PIPER'S CURLING ADVENTURES

Piper and the Bonspiel News

BOOK FOUR



Mary Deuhs

An illustrated chapter book

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CHAPTER 1

The Empty Square

The warm room had grown extra tables.

Piper was certain of it. Last Saturday, there had been room beside the window for a whole row of bags. Now two tables stood there, covered with paper, pencils, and a stack of folded signs.

Dad carried in another chair.

“Are the tables having a party?” Piper asked.

“Something like that.”

Tomorrow was the home-club junior funspiel. Four beginner teams would play two short games each. There would be lunch, people from another club, and considerably more shoes on the bench than usual.

It was the first time Piper’s little group had helped with a day like this.

She wanted to see everything.

Maisie arrived carrying a bag that rustled.

“Important equipment,” she explained.

Wren looked inside. “Napkins.”

“Extremely important after lunch.”

Nora came behind them with her small notebook. She had drawn a curling house on its cover, with four little stones tucked around the edge.

Granite was standing beside the new tables. His white gloves held a stack of blank paper.

“Excellent,” he said. “The junior department has arrived.”

“What’s our job?” Piper asked.

“First, help Ruth put these on the tables. Then make sure I don’t hang any signs upside down.”

“Have you done that before?”

“Only signs with insufficient ambition.”

Ruth, the volunteer at the desk, gave them pencils and a list of team names. The Too-Cold Club. The Silver Mittens. The Blue Comets. The Sliders.

They made a sign for each team’s lunch table. Wren checked the spellings. Maisie drew mittens that looked ready to applaud. Piper colored the letters on their own sign.

Nora finished her little picture last. She had drawn four people around a curling house, each doing a different job.

Ruth leaned over to look.

“That would make a lovely page to take home.”

Nora glanced up. “What sort of page?”

“A memory of the day, perhaps.”

Piper looked at the blank paper still on the table.

They could write who won. Draw the best shot. Put everybody’s names somewhere. There could be a headline across the top, the way newspapers had.

Nora turned to a clean notebook page.

“We could make news.”

Maisie sat down immediately.

“I have news. There will be sandwiches.”

“News about the curling,” Wren said.

“Both stories can be important.”

Nora drew a large rectangle. She divided it into four smaller spaces.

“One for each team?” she asked.

Piper leaned close. “And the scores.”

“And pictures,” Maisie said.

“And we should check the names,” Wren added.

Nora wrote BONSPIEL NEWS across the top. Beneath it she added HOME CLUB JUNIOR FUNSPIEL.

Granite examined the page.

“A newspaper,” he said. “At last, someone will report on my excellent coaching tie.”

“You aren’t wearing a tie,” Maisie said.

“A shocking first story.”

Ruth laughed. “If you finish one clear page, I can make copies on the office copier. Everyone could take one home.”

“When would you need it?” Nora asked.

“Soon after the second games. Some families will leave quite quickly.”

Piper looked at the four empty spaces.

Four teams. Two games each. A whole day of curling.

One page did not seem like very much paper.

But tomorrow hadn’t happened yet. Perhaps its news would fit neatly.

Nora wrote her own name at the bottom, then handed the pencil to Piper.

“Are you in?”

Piper wrote her name at the bottom. Maisie and Wren added theirs.

Four small names beneath four empty squares.

They had a newspaper to fill.

CHAPTER 2

News Does Not Sit Still



On funspiel morning, the warm room smelled of toast and clean floor.

Piper found her team's lunch sign exactly where they had left it. Maisie's drawn mittens were still applauding. Someone had put a little paper comet beside the Blue Comets' name.

The blank newspaper waited on a tray by Ruth's desk.

Nora checked that it was dry and flat.

Piper checked the ice.

Two short beginner lanes had been prepared. The little stones stood safely out of walking paths. Coaches

from both clubs were checking the equipment and talking together.

There would be help at each lane. Nobody had to become an expert just because extra people were watching.

Granite gathered the juniors in the warm room.

“Two games today,” he said. “Four ends in each game, like your beginner league. Two stones per player in an end, taking turns with the other team. We’ll keep our short lanes and coaching help.”

He pointed to the schedule.

“Everybody plays both games. There’s no elimination. If a game is tied after four ends, it stays tied today. We’ll record each game’s score.”

“Everyone will play all their stones today, even if the winner is already clear.”

“Do we get a trophy?” someone asked.

“No overall champion at this little funspiel,” Granite said. “But there is lunch.”

Maisie looked deeply satisfied with the arrangements.

Piper found their first opponents on the schedule. The Silver Mittens were visiting from another club.

One of their players stood beside the bench holding a brush. She had dark hair in a low bun and a small clip at the side. Two pale stripes ran along her jacket sleeves.

“I’m Juno,” she said when Piper came over.

“Piper. We’re making a newspaper.”

Juno blinked. “Today?”

Piper nodded toward the tray.

“It’s mostly paper so far.”

Maisie joined them with a little notebook.

“What would you like people to know about your team?” she asked Juno.

Juno looked over at the other Silver Mittens.

“That we haven’t had our lunch yet?”

Maisie nodded seriously. “This is becoming a major story.”

They laughed.

At their own bench, the Too-Cold Club divided the jobs. Nora would draw and arrange the page. Wren would check names and details. Maisie would ask the questions. Piper would write about their games.

They would all help when they could.

Piper looked at the schedule again.

Their first game and the other teams’ first game would happen at the same time.

“How are we supposed to watch both?” she asked.

“We can’t,” Wren said.

That was an inconvenient fact to discover after starting a newspaper.

Nora tapped her notebook.

“We’ll ask people afterward.”

Piper looked at Juno’s team. They had begun their warm-up. Across the room, the Blue Comets and Sliders were doing theirs.

News was preparing to happen in two places at once.

Piper put her pencil on the tray. Paper and notebooks would stay in the warm room. On the ice, she had her own job to do.

She checked her helmet, shoes, and grippers with the coaches. Then she followed her friends toward the ice entrance.

Maisie turned back for one moment.

“Don’t start the sandwiches without me,” she told the room.

Ruth promised nothing.

CHAPTER 3

The Part We Missed

The Silver Mittens wished them good curling.

Piper wished it back. Then she had to stop herself from asking Juno another question while everyone was getting ready.

The newspaper could wait until the break.

Their lineup stayed the one they had been learning in league: Maisie lead, Nora second, Piper third, and Wren fourth and skip. Piper would take over at the house for Wren's deliveries.

Jo helped near the hack. Ben stayed with the sweepers. Granite was available at the house. The other beginner lane had its own coaches.

The Too-Cold Club had the hammer in the first end.

Piper tried to remember the whole end, as if she could fold it up later and put it on the page.

That did not leave much room in her head for curling.

She settled for watching the stone in front of her.

Maisie made a steady second delivery. Nora's stone stopped at the back of the house. Piper sent one through and one short.

Wren's last red stone finished nearest the button.

One for the Too-Cold Club.

Piper smiled at her friends. She would remember that part without writing it down.

The second end belonged to the Silver Mittens. Their yellow stones found useful places. At the finish, two were closer than the nearest red.

Yellow two. Red one.

In the third end, Piper found herself beside Nora with a brush in her hands. Maisie was preparing to deliver. Wren had chosen a target in the front of the house.

Piper could hear voices from the other lane. Someone called for sweeping. Another voice called up.

For a moment, the two games sounded mixed together.

“Wren’s voice,” Nora said quietly.

Piper nodded. She knew that voice. She had heard it every Saturday, getting stronger and clearer.

Maisie’s stone came toward them.

“Looks close,” Nora called.

Piper watched its speed. She heard Wren call for a little brushing, then up. She and Nora lifted together.

The stone stopped in the house.

Maisie came down when it was safe, pleased with herself and slightly out of breath.

“I heard about six skips,” she said.

“We found ours,” Piper told her.

Later stones changed the picture in the rings. By the end, only one red was closer than the nearest yellow.

One more point for the Too-Cold Club. Wren and Juno agreed on it before any stones were moved.

Two each.

On the neighboring lane, a cheer rose just as Ben was helping the sweepers finish a shot.

Piper looked over after their stone stopped.

She could see the Blue Comets smiling. She couldn’t see what had happened in their house.

“Something for the paper,” Maisie said when they reached the waiting place.

“What?” Piper asked.

“I don’t know. Something loud.”

They played their final end. Yellow had the last stone because red had scored in the third.

Juno’s last yellow finished closer than any red.

One for the Silver Mittens.

The score was three to two. The Too-Cold Club had lost.

Piper felt the familiar little disappointment. She also remembered Wren’s first-end stone and Maisie’s careful sweeping. Those things had happened too.

They shook hands. Juno thanked them for the game.

“Good last shot,” Piper told her.

“Thanks. I thought it might be short.”

“So did I,” Maisie said. “I was trying not to think it too hopefully.”

Juno laughed.

After the coaches helped clear the stones and the girls stepped off the ice, Piper hurried only as far as the warm-room door. There she remembered that people were carrying cups and bags.

She walked to the tray.

Nora opened her notebook. Wren wrote down their score, with the team names beside the numbers.

Piper began a sentence.

THE SILVER MITTENS WON THREE TO TWO.

That part fitted nicely.

Maisie came back from the other table.

“Somebody said there was an amazing shot next door.”

“What kind?” Nora asked.

“Two stones went out. Or one went out and two moved. I didn’t get that bit.”

Piper’s pencil hovered.

An amazing shot sounded like newspaper material. Much more dramatic than writing that Piper’s own first stone had missed the rings.

Wren set down her pencil.

“Who made it?”

Maisie looked back at the crowded tables.

“I haven’t found that bit either.”

Nora drew a tiny empty box beside the blank square for the Blue Comets.

“We should find the person,” she said.

Piper left her pencil above the page for another second.

Then she lowered it without writing the amazing part.

They had heard a cheer.

They had not yet found the news inside it.

CHAPTER 4

Granite Makes Headlines



Maisie found the Blue Comets beside the window.

The Blue Comets' skip was eating a sandwich. Another girl was explaining something with both hands while carefully keeping her cup between her elbows.

"Who made the shot that everybody cheered?" Maisie asked.

The girl with the cup pointed at herself.

"Me. I'm Tali."

Piper and Wren brought the notebook over. Nora stayed at the newspaper table, sketching the edge of a curling house.

“Did two stones go out?” Piper asked.

“One,” Tali said. “I hit one in the house. Mine rolled away to the side afterward.”

“A takeout,” Wren said.

Tali nodded. “My first one that I meant to do.”

Piper liked the last part very much.

They asked Tali to show them on Nora’s spare sketch. She pointed to where the stone had been and where hers had traveled. Her coach, passing the table, confirmed the same thing.

One stone out. A first planned takeout.

Piper wrote it down.

“Would you like that to be your team’s bit of the paper?” Maisie asked.

Tali looked at her teammates. They nodded.

“Could it say that my team helped?” Tali asked. “Our skip chose the shot, and the others told me it was worth trying.”

Wren added a note.

Piper had been ready to write about a huge, astonishing double something. What they had now was smaller and much clearer.

Tali’s smile made it feel important enough.

Back at their table, Granite appeared carrying an empty paper cup.

“I understand you require headlines.”

“We have one,” Nora said, pointing to BONSPIEL NEWS.

“A sound beginning. But consider this.”

He rolled a blank sheet into a tube and held it like a microphone.

“LOCAL COACH DISCOVERS LUNCH.”

Maisie nearly dropped her pencil.

“COACH RETURNS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH,” Granite continued.

Piper laughed. “That isn’t about the games.”

“Very well. DISTINGUISHED EYEBROWS OBSERVE CURLING.”

Wren looked at his eyebrows. “That one is true.”

“Excellent. Print it in enormous letters.”

Nora covered the top of the page with her hands.

“No enormous letters.”

Granite peered over her fingers. Four squares were becoming four little stories. Around them lay notes, names, and Maisie’s drawing of a sandwich wearing gloves.

“A serious operation,” he said.

“Sometimes,” Nora replied.

Ruth called him over to help carry a light box of paper cups. Granite tucked the rolled sheet under his arm.

"The press must excuse me," he announced. "My next assignment is cylindrical."

After he left, Maisie wrote COACH FINDS CUPS on a scrap.

"We're not putting all his stories in," Wren said.

"One tiny one?"

Nora looked at the bottom corner of the page.

"Maybe. If there's room after the teams."

Piper crossed out the words AMAZING DOUBLE SHOT in her rough notes. She hadn't put them on the real page, but they looked rather foolish now.

Beside them she wrote TALI MAKES HER FIRST PLANNED TAKEOUT.

Then she added WITH HELP FROM HER TEAM.

This time, she knew whose news she was writing.

CHAPTER 5

Four Teams on One Page

The Silver Mittens had plenty to say.

At first, Juno thought their part of the paper should be the final shot from the game with the Too-Cold Club.

Then one of her teammates reminded her about their first team cheer.

Then another said the best thing had been finding the right bench after carrying her bag to three wrong ones.

Maisie wrote down all three suggestions.

Her pencil began to look worried.

“What does everybody want?” she asked.

The Silver Mittens talked it over. Piper waited, eating the corner of her sandwich.

Finally, Juno pointed to the first line.

“The game. But say it was close. Your team made us work.”

Piper swallowed her mouthful.

“Okay.”

Juno leaned forward to check what Maisie wrote.

CLOSE GAME GOES TO THE SILVER MITTENS THREE TO TWO.

“That’s good,” she said.

The Sliders were at the next table. Their skip, Mei, had a small notebook of her own.

“What should our bit say?” she asked her friends.

Maisie had heard someone at the table telling a funny story. One of the Sliders had wished the other team good

morning just after lunch, then said it again while trying to correct herself.

“That could be our headline,” Maisie suggested. “GOOD MORNING ALL DAY.”

The girl beside Mei looked down at her cup.

“I’d rather you didn’t put that in.”

Maisie lowered her pencil.

“Okay.”

The girl glanced up, as if she had expected a longer discussion.

Maisie drew a small line through the idea in her notes. “What would you like instead?”

For a moment, nobody answered. Piper could hear the copier in the office and someone laughing on the far side of the room.

Mei turned toward her teammate.

“There was something you were pleased about before the game,” she said.

The girl thought. Her fingers loosened around the cup.

Piper expected her to choose a shot.

Instead, she said, “We remembered all the names.”

“Which names?” Wren asked.

“The other team. Usually I say good shot to somebody and hope they know I mean them.”

Mei smiled. “Today she knew.”

They chose that as their team’s moment.

Maisie wrote a line about the Sliders learning all their opponents’ names. Wren checked that the girls liked the wording.

The girl who had said good morning read it and nodded.

Piper noticed how differently she sat now. The little story belonged to her again.

When they returned to their own table, Nora looked up from her drawing.

“How much news?”

Maisie spread out the notes.

“Possibly a whole forest.”

Nora laid them beside the page. The Silver Mittens’ sentence fitted. The Blue Comets needed two lines. The Sliders’ bit was short enough, but Piper had written an entire paragraph about the Too-Cold Club’s first game.

It contained the score. Wren’s stone. Maisie’s sweeping. Nora’s call. Piper’s miss. Another sentence explaining the miss. Half a sentence that didn’t yet have an ending.

Nora measured the space with her pencil.

“It won’t all go in.”

Piper looked at her paragraph.

“It all happened.”

“I know.”

Nora sounded sorry about the size of paper, not annoyed with Piper.

Wren pulled the rough notes closer.

“We’ve got another game yet.”

“So will everybody,” Maisie said.

All four girls looked at the four small squares.

The day was only halfway done, and the page was already full.

Piper felt a little squeeze in her stomach. They had promised Ruth one clear page. Families would be leaving soon after the afternoon games.

They couldn't make time wider by drawing another border around it.

Nora turned the paper over and thought.

"Maybe we ask every team to choose one moment after both games," she said. "They can keep the one they chose, or change it."

"And the scores go in a little box at the bottom," Wren added. "One line for each game. Four lines altogether."

Maisie lifted her pencil. "No entire forests."

Piper looked at the paragraph about their game. She liked several of its sentences.

She moved it onto the pile of rough notes.

"We can keep these," she said. "They just don't all need to be on this page."

Nora nodded and began a cleaner layout.

Four teams still fitted.

They needed to decide what belonged in each space.

CHAPTER 6

The Second Game

Ruth put the paper tray behind her desk while the girls played.

“It’ll be safe and dry here,” she said.

Nora checked once more that the page lay flat. Then she picked up her helmet.

For the next little while, they were curlers again.

The Sliders would be their opponents. Mei greeted Piper by name.

Piper smiled. The newspaper had told the truth about that part.

They warmed up again, checked their gear with the coaches, and went onto their short lane. The Sliders won the coin toss and chose the last stone.

The Too-Cold Club would deliver first.

Piper thought briefly about the page waiting behind the desk.

Then Maisie’s first stone was ready.

That was the thing in front of her now.

In the first end, the Too-Cold Club’s red stones stopped in useful places. Wren’s last red lay closest. The Sliders’ final yellow went too far.

One red point, even though yellow had held the hammer.

Piper was pleased. She was also ready when Nora needed her at the waiting place.

In the second end, the Sliders scored one.

One each.

There was no enormous breakthrough in Piper's hands. Her first stone had stopped short. Her second had wandered left. She adjusted the next push with the help of what she and her teammates noticed.

Maisie kept her steps steady while sweeping. Nora gave clear distance calls. Wren took time choosing their target.

Maisie started the third end with a red stone that stopped farther into the house than she expected.

She stared at it from the waiting place.

"I meant to do that," she said. "Mostly."

Her second went short. Nora's first curled away, but her next reached the rings and stopped a little nearer the button than Maisie's.

Two useful red stones.

Piper went for her turn. The picture in the house was busier than it had been before the end began. She could see the space Wren wanted, beside a yellow stone that sat farther out.

Piper's first delivery went through. Her second stayed in the house, but too far out to count ahead of the yellow.

At the house, she took over while Wren delivered. Nora and Maisie went to sweep.

The Sliders tried to come closer. One yellow missed to the side. Wren's first red stopped short. The Sliders' last yellow traveled through the back. Wren's final red finished near the outer edge.

When every stone had stopped, Maisie's and Nora's early reds were still the two closest.

Piper looked at them. The end had held so many later turns that she had almost forgotten where its good beginning came from.

“Your stones,” she told Maisie and Nora.

“Our brushing too,” Maisie said, nodding at Piper.

“Your calls,” Nora added, looking at Wren.

Both teams came to agree on the score. Two reds closer than the nearest yellow, with no doubt.

Three to one.

Piper looked at the board, then at her friends.

They had never finished one of their games ahead before.

They were ahead now.

One end remained.

Piper wanted to put that thought safely somewhere until the game was over. It refused to sit still.

She let it be excited in the background.

The fourth end was untidy.

Stones stopped short. Stones went through. One clipped another and both rolled out of scoring places. By the time Wren had finished her last delivery, there were no stones left in the house.

The Sliders still had the final yellow.

Mei sent it toward the rings. It traveled on a good line, but stopped just short of the outer edge.

After it was completely still, both teams looked.

Nothing in or touching the house.

“No points,” Wren said.

“A blank end,” Granite confirmed.

The score stayed three to one.

The Too-Cold Club had won.

Piper didn't say anything for a moment. Maisie looked at her. Nora looked at Wren. Then all four began smiling at once.

They had made enough good shots across the game. The last one hadn't needed to be a miracle.

Piper shook Mei's hand.

"Good curling."

"Good curling," Mei said. "That third end was good."

Piper thanked her.

She wanted to tell Dad immediately. She wanted to look at the score again. She wanted to remember every stone her team had sent, including the ones that hadn't worked.

Then Maisie said, "We have news."

The paper.

Piper glanced toward the warm room.

Their game was finished.

The newspaper wasn't.

CHAPTER 7

A Very Small Front Page

Nora reached the tray first.

Ruth put it on the table and pointed to the clock.

“I can start copying when you’re ready. Some families are planning to leave in about twenty minutes.”

Twenty minutes had sounded long when Piper waited for a game to begin.

Now it looked very small.

Maisie went to find the teams. Wren asked the coaches for the checked game scores. Nora spread the paper and notes across the table.

Piper picked up her pencil.

THE TOO-COLD CLUB WINS.

She wrote it in large letters on a scrap.

The words looked wonderful.

They also took up nearly half a square all by themselves.

Nora looked at them, then at Piper.

Piper looked back.

“We did,” she said.

“I know. I was there.”

Piper laughed. Nora had every right to enjoy the words too.

They tried a smaller heading.

FIRST WIN FOR THE TOO-COLD CLUB.

That fitted.

Piper wrote one short sentence underneath about Maisie's and Nora's two counting stones in the third end. She read it to Nora.

Nora smiled. "Will you put the brushing and calls in too?"

Piper tried the sentence again. Four girls' work had to fit into fewer words than she had written at lunch.

It took two attempts.

When she finished, Nora nodded. "That sounds like our game."

Maisie returned with the Silver Mittens' final choice. They wanted to keep the close morning game. Their second game, against the Blue Comets, had finished two to two.

Wren checked the four game sheets and wrote the results in order. In the morning, the Silver Mittens had beaten the Too-Cold Club three to two, and the Blue Comets had beaten the Sliders four to one. In the afternoon, the Too-Cold Club had won three to one against the Sliders, while the Blue Comets and Silver Mittens had tied.

The Blue Comets still wanted Tali's takeout. Maisie had asked her to read their sentence once more. Tali had pointed out that she had practised that shot before, even though today was the first time she had meant it and made it in a game.

Piper added IN A GAME to their note.

Three small words. A clearer story.

Mei came over for the Sliders.

"We'd like the names bit," she said.

"Even after the second game?" Piper asked.

Mei nodded. "We like that one."

“Then that’s yours,” Nora said.

Piper looked at their four spaces.

A close game. A first planned takeout. Remembering people’s names. A first win.

They didn’t all sound alike.

That made the page more interesting.

Nora drew a little picture for each. Mittens beside a close pair of scores. A stone rolling away from another. Two small speech bubbles with cheerful faces. Four brushes standing together.

Wren checked the team names letter by letter.

Maisie looked at the bottom corner.

“Is there room for Granite?”

There was a little space. Very little.

Piper took the scrap that said COACH FINDS CUPS.

"Could this be true news?" she asked.

"He did find them," Wren said.

"He carried them," Nora added.

Maisie wrote a new version.

GRANITE HELPS WITH CUPS. REPORTS GOOD LUNCH.

They all laughed.

"One tiny drawing," Nora said.

She gave the coach a magnificent pair of eyebrows and a paper cup.

Piper leaned over the page.

There was no room for her whole account of the first game. There was no room for the best sandwich, or every joke, or the way Maisie's curls had flattened under her helmet and sprung back up.

But every team was there.

Piper picked up the glue stick.

They were close.

CHAPTER 8

Before the Coats Go On

Nora laid their final sheet in the middle of the table.

She had drawn their pictures directly onto it. The short written pieces were on neat strips of paper, ready to stick into place.

Piper passed the glue stick. Maisie held the next strip flat. Wren checked each one before Nora pressed it down.

They worked without much talking for a few minutes.

That was unusual enough that Granite stopped nearby to inspect them.

“Has somebody stolen the conversation?”

“Deadline,” Maisie said.

“Ah. A notorious thief.”

He left them to it.

Piper could hear families collecting bags. A zipper rasped. Someone asked about a missing glove, then found it inside a boot. A parent called that there were still several minutes before they needed to leave.

The day was putting on its coat.

Wren reached the results box.

She stopped.

“Wait.”

Piper’s hand froze above the glue stick.

“What?”

“This says the Blue Comets won their second game three to one. But the game sheet says two to two.”

Maisie frowned. “I thought I wrote two to two.”

“You did,” Wren said, checking the rough note. “We copied the line above it.”

Piper looked at the strip.

They had been so busy making everything fit that the numbers from one game had been copied onto the next line too.

“Good catch,” Nora said.

She slid a blank strip toward Piper.

Piper rewrote the result. Wren checked it against the sheet. Then Maisie read the names and numbers aloud while Nora followed with her finger.

The line was right now.

They checked the others the same way.

Ruth waited at the end of the table. She didn’t tell them to hurry through the checking.

Finally, Nora pressed the last strip flat.

“There.”

The four girls leaned back.

BONSPIEL NEWS.

Four teams. Four chosen moments. The game results. One extremely small coach beside a cup.

Piper could see a pencil line where Nora had changed the size of a drawing. One strip sat slightly crooked.

The page looked made by them.

“Ready?” Ruth asked.

Nora looked around at the others.

Wren nodded. Maisie gave two thumbs up. Piper nodded too.

Ruth carried the page into the office and worked the copier herself. The girls stayed by their table, clearing the scraps into a tidy pile.

The machine began its steady whir.

Piper watched the doorway.

She had waited for curling stones to reach the house. She had never expected to feel nearly the same thing about a sheet of paper.

Juno came over with her bag on one shoulder.

“We’re going soon. Did you finish?”

“I think so,” Piper said.

Ruth appeared holding a stack of copies.

Nora let out a breath. Maisie said, “News!” so loudly that two parents turned around.

Wren took the top copy and checked that the bottom line hadn’t been cut off.

Everything was there.

They carried copies to the teams.

Piper handed one to Juno. She watched Juno find the Silver Mittens' square, then show it to her friends.

"That was our game," Juno said.

Across the room, Tali pointed at her takeout picture. Mei read the names story aloud to the Sliders.

Piper looked at Nora.

Nora was watching the room, her pencil still tucked behind one ear.

The page had left their table.

It seemed to know where to go.



CHAPTER 9

What They Took Home

Granite demanded to see his picture.

Maisie showed him the bottom corner.

He held the page close. Then farther away. Then close again.

“My eyebrows have been reduced.”

“We had to fit everyone,” Nora said.

“A difficult editorial decision.”

“Very.”

He studied the tiny drawing for another moment.

“The cup is excellent.”

Maisie bowed.

Piper took a copy to Dad. He read it slowly, beginning at the top instead of going straight to the Too-Cold Club’s square.

She waited beside him.

He smiled at Tali’s takeout. At the Sliders’ names. At Granite’s lunch report.

Then he reached their first win.

“I saw that game,” he said.

“You were helping.”

“I still saw it.”

Piper grinned.

She liked that the win had a place on the page. She liked that it wasn’t the only thing on it.

Ruth gave Nora the original sheet in a cardboard folder so it would stay flat on the way home. The other girls each had a copy.

“You finished before the coats,” Ruth said.

“Some of the coats,” Wren replied. “One was already on.”

“Before the last zip,” Maisie decided.

That seemed fair.

The teams were leaving now. People said goodbye at the door, then remembered one more thing and came back to say it. Piper could see the day becoming stories while it was still happening.

Juno waved from beside the bench.

“See you again sometime?”

“I hope so,” Piper said.

She meant it. She wanted another game with the Silver Mittens. She wanted to see whether Tali would make another planned takeout. She even wanted to know whether Mei’s team would remember her name next time.

Probably, she thought, they would.

After the visitors left, the room looked larger. There were crumbs under one table and a small pile of abandoned napkins beside another.

The girls helped with the light cleanup on the dry floor while adults put away the heavier things. Paper scraps went into the right bins. Pencils returned to their box.

Maisie inspected the remaining napkins.

“My important equipment did well.”

Wren found one unused sheet of paper.

She held it up.

“Next issue?”

Nora took it and smiled.

“Maybe another day.”

Piper was glad. Making news had been fun. It had also been work, and she had done plenty of both.

At the door, Piper folded her copy carefully along a blank space between the pictures. She tucked it into her bag where it wouldn’t get crumpled by a shoe.

Their first win was in there.

So were three other teams, a first takeout, some remembered names, and a very small drawing of Granite.

Ruth asked whether they would like to pin a copy to the noticeboard.

Nora looked at the others. Four heads nodded.

Ruth found a clear space at a height where the girls could read it. Then she pinned the page securely in place.

Piper stood beside Maisie, Wren, and Nora, looking at their news on the wall.

Next Saturday, someone might stop there before putting on a helmet. Someone who hadn't been at the funspiel would see what they had made.

Maisie pointed to the tiny coach at the bottom.

"The sandwiches nearly missed the paper."

"They got in," Wren said. "Good lunch."

"Two words. They deserve a food section."

"That would need more paper," Piper said.

Nora held up the unused sheet Wren had found.

"Another day," she reminded them.

Maisie's grin spread slowly across her face.

Piper began to laugh.

Tomorrow's news, she thought, could wait until another Saturday.