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~Chapter One~

Party Time!



Rosie rushed into the classroom on the first day of term to look at the brand-new Birthday List pinned on the wall.

There were nine names on it:

FARZANA	ELLIE
VICTORIA	OWEN
TOBY	MOLLY
GRACIE	ETHAN
SHERILYN	

Farzana never had birthday parties, so that left eight. Victoria was next on the list. Her birthday was two weeks away.

Only two weeks! But Rosie hadn't had an invitation yet. Maybe they were in Victoria's bag right now, and before Miss Beaton came in to take the register, Victoria would fish them out and hand them round.

Then it would soon be party time!



Rosie loved birthday parties. Ever since she was tiny she'd adored everything about them: the bright balloons, the presents wrapped

in sparkly paper, the tubs of ice cream and the fancy cakes with candles on top, the party frocks, the special games – and goody bags at the end.

Parties! Oh, there was nothing better. Nothing was more fun.

Rosie couldn't wait. She hurried across the room to where Victoria was sitting.



Victoria looked up at the list. "But your name isn't there. Your birthday was last term. It's a long time till it comes round again."

"I didn't mean my birthday," Rosie explained. "I meant your party."

"But I'm not having one," Victoria told her.

Rosie was shocked. "Not having one?"



"Not this year," said Victoria. "This time, for my birthday treat, I'm going with my cousins to see the film *Sparkle and Daisy*. And afterwards we're going to Pizza Palace."

Rosie's face fell.
"So there's no party?
No party at all?"
"No," said
Victoria. "Sorry,
Rosie, but there's no
party at all."

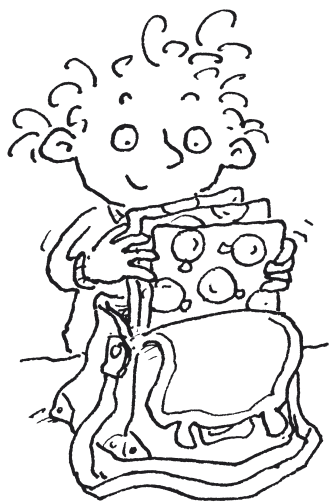


Rosie tried to stay cheerful.
"Oh, well. Toby's next on the list, and his
birthday's only a few days after yours.
So we'll have that one."
"No, we won't," said Victoria. "Because
I got the idea from Toby in the first place.
He's taking three friends bowling for his
birthday."

Rosie looked over to see Toby pulling bright yellow envelopes decorated with balloons out of his school bag.

One... Two...

Rosie waited, biting her lip with excitement. Maybe Victoria had mixed things up and Toby was having a party as well as going bowling.



Three...

That was all. Toby closed his bag and handed the yellow envelopes to his best friends, Owen, Harry and Bradley.

Rosie moved closer to ask, "Are those your birthday invitations?"

Toby grinned. "Yes! We're going bowling!"



Rosie's eyes widened in horror. Too old for birthday parties? What a *dreadful* thought.