

# The Case of the Bothersome Brother

*It was a dark and stormy night. Rain slashed the window. Lightning flashed and thunder crashed. Spooky shadows like giant teeth danced across the walls.*

*Tick-tock, tick-tock went the old clock, thumping like a scary heartbeat. Quiet as a ghost, she climbed the dark, dark stairs. In her bare feet, she tiptoed down the dark, dark hallway to the dark, dark door. She*

*tapped one, two, three times, signaling in Morse code. Just then, the door creaked open.*

*Knock-knock.*

“AAHHH!” screamed Judy from under the covers of her top bunk bed. She let go of the Mood Libs tablet she’d been writing in. It sailed through the air, bonking Stink on the noggin.

“Ouch!” yelled Stink, rubbing his head. “Watch the brains! You’re gonna give me an egg on my head.”

“You already are an egghead, Stink,” Judy teased.

“Well, you didn’t have to throw the book at me.”

“At least it wasn’t the encyclopedia.



That's what you get for scaring the pants off me while I was writing a spooky Mood Libs story."

"Why are you under the covers? It's the middle of the day."

"Nancy Drew says a person should never be afraid of the dark. So I was practicing."

"Why do you have a flashlight?"

"A good detective always keeps a flashlight under her pillow."

"Does Nancy Drew do that?"

"Hel-lo! Haven't you read *The Message in the Hollow Oak*?"

"I'm not a Nancy Drew cuckoo-head like some people!"

"Can I help it if I'm trying to read all



fifty-six original Nancy Drew classics?”

Stink waved the Mood Libs book at her. “Does Nancy Drew throw stuff at her brother, too?”

“Nancy Drew doesn’t have a brother. But if she did, I’m sure she’d throw stuff if he scared the jeepers out of her.”

“Jeepers?”

“That’s Nancy Drew talk, Stink. Get a clue.”

“Do Nancy Drew mysteries have any stuff that blows up? Good mysteries have stuff that blows up. Like boats or cakes or maybe exploding motorcycles?”

“No, Stink. Nancy Drew mysteries have old clocks and hidden diaries and squeaky steps and stuff.”

“Oh,” said Stink. He did not sound one teeny bit scared. He sounded a teeny bit bored.



“But Nancy Drew mysteries *do* have stuff like exploding oranges and flaming rockets and spooky old mansions. Lots of mansions. And they are all haunted, and one time Nancy Drew almost gets crushed when the ceiling falls on her. Another time she’s chased by a phantom horse. She even gets strangled by a giant python. No lie.”

“Exploding pythons are cool,” said

Stink, getting mixed up. “Can I look at one of your Nancy Drews?”

“Over there.” Judy pointed to a pile of stuff on her desk. “Under my sock monkey.”

Stink lifted up the sock monkey. “Under your sock monkey is a pillow.”

“Under the pillow,” Judy told him.

Stink lifted the pillow. “Under your pillow is nothing but a big fat dictionary.”

“Under the dictionary.”

Stink lifted up the dictionary. “It’s a mystery just trying to find your Nancy Drew book.” Under the dictionary was Nancy Drew book #43: *The Mystery of the 99 Steps*. “Why’s it under all this stuff?”

“Well, um . . . don’t laugh, but—”



“Ha! Ju-dy is scare-dy!” Stink chimed. “You hid it under here because it’s scary. You’re scared of a Nancy Drew nightmare!”

“Can I help it if I have an overachieving imagination?” asked Judy. “I double-dare you to read it. *In the dark.*”

Stink shivered.

“See, Nancy’s friend has this weird dream about these creepy ninety-nine steps, so Nancy goes to France to try to find them and solve the mystery of her friend’s dream. It’s spine-chilling. Says so right on the back. Books don’t lie, Stink.”

“Maybe you’ll have a bad dream from reading the book. Then *I* can go to France to solve the mystery of your bad dream . . . and see the Eiffel Tower.”

“The Eiffel Tower is *so* beside the point, Stink. But you just gave me a genius idea. I’m going to solve a mystery. A real-life, Nancy-Drew, scare-your-pants-off mystery. For sure and absolute positive.”

“What’s the mystery?”

“I don’t know yet. I have to find one first.”

“Do you have to go to France to find it?”

“Stink, you don’t have to leave the country to find a mystery. There could be one right in your own backyard.”

Stink looked out the window into the yard. “All I see out there is your purple jump rope, a pink-and-white soccer ball, your bike with the flat tire, and the blue tent we use for the Toad Pee Club. The only mystery is why Mom and Dad don’t make you pick up your stuff.”

“Ha, ha. Very funny. A mystery is out there, Stink. Maybe not in the

backyard exactly. But it could be right under our noses. All we have to do is pay attention.”

Just like that, she, Judy Moody, went looking for a mystery.

# The Mystery of the Missing Moose Mice

If a person were going to solve a big fat mystery, she had to have a way-official Nancy Drew detective kit.

Flashlight? Check.

Notebook? Check.

Grouchy pencil? Check.

Pocket magnifying glass? Check.

Duck tape? Check.

Zip-top bag? Check.

“Let’s see,” Judy said out loud to herself. “All I need now is a disguise, some money, and a French dictionary.”

She went into the upstairs bathroom and came back with Mom’s makeup bag. Judy pulled out a tube of red lipstick, a compact, an eyebrow pencil, nail polish, tweezers, and a bobby pin.

“Ooh, cool,” said Stink, coming into her room. “Is all this stuff for a disguise?”

“Stink, don’t you know anything about detective work? Everybody knows lipstick is for writing SOS messages.”

“Oh, I get it. Like if something exploded and your leg is pinned under a piece of metal, and you go to yell ‘help’ in French, but you lost your French dictionary, you

write SOS in red lipstick or something?”

“Or something,” said Judy. “Lipstick is good for fake blood, too. Like one time, Nancy Drew smeared lipstick and pretended she was bleeding to trick the bad guys so she could escape. There are tons of bad guys, like Snorky, Stumpy, Sniggs, and Grumper.”

Stink snorted. “They sound like dwarves, not bad guys.”

“And in *The Phantom of Pine Hill*, there’s an evil fortune-teller named Madame Tarantella.”

“Madame Tarantula. Cool. Can I try writing in lipstick?” Stink asked.

“It’s only for emergencies, Stink,” said Judy.

“What about all that other junk?”  
Stink asked.

“The powder in the compact can be used to dust for fingerprints, and the little mirror is for spying on somebody. The eyebrow pencil is for this.” Judy drew a quick mustache on Stink.

“Hey!” said Stink, but instead of wiping his lip, he looked in the mirror.

Judy held up a little black metal hair clip. “Rule Number One: Never leave home without a bobby pin.”

“What’s a bobby pin?” Stink asked.

“This baby is for picking locks.”

“Can I try?”

“Knock yourself out,” Judy said, handing him a bobby pin. Judy loaded all the



detective stuff into her backpack.

Stink picked up Judy's secret diary, stuck the bobby pin in the keyhole, and turned it. The diary popped open.

"Sweet!" said Stink. "It really works."

Judy looked up. "Give it!" she said, grabbing the diary back.

"You sure Nancy Drew doesn't have a little brother? Little brothers make good detectives, too."

"I'm sure. Just a dad named Mr. Drew; her two best chums, George and Bess; her dog, Togo; her cat, Snowball; and a shiny blue, way-cool convertible!"

"Nancy Drew is old enough to drive a real car?"

"Tell me about it. Who wouldn't want

to ride around in a convertible solving mysteries all day?” Judy said. “Makeup? Check. There. I’m done!”



“What about the money? Where’s the money? You forgot the money!”

“N-no, I didn’t.”

Stink peered into Judy’s backpack and pulled out a plastic bag full of coins. “Not my state quarters. And my president dollars! I collected these forever.”

“C’mon, Stinker. If I get locked in an attic or a closet or the trunk of a car, I’ve gotta have some money to bribe the bad guys to let me out.”

“Just pick the lock with your bobby pin thingie,” said Stink. Judy shot him a sour-ball stare.

“Fine!” Stink sorted through his coins. “Here. You can have my American Samoa quarter. Because I don’t know where that is.”

“One lousy quarter? That’s not going to get me un-kidnapped.”

“Okay! My Martin Van Buren president dollar. But only because he’s not James Madison. And because I don’t know who he is.”

“Gee, thanks, Stinkerbell.”

“Is it time to go find the mystery now?”  
asked Stink.

“Almost,” said Judy. “I’m hungry. I need a snack. Rule Number One of being a good detective is never solve a mystery on an empty stomach.”

“I thought Rule Number One was the bobby pin thing.”

“Do you have to listen to everything I say? Stink, turn around so you can’t see where I hid my candy.” Stink had found the candy hidden in her sock drawer. Stink had found the candy hidden in her doctor kit. Stink had found the candy hidden in her five hundred-piece puzzle of

the Tower of London. But no way would he find the candy hidden in her double-secret, triple-tricky hiding place.

Stink turned around. He covered his eyes.

“Cover your ears, too,” said Judy.

“I only have two hands.”

“Try not to listen, then.” Judy took out her Build-a-Moose that she had made at the mall with Grandma Lou last Christmas. Judy had filled his tummy with a bag of gummy candy instead of stuffing. She reached inside and pulled out . . . an old striped sock?

“Stink!” said Judy. “You’ll never believe what I found.”



Stink turned back around and looked. “A sock?” He tried to sound fake-surprised.

“Not just a sock,” said Judy. “A sock *and* a mystery. Right here in our own backyard.”

Stink did not say a word. Stink stared at the floor.

“A real-life, honest-to-jeepers, Nancy-Drew - who - doesn't - have - any - brothers mystery.” Judy waved the sock in the air.

“The Mystery of the Missing Sock?” Stink asked.

“More like the Case of the Stolen Candy,” said Judy. “I hid a bag of gummy candy in my moose’s tummy. But now the candy’s not there. Presto-change-o gonzo, just like that.”

Stink scratched his head. He snapped his fingers. “I bet Mouse got into your moose and ate your mice!”

“Interesting,” said Judy. “How did you know they were gummy *mice*, Stink? I said gummy *candy*. I never said gummy *mice*.”

*“Moose. Mouse. Mice. My tongue got twisted. And I know how much you like those gummy mice. More than gummy scabs and gummy frog legs.”*

*“Stink, take off your shoes.”*

*“Huh? Why? But—”*

*“Just do it.”*

Stink took off his sneakers.

*“Aha! Just as I thought! You have two different socks on. And one of the socks you’re wearing matches this sock.”* She held up the striped sock. *“The Case of the One-Striped-Sock-Wearing Candy Stealer is solved. Stink Moody, what do you have to say for yourself?”*

*“I sure could use that lipstick now,”* said Stink.

“What for?”

“For writing *SOS*. You said that when a person is in trouble, he can use the lipstick for writing *SOS*.”