

= The Hardy Boys =

The Hardy Boys , Frank and Joe Hardy , are fictional characters who appear in various mystery series for children and teens .

The characters were created by Edward Stratemeyer , the founder of the Stratemeyer Syndicate , a book @-@ packaging firm , and the books have been written by many different ghostwriters over the years . The books are published under the collective pseudonym Franklin W. Dixon .

The Hardy Boys have evolved in various ways since their first appearance in 1927 . Beginning in 1959 , the books were extensively revised , largely to eliminate racial stereotypes . The books were also written in a simpler style in an attempt to compete with television . Some critics argue that in the process , the Hardy Boys changed , becoming more respectful of the law and simultaneously more affluent , " agents of the adult ruling class " and the like . Most , however , saw the updates as an attempt to make the style of the books more modern , while lamenting the loss of the richer pre @-@ war descriptive style . Similar complaints were made about the updates to the comparable girls ' series Nancy Drew .

A new Hardy Boys series , the Hardy Boys Casefiles , was created in 1987 , and featured murders , violence , and international espionage . The original Hardy Boys Mystery Stories series ended in 2005 . A new series , Undercover Brothers , was launched the same year , featuring updated versions of the characters who narrate their adventures in the first person . The Undercover Brothers ended in 2012 and was replaced in 2013 by The Hardy Boys Adventures , also narrated in the first person .

Through all these changes , the characters have remained popular . The books sell more than a million copies a year . Several additional volumes are published annually , and the boys ' adventures have been translated into more than 25 languages . The Hardy Boys have been featured in computer games and five television shows and used to promote merchandise such as lunchboxes and jeans .

Critics have offered many explanations for the characters ' longevity , suggesting variously that the Hardy Boys embody simple wish fulfillment , American ideals of masculinity , American ideals of boyhood , a well @-@ respected father paradoxically argued to be inept , and the possibility of the triumph of good over evil .

= = Premise = =

The Hardy Boys are fictional teenage brothers and amateur detectives . They live in the city of Bayport on Barmet Bay with their father , detective Fenton Hardy , their mother , Laura Hardy , and their Aunt Gertrude . Frank , the older brother , is eighteen (sixteen in earlier versions) , and his younger brother Joe is seventeen (fifteen in earlier versions) . The brothers nominally attend high school in Bayport , where they are in the same grade , but school is rarely mentioned in the books and never hinders the Hardys in solving mysteries . In the older stories , the Hardy Boys ' cases are often linked to the confidential cases their detective father is working on . He sometimes asks them for help , while at other times they stumble upon villains and incidents that are connected to his cases . In the Undercover Brothers series , begun in 2005 , the Hardys are members of an organization known as American Teens Against Crime , which assigns them to cases . The Hardy Boys are sometimes assisted in solving mysteries by their friends Chet Morton , Phil Cohen , Biff Hooper , Jerry Gilroy , and Tony Prito , and , less frequently , by their platonic girlfriends Callie Shaw and Lola Morton (Chet 's sister) .

The Hardy Boys are constantly involved in adventure and action . Despite frequent danger , the boys " never lose their nerve ... They are hardy boys , luckier and more clever than anyone around them . " They live in an atmosphere of mystery and intrigue : " Never were so many assorted felonies committed in a simple American small town . Murder , drug peddling , race horse kidnapping , diamond smuggling , medical malpractice , big @-@ time auto theft , even (in the 1940s) the hijacking of strategic materials and espionage , all were conducted with Bayport as a nucleus . " With so much in common , the boys are so little differentiated that one commentator

facetiously describes them thus : " The boys ' characters basically broke down this way ? Frank had dark hair ; Joe was blond . " In general , however , " Frank was the thinker while Joe was more impulsive , and perhaps a little more athletic . " The two boys are infallibly on good terms with each other and never engage in sibling rivalry , with the exception of the New Hardy Boys Casefiles series .

Frank and Joe do not lack for money and they travel frequently to far @-@ away locations , including Mexico in The Mark on the Door (1934) , Scotland in The Secret Agent on Flight 101 (1967) , Iceland in The Arctic Patrol Mystery (1969) , Egypt in The Mummy Case (1980) , and Kenya in The Mystery of the Black Rhino (2003) . The Hardys also travel freely within the United States by motorcycle , motor boat , iceboat , train and airplane , as well as their own car .

= = Creation of characters = =

The characters were conceived in 1926 by Edward Stratemeyer , founder of the Stratemeyer Syndicate , a book @-@ packaging firm . Stratemeyer initially pitched the new series to publishers Grosset & Dunlap and suggested that the boys might be called the Keene Boys , the Scott Boys , the Hart Boys , or the Bixby Boys . Grosset & Dunlap editors , for reasons unknown , chose the name " The Hardy Boys " and approved the project . Stratemeyer accordingly hired Canadian Leslie McFarlane to ghostwrite the first volumes in the series . McFarlane would author nineteen of the first twenty @-@ five volumes in the series . Subsequent titles have been written by a number of different ghostwriters , all under the pseudonym Franklin W. Dixon . The first three titles were published in 1927 , and were an immediate success : by mid @-@ 1929 over 115 @,@ 000 books had been sold . So successful was the series that Stratemeyer created the character of Nancy Drew as a female counterpart to the Hardys .

= = = Ghostwriters = = =

All the Hardy Boys novels have been written by ghostwriters . In accordance with the customs of Stratemeyer Syndicate series production , ghostwriters for the Syndicate signed contracts that have sometimes been interpreted as requiring authors to sign away all rights to authorship or future royalties . The contracts stated that authors could not use their Stratemeyer Syndicate pseudonyms independently of the Syndicate . In the early days of the Syndicate , ghostwriters were paid a fee of \$ 125 , " roughly equivalent to two months ' wages for a typical newspaper reporter , the primary day job of the syndicate ghosts . " During the Great Depression this fee was lowered , first to \$ 100 and later to \$ 75 . All royalties went to the Syndicate ; all correspondence with the publisher was handled through a Stratemeyer Syndicate office , and the Syndicate was able to enlist the cooperation of libraries in hiding the ghostwriters ' names .

The Syndicate 's process for creating the Hardy Boys books consisted of creating a detailed outline , with all elements of plot ; drafting a manuscript ; and editing the manuscript . Edward Stratemeyer 's daughter , Edna Stratemeyer Squier , and possibly Stratemeyer himself , wrote outlines for the first volumes in the series . Beginning in 1934 , Stratemeyer 's other daughter , Harriet Stratemeyer Adams , began contributing plot outlines ; she and Andrew Svenson wrote most of the plot outlines for the next several decades . Other plot outliners included Vincent Buranelli , James Duncan Lawrence , and Tom Mulvey .

Most of the early volumes were written by Canadian Leslie McFarlane , who authored nineteen of the first twenty @-@ five titles , as well as co @-@ authored volume 17 The Secret Warning , between 1927 and 1946 . Unlike many other Syndicate ghostwriters , McFarlane was regarded highly enough by the Syndicate that he was frequently given advances of \$ 25 or \$ 50 , and during the Depression , when fees were lowered , he was paid \$ 85 for each Hardy Boys book when other Syndicate ghostwriters were receiving only \$ 75 for their productions . According to McFarlane 's family , he despised the series and its characters .

After co @-@ authoring Volume 17 , John Button , with Volume 18 , The Twisted Claw (1939) , took over the series full @-@ time until 1942 ; McFarlane resumed with Volume 22 , The Flickering

Torch Mystery (1943) . McFarlane 's last contribution was Volume 24 , The Short @-@ Wave Mystery (1945) ; his wife , Amy , authored Volume 26 , The Phantom Freighter (1947) . Over the next several decades , other volumes were written by Adams , Svenson , Lawrence , Buranelli , William Dougherty , and James Buechler (a teenager at the time) . Beginning in 1959 , the series was extensively revised and re @-@ written . Many authors worked on the revised books , writing new manuscripts ; some of them also wrote plot outlines and edited the books . Among the authors who worked on the revised versions were Adams , Svenson , Buechler , Lilo Wuenn , Anne Shultes , Alistair Hunter , Tom Mulvey , Patricia Doll , and Priscilla Baker @-@ Carr .

In 1979 , the Hardy Boys books began to be published in paperback rather than hardcover . Lawrence and Buranelli continued to write titles ; other authors included Karl Harr III and Laurence Swinburne . In 1984 , the rights to the series were sold , along with the Stratemeyer Syndicate , to Simon & Schuster . New York book packager Mega @-@ Books subsequently hired authors to write the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories and a new series , the Hardy Boys Casefiles .

= = = Legal disputes = = =

In 1980 , dissatisfied with the lack of creative control at Grosset & Dunlap and the lack of publicity for the Hardy Boys ' 50th anniversary in 1977 , Harriet Adams switched publishers for the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew , as well as other series , to Simon & Schuster . Grosset & Dunlap filed suit against the Syndicate and Simon & Schuster , citing " breach of contract , copyright infringement , and unfair competition " and requesting \$ 300 million in damages .

The outcome of the case turned largely on the question of who had written the Nancy Drew series . Adams filed a countersuit , claiming that , as author of the Nancy Drew Mystery Stories , she retained the rights to her work . Although Adams had written many Nancy Drew titles after 1953 and edited others , she claimed to be the author of all of the early titles . In fact , she had rewritten the older titles , but was not the original author . When Mildred Benson , the author of the early Nancy Drew volumes , was called to testify about her work for the Syndicate , Benson 's role in writing the manuscripts of early titles was revealed in court with extensive documentation , contradicting Adams ' claims to authorship . The court ruled that Grosset had the rights to publish the original series of both Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys as they were in print in 1980 , but did not own characters or trademarks . Furthermore , any new publishers chosen by Adams were completely within their rights to print new titles .

= = Evolution of characters = =

The Hardy Boys have gone through many permutations over the years . Beginning in 1959 , the books were extensively revised , and some commentators find that the Hardys ' characters changed in the process . Commentators also sometimes see differences between the Hardy Boys of the original Hardy Boys Mystery Stories and the Hardy Boys of the Hardy Boys Casefiles or the new Undercover Brothers series .

= = = 1927 ? 1959 = = =

The early volumes , largely written by Leslie McFarlane , have been praised for their atmosphere and writing style , qualities often considered lacking in juvenile series books . McFarlane 's writing is clear and filled with specific details , making his works superior to many other Stratemeyer series titles . Such , at least , was McFarlane 's intention : " It seemed to me the Hardy Boys deserved something better than the slapdash treatment Dave Fearless had been getting ... I opted for Quality . " The volumes not written by McFarlane or his wife were penned by John Button , who wrote the series from 1938 to 1942 ; this period is sometimes referred to as the " Weird Period " as the writing is full of inconsistencies and the Hardy Boys ' adventures involve futuristic gadgetry and exotic locations .

In general , the world of these early volumes is a " [dark] and ... divided place " . In these early

titles , the boys are cynical about human nature , an attitude apparently justified when the police , whom they have repeatedly helped , throw them into jail on slim evidence in *The Great Airport Mystery* (1930) . The police and authority figures in general come off poorly in these books , so much so that at one point Edward Stratemeyer wrote McFarlane to reprimand him for " grievous lack of respect for officers of the law . " The Hardys are less affluent than earlier Stratemeyer characters ; they eagerly accept cash rewards largely to finance college educations , and , with their parents , strive to please their Aunt Gertrude , because she possesses a small fortune . The rich are portrayed as greedy and selfish . This view of the world reflects McFarlane 's relative " lack [of] sympathy with the American power structure . " In his autobiography , McFarlane described his rationale for writing the books this way , writing : " I had my own thoughts about teaching youngsters that obedience to authority is somehow sacred 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 ? "

The books ' attitudes towards minority characters are a matter of disagreement . These early volumes have been called models of diversity for their day , since among the Hardys ' friends are Phil Cohen , who is Jewish , and the Italian immigrant Tony Prito . However , these two friends are rarely involved in the Hardys ' adventures , a level of friendship reserved for Biff Hooper and Chet Morton . The books have been extensively criticized for their use of racial and ethnic stereotypes and their xenophobia . Vilnoff , for example , the villain in *The Sinister Sign* @-@ *Post* (1936) , is described as " swarthy " and " a foreigner " , notes critic Steve Burgess .

We sense his untrustworthy nature immediately when he sits down beside the boys at a football game and doesn 't understand it , despite the boys ' best efforts to explain . When he does grasp something , you know it . " I onnerstand pairfectly , " he says . Later he adds genially , " I haf you where I vant you now ! " Can 't quite place the accent ? It 's foreign . Twenty @-@ five chapters are not enough to solve the mystery of his nationality .

African Americans are the targets of much racism , being depicted as unintelligent , lazy , and superstitious , " bumpkin rescuers " at best and " secretive and conspiratorial villains " at worst . Benjamin Lefebvre notes that Harriet Adams at times rebuked Leslie McFarlane for not sufficiently following her instructions regarding the portrayal of African @-@ American characters ; he writes that it is not clear " whether Adams rewrote parts of McFarlane 's manuscripts to add [racist] details or to what extent these early texts would now be considered even more notoriously racist had McFarlane followed Adams 's instructions more carefully . " In *Footprints Under the Window* (1933) , Chinese American men are portrayed as effeminate threats both to national security and white heteromascularity . Native Americans received mixed treatment ; those living within the continental United States are portrayed as members of once @-@ noble tribes whose greatness has been diminished by the coming of white men , while those living outside the continental U.S. are " portrayed as uneducated , easily manipulated , or semi @-@ savage . " However , Hispanics are generally treated as equals ; the Hardy Boys as well as their father speak Spanish , and Mexico 's history and culture are treated with respect and admiration .

= = = 1959 ? 1979 = = =

The Hardy Boys volumes were extensively revised beginning in 1959 at the insistence of publishers Grosset & Dunlap , and against the wishes of Harriet Adams . The revision project , which also encompassed the *Nancy Drew Mystery Stories* , was sparked largely by letters that parents had been writing to Grosset & Dunlap since at least 1948 , complaining about the prevalence of racial stereotypes in the books . Volume 14 in the Hardy Boys series , *The Hidden Harbor Mystery* (1935) , was singled out for particular and repeated attention for its portrayal of a black criminal who organizes a gang of black boys and treats whites disrespectfully . As one parent put it , the books were " ingraining the old race @-@ riot type of fear . " As such letters became more frequent , Grosset & Dunlap informed the Stratemeyer Syndicate that the books must be revised and such stereotypes excised . The end result , however , was less the removal of stereotypes than the removal of non @-@ white characters altogether and the creation of an " ethnically cleansed

Bayport ". By the 1970s , however , the series began to re @-@ introduce black characters .

An additional rationale for the revisions was a drop in sales , which became particularly significant by the mid @-@ 1960s . Accordingly , the revisions focused on streamlining the texts , as well as eliminating stereotypes . The books were shortened from 25 chapters to 20 and the writing style was made terser . Difficult vocabulary words such as " ostensible " and " presaged " were eliminated , as was slang . As a result of the new , more streamlined writing style , the books focus more on non @-@ stop action than on building atmosphere , and " prolonged suspense [is] evaporated . " The books were also aimed at an increasingly younger audience with shorter attention spans . For this reason , many commentators find the new versions nothing less than " eviscerated " , foremost among them being the first Hardy Boys ghostwriter , Leslie McFarlane , who agreed with a reporter 's statement that the books had been " gutted " .

In the course of revising and modernizing the series , many plots were completely re @-@ written . The Flickering Torch Mystery (1943) , for example , was changed from a plot involving an actual flickering torch used as a signal by a gang to a plot featuring a rock club called " The Flickering Torch " . When plots were kept , their more lurid elements were eliminated ; Vilhoff , the villain in The Sinister Sign @-@ Post , was changed from a criminal who compulsively sculpts miniature models of his own hands to a car thief without such eccentricities , and another villain , Pedro Vincenzo , who branded his victims no longer does so in the revised version of The Mark on the Door (1934 , rev. 1967) .

The books became more respectful of law and authority . Even villains no longer smoked or drank , and scenes involving guns and shoot @-@ outs were compressed or eliminated , in favor of criminals simply giving themselves up . The boys , too , become more respectful of rules and of the law ; for example , they no longer drive faster than the speed limit even in pursuit of a villain . The Hardys also became more and more wealthy , prompting the criticism that the " major problem in [these volumes] is that the Hardy Boys have risen above any ability to identify with people like the typical boys who read their books . They are members and agents of the adult ruling class , acting on behalf of that ruling class . "

= = = 1979 ? 2005 = = =

The Hardy Boys began to be published in paperback in 1979 . The Hardys were also featured in two new series , the Hardy Boys Casefiles and the Clues Brothers . The latter series , modeled on the Nancy Drew Notebooks , was aimed at a younger audience , and ran from 1997 to 2000 . In contrast , the Casefiles , begun a decade earlier in 1987 , was aimed at an older audience than the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories . In the new series , the Hardys ' work with a secret government organization simply called the " Network " , with which they collaborate to " infiltrate organized crime , battle terrorists and track down assassins around the world . " The Hardys ' personalities are portrayed as more separate and distinct , and they sometimes fight ; in the first of the series , Dead on Target , for example , the brothers brawl after Frank tries to restrain Joe after Joe 's girlfriend , Lola Morton , is killed by a car bomb . In general , the series is more violent , and the Hardy Boys carry various guns ; Lines like " Joe ! Hand me the Uzi ! " are not out of character . Barbara Steiner , a Casefiles ghostwriter , describes a sample plot outline : " I was told that Joe Hardy would get involved with a waitress , a black widow kind of character , and that Joe would get arrested for murder . I was told the emphasis was on high action and suspense and there had to be a cliff @-@ hanger ending to every chapter . "

= = = 2005 ? present = = =

The long @-@ running Hardy Boys Mystery Stories series ended in 2005 and was replaced with a reboot series , The Hardy Boys : Undercover Brothers . In these volumes , the Hardys ' adventures are narrated in the first person , each brother alternating chapters . This fresh approach to telling the adventures reveals two boys quite foreign to how they have been portrayed before , egotistical and jealous , and longtime readers will find few connections with the boys ' previous personalities . The

boys ' Aunt Gertrude becomes " Trudy " , their mother Laura is given a career as a librarian , and their father is semi @-@ retired . The boys are given their cases by a secret group known as ATAC , an acronym for American Teens Against Crime . In this new series , the Hardy Boys seem " more like regular kids ? who have lots of wild adventures ? in these books , which also deal with issues that kids today might have thought about . For example , the second book in the series , Running on Fumes , deals with environmentalists who go a little too far to try to save trees . " The Hardys are also featured in a new graphic novel series , begun in 2005 and produced by Papercutz , and a new early chapter book series called The Hardy Boys : Secret Files , begun in 2010 by the publisher Simon & Schuster under their Aladdin imprint . The last Undercover Brothers books were released in January 2012 (main series) and July 2012 (Nancy Drew / Hardy Boys Super Mystery ' 07 series) . At the time of cancellation , there was one book that had been announced , but was ultimately shelved (The Case Of The MyFace Kidnapper) ; it is unknown whether this was going to be the final title of this unpublished book , since many bookstore websites and Simon & Schuster 's website always had the letters " W.T " behind the title , meaning that it was a " working title . "

February 2013 saw the launch of The Hardy Boys Adventures , a series written in the first @-@ person . For the first time since 1985 , the books will be issued in hardcover , along with paperback editions .

= = Books = =

The longest @-@ running series of books to feature the Hardy Boys is the Hardy Boys Mystery Stories , sometimes also called the Hardy Boys Mysteries . The series ran from 1927 to 2005 and comprises 190 volumes , although some consider only the first 58 volumes of this series to be part of the Hardy Boys " canon " . The Hardy Boys also appeared in 127 volumes of the Casefiles series and 39 volumes of the Undercover Brothers series , and are currently the heroes of the Hardy Boys Adventures series . The brothers were also featured in a few standalone books , such as The Hardy Boys Ghost Stories , and some crossover titles where they teamed up with other characters such as Nancy Drew or Tom Swift .

= = International publications = =

Hardy Boys books have been extensively reprinted in the United Kingdom , with new illustrations and cover art . The Hardys ' adventures have also been translated into over twenty @-@ five languages , including Norwegian , Swedish , Spanish , Icelandic , Hebrew , French , German , Japanese , Russian , Malay , and Italian . The books are widely read in India , and Japan 's Kyoto Sangyo University listed twenty @-@ one Hardy Boys books on its reading list for freshmen in the 1990s .

= = Television = =

There have been five separate Hardy Boys television adaptations .

In the late 1950s , Disney contracted with the Stratemeyer Syndicate and Grosset & Dunlap to produce two Hardy Boys TV serials , starring Tim Considine and Tommy Kirk . The first of the serials , The Mystery of the Applegate Treasure , was aired on The Mickey Mouse Club in 1956 during the show 's second season . To appeal to the show 's audience , the Hardy Boys were portrayed as younger than in the books , seeming to be twelve or thirteen years old (Considine was 15 and Kirk was 14 during filming) . The script , written by Jackson Gillis , was based on the first Hardy Boys book , The Tower Treasure , and the serial was aired in 19 episodes of fifteen minutes each with production costs of \$ 5 @, @ 700 . A second serial , The Mystery of Ghost Farm , followed in 1957 , with an original story by Jackson Gillis . However , for unknown reasons , no more serials were produced .

In the mid @-@ 1960s , sales of Hardy Boys books began to drop . The Stratemeyer Syndicate conducted a survey , which revealed that the decline in sales was due to the perceived high cost of

the books and to competition from television . As a result , the Syndicate approved an hour @-@ long pilot for a new Hardy Boys television show . The pilot , based on The Mystery of the Chinese Junk , was aired on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) on September 8 , 1967 and starred Tim Matthieson (later Matheson) as Joe Hardy and Rick Gates as Frank . Both actors were twenty at the time of production and portrayed the Hardy Boys as young adults rather than children , as they had been in the Mickey Mouse Club serials . The show did poorly , however , and the series was abandoned .

Two years later , in 1969 , the American Broadcasting Company aired a Saturday morning cartoon series based on the Hardy Boys ; the series was produced by Filmation and ran from 1969 to 1971 . In this series , the Hardys were members of a rock and roll band . A group of professional musicians performed all the songs on the series , and toured across the United States . The animated series produced two bubblegum music albums " of moderate quality with no commercial success . " The series was notable for being the first cartoon to include a black character . The show took note of current concerns ; although aimed at a young audience , some plot lines dealt with illegal drugs , and the animated Frank and Joe spoke directly to children about not smoking and the importance of wearing seat belts .

ABC aired another series featuring the Hardy Boys , The Hardy Boys / Nancy Drew Mysteries , from 1977 to 1979 . The prime time series starred Parker Stevenson and Shaun Cassidy as Frank and Joe Hardy ; Pamela Sue Martin and later Janet Louise Johnson played Nancy Drew . During the first season , the series alternated between episodes featuring the Hardy Boys one week and Nancy Drew the next . The Hardy Boys were cast as young adults (Stevenson and Cassidy were twenty @-@ four and eighteen respectively during the filming of the first episodes) to appeal to a prime time television audience . The series featured original plots as well as ones based on Hardy Boys books , among them The Clue of the Screeching Owl , The Disappearing Floor and The Flickering Torch Mystery . The series received an Emmy nomination and featured a number of guest stars , including Kim Cattrall , Ray Milland , Howard Duff , and Ricky Nelson . During the second season , the series format changed to focus more on the Hardy Boys , Nancy Drew appearing mostly in crossover episodes with the brothers ; midway through production of the second season , Martin quit and was replaced by Johnson . The series returned for a third season , dropping the Nancy Drew character completely and shortening its title to The Hardy Boys .

In 1995 , a TV show called The Hardy Boys was produced and syndicated by New Line Television , a division of New Line Cinema . The show was co @-@ produced by Canadian broadcasting company Nelvana and was dubbed in French for airing in Quebec and France as well as in the United States . Colin Gray starred as Frank Hardy and Paul Popowich played Joe . The characters were portrayed as in their early twenties , Frank working as a reporter and Joe still in college . The show lasted for only one season of thirteen episodes due to poor ratings .

= = Video games = =

Several Hardy Boys video games have been released :

Hardy Boys Adventure Series by Dreamcatcher

The Hidden Theft (PC 2008)

The Perfect Crime (PC 2009)

The Masked Phantom (PC shelved)

Hardy Boys Nintendo DS series by Her Interactive & Saga

Treasure on the Tracks (Nintendo DS 2009)

= = In other media = =

The Hardy Boys have appeared in several titles in the Nancy Drew computer game series produced by Her Interactive . Her Interactive partnered with Sega to release its own series of Hardy Boys games . The first game in the series is titled " Treasure on the Tracks " and was released in 2009 for Nintendo DS .

JoWood Productions and DreamCatcher Games have released a Hardy Boys computer game called The Hidden Theft . Jesse McCartney and Cody Linley are the voices of Frank and Joe .

The Hardy Boys have also been used to sell a variety of merchandise over the years , much of it tied to television adaptations . They have appeared in several board games , comic books , coloring books , and activity books , jigsaw puzzles , and lunch boxes ; two LP albums , Here Come the Hardy Boys and Wheels ; a Viewmaster set , a toy truck , charm bracelets , rings , wristwatches , greeting cards , jeans , and guitars .

The Hardy Boys have been parodied in the animated series South Park in an episode titled " The Mystery of the Urinal Deuce " , in which the " Hardly Boys " investigate a 9 / 11 conspiracy theory .

In the 1970s , Parker Brothers released The Hardy Boys Mystery Game . In the board game , two to four players take on the role of amateur sleuths and try to solve a mystery .

= = Thematic analysis = =

The Hardy Boys have been called " a cultural touchstone all over the world . " Their adventures have been continuously in print since 1927 . The series was an instant success : by mid @-@ 1929 over 115 @,@ 000 books had been sold , and as of 2008 the books were selling over a million copies a year (the first Hardy Boys book , The Tower Treasure , alone sells over 100 @,@ 000 copies a year) . Worldwide , over 70 million copies of Hardy Books have been sold . A number of critics have tried to explain the reasons for the characters ' longevity .

One explanation for this continuing popularity is that the Hardy Boys are simple wish fulfillment . Their adventures allow readers to vicariously experience an escape from the mundane . At the same time , Frank and Joe live ordinary lives when not solving mysteries , allowing readers to identify with characters who seem realistic and whose parents and authority figures are unfailingly supportive and loving . The Hardy Boys also embody an ideal of masculinity : by their very name they " set the stage for a gentrified version of hardness and constructed hardness as an ideal for modern American males " , part of the " cultural production of self @-@ control and mastery as the revered ideal for the American man . " More controversially , to Meredith Wood , the characters embody not just an ideal of masculinity , but an ideal of white masculinity . She tries to argue that " racist stereotypes are ... fundamental to the success of the Hardy Boys series . " In support of this claim , Wood cites what she says is the replacement of one stereotype (evil Chinese) with another (evil Latin Americans) in the original and revised versions of Footprints Under the Window . She further claims that this is the reason for the popularity of the Applewood Books reprints of the original , unrevised texts rather than the widely cited blandness of the rewrites .

Critic Gary Westfahl considers the Hardy Boys to not display any sexuality . The Hardys ' ignorance of sex and their increasing respect for the law have led to some negative perceptions and many parodies of the characters . They are " well @-@ scrubbed Boy Scout types " who " fetishized squareness " . They have been parodied numerous times , in such works as The Hardy Boys and the Mystery of Where Babies Come From by Christopher Durang , The Secret of the Old Queen : A Hardy Boys Musical by Timothy Cope and Paul Boesing , and Mabel Maney 's novel A Ghost in the Closet : A Hardly Boys Mystery . National Lampoon ran an article in 1985 entitled " The Undiscovered Notebooks of Franklin W. Dixon " , in which the authors " purport to have stumbled upon some unpublished Hardy Boys manuscripts " , including " The Party Boys and the Case of the Missing Scotch " and " The Hardly Boys in the Dark Secret of the Spooky Closet " . It should be noted that the original series contained references to the attraction felt by Frank and Joe to the female leads .

Others have pointed to the Hardy Boys ' relationship with their father as a key to the success of the series . As Tim Morris notes , while Fenton Hardy is portrayed as a great detective , his sons are usually the ones that solve cases , making Fenton Hardy a paradoxical figure :

He is always there , he knows everything . He is infallible but always failing . When the boys rescue him , he is typically emaciated , dehydrated , semi @-@ conscious , delirious ; they must succor him with candy bars and water . He can take on any shape , but reveals his identity within moments of doing so . He never discusses a case except the one he 's working on in a given novel , so that his

legendary close @-@ mouthedness turns to garrulousness when a Hardy Boys novel begins , which is of course the only time we ever get to see him . All the same , he only discusses the case in enough detail to mislead his sons and put them in mortal danger . He has systems of information and data @-@ gathering that put the FBI to shame , yet he is always losing his case notes , his ciphers , his microfilm , or some other valuable clue , usually by leaving it in his extra pair of pants , meaning that the Boys have to drive to Canada or Florida or somewhere to retrieve it . I suppose he isn 't mysterious at all ; he simply embodies what many think of their own fathers : utterly powerful , contemptibly inept .

As a result , the Hardy Boys are able both to be superior to their father and to gain the satisfaction of " fearlessly making their dad proud of them . "

In the end , many commentators find that the Hardy Boys are largely successful because their adventures represent " a victory over anxiety " . The Hardy Boys series teaches readers that " although the world can be an out @-@ of @-@ control place , good can triumph over evil , that the worst problems can be solved if we each do our share and our best to help others . "