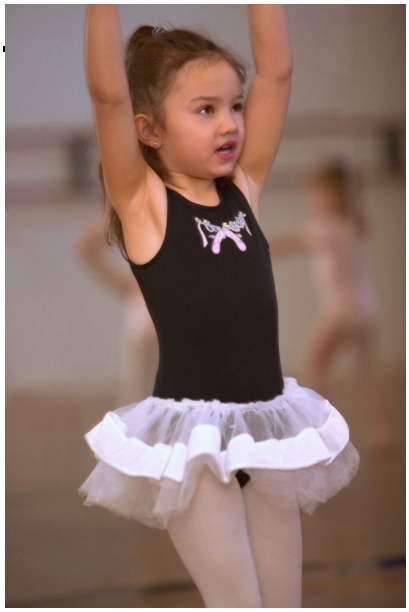
Justin, a Rising Star Scout in the Scout Programs of Adventure Scouts USA, wanted to be an archaeologist. From the time he was very little, he watched movies and read stories about intrepid explorers who flew into hot, sandy deserts and murky swamps seeking the history of mankind.

He read everything he could about archaeology. One day he went over to Madison's house so they could complete a Challenge together. She was a member of his Crew. Madison was very upset however, as she could not find her ballet slippers.



"I have ballet class at 5 o'clock", she wailed. "I need to find my slippers."

"Where did you leave them last?" Justin asked.

"I can't remember. I'm sorry, Justin, I don't think I'll have time to complete the compass Challenge with you, as I have to find my ballet slippers", she said.

Justin was very sorry they would not get the chance to complete the Challenge, but then he remembered some

archaeological facts which could help them find the slippers.

“Where might they be?” he asked.

“They could be with my little sister’s stuff. They might be with my Dad’s stuff or my Mom’s stuff. They might be in the closet or in a drawer”, she said.

“Okay, I’ll help you find your ballet slippers and then we’ll have time to complete the Challenge, agreed?” he asked.

“Yes, thank you!” Madison said.

Madison opened the hallway closet and it was a messy jumble of things. “They won’t be on the bottom”, he said.

“How do you know that?” she asked.

“Stratigraphy”, he said, “It has to do with archaeology. Things from a certain era will all be found together, in one layer of strata, or soil. The lower the item in the earth, the older it generally is. Sometimes a thing will sink further below the level it should be in, or be higher than it should be because of floods and earthquakes and that presents a true challenge to archaeologists. The bottom layer I see is made up of file and a bowling ball.”

“My Dad’s stuff”, she said.

“Well, we’d probably be wasting our time looking there”, he answered. “The next layer is made of magazines.”

“My Mom collects them”, she said.

“No point looking there”, he answered. “And now I see baby clothes.”

“My little sister Hannah wore those a couple of years ago”, she answered.

“Your ballet slippers would not be there”, he answered, “But on this level, I see a pair of ice skates and your Scout uniform” he said with glee.

“That’s mine!” she answered. “But I don’t see my slippers!”

“They’re not here”, he said, closing the closet door. “Let’s try drawers”, he said.

They searched through drawers using the same strategy.

“No luck”, Madison said.

Suddenly, Justin saw a pile of things on a chair in the living room.

On top were newspapers.

“My Dad’s papers”, she said. Then they noticed a coat and pair of gloves.

“My Mom left those there this afternoon”, Madison said.

Suddenly they both saw the edge of a backpack.

“That’s my dance backpack!” she cried.

She lifted the backpack and found her tights.

“They must be here with the rest of your things”, he said confidently.

There are the bottom of the pile were Madison’s ballet slippers.

“Hooray!” they cried.

“You’re like a real archaeologist. I want to learn

stratigraphy”, she said.

“I will explain how to do it”, he said, “But first, we need to do our Challenge.”

“Yea!” she said. “Now if only I could find my compass.”

Justin laughed. “We saw your uniform in the closet”, he answered.

They went back to the closet and in the pocket of her cargo pants was the compass!



“This the way to find everything!” she said happily.

They went outside to complete their compass Challenge and Madison never forgot her lesson about archaeology.