

THE HOLLY VS. RANDALL WARS

By Edith Weiss

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ISBN 1-60003-487-X

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The Holly vs. Randall Wars

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HOLLY HOOPER: A typical teenage girl, smarter than she knows

Hi. My name is Holly Hooper and I am at war with my grandfather. He came to live with us six months ago. He's big, he's loud and growly, and he hates kids. He told me so. (*grandfather voice*) "I hate kids. They're useless," he said, just like that.

He calls me Heidi. At first, I was flattered, I thought he meant that I looked like Heidi Klum. But no, he calls me Heidi because of some old Swiss children's book where a little girl moves in with her grandfather and she's all helpful and gathers wildflowers and milks goats. I would never milk a goat. Udders. Ew.

He won't let me call him grandfather, or pop-pop, or grandpa. (*in Grandfather's voice*) "If you have to talk to me, call me "Sir"." I'm not calling him Sir. I call him Randall. He hates it.

He smokes a pipe. My parents told him he had to smoke outside, but when they're not there, he smokes in the house. Second hand smoke all over me. Putting me at risk! He tells me I should go outside when he wants to smoke, and run around the block, and get some fresh air, cause I have young legs. So I go

outside, because I hate the smell of smoke. The entire house smells like a fireman's armpit. I am so never going to smoke.

I suspect that even though Randall is old, he is smarter than he lets on. I mean really, how many times do I have to tell him when my friend Thelma comes over, "Randall, her name is Thelma, not Thema. Please stop calling her Thema." Who would name their kid Thema? But the worst is what he does to my friend TaRhonda. He calls her Tar Honda. "Look at the way it's spelled," he says. T-a-r H-o-n-d-a. My friends think he's kind of cute in that old people sort of way, but I think he's obnoxious.

When I get home from school, and it's just me and Randall; we have the battle of the television. Randall totally hogs the T.V. I'm one of those underprivileged kids that doesn't have a T.V. in her room. So if I wanna watch, I have to watch with Randall. You know, there's only so much Public Television that I can stand. And I am way, way over my limit. He says if I don't like it I should do homework or read. What do I look like, Copernicus? After a tough day at school, I just want to watch some "Sex And the City" reruns. He said "Sex and the City" was a pernicious show. Well I didn't know what pernicious meant, I mean, what am I, Webster?-and he wouldn't tell me, so I had to look it up in the dictionary. Of course, I didn't know how to spell it, either, but instead of telling me he made me sound it out – per-ni-cious –and then I looked it up. "Causing great harm, destructive, ruinous, causing moral injury, evil."

This one time, when Randall was watching Pierre on The French Chef make a five egg souffle, I got the remote without him realizing it. I sat behind him and, while pretending to read a book, kept changing the channel. 'Separate ze eggs like so' – Sex and

the City! When he couldn't find the remote, he changed the channel by hand. 'Add a soupcon of salt' – Sex and the City! When he figured out what I had done, he called me odious. "Who even knows what that means?" I said. "Most educated people," he said. So I looked it up. O-di-ous. It means "exciting hatred or repugnance; abhorrent, offensive." Then I looked up repugnance and abhorrent, cause I didn't know what that meant either. Let me just say, I know what it means now. It means war.

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