

**The Mystery of the Missing Hardy Boys:  
Reimagining the Hardy Boys for their Centennial  
Anniversary**

**by  
Kyra Droog**

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## Declaration of Committee

**Name:** Kyra Droog

**Degree:** Master of Publishing

**Title:** **The Mystery of the Missing Hardy Boys:  
Reimagining the Hardy Boys for their Centennial  
Anniversary**

**Committee:**

**Scott Steedman**  
Supervisor  
Senior Lecturer, Publishing

**Hannah McGregor**  
Committee Member  
Associate Professor, Publishing

**Kevin Hanson**  
Committee Member  
President & Publisher  
Simon & Schuster Canada

## **Abstract**

Frank and Joe Hardy are celebrating their one hundredth birthday in 2027. This project, funded by Simon & Schuster Canada and MITACS, proposes a reimagined Hardy Boys series in celebration of their centennial anniversary. After a comprehensive review of Hardy Boys history, sample comparable titles, and sales data, a case is made for a new series based on historical context and modern need. Recommendations to maintain and elevate original story aspects while introducing and modernizing others are made to help ensure that the reimagined series exceeds the expectations of new and original readers. Potential marketing and social media campaigns are explored, with a specific focus on engagement campaigns and series packaging. Appendixes include sales data, sample character profiles, and a historical photo library of packaging for Hardy Boys titles.

**Keywords:** Hardy Boys; Simon & Schuster; Stratemeyer Syndicate; Grosset & Dunlap; children's literature

## **Dedication**

To every dreamer who was told they would never make it.

This is for you.

## Acknowledgements

Where to begin?

To my family. Thank you for your continuous support as I chased this dream.

To Kevin Hanson, Scott Steedman, Hannah McGregor, and MITACS. This project was only possible because of you. I am eternally grateful for your time and trust.

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This is for you.

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## Executive Summary

The following report forms the basis of a proposal completed for Simon & Schuster Canada and funded in collaboration with Simon & Schuster Canada, Simon Fraser University, and MITACS, to reimagine the Hardy Boys for their centennial anniversary in 2027. Project objectives include creating an actionable proposal for Simon & Schuster Canada on how they can return the Hardy Boys to the public eye with a well-thought-out series that melds modern and original aspects in ways that carefully consider modern reader needs and the original representation of the series.

Readers first met Frank and Joe Hardy in 1927 as they took a motorcycle trip to deliver important files to a nearby town for their father. Since then, they have starred in hundreds of books, multiple television series, and been the faces of video games, magazines, board games, and puzzles. Throughout the last ninety-six years, they have headlined more than ten series, as everything from eight and nine-year-olds solving middle-school mysteries to seventeen and eighteen-year-olds fighting global terrorism.

The Hardy Boys were originally published by Grosset & Dunlap, but when the Stratemeyer Syndicate—the book packager and copyright owner—became dissatisfied, Frank and Joe were signed to be published by Simon & Schuster. After a bitter lawsuit, it was decided that Grosset & Dunlap could continue to publish the first 58 books in the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories series, but Simon & Schuster had the rights to the characters and all further stories.

The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories were aimed at a middle-grade audience, much like comparable titles including *Nancy Drew: The Secret of the Old Clock* and *Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer*. A sales data analysis revealed that Hardy Boys sales have decreased significantly in the last few decades, and despite new series, witnessed an average of a 40–50% lifetime sale decrease between the first and fifth book in a series. With that in mind, the centennial anniversary of the Hardy Boys proves to be a welcome opportunity to rejuvenate the Hardy Boys and offer a new, reimagined series to the world.

This proposal recommends maintaining and elevating specific aspects of the original Hardy Boys series with minor changes; specifically, the five-step storyline, third-person omniscient perspective, ethical criminality, and lawfulness. In addition, it is

recommended to introduce new and modern aspects to the series, through updating ages and technology, changing presentations of class, self, and relationships throughout the series, better introducing social media and cybercrime, and further discussing death and its implications. A final recommendation is to maintain one author under the penname of Franklin W. Dixon, instead of hiring various ghostwriters, to maintain continuity.

Packaging the reimagined Hardy Boys series requires consideration of previous packagings, which are explored in Appendix C. It is recommended that the centennial packaging for the reimagined series be reminiscent of the original packaging for the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories, yet still distinct. Regarding marketing and social media, a variety of opportunities are presented including win-a-book and submit-a-storyline contests, library partnerships, social media engagement campaigns, and bookseller partnerships. Together, these efforts would contribute to the success of the new series by generating excitement, creating sentimental connections, and welcoming all readers to be a part of this new generation of the Hardy Boys.

The centennial anniversary of the Hardy Boys provides a unique opportunity for Simon & Schuster to demonstrate their commitment to the series and celebrate its incredible history—it is an opportunity that should not be missed. The following proposal lays out some of this history as it relates to the centennial anniversary and provides carefully considered and well-researched recommendations on how to create the most successful reimagined Hardy Boys series possible.

# Chapter 1. Project Overview

## 1.1. Project Introduction

Frank and Joe Hardy are celebrating their one hundredth birthday in 2027. Though eternally youthful, the detective duo from Bayport have supported readers young and old from across the globe through everything from world wars to global pandemics; from everyday strife to once-in-a-lifetime events. The Hardy Boys have grown from a book series into a global enterprise: they have thrived in books, on television, in video games, and with their faces plastered on countless young peoples' backpacks and bedroom walls. These detectives are more than just characters; for fans of the series, they feel more like living, breathing members of our society and family—available for readers of all ages to return to when they need an escape from reality.

In recent years, however, the Hardy Boys have become dormant. Sales of books that follow their mystery-solving exploits have decreased sharply, even with the introduction of a new TV series and multiple new spin-off book series. Bookstores rarely carry Hardy Boys books because they sit, unread, on shelves. The Hardy Boys are slowly but surely being replaced with series like Captain Underpants, Dog Man, and other modern heroes. Frank and Joe are finding themselves in donation piles, recycling bins, or simply forgotten.

Now, with their centennial anniversary approaching, is the time to reintroduce the world to Frank and Joe Hardy.

Not the original Frank and Joe Hardy, taking on the world with their motorbikes, boat, and mysteriously unending supply of cash. Not the 80s gun-toting, Russian-fighting Frank and Joe. Not the early 2010s motocross-racing Frank and Joe that work for ATAC. Not the late-2010 Hardy Boys who have been sued so often that they were, at one point, banned from solving mysteries altogether.

Now is the time to welcome a modern Frank and Joe Hardy.

If Joe Hardy turned sixteen in 2027, would he ever admit that he was partial to early 2000s pop, or would he stick to his guns that 80s rock is the only good music around? Could seventeen-year-old Frank Hardy be convinced to share his life through

stories and photos on social media platforms, or would he spend his days lecturing his selfie-happy brother about internet privacy laws? What would a conversation about the death of a client look like between two boys who had never properly experienced the loss of someone close to them before? What would the boys feel when they experienced things like their first true love, a potentially crushing injury, or the real repercussions of skipping class to solve a case? Would the world really end if one of the boys kissed his girlfriend?

Society has evolved so much since the “original” Hardy Boys started solving mysteries in Bayport, USA. These whitewashed, largely emotionless, overly lucky detectives have stood the test of time in some ways, but they have leaps and bounds to go to truly connect with modern audiences. There is a reason that these books and stories are just not selling as well as they used to: the disconnect between the characters and their readers has never been felt more intensely. The Hardy Boys centennial anniversary provides the perfect opportunity for a new-and-improved Frank and Joe Hardy to be introduced to modern readers in a way that reflects and respects the values and vision of the original stories and characters while introducing and exploring new topics and opportunities.

## **1.2. Project Purpose & Objectives**

In February 2023, I initiated conversations with Kevin Hanson, President & Publisher of Simon & Schuster Canada, with interest in developing a research-based proposal on how Simon & Schuster could successfully reimagine the Hardy Boys in the modern day for their centennial anniversary in 2027. Thanks to the generous support of Simon & Schuster Canada, and a MITACS matching grant, I was provided funding that allowed me to pursue this research.

The goal of this proposal is to provide Simon & Schuster Canada with recommendations for a modern reimagining of the Hardy Boys. Sales data, previous reboot attempts, and the success of the “original” series have been analyzed and considered to create the recommendations within this proposal.

Objectives for this project include:

1. An actionable proposal for Simon & Schuster Canada to create a new, viable, and ongoing source of Hardy Boys-related income at a low production cost.

2. With the inception of this reimagined series, a return to the public eye to the Hardy Boys, boosting sales of pre-existing titles and generating backlist revenue for Simon & Schuster.

## **1.3. Project History**

### **1.3.1. A Brief History of the Hardy Boys**

*“After the help we gave dad on that forgery case I guess he’ll begin to think we could be detectives when we grow up.”*

*“Why wouldn’t we? Isn’t he one of the most famous detectives in the country? And aren’t we his sons? If the profession was good enough for him to follow, it should be good enough for us.”<sup>1</sup>*

Frank and Joe Hardy are more than just black letters on a white page; figments of readers’ imaginations. Over the last hundred years, this unbeatable detective duo has entertained millions of children and adults across the globe. The cultural significance of the Hardy Boys cannot be overstated, and to understand the importance of revitalizing this universe with a new series for its centennial anniversary, it is key to have a brief understanding of the first ninety-six years of their lives. The following section will provide an introduction into each era of the Hardy Boys, and will include descriptions of the specific series as well as the sociopolitical events that shaped their existence at that time.

#### ***The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories (Original)***

Frank and Joe Hardy were the brain child of Edward Stratemeyer, known as “the Henry Ford of fiction.”<sup>2</sup> Stratemeyer worked at the helm of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, which held a monopoly on young children’s series books by the late 1920s, likely

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<sup>1</sup> Franklin W. Dixon, *The Tower Treasure* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1927), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Connelly, *The Hardy Boys Mysteries, 1927–1979: A Cultural and Literary History* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2008), 24.

because it hired out-of-house writers to complete book drafts based on pre-written outlines, something relatively unheard of for the time. While Stratemeyer wrote the outlines for the series and the books themselves, he hired authors to bring his visions to life. Canadian author and journalist Leslie McFarlane was the first writer that Stratemeyer reached out to with his idea for the Hardy Boys series. For each manuscript, which was expected to be 216 printed pages, McFarlane received a stipend of \$125,<sup>3</sup> equivalent to approximately \$2,096 in 2023.

When Stratemeyer pitched the Hardy Boys to publisher Grosset & Dunlap, he said:

We have two boys, Joe and Frank Hardy, the sons of a celebrated detective. From their father, they hear of various cases and gradually start to solve the mysteries. They get on to the 'side issues' of crimes, often bringing some boys or young men to the front and show them up as the criminals' aids. Thus, while the father is the real detective, the brothers do their full share in exposing the wrongdoers and regaining stolen goods. The boys' work as amateur detectives would furnish plenty of incident, exciting but clean.<sup>4</sup>

The outline McFarlane received for the Hardy Boys was quite clear: it provided him with the characters, their defining features, and where they fit into the story. The mysteries, characters (to an extent), and general plot was set by Stratemeyer, but the rest was up to McFarlane, who was energized to do these characters justice.<sup>5</sup> Regarding the characters, McFarlane received the following direction:

*Frank Hardy*, age 16, tall, dark high school lad, brother to,  
*Joe Hardy*, age 15, fair, curly hair, high school lad. Both sons of,  
*Fenton Hardy*, a well-known private detective, age 40, tall, dark.  
*Laura Hardy*, small, slim, light like son Joe. Sweet singer.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Marilyn Greenwald, *The Secret of the Hardy Boys: Leslie McFarlane and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004), 49.

<sup>4</sup> Greenwald, *Secret of the Hardy Boys*, 52.

<sup>5</sup> Leslie McFarlane, *The Ghost of the Hardy Boys* (Ontario: Methuen Publications, 1976), 83.

<sup>6</sup> Greenwald, *Secret of the Hardy Boys*, 53.

McFarlane followed Stratemeyer's direction with the intent to create quality books for young readers.<sup>7</sup> He filled the books with things he remembered from his childhood that he thought young readers of the day would be able to connect with and understand. Food played a significant role in the original Mystery Stories series: food would be prepared for picnics, the boys would be expected to be home for dinner, and every adventure ended with a feast of some kind to celebrate the boys' achievement. The boys were pranksters, playing jokes on their friends, members of their communities, and of course, the police. According to McFarlane, "while the outline did not suggest that these lawmen were comical fellows, it did seem that anyone named Collig had to be a pretty stodgy cop and that Smuff would have to be a dunderhead."<sup>8</sup>

In these stories, the boys drove their motorcycles, purchased a boat affectionately named The Sleuth, and had access to a private plane that they both learned to fly. They had an exceptionally large amount of freedom and often traversed the globe without adults. They balanced the adventures that every reader wishes they had with the school, chores, and family requirements that most readers can connect with.

While there are few if any formal digitized records about the sales of these books year-by-year, the enormity of their sales has been recognized throughout history. As Stratemeyer Syndicate aficionado Carol Billman notes, in 1984, "over seventy million Hardy Boys novels have been purchased, and in the last three years over two and a half million paperback copies of their mysteries were sold."<sup>9</sup> In addition, "The Hardy Boys mystery books were among the top-selling young adult books of the twentieth century, selling more than fifty million copies."<sup>10</sup> The early books in this series created an incredible boom of love and affection for the Hardy Boys, one that has carried on for nearly one hundred years.

The first Hardy Boys books were written between the late 1920s and early 1940s, and reflect the views and opinions of the time in which they were written. As such, by the

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<sup>7</sup> McFarlane, *Ghost of the Hardy Boys*, 85.

<sup>8</sup> McFarlane, *Ghost of the Hardy Boys*, 84-85.

<sup>9</sup> Carol Billman, *The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate: Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, and the Million Dollar Fiction Factory* (New York: The Ungar Publishing Company, 1986), 79.

<sup>10</sup> Greenwald, *Secret of the Hardy Boys*, xii.

mid-1950s, “McFarlane’s books [...] seemed outdated, confusing, and to some, offensive. Men no longer wore caps, few middle-class families had servants, the novelty of air travel had worn off, and Americans no longer referred to motorcycles or airplanes as ‘machines.’”<sup>11</sup> Alongside these changes came the question of the racist dialogue and actions within the early books. While “McFarlane may have not been an overt bigot, he was a provincial Canadian whose dialogue reflected the ethnic stereotypes of the 1920s and 1930s.”<sup>12</sup> From the portrayal and written dialect of Black, Chinese, and Italian characters to the presence of blackface disguises, the Hardy Boys were generating criticism that was quickly becoming too loud for Grosset & Dunlap and the Stratemeyer Syndicate to ignore. With these growing concerns in place, it was decided<sup>13</sup> that the books required revision—and quickly.

### ***The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories (Revised)***

By the mid-to-late 1950s, the Hardy Boys had developed an image issue. The once squeaky-clean boys from Bayport were being “pulled from public library bookshelves, excluded from classrooms, withdrawn from recommended reading lists, and condemned as being as dangerous to minors as alcohol and narcotics.”<sup>14</sup> Teachers, librarians, and parents were taking issue with the racism in the books, their status as series fiction, and the connections they had to the occult and witchcraft, present in books like *The Witchmaster’s Key*. To save the Hardy Boys, Grosset & Dunlap and the Stratemeyer Syndicate took action.

Between 1959 and 1979, the first thirty-eight books in the Mystery Stories series were updated, as a note in the freshly packaged and published books indicated: “In this new story, based on the original of the same title, Mr. Dixon has incorporated the most up-to-date methods used by police and private detectives.”<sup>15</sup> This was the only notice provided to readers, who in many cases, had a very different book in their hands than the one they thought they were reading. Entire plotlines were cut, and books were

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<sup>11</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 85.

<sup>12</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 85.

<sup>13</sup> Without access to the Stratemeyer Syndicate archives at the New York Public Library, it is impossible to prove whose decision it was to begin this editorial revamp, and scholars are divided on how the action came about.

<sup>14</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 215.

<sup>15</sup> Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1959).



slashed from twenty-five chapters to twenty, streamlined to match the attention span of the new generation that forced reading to compete with television. Ethnic characters, with few exceptions, were removed entirely to avoid accusations of racism. In some cases, these “edits” resulted in two different stories being published under the same title.

The long passages about Frank and Joe sweating over Latin and geometry were excised, along with many schoolroom jokes and pranks on the hapless Con Riley. Gone as well were many scenes of local colour and caricatures. [...] Aunt Gertrude’s exaggerated tirades predicting doom and destruction were toned down and trimmed. Many of McFarlane’s jawbreakers were deleted. The new versions were slimmer, less didactic, less descriptive, with more emphasis on action and shorter dialogue.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to cutting characterization and youthful energy from the books in favour of more action and adventure, the boys were also aged up: Frank was eighteen and Joe was seventeen, which allowed them to legally continue to drive and travel without parental supervision. After the revamp, Frank and Joe became noticeably more law-abiding, and the police were no longer the fools that they had been in the original books. The age for practical jokes and good fun came to an end, and the boys’ respect for their elders and the law became distinctly clear.

A significant part of the revamp included repackaging. Gone were the brown and tan cloth bindings, taken over from the deep red cloth bindings that had initiated the series. Now, the series was all about blue; with updated cover images, plastic bindings, new endpapers, and a new logo, Frank and Joe were ready to present themselves to a different generation of readers.

The first fifty-eight books in the Mystery Stories series are officially considered “canon,” by Hardy Boys fans— “canon” being understood as books in the Mystery Stories series that were published by Grosset & Dunlap (later Penguin Random House) before the series moved to Simon & Schuster in 1979 and their publication continued in paperback. Simon & Schuster’s attempts to revitalize the Mystery Stories series continued under a variety of guises and imprints until the series was discontinued in 2005, with a total of 190 books published under the Mystery Stories emblem. While the

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<sup>16</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 88.

first 58 books are readily available, the remaining paperbacks are rare and considered collectibles by aficionados.

### ***The Hardy Boys Casefiles***

The Casefiles series (1987–1998) saw a grittier version of the Hardy Boys aimed at mid-teen readers. Though Frank and Joe remained at the ripe ages of eighteen and seventeen, they had completely different experiences than in the Mystery Stories. The first Casefiles book begins with Joe and his longtime female companion Lola having an argument, after which Lola storms out to the car. Joe goes after her, only to watch the car—and Lola—blow up in front of his eyes. To this day, no Hardy Boys series has set a tone quite like this.

In the Casefiles series, Frank and Joe are more spies than detectives; in fact, they often cross paths with a spy agency called The Network to take down a group called The Assassins. All the restrictions on the previous series were gone: the boys become handy with guns and other weapons, fight Russian spies, have girlfriends (who they kiss!), and experience intense emotions, often lashing out when they are in emotional distress. Perhaps most importantly, they are willing to not just bend the law, but fully break it to advance their investigations. They deal with the perceived death of their father, the actual death of Joe's girlfriend Lola, and pull the trigger to end the lives of those who stand in their way. They fight terrorists, stop global biological attacks, and much more.

Books in this series were released once a month in mass market paperback format, and had wide distributions. Once the series was cancelled in 1997 and the final book published in 1998, the books went out of print.

### ***The Clues Brothers***

Whereas the Hardy Boys Casefiles series appealed to an older reader, the Clues Brothers series went in a different direction. This series, aimed at significantly younger readers, features nine-year-old Frank and eight-year-old Joe solving mysteries as they study at Bayport Elementary School.

The Clues Brothers series began in 1997 and was cancelled due to a lack of interest and sales in 2000. It is currently available in eBook format, and has been since

2013. According to Simon & Schuster, the first book in the series only sold 151 copies in Canada.<sup>17</sup>

### ***The Hardy Boys: Undercover Brothers***

The Hardy Boys returned as their seventeen- and eighteen-year-old selves in 2005 in a new series, after the Mystery Stories series was officially cancelled. The Hardy Boys: Undercover Brothers welcomed a fresh new perspective on Frank and Joe, offering chapters narrated by the boys themselves, with the chapters alternating perspectives. In this series, the boys work for an organization that their father founded after his retirement: ATAC or American Teens Against Crime. Their mysteries are dictated by ATAC, and are sometimes global in scale.

Undercover Brothers was cancelled in 2011 and ended in 2012. The series had a run of just under a decade, and lifetime sales for the first book in Canada totalled 32,052 compared to 135,144 lifetime in the US<sup>18</sup>. By the fifth book, lifetime Canadian sales had dropped to 6,606 and US to 50,187.<sup>19</sup>

### ***The Hardy Boys Adventures***

In 2013, the Hardy Boys Adventures series was launched, marking a new era for the Hardy Boys. Eighteen-year-old Frank and seventeen-year-old Joe alternate chapter narrations, which follow the first-person narration techniques used in the Undercover Brothers books. This series, however, is the first to set off with a background story for Frank and Joe that goes beyond their regular successful detective work. In the first book of the series, *The Secret of the Red Arrow*, a new plot is set, as explained by Frank and Joe's high school principal:

“I’m to understand that – as part of a plea agreement with the state attorney general – you are both subject to ‘instant recourse.’” [...] “Which if you are found to engage in any time of ‘independent, amateur law-enforcement-type activities,’

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<sup>17</sup> Data from Simon & Schuster Canada, “Hardy Boys Sales Data” (2023).

<sup>18</sup> Simon & Schuster Canada, 2023

<sup>19</sup> Simon & Schuster Canada, 2023.

will result in the pair of you being sent to [...] the J'Adoube School for Behaviour Modification Therapy on Rock Island."<sup>20</sup>

Never have Frank and Joe ever entered a situation in which they were banned from taking on any detective work due to legal recourse. Of course, Frank and Joe inevitably find danger and mystery, despite "the Deal," and continue to solve cases. In this series, the stakes are higher than ever, and with the threat of being sent away hanging over their heads, the boys are required to be even more careful than ever before.

*Secret of the Red Arrow* boasts lifetime sales of 20,963 in Canada and 47,835 in the US.<sup>21</sup> This series is one of the first to publish simultaneously in hardcover and paperback, while also offering an audiobook option. The first three books in this series were published in 2013, and the most recent title was released in February of 2023 for a running total of 25 books.

### ***The Hardy Boys Secret Files & The Hardy Boys Clue Book***

The most recent Hardy Boys series was published under the Aladdin imprint of Simon & Schuster in 2010: *The Hardy Boys Secret Files*. In it, nine-year-old Frank and eight-year-old Joe work together to solve grade-school mysteries, much like in the Clues Brothers series. Lifetime sales for the first book, *Trouble at the Arcade*, reached 20,507 in Canada and 100,407 in the US, but declined to 3,748 and 22,902 respectively by the fifth book, *A Monster of a Mystery*.<sup>22</sup>

The Secret Files series was rebooted in 2016 as the Hardy Boys Clue Book series. In this interactive series, where readers are encouraged to make deductions and solve the mystery before the Hardy Boys do by answering a series of questions midway through the book, Frank and Joe pick up where they left off in the Secret Files, with the first book in the new series, *The Video Game Bandit*, referencing the final book of the Secret Files series, *The Race is On*.

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<sup>20</sup> Franklin W. Dixon, *Secret of the Red Arrow* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc, 2013), 30-31.

<sup>21</sup> Simon & Schuster Canada, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Simon & Schuster Canada, 2023.

The Clue Book series continues to this day, with the most recent title having been released in June 2023. Books in this series are available in hardcover, paperback, and audiobook.

### **1.3.2. Simon & Schuster, Grosset & Dunlap, and the Rights to the Hardy Boys**

When the Hardy Boys were first published in the late 1920s, they were a product of a working relationship between the Stratemeyer Syndicate and Grosset & Dunlap. This partnership continued past the death of Edward Stratemeyer in 1930, when the helm of the Stratemeyer Syndicate was passed on to Harriet Adams, Edward Stratemeyer's eldest daughter. Adams worked closely with Grosset & Dunlap during the revisiting of the first 38 Hardy Boys books, known to fans as "The Great Purge,"<sup>23</sup> and on a variety of other series that they were publishing through the Stratemeyer Syndicate, including Nancy Drew and the Bobbsey Twins.

Despite their working relationship, Adams grew dissatisfied with what Grosset & Dunlap was offering. She "pestered Grosset & Dunlap for more advertising, stronger promotions, and a higher royalty schedule,"<sup>24</sup> since many of their terms had not been updated since 1908 when their partnership began. Grosset & Dunlap refused many of her requests, and the last straw came when Grosset & Dunlap never replied to Adams' request to know what their plans were to celebrate Nancy Drew's forthcoming fiftieth anniversary.<sup>25</sup>

In 1979, Harriet Adams moved to working with Simon & Schuster, who offered "better terms and promised greater advertising and stronger marketing,"<sup>26</sup> as well as stepping up to publish more books per year. In retaliation, Grosset & Dunlap sued both the Stratemeyer Syndicate and Simon & Schuster, resulting in the following:

A federal judge later divided custody of the syndicate, allowing Simon & Schuster rights to publish hardcover versions of new stories in the Stratemeyer series, and

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<sup>23</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 40.

<sup>24</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 41.

<sup>25</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 41.

<sup>26</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 41.

allowing Grosset & Dunlap rights to continue publishing hardcover versions of the books it had published under contracts with the syndicate dating back to 1930. The judge dismissed Grosset & Dunlap's claim of copyright violations, breach of contract, and unfair competition.<sup>27</sup>

In sum, Grosset & Dunlap retained the rights to publish the first 58 Hardy Boys books, while Simon & Schuster owned the rights to the characters and any reproductions of those characters in existing and future series (minus the first 58 Mystery Stories books).

Simon & Schuster ended up buying the Stratemeyer Syndicate in 1984, after Harriet Adams' death in 1982, and continues to publish new Hardy Boys books to this day. After several sales and mergers, Grosset & Dunlap became a part of the Penguin Group in 1966 and continues to function under their umbrella. Because of this, Penguin Random House can publish the first 58 Hardy Boys Mystery Stories books, but Simon & Schuster owns the rights to the characters, all series and books outside of the first 58, and any future series.

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<sup>27</sup> Greenwald, *Secret of the Hardy Boys*, 276.

## Chapter 2. Market Research & Modern Need

### 2.1. Market Research

Throughout the various Hardy Boys series introduced in the past ninety-six years, Frank and Joe Hardy have found audiences of many ages, genders, interests, and locations. With versions of the books published in many languages across the globe, the Hardy Boys are not just an American treasure; they have become and continue to be meaningful to readers around the world.

While the original Mystery Stories series was aimed at an audience of “young boys,”—self-proclaimed on the back cover of Mystery Series books printed after 1959 as readers aged ten to fourteen<sup>28</sup>—spin-off series like the Casefiles attracted older readers with increased action and adventure and the Clues Brothers attracted younger readers with aged-down Frank and Joe. With this, as well as the fact that the Hardy Boys have become household names in the last ninety-six years, it is completely reasonable to assume that modern readers exist in all shapes and sizes. From adults who remember reading the series when they were children—who are now sharing the series with their children—to English-as-a-second-language studiers who want a basic yet occasionally challenging story to test their vocabulary to first-time readers who only picked it up because they liked the cover art, Hardy Boys readers span all demographics.

That said, no series is truly written for all audiences. In fact, defining not only the intended audience for the original series but also the proposed audience for a new, reimagined series is key to helping ensure the success of the series. Keeping an average age group of ten to fourteen in mind means that these books fit squarely within the middle-grade readership, which “generally covers grades four to eight, or roughly ages eight to twelve. Obviously, this is a group with very diverse interests and reading ability, and it leaves a lot of scope for range and topic.”<sup>29</sup> While books intended for middle-grade readerships “don’t necessarily shy away from tough subjects, [they]

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<sup>28</sup> Franklin W. Dixon, *The Secret of the Old Mill* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1962).

<sup>29</sup> Neuman, cited in Kyra Droog, *Middle Grade or Young Adult: Defining and Understanding Young Readerships* (Edmonton: Golden Meteorite Press, 2021), 15.

generally avoid the graphic depiction of them. Romance in [middle grade] will tend more toward the ‘puppy love’ phase than full-on dating.”<sup>30</sup>

While middle-grade is the intended readership for the book, it is unlikely that all middle-grade readers have the financial freedom to make their own purchasing decisions. Marketing and packaging need to call towards an older audience—the ones that have purchasing power. This is a distinct benefit, because the individuals with the purchasing power likely have some form of pre-existing connection to the Hardy Boys; whether they read them as children, watched any of the TV series, or just recognize the name and are interested in buying it for their child, family member, or friend.

Being able to cater to audiences new and old with the reimagined Hardy Boys series will be integral to its success, and requires a deep understanding of specific aspects, including the characters, the plots, the content, and who will truly connect to these characters. Before the series begins, it is necessary to create a formal audience profile, including separate audience and marketing personas that reflect intended audiences across the world.

### **2.1.1. Sample Comparable Titles**

Finding comparable titles for a lengthy series such as the Hardy Boys is difficult. The following considers two comparable titles that match, meet, or exceed different aspects of the Hardy Boys series over the years.

#### ***General Comparison – Nancy Drew: The Secret of the Old Clock***

No analysis of the Hardy Boys comparable titles would be complete without Nancy Drew. Since Nancy Drew was also a product of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, and has a history that is nearly identical to that of the Hardy Boys, the first book of her original mystery series is a logical comparison to the current sales of the Hardy Boys Mysteries. The first Nancy Drew book was published shortly after that of the Hardy Boys, and Nancy, Frank, and Joe worked together on many occasions in spin-off series; she is often referred to as the female equivalent of the Hardy Boys.

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<sup>30</sup> Whitman, cited in Droog, *Middle Grade or Young Adult*, 14.



The Nancy Drew series has brought in over eighty million dollars in the last ninety-three years, rivalling sales of the Hardy Boys. Per BookNet Canada data, 20,184 copies of *The Secret of the Old Clock* have been sold since 2005, and 489 in the past year.<sup>31</sup> Bookscan reports 450,000 lifetime sales of *The Secret of the Old Clock* in the US.<sup>32</sup> Much like the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew has been rebooted a handful of times, and the most recent series, the Nancy Drew Diaries and the Nancy Drew Clue Book series, are continuing to sell. The most recent titles in each series, *Captain Stone's Revenge* and *Bird Bonanza*, both published in 2023, have sold 731 and 726 respectively in the Canadian market.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Modern Detective Series – Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer***

This series by John Grisham is a reasonable comparison when it comes to a young boy solving mysteries—albeit legal mysteries—that are stumping adults. Theodore Boone books are aimed at readers aged nine to twelve, like the Hardy Boys. The series began in 2010, and the most recent book was released in 2019.

Theodore Boone is a thirteen-year-old boy who is enamoured with the law. When he sees injustice, he is determined to fight it, regardless of his age and the number of adults who tell him not to. His series began with *Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer*, which has sold 25,864 lifetime copies and 3,916 in the last five years in Canada.<sup>34</sup> According to Bookscan, the first book sold 490,000 lifetime copies in the US.<sup>35</sup> The most recent title, *Theodore Boone: The Accomplice* as released in 2019 and has sold 886 lifetime copies in Canada.<sup>36</sup>

## **2.2. Sales Data Analysis**

To both highlight the declining sales of Hardy Boys books and demonstrate the available market, sales data information for the first five books in all Hardy Boys series is available in Appendix A. Sales data was provided by Simon & Schuster Canada, and

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<sup>31</sup> Data from BookNet Canada, “Canadian Sales Data.” 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Data from Bookscan, “US Sales Data.” 2023.

<sup>33</sup> BookNet Canada, 2023.

<sup>34</sup> BookNet Canada, 2023.

<sup>35</sup> Bookscan, 2023.

<sup>36</sup> BookNet Canada, 2023.

BookNet Canada. In general, the sales data demonstrates the extensive market opportunity for the Hardy Boys, since sales appear to have plateaued in the last ten years, and demonstrate how the introduction of a new series can boost back and front-list sales.

Sales data in this chart is broken into three categories: sales from the beginning of records (typically 1996) to present, the last five years, and the first five years of sales. This breakdown offers the opportunity to consider overall sales as well as continued sales between publication and the present. Throughout all titles, with very little differentiation, sales were highest during the first five years after publication, and tended to become significantly lower further into the series. The Undercover Brothers series, for example, saw a 66.5% sales drop in the United States between books one and five in the first five years of publication.<sup>37</sup> The Hardy Boys: Secret Files demonstrates a similar trend in the United States, dropping 75.3% between books one and five.<sup>38</sup>

Another point of interest is the variability of total sales based on the type of book. The Undercover Brothers series sold well in both Canada and the United States in terms of their first publication, but the Secret Files series sold nearly twice as many copies of its first book in the US than the Clue Book series, which was a continuation. In the first five years, the difference between sales of the first book was 43%; in total sales, the difference is 45.7%.<sup>39</sup> In general, sales trends such as this seem to be predictive for many of the series: how they sell in the first five years connects to how they sell overall.

Canadian sales for the 2016 re-release of the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories by Grosset & Dunlap (headed by Penguin Random House) are also important to consider, since they are the most recent re-release of the “original” stories. While US sales data was unavailable for this project, Canadian sales data for the first four books clearly demonstrated the current state of the Hardy Boys. The repackaging resulted in a total of 2,056 sales of *The Tower Treasure* in Canada, dropping to 768 sales of *The Missing Chums*.<sup>40</sup> While it would be powerful to consider the US data alongside the Canadian

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<sup>37</sup> Simon & Schuster Canada, 2023.

<sup>38</sup> Simon & Schuster Canada, 2023.

<sup>39</sup> Simon & Schuster Canada, 2023.

<sup>40</sup> BookNet Canada, 2023.

data, the low total sales of these books demonstrate the real market for new Hardy Boys material, not recreations and repackagings of the original books.

While the analysis of this sales data could be further broken down, it provides an overview of what has happened to the general sales of Hardy Boys books. Overall, sales are down. During the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hardy Boys, it was boasted that the books had sold over 70 million copies. Today—almost 30 years later—that 70 million number has not increased significantly, despite the release of new books, new series, and even a TV show. Luckily, the boys' centennial anniversary provides a golden opportunity to change this.

It is important to note that an absence of truly comparative titles could be interpreted as a lack of established audience for episodic, realist, middle-grade series such as the Hardy Boys. There are, however, many middle-grade series that embrace the episodic nature of the Hardy Boys while failing to compare in other aspects like characters, realism, and mystery. Amongst others, series including Dog Man, Geronimo Stilton, and Diary of a Wimpy Kid are episodic like the Hardy Boys, and characters in The Magic Tree House and A Series of Unfortunate Events series exhibit the mystery-solving spirit of Frank and Joe Hardy. Since one of the main reasons for the lack of truly comparable titles is the episodic nature of the Hardy Boys books, where a reader can pick up any book in the series and not require any context from the previous books, one key recommendation for this reimagined series is to offer a more growth-based series format. This recommendation will be further explored in Chapter 3.

Based on the sales data provided in Appendix A, as well as an energized, wide-ranging marketing and sales strategy for the reimagined Hardy Boys series proposed in Chapter Four, sales for a new Hardy Boys series could exceed any previous first-book-in-the-series sales. While it would be prudent to gather additional sales data and have a formal sales analysis done by an expert, this basic analysis demonstrates the opening in the market that Simon & Schuster can capitalize on with a reimagined Hardy Boys series in celebration of their centennial anniversary.

## 2.3. Historical Context and Modern Need

There are several factors demonstrating the need for a reimagining of the Hardy Boys, one that could be as successful as the original series. This proposal will consider three of these factors as they highlight the opportunity available to Simon & Schuster.

### 2.3.1. From a Missed Anniversary to a New Publisher

Harriet Adams' decision to terminate a seventy-five-year-long partnership with Grosset & Dunlap in favour of working with Simon & Schuster is not something that happened quickly—though history demonstrates that there was one large factor that played into her decision. Adams had concerns about the ways in which Grosset & Dunlap were handling royalties and marketing, straining their relationship.<sup>41</sup> That said, the final straw for Adams wasn't related to royalties or marketing: it was about the lack of a birthday celebration for the characters they had loved for decades.

Adams's decision to move to Simon & Schuster for publishing demonstrated her belief in the commitment that Simon & Schuster could offer Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, and all the beloved Stratemeyer Syndicate characters and stories. Even a \$300 million lawsuit from Grosset & Dunlap couldn't dissuade her: she knew that her characters deserved better, so she fought for them.

Even though Harriet Adams passed away many years ago, and Simon & Schuster now fully owns the Stratemeyer Syndicate, it would be remiss to ignore Adams' fierce belief in the value of her characters and the underlying reason that she elected to offer Simon & Schuster the opportunity to publish, and later own, the Hardy Boys. To celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Hardy Boys in grand fashion is what the visionaries and champions of the Hardy Boys would want. When Simon & Schuster agreed to publish the Hardy Boys alongside the Stratemeyer Syndicate, the company made a commitment to the characters and their stories. Now is the time to demonstrate why Harriet Adams felt so strongly about Simon & Schuster's ability to do these characters and their stories justice.

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<sup>41</sup> Greenwald, *Secret of the Hardy Boys*, 276; Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 41-43.

### 2.3.2. Low Sales of Current Hardy Boys Books

There is no way to sugarcoat it: in 2023, for a multimillion-dollar industry, the Hardy Boys are selling poorly. Penguin Random House repackaged and re-released the original Mystery Stories in 2016; to date, the first book has only sold 2,056 copies in Canada, with the fourth book selling a meager 768 copies.<sup>42</sup> In the same vein, sales of the most recent series, The Clue Book, saw lifetime sales decrease significantly between the first and fifth books. *The Video Game Bandit* sold 35,630 copies in Canada and 54,522 in the US; by the fifth book, sales had decreased 96.5% in Canada with 802 copies sold, and 64% in the US with 19,595 copies sold.<sup>43,44</sup> When Hardy Boys series have been cancelled in the past, many have been due to low sales, a trend that began with the Clues Brothers in 2000 and continues today.

### 2.3.3. Open Market for New Hardy Boys Books

Since the beginning of 2023, only two Hardy Boys books have been published: *The Smuggler's Legacy* from the Adventures series and *Undercover Bookworms* from the Clues Brothers series. This is a significant drop, considering that there were up to twenty Hardy Boys books being published each year at points in history. Since Simon & Schuster are the only rights-holders that can create new Hardy Boys titles, and there are few titles being published at present, 2027—the centennial anniversary for the Hardy Boys—is the perfect time to reintroduce the Hardy Boys to the world, which will not only provide an additional revenue source for Simon & Schuster through the new series, but will also help encourage backlist sales for readers who want to catch up on the series, or readers who want to enjoy the detective duo in different stages of their lives—whether they are youngsters solving mysteries on the playground or teenagers fighting global terrorism.

The opportunities are endless. Alongside releasing a new series based on the recommendations within this proposal, Simon & Schuster could repackage and re-release historical titles from the Mystery Stories (post-book 58) and Casefiles series.

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<sup>42</sup> Data from BookNet Canada, “Hardy Boys Sales Data” (2023).

<sup>43</sup> Simon & Schuster Canada, 2023

<sup>44</sup> BookNet Canada, 2023.

Since these titles are already under Simon & Schuster's umbrella, re-releasing them would likely only be at the cost of printing, and since many of these books went out of print more than twenty years ago, would likely have a high level of interest from Hardy Boys fans and those interested in completing/adding to their collections. Partnering with bookstores and libraries and schools to promote the Hardy Boys are just some ways that sales could be boosted. The market is open for Hardy Boys books, and now is the time to dive in and welcome a strong new revenue source for Simon & Schuster, as well as to re-introduce fans to the mystery-filled town of Bayport, USA.

## Chapter 3. Reimagining the Hardy Boys

While there have been many reboots and spinoffs of the Hardy Boys throughout the years, none have been as successful as the original series. To engage and retain readers of the original Mysteries Stories series, it is imperative that the proposed reimagination maintain a fine balance of keeping hold of what made the original books so successful while also introducing new concepts and storylines that usher the books into the modern day and make them feel relevant and engaging to new audiences. This series can and should make changes to the ways specific aspects listed below have been reflected in past books to elevate the reimagined series and make it easier for readers of all ages to connect with the updated characters and new stories.

### 3.1. Maintaining and Elevating Original Aspects of the Hardy Boys

#### 3.1.1. Five-Step Storyline

There are many aspects of Hardy Boys stories that readers love, but are likely not consciously aware of. The five-step storyline, established by Edward Stratemeyer and executed (in early novels) by Leslie McFarlane, is one of the reasons that the Hardy Boys have succeeded for so long—by offering a sense of predictability within the unknown of mystery and intrigue. While this storyline has been referenced as a four-step storyline by scholars including Arthur Prager and Carol Billman,<sup>45</sup> a more accurate representation falls in the five-step storyline presented by scholar Mark Connelly:

First, the boys are handed a mystery by their father, receive a strange message, or are nearly run down by a car, boat, or plane. Second, the boys discover a clue by coincidence that puts them on the trail of the suspects. Third, the boys get into 'trouble' when they confront the villains. Fourth, the brothers close in on the hideout (often a cave or remote dwelling) where they are typically captured and

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<sup>45</sup> Caitlyn Donnelly, "'That's Just Like a Boy': A Content Analysis of Masculinities in Hardy Boys Mystery Stories, 1927-1932," *University of Carolina North Chapel Hill* (2008): 19, <https://doi.org/10.17615/b8t6-7g23>

tied up. In the last stage, the brothers turn the tables and triumph over the evil-doers.<sup>46</sup>

While the events of the mysteries vary drastically from book to book, there is an inevitable sequence of events that readers can count on. Just as they know that justice will prevail and their heroes will be safe when they reach the final pages of the book, they also know that dangerous twists and turns will have them worried for Frank, Joe, and their friends and family. Carol Billman explains that “what keeps readers guessing [...] is not so much the outcome of each as the interconnection that will inevitably tie together the disparate threads.”<sup>47</sup>

While there are many ways to structure a story, this particular structure has worked for the Hardy Boys for nearly a century, and whether readers are consciously aware of it or not, it is one of the reasons they feel so connected to the boys and their adventures. Maintaining the structure is important in the proposed reimagining, but that does not take away from the ability to change it on occasion. In many of the reboots, Frank and Joe’s friends or people in the community come directly to them with mysteries to solve, as opposed to a random act leading them to a mystery. Sometimes the coincidental clue that the boys are handed comes at the very beginning of their case. While there is flexibility within the five-step storyline, maintaining it in a general sense is just one way to ensure, if not guarantee, a connection with original readers, while welcoming new ones.

### **3.1.2. Third-Person Omniscient Perspective**

Throughout the various Hardy Boys series, several narrative perspectives have been tested; namely, first person and third-person omniscient. While there are benefits to both first-person and third-person narration, it makes sense to bring the reimagined Hardy Boys series to life in third person for several reasons. Each volume of the Mystery Stories series included reference to the preceding volume, including an introduction to Frank and Joe and their antics for any readers who were picking up a mid-series book.

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<sup>46</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 10.

<sup>47</sup> Billman, *Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 88.



These short introductions are beloved to Hardy Boys fans of all ages, and would be a welcome inclusion in the reimagined series, especially as a nod to the original series.

A particularly important aspect of third-person omniscient perspective is that it can paint a picture of a situation and leave opportunities for readers to decipher as much or as little as they wish. Since there is a certain level of focus on very real aspects of society recommended for this reimagining, it makes most sense maintain a step back from the characters, by presenting their experiences in third-person and seeing them as they are, not how the characters feel they are, as they experience these parts of the world they have may never have before. In doing so, third-person omniscient perspective will offer the greatest chance for reader interpretation: the ability for younger readers and older readers to have differing experiences as they read.

### **3.1.3. Ethical Criminality**

Two of the most important aspects of the original Hardy Boys Mystery Stories were the ethical criminality—the presumed ethical code followed by all Hardy Boys villains— and lawfulness—the level to which Frank and Joe believe in and follow the law. If one of the Hardy Boys is kidnapped, for example, they always return home and never with any more damage than minor dehydration and chafed wrists. Physical violence, while present, never creates long-lasting damage. Violent abuse, torture, and other life-scarring events are simply not present. Whereas the realistic results of a kidnapping would be significantly more physically and psychologically traumatic, Frank and Joe inevitably escape unscathed and bring their captors to justice. It is as if the villains within Hardy Boys books are bound by some unspoken moral code, ensuring that readers of these books are not stricken with mean-world syndrome, believing that everyone in the world is out to get them, and becoming afraid to set foot out their front door for fear of running into a villain on the street.

Considering the audience for this proposed reimagining, maintaining this sense of ethical criminality is key to ensuring readers continue to engage with the series. While it is possible to reflect real-life consequences of kidnappings, chases, and street fights, it is also important to remember the impact that these scenes can have on young audiences. There are certain lines related to violence and criminality that are never crossed with the Hardy Boys, and maintaining those lines will help ensure readers

maintain a balance between worrying for the boys when they find themselves in perilous situations and knowing deep down that their favourite detectives will be able to escape any situation. As Leslie McFarlane put it, “no matter how ruthless and antisocial the criminals in a Hardy Boys book, nobody was ever shot, stabbed, blown up, or bludgeoned to death... We had our own code of nonviolence long before television.”<sup>48</sup>

There are a few situations the Hardy Boys encounter that are important to understand regarding typical ethical criminality: weapons, kidnappings, and assaults.

### ***Weapons***

Reference to technical weapons in the original Mystery Stories series are slim. In fact, guns were typically used as an intimidation technique, and were rarely if ever shot. Knives, crowbars, fists, 2x4s, and many other ‘makeshift’ weapons were more prevalent within the series since they were weapons of opportunity. With the original series’ tendency toward ethical criminality in mind, it is important to remember that weapons were often used in their most basic senses—typically, with the goal of incapacitation not death. The Hardy Boys believed guns were distasteful, and preferred a good old fistfight to using a weapon to protect themselves. The same cannot be said, however, for future series (the Casefiles series, in particular), where the boys were often discussing and using weapons.

While the Hardy Boys’ history with weapons is important to consider, it is also key to think about the difference in prevalence of guns within American society in the modern day. School shootings occur nearly every day across the United States, and with gun laws maintaining an individual’s right to bear arms, it would be improbable for the boys to not experience an event like a school shooting, someone pointing a gun at them, or even someone shooting at them. While it is important to maintain a certain level of ethical criminality within this reimagined series, it would be remiss to ignore the increasing prevalence of weapon-based violence within modern society. Reflecting this societal change within the series could take place in many ways: perhaps the boys take part in lockdown drills and ponder what they would do in an actual school shooting situation, maybe one of Frank and Joe’s friends find their legally owned weapons stolen, or it could be possible that there are simply more weapons utilized within the series.

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<sup>48</sup> McFarlane, *Ghost of the Hardy Boys*, 186.

Regardless, ushering the Hardy Boys into the modern day necessitates a higher prevalence of guns and gun violence.

### ***Kidnappings***

Kidnappings made up a significant portion of the dangerous situations that the Hardy Boys have experienced, both in the original series and throughout the spinoffs. Whether it is one or both boys, their father, or their friends, the boys witness some form of kidnapping relatively consistently. Kidnappings of note from the early canon series include Joe's kidnapping in *What Happened at Midnight*, their father's abduction in *The House on the Cliff*, and Biff and Chet's capture in *The Missing Chums*. Each time, the kidnappees are rescued, suffer from nothing a few days' rest and some good food wouldn't heal, and their kidnapppers are arrested and brought to justice, after which the boys never consider the event again.

There is a significant psychological aspect to kidnapping that is not reflected within the Mystery Stories series—likely due to societal expectations surrounding the expressing of emotions. In an article considering emotional expression in early children's literature, Peter Stearns states:

Teenage protagonists such as the Hardy boys also avoided emotional challenge, in contrast to their more introspective nineteenth-century counterparts. They faced danger without emotional comment. At most they might be "tense with excitement" or note after the fact that "I thought we were dead ducks," but no elaborate strategies for coping with fear were explored. It was as if these characters, like the science fiction superheroes, had been reared in an ideal Watsonian setting in which fear or anger had never been allowed to sprout.<sup>49</sup>

While kidnappings make up a canonically significant portion of Hardy Boys adventures, which should continue into the new series, it would be prudent to take additional time to consider the way in which kidnapping impacts the characters who experience it. Discussions surrounding feelings and emotions will be reflected later in this proposal, but should be considered deeply when creating plots that involve

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<sup>49</sup> Peter Stearns, "Girls, Boys, and Emotions: Redefinitions and Historical Change," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (June 1993): 71.

kidnapping, since these situations will provide opportune moments to allow readers a deeper connection to both the characters and their stories.

### **Assaults**

As an occupational hazard, the Hardy Boys experience an assault at least once per book, if not more often. Being knocked out, hit over the head, punched, or in some sort of fistfight are events that Frank and Joe have come to expect—and so have their readers. While mystery stories like these require a certain level of suspension of disbelief when it comes to how many times a character can be hit on the head without lasting brain damage or how many times they can be shot or punched without actually blacking out, this modern representation of the Hardy Boys is the perfect time to carefully consider the types of assaults the boys experience and how they handle the aftermath.

For example, would the world end if Frank required ice on his hand after fighting off someone trying to steal the family car? If Joe required stitches because of an injury he sustained after he was deliberately pushed down a set of stairs, how would that play into his future actions: would he be more careful next time, or would he charge ahead with the same energy and enthusiasm? Could one of them break their hand and require some time in a cast? The opportunities to reflect real-life consequences within these books are endless, and are important to audiences who could learn from the Hardy Boys' experience.

#### **3.1.4. Lawfulness**

The level of lawfulness present within Hardy Boys books has varied drastically throughout the years and series. In the Mystery Stories series, Frank and Joe felt comfortable breaking the law to minor extents, like mischief and traffic disruption. Leslie McFarlane always wondered “would civilization crumble if kids got the notion that the people who ran the world were sometimes stupid, occasionally wrong, and even corrupt at times?”<sup>50</sup> His personal views, as well as the views of the public regarding 1920s policing, led to a very specific image of the police: one that Grosset & Dunlap believed did not age well. By the time the books were re-written in the late 1950s, any sign of

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<sup>50</sup> McFarlane, *Ghost of the Hardy Boys*, 181.

lawlessness was gone: the boys were aged up so they could legally drive, never drove above the speed limit, obeyed the police, and never broke the law to follow a clue. At the same time, the boys were teenagers, and it makes sense for them to have a natural sense of rebellion: to question the world around them simply because it helps them better understand it.

Despite many attempts in various series, there has never been a Hardy Boys series that has successfully reconciled the boys' positions as both "social rebels and engines of conformity."<sup>51</sup> While they solve cases that adults cannot, often to the chagrin of said adults, they also turn in all their villains to the authorities, and somehow solve their cases without breaking the law. When the Hardy Boys series was edited in the late 1950s, it was done so under a belief that books intended for young audiences want to reflect certain societal values, including respect for adults, authority figures, and the law. That said, in the original Hardy Boys books, Leslie McFarlane wanted to encourage readers to question the world—including the law, and the adults that make and enforce it—around them. As he says in his autobiography:

I had my own thoughts about teaching youngsters that obedience to authority is somehow sacred. Where does it say that kids shouldn't size up people for themselves? Was it written [...] that everyone in authority was inflexibly honest, pious, and automatically admirable? [...] Wouldn't every kid be the better for a little shot of healthy skepticism at an early age?<sup>52</sup>

The Hardy Boys were never intended to be perfect, law-abiding citizens, though both Stratemeyer and Grosset & Dunlap insisted that they be, and McFarlane received a slap on the wrist for his original interpretations of the police and the general disregard that Frank and Joe had for them.<sup>53</sup> Now, especially in the wake of movements like Black Lives Matter, is the time to reconsider how Frank, Joe, and their friends and family interact with the police and other authority figures throughout their stories. What sort of experiences would Frank and Joe have with the police, and how much of that would reflect their inherent privilege of being straight, white boys from an upper-middle class family? While this may not be necessary to spell out for young readers, comparing their

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<sup>51</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 11.

<sup>52</sup> McFarlane, *Ghost of the Hardy Boys*, 239.

<sup>53</sup> McFarlane, *Ghost of the Hardy Boys*, 237-240.

experience with those of others within the books will provide an opportunity for important, necessary conversations surrounding inherent privilege, interpretations of the law, and questions surrounding policing in the modern day.

Would the world end if the Hardy Boys sped to catch up with a criminal? If they got a speeding ticket, then they could have a conversation with their parents about what that meant. Following actions with consequences is an important way to provide the opportunity for young readers to make their own decisions. While driving above the speed limit is only one example of what the Hardy Boys may do in pursuit of their criminal, demonstrating the consequences (or lack thereof) when the Hardy Boys break rules in this new series is a way to help engage young readers in key, critical decision-making.

### **3.2. Introducing New and Modern Aspects to the Hardy Boys**

Each new series of the Hardy Boys has attempted to modernize the boys in one way or another. In the 1980s, Frank and Joe were aged up and moved from being detectives to being spies: they brought down Russian terrorists, were shot at on an almost chapter-by-chapter basis, and witnessed the emotions brought about by their friends and family dying (or being believed to be dead). From being shot and shot at, jumping out of windows, stealing boats and other vehicles, and taking down international terrorist organizations, there is not much that Frank and Joe did not take on throughout the Hardy Boys Casefiles—and that is just one spinoff.

No spinoff series has yet to reach the same sales success as the original Mystery Stories series. In fact, as referenced in Appendix A, many of the spinoff series were not met with success at all—despite aging the characters up or down, making their mystery-solving antics official or even setting up a plot where the Hardy Boys have been sued so often that they cannot solve mysteries. There is something about the original Hardy Boys Mysteries series magic that no subsequent series has yet to capture. By maintaining and elevating the best aspects of the original series, as well as including new aspects outlined below, the proposed reimagined series could bring back the spark of the Hardy Boys, offering countless opportunities for Simon & Schuster.

### **3.2.1. Ages & Methods of Transportation**

Though Frank and Joe Hardy seem to be timeless, their ages have varied throughout the original and spinoff series. When they were first introduced to the world in 1927, Frank Hardy was sixteen and his brother Joe was fifteen. In the late 1950s, the boys were aged up to eighteen and seventeen, and their late-teen ages remained in the Casefiles series and the Undercover Brothers series. In 2002, they were aged down to nine and eight for the Clues Brothers, and they were grade-school age in the Secret Files in the early 2010s.

One of the main reasons that the Hardy Boys were aged up in the revised Mystery Stories series was to comply with changes in laws: to legally drive their motorcycles and the family vehicle, the boys needed to be over the age of seventeen. Nowadays, in New York City, an individual can drive a moped at sixteen, and a vehicle at seventeen, meaning that it is reasonable to reconsider the ages of Frank and Joe.

If Frank were to be seventeen and Joe sixteen, some interesting and engaging dynamics could come into play, both around their ages and their legal driving abilities. Both boys will require independent transit, so having them be at the legal age to drive mopeds is important: that way, they can split up on their cases and still have motorcycle-esque chases with their villains. Having Frank be the only brother that can legally drive a vehicle, however, will lead to fascinating power dynamics between the brothers that can be explored throughout the series. Would Joe ever get behind the wheel illegally if Frank was in trouble and it was the only way to save him? What would happen if Joe had to beg his mother or father for a ride somewhere because his moped was in the shop? How would Frank handle being the one his mother always sent for groceries, or the only one that could pick Aunt Gertrude up from the train station? These questions and more can all be explored with the Hardy Boys' new ages connecting them back to their fifteen and sixteen-year-old roots.

### **3.2.2. Class**

In general, and particularly post-rewrites, Frank and Joe Hardy exist in an upper-middle class setting, rarely finding themselves outside of their class comfort zone. They have the funding that they require—be it from rewards received for their work or from

their parents, who seem to have never-ending funds—to go on lengthy plane trips, buy endless amounts of camping gear, and outfit their motorcycles, car, and boat. Frank and Joe often find themselves helping individuals that fit comfortably within upper middle-class society, and are well-rewarded for their ability to return priceless heirlooms and clear family names.

While this vision of “Hardy Boys society” has existed for nearly one hundred years, it is not the reality that we see in the 2020s. In Canada and the United States, issues with drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, and steep inflation have resulted in wide variances in social inequity. It would be irresponsible and unrealistic to maintain such a significant difference from reality; thus, to demonstrate a commitment to reimagining the Hardy Boys in the modern day, it is key to ensure that all of society is represented, not just those in the upper middle class.

The Mystery Stories series has been critiqued for its narrow-minded views when it comes to classism. Mark Connelly notes that “Frank and Joe, like characters in a sitcom or soap opera, live in secure comfort and never face economic deprivation—except when their wallets are stolen. [...] The Great Depression, like World War II, never touches Frank and Joe’s hometown.”<sup>54</sup> While a certain amount of safety in society is expected in Hardy Boys books, there is no reason why a reimagined series could not tackle, in increasing ways, the realities of class disparity existing both in the United States and across the globe.

In fact, opening the Hardy Boys to explore class differences is just another way that the Hardy Boys can help educate readers about the state of the world around them. There is no reason why Frank and Joe cannot ask questions about the unhoused person who just provided them with a key clue, or mull over the differences between neighbourhoods in Bayport and New York City. Providing this opportunity for young readers to better understand their world will help shape a more realistic image of that world. As mentioned earlier, this introduction should be done in a way that balances the sometimes-terrifying realities of the world with the need to ensure that young readers feel safe stepping out their front door after reading a Hardy Boys book.

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<sup>54</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 137.



### 3.2.3. Emotional Intelligence

Frank and Joe, as characters in the canon Hardy Boys Mysteries Stories, spend little time introspecting. As readers, we witness them emote (fear, excitement, concern, and exuberance are common) but rarely if ever do we experience their thoughts surrounding themselves. Is Joe self-conscious about the size of his muscles? Does Frank worry about the one curl in his hair that always manages to stick up? Perhaps Frank takes slightly too far an intuitive leap in a case that puts them further behind instead of ahead—does he beat himself up for it, unwilling to accept his mistake? Does Joe worry that people will overlook him because his brother is smarter than him? These are all questions that a reimagined Hardy Boys series could consider, bringing greater depth to the characters.

Author and editor Cheryl Klein outlines the importance of considering the emotional intelligence of characters, especially when they border the middle grade and young adult genres. When it comes to distinguishing the emotional intelligence of a middle grade character and a young adult character, she boils it down to “a character’s relationship to the idea of home.”<sup>55</sup> Though the Hardy Boys’ ages lend themselves more towards young adult audiences, based on Klein’s assessment of emotional intelligence, Frank and Joe clearly have emotional intelligence that will connect better to middle-grade readers. Klein notes that “middle-grade protagonists are acquiring some independence certainly, but they still need to anchor that ‘home’ and all it represents. When they participate in a grand adventure, it usually ends with the promise of a return home to a safe space, the status quo [...].”<sup>56</sup>

Home is a key concept for the Hardy Boys, which should be maintained throughout the reimagined series. The boys always know that they can return home at the end of the day; that they have somewhere safe where they are loved. Their adventures typically end at home, with a feast of some kind, or a celebration of their accomplishments. Ensuring that the safety and comfort of home is available for the

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<sup>55</sup> Cheryl Klein, *The Magic Words: Writing Great Books for Children and Young Adults* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016), 16.

<sup>56</sup> Klein, *Magic Words*, 16.

Hardy Boys, their friends, and their readers, is an important way to maintain connections to the younger readers. As noted by Carol Billman:

The boys are for all intents and purposes as suspended in time as they are firmly rooted—at least mentally—in place. [...] In short, the Hardys remain locked in that period between childhood and adult life that psychologist Erik Erikson has characterized as a moratorium—the quiet and deep sleep of fairy tale characters that precedes awakening into maturity.<sup>57</sup>

It is possible to maintain a young level of emotional intelligence while also introducing difficult, complicated, and uncomfortable topics to Hardy Boys readers, both in situations themselves and how the boys react to them. In the original Mystery Stories series, Frank and Joe were notoriously unshakable: they could be kidnapped, threatened, knocked around, have their families threatened, and more, but they would rarely express fear in any more than a single sentence or two—typically using dialogue tags. Phrases like “‘Be careful,’ breathed Frank anxiously,”<sup>58</sup> “‘Nothing much’ returned Frank, trying to force a smile,”<sup>59</sup> and “Frank and Joe were downhearted. It looked as if their fate were sealed”<sup>60</sup> are frequent. These physical displays of emotions exist, but are rarely, if ever, explored and discussed.

While this tendency towards not discussing emotion, especially as young men, is reflective of certain expectations in late 1920s society and onward, it is important to consider the shift in society since then. Studies have proven the importance of expressing and processing emotions, talking about situations, and really and truly feeling one’s feelings. Since the Hardy Boys act as role models for many young readers, small changes to the series, like having the boys talk about scary or distressing situations after the fact, can have an immeasurable impact on young readers across the globe. Though this shift does not need to be quick nor aggressive, it would not hurt to have Frank and Joe talk about a potential kidnapping situation before their lights go out at night, or for Frank to tell Joe how scared he was for him and how glad he is that Joe is alright. Small changes like this to the relationship between the brothers will not only strengthen their

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<sup>57</sup> Billman, *Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 93-94.

<sup>58</sup> Dixon, *A Figure in Hiding*, 134.

<sup>59</sup> Dixon, *What Happened at Midnight*, 40.

<sup>60</sup> Dixon, *House on the Cliff*, 174.

brotherly bonds, but will also demonstrate to young readers that if the Hardy Boys can express their emotions, they can too.

### 3.2.4. Relationships and Sex

The distinct lack of any content relating to relationships and sex in the Mystery Stories, and most if not all following series, has been a point of contention throughout Hardy Boys history. In his original outlines, Edward Stratemeyer made it very clear to Leslie McFarlane that friendship was as far as boyfriend/girlfriend relationships would go. In his autobiography, McFarlane wrote:

I got the message. There was to be no petting, as it was known at the time. None of the knee-pawing, tit-squeezing stuff that was sneaking in to [sic] so much popular fiction, to the disgust of all right-thinking people. Wholesome American boys never got a hard-on. (Why was that?)<sup>61</sup>

While there was never any suggestion that a book intended for children should be filled with sexual content, the dissociation between Frank and Joe's ages and their actions regarding relationships and sex is apparent. The lack of any discussion around relationships has led to several Hardy Boys parodies, poking fun at the lack of discussion around sex and sexuality within the original stories. Timothy Cope and Paul Boesing's 2000s play *The Secret of the Old Queen: A Hardy Boys Mystery* was described as "a delightful musical romp in which the only mystery that the Hardy Boys can't seem to solve is that of their own sexuality,"<sup>62</sup> and the 1995 novel *A Ghost in the Closet* presents another parody featuring Nancy "Clue" and the "Hardly" Boys.<sup>63</sup>

While relationships have not been explored in the Mystery Stories series previously, this reimagining offers the perfect opportunity to humanize the Hardy Boys as individuals through their relationships. Would the world end if Frank finally worked up the courage to ask Callie Shaw to be his girlfriend? Would every young reader explode if Joe Hardy kissed Lola Morton? To maintain acceptability for a young audience, the likelihood that relationships would extend past handholding and kissing is slim, but this

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<sup>61</sup> McFarlane, *Ghost of the Hardy Boys*, 82.

<sup>62</sup> Madison Theatre Guild, cited in Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 212.

<sup>63</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 213.

seemingly small introduction of relationships would create opportunities to further create real, emotional connections between the boys and their readers. While most readers will not be able to connect to being teenage detectives, they will understand the stress of asking someone out on a date, or the anticipation leading up to their first kiss.

### **3.2.5. Serial Character and Storyline Development**

A well-loved feature of books in the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories series was the inevitable throwback: when Franklin W. Dixon took a moment, typically while Frank and Joe were preparing for their next adventure, to introduce or re-introduce the Hardy Boys to their readers. While this (re)introduction typically featured a quick note about their detecting success and what challenging case they had solved previously, it played a key function in the series' ability to remain episodic. There was no character development, if any, from book-to-book, and outside of these (re)introductions, no mention of characters or plots from previous stories. Creating this type of story offered readers flexibility in their choice of what books in the series to read, but it also resulted in stagnant characters because they had no opportunity to learn and grow.

Frank and Joe Hardy have never truly learned from their mistakes, nor had the chance to change their approach to a situation based on a previous event. Creating a serialized approach to the reimagined Hardy Boys series would provide countless opportunities to embrace character development for Frank, Joe, and their friends and family. One of the main reasons that emotional intelligence was rarely addressed in previous Hardy Boys books was because there was no chance to demonstrate character growth over the course of the series: one book could not lead into another. Appendix B, which features sample character profiles for some of the main characters in the series, includes recommendations for stories that could play out throughout the series, both as primary and secondary plots. Serializing character and storyline development in this reimagined series will provide room to bring more dimension and depth to characters, continue storylines over the course of multiple books, and bring back heroes and villains from the past.

### 3.2.6. Social Media and Cybercrime

Technology has advanced significantly since the original Mystery Stories books were published, opening opportunities to explore new types of crime and crime-solving. While one of the distinguishing factors of the Hardy Boys is their determination and grit in how they solve mysteries with nothing but their heads, they will have significantly more technology available to help (and possibly hinder) them in the 2020s. Of course, this concept leads to many questions regarding how the Hardy Boys would interact with technology. Would Joe Hardy do silly TikTok dances to get likes and fuel his ego? Would his brother lecture him on internet safety and TikTok usage policies every time? Is there a chance that Frank Hardy could be convinced to have a Facebook profile? Would Frank's deep understanding of technology and coding assist them in cases?

Including technology in the Hardy Boys comes with a risk that the books will be "dated"—if any of the technologies that are mentioned go out of style, the books will age quickly. That said, books are pieces of history: they reflect the way in which society exists at the time in which they are written. Giving the boys access to smartphones, Bluetooth headphones, and social media won't age them; instead, it will help them connect to modern readers. To maintain a balance, it would be wise to mirror types and concepts of social media under different names.

Cybercrime, then, could become a significant factor in the Hardy Boys' lives. How would they find a cyberbully, or the equivalent? Would they be able to trace threats sent to them by email or social media direct messages? How would they handle a client who had been defrauded through an internet scam? Considering the access that teenagers have to the internet, the understanding they have of the power of social media, and the way in which the internet seems to make the world more connected could help modernize the Hardy Boys and support their efforts in solving more modern crimes. While, of course, Frank and Joe should not depend solely on the internet and social media to solve their mysteries, they should use them in strategic fashions to help further the work and get the information they need to close their latest case.

### 3.2.7. Death

Death is a natural part of the human experience, and yet it is very rarely, if ever, referenced in the Mystery Stories series. The Hardy Boys are hardly ever impacted by death: none of their villains kill anyone around them, none of their friends or Bayport residents ever pass away, and while the boys are faced with death on many occasions, it never really sinks in emotionally.

If this reimagined Hardy Boys series further explores emotions and real-life situations, it is only natural that death be a part of the series, though it is best to keep that death far from the Hardy family and their friends. Perhaps one of the individuals that Frank and Joe helped in their early cases has passed on and left something for them in their will, prompting the boys to discuss how much that case or that individual meant to them, and how they felt about that person being gone. It would be clearly traumatic for the boys to see someone die in front of them, and that is not recommended for this series, but having some sense that death does occur in Bayport and the world of the Hardy Boys would help create a greater sense of realism around the series.

### 3.2.8. A Note on Diversity and Inclusion

It would be remiss to provide such an in-depth and comprehensive review of considerations for a reimagined Hardy Boys series without denoting the distinct lack of diversity and inclusion within all written Hardy Boys series, new and old. As cis, white, able-bodied, upper middle-class boys who predominantly surround themselves with other men and women like them, no Hardy Boys series, at this time, reflects society as it exists: with a diversity of class, race, gender, ability, and sexuality. While individuals of varying races appear within the original and revised Mystery Stories series, their portrayal—often as the villain—is insincere at best and racist at worst, despite attempts in the late-1950s editorial revamp of the series to remove racism from the books.<sup>64,65</sup> As such, it is paramount to recognize the history that this series has regarding diversity and inclusion, and consider how diverse characters and inclusive environments can be authentically reflected in the reimagined series.

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<sup>64</sup> Greenwald, *Secret of the Hardy Boys*, 243-246.

<sup>65</sup> Rehak, *Girl Sleuth*, 243-247.

Ushering Frank and Joe Hardy into the modern day means reflecting the world as it exists, and ensuring that readers see themselves represented within the pages of this reimagining. Intended or not, books are pieces of history, since they capture and share the moments in time when they are written. When considering this reimagining, we have a duty to ensure that authentic representation, in all its shapes and sizes, exists throughout the series. The world is an incredibly diverse place: every person has a different experience and a different story to tell. Readers should be able to open a book in the reimagined Hardy Boys series and recognize the world in which it exists.

Frank and Joe Hardy may be cis, white, able-bodied, upper middle-class boys, but they are not the only characters in these stories. From the individuals they meet and befriend to the clients they support, Frank and Joe are destined to engage with people from any and all walks of life during their crime-solving journeys. In fact, Frank and Joe's identities provide much-needed opportunities for stories and questions surrounding prejudice and privilege. How might Frank and Joe's experience being pulled over by a police officer for speeding differ from that of an African American family who they are helping with a case? When Frank and Joe travel to a different country on a case, would they miss their flight because their friend—a person of colour—was pulled aside at the New York airport for additional security screening? How might they handle these situations? What might they learn from them, and how might that change their views of adults in authority positions? Frank and Joe's ability to recognize, confront, and learn from their inherent privilege is a valuable, necessary inclusion in this series.

Authenticity and honesty are key in these efforts. Being real about representing our world and the diversity of the people in it is necessary to engage readers and make them feel welcome within these stories. No matter who authors this new series, they should be actively consulting members of diverse communities, and paying them for their services, when storylines emerge that reflect their unique lived experiences. The world around us can be both beautiful and ugly, perfect and broken. Placing the Hardy Boys in situations where they confront this is key to ensuring validity and authenticity for stories and readers.

Appendix B, which offers sample character profiles for some of the main characters, denotes several opportunities to welcome diverse characters and storylines authentically. How likely would Frank, Joe, and their friends be to use their pronouns when they introduce themselves? How long would it take Chet Morton to admit to his friends that he is gay, and how would his friends take the news? How aggressively would Laura Hardy correct Aunt Gertrude on her use of a racist slur? Considering questions like these within storylines in the reimagined series can and will encourage authentic representation of our world and the people within it.

### **3.3. Authoring the Hardy Boys**

Throughout the years, hundreds of writers have picked up their pen as Franklin W. Dixon. Since the name Franklin W. Dixon is so well-known and beloved as a pseudonym, it makes sense to ensure that this reimagined Hardy Boys series continues under his name. That said, one of the largest issues that has plagued Frank and Joe Hardy in the past is the lack of continuity on the part of their writers. After Leslie McFarlane, the list of writers who have worked on more than fifteen consecutive Hardy Boys books is small, with few exceptions. One of the best, most effective ways to ensure continuity in both writing and in plot, is to select one ghostwriter and have them become Franklin W. Dixon for a significant number, if not all, of the reimagined series.

One of the reasons that Mystery Stories series readers fell in love with the stories and their characters was the writing. They respected Franklin W. Dixon because he never dared write down to them: words like “prosaic,” “spasmodic,” and “ostensibly” dotted the pages, terms that Franklin W. Dixon expected his readers to either know or to learn the meaning of. The melodramatic prose of the original stories drew the reader in and kept their attention throughout the story. Finding a writer that can mimic the energy of the original prose and maintain it throughout the series would undoubtedly support the success of a reimagined Hardy Boys series.

Though many spinoffs and new series have tried, none have successfully captured the magic of the original Mystery Stories series. The Hardy Boys books are more than just throwaway children’s literature: Frank and Joe Hardy are role models who encourage readers to think critically, ask questions, and take matters into their own hands. Finding a single ghostwriter who understands the importance of reimagining the



essence of the Hardy Boys and bringing it to life in this new series will help ensure its success. When Simon & Schuster invests in the Hardy Boys through good, consistent writing, readers will find themselves more invested in the characters and stories, and therefore more likely to continue to read book after book.

## Chapter 4. Marketing the Reimagined Hardy Boys

Outside of maintaining successful storylines and character elements, reimagining the Hardy Boys for their centennial anniversary will require strategic branding, packaging, and marketing to ensure project success. Careful consideration of packaging will help ensure sales in-store, while marketing and launch promotional materials will drive excitement and energy from fans of all ages. While there are many ways that the reimagined series could be marketed, the below section provides recommendations on packaging, marketing, and launching that would support success.

### 4.1. Packaging

#### 4.1.1. A Brief History of Hardy Boys Packaging

Packaging for Hardy Boys books has changed dramatically over the years, and understanding this history and the association it holds with fans is key to creating successful packaging for the reimagined series. Appendix C features a comprehensive photo library, capturing front covers and spines of books from each of the series, and will be referenced heavily in this section.

When the first Mystery Stories books were released, between 1927 and 1932, they were some of the first in a budding hardcover juvenile series to follow what historians refer to as “the death of the dime novel.”<sup>66</sup> The first printings of the books featured a deep red cloth binding, with the title, author, and logo in black lettering surrounded by gold.<sup>67</sup> They were wrapped in a paper dustjacket featuring a white spine, cover art, and advertisements for other Stratemeyer syndicate series. Since this packaging was only available for five years, nearly one hundred years ago, these specific books are notoriously difficult to come by and are valued highly by collectors. A facsimile of this packaging was released by Applewood Books in 1991 for the first 19 books, and the packaging (with and without the dustjacket) is featured in figures C.1 and C.2 in Appendix C.

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<sup>66</sup> Connelly, *Hardy Boys Mysteries*, 30.

<sup>67</sup> Tony Carpentieri & Paul Mular. *Hardy and Hardy Investigations* (Henderson: Synsine Press, 2016, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.), 22.

Between 1932 and 1962, Mystery Stories books were printed with either tan, brown, or grey covers (the difference between the three colours is relatively insignificant, but is a useful differentiation tool between specific printings).<sup>68</sup> These covers featured black printing for the logo, author name, and title. A sample of this packaging can be seen with and without a dustjacket in figures C.3 and C.4.

This packaging changed significantly when the books were revised in the late 1950s. Revised editions of this series scrapped dustjackets and instead printed covers featuring updated art and “this emblem leads you to adventure” branding. This packaging is most well-known by modern generations of Hardy Boys lovers, and was recreated with blue plastic packaging when the books were re-released in the 2000s. Samples of the 1950s packaging are shown in figures C.5 and C.6, and the 2000s packaging is reflected in figures C.7 and C.8.

The Hardy Boys were first released in paperback after Simon & Schuster began publishing them. From *Night of the Werewolf* in 1979 to *The Skyfire Puzzle* in 1986, the books were softcover, featuring new branding and images. When Simon & Schuster’s Minstrel editions of the Hardy Boys were released between 1987 and 2001, the packaging changed yet again—although the books were still in paperback, the cover stock was lighter, and the books shifted to darker covers and bright yellow spines. When the Hardy Boys moved to the Aladdin imprint, their packaging changed again, with a notebook-style cover and blue spines. Figures C.9 and C.10 in Appendix C show sample packaging between 1979 and 1986, followed by samples from the Minstrel editions in figures C.11 and C.12, and the Aladdin editions in figures C.13 and C.14.

In 1987, the Hardy Boys were introduced to mass market paperback packaging, which lasted for the entirety of the Casefiles series. Featuring a new and distinct logo, as well as navy spines and significantly smaller stature, these books stood out from previous titles, making them more attractive to readers in the 80s and 90s. An example of mass market Hardy Boys packaging can be found in figures C.15 and C.16 in Appendix C.

Softcover Hardy Boys books remained through the Undercover Brothers, Secret Files, Clues Brothers, and Adventures series, though the packaging varied between

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<sup>68</sup> Carpentieri, *Hardy and Hardy Investigations*, 23-29

them. The biggest distinctions between them are the logos and spine colours, which can be explored by series between figures C.17 and C.24 in Appendix C.

### **4.1.2. Packaging a Reimagined Hardy Boys Series**

Packaging for a reimagined Hardy Boys series must be carefully considered, both to reflect the history of the books themselves and attract a modern audience. It is logical to offer these reimagined books in a variety of packages, both print and digital. Offering eBooks and audiobooks is essential to ensure accessibility of the content, and both editions should be released as closely as possible to the print editions.

Since the Hardy Boys have a history of both hardcover and paperback books, it would be an excellent opportunity to utilize both packaging types. A short(er) print run of one hundredth anniversary special edition books would be a must for any collector, and could include the first twelve books—or all the books released during the centennial anniversary year. For regular printing, offering both hardcover and softcover ensures price accessibility and consumer options.

Logically, calling back to the packaging of the very first Hardy Boys books is essential to acknowledging the long and illustrious history of the detective duo. An impactful yet subtle way to do this could be by offering hardcover books with modern dustjackets, yet with red binding and black text on the book itself. In addition, finding a way to integrate the very first Hardy Boys Mystery Stories logo (see figure C.2) into the reimagined branding would be particularly poignant.

While the design and packaging of the reimagined series should be up to trained professionals, it is essential that these designers be acutely aware of the design history of the series so that they are able to make subtle and engaging callbacks. Hardy Boys lovers of all ages will enjoy analyzing the covers and packaging for clues, which could be part of a marketing and engagement campaign.

## **4.2. Marketing and Social Media**

One of the best, most cost-effective ways of directly reaching the audiences for the reimagined Hardy Boys series is through social media. Since this series is bringing Frank and Joe into the modern day, and offering them the opportunity to combat cyber-

crime, update their own Instagram accounts, and argue whether they should do a TikTok video, it makes sense to use current social media to attract attention. When considering Simon & Schuster’s social media followings across various platforms, and the desire to create engagement with fans, the following campaigns are recommended to support the announcement, pre-sale, and release campaigns for the reimagined series.

#### **4.2.1. General Marketing**

There is no better way to market a book than to offer readers an opportunity to engage with the book’s content, both pre- and post-publication. Finding ways to connect to readers will engage them well beyond general brand affinity and connection and will allow them to feel an emotional connection to the characters and stories present within the printed pages. The following marketing recommendations are based on this philosophy.

##### ***Win-A-Book Contests***

The opportunity to win a free book is always enticing, especially if there is no cost to enter such a contest. By offering “win a book” contests through their website and social media, Simon & Schuster can collect valuable customer data while also gauging interest in and project sales for upcoming Hardy Boys books. Contest entries could include anything from following Simon & Schuster on social media and liking their most recent post, entering their email address to sign up for Hardy Boys-related newsletters and emails, or creating a TikTok or Instagram Reel and sharing it with a specific hashtag.

##### ***Submit-A-Storyline Opportunities***

An excellent method of engaging young readers while also gauging their interest in subject matter for the series is to create a “submit a storyline” contest. In such a contest, readers would have the opportunity to share their ideal storyline for a new Hardy Boys book, and one winner would have the opportunity to work with “Franklin W. Dixon” to outline a forthcoming Hardy Boys book. While the reader’s name would not be featured on the book, they would receive a certain number of free copies, and be listed in the front matter under “outline by.”

Engagement tactics such as “submit a storyline” have been used previously. In 2010, fans of James Patterson’s series *Maximum Ride* “between ages 13 and 18 took a stab at writing an outline and the “missing chapter” between Chapters 35 and 36.”<sup>69</sup> The winning fan had their half-chapter published at the end of *Fang*, for *Maximum Ride* readers across the world to enjoy.<sup>70</sup>

Not only would a contest such as this generate an immense amount of interest, but it would also be beneficial to Simon & Schuster in that it would provide valuable data surrounding what readers of the Hardy Boys series want to see in upcoming books. Understanding what crimes readers want to see, what questions they have about Frank and Joe, and what adventures they want their favourite detective duo to go on will help Simon & Schuster create stories that readers will love, which will inevitably support sales.

### ***Library Partnerships***

When individuals or families do not have the means or opportunity to physically purchase a copy of a book, they often borrow it from their local library. If they enjoy it enough, and can purchase a copy in the future, they are more likely to do so if they have had the opportunity to experience the book. If Simon & Schuster were to partner with library organizations across Canada and the US (to start) and create opportunities for engagement with the new Hardy Boys series, invaluable access would be created to these stories and the people that they support.

For example, Simon & Schuster could offer marketing materials to libraries so they could create book displays based on the Hardy Boys series, or space activation opportunities like Hardy Boys-themed scavenger hunts. Individual libraries could use copies of the new Hardy Boys books as prizes for contests or for their book clubs. When it comes to creating opportunities to get information about the new Hardy Boys into the world, libraries are an excellent resource, especially in their ability to create and foster new readerships and relationships. In addition, having good partnerships with libraries could support Simon & Schuster’s publishing efforts in many other ways, meaning what

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<sup>69</sup> James Patterson, *Fang* (New York: NY, Little, Brown & Company, 2011), 328.

<sup>70</sup> Patterson, *Fang*, 328.

starts with a discussion about the Hardy Boys can end in affirming, supportive relationships between libraries and Simon & Schuster.

## **4.2.2. Social Media**

### ***Engagement Campaigns***

Garnering excitement for the reimagined Hardy Boys series will be extremely important when it comes to ensuring a high success level for sales. Starting high-energy and high-profile social media campaigns is just one way to provide consistent opportunities for readers to engage with the characters, the world, and the future stories. In addition, continual posting about the series will provide readers with reminders of the series, ensuring that it is easy for them to remember when new books are coming out.

One potential social media campaign that could be utilized during the lead-up to the series release is engaging readers with questions about the modern Hardy Boys. Instagram stories, Facebook polls, and X (Twitter) polls could all be used to ask the readers how they think Frank, Joe, and their friends and family would exist during the modern day. Questions could include:

- Which social media platform would Joe Hardy use most?
- Could Frank Hardy be convinced to get a TikTok account?
- What music does Joe Hardy listen to (and what music does he tell his friends he listens to)?
- What is the most used app on Frank Hardy's phone?

Offering readers the chance to voice their opinions will not only help them feel closer to the story and characters, but will also provide Simon & Schuster with valuable information about how the readers want to see their beloved detectives portrayed, which can be utilized in later books. Readers will likely also be curious to see if their answers were right, and that need to know will help drive book sales.

### ***Hardy Boys Through the Ages***

As this proposal has established, there is a significant amount of nostalgia when it comes to the Hardy Boys: people remember reading them as children, being gifted them from their parents or grandparents, or watching them on television at various points

in the last hundred years. Creating a social media account dedicated to Hardy Boys history in the leadup to the reimagined series could help bring that nostalgia back to the forefront of people's minds, encouraging them to follow the new series.

For example, many people will remember the late 1970s Hardy Boys TV series starring Parker Stevenson and Shaun Cassidy. Posting stills from the series, doing an interview with the actors and posting clips of that interview, and sharing information about the connection between the TV show and the series, can spark interest in the new series. When people remember something that was incredibly dear to them, it can encourage them to share that with their current social circle, in this case helping to create even further reach for the reimagined series.

In addition, within this account or these posts, encouraging people to share their memories of the Hardy Boys in honour of their centennial anniversary will generate more engagement. Creating a hashtag specific to the memory of the Hardy Boys like #HardyBoysCentennial or #MemoriesOfTheHardyBoys could lead to an immense amount of information and knowledge, which could even be packaged into a special, limited-edition magazine or book release. Getting readers of all ages to engage with their memories of the boys on their own terms can result in powerful and meaningful reasons for them to then read the reimagined series.

### **4.3. The Role of the Bookseller**

The centennial anniversary of the Hardy Boys, and the release of their new series, deserves to be huge: it should be a big splash that excites readers of all ages from across the world. One way to help encourage that excitement is by partnering with bookstores, both big chains and small, local stores, to generate enthusiasm. From book displays that feature the Hardy Boys series to “design a cover” competitions to ongoing launch parties for the new books, bookstores are key to fostering and harnessing the readers' energy and giving them the opportunity to purchase books in the series.

Many readers who enjoyed the Casefiles series distinctly remember going to the bookstore once a month to pick up a new book—some counting down the days until the next release. If the reimagined series was to publish one book each month, they could work with bookstores to host launch parties for each of the first twelve books, bringing



fans new and old together. After the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been craving the connection that in-person events offer, and this is just one way that publishers and booksellers can work together to generate excitement and boost sales for this new series.

## Chapter 5. Conclusion

Frank and Joe Hardy are more than just stories. To millions of people across the world, they are friends and confidants; they represent the good, the honest, and the ethical. Bayport USA might not exist on a map, but it is a place where individuals of all ages can go to escape their reality and to find one where the good guys always win, and peace always prevails. Whether they are bound in hardcover, in paperback, in red, blue, or black, the stories enveloped within the Hardy Boys series preserve nearly one hundred years of Frank and Joe's adventures, struggles, and successes. People of all ages, genders, races, and places have connected and continue to connect to Frank and Joe Hardy and their friends and adventures in some way.

The Hardy Boys have been through a lot. They kept spirits high during the Great Depression. They comforted readers of all ages during world wars. Frank and Joe survived despite everything that was thrown at them, and for this, they deserve to be celebrated. There is no better way to honour the boys for their hundred years of service to readers across the globe than to release a reimagined series that connects their original roots to the modern world in which we now live.

There is no time like the present.

Between the gap in the market easily filled by a new series, the declining sales of Hardy Boys series across the board, and the boys' impending centennial anniversary, it is only logical to celebrate Frank and Joe in the best way possible—to remind the world of the power of the brothers from Bayport who never fail to solve their mystery, catch their criminal, and restore peace and justice. The benefits for a centennial reimagining are innumerable. Simon & Schuster will profit from sales of books, both new and old. Hardy Boys fans will rejoice at the opportunity to meet their heroes again.

A centennial anniversary celebration is for more than just Frank and Joe; reimagining the Hardy Boys at this poignant moment is honouring the memories of everyone involved in their process—from Edward Stratemeyer who dreamed them up nearly one hundred years ago, to Leslie McFarlane who brought them to life through his words, to Harriet Adams who fought for their rights and to ensure they would long outlive her and her family. Adams chose Simon & Schuster because she believed in the

publisher's ability to do right by the Hardy Boys. Now, as their centennial anniversary arrives, is the time to prove that she was right.

Frank and Joe Hardy have survived for nearly one hundred years, and there is every chance that they will continue to thrive for one hundred more—if they are returned to the spotlight instead of fading into obscurity. Simon & Schuster have an opportunity to usher the Hardy Boys into a new era with a celebration worthy of an original Hardy Boys Mystery Story; full of food, friends, and general merriment.

It's time for Frank and Joe Hardy to take on their next mystery.

It's time to reimagine the Hardy Boys.

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<https://doi.org/10.2307/2079697>.

## Appendix A. Sales Data

Sales Data will be formatted as such:

### **SERIES:**

1. TITLE (YEAR) – PUBLISHER [ISBN]
  - a. SALES FROM BEGINNING OF RECORDS TO PRESENT DAY
  - b. (YEARS LISTED) – SALES IN THE MOST RECENT FIVE YEARS
  - c. (YEARS LISTED) – SALES IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

### **The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories (Original):**

1. The Tower Treasure (1927) – Grosset & Dunlap [NO ISBN]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
2. The House on the Cliff (1927) – Grosset & Dunlap [NO ISBN]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
3. The Secret of the Old Mill (1927) – Grosset & Dunlap [NO ISBN]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available

- b. US Data:
  - i. No Sales Records Available
  - ii. No Sales Records Available
  - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 4. The Missing Chums (1928) – Grosset & Dunlap [NO ISBN]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 5. Hunting for Hidden Gold (1928) – Grosset & Dunlap [NO ISBN]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available

## **The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories (Revised):**

- 1. The Tower Treasure (1959) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-448-08901-7]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 12,438
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 2,813
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 5,471
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 290,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 2. The House on the Cliff (1959) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-448-08902-5]

- a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 4,843
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 1,395
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 2,309
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 108,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
3. The Secret of the Old Mill (1962) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-448-08903-3]
- a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 3,194
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 1,079
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 1,085
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 94,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
4. The Missing Chums (1962) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-448-08904-1]
- a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 1,552
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 206
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 875
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 69,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
5. Hunting for Hidden Gold (1963) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-448-08095-8]
- a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 1,293
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 152
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 917
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 62,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available



## **The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories (2016 Re-Release):**

1. The Tower Treasure (2016) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-448-48952-0]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 2,056
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 499
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 2,027
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 24,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
2. The House on the Cliff (2016) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-448-48953-7]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 1,034
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 142
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 1,021
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 7,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
3. The Secret of the Old Mill (2016) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-448-48954-4]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 933
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 95
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 923
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 3,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
4. The Missing Chums (2016) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-448-48955-1]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 768
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 73
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 765
  - b. US Data:

- i. (2001 – 2023) 2,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 5. Hunting for Hidden Gold (2016) – Grosset & Dunlap [0-515-15907-3]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 2,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available

## **Hardy Boys Casefiles:**

- 1. Dead on Target (1987) – Simon & Schuster – Archway [0-671-62558-6]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 2. Evil, Inc. (1987) – Simon & Schuster – Archway [0-671-62559-4]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 3. Cult of Crime (1987) – Simon & Schuster – Archway [0-671-68726-3]
  - a. CAD Data:

- i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 8,445
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 4. The Lazarus Plot (1987) – Simon & Schuster – Archway [0-671-73995-6]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 12,662
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 5. Edge of Destruction (1987) – Simon & Schuster – Archway [0-671-73669-8]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. No Sales Records Available
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 5,900
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available

## **The Clues Brothers:**

- 1. The Gross Ghost Mystery (1997) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [0-671-00402-6]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 151
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
    - iii. (1997 – 2002) 151
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 26,773

- ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
    - iii. (1997 – 2002) 26,773
  - 2. The Karate Clue (1997) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [0-671-00403-4]
    - a. CAD Data:
      - i. (1996 – 2023) 80
      - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
      - iii. (1997 – 2002) 80
    - b. US Data:
      - i. (1996 – 2023) 25,751
      - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
      - iii. (1997 – 2002) 25,751
  - 3. First Day, Worst Day (1997) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [0-671-00404-2]
    - a. CAD Data:
      - i. (1996 – 2023) 306
      - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
      - iii. (1997 – 2002) 306
    - b. US Data:
      - i. (1996 – 2023) 18,375
      - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
      - iii. (1997 – 2002) 18,375
  - 4. Jump-Shot Detectives (1998) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [0-671-00405-0]
    - a. CAD Data:
      - i. (1996 – 2023) 952
      - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
      - iii. (1998 – 2003) 952
    - b. US Data:
      - i. (1996 – 2023) 42,458
      - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
      - iii. (1998 – 2003) 42,458
  - 5. The Dinosaur Disaster (1998) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [0-671-00406-9]
    - a. CAD Data:
      - i. No Sales Records Available
      - ii. No Sales Records Available
      - iii. No Sales Records Available
    - b. US Data:

- i. (1996 – 2023) 12,546
- ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
- iii. (1998 – 2003) 12,546

## **The Hardy Boys: Undercover Brothers:**

1. Extreme Danger (2005) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4169-0002-0]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 40,652
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 1,885
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 32,052
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 151,814
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 1,795
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 135,344
2. Running on Fumes (2005) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4169-0003-9]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 13,922
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 901
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 10,046
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 77,487
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 940
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 68,572
3. Boardwalk Bust (2005) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4169-0004-7]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 9,104
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 487
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 6,959
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 67,195
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 694
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 62,149
4. Thrill Ride (2005) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4169-0005-4]
  - a. CAD Data:

- i. (1996 – 2023) 7,969
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 57
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 6,798
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 70,241
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 745
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 65,332
- 5. Rocky Road (2005) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4169-0006-3]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 6,606
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 51
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 5,861
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 50,187
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 671
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 45,462

## **The Hardy Boys: Undercover Brothers – Graphic Novels**

- 1. The Ocean of Osyria (2005) – Papercutz Graphic Novels [1-4169-0005-4]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 1,753
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 271
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 10,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 2. Identity Theft (2005) – Papercutz Graphic Novels [1-5970-7003-3]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 6
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 4
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 5,750

- ii. No Sales Records Available
  - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 3. Mad House (2005) – Papercutz Graphic Novels [1-5996-1063-9]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 1,641
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
    - iii. (2005 – 2010) 271
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 2,500
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 4. Malled (2006) – Papercutz Graphic Novels [1-5970-7015-7]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 1,243
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
    - iii. (2006 – 2011) 309
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 2,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available
- 5. Sea You, Sea Me (2006) – Papercutz Graphic Novels [1-5970-7022-X]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 951
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 0
    - iii. (2006 – 2011) 304
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (2001 – 2023) 2,000
    - ii. No Sales Records Available
    - iii. No Sales Records Available

## **The Hardy Boys Adventures**

- 1. Secret of the Red Arrow (2013) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4424-4615-3]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 20,963

- ii. (2018 – 2023) 3,877
    - iii. (2013 – 2018) 17,838
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 47,835
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 20,627
    - iii. (2013 – 2018) 36,035
- 2. Mystery of the Phantom Heist (2013) – Simon & Schuster– Aladdin [1-4424-2237-8]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 8,249
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 2,232
    - iii. (2013 – 2018) 6,273
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 36,773
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 12,721
    - iii. (2013 – 2018) 32,633
- 3. The Vanishing Game (2013) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4424-7344-4]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 102
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 8
    - iii. (2013 – 2018) 95
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 2,423
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 442
    - iii. (2013 – 2018) 2,080
- 4. Into Thin Air (2013) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4424-7345-4]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 104
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 7
    - iii. (2013 – 2018) 98
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 2,579
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 508
    - iii. (2013 – 2018) 2,150
- 5. Peril at Granite Peak (2014) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4424-9395-7]



- a. CAD Data:
  - i. (1996 – 2023) 17,491
  - ii. (2018 – 2023) 638
  - iii. (2014 – 2019) 17,175
- b. US Data:
  - i. (1996 – 2023) 25,845
  - ii. (2018 – 2023) 8,326
  - iii. (2014 – 2019) 23,640

## **The Hardy Boys Secret Files**

- 1. Trouble at the Arcade (2010) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4169-9164-6]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 20,507
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 5,443
    - iii. (2010 – 2015) 11,530
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 100,407
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 17,120
    - iii. (2010 – 2015) 74,409
- 2. The Missing Mitt (2010) – Simon & Schuster– Aladdin [1-4169-9394-0]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 12,002
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 3,102
    - iii. (2010 – 2015) 6,801
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 43,433
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 8,383
    - iii. (2010 – 2015) 31,525
- 3. Mystery Map (2010) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4169-9165-6]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 14,579
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 1,839
    - iii. (2010 – 2015) 11,363
  - b. US Data:

- i. (1996 – 2023) 31,792
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 5,622
    - iii. (2010 – 2015) 23,699
- 4. Hopping Mad (2010) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4169-9395-9]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 8,737
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 495
    - iii. (2010 – 2015) 7,853
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 24,854
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 3,088
    - iii. (2010 – 2015) 20,048
- 5. A Monster of a Mystery (2011) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4169-9166-3]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 3,748
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 417
    - iii. (2011 – 2016) 3,211
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 22,902
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 3,790
    - iii. (2011 – 2016) 18,383

## **The Hardy Boys Clue Book**

- 1. The Video Game Bandit (2016) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4814-5052-2]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 35,630
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 22,617
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 35,031
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 54,522
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 41,060
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 42,374
- 2. The Missing Playbook (2016) – Simon & Schuster– Aladdin [1-4814-5177-2]
  - a. CAD Data:

- i. (1996 – 2023) 8,486
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 1,883
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 8,154
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 32,517
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 22,592
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 27,473
- 3. Water-Ski Wipeout (2016) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4814-5055-7]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 2,125
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 974
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 2,006
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 22,776
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 15,033
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 19,505
- 4. Talent Show Tricks (2016) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4814-5180-4]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 4,361
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 595
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 4,310
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 15,740
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 9,498
    - iii. (2016 – 2021) 14,113
- 5. Scavenger Hunt Heist (2017) – Simon & Schuster – Aladdin [1-4814-8516-4]
  - a. CAD Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 1,597
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 802
    - iii. (2017 – 2022) 1,592
  - b. US Data:
    - i. (1996 – 2023) 19,595
    - ii. (2018 – 2023) 11,788
    - iii. (2017 – 2022) 19,178

## Appendix B. Sample Character Profiles

### Frank Hardy: Character Profile

#### The Basics:

*Assumed Name:* Frank Hardy

*First Name:* Frank

*Last Name:* Hardy

*Nickname:* Frankie—but he gets annoyed when his brother uses it, and flustered when girls use it.

*Pronouns (and likelihood to use them):* (he/him/his). Frank would use his pronouns in situations where he feels it would encourage respect within the environment (and would force his brother to do the same).

*Race:* Caucasian

*Gender:* Male

*Age:* 17

*Birthday:* October 25th

*Place of Birth:* Bayport, USA

#### Physical Appearance:

*Height:* 5'9

*Body Type:* Slim, but athletically built.

*Hair Colour:* Dark brown, typically kept short and neatly styled.

*Eye Colour:* Light brown

*Scars:* N/A

*Tattoos:* N/A

*Any Other Physical Distinctions:* N/A

#### Family Relationships:

*Mother & Relationship:* Laura Hardy. Frank and his mother are close—while they will never hesitate to argue about the Dewey decimal system, they agree on pretty much everything else.

*Father & Relationship:* Fenton Hardy. Frank respects his father greatly and wants to follow in his footsteps. While Frank isn't always willing to take the risks his father does on cases, and becomes upset when his father puts himself in harm's way to solve a case, he cares for him deeply.

*Sibling & Relationship:* Joe Hardy. Though Frank and his brother are very different, they are also very close: there is a bond between them as detectives and as brothers that is unbreakable. Frank would do anything for his brother—including getting himself into trouble to get his brother out of trouble.

*Aunt & Relationship:* Gertrude Hardy. Aunt Gertrude puts pressure on Frank, as the elder of the brothers, to keep Joe safe, and Frank takes that responsibility very seriously. Though Aunt Gertrude may use a sharp tongue, her love for her nephew is undeniable.

### **Social Relationships:**

*Sexual Orientation:* Heterosexual (straight)

*Romantically Involved:* Near the beginning of the series, asks Callie Shaw on a date, and dates her for the remainder of the series.

*Friends:*

- Chet Morton
- Phil Cohen
- Tony Prito
- Biff Hooper
- Jerry Gilroy
- Jack Wayne

*Allies:* Include those that he and his brother have helped during their mysteries.

*Enemies:* Include those that he and his brother have put behind bars in the past.

### **Personal Characteristics:**

*Physical Strengths:* While Frank is well known for his intellect, he is also highly active. He plays on the Bayport baseball team, and competes in Track and Field events at his high school: notably, high jump and sprints.

*Physical Weaknesses:* Frank's history with high jump has left him with a weak left knee, which can physically give out on him during lengthy runs and on the occasional staircase.

*Mental Strengths:* Frank is incredibly intelligent, and is well-versed in all the typical high-school topics. He flourishes on exams without much studying, but prefers to put in the time to study and learn a topic starting at its most basic element.

**Additional Notes:**

- Frank is a black belt in Taekwon-Do. He trains inconsistently—whenever his schedule allows—and typically goes with his mother, since Joe doesn't want to train anymore.

## **Joseph (Joe) Hardy: Character Profile**

**The Basics:**

*Assumed Name:* Joe Hardy

*First Name:* Joseph (Joe)

*Last Name:* Hardy

*Nickname:* Joe is his preferred name—Joseph only slips out when he's in deep trouble with a member of his family (Frank included).

*Pronouns (and likelihood to use them):* (he/him/his). Joe prefers not to use his pronouns, and only does when faced with peer pressure from his brother and friends.

*Race:* Caucasian

*Gender:* Male

*Age:* 16

*Birthday:* October 4th

*Place of Birth:* Bayport, USA

**Physical Appearance:**

*Height:* 6'0 (and proud of it).

*Body Type:* More stockily built than his brother—notably with broader shoulders—but still boasts an athletic build that supports his football and long-distance running.

*Hair Colour:* Blonde. Typically kept long enough that it gets in his eyes (but he has to keep it long, because that's the style \*he thinks\* the girls like).

*Eye Colour:* Bright, piercing blue.

*Scars:* Small scar on his knee where he cut it open on a sprinkler in the grass when he was four years old.

*Tattoos:* N/A (but he definitely wants at least one)

*Any Other Physical Distinctions:* N/A

### **Family Relationships:**

*Mother & Relationship:* Laura Hardy. Joe doesn't love school and isn't always interested in studying, making his bed, or doing household chores, which has tested his relationship with his mother. Though they may exchange heated words, at the end of the day, they love each other very much.

*Father & Relationship:* Fenton Hardy. Joe comes close to worshipping the ground Fenton walks on: he believes his father is the greatest detective ever and can do no wrong. Joe is always first to come to his father's defense, and takes it personally when Frank points out options alternate to the actions Fenton takes.

*Sibling & Relationship:* Frank Hardy. Though Joe and his brother are very different, they are also very close: there is a bond between them as detectives and as brothers that is unbreakable. Frank will never know how much Joe appreciates him, because Joe knows that no matter what situation he gets himself into, Frank will get him out of it. Though he would much rather not admit it, Joe looks up to his big brother.

*Grandmother & Relationship:* Gertrude Hardy. As the younger of her only nephews, Gertrude dotes on Joe—sometimes to the chagrin of everyone in the room. Joe can never say no to Aunt Gertrude, so he is the first to avoid her when she decides it's cleaning day.

### **Social Relationships:**

*Sexual Orientation:* Heterosexual (straight)

*Romantically Involved:* Joe has an eye for girls that gets him into trouble more than once. He consistently dates Lola Morton, but he balks at using the word "girlfriend" to describe her.

*Friends:*

- Chet Morton
- Phil Cohen
- Tony Prito
- Biff Hooper
- Jerry Gilroy
- Jack Wayne

*Allies:* Include those that he and his brother have helped during their mysteries.

*Enemies:* Include those that he and his brother have put behind bars in the past.

**Personal Characteristics:**

*Physical Strengths:* Joe is built like a football player, and uses it to his advantage. He is physically strong, can be intimidating, and enjoys playing football and taking part in long-distance running activities. He doesn't, however, enjoy stretching, so he finds himself quite stiff, sometimes to the point where he can't touch his toes.

*Physical Weaknesses:* Lack of stretching means his muscles are often tight and he might not have a full range of motion—making squeezing out of tight situations difficult.

*Mental Strengths:* Whereas Frank is more traditionally “book smart,” Joe is more traditionally “street smart”—he knows what's going on with social media trends, makes friends easily, and does well on his exams when his brother convinces him to study.

**Additional Notes:**

- Joe is a Black Belt in Taekwon-Do. He trained with his brother and Mom until he was fourteen, when he achieved his black belt, and then quit to pursue football.

## **Laura Hardy: Character Profile**

**The Basics:**

*Assumed Name:* Laura

*First Name:* Laura

*Last Name:* Hardy

*Nickname:* Lau (when Fenton is trying to convince her of something)

*Pronouns (and likelihood to use them):* (she/her/hers) Laura proudly displays her pronouns on her nametag and in her email, and encourages others to do so as well.

*Race:* Caucasian

*Gender:* Female

*Age:* 48

*Birthday:* August 5th

*Place of Birth:* Bayport, USA

*Occupation:* Community Librarian

**Physical Appearance:**



*Height:* 5'6

*Body Type:* Triangle. Laura struggles with body image issues, and has for years.

*Hair Colour:* Brown, typically cut collarbone-length.

*Eye Colour:* Brown

*Scars:* N/A

*Tattoos:* A star on her hip that no one but Fenton knows about.

*Any Other Physical Distinctions:* N/A

### **Family Relationships:**

*Husband & Relationship:* Fenton Hardy. The two fell in love in high school, married quickly after, and have lived together since. Laura worries about her husband's work, but tries to hide her worries from her family.

*Child #1 & Relationship:* Frank Hardy. Frank has a special place in Laura's heart, since he was her first child. They don't often argue, unless it's about something academic and it's in good spirits. Laura is waiting 'for the right time' to tell Frank that he was supposed to have a twin brother, and when she smiles at him, she often visualizes what his twin may have looked like.

*Child #2 & Relationship:* Joe Hardy. Joe is Laura's 'problem child,' as she teasingly refers to him. She loves him deeply, but he does drive her absolutely mad when he doesn't do his dishes or show any interest in cleaning up behind himself. They will exchange verbal blows, but always come to terms at the end of the day.

*Child #3 & Relationship:* Unnamed Hardy. During Laura's first pregnancy, she was pregnant with twins; however, she miscarried one baby early in the second trimester. Her tattoo on her hip represents the baby she never had. While she knows that eventually she will have to tell Frank about his almost-twin, she just hasn't brought herself to do it yet.

*Mother-In-Law & Relationship:* Gertrude Hardy. Gertrude Hardy has a sharp tongue and antiquated views that she has no problem sharing, and Laura has a problem with the latter. While Laura never minds Gertrude staying, they often battle over Laura's parenting, the way she arranges her art at home, and many of the opinions that come out of Gertrude's mouth. While Gertrude fully exasperates Laura, she is willing to put up with a significant amount, because she knows how much it means to Gertrude to be able to stay with them for long periods of time. Laura will put her foot down on certain issues,

though—and she is proudly the only person that has ever been able to change Gertrude’s mind and, even better, get her to apologize for saying something rude.

### **Social Relationships:**

*Sexual Orientation:* Heterosexual (straight)

*Romantically Involved:* Married to Fenton Hardy

*Friends:* Many, through her work at the library and her years training in Taekwon-Do.

*Allies:* Most everyone likes Laura and her family, and are willing to support them whenever they need.

*Enemies:* While Laura herself doesn’t have any enemies, her husband’s enemies will often try and reach him through her.

### **Personal Characteristics:**

*Physical Strengths:* Laura is deceptively strong—after many years training in Taekwon-Do, she can handle herself in a fight.

*Physical Weaknesses:* N/A

*Mental Strengths:* Laura is incredibly book-smart, and is often who her sons turn to if they need information about a specific topic. If she doesn’t have the answer immediately, her job at the library means that she will know how to find it quickly.

### **Additional Notes:**

- Laura is a second degree black belt in Taekwon-Do. She started training with Frank and Joe when they were young, and is the only one to continue teaching. Eventually, she hopes to teach community self-defense classes: one intended for teenagers, and one intended for seniors.

## **Fenton Hardy: Character Profile**

### **The Basics:**

*Assumed Name:* Fenton

*First Name:* Fenton

*Last Name:* Hardy

*Nickname:* Fenton hates nicknames, preferring his full name only.

*Pronouns (and likelihood to use them):* (he/him/his). Fenton has been coached by his wife that he needs to be more open with sharing his pronouns—including having them in his email signature—but he still struggles to remember to include them in most introductory occasions.

*Race:* Caucasian

*Gender:* Male

*Age:* 51

*Birthday:* June 18th

*Place of Birth:* Bayport, USA

### **Physical Appearance:**

*Height:* 5'8

*Body Type:* Slender & unobtrusive—he is the kind of man that no one's gaze would last on for long, which works well for his profession.

*Hair Colour:* Salt & pepper, getting whiter as he ages.

*Eye Colour:* Brown

*Scars:* Many, throughout his body, from his various escapades. He dreams of the day when he will sit and tell his grandchildren stories about where he got his scars.

*Tattoos:* N/A

*Any Other Physical Distinctions:* N/A

### **Family Relationships:**

*Wife & Relationship:* Laura Hardy. Fenton never realizes how lucky he is to have a wife that is so understanding of his relationship with his work and his tendency to be out-and-about at all hours of the night, gone for long periods of time without communication, and for his many hospital visits. While Fenton doesn't often express his love for Laura (though Laura would love it if he did), he loves her more deeply than anything on this earth.

*Child #1 & Relationship:* Frank Hardy. Fenton was hit hard by Laura's miscarriage of Frank's twin, and struggled to see Frank without his twin for his first few years. He always wonders what Frank's twin would have been like, yet never answers his son truthfully when Frank asks his dad why he looks so sad. Fenton is proud of Frank, but as

a nature of his work, has been a relatively absent father, and missed many of Frank's "firsts" throughout his life.

*Child #2 & Relationship:* Joe Hardy. Fenton doesn't realize it, but Joe has always been his favourite child, likely because Fenton didn't dive into his work to escape his emotions the way he did when Frank was born. Fenton has a much stronger relationship with Joe than he does with Frank, though he always claims he loves his boys equally.

*Child #3 & Relationship:* Unnamed Hardy. Though Fenton had seen many things in his life, experiencing the loss of his own child before birth was excruciating. He threw himself into his work for much of the remainder of Laura's first pregnancy and Frank's first years, trying to bury the guilt and pain he felt. While he will never forget this child, he always wishes the pain of its loss would fade.

*Mother & Relationship:* Gertrude Hardy. Gertrude is a sharp-tongued woman, and though he didn't appreciate it when he was younger, Fenton has grown to love his mother for her quick remarks and rather outdated opinions. He knows how much the loss of his father impacted her, and makes the effort to be around when she stays with them—though almost always inevitably ends up on a case anyway.

### **Social Relationships:**

*Sexual Orientation:* Straight.

*Romantically Involved:* Married to Laura Hardy.

*Friends:*

- Jack Wayne
- Chief Ezra Collig
- Detective Smuff

*Allies:* Anyone he has helped in the past, and any of Frank and Joe's friends.

*Enemies:* A long list—especially those he brought to justice in the past.

### **Personal Characteristics:**

*Physical Strengths:* Fenton is a well-built, strong man, who is no stranger to throwing and taking punches. His specialty is walking quietly, often surprising people by seemingly appearing next to them with no warning.

*Physical Weaknesses:* Decades of police and private investigating work are taking their toll on Fenton, and he is beginning to see old injuries flare up, making it more difficult for him to do stakeouts, chase after suspects, and get himself out of tight situations.

*Mental Strengths:* Fenton has an incredibly quick mind, and prides himself on being able to look at situations from angles that no one else has considered.

## **Gertrude Hardy: Character Profile**

### **The Basics:**

*Assumed Name:* Aunt Gertrude

*First Name:* Gertrude

*Last Name:* Hardy

*Nickname:* Trudy—but the only person who can call her Trudy is Laura Hardy. Anyone else who tries will be on the receiving end of a supreme tongue lashing.

*Pronouns (and likelihood to use them):* (she/her/hers) Aunt Trudy wouldn't be caught dead sharing her pronouns. She thinks that because she looks female, it is safe for everyone to assume that she is.

*Race:* Caucasian

*Gender:* Female

*Age:* Never stated, and if asked, "It's unbecoming to ask a lady their age—didn't your mother teach you that when you were young?"

*Birthday:* August 16th

*Place of Birth:* Berlin, Germany

### **Physical Appearance:**

*Height:* 5'5

*Body Type:* Barrel-chested

*Hair Colour:* White

*Eye Colour:* Green

*Scars:* N/A

*Tattoos:* N/A

*Any Other Physical Distinctions:* Aunt Gertrude has been told many times by her doctor to use a cane, but she often refuses, stating that she can walk just fine. At times though, she does struggle without the cane. When she does use her cane, she uses it strategically—especially grocery shopping, so she can ensure a clear path whenever she needs.

**Family Relationships:**

*Son & Relationship:* Fenton Hardy. Gertrude loves Fenton and is incredibly proud of everything he has accomplished, but that isn't enough to save him from her sharp tongue.

*Daughter-In-Law & Relationship:* Laura Hardy. If she thought it was possible, Gertrude would love Laura more than her own son. When Gertrude visits the Hardy house in Bayport, it is typically to spend time with Laura, because no one else is willing to challenge her and talk back to her the way that Laura does. Gertrude finds it refreshing, but she would never admit it.

*Nephew #1 & Relationship:* Frank Hardy. Gertrude always wished Frank would become a lawyer or a doctor— “a more civilized profession, considering the size of your brain” — and often rides him for his decision to follow in his father's footsteps. That said, she is the first to worry about him, though her worry doesn't always come across as such.

*Nephew #2 & Relationship:* Joe Hardy. Gertrude sees her late husband in Joe, particularly his athletic abilities and eye for the girls. She despises his tendency to keep his hair long, but would secretly be horrified if he cut his hair and looked any more like her late husband.

*Nephew #3 & Relationship:* Unnamed Hardy. Gertrude does not know that Laura was originally having twins.

**Social Relationships:**

*Sexual Orientation:* Straight

*Romantically Involved:* Single, but open to dating.

*Friends:* Many across the globe—Gertrude often travels to see them.

*Allies:* Laura Hardy is Gertrude's strongest advocate.

*Enemies:* Anyone who has come across her strong tongue & antiquated opinions.

**Personal Characteristics:**

*Physical Strengths:* Gertrude can wield a cane like nobody's business, whether it is to open a door or whack an offending hand reaching for the pie before dessert.

*Physical Weaknesses:* Gertrude's advanced age means that it can take her time to get in and out of vehicles, chairs, and to generally move from seated to standing.

*Mental Strengths:* Gertrude is as smart as a whip, and can come up with a scathing reply or quick-witted response faster than anyone half her age.

## **Chester (Chet) Morton: Character Profile**

### **The Basics:**

*Assumed Name:* Chet

*First Name:* Chester

*Last Name:* Morton

*Nickname:* Chet—no one calls him Chester unless it is one of his parents and he is in incredibly deep trouble.

*Pronouns (and likelihood to use them):* (he/him/his) or (he/they/theirs). Chet is open with his pronouns and prefers to be addressed in the way most comfortable to the addressee.

*Race:* Caucasian with Indigenous ancestry.

*Gender:* Male

*Age:* 17

*Birthday:* May 5th

*Place of Birth:* New York, NY

### **Physical Appearance:**

*Height:* 5'7

*Body Type:* Chet is heavysset and struggles with his body image. Later in the series, it is revealed that he has diabetes.

*Hair Colour:* Brown, short, and curly

*Eye Colour:* Brown

*Scars:* N/A

*Tattoos:* N/A

*Any Other Physical Distinctions:* N/A

### **Social Relationships:**

*Sexual Orientation:* Presents as straight, but comes out as gay partway through the series.

*Romantically Involved:* Not at the beginning of the series, but gets a boyfriend partway through the series.

*Friends:*

- Frank Hardy
- Joe Hardy
- Phil Cohen
- Tony Prito
- Biff Hooper
- Jerry Gilroy

*Allies:* Anyone he and the Hardy Boys have assisted in the past.

*Enemies:* Anyone who has gotten on the wrong side of one of his new hobbies.

**Personal Characteristics:**

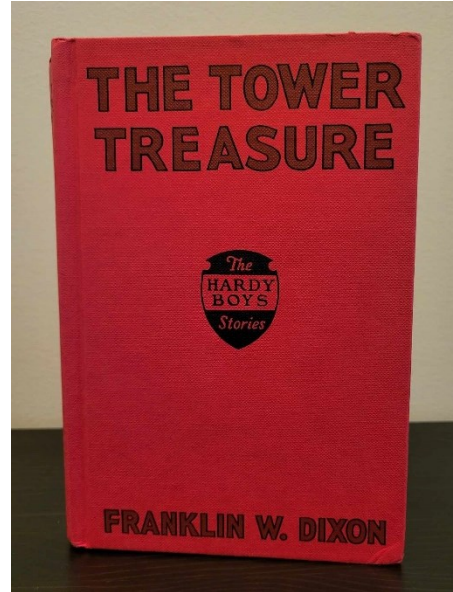
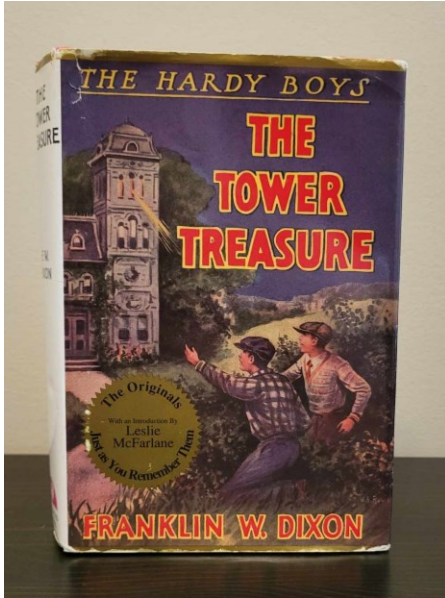
*Physical Strengths:* Chet is built like a truck: he is strong, somewhat intimidating, and can move deceptively quickly.

*Physical Weaknesses:* Chet is not built for long-distance activities, and often complains of being tired much earlier than his other friends.

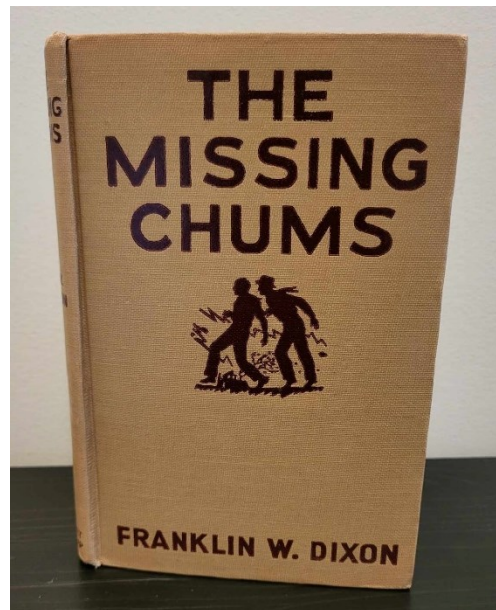
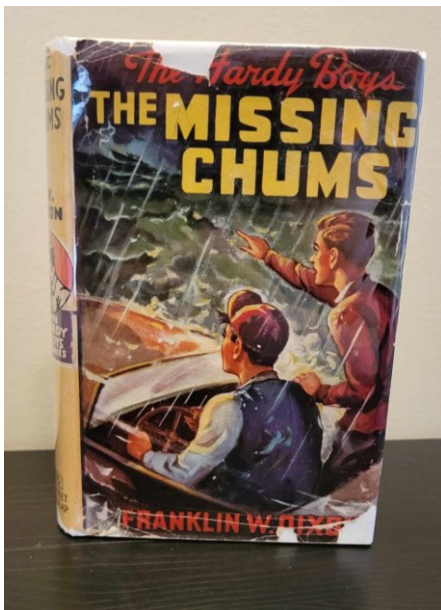
*Mental Strengths:* Chet is people-smart: he picks up on little things that most other people would miss. He has also garnered lots of experience from working on his various hobbies, and knows a little bit about a lot of things.



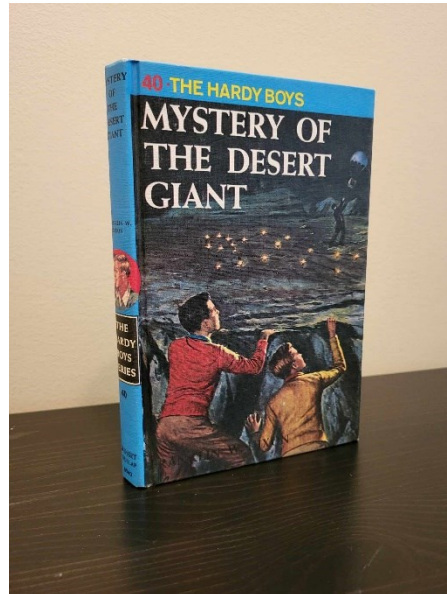
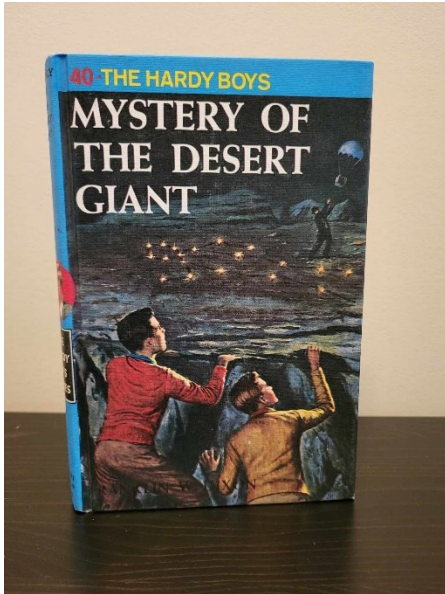
## Appendix C: Photo Library – Hardy Boys Series Packaging



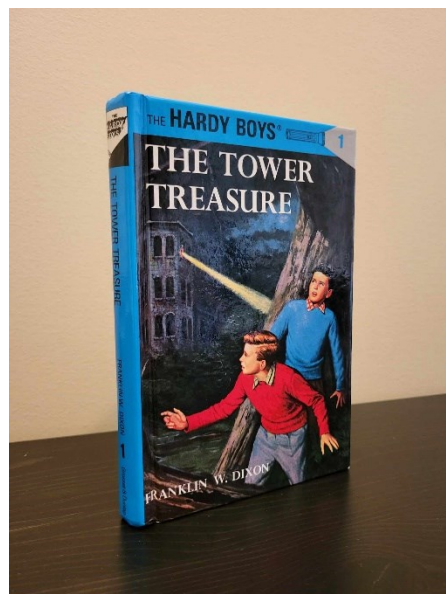
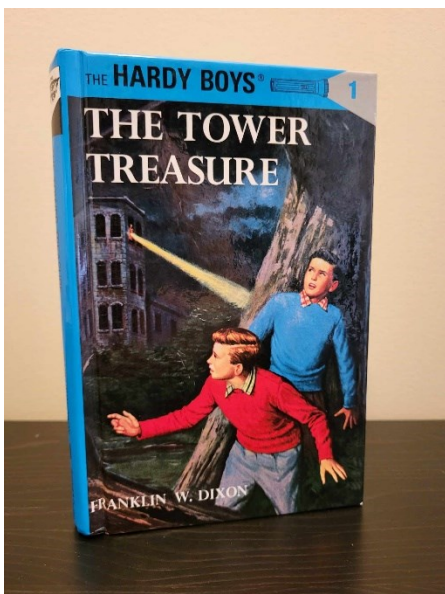
Figures C.1 and C.2: a facsimile of the original 1927 printing of *The Tower Treasure*. Figure C.1 features the original dustjacket on the left (with the gold circle noting that it is a facsimile), and Figure C.2 features the original red binding, black text, and original Hardy Boys logo.



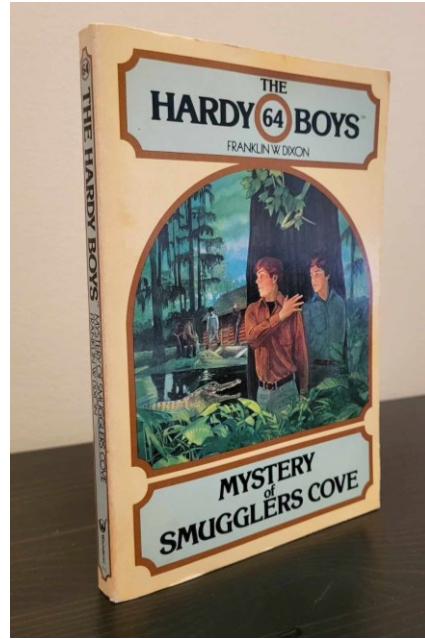
Figures C.3 and C.4: An early 1930s printing of *The Missing Chums*, the fourth book in the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories series. Figure C.3 features the yellow spine with the new Hardy Boys logo. Figure C.4 features the tan binding typical of Hardy Boys printings between the 1930s and the late 1950s.



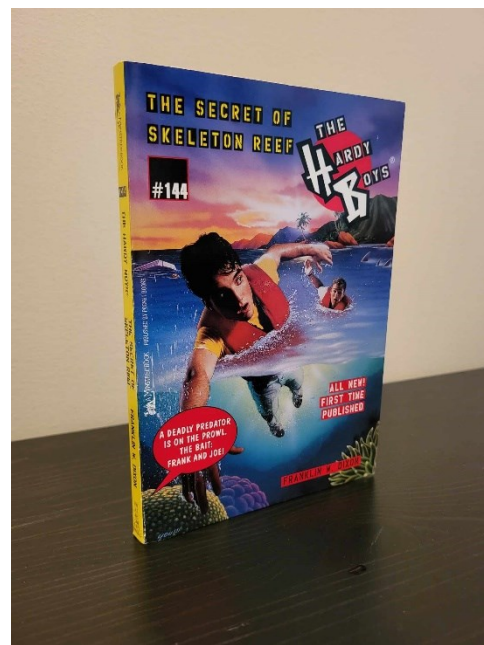
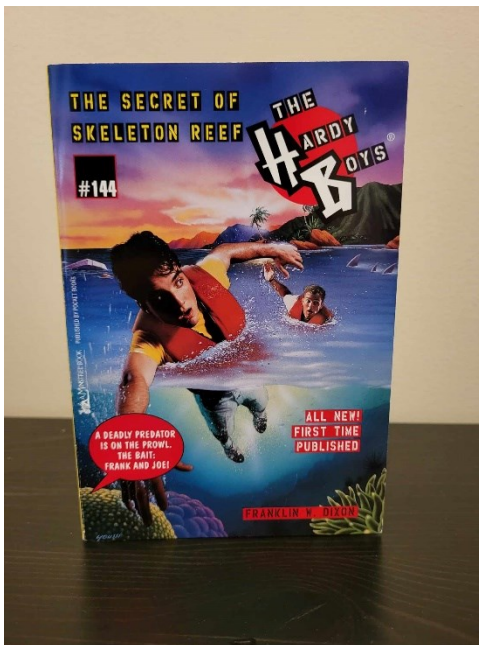
Figures C.5 & C.6: *Mystery of the Desert Giant* was published in 1961, and reflects the updated packaging and branding for the Hardy Boys. Gone are the days of dustjackets; instead, the hardcover has the image printed directly on it, with a blue spine connecting to the strip at the top of the cover page. The spine also reflects an updated version of the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories logo.



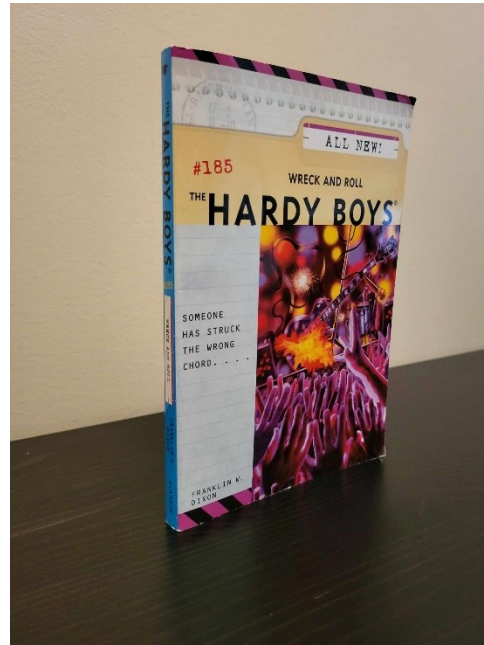
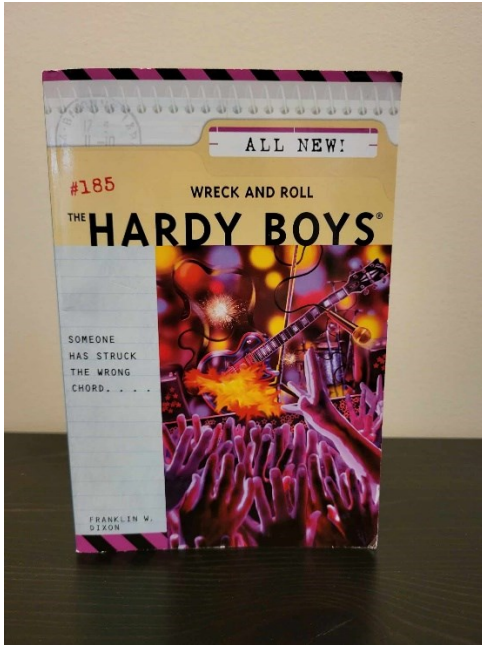
Figures C.7 & C.8: *The Tower Treasure* was repackaged and re-released in 2006, along with the rest of the first 58 Hardy Boys books. This packaging featured plastic covers with more defined artwork, a new Hardy Boys logo, and distinct black and white text as opposed to the black, white, and yellow text of the 1960s.



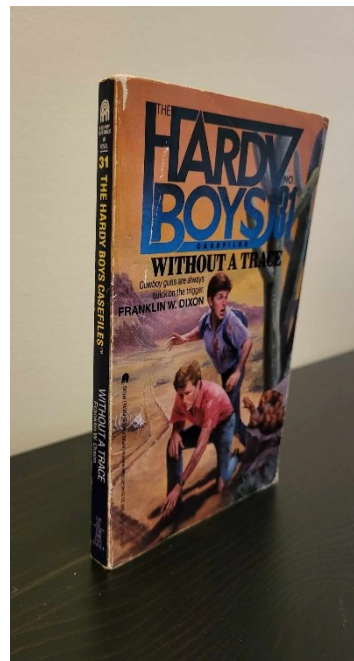
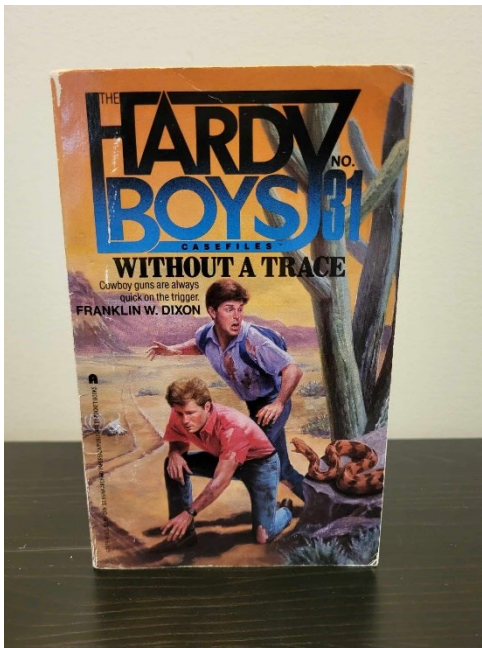
Figures C.9 & C.10: *Mystery of Smugglers Cove*, demonstrating the first of the paperback Hardy Boys series, published between 1979 and 1985.



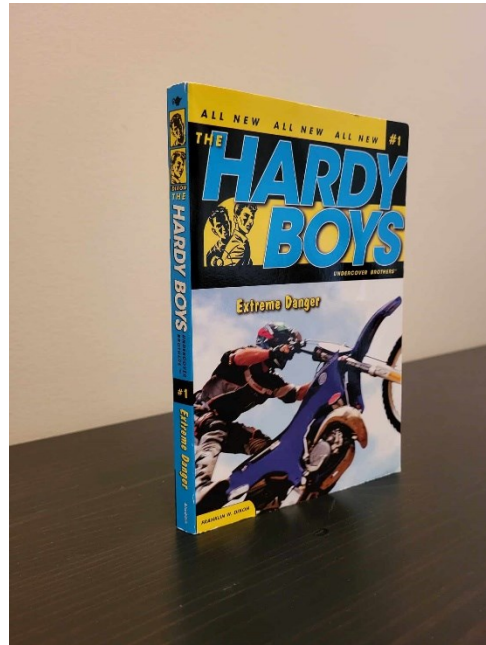
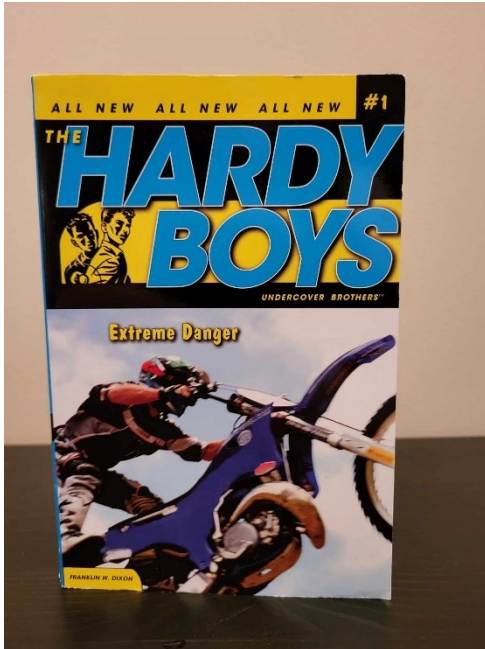
Figures C.11 & C.12: *The Secret of Skeleton Reef* depicts the Minstrel editions of the Hardy Boys, which was the result of a partnership with Simon & Schuster and Mega Books. Published between 1987 and 2001, these paperback books featured a new Hardy Boys logo and a yellow spine.



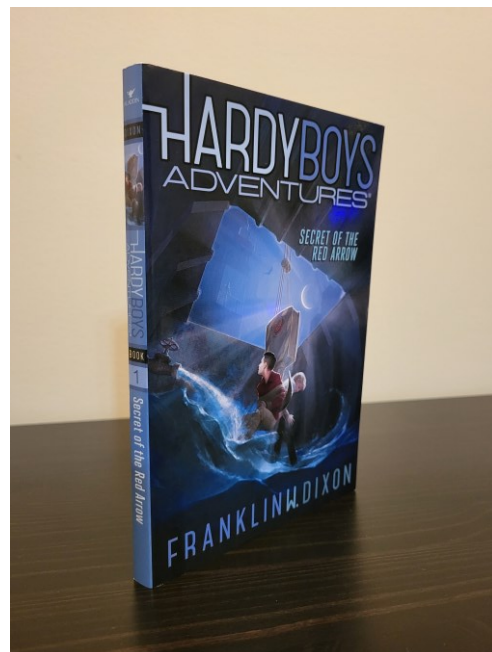
Figures C.13 & C.14: *Wreck and Roll*, an example of the Aladdin paperback Hardy Boys books, published between 2002 and 2005. These books feature yet another new logo, a blue spine, and a notebook-style cover.



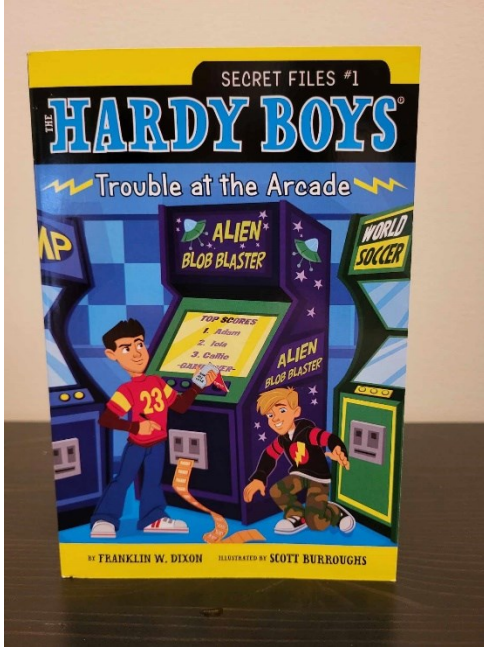
Figures C.15 & C.16: *Without a Trace* is number 31 in the Hardy Boys Casefiles series. These mass-market paperbacks were published between 1987 and 1998, and featured a navy spine in addition to a new Hardy Boys logo.



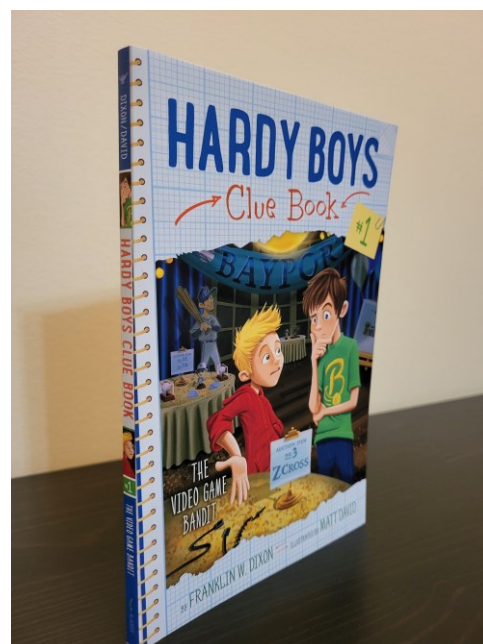
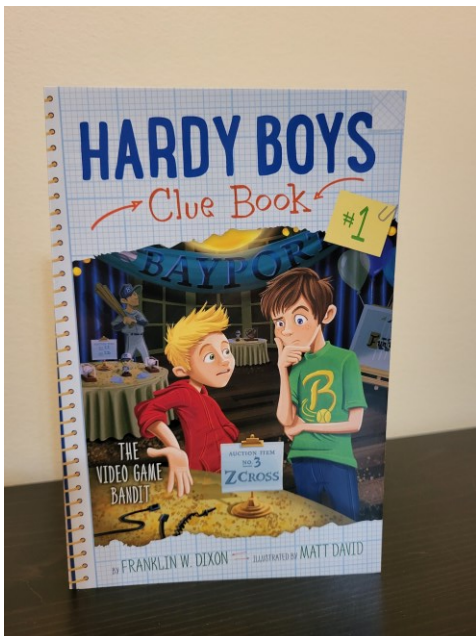
Figures C.17 & C.18: The Hardy Boys: Undercover Brothers series featured blue spines and a new logo based on Frank and Joe's faces. This series is known for its use of blue and yellow together, and was published in paperback between 2005 and 2012.



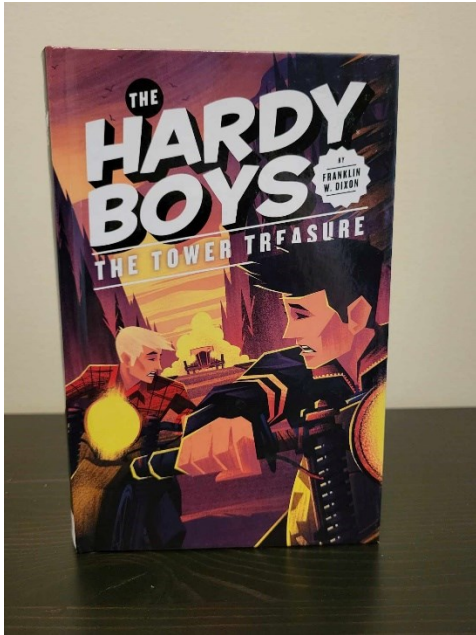
Figures C.19 & C.20: A paperback copy of *Secret of the Red Arrow*. This series welcomed a new logo, a much paler blue spine, and was released in both paperback and hardcover, starting in 2013 and ongoing today.



Figures C.21 & C.22: *Trouble at the Arcade* was the first Hardy Boys Secret Files book published. Returning to the blue and yellow theme reminiscent of the Hardy Boys: Undercover Brothers, this series is significantly shorter than others, and features a black spine. Notably, it is the first series to denote a second author alongside Franklin W. Dixon on the spine.



Figures C.23 & C.24: A paperback version of *The Video Game Bandit*. This series features a white and blue spine that also notes a secondary author. In addition, since this series encourages participation from readers, it includes a notebook theme on the left side.



Figures C.25 & C.26: The re-release and repackaging of *The Tower Treasure* from 2016 featured a new Hardy Boys logo, and a sleeker cover with more animated-style graphics. Gone is the notable blue branding; instead, featuring a modern black and white theme.

\*\*Note: All photos in Appendix C were supplied by Kyra Droog (2023) from her collection of Hardy Boys books. Special thanks to Simon & Schuster Canada for providing books required for this project.