

The background of the cover is a light blue sky. Large, stylized green leaves with a low-poly, geometric pattern are scattered around the edges. The leaves are in various shades of green, from light lime to a darker forest green. The title 'The GARDEN TROLL' is written in a large, pink, sans-serif font. The word 'The' is smaller and positioned above 'GARDEN'. The words 'GARDEN' and 'TROLL' are on separate lines. Two small, simple line drawings of flies are positioned near the title: one to the left of 'TROLL' and one to the right of 'TROLL'.

# The GARDEN TROLL

Vicki C. Hayes





MEET THE



# Garden Troll

**Age:** really, really, *really* old

**Favorite Foods:** rotten leaves and dry twigs

**Greatest Fear:** the wizard

**Future Goal:** to cause lots more trouble

**Best Quality:** hosts his brother's birthday party every year

# CHARACTERS



Jenny

**Age:** 12

**Special Skill:** can wiggle her ears

**Most Private Secret:** actually glad her dad married Ellen

**Future Goal:** to own a horse farm in Oregon

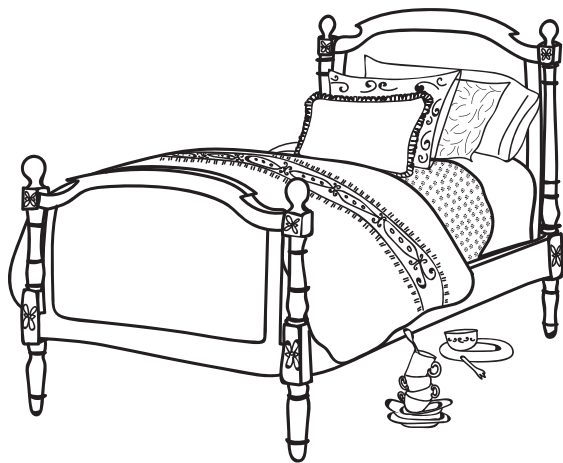
**Best Quality:** knows when she is wrong

# 1 THE WISH

Jenny was in trouble again. It didn't matter what the twelve-year-old did. She couldn't please her stepmom, Ellen.

"I did clean my room," said Jenny.

"Yes," said Ellen. "But you left dirty dishes under your bed."

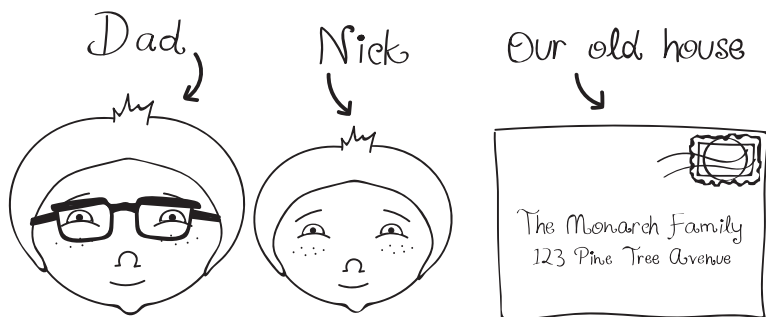


“I did fill the dishwasher,” said Jenny.

“Yes,” said Ellen. “But you forgot to start it. You need to take a little more care.”

“Leave me alone,” yelled Jenny.

Jenny stomped out the back door. She hated Ellen. She hated this old house. She was happy with Dad. She was happy with her little brother, Nick. She was happy with their other house. Then Dad had to go and marry Ellen. Their mom had been dead a long time. But still ...



Dad said they needed a fresh start. He

said they needed a new house. He said Ellen liked this house. Ellen was an artist. She said the house was charming. Dad agreed with Ellen. Even Nick liked the house. But Jenny didn't. The house wasn't charming. It was old. And it was ugly. Even the yard was a mess.

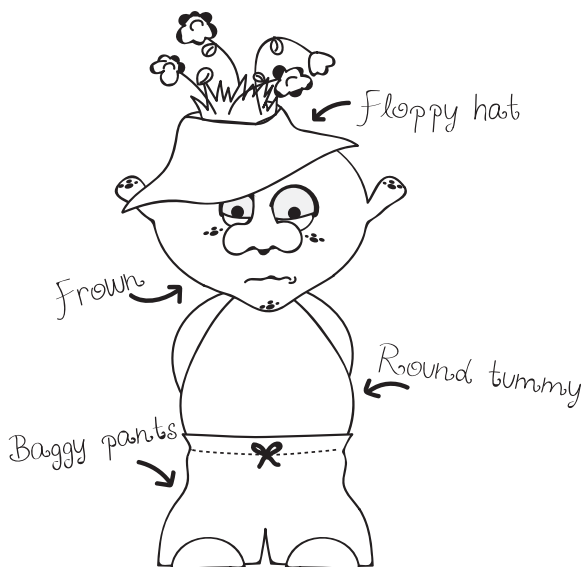


Jenny walked to the back of the yard. There was an old garden. It was full of weeds. It was full of stones. It looked the way Jenny felt. It looked sad and messed up.

The stone walls were mostly gone. There



was one stone post left. It was four feet high. And covered with ivy. On top sat a little stone man. He had a round tummy. He wore baggy pants. And a floppy hat. Jenny thought he looked like a troll. He was frowning. Jenny thought he looked funny.



“You are the only thing I like,” said Jenny. “You are the only thing I like about this old place.”

Jenny patted the troll's head. "I don't like this house. I don't like this yard. And I don't like Ellen," Jenny told the troll.

The troll didn't say anything. Jenny liked that. She traced his frown with her finger. "I'm always in trouble," Jenny said. "It's not fair. I wish Ellen would get in trouble!"



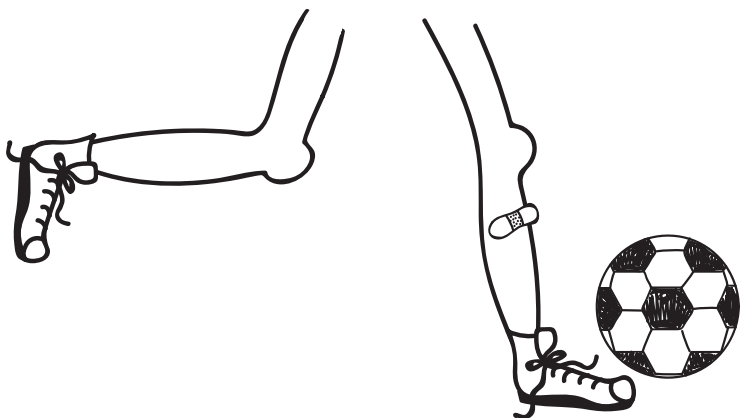
Suddenly the troll felt hot. Jenny pulled her hand away. She stared at the troll. But he looked the same. Did he really get hot? Jenny touched the troll again. Then she heard a voice.



## 2

# THE TROLL.

“Hey,” said the voice. “What are you doing?” It was Nick. He was coming across the yard. He was kicking his soccer ball.



“Nothing,” said Jenny. She let go of the troll.

“Cool troll,” said Nick. “Isn’t this a rad garden?” He joined her by the stone post.

“It’s old and messy,” said Jenny.

“Yeah,” said Nick. “But I like it. I like the house too. It’s charming.”

Jenny snorted. “You heard Ellen say that,” she said. “That’s not a Nick word. You always copy Ellen.” Jenny started to walk away.



“What’s wrong with Ellen?” asked Nick.  
“She’s nice. I like her.”

“It was better before,” said Jenny. “When there were just three of us. You don’t remember it.”

“I do too,” said Nick. “But I like having Ellen in the family. You need to give her a chance. Will you help me with my soccer kicks?”

“Fine,” said Jenny. She liked her brother. She didn’t like Ellen.

Jenny and Nick kicked the soccer ball back and forth. Then Nick gave a really hard kick. The ball went toward the stone post. It hit the post hard. The post shook back and forth.

“Watch out,” yelled Jenny. “You might break something.” She went to look at the troll. She didn’t want him broken.

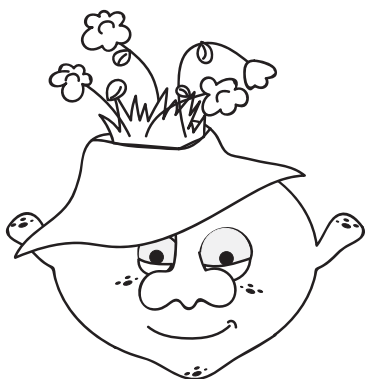
“Nick, come here!” Jenny called.

“What’s wrong?” said Nick. “Is he broken?”



“Look at the troll,” said Jenny. “He’s changed.”

Nick came over to the post. He looked at the troll.



*Something's different ...*

“I think he looks okay,” said Nick.

“No,” said Jenny. “He was frowning before. Now he’s grinning.”

“I don’t think so,” said Nick. “Anyway, how could he change his face?”

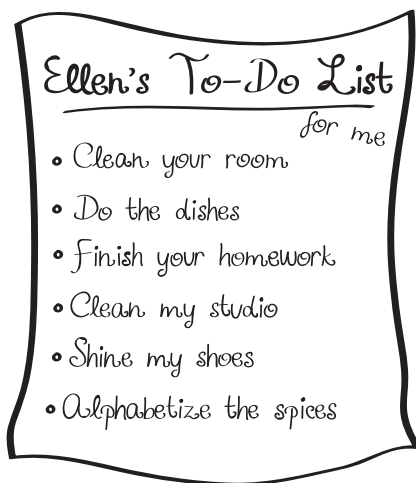
Jenny didn’t answer. She heard the sound of a car. It pulled into the driveway.

“It’s Dad,” yelled Nick. He ran to the front yard. Jenny followed.

“Hey, Nick,” said Dad. He got out of the car. “How was your day?”

“Great!” said Nick. “I got on a soccer team.”

“Good job,” said Dad. “How was your day, Jenny?”



OK, I made up  
the last three.

“No fun,” said Jenny. “Ellen kept yelling at me. I had to clean my room. I had to help



with the dishes. I had to do my homework. I hate Ellen.”

Dad frowned.

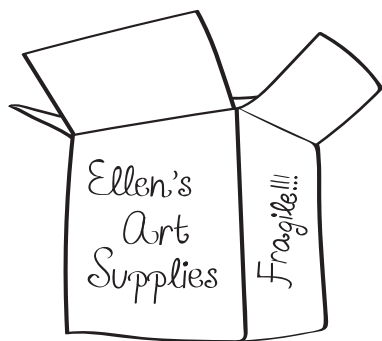
“I don’t like you saying that,” he said. “You need to try to get along. These changes are hard for Ellen too.”

Jenny kicked some stones in the driveway.

“Please try,” said Dad.

Jenny stuck her hands in her pockets.

“Maybe you could help Ellen in her studio,” said Dad. “Moving all her art things was hard for her.”



Jenny didn't look at Dad.

"Jenny?" said Dad.

"Okay," said Jenny. "I'll think about it."



*Me, thinking of other things*

Dad sighed. He went in the house.

Jenny and Nick walked to the backyard. Nick began kicking his soccer ball again. Jenny joined him. But then she remembered the troll. Had its face really changed? She looked at the stone post. Something was wrong.

"Nick! Come quick!" she yelled.

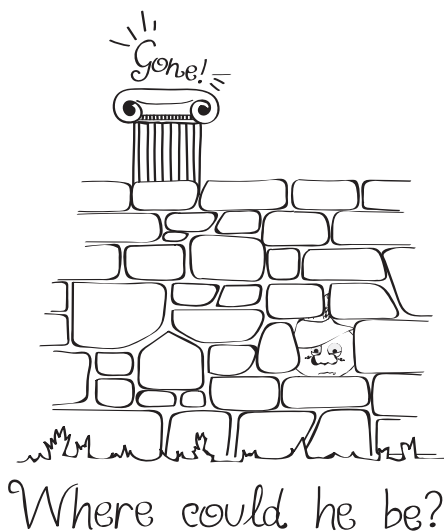


“What is it?” asked Nick. “Is the troll frowning or grinning?” He kicked his ball toward the old garden.

Jenny was staring at the post. Nick looked up at the troll. His eyes opened wide. The troll wasn’t frowning. The troll wasn’t grinning.

Why?

The troll wasn’t there!



Where could he be?

# The GARDEN TROLL

Stepmothers are horrible. Mine is super mean. She's always mad at me.



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