



Let's Have a Party!

FEATURING EMILY™

BY SUSAN HUGHES  
ILLUSTRATED BY GÉRALDINE CHARETTE





our  
generation®

This is Emily's story.







EMILY™

# LET'S HAVE A PARTY!

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*An Our Generation® book*

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EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

*Big words, wacky words, powerful words, funny words...  
what do they all mean? They are marked with this symbol \*.  
Look them up in the Glossary at the end of this book.*







# *Chapter One*

## MORE TEA?

“Would you like more tea, Sadie?” I asked. “And what about you, Izzy?”

I picked up the tiny teapot and poured more tea into my dolls’ miniature teacups.

“Rolo, would you like another cupcake?”

I love baking treats, like fancy cakes and cookies, and decorating them. Earlier today, I made little cupcakes with fancy icing for my dolls’ tea party.

I just adore parties of all kinds—going to them and giving them! Of course, I’ve only given parties for my dolls, but I really like going to my friends’ birthday parties and our classroom holiday parties. Best of all are our family gatherings—birthday parties for Mom, Dad, my brother Jered, who just turned eight, my grandparents, and my cousins; anniversary celebrations, Thanksgiving dinners... Oh, I can’t wait to go to a wedding one day!



Hmm... I looked at my dolls. Maybe I could plan a wedding between two of them. I already celebrate each of their birthdays. And I come up with lots of reasons to throw other parties for them—a sunny-day party, a rainy-day party, even a last-day-of-the-month party!

Usually I have the parties in my bedroom. It's my favorite room in our house because Mom and Dad let me organize it any way I want. I arrange everything in my bedroom by color: my bookshelves, my closet, and my drawers.

For parties, I especially want to make sure things look just right. So, I make my own decorations, choosing just the perfect themes and colors, and I put them up around my room. And I dress my dolls in special outfits to suit the occasion—casual or fancy. I dress up, too, sometimes in a party dress and sometimes in my pajamas!

"Another cupcake for you, Izzy?" I put a cupcake on her plate.

I wish my brother would play dolls with me sometimes, but he's only interested in stuffed animals, sports, and reading comics and graphic novels. My best friend, Imani, who lives next door, will play with me





if I ask. We're both nine and in the fourth grade, but I sometimes wonder if any other kids in our grade play with dolls. Imani tells me it doesn't matter and I shouldn't care so much about what other people do, and I guess she's right but...

"Em, Em, Em!" Jered shouted, bursting into my room. "You know I'm going to summer camp right after school ends next week, right?"

I laughed and rolled my eyes. It's all my brother's been talking about for weeks. He's excited and I'm excited for him. But he's a whirlwind of energy! I'm looking forward to having a whole week to relax in a quiet tidy house. Maybe I can set up my tea parties and fashion shows for my dolls in the basement for a change without worrying about Jered blasting through with his gang of friends.

"Well, Em, I just got the list of camp activities I can do while I'm there!" Jered sat down beside me and we looked over it together. I told him how much fun he'll have, and then he gave me a hug saying, "I'm going to start packing right now!" as he rushed off.

I laughed again and returned to my dolls. Maybe,





with Jered gone, it would be easier to help Mom out, too. She writes a blog\* and also has a vlog\*, with cooking and craft ideas and tips for parents. Sometimes she lets me help design her pages or style\* scenes for her videos. She says I have a good eye for color and design.

“Emily, honey?” Mom said, knocking gently on my door and then coming in. “Sorry to interrupt your party.”

“That’s OK, Mom,” I said. “My guests have had a nice time and are ready for a nap.”

She grinned. “Well, I just wanted to give you some good news. Your cousin Cristin is going to come for a short visit next weekend.”

“Oh, cool!”

Cristin is about 13 now. We don’t see each other often since she and my aunt and uncle live across the country. But we visited them two years ago, when I was seven, and we got along really well. Cristin made up really fun things for us to do together—playing “tea party” with her dolls and drawing new clothes for them, and even playing “shopping” and “fashion show” with me.

“Your Aunt Amy, Uncle Amir, and Cristin had planned a family trip for the beginning of summer



vacation, but now Amir has to go to Europe for work and my sister has a business conference at the same time,” Mom explained. “So Cristin’s going to stay with us for a week while Amy goes to the meeting. Afterwards, they’ll meet Amir in Europe and have a vacation there together.”

“Oh, that’ll be so much fun!” I said. “I hope Cristin doesn’t mind. But yay for us!”

“I’m happy about it too!” Mom said, as she headed off to finish writing today’s blog.

“Jered will be gone and my teenage cousin will be living here the entire time,” I told my dolls as I began to tidy up. “We can have pretend parties and design clothes together twenty-four seven\*!”



## *Chapter Two*

### DREAM JOB

“Imani, guess what?” I cried, rushing over to my best friend. It was Monday morning recess and we were out in the schoolyard. Imani had come late to class this morning, so this was our first chance to talk.

“What? What?” Imani asked. “You look like you’re about to burst!”

I grinned. “I am!”

I reminded her that Jered was going to camp on Saturday for a whole week, and then I explained all about my cousin coming for a visit.

“Cristin is 13,” I said, “and she’s coming on Sunday and school will be out and so she and I can hang out for seven whole days together, without Jered around!” I squeezed Imani’s arm. “I’ll show her all my dolls and their outfits. We’ll plan some cool parties for them, and maybe design some new clothes for them. Mom says she



can sleep in my room in the lower bunk bed. Maybe I'll even do some baking with her."

"Nice," Imani said. She wasn't giving her usual big smile.

"And you can hang out with us too, Imani," I added, quickly. "As much as you want."

Now she gave a big smile.

"Yes, it's Tory's first birthday!" came a loud voice from nearby. "A week from Saturday."

Imani and I turned to look. It was Lucinda, our classmate, bragging to her circle of friends about her beautiful white poodle. She got her last fall and hasn't stopped talking about her.

"I'm going to do something really special to celebrate my puppy's very special day," she was saying. Her friends all nodded. "Now, let's go and skip rope," she ordered them, pulling out her long pink jump rope, and they all nodded again.

Imani and I giggled.

"It seems silly to have a celebration for a dog," Imani said.

"But fun, right?" I said. "Lucinda would never ask



me, though.”

“Or me,” Imani added.

“But I’d love to go to a poodle party—or better yet, be the pet party planner!”

“Oh, Emily, you’d be so good at planning a pet party!” my friend said. “You have so much experience planning parties for all your dolls.”

“I love choosing what the decorations will be, what the snacks will be, and what my dolls will wear,” I said. “It’s fun to make up activities for them, too.” I hugged myself. “It would be amazing to be a real party planner one day. I think that might be my dream job!”

“Me too,” Imani agreed. “Maybe we could go into business together—be party planner partners!”

Suddenly, I got an idea. “Hey, why wait? Why don’t we start now, just for fun? We could do parties for little kids who have dolls, like all my little cousins?”

Imani grabbed my hands. “Yes, I love it!” she cried. “But, Emily, let’s start with Kayla, my little sister. You know how much she loves dolls? We’ll ask her if she wants us to plan a birthday party for one of them.”

“Perfect!” I agreed. “Can we talk to her after







school? Maybe we can plan it this week and host\* it this weekend.”

“I know she’d love that,” Imani said.



## *Chapter Three*

### OVER THE MOON

After school, Imani and I chatted all the way home. We stopped at my house so I could ask Mom if it was OK to go next door. As soon as we got to Imani's, we went straight to find Kayla.

She was sitting with Imani's mom on the living room couch. They were looking at a picture book together. And of course, Kayla had one of her dolls sitting on her lap.

"Imani! Emily!" Kayla cried, excited. She waved both hands at us and blew us kisses, which made Imani, her mom, and me laugh.

Kayla's four, and she follows Imani around, trying to do everything she does. It sometimes bugs Imani, but I think she's so sweet, and Imani does too, most of the time.

When Imani and I asked her if she'd like us to host a birthday party for one of her dolls this weekend, Kayla was over the moon\*. "Yippee!" she cried, jumping up and



giving us each a hug.

“It’s Lexie and Charlie’s birthday this Saturday,” she told us. “They’re twins.”

Imani’s mom grinned. “That sounds lovely, girls,” she said.

Imani and I went up to her room to chat about party plans for a bit until it was time for me to go home. We decided we would get together the next afternoon to work out a theme for the party.



Imani and I did lots of party planning on Tuesday during recess and after school. But for the next few days, we were kept busy with activities at school because it was the last week of the school year. We had a super field day, a school concert, and a school play. And on two different days after school, Imani had her last gymnastic class and I had my last swim lesson.

On Friday afternoon, though, we finally met up for one more planning session, this time at my house. I was a little nervous.

“I’ve planned parties for my own dolls before,



but it's different planning a party for someone else," I admitted. "I really want it to be perfect. I want Kayla to love it!"

"I'm sure she will," Imani told me. She held up one of the little party hats we were making for Kayla's dolls. "She'll just love these colorful hats—especially the two special ones for the birthday twins! And the cupcakes you're making with the chocolate icing."

"And we made the recordings of fun party music, and the banner saying, 'Happy Birthday Lexie and Charlie!'" I said. "And we've come up with three games for the dolls to play, too—with our help, of course."

Imani laughed. "I'm sure it will be great," she said again.



I was trying to tell Jered about the party as he and I cleared the dishes away after dinner. But he didn't listen. He just wanted to talk about going to camp the next day. He was bouncing around so much I was sure he was going to drop a plate!

Just then there was a knock at the front door. I heard Mom open it.





“Amy! Cristin! You’re here!” she cried. “How wonderful!”

*What?* They weren’t expected to come until tomorrow, after Jered had gone to camp.

Quickly, Jered and I put the last dishes in the dishwasher and raced out into the hallway.

Aunt Amy cried out, “Jered and Emily!” She crouched down and opened her arms. Jered got the first hug, and I got the second one.

Cristin hung back a bit, not really smiling, her hand on her suitcase handle. But when Jered hurled himself at her and hugged her, she laughed a little and hugged him back. She looked over at me uncertainly.

“Hi, Cristin! I’m so glad you’re here!” I was about to step forward to hug her too, but she didn’t really say anything or put her arms out to me. Maybe she and I were too old to hug each other? I just gave a little awkward wave.

“Come in, come in,” Mom said, as Dad came downstairs calling, “Hello, relatives! Great to see you!”

After more hugs and handshakes, we all sat in the living room, the adults having coffee while we all chatted.



It was really Mom and her sister doing most of the talking though. They hadn't seen each other for a while and had lots to catch up on. Dad tried to ask Cristin about how school was this year and whether she was looking forward to going to Europe in a week or so, but she seemed restless and mostly gave short answers.

I could hardly wait to get some time alone with Cristin. I was about to offer to show her up to my room when Aunt Amy got up.

"So, I better head out now, before it gets too late," she said. "I still have a couple hours of driving ahead of me tonight. The conference doesn't start until tomorrow afternoon, but I have to spend the morning preparing my presentation."

We all got up as well and said our goodbyes. Cristin and Aunt Amy spoke quietly to each other at the door and then Aunt Amy headed out to her car.

"OK, Cristin," I said, enthusiastically. "Come on upstairs. You're going to sleep in my room—I have bunk beds. I can't wait to show you my room!"

Cristin shrugged. "OK," she said, and we headed upstairs.



I pushed open my bedroom door and we went in. I was sure she'd *ohhh!* and *ahhh!* when she saw all my dolls, arranged so nicely, and I couldn't wait to show her my latest designs for new clothes for them. And oh, to tell her about my new party-planning idea. Maybe Cristin would even want to be one of the planners!

But Cristin just walked in, set her bag against the wall, and dropped her jacket on top of it.

"You can unpack and put your things here," I said, opening my closet door, "and here." I'd emptied one of the drawers of my bureau and I pulled it open to show her.

"It's OK," she said. "I don't really need to unpack."

She stood there, looking around at my carefully arranged and color-coded\* closet and shelves.

"Why do you care so much about everything looking perfect?" she asked, frowning.

"I..." I didn't know what to say. "I just...I just like things looking nice, I guess."

"And all these dolls," she said. She looked surprised to see them all, like she didn't remember they're some of my favorite things. "Aren't these for babies?"

I frowned. "You have dolls too. We played with



them when I visited two years ago,” I reminded her.

She looked a bit embarrassed. “Well, I do have one doll that I kept,” she said, “but that’s all. I gave my other ones away.”

“Oh,” I said. I swallowed hard.

“So, Emily, I’m kind of tired. I’m going to get ready for bed.” Cristin opened her suitcase, grabbed her pajamas and a toiletry kit\*, and then I led her down the hall and showed her the bathroom.

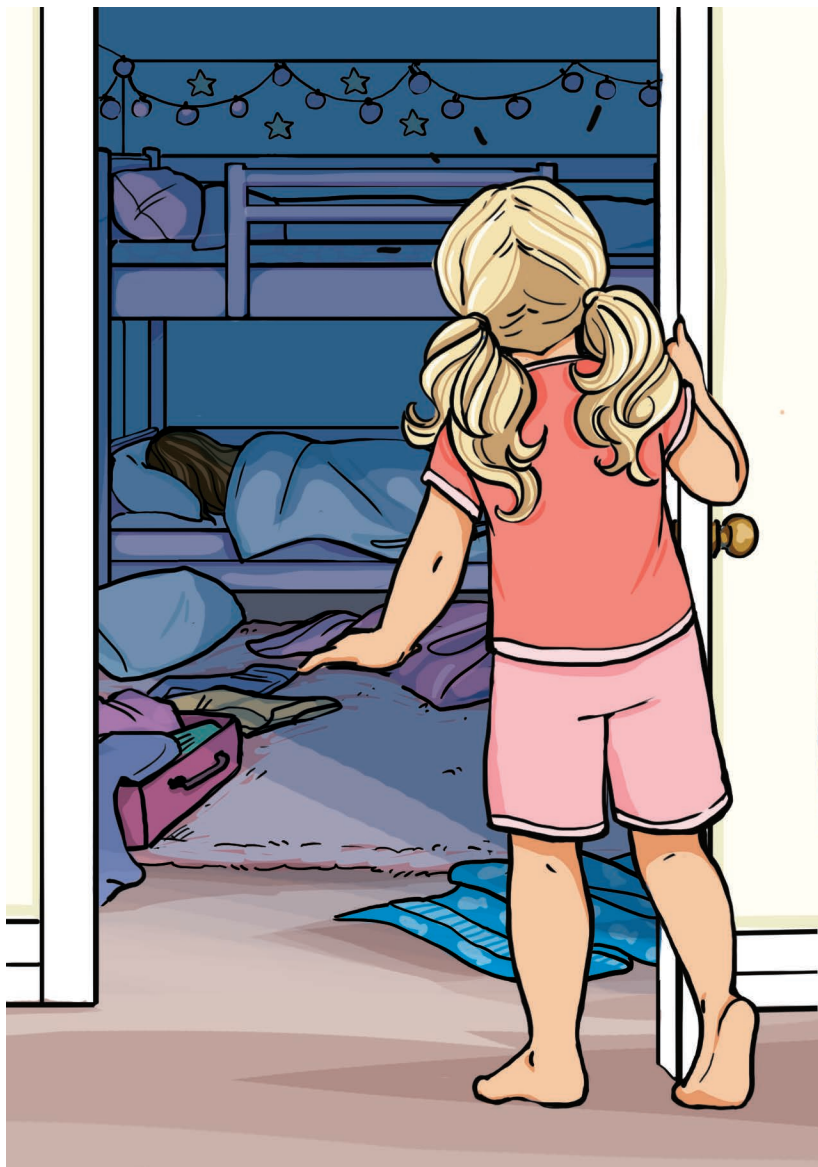
“Thanks,” she said. “You don’t need to wait for me. Can you say goodnight to your parents for me, and Jered, and tell them I’ll see them in the morning?”

“Sure,” I said. I grabbed my pajamas so I wouldn’t have to turn the bedroom light on and disturb her later, and then headed downstairs. Of course, when I told Mom what Cristin had asked me to say, she went upstairs to say goodnight to her anyway and make sure she was OK.

“Cristin’s fine. Poor thing’s just tired from the long trip with her mom,” Mom explained when she came back downstairs.

But I wasn’t sure about that. And I didn’t know if I was exactly fine, either. Because when I did go up to my





room later, and headed for my bed in the dark, I stepped on Cristin's wet towel in my bare feet, and then almost tripped on her clothes, which were in a heap by the closet.

I couldn't believe how messy she was. Maybe even worse than Jered.

I pulled the covers up to my chin. Maybe I wouldn't tell Cristin about my doll party-planning business after all. Maybe this wouldn't be the great week I thought it was going to be.



## *Chapter Four*

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TIMES TWO

“Mom, Dad,” I began, before I even poured my bowl of breakfast cereal. Cristin was still asleep upstairs, and I wanted to ask them both if she could sleep in Jered’s room while he was gone. “Since Jered is leaving this morning...”

“Hey, what about me?” Jered called, rushing into the kitchen, dragging his bulging duffel bag behind him. He had packed last night, with Dad’s help, shortly after Cristin went to sleep.

“Nothing about you,” I said quickly, before I got to finish my question. I wasn’t sure how he’d feel about a teenage girl taking over his room while he was gone. “Hey buddy, your bag is bursting at the seams\*. Did you add a few extras after Dad helped you pack? Want help going through it all again?”

Jered nodded. “Thanks, Em,” he said.



After helping him haul his bag into the living room, I discovered he'd hidden his stuffed toy monkey and his night light in his bag.

"I didn't want Dad to know," he told me. He fidgeted with the monkey. "He might think I'm a baby. But I don't want to go without them either."

"You'll be fine at camp," I promised him, "and Dad wouldn't think that for a minute. But Jered, I don't think you'll have anywhere to plug in a night light at camp."

Jered blinked his eyes quickly, looking like he might cry.

"Hang on," I told him. I ran up to my room, crept in for a moment, trying not to wake up Cristin, and hurried back down.

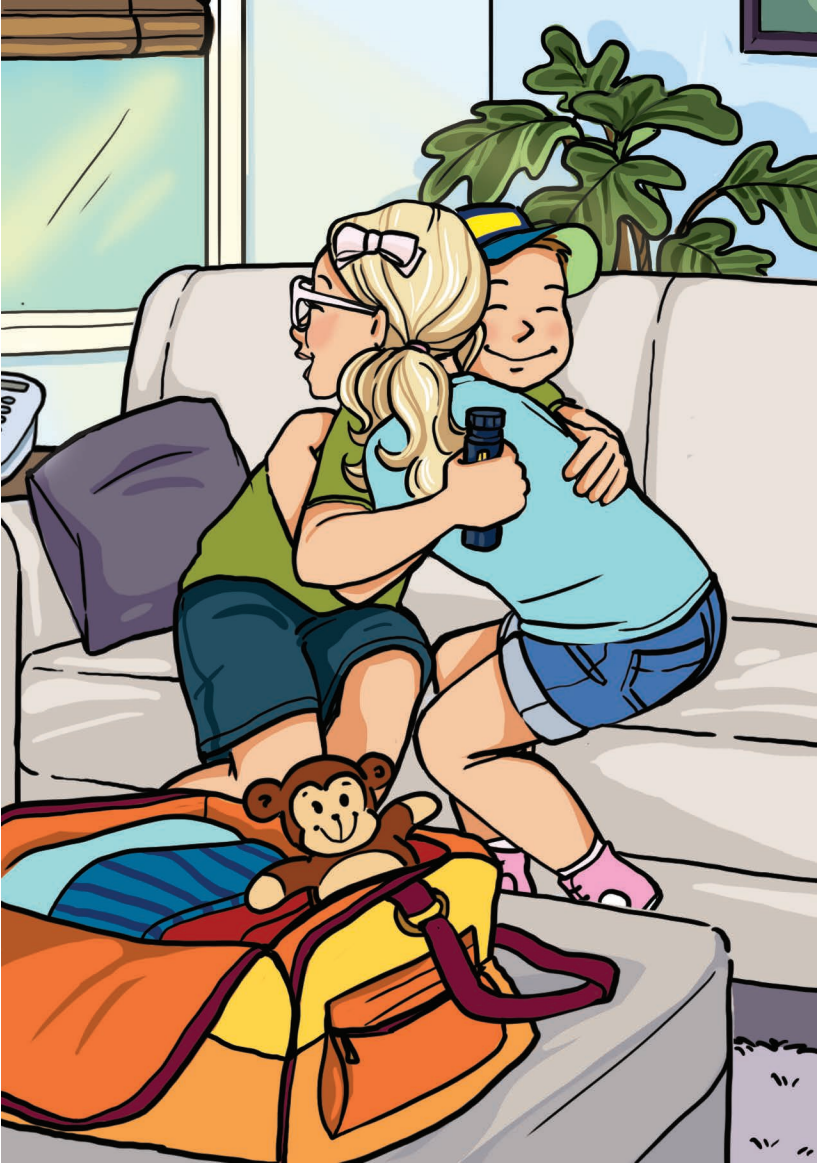
"Here," I said, handing him a mini-flashlight. "I keep this by my bed in case the dark bothers me, but I don't mind if you borrow it for camp."

Jered gave me the biggest smile. But then he frowned. "Will the other kids laugh at me if they see me with my stuffed monkey?" he asked.

I hugged him. "It doesn't always matter what other kids think," I said. "I still sleep with my teddy bear too."







Now let's go get some breakfast."

Soon after, Cristin came down and joined us at the kitchen table. She sat and played with her cellphone. She was listening while Jered talked about what the bus ride to camp might be like, but she wasn't saying much. I wasn't either. I was thinking about the party for Kayla today. I could hardly wait! It was going to be so much fun.

"Emily," Mom said, suddenly, "why don't you use my videocam to film Kayla's birthday doll party? If it all goes well, I could post it on my vlog. It would be a fun activity for my parent audience to try with their own little children."

"Really, Mom?" I asked. "OK! That would be great!"

But Cristin looked up. "You have a videocam, Aunt Caroline? I sometimes take videos on my phone, but I've always wanted to try a videocam."

"Well, Emily is hosting a doll party for her friend's little sister this morning," Mom explained, looking pleased that Cristin had perked up a bit. Then she grinned. "I know! I'm sure Emily would love it if you go with her to the party and video it. That would allow Emily and her



friend Imani to focus all their attention on the party.”

Cristin shrugged. “Sure, if Emily doesn’t mind.” She turned and looked at me.

“No, that would be fine,” I said. It would be fun to do the video myself, but...

Dad came rushing in then and told Jered it was time to go, and there was a flurry\* of goodbyes. But first, I managed to pull Jered aside and whisper in his ear.

“Can you tell Cristin she can use your room while you’re gone? I promise I’ll read your favorite comics to you for a whole week when you come back.”

Jered laughed, said sure, quickly made the offer to Cristin, and she accepted! Maybe she and I would get along better if we weren’t sharing the same space. I hoped.



“Imani, Cristin is going to take some videos for Mom’s vlog,” I explained. I’d brought Cristin over to Imani’s house and introduced her to Imani, Imani’s mom, and Kayla.

I’d also brought over a bag of decorations and party favors\*. Mom had let me go through her closet of leftover



party goods and craft supplies a few days ago. I know Mom's closet well—I've arranged it all for Mom by colors!

Imani led the way to their back patio so we could get ready for Kayla's doll party. We went through the family room, where Imani's 13-year-old brother, Sami, was playing a video game. He said hi to me, and I said hi back and quickly introduced him to Cristin.

We had just started blowing up balloons and putting out the picnic blankets when Kayla came running out onto the patio. "I'm here! I'm here and I've got Lexie, Charlie, and all their friends!" she cried, holding an armful of dolls. "Can I help set up for the party too?"

"Of course," I said. "Cristin, do you want to give us some help setting up?"

Cristin shrugged, fiddling with the videocam. "No, it's OK," she said. "I'll wait until it's time to do the video."

Just then Sami stuck his head out the patio doors.

"Hey, Cristin, want to play video games?" he asked.

"Yeah, sure," she said. To me, she said, "I'll come back in a bit."

I love decorating, and so I put up the balloons in a



pretty arrangement while Imani helped Kayla go through her doll outfits and decide what outfit each doll would wear. Then Imani and I showed Kayla how to arrange her dolls in a color-coded manner on the two picnic blankets. Kayla chattered away to us about which dolls were best friends, and why, and we talked about their favorite party treats.

Cristin appeared again right then, which was perfect timing.

She began videoing as Imani, Kayla, and I helped the dolls play some of Kayla's favorite party games. We put on music and played musical chairs with them. We helped them play "What Time Is It, Mr. Wolf?\*" and do the movements to the "I'm a Little Teapot\*" song.

Kayla was smiling from ear to ear. Cristin seemed to be having fun as she videoed the party events. She even sang the happy birthday song with us while we brought out the birthday cupcakes for Lexie and Charlie, the twins.

When Sami came back out and asked Cristin if she wanted to shoot some hoops in the driveway, the party had just finished up. The videoing was over.

Cristin said, "Sure!" and headed toward the



driveway with him.

No, she didn't help us clean up, but that was fine with me. I felt like nothing could bother me right then. Kayla was happy. Imani and I had organized our first party, and it was a success!



## *Chapter Five*

### A SURPRISE PHONE CALL

“May we see the video you took?” Mom asked Cristin.

Cristin, Mom, Dad, and I were eating lunch together. I was going on about how well Kayla’s party had gone the day before.

Cristin played the video for us, explaining that she took several videos of different activities during the party.

“Good job!” Dad said.

“You really think so?” Cristin said, looking surprised. “I wasn’t really sure what I was doing, but I did like doing it.”

“It’s great,” Mom said, nodding. “I can’t wait to put it on my vlog.”

Cristin beamed. She turned to me. “Are you planning another doll party?” she asked. “Can I help out again? Take more videos?”



I quickly took a bite of my sandwich and chewed, trying to stall.

“I’m sure Emily would be very happy for you to help again,” Mom said. “Right, honey?”

I swallowed. “Well, Imani and I don’t actually have another one planned,” I said.

“Maybe Imani can come over, and the three of us can do a planning session. Try to drum up some business,” Cristin suggested.

Mom and Dad looked at me, expectantly.

“Um, OK,” I said. “Sure.”



When Imani arrived later that afternoon, Sami came along too, with his basketball.

“Boys, right?” Imani whispered to me. “I think he’s already bored because school is over and all his friends are away.”

Sami went in the backyard to practice dribbling, and Cristin, Imani, and I sat around the kitchen table.

“So, let’s brainstorm\* ideas about how to get more clients\* for parties,” Cristin said.





I wrote “Brainstorm Session” at the top of a blank page in my notebook.

We all sat and thought for a few minutes. Then Imani and I began making some suggestions. None of them very good—in fact, some were so silly they made us giggle until we almost couldn’t stop! But that’s OK when you’re brainstorming. I jotted them all down, even the silly ones!

Cristin seemed a bit distracted. She was mostly looking out at the driveway.

“What about making flyers?” Imani asked.

I wrote it down. “Yeah, and we could give them to all our friends with younger brothers and sisters,” I said.

“Maybe we should come up with a name for our party-planning business,” Imani said.

So, she and I made a list of all kinds of names, from really terrible—like Party Poopers—to boring—like Party Planners—to OK names, like We Plan, You Party. We finally decided on the one we both liked best: Let’s Have a Party!

Imani pulled out some blank paper and we both did some sketches of what a flyer could look like. I got the



markers so we could add color.

“Color can make all the difference,” I said, as I wrote in colorful letters:

## *Let's Have a Party!*

Then, “Oh, I don’t like this color combo,” I said, crumpling up my paper and starting a new one.

“Emily, you care about every tiny detail. Why does it matter to you about how every little thing looks?” Cristin got up, frowning “I’m going to hang out with Sami,” she said and headed for the back door.

Imani and I looked at each other but didn’t say anything. I felt myself relax a little. We sketched out a few more flyer ideas. Then we planned more doll outfits and pretend party themes. I sketched some ideas of party decorations we could make and what colors would work best.

“This is fun,” I said.

“Yes,” Imani agreed. “Even if we don’t end up handing these out for real.”

“Exactly,” I said. “I doubt any of our friends would



want us to host doll parties for their little brothers and sisters. Maybe we could tell our aunts and uncles though?”



I was tired and just about to climb into bed. It had been a great day! I was so lucky to have such a great best friend. I heard the phone ringing in the hallway and my mom answering it.

“Honey,” Mom said. She poked her head in my bedroom. “Honey, there’s a phone call for you. She says she’s Lucinda, a friend from school.”

Lucinda? I was surprised. She hardly talked to me at school. She had never called our house before.

“Are you too tired to talk?” Mom asked. “Should I tell her you’ll call her tomorrow?”

“No, it’s OK,” I said. I went into the hallway and picked up the phone.

“Hey, Emily? It’s Lucinda. My friend Toni has a little sister who is friends with Imani’s little sister, Kayla. I heard about the cute doll party you and Imani planned and hosted for Kayla. I’m wondering...”

She’d heard about the party? What could she be





wondering?

“...if you and Imani can plan a party for my poodle, Tory,” Lucinda continued.

Totally surprised, half-asleep, I didn’t say anything.

“Emily?” Lucinda asked, sharply. “Did you hear me?”

“Um, yes,” I said, “but...”

“Perfect. Then the party is on,” Lucinda said. “I’ll call you tomorrow and we’ll go over the details.”

Before I could explain that I meant “yes, I heard you,” and not “yes, we’ll do the party,” she had hung up.

*Oh, yikes.*



## Chapter Six

### WAS THAT A DREAM?

I was having a quiet breakfast the next morning when Mom came into the kitchen. “I just looked in on Cristin. She’s going to have breakfast later. She’s just relaxing, reading some magazines she brought from home.”

“OK,” I said, spreading honey on my whole-wheat toast.

“I’m going to catch up on some work. You’re OK?” Mom asked.

“Yup,” I said. Then, suddenly remembering, I asked, “Did I really get a phone call from Lucinda right before bedtime last night, Mom, or was that a weird dream?”

Mom laughed as she headed for her home office. “No, Lucinda really called.”

*Oh, double yikes.*



I immediately called Imani.

“You’ll never guess what happened!” I began, and quickly explained about the phone call from Lucinda. “Imani, she’s calling back this morning. Please come over—now!”

Of course, my friend rushed right over.

“Imani, I have to find a way to say no. How can we plan a party for a real pet?” I said, panicky. “We’ve only had one practice with a doll party!”

“Well...” Imani said.

The phone rang in the living room. I looked at it.

“Maybe I could just not answer?” I suggested.

Mom called out from her office. “Emily, can you get that please?”

I put the phone on speaker.

Lucinda launched right into instructions. “Emily, my poodle’s birthday is on Saturday, six days from now. I want to have the party that morning.” She listed the names of the three people and their dogs that she planned to invite.

Imani scrambled to find a pencil and write them all down.



“And Mom says to please go ahead and get whatever party supplies and food you think we’ll need,” Lucinda said. “OK. Let’s talk soon.”

She hung up.

Imani and I stared at each other, stunned. Then we burst out laughing.

“I guess we’re hosting our first pet party!” I said.

Imani and I spent the rest of the day trying to figure out how in the world we would plan a party for a dog. And not just any dog—the dog of the bossiest girl at school.

Imani and I sat for ages, just trying to make a list of all the questions we needed to answer. Some we came up with were: What do dogs like to do for fun? What kind of games could dogs play? What kind of decorations would be good? What kind of party food would dogs like? What kind of food can dogs eat? What about the humans?

Imani and I made some lunch and took it outside to eat.

When we came back in, Cristin was snacking in the kitchen. When I suggested to Imani that we work up in my room for a while, just for a change, Cristin asked if she







could come along.

She sat on the floor, leaning against the wall while we sat on the bed and did more brainstorming. It was nice because she just listened in.

She saw my photo albums and asked if she could look through them. And she sat, flipping through the pages. Every so often, she asked about a photo or two, and she made some cool observations about the angles of the shots, and the posing. I had never really looked at the photos from that point-of-view before—like an artist, almost.

Then Cristin disappeared for a while. When she came back and began taking photos of Imani and me working, we both looked up.

“Is it OK?” she asked, holding up her phone. “Sorry. I should have asked first.”

“Yeah, sure,” I said. And Imani nodded too.

Finally, Imani said it was time for her to go home. I sighed.

“Is there any way Lucinda will ever think the dog party we organize is good enough for her Tory?” I asked.

But Cristin answered before Imani could. “Emily,



it's *you* who has such high standards\*," she said. "If you can throw a party that you're happy with, this girl Lucinda, whoever she is, will be more than happy."

Imani laughed. "She might be right, Emily," she said, nudging me.

Maybe. But maybe not. In any case, this was a lot to think about.



## *Chapter Seven*

### DO WHAT YOU WANT

Imani had just arrived at my house the next morning when Lucinda called.

“Have you decided where you’ll host the party?” she asked. “Mom says it can’t be here.”

“Oh! Well, we haven’t really...”

“Call me back before dinnertime with the location so I can send out invitations,” said Lucinda.

Imani and I got right on it. We sat down and began mulling over\* some possibilities. But none of them would work well—not for four people and their four dogs.

“What about the park down the street?” Imani suggested.

“Good idea,” I said.

When I asked Mom if we could go and check it out, she said we could go if Cristin went with us. She was working and so was Dad.



“Sure, I’ll go,” Cristin said, jumping up from the couch. She’d been sitting there reading another magazine. I think maybe she was bored.

“Great,” I said. Then I got an idea. “Imani, let’s get dressed up, just for fun.”

“Yes!” Imani said, with a fist pump.

“We’ll be ready in a few minutes, Cristin,” I told her.

Imani and I ran up to my room and searched for some summery clothes. As we did, I said, “I’d love to bring some of my dolls. They’d enjoy a trip to the park. We could turn it into a special event for them, but...”

“Let’s do it!” Imani said. She had chosen a pretty sundress with a frilly collar from my closet. She began changing.

“No. I’m pretty sure Cristin would laugh at me. She thinks dolls are babyish,” I admitted. I found a colorful shirt in my closet and paired it with a cool pair of shorts.

“Emily, you love having events for your dolls,” Imani said. She put her hands on her hips and looked at me sternly. “You need to do what you want. Forget what Cristin might say.”



I finished getting changed. I looked over at my dolls. They looked back at me, patiently waiting.

“OK.” I nodded. Quickly, I made my choice. Edith, Claudette, Ben, and Paulie.

Imani and I gathered them up and hurried downstairs.

When Cristin saw us with our arms full of dolls, she rolled her eyes at us, but Imani just laughed and so I did too.



“Well, it was a good suggestion,” I said, “but I think it would be too difficult to have the party here.”

Imani agreed. “The dogs would run around everywhere.”

But even though we couldn’t use the park as a venue\* for the party, I was glad we checked it out. We had loads of fun. We put the dolls on the swings. We let them go down the slide. We even played ring-around-the-rosy and hide-and-seek with them.

As Imani and I played, Cristin had started taking photos of the dolls and us on her phone. She really got





excited about it—calling out to us to freeze at certain times and then suggesting all sorts of silly poses.

When Imani and I asked to see some of the shots, we were amazed.

“Cristin, you’re a really good photographer!” I told her.

“Yeah, totally,” Imani said.

But Cristin shook her head, no.

Just then Cristin’s phone rang.

“It’s my mom,” she said, with a smile. Into the phone, she said, “Mom! Hi!”

After a pause, she continued, “Yes, I’m OK.” But now she looked sad, and her voice got low and shaky.

Cristin moved away a little to speak more privately with her mom, but I overheard her saying, “Can I tell you something quickly, Mom? Aunt Caroline asked me to make a video, and she even posted it on her...”

Then a pause. “OK. Sure, Mom. Bye.”

She turned back to us, and we headed home from the park. Imani and I each carried two dolls. Cristin asked if she could hold one too.

I thought about how Mom always supported my





passion for planning and design. I felt bad for Cristin that her dad and mom were away so much.

Cristin was walking head down, staring at her feet. To distract her, I said, “Hey, you two. We still haven’t come up with a place for the party yet. We can’t use Lucinda’s yard and the park won’t work.”

Suddenly Cristin looked up. “Why not your backyard, Emily?” she suggested. “It’s perfect! It’s really big, it’s fenced in, and you could prepare everything on-site.”

Imani grinned. “I can’t believe we never even thought of that,” she said.

“Yeah, it’s a perfect place for a party,” I agreed. “I’m sure Mom and Dad will be OK with it. Thanks, Cristin.”

Cristin shrugged. But she also grinned.



## *Chapter Eight*

### MORE PARTY PLANNING

Before dinner, I asked Mom and Dad if we could have the party in our backyard.

“What a great idea,” Dad said. “Well, of course you may!”

“And then we can be here to help out,” Mom said. “Not that you’ll need it,” she added quickly, with a grin.

I called Lucinda to let her know. She was pleased.

“I’d like you and Imani to come over tomorrow afternoon to talk,” she said. She didn’t wait for me to agree but just said she had to go, and then hung up. Typical Lucinda!



Imani and I spent the morning discussing which decorations would suit the party. While we ate lunch, we tried to make a list of games we could play.



“Is it possible to play hide-and-seek with dogs?” Imani asked doubtfully when I suggested it.

“Yeah, maybe not,” I agreed.

Cristin was eating with us but not saying much. I thought back to her phone call with her mother the day before.

“What do you think, Cristin?” I asked. “Any suggestions for games that dogs and their owners could play together?”

“Musical chairs...I mean, mats?” she suggested.

Imani laughed. “That might actually work!” she said.

Cristin didn’t exactly smile, but her lips twitched a little—almost a grin.

When I glanced at the clock, I saw we had to hurry. “Mom!” I called into the living room, getting up to clear our lunch dishes. “Imani’s mom is going to drive us over to Lucinda’s now!”

“OK, honey,” Mom called back. She came into the kitchen. But when she saw Cristin at the table, she added, “Maybe Cristin would like to go with you and Imani. Does that sound good, Cristin?”



“Sure, Aunt Caroline,” Cristin said, politely.

“Cristin, you don’t have to come if you don’t want to,” I said quickly. “It could be super boring for you.”

But Cristin shrugged. “No, it’s OK,” she said.



“Kayla and I will wait for you out here,” Imani’s mom said, as she pulled up in front of Lucinda’s house.

“Whoa, this is a mansion!” Cristin said, as she, Imani, and I walked down the wide, circular driveway toward the large brick house with massive white columns.

When I rang the doorbell, chimes played a fancy tune inside. I heard a dog barking.

“Hello,” Lucinda said, as she opened the door. “Follow me.”

Everything inside her house was very formal, and pure white—the carpets, the walls, the living room furniture. Lucinda herself was wearing a white sundress, and even Tory, her poodle, was white!

I was relieved when Lucinda led us straight through her house and out the sliding door into the large backyard. No one was back there, but there were piles of dirt and



flats of colorful flowers sitting ready to be planted in the garden beds.

“The gardener will be arriving soon,” Lucinda said casually, as we sat at a pretty table with an umbrella. She handed me a list. “This is the final guest list. It has the names of my guests and their pets, too.”

“But Lucinda,” I said, glancing at the list. “There are six names on here! You said three friends and their dogs were coming.”

Lucinda waved her hand. “Did I? Well, I invited some extra friends, I guess. And they are all available to come.”

I bit my lip. We’d have to make even more collars and name tags for the dogs. Well, at least we hadn’t bought the food yet.

Suddenly Lucinda jumped up and cried, “Tory! No, Tory!”

I turned. Her beautiful white poodle was racing straight for the biggest pile of dirt.

“Tory, come here right now!” Lucinda shrieked.

But it was too late. Tory rolled happily in the dirt.

“Oh, no!” Lucinda cried. “Who let Tory out here?”





“Oops!” said Cristin. “I’m so sorry.”

Lucinda frowned at her, but just then, Tory decided to obey her owner and came running over.

“No!” Lucinda yelled, as Tory jumped up, planting her front paws on Lucinda’s stomach.

“Tory!” Lucinda cried in despair. She now had two big paw prints on her white dress.

“I think we should leave and get back to work planning the party,” Imani said, quickly.

The three of us couldn’t help giggling as we hurried away, leaving through the back garden gate so we could avoid going through the perfectly white house again.



## *Chapter Nine*

### FEELING JITTERY

I was trying not to feel nervous, but by Thursday, I was definitely feeling jittery\*. I'd planned parties for dolls but never for real live people or real live dogs before! I really hoped we didn't forget anything, that everything would look perfect and go just right on Saturday.

I was happy Mom decided to take the day off from work to spend it with Cristin and me. Last night, Mom had said she'd take me to a pet store to buy things for the party. She also asked Cristin if she was interested in going to a photo gallery, and Cristin said yes.

So, this morning, after Mom got a nice e-mail from Jered's camp counselor, checking in to let us know Jered was doing great, we headed to the pet boutique\* first.

Imani and I had agreed that we would bake a special cake for the human party guests, but at the pet store, I looked at all the different "barkday" cakes and







cupcakes made with ingredients dogs could eat. They were so amazing! The cakes and cupcakes came in all sizes and shapes—from tiny to huge. Some cakes were three tiers high! One looked like a big dog bowl!

And the decorations—wow! There were sprinkles, little dog biscuits, dog paw prints, and colored icing in swirls and swirls.

I eventually chose a cake in the shape of a dog biscuit and some doggie cupcakes, too. While Mom paid, Cristin and I put the cakes, and some dog treats, in the car.

Next, we visited a photo gallery with two special exhibits: one of portraits of local people and one of landscapes\*. It didn't interest me too much, but Cristin's face lit up\*. She stood in front of each photo for what seemed like ages, looking closely at them. She and Mom talked and talked. I tried to be patient, and I was happy that Cristin had a good time, but I was nervous about all the work I still had left to do.

Finally, we headed to the big arts-and-crafts store Mom goes to all the time. She needed to pick up craft supplies for things she's making for her blog. I went up and down the aisles, choosing name tag stickers, party bags,



balloons, and paper streamers. I even found a doggy paw print tablecloth for the picnic table!



On Friday, I went into high gear\*. Imani and I made cute dog collars with bows—tiny, medium, and large, depending on the dog guest—out of scrap ribbons from Mom’s craft cupboard. We made a name tag for each dog guest, wrote their name on them with colored permanent markers, and attached the tags to collars with the little clasps I’d bought at the craft store. We filled six party bags with treats, one for each dog to take home.

With Mom’s help, Imani and I baked a tall cake for the party guests. We covered it in pink icing and glazed it with white icing. We put it on a pedestal\* so it would be extra-special. Finally, we decorated the top with macaron\* cookies.

It looked amazing!

Cristin had been snapping photos of us while we were working on the party bags and then baking. We were so intent on what we were doing that we didn’t really pay much attention. But when she showed the pictures to us,



they were good!

It made me smile to see Mom, Imani, and me happily working on our baking project together.

Imani smiled too, and she and I exchanged a look. Both of us had thought about having a photo booth at the party. We'd asked my mom and dad and they said OK. Now we were sure we should do it, if Cristin would agree to help.

We explained it all to Cristin. "We could send photos to each guest later," we told her. "It would be so cool."

"And Cristin, you could take more photos for my blog," said Mom. "And videos too, please."

Cristin smiled, but she didn't agree right away. She took me aside.

"Are you sure, Emily?" Cristin asked. She put her hand on my arm. "I haven't been very helpful with the planning. And right after I got here, I complained that you seem to care so much about how things look." She paused. "But now, I get it. I guess it's sort of like photos. Sometimes the way things look can make people happy."

"Exactly," I said. "And—that's OK about what



you said earlier.”

She nodded. “Thanks, and I’d love to help out at the party tomorrow!”

“Yay! I’ve been getting really nervous about the party, but this helps me feel like it will be a success,” I said. “You’ll get to use Mom’s videocam again. And guess what? Dad said you can use his digital camera\* for the event.”

“Oh, wow, really?” Cristin clasped her hands together. “When he gets home from work, I’m going to ask him to show me how to use it!”



## *Chapter Ten*

### PARTY TIME!

I woke up with my stomach in knots. I remembered instantly. It was the day of Tory's birthday party!

Everything went OK at first.

It was a gorgeous sunny day, which was lucky because we hadn't really made any plans for bad weather. Mom and Dad were on standby to help, but Imani and I were in charge. She came over hours before the party because we weren't really sure how long it would take us to get everything ready.

We ran back and forth, carrying things out to the backyard, setting up everything just so. The decorations looked great, especially the "Yappy Barkday, Tory!" banner. We marked off an area for the games. We arranged the macaron "people" cake and Tory's special "barkday" cake and all the doggie cupcakes on a big table. We set out bowls for the dogs and plates, forks, spoons, and knives



for the humans.

We arranged the party bags on a little table and we set up our photo booth. Cristin had helped us make it yesterday afternoon. On the front, in big letters, it said:

## **YAPPY BARKDAY PARTY!**

The dog could pose underneath the sign. There was even room for each guest to pose with their dog.

The party was scheduled to begin at eleven o'clock. At ten thirty, Cristin, Imani, and I were ready and waiting. We had planned out the event from the moment guests came to the moment they left. We had a checklist so we could keep track of what to do and when. Imani and I each had a copy on a clipboard.

I also had my pair of walkie-talkies, so Imani and I could communicate with each other easily during the party. Cristin said she didn't need one. She would be busy with the two cameras.

Lucinda arrived early with Tory as planned. And right away, she complained.

"I'm not happy with this," she said vaguely, waving



her hand toward the whole backyard. “I’d like you to make a few changes.”

Imani, Cristin, and I exchanged looks, but Lucinda was the client.

“Sure,” I said. “What would you like us to do?”

For the next half an hour, we made Lucinda’s changes as she directed. We rearranged the decorations and moved the picnic table here and then there. Dad helped us raise the banner higher and shift the photo booth to the other side of the yard. Meanwhile, Tory, the birthday dog, lay in the shade, looking somewhat puzzled.

We had just finished when the guests arrived at the back gate all at once.

Laughing, chattering, some barking, lots of wagging tails... In they came, six excited party guests and their six very excited dogs—the spaniel, the Scottie, the golden retriever, the pug, the chocolate Lab, and Brutus, the Great Dane.

Imani and I started giving out the party collars with their name tags. We had made one specially for each dog—but when Lucinda saw them, she came over and insisted on choosing which dog should get which. So we





had to take all the name tags off, and then reattach them.

Lucinda began handing out the collars.

“Remember, only one collar is big enough to fit Brutus,” I warned her.

“I know that,” Lucinda said.

Once every dog had a collar, I headed to the patio and stepped up on the stool we’d put there.

“Hello, everyone! Welcome to Tory’s birthday party! I know we’re all going to have fun today!” I announced, trying to get everyone’s attention. All the guests cheered. “We’re going to begin with some games,” I went on, “but I want to point out the photo booth.”

I explained to the guests they could pose with their dogs, or their dogs could pose alone, and Cristin would take their photos. I said they could do this anytime they wanted but it might be best to wait until after the games.

But as soon as I finished explaining, Lucinda said she wanted to have her photo taken with Tory right now, before the games. Tory was the birthday dog, so all Lucinda’s friends waited and watched while she and Tory posed. Cristin took quite a few photos. I was sure one of them must be terrific. Then Lucinda looked at them.





“Tory doesn’t look happy enough in the shots,” Lucinda said. She made Cristin take the shot over and over until she was satisfied.

“OK,” I said, quickly jumping up on the stool again. “Now, everyone, gather round for a game. There will be dog treats for prizes!”

Everyone cheered again, until Lucinda interrupted. “First, Tory really wants to show everyone her tricks in the photo booth,” she said. “It’ll be the perfect place for a video.”

So everyone watched and waited. Lucinda insisted Cristin take a video while she tried to get Tory to do her tricks: standing on her hind legs, rolling over, and bowing. I thought Tory did quite well. But Lucinda insisted Tory keep going until she did at least one trick perfectly.

Lucinda’s friends began to get a bit restless, especially as Tory started being less cooperative. Two of the dogs lay down. Another even yawned!

“I’m sure at least one of those will be great,” I said, smiling.

“I’ll look at them to check,” Lucinda said.

She stood right next to Cristin, as Cristin showed



her the videos on the videocam's viewfinder\*.

"This one doesn't look good. Tory's collar slipped," she complained. And then, "Tory's party hat shifted in this video. It doesn't look perfect."

Tory gazed mournfully at her doggie pals, obviously wanting to join them and have some fun. She looked more and more miserable, poor pup.

Finally Lucinda shrugged and took Tory to get a drink of water and Cristin came over to me.

"It didn't seem fair that the birthday dog had to show off her tricks while her friends were all relaxing," Cristin said.

"Lucinda seems to care more about how everything looks than making sure her poodle, and all her friends and their dogs, have any fun!" I said.

Suddenly I looked at Cristin. "That's what I've been doing sometimes too, right?"

She grinned. "Well, just a little," she said. "But I get it." She held up the two cameras. "I understand why the way things look can be important. It matters to me sometimes, too."

"But sometimes, other things definitely matter



more,” I agreed. I waved my hands around at the party.  
“Like now. Making sure all these guests have fun is more important! And they’re not! I have to think of some way to save this party—and fast!”



## Chapter Eleven

### PARTY CRASHER!

What should I do? How could I make things better?

But all of a sudden, when I thought things were as bad as they could be, things got even worse.

Wolfy, my neighbor's huge scruffy dog, an Irish wolfhound, crashed the party!

We had shut our gate, but our neighbor Mr. Greenbaum must have left his gate open. And Wolfy must have been curious about all the sounds coming from our yard, because—*ka-woosh!* She came leaping over the hedge between our yards.

Lucinda and all her friends looked horrified. So did Imani.

Especially when Wolfy raced over to Tory, knocking down the photo booth. And as she greeted Tory, her wildly wagging tail swept all the party bags off the little table.

“Oh, Tory! Careful of this wild beast!” Lucinda



cried, pulling her poodle closer to her, protectively.

Several balloons came loose and torn streamers fluttered in the breeze. Wolfy bounded over to the picnic table and up went her front paws, toppling our macaron cake onto it's side. Then she stuck her nose right into Tory's barkday cake.

"Oh, no!" squealed Lucinda. "Tory's cake is ruined!"

Cristin, however, was grinning. She had Dad's camera in one hand and the videocam in the other hand. She was alternating snapping away with the camera and filming with the videocam.

"Emily, Emily!" Imani called me on the walkie-talkie. "Can you believe it?"

"Yes, it's a disaster," I moaned.

"No, look!" she said.

I turned around and, to my amazement, Lucinda's friends no longer looked shocked. They were laughing, maybe because their dogs were jumping around, happy for the first time. One after another, each child took their dog off its leash.

Immediately, the spaniel, the pug, and the golden



retriever lunged forward and began eating what was left of Tory's cake. The chocolate Lab ran for the macaron cake, got covered in icing, galloped cheerfully back to his owner, and got the icing all over her party dress. But this just made the guests laugh out loud and clap.

I glanced at Lucinda. Her eyes were wide. I couldn't tell whether she was going to cry or maybe yell at me.

Imani called out, "Emily, it's OK! Everyone's enjoying themselves!"

She was so right. Cake, party bags, and decorations were everywhere, but all of the dogs, and Lucinda's friends, were messy and loving it. The kids had started to sing "Happy Birthday" to Tory. And Tory was happily playing tag with all the other dogs, including her new friend, Wolfy.

"Everyone!" Imani repeated, pointing. Sure enough, Lucinda was watching Tory, listening to her friends sing to her poodle, and she was actually smiling.

Yes, nothing looked pretty anymore. Nothing was in its right place. Nothing was perfect. But...everyone was happy. Maybe the party wasn't a disaster after all!







## Chapter Twelve

### A PERFECT PLAN

“Mom, Mom!” Cristin said. It was Sunday morning, and Aunt Amy had just arrived to pick up Cristin. “You won’t believe the amazing birthday party Emily and her friend Imani threw yesterday—for a poodle!”

“Whoa, this is something I need to hear more about!” Aunt Amy said, as she, Mom, Cristin, and I all sat down in the kitchen. Aunt Amy sipped on a coffee, nodding and smiling as Cristin told her all about the event from beginning to end.

When she heard about Wolfy saving the day, Aunt Amy laughed and laughed.

“Here, Aunt Amy,” I said, after running to get Dad’s camera and Mom’s videocam. “You have to see the photos and videos that Cristin took. They’re amazing!”

I grinned as Cristin sat beside her mother, showing her each shot and each video, one by one.



“Oh, Cristin, your dad will love to see these,” said Aunt Amy. “You’ll have to show him as soon as we meet up with him overseas!”

And then Jered came bursting through the door, home from camp.

“Em, Em, Em!” He ran to give me a big hug.

“I missed you, Jered,” I told him, wrapping my arms around him. It was true. I’d missed how he always seems happy and looks on the bright side. Yes, he’s messy, but he’s a really great brother.

“Em, guess what?” he whispered in my ear. “Two of the other kids in my cabin had stuffed toys too. When they saw me pull mine out the first night, they pulled theirs out too. Some of the other kids laughed, but we didn’t care!”

Jered gave Mom, Aunt Amy, and Cristin hugs while Dad hauled his duffel bag in from the car.

Then Cristin’s mother thanked us all again for having Cristin stay with us while she was working. And she apologized to Cristin for postponing their family vacation, but Cristin smiled. She came over to me and put her arm around my shoulders.



“It was nice to spend time with Cousin Emily, Mom,” she said. “She and Aunt Caroline and Uncle Don were so kind to me, even though I was a bit grumpy.” She squeezed my shoulder. “And I’ve discovered I love photography and filming. I can’t wait to take some photos on my phone in Europe, if that’s OK!”

Aunt Amy looked so happy. “I have an idea,” she said. “Cristin, your birthday’s coming up—what if Dad and I get you a camera of your own as an early birthday gift while we’re in Europe? You can use it to take photos while the three of us are there together.”



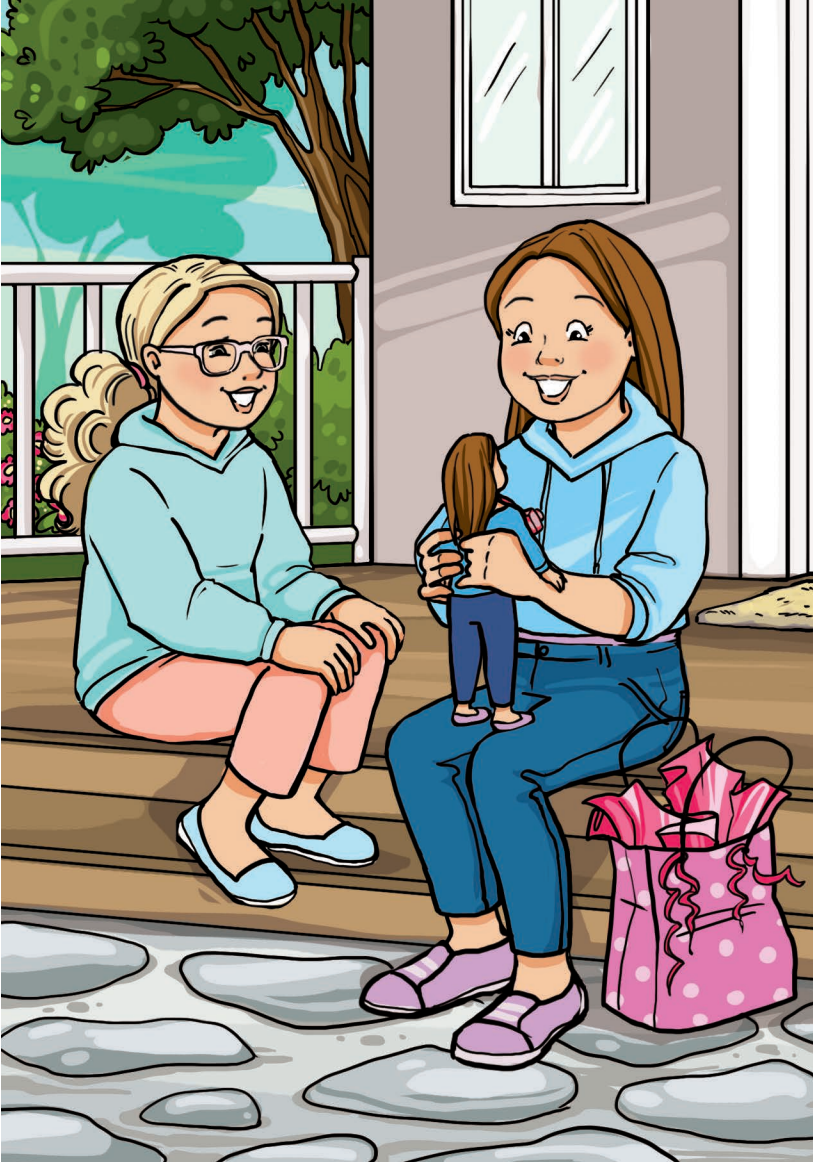
Soon Cristin finished packing and she and Aunt Amy were ready to go. We all headed out to their car.

“Oh, I almost forgot!” I cried. I quickly ran back inside and up into my room.

In a moment, I was back. I hesitated for a minute. What if Cristin laughed?

But I was pretty sure she wouldn’t. Not now. Not after we had spent this week together, getting to know each other a little more. And getting to know ourselves a





little more too!

Shyly, I handed Cristin one of my dolls.

“Oh, Emily!” Cristin cried. Her eyes lit up. “She looks just like me! Thank you so much! And...” She stared. “Look! She even has a little camera around her neck!”

I nodded. “I made the camera out of foam and colored it, and I strung it on a pink ribbon. I wanted her to really look like you!”

“I just love it, especially because you made it just for me,” Cristin said. She smiled and gave me a hug. “I’m so glad you’re my cousin. I promise I’ll send you photos and videos of my new doll everywhere we go on our vacation.”

“I’m so glad you’re my cousin, too, Cristin,” I told her. And I hugged her right back. “And that sounds like a perfect plan!”



## Glossary

*Many words have more than one meaning. Here are the definitions of words marked with this symbol \* (an asterisk) as they are used in this story.*

**blog:** *a website where someone regularly writes about their thoughts or about a particular topic*

**boutique:** *a small shop that offers special products or goods*

**brainstorm:** *come up with new ideas, usually with another person or in a group*

**“bursting at the seams”:** *stuffed so full that it’s about to break open*

**clients:** *people who hire a skilled person to help with something they need to do*

**color-coded:** *organized by color*

**digital camera:** *a camera that takes photos and stores them on a memory card*

**flurry:** *a lot of things happening suddenly all at once*



**high gear:** *a greater level of activity or effort*  
**high standards:** *expectations that are greater than the usual*

**host:** *to have guests at a party*

**“I’m a Little Teapot”:** *a popular song from 1939 which can be accompanied by actions. The child forms a handle with one hand on the hip, puts out the other arm like the “spout,” and then bends to “pour”*

**jittery:** *jumpy or very nervous*

**landscapes:** *pictures of outdoor scenery*

**lit up:** *suddenly looked happy*

**macaron:** *a sandwich cookie made of two round disks with a sweet filling, such as jam or buttercream*

**mulling over:** *thinking about*

**“over the moon”:** *very excited*

**party favors:** *little gifts sometimes given to guests at parties*

**pedestal:** *a footed plate that can hold a cake*





**style:** *to design something so it looks attractive*

**toiletry kit:** *a small bag designed to carry items such as a hairbrush, a toothbrush, and so on when you travel*

**“twenty-four seven”:** *all day, every day (24 hours, seven days a week)*

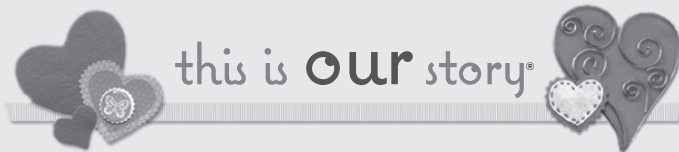
**venue:** *the place where an event happens*

**viewfinder:** *the part of the camera that you look through to see what you’re taking a photo of*

**vlog:** *a website on which someone regularly posts short videos*

**“What Time Is It, Mr. Wolf?”:** *a children’s game in which players ask one player, Mr. Wolf (whose back is turned to them), what time it is. The players step forward, matching their steps with the answers (for example, “two o’clock” is two steps). When Mr. Wolf answers, “Dinnertime!” the players run to avoid being tagged by Mr. Wolf*





We are an extraordinary generation of children.  
And have we got a story to tell.

*Our Generation®* is unlike any that has come before. We're making a positive impact on our community by performing small, but powerful, acts of kindness, standing tall for causes we believe in, and creating a narrative where everyone can make a difference.

We're speaking up for those around us, taking leaps to develop big ideas, and embracing new opportunities without ever forgetting to build lasting memories along the way. From playing sports outdoors and learning new instruments, to singing out loud and dancing around, we're laughing together with friends as we share in the best moments of being a kid.

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### *About the Author*

*Susan Hughes is an award-winning author of many children's books for all ages. Susan is also a freelance editor and writer. She helps coach and guide other writers in revising and polishing their own manuscripts.*

### *About the Illustrator*

*Passionate about drawing from an early age, Géraldine Charette decided to pursue her studies in computer multimedia in order to further develop her style and technique. Her favorite themes to explore in her illustrations are fashion and urban life. In her free time, Géraldine loves to paint and travel. She is passionate about horses and loves spending time at the stable. It's where she feels most at peace and gives her time to think and fuel her creativity.*



*Let's Have a Party! became the book that you are holding in your hands with the assistance of the talented people at Maison Battat Inc., including Joe Battat, Dany Battat, Loredana Ramacieri, Sandy Jacinto, Véronique Casavant, Cynthia Lopez, Laurie Gaudreau-Levesque, Alexandra Bonfã, Ananda Guarany, Jenny Gambino, Arlee Stewart, Natalie Cohen, Zeynep Yasar, Joanne Burke Casey, and Pamela Shrimpton.*





this is OUR story®

# Let's Have a Party!

Emily™ can't wait for her older cousin Cristin's visit. She's sure Cristin will still enjoy the same things she does—design, fashion, dolls, and picture-perfect parties. But when Cristin, 13, arrives, she is grumpy and seems uninterested in Emily's passions—or anything at all!

When Emily and her best friend, Imani, put on a fun birthday party for Imani's little sister's twin dolls, Emily notices Cristin's interest in taking videos.

Soon, Emily gets an unexpected opportunity to plan another very special birthday party—for a demanding classmate's pampered pet! But she'll need both Imani's and Cristin's help to make sure it lives up to Emily's own high standards.

Will this party be an amazing success—or a huge mess?

It's impossible to separate **Our Generation**® characters from the generation of girls who read about and play with them, for they are one and the same. They're changing the world by making their households greener. They're baking cupcakes to help charities. They're writing in their journals, practicing for recitals, doing cartwheels down the block and giggling with their friends until they can hardly breathe. **Our Generation** is about girls growing up together. "This is our story" reflects the community of these amazing girls as they laugh, learn and create the narrative of their own generation.

Ages 7 and up

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