

THE HARDY BOYS

Maison Enchantée



Let us recall that in the previous chapter, after suddenly finding themselves with long fingernails and wearing makeup, the Hardy Boys had refocused their attention on the mysteries of the Cursed Mansion—who was the naughty little girl who seemed intent on turning them into girls? And, what of the pirate treasure that had brought them here in the first place? Also, how was one supposed to pick up small things with long fingernails?

As you may recall, they heard a scream from upstairs: “Help! Someone help!”

The Boys had trained their whole lives to rescue anyone in danger, and especially women and girls. They instantly reacted to the cry for help, tossing their long hair and bolting for the stairs. Alas, they’d forgotten the now wore high heeled shoes and neither one had the faintest idea how to run in heels. They barely even managed to walk. They stumbled, tottered, put their arms out to the sides and regained their balance. Then, faces masks of concern, they moved like ladies, heel to toe, small steps as they clicked along toward the stairs.

“These shoes are not made for emergencies!” Frank observed, his brow knit with consternation. “I can now say with absolute conviction it makes no sense at all for Wonder Woman to wear high heels. None.”

“Wonder Woman is super strong, though,” Joe said. “Maybe with her super strong ankles wearing heels isn’t hard for her.” Joe’s first crush, before he even knew what a crush was, had been on none other than the Amazon Princess. He’d become fascinated at the sight of her in her swimsuit and, indeed, had though her calves looked quite interesting in those high-heeled boots.

“You always have to contradict me,” Frank said. “High heels make no sense. End of story.”

“I’m just playing devil’s advocate,” Joe said, raking his long nails through his hair and tossing it back over his shoulder. “What else doesn’t make sense is long hair. Why do girls do this to themselves?”

“And long fingernails.”

“And skirts!”

“It’s like they want to be helpless,” Frank said, plucking at his long skirt. He’d made the mistake of looking down, so his long hair now plopped into his face, forcing him to brush it back with an annoyed but feminine flick of his wrist. He was slowly beginning to realize it was best to keep his shoulders back and his chin up at all times. He was trailing behind Joe, and with the conversation being what it was, he found himself having to admit that Joe had really great legs now—or, great legs had he been a girl. For a boy, they were just embarrassing.

The boys had now reached the stairs. Propped up on their heels, neither had a good sense of how long their legs were, how deep to take each step, so once more what had been a routine task demanded intense concentration as they carefully made their way up the stairs battling both their heels and their hair since each time one of the boys looked down to try and make sure he was stepping on the next step, his bangs would fall into his eyes. Each of them kept one hand on the banister, trying to keep his balance.



The house had settled over the years, and the steps were crooked, uneven, making the climb even harder. The wallpaper along the wall, an old-fashioned green with a raised

pattern, was torn in places, revealing moldy wooden boards. A few paintings of glowering old men and women hung along the way, though the boys scarcely noticed any of the details as they climbed.

“Are you coming or what?” The voice shouted from upstairs. “I’m not getting any younger.”

“We’re coming as fast as we can!” Frank screamed in his little girl voice. “Stop screaming!”

“Okay. Okay,” the voice shouted back. “Don’t get your panties in a wad.”

“Panties? I’m not—shut up!” Frank had been about to say he wasn’t wearing panties, but then he’d focused for a moment on how his underwear felt, and he was pretty sure he was wearing panties which, for reasons he didn’t have time to ponder, might have been the most embarrassing thing of all.

“I’m giving a bad review on Yelp!”

“We’re on our way! Just try to stay calm. Everything will be fine,” Joe said, terrified. He prided himself on his sterling reputation as a clean cut All-American boy who always rescued everyone and was polite while doing it. His image meant everything, though as he thought about the All-American boy part, he couldn’t help but feel extra aware of the jiggling of his big, bouncy breasts, not the fact he now wore a skirt. “We have to make sure no one takes any pictures of us like this,” he said to Frank.

“No duh,” Frank said, then added, “and no recordings of us either. I can’t believe I sound like a Bambi doll now.”

The boys reached the second floor. A hallway stretched ahead of them, with sconces on the walls tossing their orange, flickering light along the path, illuminating ripped carpet, peeling wallpaper. The boys could see more light flickering under the doors that lined the hall.

Frank started to totter down the hall, but then the voice cried out once more. “I’m in the attic. Help. Help.”

They turned back to the next flight of stairs and started to climb. “My calves are burning,” Joe said.

The boys reached the attic, which looked like a scene from a scary movie. Cobwebs clung to the corners and beams that stretched across the ceiling. The space was crowded with musty, dusty artifacts—phonographs, mannequins, doll houses, a cracked full-length mirror.

“Hello?” Joe called.

“Hello?” Frank said.

“I already said that,” Joe said. “You don’t have to repeat me.”

“I wasn’t repeating you, I was... um...” the boys had been drifting toward the mirror, and they now could see themselves reflected back. Even in the old, broken mirror, it was once more shocking to see how much they looked like girls now. Joe hooked his hair behind his ear as he turned to the side, wincing at the sight of his breasts. Did they look bigger? Frank, meanwhile, had also turned to the side, wincing at the dramatic rise of his big booty, the swerve at the small of his back.



“Do you think we could be stuck like this?” Joe said cupping his breasts and lifting them.

“Stop playing with your boobies,” Frank said, “you perv.”

“I’m not playing with my boobies,” Joe snapped back. “I’m just seeing how heavy they are and, anyway, these aren’t mine. I just got stuck with them.”

“That makes no sense. God, you’re such a blonde!”

Before the bickering could continue, the boys heard a voice whisper, “more girl.” It sounded like it came from behind the mirror, so their eyes were not pulled away as their faces began to change. As noted earlier, the boys’ faces had not changed at all, though with their feminine haircuts they looked more like girls than before. Now, however, the boys watched, fascinated, as their lips swelled, their eyes grew bigger, their noses cuter and their chins melted away, each one in a matter of seconds finding himself with a very pretty, very female face.

Joe’s hand went to his smooth, soft cheek. Frank’s hand went to his slender, arched eyebrow, then to his cheek. They stared, transfixed, for all the world looking like a pair of pretty teen sisters. “You look like a girl,” Frank said.

“Wow, you’re such an amazing detective,” Joe sneered back. “What amazing powers of observation.”

“Like you’re such an amazing detective. I’m surprised you can even think with all the blood flowing to your boobs.”

“Oh, that is so sexist!”

“Enough, already,” the little girl said, stepping from behind the mirror. “You’re driving me crazy with all this sniping. Let’s just move this along. Total girl!” She said, waving her hands toward the boys, and they each shrieked as they felt the rest of their bodies flowing, changing, re-arranging. Now, they looked in the mirror and saw sweet- faced females with nice figures. They also could feel they were sweet- faced females with nice figures. “Get her!” Joe shouted, his voice now almost identical to Frank’s.

They lunged at the little girl, but this time she didn’t fly away or vanish. Instead, she raised her hands and said “freeze.” The boys froze like statues, unable to move. “I’m quite disappointed in you two,” she said in a tone like a schoolteacher talking to a pair of naughty little girls. “You haven’t figured out a single thing since you came here! Tsk. Tsk. Heavens, I’ve had you running around in circles like a pair of silly geese. Focus. Focus. Focus, young ladies. If you do not solve the mystery of the house, you will be trapped as girls forever.”

Though they couldn’t move, each of the Hardy Boys felt himself panic on the inside at the very thought. Girls? Them? They liked being boys. They’d been looking forward to remaining

boys and doing boy things as they got older like maybe growing a beard. There would be no beards for them if they stayed as girls and, besides that, they liked girls. They were both pretty sure their girlfriends would break up with them if they stayed girls. They'd also had that very terrible dream where they couldn't be on the boys' little league team anymore but would be stuck playing jump rope. The boys could think of few more humiliating fates than being stuck playing jump rope with the... girls.

Each, further, dreaded what their father would think of him.

It was all very scary to these two red-blooded All-American boys, indeed.

"Now, just to give you an extra incentive to GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER," and the little girl punctuated those last angry words by stomping her little foot, making her curls bounce, "I will cast another spell on you to help you understand what life will be like for you as girls."

She raised her hands and closed her eyes.

Lipstick, blush, mascara, too

Fresh faced Hardy girls must use

Hardly boys, they long to see

Wet long lashes and lips glossy

Pencils, bushes, wands and tubes

It's a girl's life for both of you

Each of the boys felt magic energy now seeping into his brain, and then he could feel if that energy were somehow re-arranging and reprogramming his thoughts. No, no, they each thought. I won't let her change me! I won't! I am a Hardy Boy!

"I release you," the little girl said as she rose into the air and flew back away from the boys, who rushed after her, though in their high heels it was almost comical. "Oh, girls," their tormentor called. "You want to do your makeup thanks to my spell. Hahahahaha!"

The little girl vanished in a cloud of laughter. Joe looked at Frank who looked back. They each shrugged. "Like I would ever wear makeup," Joe said. 'Anyway, weren't we already wearing it?"

"I know, right?" Frank tossed his long hair. "Dad would be so mad if he saw us now. We can't go home like this."

“He would be disappointed in us, that’s for darn certain.”

“Mom might be a little happy about, though,” Joe said, frowning.

“Do you think Mom would make us do... girl things?” Frank whispered, his voice trembling at the thought of such shame being brought upon them.

Just then, Joe glanced over and saw a table with a mirror, and on the tabletop were tubes of lipstick, camel hairbrushes, trays of eyeshadow. His eyes sparkled as he wandered toward the table. The colors were all so pretty.

“That little girl is so dumb,” Frank said, wandering over as well. “Like she can cast such a stupid spell on us.”

“Totally,” Joe said as he opened a tube of lipstick and pulled out the little brush. His knees went weak. It was the most amazing shade of pink he’d ever seen. He needed to wear it. He simply must.

Frank, meanwhile, had pulled out the wand from a tube of mascara. His mouth went dry as he looked at the dark, sticky mascara and imagined how his eyes would pop. Yet, he suspected Joe would give him so much static if he started to put on makeup. Only girls wore makeup. Besides, from the earlier spell, he was—glancing in the mirror, he gasped. His makeup was gone. He was—plain faced, like a boy. Heart racing, he needed to do his face, but then, he didn’t want Joe to tease him. Instantly, the clever Hardy came up with a plan.

“I have an idea,” he said.

“What’s that?” Joe answered, struggling with the all consuming need to paint his lips. His hand was actually shaking as he strained to keep from putting on the lipstick.

“Just to totally fool that little hag, we put on makeup, so she thinks her stupid spell worked.”

“Such an amazing idea,” Joe said, puckering up, bringing the lipstick wand to his big, soft lips. “You’re so smart, especially for a girl.”

“Okay, blondie,” Frank said, thrilled he would be able to get the long, wet lashes he wanted and needed. He was about to make another joke about Joe’s large, bouncy breasts, but then the weight of his own rising and falling as he breathed reminded him he had jugs now as well.

Driven near to a frenzy the boys made themselves up and were only able to feel a bit calm when they were done, looking over their faces, a warm, feminine pride spreading through

each as he saw what a good job he'd done with his makeup. "I guess the spell worked," Joe said, chagrined as he found himself taking a purse from the clutter in the attic and filling it with the cosmetics he would need to touch up his face.



"Can you put these in there, too?" Frank asked.

"Get your own purse," Joe said, slitting his eyes.

"Fine. Be a... bad person."

"I will."

“I know.”

Finally, perched on their heels, purses secured, lips glossy, the Hardy Boys were ready to continue their investigation. “Where should we start?”

“The answer is where you are!” They heard the little girl call from somewhere in the house.

“What the heck does that even mean?” Joe asked, already pulling out his compact and checking his lipstick.

“It means here in the attic,” Frank said, shaking his head and muttering “such a blonde.”

Joe grinned. He was kind of ditzy now, he had to admit. He was beginning think it was kind of cute to be such an airhead.

The boys began searching around the attic. There was stuff going back hundreds of years all crammed together. Meanwhile, they were both still trying to get used to the feeling of their new bodies, being stuck in high heels. They also both kept smacking their lips, unused to the sticky nature of their lipstick. They were both trying to get used to the fact they were wearing skirts. Frank, in particular, had to manage his long, flowing skirt, which he felt constantly shifting across his legs as he moved. At times, he had to pluck at it and pull it, lift it. Skirts, he thought, are completely impractical.

For Joe, feeling the cool air flow around his bare legs wasn’t that different from wearing shorts, but he couldn’t escape the feeling that the skirt might flip up at any moment. There was just something more vulnerable in wearing such a short skirt instead of shorts. Of course, it did not help that skirts were for girls.

Frank, looking through the musty old books and nicknacks on a bookshelf, found a yellowed and crumbling old newspaper. The date at the top read 1864. Wow, he thought, and was about to put it aside when he noticed the headline on the front page:

Little Girls rescued from Pirate Ship.

The article recounted how the little town had woken one day to see a pirate ship anchored in the harbor, jolly roger flapping in the breeze. The article explained:

The church bells did ring that day and not with joy or the call to worship. Instead, the men of the town did gather their arms and assemble into a militia as an attack was expected at any moment. The mayor, hoping to forestall bloodshed, then showed his wisdom and the wisdom of all the town in choosing such an August leader, by suggesting a contingent be sent to meet the pirates in the hopes of negotiating a truce of some sort.

After some discussion, a group of men was chosen and they set on to the pirate ship on Ned Haverty's Fishing Boat, flying a white flag. The town gathered on the shore to watch. While the ladies expressed concern and fretted so, which is natural and a compliment to their sex, Old Woman Enchantee, the recluse who lived in her family's secluded mansion near town, cackled. "There bein't nothing to fear, ladies, as you'll soon see." Enchantee still spoke with a colonial accent she'd learned from her ancient nanny, and to hear her speak was to imagine oneself brought back to the days when the great General Washington strode there lands.

After some time, the boat returned, but with half the men. Those who did come back looked most confused and out of their element. "We'll need some ladies," Bill Baker announced. "There's nothing on that old pirate ship but a bunch of little girls." He shook his head. "They are, er, a handful. Best the ladies handle them, eh?"

Puzzling. Frank thought, A ship full of little girls. He skimmed the rest of the article before digging into more of the old newspapers, where he found another article dated a year later:

Miss Phillipa's Academy a Great Success

From pirate girls to little ladies, a testament to the talents of Miss Phillipa and all the fine ladies of our village. One would scarcely believe the darling little ladies who made their debut this past weekend at the Spring Cotillion had once been, let us be honest, a coarse and vulgar bunch.

Having been raised by pirates, it seems, the girls came to us with abhorrent manners, defiant attitudes and mouths so vulgar as sailor would be ashamed of them. Indeed, many remarked how their very accents called to mind portside ruffians, though it was oddly adorable to hear a little girl say something like, "Avast, keep yer hands to yerself lest I get ta choppin."

Quite taken aback that these poor little girls had been raised in such a terrible manner, Miss Phillipa volunteered to open an academy for young ladies and to teach these unruly maids to act like proper girls. Given Phillipa's stern and unyielding personality, well known throughout the town, the decision was made to allow her to make this effort, though some held misgivings, believing the girls beyond saving. Yet, in no time at all, and with some assistance from other ladies, our "pirate girls" as we came to call them, were learning all the arts of the feminine, hosting teas, reciting poetry and learning to dance, all the way having their vulgar accents replaced by a more refined and ladylike manner of speech.

As Little Miss Daisy, her new given name after she first introduced herself as Bloody John, explained, "Goodness me. We are so lucky Miss Phillipa found us. She has helped us all

become such good girls, and now I can hope to one day make a smart for a good, wholesome boy."

There was a picture of Daisy before and after, and Frank was quite impressed with the change in her. "Lucky girl," he thought.



small scrap of paper sticking out from the side of the chest. He plucked the paper out and then shrieked, 'a clue!"

"What is it?" Frank asked, sitting down next to his shapely brother and looking at the scrap upon which words had been written in a fancy, old-fashioned script. "The key is inside the chest."

"That is not helpful at all," Frank said. "How can we get the key to unlock the chest when it's inside the chest? He clenched his fists in rage and felt his long fingernails dig into his palms.

“I hate this stupid house and that mean little girl,” Joe said, then his mouth fell open. “I have it. I know where to find the key.”

To be continued

Bonus

