

# Tea Party Sleepover with Your Friends

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❖ **Tags:**

[FF4A] [college/university students] [platonic] [tea party] [sleepover] [slice of life] [rambling] [reminiscing] [wholesome] [cuddling] [sharing the bed]

❖ **Date:**

03 March 2025

❖ **Words:**

3,510 (Katherine) + 3,387 (Isabelle) = 6,897 spoken words

❖ **Summary:**

*You've been invited to a girls' night sleepover at your friend's place tonight. You got caught in the rain on your way there, but you're still excited. It's the first time you've come over, as most of your hang-out sessions have been studying together in the library or being pulled to a club meeting after class, or whatever. But tonight, it's a sleepover, which quickly turns into just cosily chatting and sharing stories and spending time together before one of the other girls suggests having a little tea party before bed.*

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❖ **Editing:**

Small changes to the scripts are okay, but please ask before making any major line changes, additions, deletions, gender swaps, etc. Vocal cues and sound effects are suggestions, so feel free to be creative with those!

❖ **Other notes:**

I find it easier to write the listener's dialogue rather than keep track of half of a conversation, so their lines are given for context but aren't meant to be voiced. The word counts given only include the spoken text.

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## **Characters:**

- **Katherine (speaker)** — nicknamed "Kat".
  - **Isabelle (speaker)** — nicknamed "Bell".
  - **unnamed listener** — ...
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### **Formatting Guide:**

**spoken text (Katherine)**

**spoken text (Isabelle)**

*(tone marker)*

[...] = a short pause

*[This is a stage direction and/or SFX.]*

*« example listener dialogue, not intended to be voiced »*

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*[Katherine's apartment, late evening. It's raining outside. Isabelle has already come over. After a moment, the listener arrives, knocking on the door and carrying an umbrella and a bag with a change of clothes. Katherine and Isabelle answer the door together.]*

**Ah, there you are! Welcome! Come on in. Let's get you out of the rain.**

*[The listener enters, closing and shaking water from her umbrella. Katherine closes the door behind her.]*

**Hi! Yeah, I hadn't realised that it had started raining this hard. It had only started sprinkling when I came over.**

**You didn't get too wet, did you?**

*« Nn, I'm alright. A little bit damp, but since I brought an umbrella, I was fine. »*

**Okay, that's good.**

**If I'd known the rain had picked up this much, I would have offered to come pick you up, but I'm glad it wasn't too bad for you.**

*« I appreciate it, but it really isn't that far of a walk. »*

**I know it's not too far, but even a ten-minute walk in the rain can be pretty annoying, so...**

*« Sure, but... (giggling) You're already wearing your pyjamas. That means no leaving the house again. »*

**Mhm. You know the cardinal rule about wearing pyjamas, Bell: "Thou shalt be comfortable and lazy and not go outside for the rest of the day."**

*« (giggling) Exactly. »*

**(falsely exasperated) Yes, I know the rule. But I also think it'd be kind of mean to make you walk by yourself in the rain when it's not that hard for me to stop you from needing to, so...**

*« Well, either way, I appreciate the offer. But as I said, with my umbrella, I didn't get too wet. »*

**You're welcome.**

**I assume you brought your own pyjamas in that bag?**

*« Mhm. I didn't want to wear them because of the rain. »*

**That makes sense. Even though you didn't get too wet, I'm sure you'd like to dry off and put those on, so why don't you go change in the bathroom? You can take any of the towels from the closet, dry off, change, and then meet us in my room?**

*« Sounds good. Thanks. »*

**Of course. And you can just leave your shoes and umbrella on the mat there.**

*« Alright. I'll meet you two there in a few moments. »*

**Sounds good. (excitedly) But hurry up so we can all get all nice and cosy together for the sleepover!**

*« (giggling) Alright, alright. I'll be right there. »*

*[The listener goes into the bathroom to dry off and change while Katherine and Isabelle go to Katherine's bedroom, sitting on the floor at the low coffee table in the centre of the room. After a few moments, the listener enters, wearing her pyjamas.]*

**(warmly) Hey, girl. Come sit down with us.**

*[The listener goes over to sit next to Katherine.]*

**Also, those pyjamas are super cute on you.**

*« Thanks. »*

**Are those the ones you got when we went shopping together that one time?**

*« Yeah, I think so. »*

**Ah, I wanted to get some too, but they didn't have them in my size.**

**They are really cute. But... Kat, don't you wear a medium, usually?**

**Small or medium, depending on what it is. But yeah, in those, it was a medium, I think.**

**That seems a weird size for them not to have.**

« They were on clearance, if I remember correctly. »

Yeah, exactly. And it was a pretty good clearance markdown, too. Something like 80 percent off, I think?

« Something like that, yeah. »

Ooh, that is a really good deal.

Mhm. So they probably only had, like... a few smalls and larges and then a handful of the extra smalls or extra larges... Something like that, anyway.

That sort of "everyone took the common, middle sizes and so just the ones that don't fit you very well are left" phenomenon?

*(giggling)* Yeah, exactly.

I could have gotten—probably should have gotten—one of the bigger ones since they're just pyjamas, especially since...

*[Katherine nuzzles against the listener's shoulder.]*

...they're super cute and *(nuzzling)* super soft...

*[Katherine realises what she's doing.]*

*(slightly embarrassed)* Oh! You... don't mind me nuzzling against you like that, do you?

« Nn, it's okay. »

*(giggling, teasing)* I know your nickname is "Kat", with a K, but you really ought to be "Cat", with a C, what with how much you like to snuggle and nuzzle into people... *(quietly)* I guess "kitten" starts with K, but... *(trails off)*

*(indignantly)* I do not— *(with realisation, giggling)* ...No, actually, that's fair.

« Do you, really? »

*(lightly)* She does. I know you haven't known her as long, but I'm surprised you haven't found out yet.

I don't know. I just like being affectionate with all of my friends, though I try to not go too far with new people. Bell and I have been friends for so long that she's had a long time to get used to it.

*« I see. That's fair. I can be pretty affectionate too, so you don't need to worry about that with me. »*

Well, then I won't worry so much, though hopefully, I won't make you regret saying that.

But... yeah. I guess we have mostly just hung out in more public, organised spaces—at school, studying together in the library, that one club meeting I dragged you to...

*(laughing)* She dragged you to one, too?

*« Yeah, though I didn't really mind. You too, though? »*

No, she knew well enough that I wouldn't have enjoyed it, so she didn't ask. It's a cool club... Just not my thing, you know?

*« Mhm. That makes sense. »*

Mhm. You and I have talked enough for you to figure that out too, of course. But... I think she tried to bring along...(?)

TEmily and Esther. Emily came to... two meetings, I think, at the beginning of the school year before deciding that she liked it but didn't have enough free time to commit, which is more than fair.

That makes sense. I can imagine her enjoying it if she weren't taking basically as many credits as she's allowed to whilst also working part time, 15-20 hours a week.

*« Really? That's a lot... »*

Mhm. It's why I don't think you've met her. She's really sweet, but also really busy.

*« Yeah, I can imagine. That makes sense. »*

*(warmly)* But I can appreciate you coming along and giving it a try even though—actually, even more so because—it ended up not really being your thing.

*« Mm. I had fun with it as a one-off thing. So don't worry about it. »*

**Well, I'm glad for that, at least.**

*(emphatically)* **Anyway... It's good to know that you've not been scared off... nor will you be scared away so easily. *(giggling)***

*« Nn, I don't think you're that scary, you two. »*

**That's good to hear.**

**Mhm. But more importantly, what are we doing for this sleepover?**

*« ...sleeping over? »*

*(exasperated)* **I know that, and I'm sure there'll be some sleep later, but what do we want to do before that?**

**I don't think we ever specified. I think it was just "let's hang out and you two can sleep over, like those fun sleepovers we might have had when we were little girls".**

*« Yeah, that's all that was said to me beforehand, but I'm not that picky. I'm fine with just about anything. »*

**Kat, if we're doing something like the sleepovers we had as kids, then that's all the more reason to do something!**

*« I mean, that's a fair point, actually. Even if it's just some small thing. »*

**Exactly! See? She agrees with me.**

**I'm not disagreeing with you, Bell. I just said that we didn't plan it in advance.**

*(bashfully)* **...touché.**

*« What do you want to do? »*

**I don't know. What do people usually do at sleepovers?**

**To be fair, I think it's generally different things when you're 9 than when you're 19 or whatever.**

*« That's a very fair point. I think the "stereotypical" 19-year-old "sleepover" is a fair bit less innocent. »*

Yeah... I'm definitely leaning more toward that 9-year-old version. Just something cute and fun, you know? No need to do anything crazy or complicated... Just hang out, relax, spend some time together, ignore the world for a bit...

*« (giggling) Sounds good to me. »*

*(giggling)* Me too.

*(slowly)* But... what actually is that? What do we want to do?

*(teasingly)* As hostess, shouldn't you decide?

I mean... maybe? But I don't know how this works.

*« Hm? What do you mean? »*

Well, I've never really had a sleepover before. At least not this type of thing.

*(surprised)* Wait. Never?

*« That is kind of surprising, actually. »*

Yeah. You've never slept over at a friend's place growing up? I mean, you slept over at my place just a couple weeks ago.

I mean... sure, I've slept over, but it wasn't really a sleepover, if that makes sense.

Yeah... I guess that's fair.

Like, Bell... sure, you've slept here a couple times, and as you said, I've stayed the night at yours a couple times, but... *(trails off)*

Sure, that's not really the same thing, is it?

*« Not really, by the sound of it. »*

*(to listener)* But you did a lot of sleepovers when you were growing up too?



*« Um... I don't know about a lot, but definitely quite a few. Usually at least one of my friends would do a sleepover party for her birthday, so I probably did at least one or two per year. »*

**Yeah, same here. It was pretty common for birthdays with my friend group. Not so much for you, Kat?**

**Well... I had a pretty small circle of friends when I was growing up, and my best friend and I weren't allowed to host sleepovers.**

*« Not allowed? »*

**Nn. We could have friends over, but I guess my parents didn't want to try to get a bunch of kids to bed. Or have us fight over sleeping arrangements. Or just... be responsible for watching other people's kids like that? I mean... I already have two siblings, so I don't necessarily blame them for it.**

*« Yeah, I guess that makes sense. Still, though... »*

**Mm, that's fair. I'm an only child, so maybe my parents were more okay with it for that reason, or just wanted me to have that with my friends at least.**

**But you never got to do it at another friend's house?**

**Well... as I said, I didn't have too many friends, at least not people I was that close with.**

**But... *(contemplatively)* actually...**

*« Hm? »*

**I think when I was... I must have been 7 or 8 at the time... but there was this girl I was kind of friends with? Her name was Laura. Anyway, she was doing a big sleepover party for her birthday, and she invited me.**

*« Did you get to go? »*

**Yeah, I was allowed to go.**

**Your parents didn't have issues with sleepovers but just didn't want to host them? And your friends' parents thought the same way?**

More or less, yeah. And so I went to Laura's party and there were probably 10? maybe 15? kids there. We ate dinner, and I ended up getting sick from it.

*« (concerned) Oh, no! Were you alright? »*

Yeah. Or, well, I was eventually fine, anyway. I threw up and didn't feel great for the rest of the night and a bit the next day, but that was that. I felt better by the next evening.

Well, that's good at least.

Mhm, but—

*« —I'm guessing you went home at that point? »*

*(chuckling)* Yeah, exactly. My parents came to pick me up shortly after that, and that is the sum total of my sleepover experience.

*« Aww, that really sucks. »*

Yeah, that is pretty bad. So... two things.

Mhm?

One: That's just more evidence that we should do something cute and fun tonight.

*« Yeah! »*

Sure. I'm down for that.

So we'll need to figure that out.

And two: Were you the only one who got sick?

Um...

Because it definitely seems like a food poisoning issue, but it seems kind of strange that everyone else would be fine if you were all eating the same food.

To be honest, I don't really remember. This was more than a decade ago.

*« Yeah. You said were you 7 or 8? »*

**Mm. Something like that.**

**I was definitely the first girl to get sick. Maybe there was another after I left, but I'm not sure. I also had a weaker immune system when I was little, I guess, so I also got sick more often than most people.**

**Oh, that makes sense. My cousin is sort of like that too. Any time any of his siblings gets sick, he will too, and always at least a little bit worse than them.**

**Yeah, that sounds about right.**

*« That sounds pretty terrible, actually. I hate being sick. »*

**Mm. I remember him complaining about it. Always missing things or just not feeling well enough to go hang out with friends or whatever.**

*(laughing)* **I missed a lot of school in those days.**

*(warmly)* **Well, I'm glad that you grew out of it so I can borrow your notes and we can hang out.**

*(warmly)* **Yeah ^\_^**

*« Has your brother grown out of it too, Isabelle? »*

**Um... sort of? He's better than he was when he was little, though he's still definitely more prone to getting sick than a lot of people. He's only a year younger than me, so he's definitely grown used to it by now.**

*« Still, though... »*

**Either way, there's not much you can do about it.**

*« That's true, I guess... Still hate being sick, though. »*

**Mhm...**

*(emphatically)* **A·ny·way... We've been sitting here for a while, just chatting—**

*« —which I've enjoyed— »*

—Oh, yeah, it's been fun. I'm not going to argue with that. Far from it. But do we want to actually decide on something to do?

*(giggling)* Given how it's gone so far, with all of the rambling and such, it may be best if we pick something that still lets us talk, so... probably no films or anything like that.

*« (giggling) Yeah, that's probably for the best. »*

Mm.

*« Um... Katherine, do you have any board games or anything like that? »*

Ooh, yeah. Board games are good.

Um... My family played card games much more than board games growing up. So I have a couple decks of cards if you wanted to play Skat, Sergeant Major—or 3-5-8—a three-hand variant of, like, Euchre or Whist...

*(giggling)* Girl, I don't think I've heard of most of those, let alone know how to play.

*(lightly)* Well, I could teach you, but... that's also fair.

*(giggling)* Do you remember how badly that went last time we tried?

H-Hey—

*« Was it really that bad? »*

No, it wasn't.

Well, sort of. Kat's explanations were fine, I think, but I was exhausted and having trouble focusing since I really hadn't slept well the night before and it had been a really long day.

*« Áh, that makes sense. I wouldn't think you'd have too much trouble picking up a new game. »*

Well, it depends on the game, but yeah, I can usually pick up a game reasonably well. *(teasingly)*  
But Kat here just loves really complicated games where even with the "basic" rules, I have to ask her to repeat the explanation three or four times.

Hey, that's—

*« Really? Do you like really complicated games like that, Kat? »*

Sometimes? I don't mind games being kind of complex. I don't really want to be able to play completely on autopilot since that's not very fun—

—*(almost whiningly)* but autopiloting the game means you can actually talk with your friends while you play! Instead of it turning into an exam every time it's your turn and you need so much focus that the room is silent aside from the occasional flutter of a card or the scratch of a pencil keeping score or someone flatly stating an action out loud.

*« (giggling) You seem like you're reliving some bad memories. Are you okay, Bell? »*

*(laughing)* Yeah. I'm exaggerating a bit for dramatic flair. But Kat and I went to a meeting of the Board Game Club here on campus... once or twice?

I think you've come to two.

*« Do you go more often? »*

Not too often, but I go occasionally. Twice, maybe three times per semester? I'd be happy to bring you along sometime, if you're interested.

*« Yeah, that sounds like fun. »*

Cool. I'll let you know when I'm thinking about going, and if you're free, you can tag along.

*« Thanks. »*

You should go at least once if you like board games... which you probably do since you're the one who brought them up.

*« Mhm! »*

But the reason I brought it up is that one of the times I went with Kat, I got stuck playing Power Grid, which—

*(somewhat sharply)* No, Bell. In everyone's defence, someone suggested it as an option for our group, and then it got pointed out that you were new and that I'd also not played it, and that person quickly rescinded the suggestion. You said it was fine, and you were asked at least twice, point-blank, if you were sure you wanted to try.

*« Power Grid? Is it really that difficult? »*

Um... I wouldn't say that it's difficult, per se, but it is pretty... intricate? Is that fair?

Mhm. The actual mechanics are pretty simple, but there's a lot of them, and there are a lot of options for the actions you take and there's ultimately just a lot of strategising and calculating moves and consequences. It's just addition, but I remember Serena asking to be allowed her phone calculator just to make the process faster for her.

But it's an interesting game, and the other people seemed to really enjoy it. It seems cool. It's just not the type of game I really enjoy.

*« What about you, Kat? »*

What I was going to say a moment ago is that I don't like games that are so simple that I can play them on autopilot because I think that's kind of boring, but as Bell said, I usually like games where I can still talk to everyone.

Sometimes I'm in the mood for something complicated where I can just lock in and strategise and that's the fun of the game, but more often, I prefer games in the middle.

*« Fair enough. Yeah, I like games where I'm still able to talk too. »*

*(giggling)* I think we all like the option to talk given that we're still talking down this tangent and haven't even put out any other ideas for this sleepover.

*« That's true. But I did make a suggestion! »*

*(warmly, playfully)* You did. Look at you, being all good and helpful, unlike Bell and me.

*(falsely upset)* H-Hey!

*(playfully, teasingly)* Aww, what's wrong, Isabelle?

*(playfully, almost whiningly)* I can be helpful(!) I'm the one who's trying to get us to actually come up with an idea.

Then why don't you come up with an idea?

*(slowly, as she thinks)* Fine. Um... what about... *(suddenly, brightly)* a tea party!

« *(surprised)* A tea party? »

Yeah! It's a classic "little girls" thing, it's cute, and it's really just "make tea and continue chatting".

« *I mean... yeah, I'm down. It just wasn't what I was expecting you to say. »*

Yeah... not sure why it popped into my head, but the more I think about it, the more I like the idea.

Kat, don't you have that fancy tea set from your grandmother?

*(excitedly)* Oh, that's right! I forgot about that.

« *Hm?* »

Well, contrary to what Bell said, it's not exactly fancy, but it's an antique tea set that's been in my family. I inherited it from my grandmother a few years ago. It's really only "fancy" because we don't generally use porcelain anymore.

...fair enough.

« *Ah, that's still really cool. How old is it?* »

Um... I don't think we know exactly how old it is, but what my grandmother said was "turn of the 20th century, plus or minus a decade or so".

« *So... somewhere between 100 and 150 years, basically?* »

More or less, yeah.

« *(hesitantly)* Is it okay for us to use? »

Yeah, it's fine. The only reason I don't have it out is because I don't have much use for it day to day, living by myself.

Plus, while the teacups are pretty cute, they're decently small, and so I'm much more likely to use my big mug if I want to make tea or hot cocoa or something.

Fair enough. You get more tea that way. And then you also don't have to worry about damaging the antique one just from normal use.

*(lightly)* They can't go in the dishwasher, for one.

*« Oh, that's a good point. »*

And I hate doing dishes... even with a dishwasher, honestly. It's not even that bad, but for some reason... *(trails off)*

*« Honestly, that's very fair. I don't really mind since it doesn't require a lot of brainpower and I can just listen to music or a podcast or something. »*

Yeah. I don't mind dishes either for the same sort of reason—I can listen to music or just daydream and come up with stories to work on later.

That's fair, and I know that, but there's just something about it that really doesn't click for me.

Anyway, are we settled on having a little tea party tonight?

*(playfully)* Well, it was my idea, so...

*« Yeah, it seems good to me. I like the idea. What about you, Kat? »*

Yeah, that works for me. Sounds like fun and I'll be able to put that tea set to use for once.

*(excitedly)* Then let's do it!

*« Yeah! »*

Then why don't you two go out to the kitchen and start boiling the water and picking out your teas, and while you do that, I'll dig the tea set out of... well, some box in my closet.

*« Yeah, that works good for me. »*



**Alright. Then... (to listener) let's go.**

*[Isabelle and the listener get up and begin walking to the kitchen. Katherine gets up and starts looking for the box containing the tea set.]*

**I've been here quite a few times, but Kat and I don't really ever cook together or anything, so I don't actually know where things are in here.**

*(mischievously)* **Hopefully Kat won't mind if we do a bit of snooping around.**

*« (giggling) You say that so mischievously, as if we're doing something bad. She asked us to do this. »*

**Well, she asked us to start boiling the water and pick out tea, not to search through all of her cabinets, but... (trails off)**

*[Isabelle and the listener begin looking through the cabinets in Kat's kitchen. The listener quickly finds the tea kettle in a cabinet under the counter containing pots and pans.]*

*« Alright. I found the kettle. I'll go ahead and start the water. »*

**Sounds good.**

*[The listener fills the kettle with water from the sink, then sets it on the stove to boil. As she does this, Isabelle continues looking.]*

**I found her cups and mugs and such, which... is distinctly not helpful right now since we're using the tea set.**

*« That's true. »*

**Mm. I'm just surprised I'm having this much trouble finding the tea. Given how much she drinks, I'd imagine it'd be easy for her to get to.**

*[Isabelle continues looking for a moment. Eventually:]*

**Okay, the only cabinet I haven't looked in is that one—the one above the microwave, but... (shyly) I...**

*« (playfully, giggling) Can you not reach, Bell? »*

*(slightly pouting)* Girl, it's not my fault that I'm only 5'1" and can't reach that cabinet. Someone decided that putting the microwave above the stove and then cabinets above that, with the handles in the middle of the door was a good idea, and it certainly wasn't me. Hmph.

« *(giggling)* That's okay. I'll get it. »

*[The listener reaches up and opens the cabinet door, revealing a wooden tea organiser box. The listener grabs it, setting it on the counter.]*

*(quietly, reluctantly)* ...thanks. Anyway...

Looks like Kat has a pretty good selection. *(indicating them in turn)* Peppermint, earl grey, peach, chamomile, lavender, orange pekoe, honey ginger, chai, ...

« *(awed)* That is... quite a few options... »

Mm. Probably why she has this organiser. Well... that and it's cute.

*[By this point, the water in the kettle is starting to boil. Katherine enters the kitchen, carrying the teapot from the set.]*

How are things out here?

« *Pretty good, I think?* »

Yeah. It... took a while to find the tea, but... *(trails off, embarrassed)*

*[The listener stifles a giggle.]*

*(falsely upset, giggling)* Hey!

Hm? [...] Anyway, sorry. I didn't realise you'd have to look for it. I could have told you where it was.

*(slowly, expecting the listener to butt in)* Nn, it's fine. We found it in the end.

Good. It actually took me a few minutes to find the tea set as well since it was in an unlabeled box at the back of the closet. But... it seems like we were all successful in the end.

I'll go ahead and pour the water into this teapot.

*[Katherine takes the kettle off of the stove and begins pouring the water into the teapot.]*

**Have you two each decided on a tea?**

*« I don't think so, no. »*

**You've too many options, Kat.**

*(facetiously)* **I'm sorry. I like tea.**

**Which one do you want?**

*(without hesitation)* **Peach.**

*« (laughing) No hesitation. »*

**...Is it weird to know what I want?**

**I guess not. And I suppose you also knew what all of your options were beforehand, so...**

**That's true, too, I guess. But why don't you make your choices so we can go back to my room and get cosy?**

*(giggling)* **Because decisions are hard.**

**Do you have a favourite?**

**...not really?**

*(to listener)* **What about you?**

*« I don't know about favourite, but I have made my choice. »*

*[The listener takes a tea bag from the organiser corresponding to her choice.]*

**Ah, good choice. (slightly sharply, expectantly) ...Bell?**

**I'm sorry. I'm being indecisive.**

*(playfully)* **...I can see that.**

Would you like me to choose for you?

No, no. I can pick.

(playfully) Very well, but if you pick one of the caffeinated ones and then keep us up...

(playfully, slyly) Hm? What would you do?

*[The listener offers a response.]*

(playfully) Ah, clever girl. Good answer.

(admonished) Ah, yeah. No. I'd rather you didn't do that.

Then choose wisely.

With such a threat looming over my head, I'm going to trust your judgment, Kat, and also choose the peach one.

(playfully) Ah, clever girl. Good answer.

(to listener) You already grabbed your tea bag, so... (to Isabelle) Can you grab two of the peach tea bags—one for each of us—and then we can go back to my room and make our tea before this water cools down too much?

Yep.

*[Isabelle grabs two of the peach tea bags, then is about to try to put the organiser away before remembering that she can't reach.]*

And I'll... (faltering) just leave this here in case any of us wants more, I guess?

*[This time, the listener fails to stifle her laugh, and Isabelle glares at her.]*

Hmph.

...hm? [...] In that case, though... why don't we just bring it into my room, and then we won't have to come all the way out here?

Y-Yeah, that makes sense.

**Then... do one of you mind carrying it?**

*« Yeah, I can do that. »*

*[Isabelle the hands organiser to the listener.]*

**Here you go.**

*[Katherine, Isabelle, and the listener return to Katherine's room, moving to sit around the coffee table as they were before. Katherine sets a tea cup and saucer in front of each of them.]*

**Here you go...**

*(excitedly)* **Aww, those are so cute!**

*« Ooh, they really are! »*

**The teapot itself is really plain, but I do really like the little floral patterns on the cups.**

*« Are they different colours? Or... I guess not... »*

**Kind of, actually. They're hand-painted, so the colours are a little bit different on each cup. Yours is more purple than the other two, for example. But this set does have six tea cups—these three have the pink flowers, and the other three are a sort of blue-green.**

*[Katherine takes one of the remaining tea cups from the box next to her, holding it up to show the blue-green flowers.]*

**See?**

*« That's pretty cool. So you just decided to have us all match? »*

*(brightly)* **Mhm!**

*[Katherine begins pouring water from the tea pot into the three tea cups: first, the listener's, then Isabelle's, then her own.]*

*(to listener)* **For you...**

*« Thank you. »*

*(to Isabelle)* **For you...**

Thank you, Kat.

And for me...

*« Are we being particular about the rules of etiquette for tea parties? »*

...Do you want to be particular about the rules of etiquette for tea parties?

*« I mean... »*

*(giggling)* Something tells me that we might have to do some explaining for a certain someone.

*« (giggling) Mm... Perhaps. »*

Hm? Are they different from the rules of a standard afternoon tea? I imagine there's at least a fair bit of overlap.

*« There is, yeah. »*

Then no, I don't think it's necessary. For one, it's not afternoon, but we also didn't brew the tea in the teapot since we have different teas, I don't have any scones, there's probably a rule against wearing pyjamas, ...

*[Katherine takes a sip of her tea.]*

Why bother pretending to be part of, like, 19th century English high society? We're just three girls hanging out, having fun, having a sleepover together.

*(playfully)* I mean, fair enough. It's certainly easier not to.

Sorry if that makes it not a "real" tea party and ruins the fun. I can be convinced. *(giggling)* As long as I don't have to change out of these pyjamas. That's a hard line for me.

Nn, it's okay. I don't really mind either way, though I'd have suggested doing it this way—relaxed and just us having some tea—as well. There's something kind of fun about being all "prim and proper" like that, but there's also something nice about not having to worry about it.

*(to listener)* But since you were the one who asked... does that work for you? Did you want to be all formal about it?

*« Not really, I guess? I don't really have a preference. As you said, both are good options. I just wanted to know which one we were going with. »*

**Ah, that's fair. But no, I think the consensus is... let's just be cosy.**

**Mhm.**

*« (giggling) I'm good with that. »*

*(after a moment)* **How's the tea?**

*« It's pretty good. Thanks. »*

**Yeah. It's still a bit hot, but that notwithstanding, it's pretty good. I don't think I've ever had a peach tea like this.**

**Do you like it?**

**Yeah? I think I'd choose something else next time, but that's alright. I don't mind this.**

*(warmly)* **Yeah? I can live with that.**

*[There's a lull in the conversation while three girls drink their tea. After a moment:]*

**Not that I'm complaining—this is nice—but why'd you suggest a tea party, Bell?**

**As I said, I don't really know. You put me on the spot to come up with an idea, and for... some reason, it popped into my head and I blurted it out.**

*« (giggling) And now here we are. »*

*(giggling, warmly)* **Mhm. And now here we are.**

**Did you—either of you, really—do a lot of tea parties when you were little? You both seemed to have some experience with them.**

*« A bit, yeah. Not too many, but a few. What about you, Bell? »*

It sounds like I have more experience than you do, but it was mostly when I was really little, like... probably when I was 4 or 5? Something like that, anyway. There were these twin sisters who lived next to us at the time, and they were only a couple months older than me, and the three of us played together as much as you'd expect neighbouring 5-year-old girls to play together.

*(giggling)*

« Quite a lot, yeah. »

*(giggling)* Exactly. All the time. But we did a lot of the stereotypical little girl things together. We played house with their giant dollhouse, we played dress-up where I was often *(in a cute, child voice)* "Pwincess Isabelle!"

*(giggling)* That's adorable.

Sometimes we'd dress up as other things too, but as 5-year-old girls are wont to do, "princess" was a common theme. And we'd often host tea parties as princesses. I can't remember if it was my parents or theirs or if we just picked it up from films or whatever, but somehow, we knew all of the "rules" of tea parties. So that's why I know them.

« Aww, that's really cute. »

Yeah. And that sounds really nice.

Mhm. But they ended up moving after a year or so, and while I'd do some of that with other friends, it definitely wasn't very often, and *(giggling)* it also doesn't help that I had a tomboy phase for much of the rest of primary school and until... probably until I was 14 or 15, I think?

« *(laughing, surprised)* You had a tomboy phase? »

*(nonchalantly)* I don't know if "phase" is entirely accurate if it was, like, 8 or 9 years, but yeah.

« That surprises me. »

Yeah, honestly, I wouldn't have guessed that either.

Really? I know I've sort of come back around over the last few years and such, but I'm surprised that you're both surprised, I guess? I'm also surprised that it's never come up in conversation before.



Maybe it has and you just mentioned it in passing, but if nothing else, I don't remember it.

*« Same. And it's something I'd remember, I think. »*

Alright, fair enough. Kat, can you hand me my phone? I left it on your desk over there.

Hm? Sure.

*[Katherine grabs Isabelle's phone from the desk and hands it to Isabelle.]*

Here.

Thanks...

*[Isabelle unlocks her phone and navigates to the photo gallery app.]*

*(mumbled, to herself)* What year would that have been? If I was four, then...

*[Isabelle navigates the folder for the appropriate year, then finds the photo she's looking for. She then turns her phone toward Katherine and the listener to show them.]*

Here, look. Here's a picture of the twins and me playing dress-up...

*« (surprised) You have those pictures? »*

Yeah. It's something my mum was good about. She organised and curated a lot of the photos that she and my father took. It's something she didn't have growing up, and she wanted our family to have. So... I have them.

That makes sense, and that's really sweet. And that photo of you three in those princess dresses is really adorable.

*« Mhm! Very cute. »*

*(slightly flustered?)* Aww, thanks, you two.

*[Isabelle navigates through the folder, looking for another particular photo of her with the twins. Soon:]*

Ah, here we go. *(showing the phone)* Here's the three of us at Halloween. Classic costumes, of course: I was a witch, Ava was an angel, and... *(giggling)* Leah was a book.

*(giggling)* **A book? Why a book?**

*(laughing)* **Don't look at me! Little kids are silly and are not always bound by—nor to—sensible logic.**

« *(giggling)* *That's a fair point.* »

**Surely you two have examples of that, too.**

**Oh, almost certainly. I just don't remember any of them offhand.**

*(teasingly)* **Oh? Too embarrassed to share?**

**No, actually. I just don't remember.**

**Fair enough.**

*[The listener gives an example of this from her own life.]*

*(giggling)* **That's honestly hilarious, yeah.**

**I'm not 100 percent sure since this was 15 years ago, but I think Leah wanted to be a book because she was starting to learn to read and she was really excited about it.**

**Aww, that's actually really adorable.**

*(after a moment)* **Alright, while I try to find good pictures of when I was a bit older in order to convince you that I'm not making stuff up—**

**For the record, I don't doubt you. I'm just surprised... and curious.**

« *Me too.* »

**Fine, then. *(more emphatically)* While I try to find good pictures of when I was a bit older in order to satiate your curiosity—**

*(giggling)* **Better.**

—that Halloween tangent made me curious: did either of you have any particularly interesting Halloween costumes—good, bad, silly, whatever?

*« Um... I don't know about them being "particularly interesting", but I at least remember a few. »*

**Mhm? What were they?**

*[The listener lists a few costumes she dressed up in when she was little.]*

*(giggling)* **Those sound like a lot of fun. I think my favourite one that I did was as a bumblebee when I was 6 or 7. I don't remember how we made it, but the body was really soft and fluffy and I think I used it as a pillow for a bit, but I also remember that my candy bucket that year was a giant version of those bear-shaped honey jars.**

*« Aww, that's adorable. »*

**Mhm.**

*« What about you, Kat? »*

**Um... I think I might have had a couple interesting ones?**

**Yeah?**

**So, I have two older siblings, right? It was my sister, Olivia, who's 8 years older than me, then my brother, Alex, who's 6 years older, and then eventually me. Olivia sort of grew out of Halloween costumes and trick-or-treating—**

*« (almost indignantly) There's no such thing! You're never too old to go trick-or-treating! »*

**I know, but she was 13 or 14, and so... you know, she thought it was childish or whatever.**

*« ...that's fair. »*

**Mm. Personally, I just came to find it not as fun anymore, but that's besides the point.**

**Anyway, when I was 5 or 6—so, one of the last years that Olivia dressed up—we did a costume theme for all of us, where we were all Wizard of Oz characters.**

Aww, that's cute.

Mhm. If memory serves, my mother was the Good Witch of the North, my father was the Wizard of Oz, Olivia was the Wicked Witch of the West, Alex was... either the Cowardly Lion or the Tin Man—I forget which—and I was Dorothy.

*« That sounds like a lot of fun. »*

Yeah, that one was fun. I don't have pictures of it, though my parents probably do somewhere. I can ask them the next time I see them.

Other than that one... I think all of mine were pretty generic. I do remember that I dressed up as... I think it was Fluttershy from "My Little Pony" one year, but I don't remember any others.

*(playfully, teasingly?)* Ooh, yeah. You'd make a great Fluttershy.

Hm? What's that supposed to mean?

Nothing mean, like you seem to think. You're both introverted and a bit shy, but you're both really kind and calm and thoughtful. It's a great pairing.

*« (laughing) Imagine her as Rainbow Dash or Pinkie Pie. »*

*(laughing)* No, not at all, unless—actually, just no. I can see Twilight or even Applejack or Rarity working, but unless she was really different as a kid... I absolutely cannot see her as Pinkie Pie or Rainbow Dash.

I did get convinced to run track one year in middle school, but that's about as much "dashing" as I ever did.

That checks out.

I played basketball around that age, and to go back a topic, here's a picture of me in uniform before our first game one year. I—and our team as a whole, honestly—was pretty bad. I think we went 2 and 11 that year, but anyway, you can see my really short hair and all of the bruises and scrapes all over my arms and legs, and—

*« How did you get so many little injuries like that? That seems like a lot. »*

Ah. There was this guy I had a crush on at the time. His name was Chris. In hindsight, we'd have made a pretty bad couple, even by middle school standards, so maybe it's good that he didn't like me like that.

« (concerned) Hm? Did he hurt you? »

(realising the implication) Oh, no, he didn't hurt me. Nothing like that.

« ...Mhm? »

(chuckling, playfully) You should be more careful with your implications, Miss Isabelle.

Yeah, sorry. He was really nice, we got along really well, we were good friends.

We lived close to this elementary school in our neighbourhood and we—that is, the two of us along with a group of our other friends—would often play football (*i.e., soccer*) in one of the fields in the evenings. It got pretty aggressive sometimes with no referees to call penalties on slide tackles, for example, and we were still young enough that I wasn't really that much smaller than them, so... yeah.

Ah, that makes sense.

I remember one specific time that this other girl and I were both chasing after a fly ball and didn't see each other.

« Ah, I know where this is going... »

...Mhm. I think she went to kick it as it fell and I tripped over her outstretched leg at speed and fell forward pretty hard.

Ooh, that must have hurt quite a bit.

Mhm.

I had something similar happen in gym class. I remember getting hit in the head with a basketball a few times, and I think I tripped over someone while we were playing dodgeball—and I definitely got hit in the face once or twice, though the dodgeballs are soft, so that wasn't too bad.

Oh! I just remembered that at one of our track meets—*(parenthetical)* For context, I ran the short events: 100 metres, 100 metre hurdles, and 200 metre hurdles because we each had to do three events and *(giggling)* the shorter events meant not running as much—

« Why didn't you run the 200 metre dash instead of the hurdles? »

Ah, that's a good question. It's because the hurdles were kind of fun since they weren't just running, but the main reason was that we already had quite a few girls doing the 200 metre dash and we had some minimum quota of participants for each event, and we otherwise wouldn't have enough for the 200 metre hurdles, so... I got convinced to do it since I was already doing the 100.

« Ah, I see. That makes sense, though it kind of sucks. »

Eh. I might have preferred to just do the normal 200, though it's not like it was anything terrible or whatever.

But the reason I bring it up is because there was this meet that we had where, during the 200 metre hurdles, I was lined up in the inside lane. The race started, everything was fine, and then as I came around the corner onto the main straight, there was a hurdle on the end of that corner and I clipped the top of it with my foot and fell, rolling out onto the grass—fortunately not toward any of the other runners, but... *(trails off)*

« That sounds pretty rough. Were you okay? »

Yeah, I was fine. A bit scraped up since running tracks aren't exactly soft, but nothing more than that. Just annoyed that it happened.

« Were you disqualified? You didn't interfere with anyone, but I think that stepping out of your lane, intentionally or otherwise, is a disqualification, isn't it? »

Um... I don't think so? This was years ago, so I don't perfectly remember, but I don't think I was disqualified for it. You're right that leaving your lane should be a disqualification, but maybe the referee just judged that one, it was obviously an accident, two, I was in the inside lane and didn't interfere with anyone, and three, we were 12 and thus it really wasn't that serious. Who knows?

« Yeah, those are good points. I don't know if I'd want to call that, either. Just play it through. »

Mhm. I know that football refs won't call fouls if the innocent team has an immediate and clear advantage despite the foul, and they won't call half time or full time during an attack, so... could be the same thing? Or yeah, your last point about you being 12 and so the meet just isn't that serious in the grand scheme of things.

Mm. *(giggling)* But either way, this is why I don't generally do sports. I'm clumsy and unlucky and prone to having bad things happen.

*(laughing)* That's fair. So I shouldn't invite you to come play volleyball on campus with the girls sometime?

It might be fun once or twice, but—

« *(laughing)* Just expect her to get hit in the head with the ball? ...Sorry. »

*(laughing)* Or to get a bunch of sand in my hair, yeah. You play on that sand court next to Scott Hall, right?

Yeah, usually. Unless we play on the one near Woodford Hall because we have more of the south campus girls that night, but yeah, it's always one of the sand courts.

...Then yes, sand in my hair.

*(to listener)* Would you want to come play sometime?

« *(hesitantly)* Um... maybe? I'm not very good, though. »

There's no pressure: if you don't want to, that's totally fine, and you don't have to make a decision on that now. And honestly, most of us aren't very good. *(giggling)* Claire can't serve to save her life, so we don't make her, and although Audrey played in high school, she's not allowed to try very hard, which she's fine with.

« *That sounds like it could be fun, but I can't make any promises about it, I guess. »*

*(warmly)* That's alright. As I said, if you want to come, that's fine, and if you don't want to come, that's also fine, and—*(yawns)*—it's not like we're going to play tonight, so... *(trails off)*

*(warmly)* That's right. Tonight is for a tea party and a sleepover, and volleyball—while potentially quite fun—is way less cosy than either of those.

*« (giggling) This is very true. »*

Do either of you want more tea or anything?

*« Um... I'm good, I think. »*

Nn, I'm good. Thanks.

Alright. Do we want to do anything else tonight, or do we want to start getting ready for bed since it's getting pretty late?

*« I'm fine with either, honestly. I'm kind of tired, but if we want to keep doing stuff, I can also stay awake a bit longer. »*

Yeah, same. I'm fine with either, whichever you're both up for.

*(giggling)* Decisions are hard when everyone just wants to go with whatever everyone else wants to do.

Well, what do you want to do, Kat?

Since apparently I have to make the decision, why don't we get ready for bed? We'll still have tomorrow to do things together if we want since I think we established that we don't have anything else going on tomorrow.

*« Yeah. »*

Sounds good to me.

Then how about this? We're all already in our pyjamas, so why don't you two brush your teeth and do whatever else you need to do, and I'll get the tea set cleaned up? And then I can do the same and then meet you back here?

*« That sounds good. »*



*[Katherine picks up the parts of the tea set and carries them into the kitchen to wash them. At the same time, Isabelle and the listener grab their toothbrushes, etc. from their bags and head to the bathroom to brush their teeth. After a few moments, Isabelle and the listener have finished and return to Katherine's bedroom, waiting for her to finish cleaning the tea set and then brush her own teeth. While they're waiting:]*

*« Do you know what we're doing for sleeping arrangements tonight? »*

**Oh, that's a good question. I don't think Kat and I have talked about where everyone is sleeping. I haven't really thought about it. I've slept over here a couple times, and I think one time, I slept on the sofa and the other time, we shared her bed. But I'm not sure if she has other options or if we could all comfortably fit on the bed or if you'd even be comfortable with that, or...?**

*« As long as there's enough room, I think I'd be comfortable with it. I just also hadn't thought about it and was curious to see if you knew. »*

**I don't, but Kat should be done any moment and we can ask her.**

*« Works for me. »*

*[Isabelle and the listener wait another moment, and soon, Katherine re-enters the bedroom, ready to get to bed.]*

**Alright, are you two ready?**

**Mhm, but she was wondering...**

**Hm?**

*« I was wondering if we had worked out sleeping arrangements or what the options were regarding that, or... »*

**Ah, that's a good question. Well, you and I shared the bed last time you slept over, right?**

**Yeah.**

**Do you reckon it'd be big enough for all three of us?**

**Yeah, it might be a little bit tight, but I reckon it's fine. *(giggling)* As long as none of us like to flail a bunch in our sleep.**

*(primarily to listener)* **Is that something you'd be comfortable with?**

*« Yeah, I think so. »*

*(giggling)* **Just know that, just like I was joking earlier, Kat can be pretty cuddly, so expect—**

*(laughing)* **...That's a fair warning. Honestly, I usually sleep curled up with a plushie— Actually...**

*[Katherine walks over to her bed and picks up the large cat plushie from it, handing it to the listener.]*

**This big weighted cat plushie.**

*« Ooh, that's really nice, isn't it? Such a perfect size for cuddling with. »*

**Mhm! I love my other plushies, but that one is perfect for cuddling with. So... I've just come to get used to cuddling something when I sleep. That can definitely be this plushie, but I can't make any promises about what happens once I fall asleep, so if it's something you're concerned about, it might be better to have Bell in the middle—you don't mind it, right?**

**Not really, no. I think it's nice.**

**Yeah, then it might be better to have Bell in the middle and us on either side? I honestly don't mind however it goes, and we can go all-in on the cuddling if you want, or we can explore other options. There's the sofa in the living room that's decently comfortable—I've definitely fallen asleep on that thing plenty of times—**

**I have, too, for what that's worth.**

**And I also have a sleeping bag someone could use if she wanted to camp out on the floor. *(a beat, flatly)* Or outside, I guess, though that seems unwise since it's still raining and I don't have a tent.**

*« (giggling) Yeah, that's probably not the best idea. »*

**So, what do you want to do? And I also don't mind if you two take the bed, as my guests, and I can sleep either in here on the floor or on the sofa.**

*(slightly exasperated?)* **No, Kat, you can't sleep on the floor like that. This is your place and your bed, silly.**

« Mhm. That'd be silly. »

Perhaps, but I'm just... *(sighs)* Never mind. Just: how do we want to do this?

I'd be fine with us all taking the bed. You've got a pretty big mattress that I think will be fine for all three of us as long as we don't mind a bit of contact. *(to listener)* What do you think?

« Yeah, that's fine with me. »

Sure, that's fine with me too. Worst case scenario, we figure out that it doesn't work and we can try one of the other options. Here, let me get the sleeping bag out of my closet so that it's easier for us to get to if we find we need it in the middle of the night.

*[Katherine goes to the closet to pull out the sleeping bag.]*

But at least for now, if we're planning to share the bed, which arrangement do we want to go with?

Why don't we go with your earlier suggestion?

Hm?

Have me in the middle and then you two on either side of me. Specifically, I'm thinking that it should be *(gesturing inward from the wall)* you, and then me, and then her. If there ends up being an issue, it'll more likely be one of us who would want to get up, so putting us on this side makes that easier.

*(to listener)* Does that work for you?

« Yeah, that should be fine. »

Alright, sounds good. Is there anything else anyone needs before we get into bed, then?

« I don't think so. »

It doesn't look like it.

Then, *(to listener)* since you'll be on this side, do you mind turning off the lights after Bell and I get into bed so no one has to climb over anyone in the dark?

*« Yeah, that's not an issue. »*

*[Katherine and Isabelle get into the bed, with Katherine against the wall.]*

*« Are you two good? »*

**Yeah, I think we're good.**

*« Alright. Then... »*

*[The listener turns off the light, then climbs onto the near side of the bed.]*

**Alright...**

**Kat, honestly, cuddling seems kind of nice, so... *(trails off)***

**Yeah? Then do you want to be my big spoon or little spoon?**

**Do you have a preference?**

**Whichever you'd like. If you want to be the big spoon, then I'll just hold the plushie, so both options work just fine for me.**

**Hm... *(to listener)* Do you want me to cuddle you, too?**

*« That does sound kind of nice, so... yeah, you can if you want to, but... I guess I'm okay with it either way. »*

**Yeah? Then how about we make a little nestled spoon drawer? Kat can be the big spoon, then I can be in the middle, and then you can be the little spoon?**

*« Sure. That works for me. »*

**Alright. Sounds good. Then let me just...**

*[Katherine wraps her arms around Isabelle.]*

**...wrap my arms around you... Is that okay?**

**Mhm. *(to listener; gently, softly)* And then I can do the same for you?**

*« Mhm. Go for it. »*

*[Isabelle wraps her arms around the listener.]*

*(gently, softly)* **How's this?**

*« Yeah, that's nice. »*

**Good...**

**Is everyone comfortable?**

*(quietly, yet brightly)* **I am!**

*« Me too! What about you, Kat? »*

**Yeah, I'm comfortable, too.**

**Good... Then... goodnight, you two?**

*« Yeah. I think so. Goodnight, Bell. Goodnight, Kat. »*

**Mm... Goodnight, sleep well~**