

CASE STUDY

- GIRLS -

Maria is the captain of her school's basketball team, and she's invited just about all of her teammates to her birthday party this weekend. They're all talking about how much fun it will be, what they're going to wear, and what gifts they're going to get Maria for her birthday. It's the one thing everybody seems to be talking about.

Everyone but Tasha, that is.

Tasha is one of the girls who typically sits on the bench during basketball games. She isn't exactly a star player on the team, and she doesn't always fit in with the other girls. The more she hears about Maria's upcoming party, the more she wants to go, too! So, Tasha makes the choice to ask Maria if she is invited to come to her party with the rest of the team. Well, the bad news is Maria wasn't planning on inviting Tasha. So when Tasha asks if she can join, Maria just laughs and replies, "You aren't a starter, are you? Players who sit on the bench weren't invited."

Jayla, another teammate, overhears this exchange and chimes in, "Yeah, why would we want you to come?" Embarrassed, Tasha walks quietly back to her corner of the locker room and sits defeated on the bench. After seeing Tasha's disappointment, Maria starts to feel bad about the way she spoke to her. She didn't mean to hurt anyone's feelings! So, despite what she said at first, Maria goes over and extends an invite to Tasha after all. Coach blows the whistle, signaling warmups are about to begin.

Excited to have been included on the invite list, Tasha posts a TikTok of her shoe collection with the caption, "What's my vibe gonna be for the party Saturday?"

Within minutes, she gets replies. Jayla says, "Probably boring." Then a flood of "likes" accompanies the post. Brianna, another teammate, speaks up, "Choose the pink ones! Can't wait to see you on Saturday!" But then Maria writes, "Um, yeah . . . there's no way you can come to my party wearing any of those." More "likes" come in to echo Maria's comment. Then Chad adds, "Gross. You need more pairs of shoes!"

Feeling pretty down about herself, Tasha walks into first period at school the next day. When Maria comes into class, she approaches Tasha and immediately teases her saying, "Girl, I need to take you shoe shopping. You are not ready for a party like mine! I actually only invited you because you have no friends, and I felt bad for you. But clearly I never should've invited you in the first place."

Jayla and Chad overhear and laugh.

And though Brianna is sitting right next to Tasha, she remains quiet, acting like she doesn't know what's going on. She decides to look at her book and not get involved.

As Tasha holds back tears, class begins.