



Into Thin Air (Hardy Boys Adventures)

By Franklin W. Dixon

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Franklin W. Dixon is the author of the ever-popular Hardy Boys books.

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Into Thin Air

MISSING

1

FRANK

TELL ME AGAIN WHAT YOU heard,” Officer Lasko said to me, crouching over his spiral notebook like it held the secrets of the universe.

I sighed. “I didn’t hear anything,” I said honestly, for about the tenth time. I squirmed in the hard plastic chair, wondering whether my brother and I would ever be allowed to leave. The Bayport PD had taken over the Funspot amusement park’s administrative offices, which I don’t think were comfortable under the best of circumstances. And these were not the best of circumstances. These were pretty much the worst of circumstances.

Daisy Rodriguez, the park owner’s daughter and my brother Joe’s recent lady friend, was missing.

It wasn’t a normal disappearance. No missed curfews, no sneaking out after a fight with her parents. No, Daisy had gone missing off her father’s most prized (and infamous) ride, the G-Force—sometimes called “the Death Ride.”

Let me explain.

A couple of weeks ago Funspot reopened for the season under new ownership. Hector Rodriguez had bought the park, which had been a Bayport institution for a long time but had become pretty run-down in recent years, and wanted to totally revitalize it. Step one was hiring the Piperato Brothers, famous amusement ride designers, to create an all-new amusement ride exclusively for Funspot.

That ride was the G-Force. I first rode it on opening night with my brother, his date, Daisy, and her best friend, Penelope Chung. It was, in a word, awesome. Even now that I’d ridden it countless times, I still found it hard to describe exactly what the G-Force did. It was sleek and enclosed, like a spaceship, and it’s safe to say that the seats moved around in a circle, and also up and down. Images were projected in the ride’s center, and loud rock music played. But the combined effect was pretty exhilarating. Riding the G-Force made me feel like I’d climbed six mountains, skied down a black diamond slope, slain a dragon, breathed fire, and also saved humanity from certain destruction.

Like I said: awesome.

What wasn't awesome was the huge hoax the Piperato Brothers had pulled to gain publicity for the ride. That first night, a young girl disappeared while riding the G-Force, right under the nose of her watchful older sister. Her restraints had been cut, and the girl, Kelly, was gone without a trace. The ride was immediately closed down, but it reopened after inspectors found nothing wrong with it. And weirdly, kids flocked to the ride like rats to the Pied Piper.

They were encouraged by a "viral video" that the Piperato Brothers put together. It showed the ride in the creepiest light possible, asking viewers if they were "brave enough to ride the Death Ride." My classmates—along with nearly all the teenagers in a fifty-mile radius—wanted to prove that they were brave enough. The lines for the G-Force swelled, even as the police struggled to find any trace of the missing girl.

Not long after, a boy—an ex-boyfriend of Daisy's, in fact—disappeared in the same way. Parents panicked. The media pounced.

We thought we'd stopped the madness when we spotted one of the missing kids on a main street and chased him to a motel, where he'd been placed with the missing girl. These kids told an incredible story: that they'd been offered a thousand dollars to play "missing" for a couple of weeks, all to pull off a hoax and get tons of publicity for the new G-Force ride.

The hoax had been arranged by the Piperato Brothers, now in jail. The G-Force was scheduled to be torn down starting tomorrow. But since the ride had been declared safe by the inspectors, Hector had agreed to reopen it tonight for one last hurrah.

And on the first ride, Daisy had gone missing.

Unlike the others, she didn't appear to have spent any time in the tiny crawlspace in the heart of the ride, built to be a temporary hiding place as part of the Piperatos' plan. In fact, she'd left no trace whatsoever.

Hector was beside himself. Joe was freaking out.

And here I was, watching Officer Lasko chicken-scratch my answer into his notebook for the tenth time.

"Can I ask you something?" I asked.

"No," replied Officer Lasko without looking up. Aha. So this was a "bad cop" night. Chief Olaf didn't seem entirely sure how to handle my brother and me—he couldn't seem to decide whether we were friends or foes. Usually he leaned toward foes.

"Do you have any clues?" I asked. Lasko looked up from his notebook and sighed. "Did she leave anything behind? Are you thinking the Piperato Brothers are behind this, or someone new?"

Just then the door to the small office we were borrowing opened, and in walked Chief Olaf, followed by Joe, who he'd been questioning. The chief's expression was pretty grim, as was Joe's. I had the feeling that Joe's answers had been about as helpful as mine.

"I think we can let these boys go home," Olaf said, nodding at Officer Lasko "Unless you have anything new?"

Lasko shrugged and shook his head. "Not really. They didn't hear anything; the music was too loud. They

didn't see anything; the ride was too dark."

Chief Olaf nodded, his lips pulled into a tight line. "All right then."

I stood up, looking at my brother. His face was pale, and he looked exhausted. I knew he had to be suffering right now. Even though he and Daisy had recently broken up—he'd decided the case was more important than getting the girl—I knew he really cared about her.

"Chief?" I asked, trying to sound as respectful as possible. "Can you tell us anything? You know we were close to Daisy. We, um—we're really worried about her."

Chief Olaf paused and looked me in the eye. I could tell that he knew there was much more I wasn't saying. He was well aware of the fact that Joe and I had helped the Bayport PD solve some pretty tricky cases in the past. He also knew that we'd gotten in trouble for our amateur sleuthing one too many times. So we'd worked out an agreement with the chief and our dad: If we followed some rules and checked in with the adults while doing our detective work, we could continue to investigate.

I think that while Chief Olaf sometimes sees us as wannabe private eyes, he knows that we're kind of good at investigating. We kind of catch a lot of criminals. And I think the chief understands, on some level, that sleuthing is in our blood.

Still watching me, he cleared his throat. "Okay," he said quietly. "I'm sure you realize that this information is for your ears only, and not to be shared with anyone. I'm telling you this because I know you were close to the victim. Understand?"

I nodded, and Joe did too. "We understand," he said, an edge of desperation in his voice.

Chief Olaf continued. "We're working on the theory that this is a copycat crime."

Joe raised an eyebrow. "Meaning?" he asked.

"Meaning that the Piperato Brothers aren't behind this," the chief clarified. "They carried out the first two disappearances and the hoax, yes. But this appears to be more serious. The kidnapper is hitting closer to home, the park owner's own daughter. We think that someone saw the Death Ride hoax in the news and was inspired to try his or her own hand."

I nodded, thinking that over, and struggling not to ask the obvious question: Why? That was the first, and hardest, question in any investigation. Figure out why the criminal did it, and you often find the criminal.

Why would anyone want to hurt Daisy? To send Hector a message? To get revenge on her or her family?

Why?

Joe wobbled on his feet, and Chief Olaf caught him roughly under the shoulder. "Sit down, son." He gestured for me to get up, and pulled my chair over for my brother to sit in. Joe followed orders, still looking exhausted and stressed.

"You boys had better get home," the chief said again. "Get some sleep. Are you okay to drive?" He looked at me.

“Sure,” I said. I felt weary, but not sleepy.

He nodded. “Get going, then. We’ll call you if we learn anything.”

I stepped over to Joe and touched his shoulder. “You ready?”

Joe nodded. “I’m okay,” he said quietly. “Fresh air will help, I think.”

Chief Olaf opened the door, and we stepped out into the hallway. We could hear shouting coming from Hector’s office, one room down.

Hector’s office was on our way out. At the doorway, I peered in. An elegant, middle-aged lady was shouting at Hector, who sat slumped at his desk.

“You let this happen!” she cried, her voice rough with emotion. “With this terrible park! You forced that poor man to sell it to us, and it’s brought nothing but misery ever since!”

At our footsteps, Hector looked up at the door. His eyes contained a deep well of sadness, more intense than I’d ever seen from him.

“Frank and Joe,” he said. “Are you two okay?”

I nodded. “We’re just heading home, sir. The police are done with us.”

Hector nodded. He looked down, then gestured toward the woman. “Boys, this is my wife, Lucy. I don’t think you’ve met.”

Lucy, Daisy’s mom, looked over at us. She looked a little embarrassed to be caught yelling at Hector. “Hello,” she said.

“Frank and Joe were a huge help in finding the truth about the Piperatos,” Hector said.

I nodded. “I hope we can help find Daisy, too, sir.”

Hector winced and closed his eyes. My skin prickled with the feeling I’d said the wrong thing.

Finally he nodded and opened his eyes. “Get some sleep, boys.”

We nodded our good-byes and walked out into the dark, silent night. Funspot had been closed for hours. Everybody had been kicked out when Daisy was discovered missing. The park always felt a little creepy when it was deserted. Most of the rides had completely powered down, but a few were still blinking their bright, aggressively happy lights into the darkness.

I closed my eyes and rubbed them. I could really use some sleep.

“Did Lasko say anything interesting?” Joe asked as we walked toward the park exit.

“Not really,” I replied. “Just asked me the same questions over and over. What do you think about what the chief said?”

“About telling us if they learned anything?” Joe scoffed. “I’ll believe it when I see it.”

“No, about this being a copycat crime.” We rounded a fence that led to the exit and were plunged into near-total darkness. A few lights shone in the parking lot, but they were still too far away to do much good. We’d left the lights of the administration building behind. I shivered, and I wasn’t sure whether it was because of the sudden breeze.

Joe shrugged. “It makes about as much sense as any of this,” he said. “This doesn’t look like the hoaxes. They didn’t find any evidence that Daisy was in the little room under the ride, for example.”

“Right,” I said, pausing to make sure we were going in the right direction. We had to go down “Main Street”—a now-dark and deserted stretch of souvenir shops and food stands—to get to the parking lot. I nodded at Joe and led the way.

“I just don’t know what the motivation is,” I added. “Who would want to hurt Daisy?”

Joe nodded. “I know. Who hates Funspot that much?”

I turned around, my mouth already open to reply, but the sound died in my throat, replaced by a scream.

A dark shadow shot from behind one of the souvenir stands—arms outstretched and headed for my brother!

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kenneth Grimes:

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children till adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important for people. The book Into Thin Air (Hardy Boys Adventures) had been making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The reserve Into Thin Air (Hardy Boys Adventures) is not only giving you more new information but also being your friend when you sense bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship with the book Into Thin Air (Hardy Boys Adventures). You never really feel lose out for everything in case you read some books.

Ann Mickey:

As people who live in often the modest era should be revise about what going on or details even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era that is certainly always change and make progress. Some of you maybe may update themselves by examining books. It is a good choice in your case but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know what type you should start with. This Into Thin Air (Hardy Boys Adventures) is our recommendation to help you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and want in this era.

Carlos Mendoza:

Nowadays reading books are more than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading practice give you lot of advantages. The benefits you got of course the knowledge the rest of the information inside the book this improve your knowledge and information. The data you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want send more knowledge just go with education books but if you want feel happy read one together with theme for entertaining for instance comic or novel. The Into Thin Air (Hardy Boys Adventures) is kind of publication which is giving the reader erratic experience.

Jamie Ault:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you will have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Into Thin Air (Hardy Boys Adventures), you are able to enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout guys. What? Still don't obtain it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

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