

★ THE KID WHO ★ ★ RAN FOR ★ PRESIDENT

Can he win?

DAN GUTMAN

 SCHOLASTIC

1.

★ King of the Hill ★

It was right after Election Day. Lane Brainard and I were down in his basement shooting pool when we first came up with the idea of a kid running for President.

The TV was on. A bunch of boring grown-ups in suits and ties were sitting around a table. I wasn't paying much attention, but they were jabbering something about what the Democratic Party and the Republican Party are going to have to do if they want to win the election next year.

Ordinarily, I would grab the remote control and switch to something more interesting (to me, the Weather Channel would have been more interesting). But Lane's sort of a weird genius who wants to know everything about every-

thing. His favorite show is *Meet the Press!* Besides, it *was* his house.

Lane recently moved to Madison — that's the capital of Wisconsin, in case you don't know — with his mom. She had just split up with Lane's dad, who lives in California. Lane and I have only known each other for a little while, but we're getting to be good friends.

"The Democrats have been all messed up since they lost control of Congress," Lane explained as he chalked up his stick. "And the Republicans are entirely clueless."

He smacked the cue ball into the pack and balls scattered across the table. The eleven ball dropped in a corner pocket and Lane walked around the table looking for his next shot.

"Half the time the President doesn't know what he's doing, either," I replied. I don't know much about politics, but I can usually fake it if I have to.

"You know who should be running this country, Moon?" Lane said, lining up his next shot. "A kid."

He stroked the five ball toward the side pocket. It just missed, tapping off the bumper.

Lane looked up at me with a sparkle in his eyes. "Can you imagine that, Moon? A kid running for President of the United States? Think about it. It'll be the next election. And a kid becomes the most powerful person in the world! What a mindblower!"

"That's crazy," I said. "The kid would have to be part of the political system. He'd have to know all the politicians. It takes years to make all the connections."

"You know, politicians aren't picked by a bunch of political cronies in smoke-filled rooms anymore, Moon. It's all computers, fax machines, image makers, media experts, and advertising now. They might as well be selling soap."

"Don't you have to be thirty-five years old or something like that to run for President?" I asked. I seemed to remember something from history class.

"There are ways around that," Lane replied casually.

"You oughta run, Lane," I said. "You're probably the smartest kid around."

"People don't want a smart President," he

"Hi! My name is JUDSON MOON. I'M
TWELVE YEARS OLD AND I'M RUNNING FOR
PRESIDENT OF THE YOU-NITED STATES."



That's how I introduced myself to about a zillion people. I must have kissed a zillion babies, said a zillion hellos, shaken a zillion hands . . .

Will I get a zillion votes? The answer might surprise you.

Can you picture a kid as President? Imagine what we can accomplish—together—in a country where parents listen. Where teachers give no homework. Where every lawmaker obeys a single kid—me!

How am I going to pull this off? Who knows! Read the book to find out.



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