

## The Committee: Erica Griffiths

Madeline wasn't very ambitious, but she desperately wanted to prove to her daughters that she could achieve something important outside of her day job. So she worked hard to gain the approval of the School Committee's famed inner circle, attending their working groups, posting on social media, and volunteering her non-existent time. But she wasn't the right fit, with those incredibly busy executive wives judging her, for working, for not volunteering more, and for just being a single mum with a ponytail.

But after months of diligent work, Madeline felt the circle crack open, just a little, with the dominant Mummies now inveigling Madeline into organising meetings of the Parents and Citizens Committee and doing research on new policies. She toiled away, striving to occupy that persona of a useful, even irreplaceable team member. They now told her they admired her, and even talked about her holding an executive position. Madeline was thrilled.

The power group of Heather and Parvina arrived early for the Annual General Meeting, squeezing their BMWs into non-existent spaces out front, striding into the courtyard, heels clicking and salon hair swishing across new outfits. Madeline sought them out before the crowd arrived, desperate to confirm their prior agreement of her as the new President. But they were taking up precious time with meaningless chit-chat about clothes and their troubles finding parking. The meeting was starting, there was no time to focus their attention, they rushed to take their self-assigned places.

Following distribution of the Agenda, Madeline addressed the gathering on Item 1, thanking the Committee for her

well-written policies on student phones, healthy canteen food and gifts for parent volunteers. The attendees loved her words about a revitalised Committee and benefits for the whole school community. But when it came to actions, the Committee didn't care, they weren't listening, just nodding. Those things were good, they said, but not urgent and there was no need for follow up.

Madeline was puzzled, but she had already turned her attention to Item 2, voting for executive positions. Polling slips were distributed with the nineteen parents quickly marking their ballots, almost without thinking, while Madeline excitedly rehearsed her speech in her head. Parvina cleared her throat to read the results.

'Two votes for our new member, and with seventeen votes let's congratulate Heather as our new President.'

Madeline was flabbergasted, realising that instead of policies, those crafty crones had merely spent time on their own campaign, canvassing votes and calculating every manoeuvre. She rose to her feet.

'You filthy traitors,' she shouted, 'we could have achieved so much together, but instead you have stabbed me in the heart with your treachery and deception.'

'Oh pipe down' quipped Heather, 'you never had a chance.'