PIPER'S CURLING ADVENTURES

Piper and the Club Challenge

BOOK SEVENTEEN



Mary Deuhs

An illustrated chapter book

Contents

1 Two Teams From Home 1

2 Where It Turned 6

3 Their Turn Again 10

4 A Red Worth Keeping 15

5 The Shot They Wanted 19

6 The Other Result 24

Story by Mary Deuhs

AI-generated draft and illustrations

Free digital edition · HouseCall

© 2026 Mary Deuhs. Curling clubs, schools, and families may download, print, and share these free books for noncommercial educational use. Not for resale.

CHAPTER 1

Two Teams From Home



“Evie wants this one to stay,” Maisie said.

She was looking at the red stone beside her foot. Piper stood with Nora, ready to sweep it.

“I want it to stay too,” Nora said.

“Yes, but you usually do.”

Maisie grinned and went to the hack.

Piper could still hear Evie saying it. A few minutes earlier, before the handshakes, they had stood together on the dry side of the rink. Evie had tucked her brush against her shoulder and looked through the glass at the two lanes waiting for them.

“You win yours,” she had told Piper. “We’ll try to win ours.”

“We’ll try too.”

“I know. But win it.”

Piper had laughed. “You win yours, then.”

They belonged to the same curling club, but they usually wanted different results when they played each other. Today their two teams had come to visit another club together. Evie and her friends would play the Foxes. Piper, Maisie, Nora and Wren, the Too-Cold Club, would play the Otters.

Both host teams belonged here. Both wanted to win the club challenge.

Piper wanted to go home with two wins to tell Dad about, even though Ben had come with them and would see plenty for himself. She liked imagining how she would say it.

We both won.

Now Wren waited at the far house, holding the target for Maisie. The Otters’ first yellow had already stopped in the front rings. Their skip, Rae, stood in her waiting place.

Maisie sent the first red.

“A bit short,” Piper called.

Nora agreed. Wren called them to sweep, and their brushes worked side by side ahead of the stone. Piper liked hearing Nora beside her. She had been back with her usual friends for several Saturdays since her Sunday game with the Silver Mittens. This was their third season, and there were still Saturdays that felt new.

“Up!” Wren called.

They lifted their brushes. The red went on and settled in the left side of the house, nearer the middle than the yellow.

Maisie came down the clear side route, steady in her grippers.

“There.”

“There,” Nora agreed. “You may tell Evie afterward.”

Piper smiled. Evie was busy with her own game. There would be no popping across the lanes to give her reports.

The coaches had explained the challenge before they warmed up. Each team would play one four-end match. A win earned two club points, a tie earned one, and a loss earned none. After both matches, they would add those points to find the winning club.

“If a match is tied, it stays tied,” the host coach had said. “And if the clubs are tied, that stays tied too.”

No extra end waiting at the end of the afternoon. Two matches, one shared result.

Nora had liked another part of it.

“Four whole ends against the Otters,” she had said. “We’ll get to know them a bit.”

“Unfortunately, they’ll get to know us,” Wren had answered.

Rae had heard and smiled. “We’ll try.”

They were using the host club’s junior stones. The adults had checked that the equipment and familiar farther starting places suited all the children.

Piper had tried a few deliveries in the practice time. One had gone where she wanted. One had gone past it. She had visited other ice before; a different building did

not come with a promise that every stone would behave the same way.

Her helmet was fastened. Nora was beside her. Wren had won the opening toss and chosen the last stone, and the Otters had chosen yellow.

Piper was ready for a good game.

The Otters put their next yellow on the other side. Maisie's second red reached the rings but went deeper than Wren had wanted.

"I thought that was stopping," Maisie said.

"So did I," Piper said.

Nora's turns brought a little battle on the right. Twice she knocked out a yellow and stayed. Twice the Otters took her red out again.

"They're getting to know you quickly," Wren told Nora.

Nora looked at the yellow in the place her red had been.

"I was hoping for a slower introduction."

Piper went to deliver. Wren wanted a draw into the front-left part of the house. Maisie and Nora took their sweeping places.

From the hack, Piper could see the broom and the space beyond it. She sent the red toward the target.

For a while, the line looked right.

Then the stone bent farther toward the middle than she expected.

“Up,” Wren called.

The brushes were already clear. The red kept turning and stopped in the front rings, well inside the line Piper had pictured.

It was in the house. It was also in the wrong part of the house.

Piper got steady and covered her slider before she walked down.

“That moved across a lot at the end,” Maisie said.

Piper looked from her red to the place Wren had wanted it.

She had plenty of distance. What she wanted back was the space beside it.

CHAPTER 2

Where It Turned

“Did it start that far over?” Piper asked.

“Not from where I was,” Nora said. “The last bit surprised me.”

Wren nodded. “Me too. Let’s watch the next one.”

The Otters’ vice was drawing on the left. Piper stood still in the waiting place and followed the yellow with her eyes. It came around toward the middle too, finishing behind Piper’s red and nearer the center.

Rae looked pleased with it.

Piper had wanted the yellow to stop farther out. She could still use what she had seen.

“Another one coming in,” she said.

“Different weight,” Wren said. “But yes.”

Piper made her next hit on the right, but Rae answered by taking her red out. Piper pressed her lips together, then let them go. The Otters were making a game they liked.

Wren’s first draw gave them a red nearer the center. Piper watched it finish from the house, pleased that she had called Maisie and Nora up at the right time.

Then Rae drew almost onto the middle.

“Oh, that’s good,” Nora said quietly.

It was. Piper wished it were a little less good.

Wren tried to hit it with her last red. The stone passed the yellow’s outside edge and went through without touching anything.

One yellow counted. Piper and the Otters’ vice agreed before the stones were cleared.

Rae's team led one to nothing.

As they changed ends, Wren came beside Piper.

"We've got the last one again."

Piper nodded. She had enjoyed the picture of two home wins. The Otters were making them work for their half of it.

At the other end of the sheet, the house lay below the warm-room windows. Piper could see Ben through the glass for a moment. He was listening to someone beside him. She turned back to Maisie.

There was a new end to help begin.

Maisie put two useful reds into the left side, one farther back than the other. Then the Otters' second sent a yellow down the left approach. Piper watched the way it turned inward as it slowed.

"That came across more than I thought," she told Wren when the stone had stopped.

Wren looked along the route before setting a target for Nora.

Nora made a clean hit. The yellow went out, and her red stayed close to the middle on the left.

Piper lifted her glove toward Nora as she came down.

"Keep that place."

"I'm trying."

Nora's next draw stopped short, while the Otters put more yellows around the house. Their vice removed Maisie's deeper red. Nora's nearer one stayed.

Piper wanted to put another red near it.

Wren set the target for a left-side draw, and Piper checked it from the hack. She remembered the yellow she had just watched. She tried to send her stone smoothly, with enough room for it to turn.

The red reached the front of the house. Then it moved inward more than she had meant it to, ending well short of Nora's stone and farther toward the middle than its called spot.

Maisie and Nora were both looking at it when Piper came down.

"Same sort of late turn," Maisie said. "I could see it coming across after we lifted."

Piper frowned at the red.

"I allowed some room."

"I know," Wren said.

Piper wanted to say she would allow more next time. But the next shot might be somewhere else, with other stones in the way. Even here, the Otters' yellow and her red had not traveled exactly the same path.

"On that side, coming this way," she said instead.

Wren looked from the left approach to the window above them.

"We'll remember this end."

The middle changed hands again before Wren's turns. By the time Piper took the house, Rae had put a yellow nearest. Nora's earlier red was still there, waiting for its chance.

When Wren came to discuss her first draw, Piper stood beside her and looked along the left approach. They chose a target with more room outside the turn they had seen.

Piper held the broom there. Wren checked it and went to deliver.

This red stayed on the side they wanted.

It also stopped too soon.

Maisie and Nora had swept hard, but the stone settled in the front rings instead of reaching the middle.

Wren came down looking at it.

“More distance next time.”

Piper nodded. The target had helped the line. It had not supplied the missing weight.

Rae tried to draw another yellow close. It stayed wider than she wanted, leaving her earlier yellow nearest, with Nora’s red still waiting just behind it in the count.

Wren chose a hit for her last turn.

Piper crouched to check the open route, then stood with the agreed target. Maisie and Nora were ready farther down the sheet.

The red came toward her. Piper watched its line. The brushes lifted clear before it reached the stones.

Click.

Rae’s yellow went out. Wren’s red stayed.

Piper looked at Nora’s earlier red, then at Wren’s. Both were closer than the nearest yellow.

“Two red,” she said to the Otters’ vice.

“Two.”

Piper turned toward her friends with two fingers raised. Nora was already smiling at the stone she had made so much earlier.

“That place,” Piper said when Nora joined her.

“I kept it.”

Wren’s glove met Nora’s, then Piper’s and Maisie’s. Two to one for the Too-Cold Club.

There would be more answers from the Otters. For now, the end was finished, their score was agreed, and it was time to sit down.

CHAPTER 3

Their Turn Again



Piper sat all the way back in her chair.

For a little while, she could feel how much work her arms had done. The warm room hummed around them. Someone was talking near the doorway. Somewhere beyond it, a cupboard shut with a soft thump.

Maisie stretched her fingers and left them spread on the table.

“Mine feel very long.”

Nora looked at them. “They seem the usual length.”

“They feel longer.”

Wren put her own hands beside Maisie's. Maisie inspected them seriously.

"Yours too."

Piper laid one hand on the table. Soon all four were looking at their fingers, which had done nothing unusual at all.

Granite came past in his sneakers, carrying his clipboard in one white glove.

"Have you lost something?"

"No," Maisie said. "We're checking what we've got."

He glanced at the hands.

"Thorough."

He went on to speak with one of the coaches, and the girls laughed.

They had changed their shoes and taken off their helmets for the halfway break. Their drinks and a little food were in front of them. Nobody was asking them to hurry back. Both games had their own proper rest, even though the players on Evie's lane had reached theirs sooner.

Piper took a drink and let her shoulders settle.

Through the window, she could see the other game starting again. She wondered whether Evie was winning. Then Maisie asked Nora how she remembered the way through every building, and Piper turned to listen.

"I don't remember every building," Nora said.

"You knew where this room was."

"We'd already been in it."

"Still."

Nora traced a route in the air with one finger.

“From the entrance. Past the noticeboard, then the doors, then turn here.”

“Which noticeboard?” Maisie asked. “There were about four.”

“The one with all the notices.”

Wren looked at her.

Nora stopped tracing.

“That wasn’t my best instruction.”

Piper laughed. Maisie rested her elbows on the table, satisfied to have found a small gap in Nora’s knowledge of buildings.

For the next few minutes they talked about ordinary things. Wren had nearly reached the end of the book she was reading. Maisie wanted to know whether the person who disappeared in it had come back yet.

“Don’t tell her,” Nora said. “I want to read it.”

“I won’t,” Wren said.

“Could you tell just me?” Maisie asked.

“I’m sitting here,” Nora pointed out.

Piper liked sitting there too. She liked having two points on the board, but she did not need to inspect them through the glass every minute.

When the coaches came for them, there was time to finish, change and warm up again. Then they returned to their lane with helmets fastened and brushes in hand.

The Otters were ready.

Maisie began the third end with a red on the left and put her second a little nearer. Piper and Nora helped both stones along when Wren called. The work felt good after sitting still.

Nora's good draw near the middle started another exchange on the right. When her turns were finished, the Otters had a yellow in the place she had wanted.

Nora came down beside Piper once the stones had stopped.

"I know that introduction now."

Piper glanced at the yellow on the right.

"They do keep doing it."

She tried a draw on the left. It stopped well before the place Wren had chosen. The Otters' vice put a yellow farther in, giving her team two nearer yellows for the moment.

With her next turn, Piper removed the one on the right. Her red stayed, but the other yellow was still closer.

"That leaves the left one," she said to Wren.

"I can see it."

Wren chose the hit. Piper took the house and held the target. Maisie and Nora watched the red come toward them, clearing their brushes before contact.

The yellow went out. Wren's red stayed nearer than anything else in the house.

Piper's whole face warmed inside the edge of her helmet.

Then Rae took it out.

The Otters' second lifted her glove toward Rae. Their vice was smiling. Piper could see how much they liked that answer.

Wren's last draw stayed too wide to get inside Rae's yellow. Now Rae had one more stone, and she chose to draw for another point.

Piper watched from the waiting place. Rae's vice called, the two sweepers worked, and the yellow came around toward the center.

It slowed beside the middle and stopped nearer than any red.

Rae had made the draw she wanted.

The Otters' vice checked with Piper. Two yellow, both Rae's. The Otters now led three to two.

Piper held up two fingers for the agreed yellow score, then came back to Wren. She was disappointed. She had liked having their half of the challenge going well. She wondered about the other half, which had gone on somewhere beyond the side of her own busy game.

One end left. They would have the last stone.

Before the next end began, the event adult came to their stopped lane. She had been checking the results with the other game's players.

"Evie's team has won," she told both teams. "That result's agreed and on the club board."

Maisie's hands came together in a small clap.

"Yes!"

Nora smiled at Piper. Wren gave a quick pleased nod.

Piper felt the news arrive like an extra bit of warmth. Evie and her friends had done it. Two club points were theirs already.

The adult went back to the results board. Maisie watched her go, still smiling.

"A tie here wins the challenge," Nora said.

Piper looked toward the house where they would play their last end.

"And two points here would win our game," she said.

Wren nodded. "Let's get something in."

CHAPTER 4

A Red Worth Keeping

The Otters began with a yellow in the front of the house, a little left of the middle. Piper looked at it from her waiting place. It would get in the way of a straight approach toward the center on that side.

Wren chose the open left wing for Maisie.

Nora and Piper swept the first red part of the way, then lifted at Wren's call. It stopped out to the left, in the rings. Maisie's second came nearer, giving them another red to work with.

"That's the one I like," Maisie said when she reached them.

The Otters' second put a yellow behind the middle. Nora's first red stayed wider than she had intended on the right.

"Too far over," she said.

The Otters took out Maisie's nearer red and left a yellow in its place. Nora replaced it with a red of her own. Their vice replaced Nora's red with another yellow.

Maisie looked at the place she had liked.

"It's very popular."

Piper went to the hack for the same open hit.

She could see the yellow clearly on the left. It was nearer than Maisie's remaining red and the other stones they had in the house. She wanted to take it out and keep something useful there.

Her stone met it firmly.

The yellow went through the back. Piper's red stayed, a little in front of where the yellow had been.

Maisie held out her glove when Piper came down the safe side.

"I like yours there too."

Piper met it. Then they turned to watch the Otters.

Their vice drew on the right and got closer. Wren asked Piper for another hit.

For a moment at the hack, Piper thought how much she would like both reds to stay. There would be one on each side, and Rae would have to deal with them.

The second hit worked. Piper's red stayed near the middle on the right, with her earlier one counting beside it for the moment.

Rae dealt with it immediately.

Her yellow sent Piper's nearer red out and stayed closer than the one on the left.

Piper made a small noise in the back of her throat.

Wren heard. "I know."

Now it was Wren's turn. She still had both her stones. Rae had one.

Piper came into the house beside Wren. The yellow on the right was closest. Piper's red was still useful on the left, but it would not give them a point while that yellow stayed nearer.

Wren looked at the space behind and just inside Rae's stone.

"I'd like one here."

Piper checked the route with her. A draw could come through the right-middle opening and settle nearer the tee.

She showed Wren the finishing place with her broom, keeping it clear of the stones. Then they agreed the target, and Wren went to deliver.

Maisie and Nora took their sweeping positions. Piper watched them get ready. She had made two hits in this end. Now the thing she most wanted was for Wren's draw to stop in that little useful space.

The red came toward the house.

"Has enough," Nora called.

Piper watched the line as it came around. She called the sweepers up. Their brushes lifted before the tee, and the red slid on between the places they had been looking at.

It stopped just behind the middle, on the right.

Closer than Rae's yellow.

Maisie breathed out. "There."

Piper let herself smile. Wren had made it.

They had one counting red, and one point would tie the match. Rae could still change that.

When Wren returned, the two girls moved to their waiting place. Rae and her vice were looking at the house. Piper heard Rae say, "The draw. I like the draw."

Rae could have tried a hit on Wren's exposed red. She chose the left approach instead. Piper had seen her draw close in the first end and make another good one in the third. The place Rae pointed to now was even nearer the middle than Wren's stone.

Piper understood why she wanted it.

She hoped very hard Rae would miss it.

The yellow came down the left. The Otters' sweepers brushed and lifted. Their vice watched from the house, calling clearly.

It was a good-looking stone. Piper followed it until it settled.

The yellow stopped left of the center, close to the middle but still farther out than Wren's red.

Piper could see the difference. Red was nearest. This new yellow was second.

It had come close enough to make her stomach tighten anyway.

Rae joined her teammates. Their vice said something quietly, and Rae nodded, looking at Wren's red. She had tried to beat it. She had also left a yellow that a second red would have to beat.

Piper crouched beside Wren, looking from the new yellow to the front-house stone that had been there since the Otters' first turn.

There was still a place another red could go.

Not much of a place.

But a place.

CHAPTER 5

The Shot They Wanted



“We could still get two,” Piper said.

She pointed to the small space in front of the middle, inside Rae’s new yellow. Another red there would count with Wren’s. Two points would make their match four to three.

Their win, to go with Evie’s.

Wren crouched to look from beside her.

“Around the left of that front yellow.”

“And stop in here.”

Piper could picture it. The red would come around the blocking stone, curl toward the middle and settle just

where she was pointing. She had watched other stones curl all afternoon. Wren had just made a good draw herself.

It was a shot they could try.

Wren looked at the narrow approach again. “There isn’t much room now.”

Piper glanced at Rae’s last yellow. Before it arrived, they had had more space for a second counting red. Now the finishing place was smaller, and the path to it had stones on either side.

She looked up at the warm-room windows.

This was the house they had played toward in the second end. Here was the left approach where the Otters’ second had come inward more than Piper expected. Here was the end where Piper’s own draw had turned across too far.

Not exactly the same shot. This one had less room.

“Mine came in late here,” she said. “Before the break. And their second’s yellow did too.”

Wren nodded. “I remember.”

“If we catch that yellow, with a bit too much weight…” Piper looked at the yellow blocking the front of the house.

Wren followed her glance.

“We could knock that up.”

Nearer than their red.

Piper saw it now: the yellow moving in toward the middle, while the red that had bumped it stopped farther out. It was one way the draw could go wrong. Other misses might leave their point alone. This one could give the Otters a point instead.

Their own match would be lost. Evie's win would still count, but the clubs would finish tied.

Piper straightened. She still wanted to send a red around that yellow.

Wren beckoned Maisie and Nora over along the clear side. The Otters waited out of their way.

"Two is possible," Wren said, showing them. "But this yellow could go in if we catch it wrong. Or I can send the last one through the open side and keep our one."

Nora looked at the space Piper had wanted.

"It's smaller than it looked from back there."

She pointed along the left approach with her empty hand.

"Maisie and I saw yours turn late here. I wouldn't know exactly when this one would come across."

"Neither would I," Piper said.

Maisie looked at Wren's red, sitting just behind the middle.

"We helped get that there."

"Yes," Wren said.

"I'd like to keep it. And win the challenge."

Nora nodded. "Me too."

Piper looked once more at the little place where another red could win their match. She did not suddenly stop wanting it. She could almost feel how pleased she would be if Wren made it.

Then she looked at the red Wren had already made.

They had sent a lot of good stones toward this house. The Otters had taken some out and beaten others. This red had survived their last answer. It gave them something they could bring back to the other four girls.

“I wanted both wins,” Piper said.

“So did I,” Wren said. “I still do.”

Piper nodded slowly.

“But I want the club win more than I want another try at ours.”

Wren looked at each of them.

“The clear right side, then. Through.”

“Yes,” Piper said.

Maisie and Nora agreed. They went to their places, and Wren checked the target with Piper before returning to the hack.

There was plenty of empty ice on the right, beyond the stones already in the house. Piper held the broom for that route. Wren would send her last red all the way through the back.

Piper watched Wren get ready. Maisie and Nora stood prepared with their brushes clear.

The red came down the open side at controlled weight. Nobody called for sweeping. It passed the nearest stones with room to spare, kept moving and went completely out at the back.

That was all.

Piper looked into the house. Every stone was where it had been before.

The Otters' vice came to check with her. Wren's first red was nearest; Rae's last yellow was second.

"One red," Piper said.

"One."

Three to three. Their match was tied.

Wren came down the side toward them. Piper held up her glove, and Wren met it.

Maisie was smiling. Nora looked at the red one last time before the adults began to clear.

They had kept it.

CHAPTER 6

The Other Result

Rae shook Piper's hand.

"Good game."

"Good game."

Piper looked toward the yellow being brought out of the house.

"I thought your last one was getting nearer."

"So did I," Rae said. "I wanted it just a little farther in."

"It made our last one harder."

Rae glanced back at the ice. Then she smiled a small, pleased smile and went to shake Nora's hand.

The Otters' second recognized Nora before Nora had said anything.

"You kept putting them back."

"You kept taking them out."

Both girls laughed. Four ends had been long enough for a proper introduction after all.

Piper shook hands with the other Otters, then joined her friends for the walk off. Their supervisor led them along the clear route. Piper could hear shoes on the ice and the low scrape of stones being gathered behind them.

She felt pleased and a little unfinished at the same time.

There had been a chance for two. She had wanted to try it. When she remembered the last end, she thought she would still wonder whether they could have made it.

Beside her, Wren shifted her brush to her other hand.

“Good hits,” she said.

“Good draw.”

Wren smiled. “I liked that one.”

“So did I.”

On the dry side, Ben was waiting near the changing bench. Piper stopped beside him while the others made room for the girls coming off behind them.

“We tied,” she said.

“I saw.”

“We could have tried for two.”

Ben nodded, listening.

Piper looked toward Wren, who was loosening her helmet strap.

“We talked about it.”

She did not have to tell Dad the whole conversation now. Maisie was asking where Evie had got to, and Nora had spotted her through the doorway.

The event adult checked their agreed score and wrote the second result on the club board. Two club points from Evie’s win. One from their tie. One for the host club from the Otters’ tie.

Three to one.

Their club had won the challenge.

Evie came toward them with her three teammates. She had already changed her shoes; the purple laces made Piper look down for a moment before looking back at her face.

“We heard you’d won,” Piper said.

Evie grinned. “We did.”

“And we got one.”

“I saw your red stay.”

Maisie moved beside Piper. “You wanted it to!”

“I did.”

“That was useful,” Wren said. “Your clapping was much easier to understand today.”

Evie laughed. So did her vice, who had compared scores with Piper in other games and had wanted very different stones to stay.

Nora came over with her helmet under her arm. Evie’s lead stepped aside to let her join them. Piper moved closer to Wren, making room for Maisie too.

Now all eight were there.

“I still wanted two,” Piper told Evie.

Evie glanced at the club board.

“I’d have wanted two.”

Piper looked at it with her. Her own game was a tie. The other result belonged to all of them.

Evie held up her hand.

“We won.”

Piper met it.