

The most puzzling mysteries...  
The cleverest crimes...  
The most dynamic brother detectives!

# THE **HARDY BOYS**<sup>®</sup> MYSTERY STORIES

BY FRANKLIN W. DIXON

Join Frank and Joe Hardy  
in up-to-date adventures packed  
with action and suspense

**LOOK FOR A BRAND-NEW MYSTERY EVERY  
OTHER MONTH AT YOUR LOCAL BOOKSELLER**

PUBLISHED BY SIMON & SCHUSTER

EAN



US \$4.99 / \$7.50 CAN  
ISBN-13: 978-0-671-79298-5  
ISBN-10: 0-671-79298-9



## ***Crime in the Queen's Court***

Nancy and Bess decided to join a few other ladies-in-waiting who were sitting on a blanket, munching on biscuits and cold chicken. As the two girls walked across the clearing in their Elizabethan costumes, Nancy's gaze shifted to the woods, and she admired the shafts of soft sunlight falling on the trees.

Then Nancy approached the ladies-in-waiting seated under a large oak tree and said, "Mind if we join you?"

Suddenly, Nancy heard a sharp whizzing noise near her ear. She flinched in surprise and felt a rush of air on her cheek.

Looking to her left, she let out a gasp. Lodged in the tree, only inches from Nancy's head, was a quivering arrow!

# Nancy Drew Mystery Stories

- #79 The Double Horror of Fenley Place
- #83 The Case of the Vanishing Veil
- #85 The Secret of Shady Glen
- #104 The Mystery of the Jade Tiger
- #108 The Secret of the Tibetan Treasure
- #110 The Nutcracker Ballet Mystery
- #112 Crime in the Queen's Court
- #116 The Case of the Twin Teddy Bears
- #117 Mystery on the Menu
- #120 The Case of the Floating Crime
- #123 The Clue on the Silver Screen
- #125 The Teen Model Mystery
- #126 The Riddle in the Rare Book
- #127 The Case of the Dangerous Solution
- #128 The Treasure in the Royal Tower
- #129 The Baby-sitter Burglaries
- #130 The Sign of the Falcon
- #132 The Fox Hunt Mystery
- #134 The Secret of the Forgotten Cave
- #135 The Riddle of the Ruby Gazelle
- #136 The Wedding Day Mystery
- #137 In Search of the Black Rose
- #138 The Legend of the Lost Gold
- #139 The Secret of Candlelight Inn
- #140 The Door-to-Door Deception
- #141 The Wild Cat Crime
- #142 The Case of Capital Intrigue
- #143 Mystery on Maui
- #144 The E-mail Mystery
- #145 The Missing Horse Mystery
- #146 The Ghost of the Lantern Lady
- #147 The Case of the Captured Queen
- #148 On the Trail of Trouble
- #149 The Clue of the Gold Doubloons
- #150 Mystery at Moorsea Manor
- #151 The Chocolate-Covered Contest
- #152 The Key in the Satin Pocket
- #153 Whispers in the Fog
- #154 The Legend of the Emerald Lady
- #155 The Mystery in Tornado Alley
- #156 The Secret in the Stars
- #157 The Music Festival Mystery
- #158 The Curse of the Black Cat
- #159 The Secret of the Fiery Chamber
- #160 The Clue on the Crystal Dove
- #161 Lost in the Everglades
- #162 The Case of the Lost Song
- #163 The Clues Challenge
- #164 The Mystery of the Mother Wolf
- #165 The Crime Lab Case
- #166 The Case of the Creative Crime
- #167 Mystery by Moonlight
- #168 The Bike Tour Mystery
- #169 The Mistletoe Mystery
- #170 No Strings Attached
- #171 Intrigue at the Grand Opera
- #172 The Riding Club Crime
- #173 Danger on the Great Lakes
- #174 A Taste of Danger
- #175 Werewolf in a Winter Wonderland
- Nancy Drew Ghost Stories

**Available from Simon & Schuster**

NANCY  
DREW® 112

CRIME IN THE  
QUEEN'S COURT

CAROLYN KEENE

Aladdin Paperbacks  
New York London Toronto Sydney Singapore

If you purchased this book without a cover, you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as "unsold and destroyed" to the publisher and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this "stripped book."

This book is a work of fiction. Any references to historical events, real people, or real locales are used fictitiously. Other names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination, and any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

First Aladdin Paperbacks edition April 2002

First Minstrel edition April 1993

Copyright © 1993 by Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Produced by Mega-Books, Inc.

#### **ALADDIN PAPERBACKS**

An imprint of Simon & Schuster

Children's Publishing Division

1230 Avenue of the Americas

New York, NY 10020

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

Printed in the United States of America

OPM 20 19 18 17 16 15 14

NANCY DREW and NANCY DREW MYSTERY STORIES are registered trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

ISBN-13: 978-0-671-79298-5

ISBN-10: 0-671-79298-9

## Contents

---

1	<i>Merry Old England</i>	1
2	<i>A Mysterious Poet</i>	12
3	<i>Rehearsal for Disaster</i>	21
4	<i>An Unlucky Break</i>	29
5	<i>Her Majesty's Secret Service</i>	38
6	<i>Poetry in Motion</i>	47
7	<i>Courtly Clues</i>	59
8	<i>A Visitor and a Visit</i>	72
9	<i>On the Hunt</i>	80
10	<i>A Pointed Warning</i>	89
11	<i>Much Ado About Something</i>	97
12	<i>The Play's the Thing</i>	104
13	<i>The Real Thing?</i>	114
14	<i>A Player Is Unmasked</i>	126
15	<i>To Catch a Thief</i>	134
16	<i>A Royal Wrap-up</i>	144



**CRIME IN THE  
QUEEN'S COURT**





# 1

## *Merry Old England*

“O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?” Bess Marvin exclaimed with an exaggerated sweep of her hand. Turning to her friend Nancy Drew, she asked, “So, what do you think?”

Nancy smiled as she shielded her eyes from the bright sunshine. “Well, you probably shouldn’t give up your day job,” she said teasingly.

Bess giggled and tossed her long blond hair. “I guess I just got carried away. This Elizabethan festival makes me feel so . . . so . . .”

“Festive?” finished Bess’s cousin, George Fayne, as she guided Bess back into line.

Bess made a face at her cousin. “Well, it does. Admit it,” she said to George. “Doesn’t just being here make you think of crowns and royalty and England and ladies with long dresses and—”

“Okay, okay,” George said, throwing up her hands.

Nancy smiled as she listened to the two cousins. Bess was right, she thought as she moved up in line. There was definitely a feeling of old England in the air. The outdoor pavilion on the outskirts of River Heights had been transformed to look as though it belonged in sixteenth-century London. Its dark wood had been painted to look as if it were made from large stones. From where she was standing, Nancy could see an outdoor theater, part of a backstage tent behind the theater, and a town square with fake building fronts.

There were two rows of trailers parked on the far side of the pavilion. Nancy saw a man in knee-length pants, a vest, stockings, and a hat step out of a trailer. Then a woman in a high-necked dress with puffed sleeves, a tight waist, and full skirt hurried into the trailer. Beyond the trailers was the parking lot, where Nancy's blue Mustang was parked.

For the third year in a row Her Majesty's Players, a traveling acting troupe, had come to River Heights for a week-long festival. This year Nancy, Bess, and George had decided it might be fun to sign up as volunteers for the week.

"Earth calling Nancy," George said, interrupting Nancy's thoughts.

Nancy turned to find herself at the sign-up table at the front of the line. A woman wearing a

deep blue, high-necked dress sat at the table, smiling at her. On the table were several sheets of paper—each with a different job description. Most of the jobs had already been taken by other volunteers.

“Good morning, ladies,” the woman said pleasantly. “Take a moment to look at the sheets, and then let me know which job interests you.”

“Oh, look!” Bess exclaimed, pointing to one of the lists. “‘Ladies-in-waiting.’” She looked excitedly at the woman. “Do ladies of the court get to wear dresses like yours?” she asked, admiring the Elizabethan dress.

The woman laughed. “Yes, they do,” she answered. “And there are a couple of openings left.”

Bess grabbed a pencil and signed her name on one of the lines. “Won’t this be fun?” she said.

George rolled her eyes. “Walking around in ruffles and layers all day? No, thanks.” But then a different list caught her eye. “Look, there’s an opening here to help out the props coordinator. Now, *that* could be interesting,” she said, signing her name.

“Props?” Bess said in disbelief. “What do you want to do? Carry a hammer around all day?”

Though Bess and George were cousins, they couldn’t be more different, Nancy thought. George, with her short, dark hair and dark eyes,

was slender, athletic, and always ready for adventure. Blond-haired, blue-eyed Bess, on the other hand, would rather be watching the action from a safe distance. Bess was forever battling to lose five pounds from her slightly plump frame. And both girls looked completely different from Nancy, who had reddish-blond hair and deep blue eyes.

“So what are *you* going to do, Nancy?” George said, ignoring her cousin’s remark.

“I don’t know,” Nancy said, scanning the sheets. “There’s not much left.”

“There’s room for one lady-in-waiting,” Bess suggested.

Nancy looked at the ladies-in-waiting sign-up sheet. The job description sounded fun. Ladies-in-waiting had to wear Elizabethan dresses and attend all events as members of Queen Elizabeth’s court. The events included a hunting party picnic, staged duels, dances, the evening play, and more.

“Why not?” Nancy said, signing her name. “It’ll give us a chance to see the whole festival.”

“Oh, good,” Bess said. “It’ll be fun to do this together. But just remember,” she said, looking concerned, “we’re here to have fun—not to look for mysteries.”

Nancy laughed. “Don’t worry, Bess,” she said. Nancy had become known in River Heights as an amateur detective. But while her interest in sleuthing had brought her a good deal of recogni-

tion, it had given Bess more than one nervous moment.

“Thanks for volunteering,” said the woman at the table. She handed the girls volunteer badges. “Please wear these at all times,” she said. “Now you can head over to the theater, where the director, Philip Schotter, will be meeting with the volunteers. And I hope you have a wonderful week.” She looked at her watch. “Quick, he’ll be starting any minute.”

The three girls hurried over to the theater and sat down just as a tall, friendly looking man began speaking. Dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, he looked to be only a few years older than the girls. His brown, curly hair hung down to his shoulders.

“Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears,” he said to the group of about thirty volunteers. “I’m Philip Schotter—better known as Schotter—and I’d like to welcome you to our Elizabethan festival as official members of Her Majesty’s Players.”

A few people clapped, and Schotter continued with a smile. “We want you to know that we truly appreciate your volunteering. We’re a small group, and every bit of help counts.

“The festival officially begins today at noon. It will run for seven days, ending Saturday evening,” he continued. “But all volunteers will have a day off on Wednesday. The gates open at

noon, and we expect everyone in the troupe—and that now includes all of you—to be in costume by then.”

Schotter went on to explain the different spectator activities. They could attend sixteenth-century duels, Shakespearean sonnet readings, hunts, and concerts. They could also learn dances, songs, and games. Every day, in the late afternoon, there would be a performance of Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet*.

“We’re very proud to be joined this year by respected actress Martine DeVries, who will be the festival’s one and only Queen Elizabeth. The queen and her procession—the ladies-in-waiting and courtiers—will attend meals, the hunting-party picnics, and every play performance. If you’re a lady-in-waiting or a courtier, you have a choice of being part of the procession or intermingling with the spectators.”

Schotter then introduced Josh Forster, the company’s creative consultant. “Josh is basically my right-hand man,” he said, looking at Josh appreciatively. “You’ll be able to count on his expertise in sixteenth-century England’s history and literature. Spectators will be asking all sorts of questions, and if you don’t know the answer, just ask Josh.”

Josh Forster, in his wire-rimmed glasses and tweed jacket, reminded Nancy of a college professor. He began to explain the Elizabethan peri-

od to the volunteers. “Queen Elizabeth came to power in 1558. She considered herself to be chosen by God to be the ruler of England, and believed, as many did, that she was responsible only to God,” he said.

“This is like being in school,” Bess whispered.

“Shh,” George whispered back. She had always liked history.

Adjusting his glasses, Josh continued in a quiet, serious voice. “Most of you probably know of a famous citizen of London at that time—William Shakespeare. This week our theater group will be performing one of his most famous plays, *Romeo and Juliet*. This play—”

Suddenly a booming voice rang out. “Josh, I think I should cover this part!” Nancy looked up to see a middle-aged man, whose hair was almost completely gray, appear from backstage.

“You?” Josh frowned. “What do *you* know—”

Schotter, the director, rushed to center stage to smooth things out. “Uh, thank you, Josh, for those important facts,” he said awkwardly. “We’re running short on time, and I still want to make one more introduction.” He gestured toward the man who’d interrupted Josh. “I’m sure most of you recognize the well-known actor Dean Batlan. He’ll be playing the part of Romeo.”

The man smiled and raised his hands to polite applause.

“That’s Romeo?” George said under her