

# *The Election*

by Roy W. Sorrels



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Jill was running for class president. Read to find out what happened when she gave her campaign speech in the auditorium.

Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System 2

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Jill stood in front of her 6th grade class at King School, gazing out at a sea of faces. “As Abraham Lincoln once said,” she began, and then her mind went completely blank. Her cheeks got hotter and hotter and she couldn’t speak. As the audience stared at her, the walls seemed to swirl around and around. Jill squeezed her eyes shut to try to snap out of it.

“Help!” she called out.

“Jill? Honey? Are you all right?”  
Jill’s mother asked, standing at the bedroom door.

Jill bolted upright in bed, feeling dazed.

Jill nodded slowly. "I'm okay," she said in an unconvincing voice. "What time is it?"

"Time to get ready to deliver your speech for class president," her mother said, smiling.

As the memory of her dream came flooding back, Jill felt a fresh wave of panic. "Mom, I don't know if I can do it. The thought of standing in front of all those people makes me feel sick!"

Jill's mother sat down next to her and smiled. "You know, Jill, sometimes I have to give speeches at big meetings." Jill's mother was a heart surgeon, an expert in her field. "I used to feel as frightened as you are now."

Jill asked, "How did you get over your fears?" ■

“Well,” her mother began, “when I have to get up in front of hundreds of strangers, I focus on one friendly face I know. Then I imagine that the two of us are sitting across a table from each other and talking about work.”

“And do you stop being scared?”

“Well, not completely. It’s normal to feel nervous about something that’s new to you. But if you can find the courage to do it anyway, it won’t feel so scary the next time. You can do it—I’m sure of it.”

Later that morning, Jill walked slowly across the auditorium stage and stood behind the podium. She took a deep breath and scanned the faces in the crowd. There, in the second row, was her friend Eduardo. He smiled at her encouragingly. Jill imagined herself talking directly to Eduardo, exactly as her mother had suggested.

"As Abraham Lincoln once said, 'Whatever you are, be a good one.' I am here today to gain your support in our class election. I want to be your class president, and I will be a good one . . . "

Jill began to relax and allowed herself to glance around the auditorium. There, in the next row, was another friend. One by one, more familiar faces came into view. Jill talked about the ideas she had often discussed with these friends—how to keep the halls cleaner, the need for more nutritious cafeteria food, and starting a regular student-faculty discussion group. As Jill described her plans, most of her fears melted away. And when she finished her speech and thanked her classmates for listening, the applause and cheers she heard felt good. Very good.