

**JERRY TODD  
AND THE  
TALKING FROG**

BY  
LEO EDWARDS

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# JERRY TODD AND THE TALKING FROG



*Jerry Todd and the Talking Frog. Frontispiece—*

**MR. RICKS ABSENT-MINDEDLY POURED THE SYRUP DOWN THE BACK OF HIS  
NECK AND SCRATCHED HIS PANCAKE!**

## JERRY TODD SAYS:

When I started writing this book, I thought of calling it: JERRY TODD AND THE PUZZLE ROOM MYSTERY. But Scoop told me that wasn't the proper title. "There is more in the book about the talking frog than there is about the puzzle room," he pointed out. "So why don't you call it JERRY TODD AND THE TALKING FROG?"

So it was our leader, you see, who gave this book its title.

Like my other books, this is a fun-mystery-adventure story. The "fun" part is where we peddle the spy's beauty soap. Bubbles of Beauty, let me tell you, was very wonderful soap! At first we couldn't believe that it would do all of the amazing things that Mr. Posselwait claimed for it. But that is where *we* got a surprise!

There is a ghost in this story. B-r-r-r-r! At midnight it comes to the old haunted house, walking on the porches. Creepy, I'll tell the world. We kept the doors locked. For we were all alone in the brick house, Scoop and I and Peg and our new chum, Tom Ricks. It was to help our new chum that we braved the perils of the haunted house. You see, a puzzle maker had met with a strange death in the brick house, and that is what made it haunted.

"Ten and ten." That was the Bible's secret. What was "ten and ten"? Why did the ghost come nightly to the inventor's home? We found out, but it took us many exciting days to solve the mystery.

Yes, if you like a spooky, shivery, mysterious story, you surely will enjoy this book, my fifth one.

Here are the titles of my five books in their order:

JERRY TODD AND THE WHISPERING MUMMY  
JERRY TODD AND THE ROSE-COLORED CAT  
JERRY TODD AND THE OAK ISLAND TREASURE  
JERRY TODD AND THE WALTZING HEN  
JERRY TODD AND THE TALKING FROG

My sixth book will be JERRY TODD AND THE PURRING EGG. This dodo egg, taken from King Tut's tomb, was more than three thousand years old. The Tutter newspaper called it the "million-dollar egg." Could it be rejuvenated? One man said so. The story of what happened when the egg was "rejuvenated" makes mighty good reading for a boy who likes a book packed full of chuckles and mysterious tangles.

Your friend,  
JERRY TODD.

## OUR CHATTER-BOX

When I started writing books for boys (this is Leo Edwards speaking) I was practically unknown in the story-writing world. Never having heard of me, boys didn't know whether to buy my books or not. The titles, featuring Whispering Mummies and Purring Eggs, seemed kind of silly to a lot of young readers. But to-day hundreds of thousands of boys look forward to my new titles. If the books are slow in coming, a goodly portion of these hundreds of thousands of "fans" write and tell me about it. Also they jack me up if things aren't so-so. And, happier for me, they pat me on the back (verbally) if they like my stuff. I never tire of reading these bully good letters. And I was tickled pink when my publisher told me that I could incorporate a few of these letters in a "Chatter-Box." An experiment, the first "Chatter-Box" appeared in my sixteenth book. And so popular has this department become (it is made up almost wholly of letters, poems and miscellaneous contributions from boys and girls who read my books) that now I have been given the pleasing job of supplying my earlier books with brief "Chatter-Boxes." Writers of accepted poems, built around the characters in my books, or featuring some boyish interest, win prizes. And, of course, it is pleasing to other boys to see their letters in print. If you have written me a letter I may have used it in another "Chatter-Box." Or if you are contemplating a letter, why not write it to-day? It may be just the letter I need for one of the big "Chatter-Boxes" in my new books. It may even give me an idea, for my books, which will bring millions of added laughs into the world.

## LETTERS

"I have read every book you published, including the Trigger Berg books," writes Philip Horsting of Brooklyn, N. Y., "and I like them all. Trigger Berg can get into mischief faster than any boy I know. I think that the 'Chatter-Box' is a very good idea and while I'm writing this letter my aunt is reading the latest 'Chatter-Box' right now."

"I just read *Andy Blake's Secret Service*," writes Bill Hopwood of Primos, Pa., "and there's something in the book I don't understand. When Eddie Garry's uncle, with whom Eddie was living, told Andy that the latter's father was his younger brother, and Eddie's father's twin, how come that Andy's name is Blake and Eddie's name is Garry? Did Andy's father go under a false name?"

Yes, Bill, when Andy's father ran away from home, determined never to have anything more to do with his own people, he dropped the name of Garry and took the name of Blake. By rights, we should call Andy by his true name. But he prefers to keep the name he has known all his life. So we'll continue to speak of him as Andy Blake instead of Andy Garry.

"Not long ago," writes Dub Moritin of Dallas, Texas, "I was reading one of your Jerry Todd books and I saw where you had a Freckled Goldfish club. Gee, Mr. Edwards, I sure would like to join! The boys call me Dub. If you want to call me that, it's OK with me. I have six Todd and two Ott books. I save my weekly spending money and if I haven't enough Mom gives me the rest. For both Mom and Dad are crazy about your books. I am sending the two two-cent stamps to join your club."



“I am trying to get another boy besides myself to join the Freckled Goldfish club,” writes Charles F. Spiro of Yonkers, N. Y. “I told him what an honor it was to be a Freckled Goldfish. The kids living near me use the number thirteen for a danger cry just like Jerry and his gang.”

“Some day I’m going to break a rotten egg to see how it smells,” writes John F. McIntyre of Natchez, Miss. “Then I can prove it to my brother who is a dummy and said Jerry and Poppy wasn’t any account. Gr-r-r-r! I feel like biting his head off. If I did it wouldn’t be anything gone. Is it very easy to write a book? If so, would you please tell me how to do it? I am joining the Freckled Goldfish lodge to get my name in the big book.”

Well, John, I don’t know what you’re going to prove by breaking a rotten egg. But if you’ll gain anything by it, in proving to your older brother that Jerry and Poppy are worthwhile pals, go ahead. I assure you that it would be very hard indeed for a small boy to write a book. We have to live a good many years, and learn a lot about the world and its ways, before we can write interesting books. But if you want to get some pointers on story writing see my first “Chatter-Box” in *Poppy Ott and the Tittering Totem*.

“The boys around my neighborhood were always talking about how spooky and funny your books were,” writes Carl A. Swanson of Minneapolis, Minn. “I never had read one of your books. But I decided to read one to see if it was as good as my friends had said. Boy, was it ever hot! It was *Poppy Ott and the Freckled Goldfish*. I just got *Poppy Ott and the Tittering Totem* Saturday and I laughed so much Sunday reading it that both my grandmother and my dad started reading it.”

“I would like to join the Secret and Mysterious Order of the Freckled Goldfish,” writes Mortimer A. Stiller of New York, N. Y. “Jerry, Poppy and Trigger are my best pals. I agree with whoever said: ‘He that loveth a book will never want a faithful friend,’ only, of course, I find more than one friend in your books. Your latest idea of having a ‘Chatter-Box’ in each book is great. As I live in the city the only thing that I can do that you mention is to start a local Goldfish chapter, so please send me the necessary booklets.”

“I have just finished reading *Andy Blake’s Comet Coaster*,” writes Jack Pattee of Chicago, Ill. “I liked the book very much but I like Jerry Todd better. Before I read *Andy Blake* I read *Trigger Berg and His 700 Mouse Traps*. That was a swell book, only it didn’t have a mystery. I have a friend, Jerry O’Neil, and he told me that he wrote to you and you are going to put his letter in the ‘Chatter-Box’ in *Jerry Todd, Editor-in-Grief*. I am a Freckled Goldfish and I read most of your books. I have a small black dog named Gertie who likes gumdrops, candy and chocolate doughnuts.”

## FRECKLED GOLDFISH

Out of my book, *Poppy Ott and the Freckled Goldfish*, has grown our great Freckled Goldfish lodge, membership in which is open to all boys and girls who are interested in my books. Thousands of readers have joined the club. We have peachy membership cards (designed by Bert Salg, the popular illustrator of my books) and fancy buttons. Also for members who want to organize branch clubs (hundreds are in successful

operation, providing boys and girls with added fun) we have rituals.

To join (and to be a loyal Jerry Todd fan I think you ought to join), please observe these simple rules:

- (1) Write (or print) your name plainly.
- (2) Supply your complete printed address.
- (3) Give your age.
- (4) Enclose two two-cent postage stamps (for card and button).
- (5) Address your letter to

Leo Edwards,  
Cambridge,  
Wisconsin.

## LOCAL CHAPTERS

To help young organizers we have produced a printed ritual, which any member who wants to start a Freckled Goldfish club in his own neighborhood can't afford to be without. This booklet tells how to organize the club, how to conduct meetings, how to transact all club business, and, probably most important of all, how to initiate candidates.

The complete initiation is given word for word. Naturally, these booklets are more or less secret. So, if you send for one, please do not show it to anyone who isn't a Freckled Goldfish. Three chief officers will be required to put on the initiation, which can be given in any member's home, so, unless each

officer is provided with a booklet, much memorizing will have to be done. The best plan is to have three booklets to a chapter. These may be secured (at cost) at six cents each (three two-cent stamps) or three for sixteen cents (eight two-cent stamps). Address all orders to Leo Edwards, Cambridge, Wisconsin.

## CLUB NEWS

“We have eleven members in our Pool,” writes Gold Fin Samuel Ferguson of Philadelphia, Pa., “and at almost every meeting we have visitors. I am enclosing a cipher code that we use in writing secret messages.”

Also it is Sam’s suggestion that we have a booklet printed giving an official Freckled Goldfish secret code, then members can write to one another in secret. How many members of our club would like to possess such a booklet? Let me know as soon as possible. And if there is sufficient demand, we may produce one. But you fellows have got to show me that there is a demand for the booklet before we go ahead with it. Another boy suggested that we have such a booklet and then print part of “Our Chatter-Box” in code. How does that strike you?

“We now have a Freckled Goldfish song, yells, a jazz band composed of tin cans and our Pool is decorated swell,” writes Gold Fin Francis Smith of Chambersburg, Pa. “Also we have two goldfish, named Leo and Freckles.”

I suppose I ought to send my namesake a present. What do you want, Francis, a box of goldfish food or an angleworm?

Nancy Hannemann of Chicago, Ill., is, I think, our youngest member. Giving her age as two, she confesses that the letter of

application was written by her brother, also a Freckled Goldfish.

“I have been a Freckled Goldfish for several months,” writes C. B. Andrews of Oklahoma City, Okla. “It is a secret and mysterious order, but nothing secret and mysterious has been done yet. So I suggest that you write to each member, telling him to join with other local members and do mysterious good turns. For example, suppose some poor old lady in your neighborhood has a birthday. Early in the morning before she is up and around, leave a couple of goldfish at her door with a card reading: ‘With the compliments of the Secret and Mysterious Order of the Freckled Goldfish.’ That would be pleasantly mysterious.”

Which, *I* think, is a corking good suggestion.

The three happiest boys in Yankton, South Dakota, are Dan Schenk (G. F.), Joe Dowling (S. F.) and Bob Seeley (F. F.). Not only have these boys organized a successful Pool, but they have swell rotographed letterheads. The reproduction of the “fish” is almost as good as Salg could do himself. Dan advises that the Pool has its meetings in an attic. Boy, I bet they have fun!

“Our Freckled Goldfish club,” writes Ernest Smith of Alhambra, Calif., “has an orchestra consisting of a violin, saxophone, a jazzophone and a harmonica. All of the boys playing in the orchestra are Freckled Goldfish.”

## LEO'S PICTURE

And had you heard, gang, about the marvelous piece of “art” that you can get by sending ten cents in stamps to Grosset &

Dunlap, 1140 Broadway, New York, N. Y. Yah, the “art” referred to is Leo’s picture—and what a wonderful bargain! Only ten cents for such a marvelous picture!

**JERRY TOD AND THE  
TALKING FROG**

## CHAPTER I

### THE BOY IN THE TREE

I got into the bushes quick as scat. Biting hard on my breath, sort of. For right there in front of our eyes was a regular old gee-whacker of a dinosaur. Bigger than the town water tower and the Methodist Church steeple put together. I tell you it was risky for us.

My chum got ready with his trusty bow and arrow.

“Do you think you can hit him in the heart?” I said, excited-like, squinting ahead to where the dinosaur was dragging his slimy body out of the pond.

Scoop Ellery’s face was rigid.

“Got to,” he said, steady-like. “If I miss, he’ll turn on us and kill us both.”

“It’s a lucky thing for Red and Peg,” I said, thinking of my other chums, “that they aren’t in it.”

“They’ll miss us,” said Scoop, “if we get killed.”

My thoughts took a crazy jump.

“Why not aim for a tickly spot in his ribs,” I snickered, pointing to the dinosaur, “and let him giggle himself to death?”

“Sh-h-h-h!” cautioned Scoop, putting out a hand. “He’s listening. The wind is blowing that way. He smells us.”



“What of it?” I grinned. “We don’t smell bad.”

“Keep still,” scowled Scoop, “while I aim.”

Bing! went the bow cord. My eyes followed the arrow. It struck. The old dinosaur angrily tooted his horn. But he didn’t drop dead. For his hide was sixteen inches thick.

We were lost! Scoop said so. And without arguing the matter I went lickety-cut for a tree.

“Come on!” I yipped over my shoulder. “He’s after us.”

Up the tree I went monkey-fashion. And when I straddled a limb and squinted down, there was the old dinosaur chewing my footprints off the tree trunk.

“How much longer have we got to live?” I panted.

“Two minutes and fifteen seconds,” informed Scoop, who, of course, had followed me into the tree.

“I can’t die that quick,” I told him. “For I’m all out of wind.”

But he was squinting down at the dinosaur and seemed not to hear me.

“He’s got his trunk coiled around the tree,” he said. “Feel it shake! He’s pulling it up by the roots.”

“Wait a minute; wait a minute,” I said, motioning the other down. “You’re getting things muddled. A dinosaur hasn’t got a trunk. This must be a hairy elephant.”

“Climb higher,” cried Scoop. “He’s reaching for us.”

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