

The Secret of the Mansion (Trixie Belden Book 1)

By Julie Campbell

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Trixie’s summer is going to be sooo boring with her two older brothers away at camp. But then a millionaire’s daughter moves into the next-door mansion, an old miser hides a fortune in his decrepit house, and a runaway kid starts hiding out in Sleepyside!

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap
Trixie's summer is going to be sooo boring with her two older brothers away at camp. But then a millionaire's daughter moves into the next-door mansion, an old miser hides a fortune in his decrepit house, and a runaway kid starts hiding out in Sleepyside!

About the Author
JULIE CAMPBELL, in the 1940s, was running her own literary agency when Western Publishing put out a call for talented authors to write mystery series for kids. Julie proposed the Trixie Belden series and wrote the first six titles herself. She also started the Ginnie Gordon series and wrote several Cherry Ames books. Julie Campbell died in 1999.

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Ten minutes later, Trixie and Bobby began the long climb up the Manor House driveway with Reddy racing ahead of them. At the turn in the road, a fat little cocker spaniel rushed down to meet them. Right behind the puppy was a tall thin girl whose pale face was framed in shoulder-length, light-brown hair. She cringed as Reddy, disdainfully ignoring the black puppy, raced around her in circles, barking furiously.
“Don’t pay any attention to him,” Trixie cried quickly, seeing that her new neighbor was really frightened. “He’s just showing off. He wouldn’t hurt a fly. I’m Trixie Belden,” she went on hurriedly. “My kid brother and I live in the hollow in that little white frame house–Crabapple Farm, you know.”
The girl stared solemnly from Trixie to Bobby and back again. “How do you do?” she said, holding out her slender hand. “My name is Honey–Honey Wheeler.”
Trixie shook hands, feeling rather foolish at such a display of formality. *Oh, my*, she thought, almost sick with disappointment, *she’s stuck-up. Who would go around in a white linen dress and stockings and sandals unless there’s a party?* Aloud she asked, without much hope, “Do you ride horseback?”
Honey smiled, then. “Oh, yes,” she said. “Do you?”
Trixie shook her head ruefully. “No, but I want to learn like anything. The only thing I have to ride is a babyish old bike. But I’m earning the money now to buy a horse just as soon as I can.”
“A bike?” Honey’s smile widened, and Trixie had to admit that the girl was really pretty in a pale sort of way. “I wish I had a bike,” she said wistfully. “Mother wouldn’t let me have one in the city because of traffic, and the rest of the time I was at boarding school and camp where they’re not allowed.” Timidly she moved a step nearer to Trixie. “I’ll teach you how to ride horseback,” she offered. “Then perhaps you would show me how to ride a bike.”
Trixie could hardly believe her ears. “That’s great,” she gasped. “Let’s start right away. I mean the horseback part. I can teach you how to ride a bike any time.” She turned impatiently to Bobby, who was joyously cuddling the cocker spaniel puppy. “You go home now, Bobby, and play in the sandpile.”
Bobby ignored her and grinned up at Honey. “Are you rich?” he demanded. “Hey! What’s it like to be rich?”
Trixie felt her cheeks flame hotly, but Honey merely smiled and said, “It’s not nice at all, Bobby. I can’t remember when I didn’t want to be like other people.” She turned shyly toward Trixie and added, “When I was little, my nurses never let me play in the dirt the way Bobby is now, and I was never allowed to go any place by myself for fear of being kidnaped.” She stopped suddenly as her enormous hazel eyes filled with tears. “I hardly ever saw my father and mother until I got sick. And now they’ve bought this big old place just for me. But what good is it? What good is anything if you’re never allowed to have any fun?”
Trixie could never bear to see anyone unhappy. “Gee,” she said, putting her arm sympathetically around Honey’s thin shoulders. “I never thought about it like that. I always thought it would be wonderful to have a lot of money.” She stopped as the word *money* gave her an idea. “I tell you what let’s do.” She whirled

Honey around and pointed across the woods to Ten Acres, which she called Miser's Mansion in her own mind. "See that big old gray and yellow house on the opposite hill?"
Honey nodded and dabbed at her eyes with a dainty handkerchief.
"Well," Trixie went on excitedly, "a crazy old man lives there all alone. Dad took him to the hospital this morning, so this is a swell time to explore. I've always wanted to see what the inside of the house was like."
"Trixie Belden!" Honey gasped in a shocked voice. "You wouldn't really break into somebody's house!"
"Of course not." Trixie grinned. "Old Mr. Frayne would probably have me thrown in jail if I did such a thing. But there's no reason why we couldn't peek in through a window. You know what they say in the village?" she demanded. "They say there's a half million dollars hidden there. Let's go!"
"I wouldn't go near that creepy old place," Honey said firmly. "And I don't believe there's any money hidden there. Why, the house is practically falling to pieces, and it hasn't been painted in ages."
"How do you know all that?" Trixie demanded impatiently. "You can't see it *that* clearly from here."
"I was there early this morning," Honey explained. "Daddy and I were out riding, and we went up that old driveway thinking it was a road to the woods. We didn't realize that it led to the Mansion until we were halfway up. Then, of course, we knew we were trespassing, so we turned around. It looked like a deserted house to me, and I was glad to get away from there. Nobody would want to live in such a horrible, run-down place."
Trixie bent down and fumbled with her shoelace to hide the disappointment on her face. *She's worse that I thought she was at first,* she thought. *A silly old fraidy cat.* Aloud she said coldly, "Of course, a lot of people think old Mr. Frayne went crazy after his wife died, and he lost all his money. That's why the place is run-down. Anyway, I'm going to look around there while Mr. Frayne's in the hospital. You don't have to if you don't want to."
"Are you sure he's in the hospital?" Honey asked, suddenly.
Trixie straightened up. "Of course. Dad took him in early this morning. He's not expected to live."
"That's funny," Honey said slowly. "We were there about an hour ago. As we rode down the hill, I got the creepy feeling you get when you know somebody you can't see is watching you. I looked back over my shoulder quickly, and I saw a face at one of the windows." She shivered slightly. "I'll bet that house is haunted!"

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Users Review

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