Sweep and the Pocket-Sized Plan



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HOUSECALL

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A HouseCall picture book

This is a work of fiction.

Learn the game. Love the game.

For everyone finding their way into something new.



Sweep had a plan for the club’s welcome afternoon. New visitors would follow clues, discover surprises, and finish with a grand treasure. Granite asked how many clues.



“A sensible number,” said Sweep. The paper rolled past the chair, around the table, and under Granite’s shoes. Granite looked down. “I see.”



Sweep made a map. Then he made a key to the map. Then a map showing where to find the key. Piper watched him draw a fourth arrow.



The treasure would be a little paper curling house, folded by each visitor. Sweep made a sample. Then a crown for the sample.



“Would you like me to try the hunt?” asked Piper. Sweep handed her the instructions. She unfolded them once. Twice. Granite moved his chair back.



The first clue sent Piper to a blue star. There were three blue stars. Sweep liked stars. He had been generous.



The second clue was under a chair. The chair was behind the table. The table was behind the enormous welcome sign.



Piper found the chair. She did not find the clue. Sweep checked his pocket. “Excellent,” he said quietly. “You have found the test version.”



By the third clue, Piper had stopped looking at the club. She was only looking at the instructions. That bothered Sweep more than the missing card.



“I wanted people to enjoy being here,” he said. Piper lowered the paper. “What do you want them to discover first?”



Sweep looked around. The friendly faces. The view of the ice. A table where someone could ask a question. Three things. He counted them again.



He made a new plan. One small card. Three clear pictures. No separate key. Granite took off his glasses to check. “It fits in my hand.”



First, say hello at the welcome table. Next, find the window with the best view. Last, bring one question back. The treasure could wait until then.



“My turn,” said Sweep. He followed the plan himself, slowly. At the window, he discovered that the flowerpot blocked the view for someone his height.



They moved the pot to a sunny table. Sweep could see the house at the far end. “The plant,” said Granite, “has an excellent view of the chairs.”



They put the picture clues where visitors could see them and kept the walkways clear. Sweep folded his enormous old plan into a neat stack.



The first visitors arrived. Sweep gave them the pocket-sized card. Then he waited. Waiting was the part he had forgotten to put on his first plan.



At the window, a visitor pointed to the colored circles. “Is that the house?” she asked. “Yes,” said Piper. “That’s the target at each end.”



“And where do the curlers eat?” asked her friend. Granite pointed behind them. Sweep looked relieved. At least the snack cupboard had not become a clue.



Back at the table, the visitors folded their paper houses. One was perfectly round. One was wonderfully lopsided. Both looked ready for a game of imagination.



A visitor asked Sweep to draw a tiny broom beside hers. He added himself instead. “A very modest signature,” said Granite.



Nobody had followed fourteen arrows. Nobody had solved the secret key. Everyone had found something to look at, someone to ask, and a place to sit.



Sweep looked at his little card. It did not show how much work he had done. It showed people where to begin. He liked that better.



When the next visitors came through the door, Sweep had everything ready. A small plan. A clear path. And a very big hello.