

## **Parent & Daughter Book Club: Grades 4 & 5      November 2016**

### *President of the Whole Fifth Grade by Sherri Winston*

Brianna Justice has big dreams. She wants to be a millionaire chef with her own television show, famous for her trademark cupcakes. The path to her goals (and, possibly, to world domination) begins with winning the election to be President of the fifth grade at her elementary school.

This book reminds our girls that ambition doesn't have to wait for adulthood. The best time to practice attaining big goals is right now. Make a list of ways your daughter can begin to achieve her goals, right now. Does she want to discover a new species of spider? Independent research projects, participation in science fairs, and visits to museums would be a good start. It doesn't matter if children's goals change over time. What matters is that you're teaching your daughter to be proactive about following her curiosity.

In this election season, Brianna's campaign might be fodder for an interesting conversation in your book club meeting. In her story, Brianna begins by focusing on defeating her opponent, a new girl named Jasmine Moon who seems determined to embarrass Brianna. When the campaign damages Brianna's personal sense of integrity and her relationships, she decides to change course. Instead of defeating Jasmine, she focuses on presenting the best plan for president she can think of. How do the events in the book reflect what's going on in this year's real Presidential election?

Now that you're in your second book club meeting, participants will likely feel more comfortable sharing their opinions. If anyone in the group seems still feels shy or uncertain, make sure that other members reach out to purposefully include those people. Girls should see their parents modeling this inclusive behavior. Adults can also coach and encourage girls to extend that inclusiveness.

**In the following pages, you'll find suggestions for how your second meeting could go.**

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## **Munch 'n' Chat, 20-30 minutes**

As parents and girls arrive, think about allowing some time for snacking and catching up. Snacks don't have to be fancy at all; it can be as simple as a picnic blanket in the backyard, or sitting around the coffee table eating popcorn and lemonade.

## **Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes**

Start with a check-in about leadership goals. Did anyone try public speaking over the past month? Give a few minutes to share experiences.

If there's time, pairs might ask each other a questions, such as: **"Where do you like to read?"** Give five minutes for discussion. (These could be parent-daughter pairs, or you could decide to mix up pairs.) Then, give 5-10 minutes for sharing each other's answers.

## **Book Discussion, 30 minutes or so**

### **Open-Ended Questions**

Open-ended questions are a good springboard to book talk because they allow readers to bring up any part of the book that made an impression, confused, delighted, or inspired them. If you started with an open-ended question in the first meeting, you might ask the same question this time or try a different one from the list below. Any question that gets parents and daughters sharing is a good question.

**Here are some useful open-ended questions:**

- What was your favorite part of the book? If you have the book with you, read a paragraph or two of your favorite part aloud. Why was that particular part so powerful or memorable?
- Which part of the book felt important or gave you a Big Idea?

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- Was any part of the book confusing? Was your confusion cleared up by the end of the book or not?
- How is the main character like you, and how is she different? Would you have handled the situations in the story differently than she did?
- What did the main character learn in this story, if anything?

### Questions About *President of the Whole Fifth Grade*

These questions about *President of the Whole Fifth Grade* can help you launch your book talk. Some groups might have time to get to all of these questions, but many groups might pick one or two questions and spend the whole meeting discussing those. Feel free to write your own discussion questions.

- What are some of your goals and dreams? It doesn't matter how huge or unattainable they seem. Saying your goals out loud is a first step toward actualizing them. What are some other steps you could take to learn skills and get closer to your goals?
- Who are your role models outside of your family?
- What kind of character is Jasmine Moon? Why does she do the things she does, and what makes you think that? What do you think of the way Brianna and her friends treat Jasmine?
- Do you think Brianna gets carried away with her campaign to be class president? What does she do that crosses a line?
- Does Brianna change from the beginning of the story to the end? If so, explain how.

### Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

Brianna has a few brave conversations in this story. For one thing, she apologizes to her friends for assuming the worst about them. Then, she tells the kids in the popular group that she is not going to support their idea to use school funds for a beach party. Can you think of any other brave conversations she has?

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Can you think of a brave conversation you have had recently, or one that you need to have? This could be bringing attention to a bad situation, disagreeing with someone else's opinion, or asking for something that you need. The other person might surprise you with a positive response, like Brianna's friends and classmates did!

Your book club can talk in pairs or as a whole group. Think about setting a goal for the next month. For instance, you might try to find three opportunities to practice brave conversations. This goes for parents, too! Report back to the club next month.

### **Closing, 5 minutes**

Before everyone goes off their separate ways, make sure you've chosen a date for your December meeting. Happy reading!

### **Further Reading!**

If you really loved this book, and you'd like to read more books like it, here are some suggestions. If there are other books you would like to recommend, we'd love to hear them! Please share them on our **Girls Leadership Book Club Facebook Group** so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GirlsLeadershipBookClub/>

*President of the Whole Sixth Grade*, by Sherri Winston - If you enjoyed this month's book, continue with Brianna's leadership adventures in this middle school sequel.

*The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*, by Wendy Wan-Long Shang - Lucy has lots of plans for sixth grade, but they are all in jeopardy when her great-aunt from China becomes her new roommate. Who would've thought that this quiet older woman would have so much to teach Lucy about true courage?