

THE HARDY BOYS

MAISON ENCHANTEE 6



“Yes,” the Hardy Boys said in unison, their soft, high-pitched voices blending together. The blending ended there, however, as each of the excited boys began to chatter on, talking over each other in a cacophony of feminine gushing... “we’ll do anything and let’s get started and “you needn’t worry... your doll.... The other day... hair... How come... and then...”

“Shut it!” Sweet screamed in his own, squeaky little girl voice.

The Hardy Boys grew silent.

“Girls,” Sweet mumbled to himself. ‘We’re so annoying.’ He took another puff from his cigar. “I mentioned afore that Phillipa had confiscated my doll. She, for whatever damnable reason, changed the doll’s dress. Now, the real dress, which I adore almost as much as the doll herself, it kept in an antiques store in town by an old man named Skivers. You need to get that dress by hook or by crook.”

Joe and Frank nodded and smiled. They were each a little intimidated to speak after Sweet had screamed at them. Each of the boys, in fact, without realizing it, was becoming a bit more of a meek and docile female.

“I know a way you can sneak into the shop and steal the dress,” Sweet said, grinning gleefully, thrilled at the thought of planning a piratey caper. “All you need do is...”

Joe raised his slender hand and smiled apologetically, his eyebrows raised. “Pardon me?”

“What is it?” Sweet asked, shaking his head, clearly annoyed.

“It’s just... um... well.... um...”

“Spit it out!” Sweet screamed, and then his own identity struggles kicked back in, and he also smiled. “Goodness. That was ever so rude of me. You may speak freely.” He patted Joe on the hand. “We’re all girls here.”

“Speak freely,” Frank chimed in, nodding and smiling, wanting to encourage and support his sister. As he realized he was being supportive, he felt quite ashamed, but he kept his mouth shut. He suspected he knew what Joe wanted to say.

‘My broth—my sister and I-- we were raised to be good people, good boys. Now, we’re good girls, so of course...’

“We can’t steal,” Frank added in. “It just isn’t proper.”

“We’re Boy Scouts,” Joe added in a cute, chirpy voice.

Frank nodded. “Such Boy Scouts.”

Sweet closed his eyes and mumbled a series of curses. “All American small town this and that and...” He forced himself to stop mumbling. He smiled. “Boy Scouts, eh?”

The boys smiled and nodded.

“I can safely say that no boy scout afore ye ever had such a fine figure, but very well. This leaves us only one option.”

“Yes?” Joe and Frank said, their pretty voices once more harmonizing.

The dark, foggy day seemed to grow darker still as a more dense and sinister cloud must have passed across the face of the sun. The crows in the graveyard, which had been



croaking steadily all morning, suddenly grew silent. A chill breeze wafted across the grounds, making the boys’ skin dimple and each of them shivered, causing them to reflect that thought their outfits offered little protection from the cold, they were at least cute.

Sweet waved his cigar toward the boys in a figure 8 motion. “You’ll need to use your feminine wiles.”

Joe looked at Frank. Frank looked at Joe. Their mouths fell open, and their eyes went wide. “Whaaa?”

Part Two



“Whoever came up with cobblestones never tried to walk on them in high heels,” Joe hissed as he gingerly stepped his way down the old-fashioned street, his purse dangling from his fingers.

“Hush,” Frank whispered. “Someone might think you’re a feminist.”

“That would be terrible,” Joe whispered, resolving to control himself and to stop any and all thoughts about life being in any way unfair to girls from entering his mind. Everyone knew girls were supposed to just accept things as they were and not be shrill and negative. Allowing his newly blossoming feminine impulses to take over, he brightened and said, “these cobblestone streets are so cute.”

“Oh, my goodness,” Frank answered. “I just love these quaint villages, and they always have the cutest shops.”

Joe and Frank, having gotten dressed and fussed over their hair and makeup for an hour, now found themselves making their way down the main street of the little where they’d started their journey to Enchante.

“Oh!” Joe said, gesturing toward the old-fashioned clock with rotating arms that hung above one of the stores. He didn’t point, of course. Pointing was not only rude but a bit too masculine. “Look at that clock. It’s so cute.”

“And that kitten. I so get kittens now.”

“Cute,” the boys said in their singsong harmony. Indeed, the boys found themselves obsessed with all things cute. And, well, there was one other thing that now captured their attention to which they previously paid no mind.

They spotted it at the same time, there in the shop window, wrapped around an old-fashioned mannequin. “Oh...” Joe said. “My...” Frank continued... “GOODNESS!” They squealed as they each turned and scurried to the shop window as fast as they could manage in their heels and dresses. Almost pressing their noses against the glass, they stared in wonder at the most beautiful and amazing thing either of them had ever seen.

It was a dress.

“I need it,” Joe said, his voice hoarse.

“It’s mine,” Frank whispered, pressing his fingers against the window as if he could reach right through the cold, hard glass and seize it.

At Frank’s claim, Joe felt his blood boil. “I saw it first,” he hissed, making a claw of his long nails.

“Ha!” Frank answered, barring his teeth. “Just try and take it from me.”

Perhaps, dear reader, you may be wondering how it is that our sweet and passive boys could suddenly become so aggressive and not feel even the slightest sense that their behavior was now wrong, given they had joined the more gentle sex and begun to adopt the

personalities expected of proper young ladies. Yet, we must remember, that in certain areas the female is permitted to become quite as ferocious as any a caveman, and one of those areas is the competition for a fashion.

Still. A boy must consider the stakes before pulling another's hair or pushing him out of the way as one rushes to grab the perfect dress. The boys turned their pretty eyes back to the dress, assessing the risks and rewards, when at that very moment an older woman poked her head in the window and placed a placard at the base of the mannequin. In large, red letters the sign read: ON SALE.

ON SALE. Their feminine passions, previously stoked to a blaze, now rose to an inferno. Neither boy had any defense against his new female obsession with sales, and when combined with the need to have THAT dress, it drove each of them into a state that can only be called Femania.

Joe turned. Frank turned. Each boy dropped his purse and turned his head to the side. Each boy planted a hand on his outthrust hip and fingered his pearl necklace. "This girl does not back down," Joe said.

"Bring it," Frank said.

Across the way, a group of young men saw the two pretty girls getting ready to have what looked like an epic catfight over a dress, and they laughed and bumped fists. "Cat fight," one of the guys said, and they started taking bets on which of these two fashion-mad females would win.

Just then, the clerk from the store popped her head out the front door. "Girls?" She said, bemused. "We have more than one."

"Oh!" Joe said, shocked out of his rage.

"I feel so silly," Frank said.

The boys hugged and exchanged air kisses to the amusement and disappointment of the group of boys.

Joe and Frank arrived at the front door, the amiable clerk holding the door for them. "After you," Joe said, feeling embarrassed about how he'd acted and wanting to reestablish his femininity.

"Oh, no, please. You first," Frank said, likewise ashamed he'd allowed himself to feel even the slightest bit of anger.

“Girls. Someone might swoop in and buy up those dresses,” the clerk said, knowing just how to manage young ladies.

Joe and Frank squealed and hurried into the store.

The next hour found out stalwart Hardy boys lost in a haze of feminine pleasure. Yes, they had put on their first dresses, but neither had ever gone shopping, and had they ever found the most perfect place for a boy turned girl to have the experience. Like any old-fashioned shop, The Finery fawned over the customers, serving tea and cakes as the boys giggled and blushed, chatting with the clerk, trying on their dresses, posing in front of the mirrors, turning this way and that, smiling, then giggling, hugging, telling each other how pretty they looked, basking in another new and thrilling experience. The store itself was a jewel box of Victorian moldings and an iron fireplace, an oak floor that glowed and led glass sconces on the walls glowing softly.

As soon as they’d finished trying on and being fitted into their new dresses—it seemed that every girl had a slightly unique shape and garments needed to be much more precisely tailored than boy clothes, the salesgirl decided to see if she could get her eager new clients into something else.

“Here’s something cute,” she said, leading them to another dress that was adorable and a little more every day.

“I need it,” Frank said, his mouth going dry.

“It’s to die for,” Joe whispered. “To die for.”

They were just about to try on the second new dress, when Joe’s eyebrows knitted in a most adorable way. “Wait,” he said as he checked his makeup in the store mirror. “Weren’t we supposed to be doing something?”

Frank thought, his own eyebrows knitting. “No,” he said, his attention going back to the dress. “I don’t think so. We came to town to get a dress. Duh”

“Oh!” Joe remembered. He leaned close and whispered to Frank, reminding him they were supposed to be getting the dress for the doll and not for themselves.

“Oh!” Frank said, echoing his brother. He gave one last forlorn glance at the gorgeous dress they were not leaving behind. It almost felt like a crime, but they probably really should get back to the task at hand.

“You sure?” The salesgirl said, holding out the tray of tea cakes.

“Sadly, we must anon,” Joe said. They followed the girl to the register. She rang up their purchases, and the boys discovered something else about their new sex and the realities they faced. The new dresses, on sale, were quite reasonable, but they’d also needed new shoes and purses to go with their dresses, and the girl had talked them into buying jewelry and even tights to go with their outfits. The bill was quite a bit more than either boy had ever spent on an outfit. Yet, what choice did they have? A girl needs what she wants.

“Can we wear these out?” Joe asked. “Is it appropriate for day wear?”

“As pretty as you are,” the salesgirl replied. “You can wear anything you want.”



“Merci!” The boys sang in unison, flush with pleasure at the compliment.

As soon as the shop door closed behind them, the little bell clinging, the smile left Frank’s face, to be replaced by terrible worry. “Father will be so cross with us when he sees how much we just put on the credit card.” Indeed, Father Hardy had preached against the dangers of credit as long as the boys could remember. In fact, in their household all were forbidden to even use a credit card unless they could pay off the charge right away, thus avoiding interest.

“Well,” Joe said, glancing at himself in the shop window and tucking a stray strand of hair behind his ear. “We’ll just have to find a way to make some money to pay it.”

“How will we do that?” Frank said, glancing in the window and using his long nail to scrap a slight lipstick smudge from his bottom lip.

“Oh, I don’t know,” Joe said breezily. “We just will.”

“Of course we will,” Frank said, finding himself drawn to Joe’s carefree attitude toward shopping and debt. “I mean, the way the salesgirl just happened to put the On Sale sign in the window at just that moment? The universe was telling us to buy these dresses.”

“It was the universe,” Joe agreed. “What else could it be?”

They started to continue on down the street to the antique store. Frank made a small noise as if he were in pain. “I think there’s a pebble in my shoe.” He kicked his leg back, took his heel off, dumped the peddle.

Joe, meanwhile, had found his skin tingling, an eerie sensation coming over him as if he were being stalking by a ferocious tiger in the jungle. He glanced in the direction from which he sensed the danger and saw that same group of boys checking out both he and his shapely brother. Plastering a bright smile on his face and pretending he didn’t notice the boys, he whispered, “don’t look, but some boys are checking us out.”

Frank looked. He could sense the boys mentally undressing him. Could feel the heat of their hunger.

The boys began shouting. “Hey, hot stuff. Where you honeys from?”

The Hardy Boys had never in their lives had boys look at them like that. They had never had boys talk to them like that. Fear seized their minds. “Let’s go,” Joe whispered.

“Hurry,” Frank agreed, taking Joe by the hand, the two of them rushing down the street, hand in hand, their legs flashing.

The began to hurry down the sidewalk as fast as they could in their heels and dresses. The boys chased them with laughter and jeers.

The Hardy Boys hurried into the shop, eager to get away from the boys, who'd been following them down the street. Once inside, they looked around, amazed at all the antiques and oddities, with everything from porcelain dolls to coffins, old suits of armor to fortune teller kiosks. The room smelled of dust and regret, with a hint of dried roses. "Hello?" Frank called.

No answer.



As they moved cautiously into the store, their breath grew more shallow, their hearts raced. “I feel nervous all the time now,” Frank admitted as he looked over the porcelain doll with the cracked face. It was wearing a frilly, old-fashioned dress. Could this be what they’d come looking for?

“I worry more than ever,” Joe said as he examined a skull in one of the glass cabinets. “I guess it’s just part of being a girl.” He sniffed the air, unnerved by the smell of the dust. “I hope this doesn’t get into my hair.”

“Haha... her her... he he...” they heard a rusty old voice mumble, and then they heard a thump. And another thump. And then, a door swung open behind the counter and a wrinkled, dried-up apple of a man leaning on a cane emerged. Seeing the boys in their little dresses his eyes lit up and let them drift down the length of their long, shapely legs, then up to their faces. He licked his lips, his yellow, glassy eyes gleaming with dirty thoughts.

Creepy. Joe and Frank most certainly found it creepy to have such a gross old man look at them like that, but they weren’t surprised. Sweet had told them the old man was a pervert, and that was one of the reasons he’d suggested they use their feminine wiles. Joe put a hand on his hip, smiled as pretty as he could and, letting his voice rise a half octave higher said, “I love your store,” in a flirty, sing song voice.

“It’s so amazing,” Frank cooed, likewise smiling and raising his voice.

The old man grinned, showing his brown, rotting teeth. “Do tell.”

After flirting and smiling and complimenting, the boys brought up the fact that, well, gosh, they’d come looking for a dress for their doll. “Something antique...” Joe said, putting his finger in his mouth and pouting.

“Like, maybe, from colonial times,” Frank said, tugging on his earlobe.

Now, readers, we must make it clear that neither Joe nor Frank would ever consider doing anything naughty with anyone they weren’t married to. Heavens, no. However, for a young lady to use her feminine wiles to charm a man is no crime.

The old man was duly charmed. “I may have just what you’re looking for,” he said, walking toward the back of the store. Then, wanting a little more fawning from these lovely young ladies, he paused for a moment by a shelf. He pointed toward a green mask.

“That mask is over 750 years old,” he said. “it belonged to a Tibetan guru.”

Sensing what they wanted with their blossoming powers of female intuition, the boys squealed. “That’s so amazing!” Frank gushed, bending forward as if to get a better look, but really just wanting to drive their poor victim a little bit crazy.



“You’re, like, so cool,” Joe said, putting his hands to his cheeks. “We have to get a selfie!”

“Oh, no, no,” the old man said, pretending to be annoyed, but really quite pleased to have two pretty girls gushing over him. “I hate them selfie things.”

Giggling, the boys rushed up and threw their arms over his shoulders, snapping pictures.

“I’m going to post this to my social media. All the girls are going to want to come here to see these amazing antiques.”

“Especially that green mask!”

A few moments later, flush with pride and really quite pleased with themselves, the boys emerged carrying the dress, which the man had carefully wrapped in tissue paper and placed into a gift bag. "I like free, don't you?" Joe giggled.

"It's kinda fun to manipulate men, isn't it?" Frank said.

They saw the boys across the street, still hanging around on the counter, only now instead of being a little afraid they were feeling a newfound sense of power. Each of the boys was thinking how much fun it would be to lead the boys on, tease them, try and get them to buy things for them.

"Mother would not approve," Joe said.

Frank nodded. The boys began to walk back to Maison Enchantee, and they could feel the eyes of the boys watching them as they walked. "Drink it in," Frank whispered. "Cause you're never gonna have this." I mean, really. Such crude boys should know they could never have a girl like him.

Part III

Never in their lives as boys or girls, had the Hardy Boys seen such a happy little girl as they saw when Captain Sweet saw that they had the dress. He clapped his little hands and hopped up and down, singing out, "Yes! Yes! Yes!"

Once he'd managed to settle down, he did a curtsy. "Now, if you would be ever so kind as to put the dress on my dolly, the curse will be broken."

Joe and Frank dressed Sweet's doll in the dress, though each of them had certain reservations now that it had come down to breaking the curse for real. They'd grown a bit fond of being girls, and the thought that it was about to end made each a little sad, especially when he considered that he would never get to wear his brand new dress again. It's not that either had a problem wearing a dress now, even should he return to boy form. The dresses simply wouldn't fit, which really was such a shame.

Once they finished dressing the doll, she began to grow brighter and brighter until there was a blinding flash. Once their vision cleared, the boys saw a young woman now standing in the center of the room, holding the doll. "Curses and be damned," the woman said. "I thought I'd be a man once more. Well, we can't have everything now can we, ladies?" Captain Sweet looked down at himself. "So this is what bosoms feel like, eh? Well, I'll get good use of them I suppose."

"Sweet? But..." Joe looked down at himself to confirm that he was, indeed, still a girl. "What about us?"

"I lied," Sweet said, grinning. "In fact, though you broke at least part of the curse for me, what ye did actually causes it to become permanent for you lousy landlubbers."

"You mean?"

"Get used to being ladies, Hardy Girls. Hahahaha." Sweet, clutching his doll, turned to leave.

"How could you do this to us?" Joe shrieked.

Sweet looked back over his shoulder. "I'm a pirate."

Epilogue



Joe and Frank sat with their legs crossed primly in their dresses, carefully working on their sewing. Frank was restitching the hemline in one of his mother's house dresses, while Joe was sewing a patch onto the knee of one of Pa's work shirts, the one he wore when he was working on the yard. Pa would never go into town wearing a patched shirt.

"What do you think?" Joe asked, holding his stitching out to their mother, who was doing some sewing as well.

Mother adjusted her glasses and tilted her head back, nodding with approval. “Excellent work, Jane,” she said, using the new name they’d selected for Joe after getting over the shock of realizing their boy was now a girl. Josephine was just too manly.

“How about mine, mother?” Frank asked.

“Wonderful needlework, Fiona,” she said. “I’m so proud of my girls. You’ll make wonderful wives one day.”

The boys looked at each other and smiled, pleased to have their mother’s approval and excited by the knowledge they were becoming such good little potential wives. It was, really, the most amazing thing a girl could hope for, after all. To that end and under their mother’s instruction, they’d been learning all about cooking, baking, sewing, doing laundry, cleaning and managing a home.

They couldn’t wait to get married, and the boys had started a little competition between them to see which of them could lure a handsome fellow into his web of wiles sooner. As sweet and pretty as they were, they had plenty of attention from the so many boys, but their mother had helped them realize they should hold out for a perfect boy who would treat them the way a girl deserved to be treated.

“You’ll have to kiss a lot of frogs to find your prince,” she said, and to that end the boys had been doing a lot of kissing.

In the meantime, they’d kept solving mysteries. It was fun and had helped them attract so many followers on social media. Plus, they had a great time putting together “girl detective outfits” and having adventures with their hero, Nancy Drew.

“Oh, Fiona,” Jane said as they got up and headed to their room, sewing done. “I do hope that little spot on your chin isn’t about to become a pimple.”

“I hope one day you don’t have to stuff your bra to try and be as busty as me,” Fiona answered. Then, he stuck out his tongue. Jane stuck out his tongue. Then, they started to giggle as they headed to their separate rooms.

“You’re an even worse sister than you were a brother,” Fiona said.

“Thanks for the compliment,” Jane said, throwing her hip to the side.

“I hate you.”

“Hate you more.”

The girls started to close the doors to their rooms, but then Fiona had a sudden impulse to shop. “Wanna go the mall?”

“Of course,” Jane said.

“I hope we find some good sales.”

“We always find good sales,” Jane said and then the boys sang out, in their now famous harmonized voices, “We’re the Hardy Boys.”

The End

Bonus

