PIPER'S CURLING ADVENTURES

Piper and the Sleepover Plan

BOOK NINE



Mary Deuhs

An illustrated chapter book

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CHAPTER 1

The Part in the Middle

Piper could hear Nora's brush beside hers.

Scritch, scritch, scritch.

They were sweeping Maisie's second stone. It was slowing down, and Wren wanted it to reach the front of the house.

"A little more!" Wren called.

Piper kept her brush moving. Ben watched from beside the lane.

"Up!"

The two brushes lifted. The red stone crept into the rings and stopped.

Maisie came along the clear side after Jo had helped her up and her sliding foot was covered.

"Did I get in?"

"Some of you," Nora said.

"That'll do for a start."

Several more Saturdays had passed since the kite afternoon and the extra curling workshop. The girls had practiced draws, simple takeouts, and getting their brushes working together. Piper still sometimes sent a stone much farther than she wanted. Maisie still sometimes made a joke before anyone knew there was a joke available.

Today Piper's first draw went through the house. Her second stayed, well to one side.

When Wren's turn came, Piper took the target broom to the rings. Wren wanted a little more room on the left.

Piper moved the broom, checked her nod, and held it still.

Wren's stone needed hardly any sweeping. It settled in the house, closer to the middle than Piper's.

"Can we try that once more?" Wren asked.

They could. There was still time before the end of practice.

Later, in the warm room, Jo put a weekend programme on the table.

Piper saw their team name first.

THE TOO-COLD CLUB.

Then she saw two days.

"Saturday and Sunday?"

"A small beginner event at another club," Jo said. "Four teams. You play each of the other three once. Two games on Saturday, with a long break between, and one on Sunday morning."

"Four ends each?" Nora asked.

"Yes. With the junior stones and the short setup you know. We've talked with your parents about the weekend. They'll check the arrangements before anyone signs up."

Piper put a finger between the Saturday games and the Sunday game.

"What happens here?"

"Saturday evening," said Wren.

"I know what it's called."

Granite leaned over the programme. His white eyebrows rose above his glasses.

"An important discovery. We must tell the calendar."

Piper smiled, but she was still looking at the gap.

At their previous away event, they had packed up after curling and gone home. This time there would be a whole middle part.

"Could we stay together?" she asked Dad. "After the games, I mean. Have supper and do things. A sleepover."

Maisie sat up straighter.

"With pajamas?"

"That's usually involved," Wren said.

Dad pulled up a chair. The other parents came over to look at the programme too.

"We're checking a lodge with a family suite," he said. "Several bedrooms around one sitting room. If that works for everybody, we can stay in the same place."

Piper pictured Nora taking out a game while Maisie sat beside her. She pictured Wren being there when she looked up.

Nobody would be saying that it was time to find their coats.

"Can we ask about the sleepover bit?" she said.

"We can ask."

Piper moved her finger off the programme. The empty part between the games did not look empty anymore.

CHAPTER 2

Five Dominoes Each

By the following practice, the grown-ups had booked the lodge suite and confirmed the team's place.

Each girl's own parent would be staying there. The children could share one bedroom, with a separate sleeping place for everyone. Each also had a bed available in her parent's room.

"I want the room with everybody," Piper told Dad.

"All right. Your other bed will be there too. The bedrooms open onto our sitting room, so you'll know where we are."

Maisie wanted to share. So did Nora and Wren.

Nora brought a small box to show them.

"Dominoes. We could take these."

Piper slid back the lid. The tiles made a good, solid clicking sound.

"Do we knock them over?" Maisie asked.

"We can play the game first."

"I know there's a game."

"I like the game."

Nora tipped out a few tiles and turned them faceup. She showed Piper how the dots at the touching ends had to match.

"For our easy version, five tiles each. We leave the rest out of that round. If you can't match either end, you pass. First person to use all five wins."

"What if nobody can go?" Wren asked.

"Then we count the dots we have left. Fewest wins."

Maisie stood two of the spare tiles on their ends and tried to balance a third across the top.

It fell into her palm.

“An arch,” she explained. “For dramatic entrances.”

Nora gathered the playing tiles back into the box.

“You can use the ones we’re not playing with.”

Wren was bringing a book. She was in the middle of a story about a boat, and wanted to find out whether it would get across the sea.

“Couldn’t you finish it before Saturday?” Maisie asked.

“I don’t want to rush it.”

Piper liked that answer. She had a book with short chapters that she wanted to take too, although she mainly wanted to play things with the others.

On Friday, she put it beside her pajamas in the overnight bag.

Dad checked the curling things with her. Helmet, shoes, grippers, brush, gloves. The overnight bag was smaller than the curling bag, but it made the trip look much longer.

Piper zipped it shut.

“Tomorrow, when we finish the games, we don’t come straight home.”

“That’s right.”

“And on Sunday we go back to the same rink.”

“Yes.”

Piper carried the little bag to the door and set it beside the big one.

There they stood, ready for different parts of the same weekend.

CHAPTER 3

A Whole Saturday Left



Juno was already at the visitors' club when Piper arrived on Saturday morning.

She waved from beside her team's bags.

"We play you first."

Piper put down her own bag.

"I saw. Then the Blue Comets."

"You have the Pinecones tomorrow," Juno said. "We play them this afternoon."

There were only four teams in their beginner division. Each would play all three games, whatever the scores

were. Piper liked being able to see the whole weekend on the notice.

Jo joined the host coach for the welcome. They explained the local format: four ends, two stones for each player in an end, ties left as ties. In these short beginner games, everyone would finish all their stones.

The adults had checked the familiar shortened lanes and junior equipment. After warming up, the girls had their helmet straps and grippers checked. Jo showed them the safe waiting places and reminded them of the release cue.

The Silver Mittens won the toss and chose the hammer, the last stone in the first end. The Too-Cold Club chose red handles.

Maisie would deliver first, then Nora, then Piper, then Wren. Wren was skip. Piper would take the house for Wren's two stones.

Piper and Nora followed Maisie's opening red. It finished in the rings, farther from the middle than Maisie had hoped.

The yellow stones came in too.

By the end of the first end, Juno's team had one closer than every red.

One to nothing for the Silver Mittens.

Now red had the hammer.

The second end began with more room than the first. Two early yellow stones went through the house. Maisie put a red toward the front. Nora put another on the far side.

Then yellow drew closer to the button.

Wren showed Piper an open way in beside it.

Piper settled at the hack. Jo watched her start. She gave the handle its turn and let the stone go without adding a last little shove.

Maisie and Nora moved beside the red.

“Sweep!” Wren called.

The brushes made their hurried sound. Piper watched the red enter the rings and slow near the button.

Closer than yellow.

“Oh, good,” she said to nobody in particular.

Jo helped her safely up. Once her slider was covered, she went along the side to join the others.

“That’s a good place,” Nora said.

“I’d like two in that place.”

“There isn’t room for two in exactly that place,” Maisie pointed out.

Piper’s next attempt settled the question. It went wide and crossed the side line without touching anything.

“One will have to do,” Piper said.

She took the house for Wren. There was still open ice on the other side of the button, and Wren wanted to try for it.

Piper set the broom where they agreed.

Wren’s first red came in gently. Piper called Maisie and Nora to sweep, then lifted her own broom as she called them up.

The stone stopped a little farther from the middle than Piper’s, but closer than the nearest yellow.

Two reds were counting.

Juno’s last yellow tried the open draw. It finished outside those two. Wren’s final red was too long and went out at the back.

The two useful reds stayed.

Two points for the Too-Cold Club. Two to one altogether.

Piper tapped gloves with Wren.

“We got the two,” she said.

“In different places,” Maisie reminded her.

The Silver Mittens got two in the third end. Their second player made a lovely draw, and Juno added another. Nora’s nearest red stayed farther out.

Three to two for yellow.

In the last end, Piper swept hard for Nora, but the red stopped short of the house. Her own first draw was in the rings; her second went through. Wren got their nearest red closer still.

A yellow was already nearer the button. It stayed nearest.

One more for the Silver Mittens. Four to two.

They shook hands. Juno was smiling as she collected her brush.

“I liked my first one in the third.”

“So did I,” Piper said. “Except for the bit where it beat ours.”

Juno laughed.

In the warm room, Piper set her gloves on her bag. She was hungry, and she could feel the game in her arms.

Dad passed her water.

“Lunch first. Then a proper rest. We don’t go back on for quite a while.”

Piper looked at the programme again. There was another game that afternoon, and then the part she had been imagining.

A whole Saturday was still unfolding.

CHAPTER 4

The Arch Department

After lunch, Nora put the domino box in the middle of their table.

Piper liked the way the tiles felt cool for a moment, then warmed in her hand.

They mixed them facedown. Five each. Eight stayed in a little spare pile for this round.

Nora began with a double six.

Piper had a six at one end of a tile and a two at the other. She put the six beside Nora's six.

Maisie added a two and four. Wren followed with a four and one.

The line was growing toward Piper's water bottle. She moved the bottle away.

"It's coming for my lunch," she said.

"Your lunch has gone," Wren said.

"That'll be a disappointment."

Nora played a one and three. Piper found her three and blank, and joined the three to Nora's tile.

"What's blank?" Maisie asked.

"Nothing."

"Very useful. I have some nothing."

She added a blank and five.

Then, while Wren took her turn, Maisie borrowed three tiles from the spare pile. Two stood on end. The third lay carefully across them.

An arch.

Maisie held up two fingers and walked them toward it.

Her fingertips hit the top. The arch fell down.

“Too tall,” Wren observed.

Maisie bent her fingers almost flat and tried the journey again, although there was no longer an arch to go through.

“Dramatic entrances have been postponed.”

Nora was waiting with a tile in her hand.

“Whose turn?” Piper asked.

“Mine. Wren’s just gone.”

Piper looked at the two open ends of the line. Both were sixes now. Nora looked at her remaining tiles and passed.

Piper could play. She put down a six and three.

The game turned back toward the center of the table when they ran out of straight space. Nobody was allowed to take a tile from the playing line for an arch, however suitable it looked.

Eventually Piper was left holding a double three while Nora put down her last tile.

“Nora wins,” Wren said.

Nora looked pleased. She tipped the box lid beside the line.

“Another?”

“In a bit,” Wren said. “I want to read.”

She took her book to a chair beside her parent, away from the game table. Piper could see the red bookmark poking out over the top.

Maisie had rebuilt her arch. This time she sent one bent finger through.

It survived.

“Admission for one finger,” she announced.

Piper tried with hers. She brushed an upright tile, and the roof came down.

“Admission has closed.”

Piper laughed. Her arms had stopped feeling full of sweeping. Beyond the glass, other players were on the ice, with other adults watching their stones.

Dad came over after a while.

“Time to put the game away. We’ve got time for water and the warm-up before the next draw.”

Nora slid the tiles back into their box. Maisie took down the arch by hand.

Wren marked her page and came over.

“Did the boat arrive?” Piper asked.

“Not yet.”

“Does it know we have curling?”

“It will have to wait.”

CHAPTER 5

The Open Side

This time the Too-Cold Club won the toss and chose the first hammer. The Blue Comets chose yellow.

Piper recognized Tali from their home-club funspiel. Tali recognized her too.

“Good curling.”

“Good curling.”

Then they were in their jobs again.

Yellow first. Maisie next. Nora and Piper sweeping together, Wren watching from the house.

Maisie’s second red stopped closer to the button than her first. Nora’s first came closer still.

They were both still there when Piper took her turns.

She put one red too far out to count and sent the next right through. She would have liked at least one of them to help.

At the house, Wren asked her to show the same open side again.

Piper did. Wren’s red came into the rings but stayed outside Maisie’s and Nora’s.

Yellow couldn’t get inside the two nearest reds. Wren’s last stone didn’t add another.

Two points for the Too-Cold Club.

Maisie touched her glove to Nora’s.

“First and second.”

“We both had sweeping,” Nora said.

“We had very good sweeping,” Maisie agreed.

Piper held out her glove too.

The Blue Comets got one in the second end. Tali made a takeout on a red in the house, and her yellow rolled away too. Later, their skip drew near the middle. Wren's last red came close enough to stop a second yellow from counting, but not close enough to beat the first.

Two to one.

Before the third end, Piper drank some water at the planned pause. She could see Nora rolling her shoulders beside Jo.

"Ready for the next?" Dad asked.

They all were.

Nora's second stone in that end was the red Piper liked best all afternoon.

Piper and Maisie swept it together. Wren called them up just as it came toward the button. It stopped a little to one side of the center.

Yellow put a stone farther back. Then Piper made a draw toward the front of the house, well outside Nora's.

There was still a broad, open route beside it.

For Piper's second turn, Wren looked at that route, then at the ice in front of Nora's stone.

"We could try a guard," she said when Piper joined her at the safe side. "Or another one in the house."

Granite waited nearby while they looked.

Piper pointed with her free hand.

"I'd like to draw on the open side. There's room there."

Wren considered it. Then she nodded.

"Let's try."

Piper went back along the clear route to Jo.

She knew which shot she wanted. She could see the target.

Her red went past it.

It carried on out of the house, looking very certain about the wrong distance.

Piper made a small face at it. Then she got safely up, covered her slider, and went to take the house for Wren.

“Same side?” she asked.

“Yes. A bit less.”

“A bit less,” Piper agreed.

Wren’s first attempt stopped farther out than Nora’s. Yellow got one in between those two reds. Wren’s last draw reached the house, but couldn’t beat that yellow either.

Nora’s stone still counted for one.

Three to one.

In the fourth end, Maisie put a red near the front, and Piper put one closer to the middle. The Blue Comets’ nearest yellow finished between them. Neither team’s last player changed which stone was nearest.

One more red point.

Four to one for the Too-Cold Club.

This time, at the handshakes, Piper was the one smiling hardest.

Tali pointed toward the house.

“I liked the one I took out.”

“It was a good hit,” Piper said.

She had liked some things about a game they lost too.

They put their equipment away with the adults. Granite reminded Maisie that a brush belonged in a bag rather than across the doorway.

“It was considering its options,” she told him, moving it.

“It has chosen wisely.”

Dad had the car ready when the bags were packed. Piper lifted her overnight bag beside her curling things.

Now came the middle.

CHAPTER 6

No Coats Yet

The lodge sitting room had a low table, a sofa, and a lamp that made a warm circle on the wall.

Piper put her bag down and looked around.

The bedroom for the four girls opened onto this room. So did the rooms where their parents would sleep. Dad showed Piper her own separate bed in his room before they took her bag into the shared children's room.

"This one's ready for you too," he said.

Piper nodded. Then she went to see which sleeping place Maisie had chosen.

The parents showed everyone where they would be. Each child could use her family bed if she preferred. At bedtime the grown-ups would still be in the sitting room, and the girls could call or come out for them.

Nora set the domino box on the low table.

Maisie looked at it.

"The arch department has arrived."

Supper came first. The families ate together, and Piper found herself explaining her wide morning stone with a piece of bread in her hand.

"It went all the way over there."

Dad looked at the bread.

"Keep that one on the table."

Afterward, the girls took turns getting ready for the evening. When Piper came back to the sitting room in her pajamas, Wren was already on the sofa with her book.

Piper stopped by the doorway.

Wren looked up.

"What?"

"Nothing. You're here."

"So are you."

"Yes."

Piper went and sat beside her.

Usually, by the time Piper was wearing pajamas, her friends were somewhere else. Now Maisie was crossing the room in her socks, and Nora was choosing a place where all four of them could reach the dominoes.

Dad sat in an armchair. The other parents were talking nearby. Somebody had put water on a side table, well away from the game.

"Do you want to finish your chapter?" Piper asked Wren.

"I've finished this one. I want a game."

Piper turned the tiles facedown and began to mix them. Wren left her closed book on her lap and leaned toward the table.

The little clicks sounded louder in the sitting room than they had at the club. There were no stones rumbling beyond a window. Nobody else was calling sweep.

Piper chose five tiles and stood them where the others couldn't see the dots.

Maisie squinted at her own.

"I have some possibilities."

Nora began the line.

This time Piper won. She had been holding her last tile very carefully, trying not to look as though she was holding her last tile very carefully.

When she finally put it down, she spread both empty hands.

“Finished.”

“I could see you waiting,” Wren said.

“Could you?”

“Your shoulders were by your ears.”

Piper lowered them. She hadn’t noticed.

Maisie borrowed three spare dominoes and built the little arch.

“New location. Same excellent entrance.”

Nora slid her last playing tile through it, flat on the table.

It fit.

“The guests are dominoes,” Piper said.

“Of course,” Maisie replied. “We should have invited them earlier.”

They sent another tile through. It bumped the first one, which slid into an upright. The roof fell down.

“Too many guests,” Wren said.

She picked up her book.

“I want my next chapter now.”

Nora wanted another game. Piper did too. Maisie took apart the remains of the arch and helped mix the tiles for three players.

Wren tucked her feet under her on the sofa. She was close enough to hear Maisie say that a double blank was a tile with nothing to say.

“Lucky tile,” Wren murmured, and turned a page.

Piper laughed so suddenly that she nearly showed Nora her dots.

Later, she leaned back against the sofa and watched Nora take her turn. Dad was still talking. Maisie had tucked one foot underneath her. Wren’s bookmark lay across her knee.

No coats were waiting.

Piper was exactly where she had wanted to be.

CHAPTER 7

The Other Bed



At bedtime, the parents came to say goodnight.

Then the four girls settled into their separate sleeping places. The bedroom door stayed a little open. Piper could hear the low sound of the grown-ups talking in the sitting room.

Maisie whispered something about a domino needing twenty-eight pajamas.

“Why twenty-eight?” Nora whispered back.

“One for every tile.”

“That’s twenty-eight dominoes.”

“Oh. A busy household.”

Piper smiled into her pillow.

The room grew quiet. Wren put her book down. A bed creaked as Nora turned over.

Piper shifted her head. The pillow was softer than hers at home. The ceiling caught a stripe of light from the sitting room.

She had imagined the four of them talking in their pajamas. They had done that. She had liked it very much.

She hadn't thought much about this part, when the talking stopped.

Piper looked toward the door. She wanted her bed in Dad's room. She wanted him nearby when he came to sleep.

For a moment, she stayed where she was.

She had been the one who asked for the sleepover.

Then she sat up.

"I'm going to talk to Dad," she said quietly.

Ben looked up as she came into the sitting room. The other parents were still there with him.

"What do you need?" he asked.

"I think I want the other bed."

"The one in my room?"

Piper nodded.

"I liked the games," she added.

"I saw. Shall we take your pillow over?"

Piper went back to the doorway of the children's room.

"I'm sleeping in the room with Dad. Goodnight."

"Oh," Maisie said. "I liked having you next to me."

"I liked the evening."

"Me too."

Nora said goodnight. Wren lifted a hand from her blanket.

Dad waited in the sitting room while Piper fetched her pillow. They carried it together, one at each end, although it didn't need two people.

Her other bed was already made.

Piper climbed in and chose a short chapter from her book. Dad sat beside her for a little while.

When he went back to the sitting room, she left her book closed beside the bed.

She could hear his voice through the open door.

CHAPTER 8

Breakfast Together

In the morning, Piper carried her book into the sitting room.

Nora was there with the domino box. Maisie was sitting on the sofa beside her parent. Wren was looking at the weekend programme with hers.

Piper paused.

She wasn't sure whether to say something about the other bed.

Nora tapped the domino box.

"I want another go against you. You won that one too quickly."

Piper sat down.

"After breakfast?"

"After breakfast."

"Who do we play today?" Wren asked.

"The Pinecones," Piper said. "Ada's team."

Wren found their names on the page.

"Right."

Breakfast took a while. Maisie wanted more toast. Nora was telling her parent about the game at the club and the double three Piper had been unable to use.

"I have not forgiven that three," Piper said.

"It's still in the box," Nora told her.

After they ate, there was time for one short game at the low table. This time Wren won. Maisie made her last tile walk away on two fingers.

"It's going for a private think."

Dad came in with Piper's overnight bag.

"Let's collect your things. We're checking out before curling."

Piper put her book in the bag and went with him to her bed. She gathered her pajamas. Dad checked the room after her.

In the children's room, Maisie was rolling up her own night things while her parent helped with the bag. Piper collected the little pouch she had left there. Nora shut the domino box, and Wren slid the red bookmark into place.

Soon all the bags were beside the suite door.

Piper took one last look at the low table. There were no dominoes on it now.

Outside, morning light lay across the parked cars. Dad packed their things, and Piper climbed in.

They were going back to the rink.

She knew which door they would use.

CHAPTER 9

One More Game



At the club, Ada was filling her orange water bottle.

“Morning,” she said.

“Morning.”

Piper put her outdoor shoes beneath the bench. Her curling shoes were where she had packed them. Her gloves were together. She liked knowing which parts of her bag to open.

The coaches brought the teams together for their warm-up and equipment checks. Helmets fastened, clean grippers secure, clear routes ready.

Granite waited beside the ice.

“Four ends this morning,” he said.

“We remembered,” Maisie told him.

“Very good. So did I.”

The Pinecones won the toss and chose the first hammer. The Too-Cold Club chose red handles.

Piper went with Nora to sweep for Maisie. Wren took the house. Jo watched at the hack, Ben stayed near the sweepers, and Granite helped the host coach at the other end.

Maisie’s first red reached the front of the rings. Her second went wide.

Nora put one in a useful place. Piper sent her first too far, then got the next into the house on the open side.

It was nearer the button than Nora’s red.

Yellow came close, but not closer.

When Piper took the house, Wren tried to add another. Neither of her stones got inside the nearest yellow.

Piper’s red counted for one.

One to nothing.

She looked back at it while the adults prepared the lane for the next end. It was a very satisfying place to have left something.

In the second end, the Pinecones left something more satisfying.

Their second player drew close to the button. Piper tried to take that yellow out, but missed and went through. On her next turn she drew nearer, though yellow stayed closest.

Wren brought their nearest red closer again. Ada’s final yellow stayed outside it.

One for the Pinecones. One each.

During the pause for water, Nora leaned on the table with her elbows.

"I want another like mine yesterday."

"The one in the third?" Piper asked.

"Yes."

"I want to sweep it," Maisie said.

"You probably will," Wren told her.

They went back after the coaches checked that everyone was ready.

Maisie's first red in the third end was useful, toward the side of the rings. Yellow put one nearer the middle.

Nora's first red stopped in front of the house. For her second, Wren showed a clear path on the other side.

Piper and Maisie waited with their brushes.

The stone came toward them.

It looked slow to Piper.

"Sweep," Wren called.

Piper bent to her brush. Maisie matched her beside it. They kept going until Wren called them up.

Nora's red slipped into the inner rings.

Nearer than yellow.

Nora came along the safe side with a smile she didn't try to hide.

"I got another."

Piper tapped her glove.

They still had work to do. The Pinecones tried the open space. Piper put her first red into the rings, but farther from the button than yellow. Her second ran out the back.

Wren's first was useful, but yellow drew between it and Nora's nearest red. Wren's final draw couldn't get inside that yellow.

Only Nora's red counted.

Two to one for the Too-Cold Club, with one end left.

Ada talked with her team. Piper could see her pointing toward the middle of the house before the stones were cleared.

Then Maisie was ready at the hack again, and Piper went with Nora to sweep.

The last end grew around a yellow draw made by the Pinecones' second player. It sat near the button.

Piper put her first red behind it, farther from the middle. Her next went wide and out. When she reached the house for Wren, she could see an open route on the other side.

"Draw there?" she asked.

Wren looked from the hack and nodded.

Piper held the target. Wren's first red stopped near the front. Her last came farther in, with Maisie and Nora sweeping until Piper called them up.

It finished closer than Piper's red, but still outside the nearest yellow.

Ada had the last stone.

At the moment, one yellow counted. That would make the game a tie. A second yellow closer than Wren's red would give the Pinecones two points and the game.

Ada and her vice chose a draw into the open space.

Piper moved clear to watch.

The yellow came toward the house. Its sweepers worked for part of the way, then lifted when their vice called.

It passed the front rings.

Slowed.

Stopped beside the inner circle, nearer the button than Wren's red.

Two yellows counted.

Three to two for the Pinecones.

Ada's teammates reached for her gloves. Piper let out a breath and went to join the handshakes.

"Good game," Ada said.

"Good game. That last one was good."

"Thanks."

Piper wished it had stayed a little farther out. She also wanted a drink and somewhere to sit.

In the warm room, she dropped onto a chair beside Maisie.

"Nearly," Maisie said.

"Yes."

Nora set down her water.

"I liked my one in the third."

"I liked it too," Piper said. "Our brushes were going quite fast."

Maisie made a small scrubbing movement with one hand, then rested it on the table.

"Now that hand wants lunch."

They ate before the families set off. Outside the windows it was still bright. Their three games were finished, and Dad said they would have plenty of daylight for the journey home.

While the parents collected the last bags, Nora opened the domino box.

“Just the arch,” she said. “There isn’t time for a whole game.”

Maisie stood two tiles up and laid the third across them.

Piper took a spare tile and slid it flat toward the entrance.

“Coming through.”

“Wait,” Maisie said. “Wren’s reading the sign.”

Wren looked at the perfectly plain top domino.

“One guest at a time.”

Piper pushed her tile carefully under the arch.

Nora caught it on the other side.