

# CARL & JERRY



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# CARL & JERRY

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This story has been excerpted from *Carl & Jerry, Their Complete Adventures, Volume 2*. The print book contains 24 stories, originally published in *Popular Electronics* from January 1957 through December 1958. Printed books may be ordered through Lulu.com at the following URL:

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An index with summaries of all Carl & Jerry stories may be found here:

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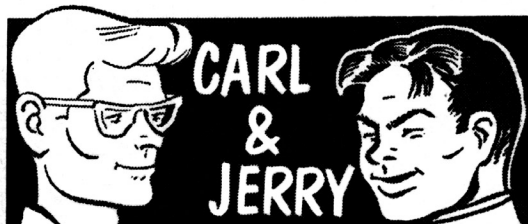
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**September 1958**

Jerry was looking for his pal, Carl. The latter's mother said she had not seen her pride and joy for a couple of hours. And Bosco, the dog, only yawned widely when ordered: "Go find Carl!"

This was puzzling. Losing big, rambunctious, noisy Carl was like misplacing a B-47 on a small-town airfield. As Jerry stood in the back yard mulling over the mystery, he heard faint, strange sounds coming from the garage on the rear of the lot. He tiptoed across the grass and placed his ear against the closed door. A strangled, falsetto voice inside was piping:

"The little boy threw the onions into the river because he wanted to see the River Kwai."

Not waiting to hear more, Jerry threw the door open and beheld a strange sight in the shadowy interior. Carl was sitting Indian-fashion on the garage floor. Perched on his knee was a very battered, limp-legged ventriloquist's dummy, and on the floor at his side was spread open a small booklet boldly entitled *Throw Your Voice*. Carl's mouth was drawn back in a horrible grimace and the leaders in his neck stood out like ropes as he tried to project his voice into the slack-jawed dummy.

"Oh, it's you," Carl greeted Jerry. "I might have known a man couldn't have any privacy. But since you're here, take a listen and see if it sounds as if my voice were coming out of this refugee from a toothpick factory."

He screwed his face back into its former distorted shape and grated: "Pancakes are like der sun because they rise in der yeast and set behind der vest."

Jerry shook his head emphatically from side to side. "Nope. It sounds as if you were trying to talk as you went under for the last time."

"Yeah, I know what you mean," Carl said disconsolately as he released the dummy and let its wooden head bang on the concrete floor. "But I've simply got to do something to show Linda that this new guy, George, isn't the only satellite in orbit."

Jerry's round face puckered into a worried frown.

"How come that's important? What do you care what a girl thinks?"

"Well, this George really sears me. At Linda's party Saturday night, I was telling her about how we helped the sheriff catch those moonshiners when this George character drags out his dummy and begins to carry on a corny dialogue with him. After that, Linda just couldn't seem to see anyone but George.

"I've simply got to show her that I could be a ventriloquist too—and a much better one than George—if I really wanted to. That's why I swapped Milo Perkins my trumpet for this bunch of kindling and the book to go with it. Milo said he got everything he knew about ventriloquism out of this book."

"Did you ever hear Milo do any voice throwing?" Jerry wanted to know.

"Why, come to think of it, no! Why, that dirty crook!"

"From the little I've read about ventriloquism, it takes a long time to learn to create the illusion, unless, of course, you have a natural talent," Jerry said. "But frankly, Carl, I take a dim view of the whole business. I thought we both felt the same way about girls: There will be plenty of time for them later, but right now you and I can have lots more fun with electronics."

"I know," Carl said miserably; "but I still can't stand being made to look like a dope in front of Linda—at least not by a porch-swing poodle like George. Anyway, we're pals, aren't we?"

"You know we are," Jerry answered in gruff embarrassment.

"Well, a pal helps a pal, no matter whether the pal likes what the pal is doing or not," Carl said with more conviction than clarity.

Jerry heaved a sigh of submission and picked the dummy off the floor. "Hm-m-m-m," he mused, "there's plenty of room inside the body for a transistorized receiver and a miniature loudspeaker. We



can spring-load his jaw so that it's normally closed and a pull on this cord will open it. Audio voltage picked off the receiver and rectified with a germanium rectifier will produce pulses of d.c., which can drive a high-current transistor with a solenoid in its output circuit. This solenoid will give a yank on the jaw cord with every syllable of the voice picked up by the receiver."

"**I** get it!" Carl said, jumping to his feet. "You're *really* going to throw your voice, right through the ether waves! You'll be hiding somewhere and talk back to me through the little transmitter."

"Uh-uh!" Jerry denied. "You're really going to throw *your* voice. You'll wear a throat mike concealed by your collar. A switch will cut this mike in when the dummy talks and cut it out when you talk. All you have to do is learn to talk without moving your lips very much when the dummy is supposed to be talking. The little transmitter in your pocket and the receiver inside the dummy will take care of the actual voice-throwing."

"That's the end, the absolute end!" Carl applauded excitedly. "Let's get going on it. George and I are both supposed to go over to Linda's

tonight to plan a class picnic. Think we can have Splinter here wired for sound by that time?"

"I don't see why not," Jerry said listlessly. "We can use the transmitter and receiver we fixed up for that Santa Claus caper last Christmas. Of course, we'll have to do a little modifying on the transmitter to make it work with that surplus throat mike, and we'll have to rig up the solenoid circuit on the receiver; but it shouldn't take long."

And it didn't. Everything, for once, worked just as Jerry planned. The installation was finished as Carl's mother gave him the first supper call. Splinter was propped up on the bench of the laboratory in Jerry's basement, and Carl fastened the throat mike in place and recited: "One, two, three, four; testing!"

The words came from the dummy! True, the voice was muffled and deep-sounding because of the throat mike, but the high volume from the speaker overrode the slight sound escaping from Carl's lips. Best of all, though, was the realistic way the dummy's jaw worked with every syllable.

"Wow! Does that ever work smooth! Thanks a million, Jer. I've got to go now because Mom sounded pretty mad on that last call; but if you're still up when I get home, I'll tell you what happened."

As he said this, Carl grabbed Splinter unceremoniously by the neck and pounded up the basement stairs. Slowly and thoughtfully, Jerry went about the business of putting away the tools and brushing off the littered bench.

After supper Jerry tried to read an article on analog computers, but the meaning of the words kept slipping out of his attention. He tossed the book aside and wandered aimlessly about the house. Finally he went outside and sat on the front porch in the moonlight. He felt strangely lonely as he leaned back and listened to the chirping of the nocturnal insects.

He jumped as a cold, moist nose touched his hand. "Hi, Bosco," he whispered, clamping the dog between his knees and beginning to rub the animal's ears affectionately; "I'll bet you would never let any old girl spoil our friendship!"





At that instant the stillness of the evening was broken by a sound that could be one of two things: a steam calliope with a flat wheel or Carl walking along the sidewalk whistling off-key.

“Hi, Jer,” he greeted gaily as he collapsed on the steps beside his chum and tossed Splinter onto the porch.

“How did you manage to tear yourself away from the fascinating Linda so early?” Jerry asked sarcastically. “Did Splinter let you down?”

“Oh, no, Splinter was a howling success. When I got there, George and Linda were sitting in the porch swing, and good old George had already gone into his act. He and the dummy were talking up a storm, and Linda was giggling admiringly at every word. I listened politely for a while and then I innocently asked George how far he could throw his voice. He laughed in a snotty sort of way and said it wasn’t really a case of throwing the voice—he merely created an illusion.

“Well, I said that might be all right for amateurs but that I had noodled around with ventriloquism a little myself and thought I did a pretty good job of projecting my voice. George boy gave a big scornful laugh at this, and Linda joined in—although she whispered to me afterward that she was just trying to be polite.

“So I took good old Splinter out of the sack in which I had been carrying him and propped him up against the honeysuckle vines at the end of the porch. Then I stepped back about ten feet and asked him how he felt. He snapped right back that he felt fine and wanted to know who the pretty girl in the swing was.

“I’ll not bore you with details of the rest of the dialogue, but honestly it wasn’t too bad. I really felt good, and it seemed to roll out all by itself. George’s face was something to look at, especially when he saw Splinter’s jaw flapping away in the moonlight. Linda was thrilled to pieces.

“She couldn’t keep her hands off Splinter; so I told her she could hold him while I tried something really difficult—throwing my voice behind me. I walked out to the gate, and Splinter and I still carried on. Linda made George touch Splinter so he could actually feel my voice vibrating inside the dummy’s body.

“George looked like a whipped dog. ‘I simply can’t understand it,’ he kept muttering over and over. Actually I began to feel sorry for him, especially after Linda got out of the swing and sat down on the edge of the porch with me. I mean she couldn’t dig anyone but me and Splinter; George had to say something two or three times before he got her attention.”

“That must have made you feel just wonderful,” Jerry said wistfully.

“No, it didn’t. It made me feel kind of sick and ashamed. If Linda was as fickle as all that, I decided George could have her. Just as I reached this conclusion, George got up from the swing and mumbled something about three being a crowd and said perhaps he had better go. Linda said if that was the way he felt, perhaps he had.

“That was when I got up. I told George that he could stay because I was going; and since Linda was so interested in ventriloquism, he was the one to tell her about it because I actually knew from nothing.

“Then I explained how I had tricked them with electronics. Actually, I don’t think they had the foggiest notion of how Splinter works when I got through—you know how little most people know about electronics. At any rate, I grabbed up Splinter and took off like



a big bird, leaving George and Linda standing there on the porch. She had the funniest look on her face.”

For a little while both boys sat silent in the soft light of the moon, enjoying the warm feeling of restored comradeship.

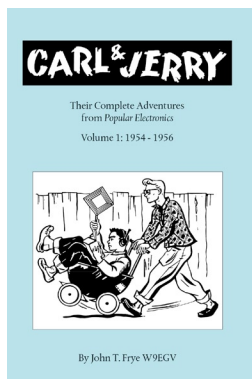
“Hey, Jer,” Carl exclaimed, jumping to his feet and dusting the seat of his trousers.

“Yeah?” Jerry asked.

“Let’s go down to the lab and get started on some really big electronic project, something that’s real gone.”

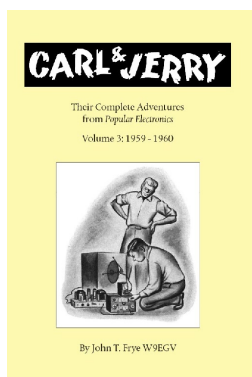
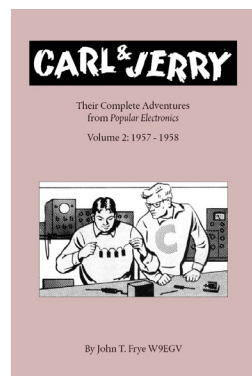
“Okay,” Jerry said happily.

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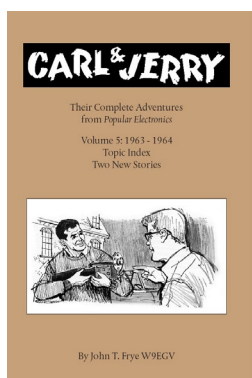
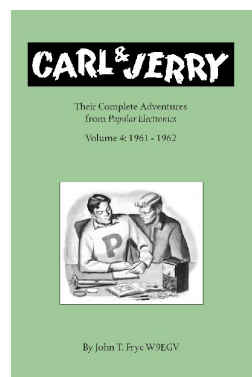
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