

This takes place immediately following #39, *The Mystery of the Galloping Ghost*, and makes reference to #36, *The Mystery of the Antique Doll*. Yeah, I know #39 does not exist in Dana's World (because Jim isn't in it), and #36 just barely exists (because it sucks, lol), but once Cathy had to make my head explode and shatter my belief that #7, *The Mysterious Code*, could not exist by providing a perfectly plausible explanation of the "tainted timeline" involved in that book, well, I decided to embrace the unknown and write this story as a tribute to her genius. Which is fitting since this is also lovingly written to celebrate five years of the best place on the 'Net, Jixemitri. Happy Anniversary, Cathy and Jix!

Trixie Belden and the Mysterious Bribe by Dana

"That's impossible," fourteen-year-old Trixie Belden said disbelievingly into the phone. Her brain tried to process the information that her best friend, Honey Wheeler, had just given her, but it was incomprehensible. "That's impossible," she repeated.

"The charges may be impossible to believe, but, unfortunately, the situation isn't. They relieved him of his duties today, Trix, pending further investigation."

That clear, hard fact, delivered in Honey's calm manner, broke through the fog in her brain and spurred Trixie into action. "Well, there's obviously been a mistake, and we need to clear him. I won't rest until I've proven these accusations are false."

Despite the gravity of the situation, Honey smiled at her friend's words. Of course, Trixie would be the first to jump in to clear his name. "Somehow, I knew you'd say that, Trix. And, of course, you know I'm right next to you. And Jim, who we all know would follow you to the ends of the earth, will certainly want to help, too."

Trixie blushed at the mention of Jim's name. "Well, I don't know about him following me *that* far, but I know he'll want to help clear Molinson's name. He may be gruff and irritable, but Sergeant Molinson has been a friend to us Bob-Whites," Trixie said, referring to the semi-secret club she, her brothers, and her friends had formed to help others.

"So, where do we start?" Honey asked.

"Go over the story from the beginning, will you please, Honey?" Trixie requested.

"Well, Miss Trask was at the city building, helping Jim out by renewing Patch's license for him while he takes care of all of the projects he promised to help Regan with before he leaves for camp," Honey started to explain in her round-about way. "Sergeant Molinson happened to see her and started to head over to her. Before he reached her, two men in suits stepped up to him and asked if he was Sergeant Wendell Molinson. Miss Trask says that he replied that he was and then the two men said that they were from Westchester County's Public Integrity Bureau."

"Public Integrity Bureau?" Trixie repeated.

"It's the bureau that monitors all civil servants and law enforcement officials in Westchester County and investigates any allegations of corruption, according to what Miss Trask found out," Honey explained. "Anyway, they ushered the sergeant into his office. Miss Trask assumed that it was a routine inspection or something, because it never occurred to her that anyone on Sleepyside's police force could be *corrupt*, but, as she was finishing up the paperwork for Patch's license, she said that Sergeant Molinson came out of his office, and he looked shell-shocked and very pale. The two men were following behind him, but she said she was so worried about him, that she approached him to see what was wrong, even though the two men were right there."

Honey paused and took a deep breath.

Impatiently, Trixie burst out with, "And then what happened?"

"Miss Trask said that Sergeant Molinson just looked at her and said, 'They've taken my badge from me, Marge.' Miss Trask was stunned and started to ask what was wrong, but one of the bureau guys interrupted their conversation and said that Sergeant Molinson couldn't talk to anybody until he had been questioned at the Westchester D.A.'s office."

Trixie gasped at the image of the sergeant being taken in for questioning like a common thief. "What happened next?"

"Miss Trask told Sergeant Molinson that she was sure she could speak for my parents and offered the resources of Wheeler, Inc. if it would help him.

"Several hours later, Sergeant Molinson actually called the house. Miss Trask was surprised, since she thought that the sergeant might be too proud to call, but he did. He explained to her that he was being charged with 'bribe receiving'. Sergeant Molinson was hoping that Daddy could recommend a good lawyer. Miss Trask immediately called Daddy at work, and he arranged for a lawyer for the sergeant."

"Do you have any more details about the bribes? Who did he supposedly take a bribe from?"

"Carl Reid," Honey said ominously.

"Carl Reid?" Trixie fairly screeched. "That's impossible!" she said for the third time in as many minutes.

"Sergeant Molinson allegedly accepted money from Carl Reid to look the other way while Carl was counterfeiting money in back of the antique shop."

Trixie snorted. "Like Molinson would sit back and let Carl Reid counterfeit in Sleepyside! And it also implies that Sergeant Molinson sat back happily and allowed that man to trick us into bringing contraband counterfeiting plates back from Paris in an antique doll. The whole idea is ridiculous!"

"I know that, and you know that, and anybody who knows Sergeant Molinson knows that, but the PI people must have evidence, or they wouldn't have charged him and taken away his badge."

"Did they arrest him?" Trixie demanded.

"No, I don't think so. They've just removed him from his post until they've completed their investigation."

"Well, if they haven't arrested him, then they don't have foolproof evidence," Trixie reasoned.

"But they must have *something*, Trix," Honey argued. "They can't just strip his badge over nothing."

"True," Trixie conceded. "We need to find out exactly what it is that they *think* they have, and then we need to disprove it. Can we talk to Sergeant Molinson?"

"I don't see why not," Honey said. "When he called Miss Trask, he had just been released from questioning. I'm not sure when he's meeting with the lawyer Daddy recommended. He might be doing that now, or he might not be doing it until tomorrow morning."

Trixie pondered for a moment. "Okay, we need to talk to Molinson. I think it's probably safe to say that he's *not* at the police station. And, I just realized that I have no clue where he lives! I've never thought about it before, but he probably *doesn't* live at the police station!"

Honey giggled at the image. "I never really thought about it before, either!"

"Okay, I've got the phone book right here. Let me see if he's listed," Trixie said as she paged through the thick tome. "There is a Molinson, W. listed with a phone number, but no address." Trixie sighed. "I guess he wanted to be accessible if people needed to call him in an emergency, but he didn't exactly want them showing up on his doorstep!"

Honey giggled again. "You're probably right!"

"I guess we can go about this several ways," Trixie surmised. "We can try to get Miss Trask to get his address the next time he calls, or maybe Spider would give it to us if we begged him."

"Or we could call him ourselves and ask him if we could come over," Honey said.

Trixie was so surprised by this simple answer that she didn't speak for a moment and then burst out laughing. "What a first class dope I am, Honey! I didn't even think of the simplest answer. Of course, the thought of picking up the phone and calling Sergeant Molinson at home is rather scary. It doesn't feel very simple!"

"I can call him, Trix," kindhearted Honey volunteered.

"Oh, would you, Hon? You're so tactful and sweet; you'll be sure to get him to agree to let us visit him. I'd probably just put my foot in my mouth," Trixie said ruefully.

"I'm sure you wouldn't," Honey said loyally, "but I'll be glad to call him. What's the phone number?"

Trixie read her the digits, and Honey hung up, promising to call Trixie the second she got off the phone with the policeman.

The fourteen-year-old sleuth was lost in thought, wondering how she was going to prove Sergeant Molinson was innocent, when the phone rang.

"What did he say?" she fairly gasped into the phone without preamble.

"What if it hadn't been me?" Honey asked, a smile in her voice.

"I would have been embarrassed. What did he say?"

Honey laughed out loud at Trixie's infamous one-track mind. "He said that he was so low that even a visit from the two schoolgirl shamuses would cheer him up. And I got directions to his house. He lives on Albany Post Road."

"Really? We've probably passed his house a million times and never even knew it!"

Twenty minutes later, after receiving permission at home to bike over to the sergeant's house, both girls were hurrying up the front steps of a modest one-story house built of red bricks.

Before they could even ring the doorbell, the sergeant opened the door. Trixie was taken aback at the meaty policeman, usually larger than life, looking pale and meek...and almost defeated. Trixie may have had her differences with the burly man in the past, but he had always been there for the Bob-Whites. He was an honest man, devoted to upholding the law, and Trixie felt sick seeing him look so bleak.

"Hi, Sergeant," Trixie said, trying to sound matter-of-fact and cheerful.

"Hi, girls. It's nice of you to come by and try to cheer me up. Although I suspect that you have ulterior motives in visiting me. No matter," he continued, "come on in, and let's talk."

The two teenagers followed him into a simply decorated house.

"Would you like a drink? Iced tea or a soda?"

"Iced tea would be nice," Honey said politely.

"Iced tea sounds great," Trixie echoed.

"Have a seat in the living room. I'll be right in with the drinks," the sergeant said as he disappeared into the kitchen.

Trixie and Honey fairly tiptoed to the couch and sat down gingerly. Somehow, being in the policeman's inner sanctum felt almost sacrilegious. It definitely felt different. More than ever, it registered that Wendell Molinson was a person and not just a scolding authority figure in a uniform.

"He looks awful," Honey whispered after they were seated.

"I know," Trixie whispered back. "I can't wait to clear this whole mess up."

Honey nodded. "I still don't understand how a mistake like this could happen."

Trixie looked at Honey, surprised. "But, Honey, he must have been framed," she whispered fiercely.

Honey's eyes widened, but she had no chance to respond because Molinson had entered the room, carefully balancing three iced teas.

"Here you go, girls," he said as he handed each girl a glass of the cool liquid.

He settled himself in a comfortable-looking blue La-Z-Boy chair facing the couch and managed a wan smile. "So, are you here to grill me?"

Honey smiled nervously while Trixie decided to take the bull by the horns. "In a word, yes. We don't believe for a moment that you've been taking kickbacks, and we want to prove that you're innocent."

The normally gruff sergeant was silent for a few moments, and Trixie saw that his eyes were unusually shiny. "Thanks. I needed to hear that." He sighed deeply. "I can tell you all I know, but it isn't much. And I—I really appreciate you girls standing up for me and trying to clear my name."

Embarrassed by the raw emotion on the sergeant's face, Trixie tried to stutter a suitable response, but Honey came to the rescue.

"We know you didn't do it, Sergeant Molinson, and anybody who knows you will know that, too." Trying to steer the conversation back to a less emotional level, she asked, "Can you tell us everything?"

Sergeant Molinson took a deep breath before answering. He basically told them what they already knew: he was being investigated for accepting bribes from a convicted felon to allow criminal activities to be carried out under his jurisdiction.

"Did they tell you what evidence they had to initiate this investigation?" Trixie wondered.

"They showed me papers with my signature, linking me to Carl Reid and the counterfeiting scheme. Papers that suggested I had knowledge of the criminal acts. The signature looked like mine, but I certainly never signed them." A flush rose in Molinson's pale face as he said the last words.

"A counterfeiter, someone able to essentially forge money, could easily forge your signature," Trixie concurred. "Anything else?"

Molinson shook his head. "That was all they showed me. They asked me to deny that that was my signature. I told them that it looked like my signature, but I had sure never signed those letters!" The sergeant paused to regain his composure. "If they had more evidence, they didn't show it to me. Unfortunately, the letters with my apparent signature on them were damaging enough to initiate an investigation. And enough to relieve me of my badge," he finished, looking so utterly defeated that Trixie felt an unusual mixture of sympathy and rage. She vowed right then and there that whoever the culprit was, she would not rest until he—or she or them—was behind bars.

The girls visited with Molinson for a bit longer and then asked permission to use his phone. They called the rest of the Bob-Whites to meet them at Wimpy's for dinner. Since it was summer vacation, and a friend of the BWGs was in trouble, everyone's parents or guardian was amenable to the club gathering for an emergency meeting at the town's converted train car diner.

The other BWGs were already gathered in a large booth when the two girls walked through the door.

Trixie's eyes immediately fell on the handsome redhead sitting next to her older brother, Mart.

"Jim!" she called, a huge smile lighting up her face. She and Honey had just returned from a trip to Minnesota the day before, and Trixie hadn't seen Jim Frayne, Honey's adopted brother, in two weeks.

"Hi, Trix!" Jim said with a smile that reached his green eyes.

"Hi, Trix," Dan said in a voice that clearly stated that he noticed that Trixie didn't greet *him* with the enthusiasm she greeted the redhead with. The twinkle in his dark eyes also indicated that he didn't really care and found the whole thing amusing.

"Hi, Dan, Di! I'm so glad you guys are back in Sleepyside. Di, how are your grandparents?"

"Hi, yourself," pretty Di Lynch said. "It was pretty boring, but relaxing at the same time. They have a pool at their senior citizens' complex, so I spent most of my time there."

"A pool *does* sound nice," Honey said as she slid into the booth, blushing as her leg brushed up against Brian's leg.

Trixie grinned up at Jim, whom she had just sat down next to, before turning to Dan. "And how was that youth program in New York?"

Dan's goal was to become a New York City policeman some day, and he had been selected to be a mentor at a two-week program for troubled youth in New York City. Since Dan Mangan had himself been a troubled youth living on the streets of the city before being given a second chance in Sleepyside, he was the perfect person to show juvenile delinquents that change *was* possible.

"It was great. I hope I helped at least one of those guys realize that there is hope," Dan said.

"Indubitably thou exhibited a beneficial influence on the adolescents," verbose Mart Belden, Trixie's other brother, agreed as the waitress stopped by their table to take their order. After the group ordered cheeseburgers and chocolate shakes all around and the waitress headed back to the kitchen, Trixie became serious.

The Bob-Whites focused their full attention on Trixie as she explained Sergeant Molinson's predicament, the evidence against him, and her theory that he had been framed.

Jim whistled when she was finished. "Wow, Trix. This mystery's a dandy. How are you going to prove he was framed?"

Before Trixie could answer, Mart jumped in. "If he was framed. This could still be a colossal mistake."

"How can it be?" Trixie demanded. "Those documents didn't fabricate themselves and march on over to the county Public Integrity Bureau office."

Dan spoke up. "I agree with Trixie, Mart. I don't see how this could be just a mistake."

"This definitely seems to have malicious intent behind it," Jim agreed.

Trixie smiled her gratitude at the two older boys and answered Jim's original question. "Well, we have to logically think out motives first, I think. This could be a personal vendetta, or it could be orchestrated by someone whom Molinson sent to jail."

Di snickered. "Don't you mean someone that Molinson helped *you* send to jail?" This astute comment elicited grins from around the table.

"Or that," Trixie smiled.

"Well, that brings up another question," Mart said. "If it's someone related to his professional life, then why aren't *you* a target? You've certainly been the driving force behind many of his arrests."

Trixie shrugged. "I don't know."

"I hate to bring it up," Dan put in with a rueful look on his handsome features. "But maybe Trixie *will* be a target."

Trixie looked surprised by the thought, but dark looks crossed the Belden boys' and Jim's faces, while Honey and Di looked deeply worried.

"Well, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it," Trixie said matter-of-factly, hoping to head off any safety lectures from honorable Jim and responsible Brian. "In the meantime, let's go on the assumption that it *is* someone from his professional life, since we know next to nothing about his personal life. Agreed?"

Six heads nodded their assent, but no one had time to comment or make suggestions, because their food arrived just then.

Trixie had just taken a bite of her deliciously juicy burger when she noticed Mart and Brian looking at the door with surprised and none-too-pleased expressions on their faces.

Curious, Trixie quickly turned and saw Olyfant, a criminal she had helped put away the previous year while working on a case that involved Di's long-lost uncle and a scheme to extort money from Di's father.

Trixie felt Jim tense beside her. "What's *he* doing out of jail?"

"I don't know, but I must say, this is not good," Mart said.

"He must not have gotten serious time since all they could prove was petty theft and minor fencing," Jim stated.

"Who is this guy?" Dan asked. "Someone Trixie put away, I bet."

"You've heard the story of Di's fake Uncle Monty," Honey said. "That's the guy who ran the seedy hotel on Hawthorne Street and served as Tilney Britten's contact. He was also selling items that Britten stole from Di's house."

Di herself was looking very troubled. "What if he wants revenge?"

Trixie was suddenly alert. "Molinson *was* the arresting officer on that case," she said excitedly. "Could Olyfant be in on what's happening to the sergeant?"

"It *is* awfully coincidental timing," Jim stated.

Dan was staring at the seedy-looking man, who had just sat down at a booth where a thin, haggard-looking man was sitting. "That guy he just sat down with? I've seen him before."

"Where?" Trixie said breathlessly.

Dan shook his head in frustration. "I don't know. Maybe it will come to me."

The group returned their attention to their burgers, but, despite the fact that Wimpy's made the best burgers in the world, no one enjoyed their meal much.

It was on the ride home in the Bob-White station wagon, the seven BWGs managing to squeeze in together, even with the added bulk of Trixie's and Honey's bikes, when Dan suddenly remembered.

"I know where I've seen that guy!"

His sudden exclamation was met with a chorus of "Where at?" and "Tell us!"

"I was at the police station about a month ago, finishing up my paperwork to work at that youth program in the city, when that guy came in with a package. The desk clerk tried to sign for it, but the guy made a big stink about needing Sergeant Molinson's signature for release. No one else's would do. The clerk finally went and got Molinson, just so the guy would drop off the package and leave."

"Very interesting," Brian said.

"It sure is. This guy insists on getting Molinson's signature right before some incriminating documents with what appears to be Molinson's signature turn up at the PI Bureau, and then the same guy is seen meeting with a convicted felon whom Molinson arrested," Trixie said, unable to resist shooting Mart a triumphant look.

"That's too pat to be a coincidence," Jim stated. He gave Trixie a fond look and asked, "What next, boss?"

Trixie smiled up at Jim. "I'm not sure, but I really feel like we're on to something."

* * *

"Honey, I just finished my chores. Can you take a bike ride with me?" Trixie said into the phone.

"Sure. Do you want to ride into town and play tennis at the country club?"

"No, I was thinking maybe we could ride into the village and just hang out," Trixie said, trying to sound nonchalant.

"Hang out?" Honey asked skeptically. "Yesterday, you find out Molinson is being framed, and you're determined to solve the case, and today, you just want to 'hang out'? Something's up! What do you have up your sleeve, Trixie Belden?"

Trixie grinned. Honey really did know her too well. "I'll tell you on the way. Are you in?"

"You know I am. Do you want Jim to come, too? He's helping Regan with some things in the stables, but I am sure he would be eager to come along and be a part of whatever it is you have planned."

"No, it's not worth pulling him away from helping Regan," Trixie said. "I'll meet you at the foot of your driveway in five minutes."

Twenty minutes later, the two girls had parked their bikes in one of the bike racks along Main Street and were casually strolling along, looking as though they were window shopping and hadn't a care in the world.

In reality, the two of them were keeping their eyes peeled for either Olyfant or the man he had met the night before at Wimpy's. Trixie was hoping to see one of the men and follow them, even if it was a long shot. After two hours of fruitless searching in the hot July sun, the two girls were parched and headed into Wimpy's for vanilla malts to cool themselves off.

As they finished their malts, Trixie casually glanced out the window and happened to see the very man they were looking for glance furtively over his shoulder before heading down Main Street away from downtown.

"Honey!" she cried. "There he is! Let's go!"

The two girls sprinted outside and then realized that their quarry hadn't gotten far. They slowed to a less-noticeable pace and continued to follow him. The two sleuths dropped back once when the man glanced over his shoulder in their direction.

Trixie didn't know if he had seen them or not, or if he would even recognize them if he did, but she didn't want to take any chances. Soon, the man crossed the street and headed into Sleepyside's park.

Trixie and Honey fell behind a couple casually strolling in the park, holding hands and gazing romantically at each other.

Honey suppressed a grin when she heard Trixie mutter, "Blech."

But the couple served their purpose for a while. Trixie and Honey could see the thin man, but were relatively hidden if he glanced behind him, as he had been doing every so often since the girls had begun to follow him.

But when the young man and woman stopped to kiss, Trixie grimaced, and the two girls were forced to walk around them and follow the man while rather out in the open.

Suddenly, their quarry stopped at a bench. Trixie quickly grabbed Honey and stepped off the path and behind a convenient bush. They watched as he sat down on a bench and tried to look casual.

"He's not fooling anybody," Trixie muttered.

Honey agreed. "He's too tense for that casual act to be very convincing. I wonder if he's waiting for someone."

"I don't think so," Trixie said as she watched the suspect surreptitiously pull what looked like an envelope from underneath his shirt and slide it carefully underneath the seat of the park bench. He then stood and quickly walked in the opposite direction.

"Should we follow him, or wait and see who picks up the envelope?" Honey asked.

"Neither," Trixie said as she started to move forward. "Let's go get the envelope."

"But, Trixie, someone might be along any minute to get that envelope. If they see you take it, you could be in a lot of danger," Honey pointed out as she grabbed Trixie's wrist.

"You're right. I wasn't thinking, as usual," Trixie said ruefully. "But, darn it, Honey, that could be evidence that proves the sergeant didn't take bribes from Carl Reid! I want to take a look at it, but I guess we should wait and see who picks the envelope up."

"You're going to be waiting a long time, girlies," a menacing voice snarled from behind them.

Trixie and Honey whirled around to find Olyfant standing right behind them, a sneer playing on his thin lips. Once again, with his bushy black eyebrows, the crooked hotel proprietor looked to Trixie as though he was wearing a domino.

"Once a snoop, always a snoop, huh, kid?" Olyfant said.

Trixie snuck a look at Honey, who had gone pale. She remembered how Olyfant's hand had trembled the first time she had surprised him outside his hotel when she had been investigating Di's fake uncle. Although he looked much harder than he had before, she decided to put on a brave front in the slim chance that she could psych him out.

"Once a crook, always a crook," she returned coldly, her blue eyes icy with disdain.

Olyfant's dark eyes narrowed. "Fresh as paint, aren't you? Well, not for much longer."

"You don't scare me," Trixie said boldly, even though quite the opposite was true.

"Well then, not only are you fresh as paint, but you don't have the sense you were born with, girlie," he snarled and then flashed them the gun that he was holding. Trixie hadn't noticed that little detail before, and she felt her heart sink. "Carl Reid will be quite thrilled that not only is Molinson going to jail, but the two snoops who sent us both to Sing Sing are going to be dealt with as well. Head to the Farm Road exit of the park and don't try anything funny. I'll be right behind you, and I won't hesitate to use this if I need to. Move it."

Trixie and Honey exchanged glances and realized that they had no choice but to do as the ugly man said. They headed toward the park exit that Olyfant had specified, on the look out for anyone who could help them. But that end of the park was never as populated as it was near the Main Street entrance, where park benches, picnic areas, and playground equipment were. As they headed away from the more occupied part of the park, Trixie realized that Olyfant had counted on that very fact.

Besides, Trixie reflected, it's not as though we could really do anything even if we did see someone on these deserted trails back here. With Olyfant armed, we couldn't drag innocent bystanders into this. They could get hurt...or worse.

The girls walked in silence, desperately trying to form a plan as they neared the edge of the park. Trixie assumed that Olyfant had a car parked on the street that bordered the park. Once he got them into the car, it would be all over.

At this thought, a wave of panic washed over Trixie, but she quickly brought herself under control.

You can't panic, Belden, she scolded herself. *You have to get yourself and Honey out of this mess. Think!*

As they stepped out of the park, Trixie caught a flash of movement across the street, and her heart soared.

Instinct took over and she grabbed Honey's hand. "Run!" she screamed as she took off.

Stunned, Honey followed her, and the two dove behind a parked car.

"Freeze! Sleepyside PD!" a voice called. Trixie thought she had never heard so sweet a phrase in her whole life.

Olyfant, suddenly confronted with four of Sleepyside's finest aiming their service weapons at him, dropped his gun and raised his hands.

Trixie and Honey came out from their position behind the car, and Trixie grinned as she saw Jim and Dan hurrying toward them.

"Are you all right?" the boys asked.

"Boy, am I glad to see you!" Trixie said.

"How did you ever find us?" Honey wondered. Then she turned to Trixie. "And how did you *know?*"

Trixie grinned. "Jim's red hair always gives him away!"

Jim returned her grin. "Well, I'm glad it does, because I was afraid that you'd get caught in the cross-fire if Olyfant decided not to go down easy."

"How *did* you find us?" Trixie wondered.

"Uncle Bill sent Jim and I into town to pick up a few things from the hardware store to finish the stable project," Dan explained. "As we were coming out of the store, we noticed you come flying out of Wimpy's like two hurricanes. We decided to see what you were up to, knowing your penchant for finding trouble, and followed you."

Jim took up the story then. "Once we realized that you were following the man Dan recognized from Wimpy's, we figured you might be on to something. After that man left something under the park bench, we started to approach you. That's when we saw Olyfant, and Dan noticed that he had a gun. So, I kept an eye on you, and Dan hightailed it out to find the cop who's always on duty at the corner of Main and Elm, right outside the park. Dan guessed that Olyfant would try to leave the park near the back entrance on Farm Road, which is pretty deserted. Fortunately, he was right. The cop radioed for back-up, and four men were sent to cover the Farm Road exit of the park, and two were sent to guard the Main Street exit.

"I didn't want to risk following behind you and Olyfant on the path. Like you said, Trix, my red hair does seem to always give me away," he said with a grin. "So, I ran as fast

as I could along the outside of the park and had just made it around when you both came walking out."

"And the rest is history," Dan smiled.

"I've never been so happy in my life that Regan decided to send you on an errand," Honey said gratefully.

"Me, too, little sis. Me, too."

* * *

Three days later, the full complement of Bob-Whites was gathered in the clubhouse.

"They did another raid on Olyfant's hotel and found evidence proving that he and Carl Reid were trying to set Molinson up as revenge for sending them both to jail," Jim reported. "Turns out they were in the cells next to each other in Sing Sing and got to talking and came up with this plan to be carried out when Olyfant was released."

"Plus, with the illegal gun that was in his possession and the kidnapping attempt, this time, Olyfant will be behind bars for a good long time," Trixie said, satisfaction thick in her voice.

Just then, there was a knock on the door. Seven pairs of startled eyes met before Di had the presence of mind to jump up and answer it.

"Sergeant Molinson!" she cried in surprise.

"Good afternoon, Di," the sergeant said. Trixie thought that the policeman almost sounded shy. His gaze swept the room. "Hi, everyone. I hope you don't mind me intruding at your clubhouse."

His statement was met with a chorus of "Of course not!" and "We're glad to have you, sir!" and "Don't be ridic!" Trixie felt a hot blush rising in her cheeks after she blurted *that* out.

"I won't stay long, but I wasn't sure when you'd be by the station, and I wanted to thank you personally for what you all did for me. Especially you, Trixie and Honey."

The normally gruff officer fumbled briefly with his hat before continuing, "When I first found out that I was being investigated, what hurt the most was that people thought I was capable of committing a crime. I was afraid once the news got out, everyone would think the same of me, and I'd be shunned. But you all believed in my innocence from the very beginning and went out of your way to show me that, and I'll always appreciate it."

The sergeant looked as embarrassed by this display of emotion as Trixie felt, so she decided to lighten the mood.

"So, does this mean that Honey and I have an honorary place on the force?" she asked mischievously.

Sergeant Molinson looked surprised for a moment and then grinned. "You know, I just might make you both some business cards. What's that phrase? Trixie and Honey, Schoolgirl Shamuses, Inc.?"

The whole group laughed as Trixie said, "Something like that. And we want 'When the FBI gives up, we take over' printed in red."

She turned to give Jim a wicked grin and noticed that he was looking directly at her and giving her that special smile that she loved. The one that said all was right with the world.

And now that Sergeant Molinson's name was cleared, and she and Jim were going to be in Sleepyside together for a few more weeks, everything *was* right with the world.

Additional notes: Susan and Mary are not only the best friends in the world, but the best editors, too! Who else would say, "Sure, you procrastinator you. I'll drop everything and edit your story within the next few hours because you waited until the last minute to write it."? So, many, many thanks to Susan and Mary for the fantabulously speedy edits, both of which improved the story tremendously!

Another thanks to Susan whose marvelous new *Missing Murderer* graphics inspired the title header. Thanks, Susan! Oh yeah, and thanks for providing me with the Elm Street reference so I didn't have to research it. Have I told you lately that you rock?

Trixie and Honey are the only ones to go to Minnesota in #39 because Brian, Mart, and Jim are going to "work as junior counselors at camp later this summer" (after they completed some projects around their respective houses) and Di and Dan had "other summer plans" (c'mon KK, please make up a better excuse than *that!*). Trixie and Honey were in Minnesota for two weeks. When they returned, Brian, Mart, and Jim were still around because, in my world, it wasn't "later this summer" yet and they were still working on projects. And Di and Dan had already finished their vague "other summer plans" and were around.

All that is said in *Mysterious Visitor* is that "the police raided his hotel" when referring to Olyfant's criminal activities. Since Molinson was the one on hand at the police station when Mart and Trixie were kidnapped by Tilney Britten and he is the one who returned them home that night, I took a little license and made him Olyfant's arresting officer.

Description of Olyfant is from *Trixie Belden and the Mysterious Visitor*. Olyfant and Carl Reid (and all other characters, actually) are the property of Random House.

Farm Road really does border a park in Ossining, and Westchester County does have a Public Integrity Bureau that oversees corruption in county employees, including police officers working in any police department in the county. Any mistakes I made with how corruption is actually investigated are mine; I made up a scenario to fit my story and could be completely wrong! Please willfully suspend your disbelief.