

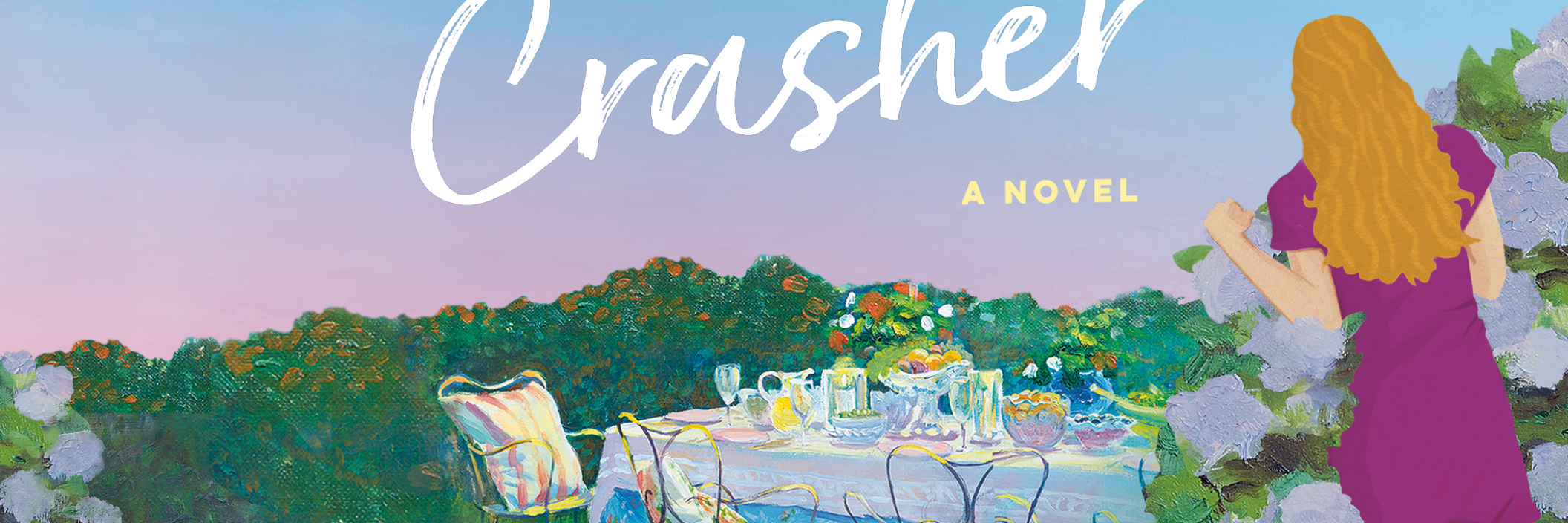


#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
SOPHIE KINSELLA

**BOOK
CLUB
KIT**

The Party Crasher

A NOVEL



A Letter from Sophie Kinsella

Dear Reader,

YOU'RE INVITED to the Greenoaks farewell party (where nothing will go as planned)!

Protagonist Effie Talbot's beloved parents got divorced two years ago, destroying the image of the happy, loving childhood she thought she had. She's estranged from her father, in a feud with his hot (and much younger) girlfriend, Krista, and now they're selling Greenoaks, the rambling Victorian country house Effie called home her whole life.

Krista decides to throw a grand "house-cooling" party. Effie, originally left off the guest list, receives a last-minute "anti-invitation" and declines. But then, remembering that a beloved childhood treasure is still hidden in the house, she decides to sneak into the party to retrieve it. As she hides around Greenoaks, not only does Effie discover secrets that make her see her family in a new light, but she runs into Joe—the love of her life, who long ago broke her heart.

Decadent partying, childhood nostalgia, playful hijinks, first love . . . What truths will spill out? What family fiascos will emerge? And what on earth is Effie doing inside the cupboard?

I hope you enjoy *The Party Crasher*! And I gift you a million plus-ones, so feel free to invite anyone you'd like to join in on the fun!

Happy reading!

Sophie Kinsella

The Party Crasher Guest List

Effie: The baby of the family. Effie is loving and strong in her convictions. She can be stubborn and impulsive at times but is always there for the people she loves.

Tony: Effie's father. A self-made man who takes pride in his family. Effie gets her stubbornness from him.

Mimi: Effie's stepmother. Artistic, creative, and quirky, Mimi loves Tony's children like they're her own.

Bean: Effie's sister. Practical, dependable, and always putting others' needs above her own, especially when it comes to her family. She has Mimi's creative flair.

Gus: Effie's brother. A handsome, endearing software developer who's sometimes absentminded.

Romilly: Gus's girlfriend. Obsessed with getting her two daughters into the finest schools and turning them into violin prodigies.

Joe: Effie's childhood friend-turned-boyfriend-turned-ex. A hometown hero heart surgeon who struggles to express his own emotions.

Temi: Effie's best friend. Blunt, loyal, and funny. Appreciates a challenge.

Krista: Tony's girlfriend. A bold, athleisure-wearing sales executive with a penchant for the finer things in life. Krista goes after what she wants and isn't afraid to say what she thinks.

Lacey: Krista's sister and part-time contortionist. Does things "Lacey's way."

Humph: Effie's classmate whom she briefly dated to make Joe jealous. Likes: transcendental meditation, alternative medicine. Dislikes: Joe.

Discussion Questions

1. What was your first impression of Effie? How did it change over the course of the story?
2. Effie thinks Greenoaks is charming and full of character, though others call it quirky at best and an eyesore at worst. Why does Effie see the house in such a different light? Why is it so difficult for her to let it go?
3. What do Effie's Russian dolls mean to her at the beginning of the novel? How does their symbolism change throughout the book?
4. In Effie's view, each character has an outer Russian doll they present to the world, an inner-middle layer just beyond the surface, and a tiny innermost doll they keep hidden deep down. Discuss the characters' outer, middle, and innermost dolls. Whose layers were the most surprising to you? Why?
5. While hiding in the rosebush, Effie looks at her tree house and feels "a sudden pang" of yearning to climb into it again. "But I chose to ignore it," she says. "If you listened to every pang, you wouldn't get anywhere in life." Do you agree with her statement, or do you think we should follow all our pangs? Why or why not?
6. Effie learns many secrets—or at least parts of secrets—while eavesdropping from her various hiding spots. Have you ever overheard something you shouldn't have? If so, what did you do with the information? If not, what do you think you would have done in Effie's position?
7. "I'm trying to match up the mental image of Joe I've been holding onto all this time with the new version in front of me," Effie says. "Anxiety. I thought he was made of tungsten. What happened?" Do you think this truly was a "new version" of Joe—or was Effie just seeing the real Joe? Discuss.
8. How do Effie's experiences throughout the party ultimately help her come to terms with her parents' divorce? What event did you feel was the turning point for her?
9. Effie and her siblings admit to feeling ashamed of being so hurt by their parents' divorce, even though they're adults. Do you think adults really get over things more easily than children do, or do we just get better at hiding our feelings?
10. Effie has a difficult time processing the fact that sweet Mimi could fight for a large divorce settlement, or that her superman father could have financial problems. Why do you think it can be so difficult to see one's parents as complete people, with flaws and all?
11. Despite considering Krista her mortal enemy at the beginning of the novel, by the end, Effie can see the good in her too. What does this teach us about prejudging people or writing them off? Do you think Krista and Tony should have broken up?
12. Effie is stunned to realize that if she'd told Joe she was looking for her dolls at the beginning of the night, they would never have gone through the events that led to their reunion. Have you ever had an experience like this, where what seems like a misstep actually leads you down the best path? What was it?

Recipe

Mimi's Plum Crumble

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 ½ tbsp. plus 1 cup unbleached flour, divided
- ½ tsp. cinnamon, divided
- ¼ tsp. ground ginger
- 10 to 12 Italian prune plums, halved and pitted
- ¼ tsp. vanilla bean powder or
½ tsp. vanilla extract (optional)
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 egg, well beaten
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted

Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a small bowl, mix the brown sugar, 1 ½ tablespoons of flour, ¼ teaspoon of cinnamon, and the ground ginger. Add the plum halves and gently toss to combine. Arrange, cut side up, in a 9-inch pie plate set on a baking sheet (to catch leaks!).
3. In another small bowl, combine the granulated sugar, baking powder, remaining 1 cup flour, remaining ¼ teaspoon cinnamon, the vanilla bean powder (if using), and the salt. Stir in the egg and the vanilla extract (if using). Use your hands to squeeze and mix thoroughly to form soft clumps and bits. Scatter pinches of the dough evenly over the plums.
4. Pour the butter evenly over the topping and bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until the top is browned and the plums tender. Serve warm or at room temperature, with ice cream, crème fraîche, mascarpone, yogurt, or whipped cream.



Source: food52.com/recipes/73227-marian-burros-plum-crumble

Cocktail

English Garden

Ingredients

- 1 ½ oz. gin
- 1 ⅔ oz. apple juice
- 1 oz. St-Germain elderflower liqueur
- ⅓ oz. lime juice (freshly squeezed)
- Cucumber slices (garnish)

Instructions

- Shake all ingredients with ice and fine-strain into an ice-filled Collins glass. Garnish with cucumber slices.

Source: diffordsguide.com/cocktails/recipe/715/english-garden



Quiz

What's your Party Persona? Take this quiz to find out!

At a party, you can be found:

- a. Making sure the canapés get refilled. You don't want anyone to end up hungry!
- b. Chatting up a new friend.
- c. Off somewhere playing with the dog.

Your favorite party outfit is:

- a. Something classic, like an A-line dress.
- b. Anything with sequins.
- c. Something comfortable, like jeans and a t-shirt.

When it comes to the guest list:

- a. You're flexible. You invite your friends and some coworkers but make it known you're fine with them bringing guests. You don't want anyone to feel left out!
- b. You invite everyone on your contacts list and a few people you bumped into on a pizza run. The more the merrier!
- c. You keep it to just a few close friends.

Your ideal party type is:

- a. An '80s theme night with DIY decorations.
- b. A masquerade gala.
- c. A slumber party.

You stay until:

- a. People start trickling out and it feels like the night is winding down.
- b. The sun comes up.
- c. You've made an appearance and can sneak out without anyone judging you.

Turn the page to find out your party persona!

Quiz Results

Mostly A's:

You're the: Host/Hostess with the Most/Mostest

You love attending parties, but you like planning them even more! You're basically a walking Pinterest board, and your friends know that you're the one to turn to when they need help making an event extra special.

Mostly B's:

You're the: Life of the Party

The party doesn't start until you walk in. You're bold, fierce, and not afraid to make an entrance. You own your confidence and liven up any group you're in.

Mostly C's:

You're the: Irish Exiter

You're an introvert at heart whose ideal Friday night consists of takeout and reality TV. You enjoy yourself at small gatherings, but like Cinderella, by the time the clock strikes midnight, you're nowhere to be found.

Playlist

Click here to listen to this playlist inspired by *The Party Crasher* while you read, or to get your own party started.

"Who Says You Can't Go Home" by Bon Jovi

"Gold Digger" by Kanye West

"Let's Get It Started" by Black Eyed Peas

"Get the Party Started" by Pink

"Our House" by Madness

"Shake It Off" by Taylor Swift

"When We Were Young" by Adele

"Need You Now" by Lady A

"I Miss You" by Blink-182

"Get Back" by Demi Lovato

"Love on Top" by Beyoncé

"Home" by Edward Sharpe & The Magnetic Zeros

"We Are Family" by Sister Sledge

"Auld Lang Syne" by Robert Burns

"I Gotta Feeling" by Black Eyed Peas

"I Heard It Through The Grapevine" by Marvin Gaye

"I'm Still Standing" by Elton John

Russian Doll Diagrams

"She's reaching a secret, tucked-away part of me. My inner Russian doll, the tiniest baby one . . . I need my protective layers to click shut, quickly. Doll after doll. Shell after shell. Click, click, shut, shut. Safe inside." —Effie, *The Party Crasher*



Effie



Joe



Your turn!

If you were a Russian nesting doll, what would each of your layers say?