

1. While I had been in my backyard with Pinks 257, apparently Jasmine Moon was in  
2.the park passing out little triangle-shaped bribes. Triangles covered in meat and  
cheese!

3. Lauren told me she'd heard that Jasmine Moon went to Orchard Park and passed out  
4.pizza that same day. Her father bought LOTS of pizza and she was just giving it away  
to kids "as a way of introducing herself."

5. Ha! Should I really believe that? Like people go around saying Hi, I'm new in town;  
have some pizza.

6. A guilty feeling scratched at the back of my mind. What if she had only wanted to  
make friends? What if her pizza was not an underhanded way of buying votes?

7. Besides, hadn't my friends warned me not to get too carried away? She was new.  
She passed around some pizza. Big deal... right?

8. Well, what happened next stung more than the time I got flipped in karate class and  
saw stars. We three candidates were picking our campaign teams before the big  
"primary"—which is what they call the little elections in each classroom before the BIG  
election involving the whole school.

11. Of course, I'm picking all my girls, right? With my first pick, I chose Sara. We'd  
discussed it all through the summer like a gazillion times. She would be my campaign  
manager. Then Becks. Becks would be in charge of the creative stuff, like slogans and  
posters. Lauren, who was taller than almost anybody in fifth grade, would be in charge  
of making sure our posters were hung the best. We had it all planned.

12. Except, guess what: Jasmine Moon picked Becks first! Becks looked all squirmy and  
nervous. When Mrs. Nutmeg smiled at Becks, I knew there was trouble.

13. She bent down at Becks's desk, right in front of me. She said, "It might be a nice  
show of citizenship if you helped our newest student with her election campaign, Sweet  
Pea."

14. Mrs. Nutmeg could make going to juvie hall sound like the kindest, greatest thing  
that could happen to a kid. When she smiled at us and patted us on the back and called  
us "Sweet Pea," we were putty in her hands.

15. Becks didn't stand a chance! From the back of the room, Toady Todd began imitating  
Becks. "Umm... mmm... mum..." he said, screwing his face up into these real  
pathetic-looking expressions, then he laughed real hard and in true frog fashion I think  
he croaked a little. He was the funniest toad he knew.

19. "Todd Hampton, you will control yourself this instant, or the primary will be over by  
default, young man, because you will be out!" Mrs. Nutmeg glared at him.

20. Jasmine Moon looked as if she might be nervous. She said, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Nutmeg.  
I didn't mean to cause any problems. If Rebecca has to work with Brianna, I... well, I'm  
really, really sorry." "Rebecca is free to make her own choices, right, Brianna?" Mrs.

Nutmeg looked at me the way Mom does when she's asking something like, "You do know you're not a grown-up, right, Brianna?"

21. Then if that weren't bad enough, Jasmine Moon looked at Becks and said, "It's just that I don't know many people, but you live down the street from me. We could just walk right down the block, you know."

22. From the far side of the room, Taurus the snake slithered around in his glass box. The fish tank made its usual bloop-bloop-bloop sounds. The big, black hand on the huge clock over the door seemed to get stuck, just sitting there.

23. Becks looked at me, then at Sara, as if she didn't know what to do. Mrs. Nutmeg placed her hand on Becks's shoulder. "I know you have close ties in the class, but maybe just this once..." Becks gave a small nod. And just like that, Jasmine Moon had lured one of my best friends... over to the OTHER SIDE!!!

*Reference:*

*Winston, Sherri. President of the Whole Fifth Grade (President Series) (p. 43-46). Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.*