

THE HARDY BOYS

MAISON ENCHANTEE 5



Hardy Boys 5

We have noted, dear reader, how the Hardy Boys found even so common an act as walking strange and uncomfortable in their new, female-shaped bodies. It bears mentioning again, because as the boys descended the stairs, they now experienced a new feeling that was, let's say, female adjacent. That is, the feeling of walking down the stairs wearing a bra. It was already uncomfortable for them to have what felt like a harness wrapped around his body when he had once felt so much more free, but even with the support of his new bra, he felt his breasts bounce slightly with each step and the dainty straps on his shoulders bear down into his soft flesh and then loosen. Much to their mutual surprise, each boy found his bra tighter than he had expected, making it slightly harder to breath.

Joe, tugging at the sides of his bra, felt the need to comment on just this issue. "It's a little hard to breath," he said, fiddling with his bra strap as he descended the stairs.

"Ha. You're such a girl," Frank said, tossing his hair.

"No way. I'm not being a girl at all. You're telling me you don't find it a little hard to breath?"

"Whether I do or don't, I'm not going to complain about it because I'm not a girl."

"You sure sound like one," Joe said, his voice oozing with sass.

"Brat," Frank sneered.

"Hag."

Joe slit his eyes at Frank, who slit his eyes back, then each of their boys turned his head with a huff and tossed his hair.

Of course, in addition to the fact that their bras were, indeed, uncomfortable, bras were also something that belonged firmly and completely in girl world, and each of the boys was struggling with the shame of wearing a girl thing. It couldn't be helped.

Their cute overalls also shamed the boys not only because they looked like exactly the kind of cute little thing a girl would wear and which they, as red-blooded all-American boys would have enjoyed seeing a girl squeeze into, but because their new outfits were tight and small, showing off their slender arms, their long legs and hugging their soft round hips and bouncing behinds. Their skirts and dresses, though arguably belonging more fully in the world of the girl, were loose and flowing. Their new clothes were tight, restricting and revealing. They just felt so wrong.

Joe and Frank reached the bottom of the stairs and headed toward the kitchen. “At least we have these cute boots to wear instead of heels,” Joe said, looking down at his round toe short boots.

“I know, right? Can you imagine if someone saw us gardening in heels?”

“It’s unheard of.”

The boys’ newly blossoming feminine fashion sense was kicking in without them knowing it, as neither objected to the idea of wearing high heels at this point, only wearing them when it wasn’t fashionable. Yet, their gentle pleasure at their cute and appropriate footwear



came to an abrupt end as they saw what awaited them in the kitchen. They froze, looks of disgust on their pretty faces.

“Girl food,” Joe whispered.

“No... no...” Frank begged. “Please, no.”

“Eat it or go hungry,” the ghost girl called, her voice now seeming to come from upstairs.

“Go hungry?” Joe said, raising a slender eyebrow.

“We need our energy,” Frank said, walking toward the counter where the girl food awaited, but with a look of terror and disgust on his face. “Just pinch your nose and get it down.”

The boys stood at the counter, grossed out at the thought of eating the horrible, feminine food that had been placed before them. They stared and almost walked away, but their grumbling tummies had other ideas. What was the horror they faced, you may well wonder?

There before them were two porcelain bowls decorated with hand painted roses resting on saucers. Next to the bowls, silver spoons. Residing within each bowl? The offending *girl food*: Half a pink grapefruit, the pulpy skin glistening.

“The grapefruit diet,” Joe said, his voice still in a whisper.

“Mom’s been on this for years.”

It was food girls ate, like salad. It was not for boys. No. Not at all.

They picked up their spoons.

“She has kept her figure,” Frank said.

“There’s that,” Joe answered, neither of them even stopping to wonder why keeping their figures suddenly seemed to matter to them.

Each boy dug a wedge of grapefruit out, lifted it to his lips and ate. “Not too bad,” Frank said. “Maybe girl good isn’t so bad.”

“It’s the magic,” Joe answered as he took a second bite. “It’s making us like girl things. Next, we’ll be eating fat free yogurt parfaits and drinking soy milk.”

They boys finished their grapefruit, surprised to actually feel pretty full with such a small meal. Then again, they were just skinny girls now. Without even realizing what they were doing, instead of just leaving the dishes for mom, each of the boys took his dishes to the

sink, slipped on a pair of rubber gloves, washed them, dried them and placed them in the drainer next to the sink.

It was only when they finished that they realized the horror of what they'd done. "Not a word of this to daddy," Frank said.

"We've got to get out of here before we start dusting," Joe said, taking his gloves off and throwing them on the counter, stepping back as if they were a venomous snake.

"Let's go find the treasure and finish this." Throwing their shoulders back, thrusting their chests out, the boys began to march toward the kitchen door that led out to the graveyard.



“We are the Hardy Boys,” Joe said, setting his jaw.

“The Hardy Men.” Frank answered.

They reached the door. They froze. Joe looked at Frank. Frank looked at Joe. They nodded and without needing to say a word, they headed back upstairs to do their makeup. Of course, it would be light makeup appropriate for gardening but, seriously, a proper red-blooded American girl did not leave the house without doing her face.

The boys sat, crossing their legs girl-style, and began to do their light makeup. “Just a little lipstick,” Joe said. “Some eyeliner,” Frank added. “Not too much,” they said together, somehow managing to harmonize their pretty voices. Eyeliner led to a little concealer which led to a little mascara which led to a little blush and then, oh, well, each of the boys found the need to do his nails and pluck his eyebrows. Not fully, of course, but just to clean up the edges. “I mean, of course,” Joe said. “I know, right?”

After, the boys realized their hair really wasn’t right at all for gardening. They’d taken it down the night before, but long, flowing hair, though they did look cute, just wasn’t right. Joe put his hair in a low ponytail, while Frank put his in a high ponytail. Finally, concerned they might perspire and acquire an unladylike smell, each of the boys sprayed some perfume on his wrists and rubbed them together, then dabbed some on his neck.

As the boys had prettied themselves up, they’d each started to feel guilty about their earlier argument, so once their hair and makeup was just right, they once more looked at each other, communicating without speaking the way sisters do.

Joe bit his lip. “I’m sorry I called you a hag.”

“I’m sorry I called you a brat.” With that, the boys hugged.

“You’re so pretty,” Frank said to finish their making up.

“You like a princess.”

The boys’ mouths dropped open in shock as they realized what they’d just done. More and more there seemed to be “boy lag” where they would act like girls then realize only after they’d been acting like girls. “Let’s do this,” Frank said, holding up the treasure map. “Before we start braiding each other’s hair.”

Braiding each other’s hair? Oh, fun.” Joe thought, but then stopped himself. They really did need to get out of this place.

The boys went to the old shed on the edge of the graveyard and got a couple of spades. Then, they headed across the yard and to the stone archway that rose from the mists on the edge of the graveyard. Beyond could see seen weathered old headstones, tilted this way and that, a mausoleum crawling with stone gargoyles and a small, stone chapel of granite. Crows perched atop the arch, on the headstones, the church, occasionally croaking into the gray, misty morning. The very air smelled of rot.



“Please tell me it doesn’t lead to that scary building,” Joe said, pointing one long nail at the mausoleum.

“It leads to this grave right by the entrance. They walked over. It says the tombstone will read “Johnny X.” The boys looked at the tombstone. The letters were faded and overgrown with moss and mildew. “I don’t suppose you brought a tissue or a hanky?”

“No,” Joe said, crinkling his nose at what he was about to have to do. “I’ll wipe it off,” he said, walking over to the headstone. He reached out toward the stone—it looked so gross—then rubbed his hands across the letters, the moss feeling cold and slimy against his skin. “Eeee!” He squeaked. “Omigod, it’s so gross.” He pulled his hand away. “I can’t do it,” he gasped, eyes wide.

“Remember, you’re a boy,” Frank said, mostly because he found the thought of touching the gross stone disgusting and wanted Joe to do it. “Boys like gross things.”

Joe nodded. Took a deep breath. His brother was right. He needed to be a boy right now. “Omigod.... Omigod... omigod...” he whispered as he rubbed the letters clean. “Eeee. It smells like poopy death.”

“Good job,” Frank said. “This is the place.” The letters were now clear enough to read. “Let’s get to digging.”

The boys took their shovels, a new anxiety consuming each of them. “Don’t make fun of me,” Frank said. “But I’m worried I might break a nail.”

Though this was, indeed, a perfect chance for Joe to tease his brother, Joe demurred. “I am too, though I’m not sure why.” He plunged his shovel into the dirt and dug up a spadeful, then carefully tossed it to the side. “I don’t want to get my outfit dirty,” Joe said, half talking to himself.

“You’re such a girl,” Frank said. Unlike his brother, he could not resist the urge to tease and torment, though he was also feeling a distinct need to keep himself and his outfit clean. Ugh. It annoyed him that he was using the word outfit, even just in his head.

As the boys dug, they each felt a growing sense of foreboding. The ever-watchful eyes of the crows seemed to be staring at them with a mad intensity, and each one gasped now and then as he would think he saw a shadowy figure flittering just on the edge of his vision only to turn and see... nothing.

Was it because they were girls now that they both felt so nervous and scared? Or, was it because they were in a spooky graveyard? They couldn’t be certain. So, they just kept digging even as they found themselves glancing about, watching, ever sensitive to the possible presence of danger.

Clunk. Joe's shovel hit something hard. The boys scraped away to find the top of a chest. Unlike the fancy pirate chest in the attic, this one was a low, plain wooden box, and they had soon pulled it free of the dirt and set it on the grass near the grave. Joe used the key to open the clunky, metal lock. Inside, they found an oil cloth wrapped around something.

"What is it?" Joe asked.

"Let's find out." Frank carefully began to unwrap the oil cloth from whatever it concealed. Turning and turning... until at long last it was open the mystified boys stared upon the treasure inside.

"A doll?" Frank said, looking at the doll. It was porcelain, with a painted face. Something very old, but still, it just seemed like a doll.

"I don't get it," Joe said.



"Aye, a doll indeed," they heard the voice of the little girl say. "But not just any doll. She is the greatest treasure I ever looted in all my years." Both boys jumped away, terrified she would unleash some new change upon them. Turning, they saw her leaning against a tombstone in her dress and bonnet, smoking a cigar. "It was that doll that led me to live this cursed existence and left my whole crew transformed into little girls. Yet, I love her more than my own mother." As the boys looked at the little girl, she seemed to flicker and for just a moment they

got a glimpse of the man who was trapped within. He had a strong, cleft chin and a rugged, manly face with a jagged scar across his cheek. He no doubt had once made quite a fearsome figure, stomping across the deck of his pirate ship. The image of that manly face faded and once more a little girl with golden curls and a pretty bonnet festooned with flowers stood before them.

Joe and Frank stepped back, eyeing the little girl warily.

"Ar, you needn't fear me now," the girl said. "I'm done making me changes to ya, and what's more, I can offer yer a way to get yourselves changed back into proper lads." She gave each

of them a once over at that and nodded appreciatively. "Though, I must say you do make fetching lasses. Maybe ye'll be wanting to stay such pretty things."

"Don't look at us like that," Joe said. "It's so wrong for so many reasons."

"Wrong is pretty much my bailiwick," the girl said. "But, where are my manners? Allow me to introduce myself. I am the notorious Captain Sweet, scourge of the seven seas, King of the Pirates, or, at least I used to be before I stole that doll." She took another toke from her cigar and blew a smoke ring into the air. "Now, well..." His face screwed up in a mask of self-mockery, Captain Sweet plucked at the hem of his frilly dress and did a curtsy. "They call me Marjorie."

"You said something about knowing a way we could get turned back into boys?" Frank said. "How?"

"Before'n I get into the details of all that, I best explain how it came to be that me and my scurvy crew of outlaw buccaneers ended up a bunch of frails," Sweet said. "It all started when we..."

"You know, that's okay." Joe's desire to be restored to boyhood had overcome his need to be polite. "Just skip to the past where you tell us how to get to be boys again."

Sweet's cute little face twisted into a mask of rage, yet his voice lost its pirate edge, and he suddenly spoke in the sing song voice of a proper little girl. "Goodness me, but you're quite a rude one, missy," Sweet said, so offended that he stomped one little foot. He even went so far as to wag one little finger at them. "You would have done well to learn from proper manners under the lash of Miss Phillipa."

He adjusted his bonnet and tossed his golden sausage curls back over his shoulder. "Fine. You can stay girls just like that dumb skateboard boy and all the rest. Good day." She turned and ran, beginning to fade away in the process.

"No. Please!" Frank called. "My... um... sister didn't mean to be rude. She would love to hear your story. We both would. Right?"

"Yes. Yes," Joe said, catching on. Nodding vigorously.

Sweet looked back over his shoulder, pouting. "Really?" He asked in a small voice.

"More than anything," Joe lied.

"Like, I'll go crazy if I don't get all the details," Frank said.

Sweet seemed on the fence, considering. "I don't know..." he said. "Miss Phillipa told me never to speak to strangers."

Joe and Frank each, desperate to find a way back to boy life, found himself drawing on his newly found feminine intuition. “Your dress is so pretty,” Frank said.

“I adore your curly hair.”

Captain Sweet giggled, posing and then doing a twirl. “Fine. I’ll tell you my story. You’ve forced it out of me.” Now seeming much more a little girl than a pirate, she tossed her cigar dramatically to the side. “It all started when I spotted a merchant ship off the coast of this very state,” he said. “We’d only left Nassau a few days before, and here was a French vessel low in the water that looked like easy pickings. My men and stormed the ship. The crew surrendered. We found a tobacco, rum, a small fortune in cargo and more. A woman named Mademoiselle Geroit was passenger on that vessel. She had a chest of gold and jewels, which we seized, but also in that chest was a doll, the very doll you now hold.” Sweet’s eyes grew distant as he remembered the scene. “Her daughter began to cry. ‘Please don’t take Marjorie,’ she said, weeping. ‘Please. I love her more than anything.’

“I beg you,” Mademoiselle Geroit said. “Leave the doll. It means all the world to my little girl.”

I laughed. I cared not for that little girl’s feelings, nor anyone’s. Indeed, though it shames me to admit it now, I took great pleasure inflicting pain on others. “I’ll take this doll,” I said, sneering. “And sink it to the bottom of the sea.”

The girl screamed and threw herself in her mother’s arms. As my men and I walked away, I heard Geroit shout, “I curse you all! You think it fun to make little girls suffer? To steal a little girl’s doll! You will become little girls and spend your lives in dresses!” She shouted more, now speaking in some strange language, then began to laugh.

I thought nothing of it. Just some fool woman’s babble. I didn’t believe in curses. Yet, when I returned to my quarters, I found myself strangely attached to that doll. I brushed Marjorie’s hair and found myself talking to her as if she were my best friend. I arranged a tea party at my table and sat chatting with her, telling her all about my adventures as a pirate and how much I hoped to one day meet a dashing man. Yes. He would be tall with green eyes and-- Wait? A dashing man? On some level, I knew this was wrong, that I’d been ensorcelled, and yet I could not stop myself. I wanted a man to sweep me off my feet. I loved my dolly, Marjorie. She was my best friend. I struggled, but I couldn’t remember who I was, couldn’t break free of the spell. I’m a ... I’m a... I couldn’t say man or pirate but there was something else in my brain, something tremulous with horror struggling to come out of my mouth.”

I didn’t even notice my body changing.

There was a sudden knocking at my door, and I heard someone call out in the voice of a little girl, “Captain! Captain!”

A little girl? On my ship? What the devil. I jumped from my chair and started toward the door, tripping over my now too long pants even as long hair fell across my face. “What’s going on?” I called, my eyes going wide as I heard myself speak, now in squeaky voice that reminded me of a tea kettle. I made my way to the door and reached up—I wasn’t as short as I am now, but I had shrunk, my sleeve fell back to reveal a slender arm. Ignoring all the puzzling evidence, I struggled to turn the key but eventually got the door open to find myself staring at a freckled-faced red-haired girl dressed in oversized men’s clothes. I did a double take. She was the spitting image of my first mate’s daughter, but how could Meghan have gotten onto my ship?

As I did my double-take, she did one of her own. Her eyes went wide. “Captain?”

“What are you doing on my ship, young lady?” I said, trying to ignore my soft voice, my diminutive stature.

“It’s me,” she said, blushing with shame. “Morgan The Axe.” She turned so I could see the crew gathered behind her. I saw was a sea of smooth, pretty faces, girls one and all, looking scared, confused. Those pretty faces were all looking to me for answers, yet I’d never felt more lost in all my life. The faces were familiar. They looked like my men, like the way my men would look if they had been born as girls. That shook me. I refused to accept that my fearsome crew now consisted entirely of little girls. “Who are you? What are you doing on my ship?”

“We’ve all been turned into girls,” Morgan said. “Just like you.”

Girl? Me? My blood boiled.

“I’ll slice you from stem to stern,” I squealed fully intending to gut this impudent child. I had quite a temper in those days, and there was no greater insult than being called a girl. I was not even close to facing the truth of what I’d become. I reached for the knife I always kept in my belt only to now realize my belt had slipped from my narrow hips and fallen to the ground when I’d jumped from my chair. I looked back and saw my beloved doll, Marjorie. Maybe it was my imagination, but I could have sworn I saw Geroit sitting there next to her, or at least her shade, laughing at me. “I’m not a girl,” I said, horrified at my little girl voice. I started to breath hard, the world seemed to spin. “I’m not a girl,” I repeated, my little voice shaking as I repeated it again, as if saying the words would make it true. ‘I’m NOT A GIRL!’

“It pains me, but ya need ta see the truth, C’pn. Look ye and despair.” Morgan held up a looking glass.



I looked. A little girl with golden hair looked back at me. She was the very image of an angel, that young lass, and I was her. “No... no...” I turned and ran from that innocent face, but I couldn’t run from my doom. None of us could.

The next few days were ones of denial and curiosity. We avoided each other as much as possible, each of us ashamed of what we’d become. Rarely did we speak to each other, though I would sit in my quarters and talk aloud to myself, to my doll, struggling to deal with the shame of my tiny voice, my tiny body. I had my own looking glass and alternated between feeling terrified to look into it and obsessed with staring at my new face—the tiny nose, the bright skin. I looked so young. I looked so female. I cringed to think of dealing with the world with such a face, as a member of the weaker sex. A ship of girls at sea, we lived in

terror. What if Blackbeard were to come along? Calico Jack? I shivered to think of our fates should those crude men find us in this state, and yet where could we port and be safe and free—like this?

Then, the men from town came. None of us dared tell them we'd once been men. Pirates, even. They never would have believed it anyway and so we found ourselves remanded into the care of Miss Phillipa, who was determined to discipline us all and turn us into good little God-fearing girls. I found myself renamed Marjorie after my dolly, the one I'd stolen from that cursed woman. I never thought Miss Phillipa had a chance, but she was tough one and soon we were all becoming the most well-mannered little ladies you could ever imagine."

Sweet now took Marjorie in his small hands and hugged her to his chest. "Oh, Marjorie," he said. "How I've missed you all these years."

Joe and Frank exchanged a glance. They had yet to hear about how to get their own bodies back, and as much as they each wanted to press Captain Sweet for that information, they didn't want to offend him. Her. They weren't sure. Besides, their growing femininity made each feel it was adorable to see how affectionate Captain Sweet was toward his dolly.

"What happened next?" Joe asked, taking on a breathless, excited tone, hoping Sweet would get to their salvation soon.

"This led to that and then the other. At one point, Miss Phillipa had punished me by taking Marjorie, so my girls and I stole her back and buried her out here for safe keeping, though Miss had taken Marjorie's outfit." Sweet now found himself playing with Marjorie's hair. "Of course, since Marjorie was and is my greatest treasure, I made a treasure map. It's what pirates do. Over time, one by one, my crew lost the will to fight and accepted their new lives. Some got adopted and moved out to live with their new families. Those that remained were married off once they reached age.

"But not me, for, well, I had died." Just as she said that, one of the crows croaked. She smirked. "indeed. I croaked." She went back to her story. "One night after we'd hidden my dolly and after many of my girls had been taken away to join their new families, a man appeared in my room. He told me he'd been looking for me for some years. Mademoiselle had sent him and bade promise me she would give me my life back if I would only return the doll. It was, of course, now buried in the cemetery. By this time, facing a life as a woman, married, having babies, I decided I would give up my beloved dolly. None of my girls would help me, though. Those that were left we now all good girls and wouldn't dream of breaking the rules. All any of them wanted was to be claimed by a good man.

“I snuck out that night meaning to find the doll myself, but I got lost. I sank into the swamps and drowned only to find myself trapped here as the ghost of the little girl Mademoiselle had made of me.”

Sweet stopped talking at that point, but started crying, hugging Marjorie to his chest once more.

Joe looked over at Frank. What now? Frank shrugged, shaking his head from side to side. Joe mimed giving someone a hug and raised one sculpted eyebrow. Frank nodded and gave a thumbs up. The boys put their arms around the little pirate, hugging him while whispering comforting words. “There... There... everything’s going to be all right, sweetie...”

When the hug ended, Sweet wiped the tears from his eyes, then reverted to pirate mode. “Get yer hands off me ya lily livered land lovers. I’m not girl! I’m Captain Sweet. Now, let me tell you lassies what you’ll need to do if’n ya want to be lads again.”

To be continued...

Bonus: With all the pirate activity going on, Joe and Frank start thinking about dressing up as pirates for Halloween.

