



Chapter 1

The Leaders of Tomorrow: A Retelling

I knew only two of the other girls who were to be my classmates, and both had been a half-grade ahead of me at my old school. The taller, five feet at age ten, was Mary Barker; the other, Gina Pasquale. I had often admired Mary on the playground because she was the best softball player in school. She also won all-city prizes in track. And smart! I'd seen her give accurate, instant answers to intricate math problems that other girls had spent hours huddled over in the bathroom, trying desperately to solve before handing in their papers. Sometimes Mary would only help others with homework for money. She had a side that was unscrupulous and fearless, and despite her tender age, her almost insatiable appetite for makeup and earrings required money. Nobody could believe her mother allowed her to use lipstick and wear earrings, but no one would deny that she looked good. The shirtwaist, the long blunt-cut auburn hair, the skeptical brown eyes all made her look mature and intimidatingly attractive.

Gina was so completely opposite in character and values that the two seemed destined to despise one another. A little overweight,

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