

The Book Club

Characters

Cindy: a high school Theater/English teacher, about 30

Evelyn: a high school English teacher, about 50

Andrea: a high school English teacher, about 38

Lisa: a high school English teacher, about 45

Tony: a Phys Ed teacher, 30-50

Setting: Cindy's living room/dining room. There are four places set at the dining room table, the one at the head with an armchair. There is a sideboard with bottles of soda and an ice bucket. A fake ficus is on the side of the room next to a low ottoman.

At Rise: Cindy is humming happily as she bustles around preparing for guests. She places a tray of crackers and cheese and dip in the middle of the table. She then takes a pile of papers and meticulously puts one at each place and the rest at the head of the table. She lays out colored index cards. The doorbell rings.

Cindy sets a book standing upright at the head of the table, then hurries to the door.

Evelyn walks in with some attitude. She is wearing a flared skirt, blouse, and shawl. She has streaked blond hair and carries a large tote bag.

Cindy & Evelyn start

CINDY

Hi Evelyn! I'm glad you could come. I'm so excited for this.

EVELYN

I'm the first one here? I should have stayed in the car and done more grading. What about that meeting?

CINDY

Meeting? The book club meeting?

EVELYN

The faculty meeting, Cindy. Was that a shit storm or what?

CINDY

What?

EVELYN

You must have realized what bullshit it all was, right? You didn't have your time wasted like that at your last school, did you?

CINDY

It did go on for a long time.

EVELYN

A long time! It was exactly one hour. The maximum length our contract allows. *We're* not supposed to teach from PowerPoints, but they can do that to us. 47 slides? And a "Think Pair Share." I have a pair I'll share.

CINDY

It was kind of...but you know, they have to...

(Evelyn goes off to the kitchen and comes back in with a wine glass. She then moves the book and the nearby papers off the table and sits at the head. Cindy watches with dismay.)

CINDY (continued)

I was planning on...

EVELYN

Don't worry! I brought wine. I knew you wouldn't have any.

CINDY

No, I meant I was going to sit...

EVELYN

No worries.

CINDY

I have soda. (She gestures to the sideboard.)

EVELYN

Just soda! After a meeting like that?! Did you come from a Baptist School?

(Cindy picks up the book and puts it back on the table where it was.)

CINDY

We...uh...need this here.

EVELYN

What's that?

CINDY

A Man Called Ove.

EVELYN

I can see that. Why are you placing it so prominently in front of my face?

CINDY

It's this month's book.

What? EVELYN

The book club book. CINDY

What? EVELYN

You didn't read the book club book?! CINDY

Are you going to keep saying the book club book? EVELYN

Cindy & Evelyn end (The doorbell rings. Cindy heads to answer it. Evelyn moves the book and pile of papers off the table. She pulls a huge bottle of white wine out of her tote bag and puts it where the book had been. Cindy opens the door to admit Lisa. Evelyn gets up to greet her.)

Cindy, Lisa, Evelyn Start

Hi Lisa. Thanks for coming. CINDY

Like I had a choice. They have me "on record" for missing two PLCs. (She looks around.) Nice house. How can you afford this on what they pay us? LISA (looking around)

Uh, I uh... CINDY

What a waste of time! LISA (she looks at Evelyn)

My house? CINDY

No, honey. LISA

LISA
The faculty meeting.

EVELYN
The faculty meeting.

I swear, if Andrea had said one more word, I would have strangled her. EVELYN

LISA

Her questions were so stupid. And they'd already been answered.

EVELYN

She's just trying to show off to get the promotion.

LISA

She thinks that teaching AP makes her better than us.

EVELYN

Better than *we are*. If they make her Assistant Principal, I'll quit. You know I will.

LISA (giving her an annoyed look)

You say that all the time, but you never will.

EVELYN

Maybe I will this time.

LISA

You'll never quit. You'll die in front of your study hall, covered in spitballs and paper airplanes.

EVELYN

That would be preferable to attending a "Professional Learning Community" meeting.

(Cindy sees that Evelyn has vacated the head seat just as Lisa is pulling out the chair to sit down. Cindy hurries over to beat her there. She resets what Evelyn has moved.)

LISA (continued)

Whoa, honey. Where're you going so fast? If you want to sit there, just say so.

CINDY

No, it's...I'm all set up... I mean, I *am* the discussion leader this month.

EVELYN

I don't think we need a discussion leader. I mean we all have English degrees. (Beat) Oh, sorry, yours is in theater, right?

CINDY

I have 30 English credits.

LISA

Leave her alone, Evelyn. She's doing a great job. Look! She's got cute little discussion sheets.

Cindy, Lisa, Evelyn end

ANDREA START (Lisa answers the door. Andrea and Tony enter.)

ANDREA
Hello friends! Wasn't that a great faculty meeting?

(Evelyn and Lisa roll their eyes.)

EVELYN
God, Andrea, you can't be serious.

ANDREA
I am serious. I felt the PowerPoint was very...powerful! (She laughs at her joke.)

EVELYN
Let me guess...

EVELYN and LISA
You made it.

ANDREA
Thank you! It encapsulated the new standards well, don't you think?

EVELYN
If by encapsulated, you mean totally obscured....

ANDREA
What resonated most with you?

LISA
The...uh... color scheme.

ANDREA
Thank you. The color palette is supposed to elicit...

Andrea end

EVELYN
Get yourself some wine, Steph.

(Tony approaches Cindy..)

Tony & Evelyn start

TONY
Hi guys. Hi, Cindy.

CINDY (to Tony)
Hi, Tony. What are you doing here?

TONY

Harry said I could join your PLC.

EVELYN

The other gym teachers kicked you out?

TONY

We prefer to be called Phys Ed teachers, but no, they're discussing... gym stuff...

EVELYN

New techniques in dodge ball?

TONY

I'm doing health this semester.

EVELYN

And our English learning community will help you with what? Sex ed?

TONY

I wanted to come because I love... this book.

CINDY

Finally, someone who read it.

EVELYN

I assign essays that I have to grade. 135 essays at a time. I have no time to read anything else.

Tony & Evelyn end

CINDY

I didn't...

ANDREA

It's a great book.

CINDY (hopefully)

You read it?

ANDREA

This is really good dip.

EVELYN

I brought wine. (aside to Lisa) All she had was soda.

CINDY

It's one in the afternoon.

(Andrea pours herself a big glass of wine.
Tony takes pictures of the Cindy.
Lisa is turning her paper into an airplane.)

CINDY

You know we have to turn in a sheet telling what we did in our PLC.

LISA

You're going to narc on us?

ANDREA

Technically, the PLC is supposed to help you improve your teaching skills.

EVELYN

Cindy is trying to work on her teaching skills. Do I get a sticker, Cindy?

TONY

She's doing great!

EVELYN (to Tony)

Don't suck up shorty.

Cindy start

CINDY

Evelyn! Are you grading papers?

EVELYN

No.

LISA (sarcastically)

Discussing literature is helping us so much.

CINDY

If you had really read the book it would! Andrea, put your phone down.

(A phone buzzes. Tony looks down and tries to sneakily talk.)

CINDY (continued)

Tony!

TONY

One minute. (into phone) Can I come back to your PLC?

ANDREA (whispering to Evelyn)

I should take over this discussion.

CINDY (standing up)

Stop the whispering unless you want to share it with the class.

ANDREA

I didn't say anything.

(Lisa throws the paper airplane.
It hits Cindy in the face.)

CINDY

That's it!

ANDREA

Cindy! Relax!

CINDY (to Andrea)

I've had it. Andrea, are you chewing gum?

ANDREA

Maybe...

CINDY

I had a nice discussion planned...

EVELYN

Are you going to write us up? (She goes to take a sip of wine.)

CINDY

I just might. (She takes the wine glass away from Evelyn.) No more for you.

EVELYN

I brought it!

CINDY (taking the papers from Evelyn)

And no more grading until we're done.

(She sees Andrea texting and takes the phone.

Lisa goes to grab crackers. Cindy takes

the crackers and puts the book in front of Evelyn.)

No more crackers, wine, or phone until we're done! (She picks up the book and thrusts it at Evelyn.) Here! Start reading!

EVELYN

What?

ANDREA

You can't do this.

Just watch me!

CINDY

Just watch her.

TONY

Now! Out loud! And the rest of you are taking notes.

CINDY

I don't have a pencil.

ANDREA

You should have come prepared.

CINDY

I actually read it, so can I go.

TONY (standing up)

May I!

ANDREA, LISA & EVELYN

Sit down! Everybody is gonna...Don't correct me. ...Is going to suffer if you don't all do the work.

CINDY

Now we know why she had to leave her old school.

EVELYN

Enough! I've had it with all of you. (Turning to Evelyn) Evelyn, you're a bully with a bad attitude!

CINDY

Cindy end

I was teacher of the year.

EVELYN

25 years ago.

ANDREA

Andrea, you're a know it all.

CINDY

Well, because...I don't want to sound egotistical, but I do know it all. I almost have my Phd.

ANDREA