



Hank the Cowdog #75 - The Case of the Red Rubber Ball

Chapter 1 - Morning at Slim's Place

*"And that's how my Wednesday got started, listening to Drover's nonsense.
But just then... you'll never guess what happened."*

Name: _____
Date: _____

Cowdog Wisdom:

"A dog has to step up and take charge."

nourishing - food necessary for growth, health and being in generally good condition

morsels - small amounts of food

procedure - an established or official way of doing something

ritual - a religious or very serious ceremony where you do a series of actions according to a set order

tainted - messed up, ruined because of something that touched it

bachelor - a man who is not married

interrogate - question

gibberish - nonsense

Stuff to 'ponder for a while: Nourishment

Hank claims that Roastie Toasties is a good nourishing breakfast and says dogs need nourishment too. What kinds of foods are truly nourishing? Why is it a good idea to eat nutritious foods?

Comprehension Questions:

1. What day did Hank eventually conclude it was? _____
2. What does Hank's difficulty remembering the discussion topic cause? _____
3. Identify each of the trees Hank mentioned and what color they were:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
4. Draw a quick picture of Slim's usual breakfast:

5. What did Slim say the milk was? _____
6. What does Hank think is silly? _____
7. Why can a ranch dog never relax or let down their guard? _____
8. Why did Hank go ahead and interrogate Drover, despite thinking it was just gibberish? _____
9. What can't a gingerbread house be made out of cornbread? _____
10. Why does Hank hope that Drover was asleep while talking about cornbread houses and frogs? _____

WRITING:

Hank is quite offended at how his friend Slim treats him. But he has no problem with the way he treats Drover. What do you think makes a good friend?

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Chapter 2 - A Raccoon Crosses the Road (Major Clue)

"I admit that I didn't see the coon or the so-called red ball, because I was trying to scratch an itch on my nose. It's a very delicate procedure that requires concentration and a soft touch with a hind foot."

Name: _____
Date: _____

Cowdog Wisdom:

"The grass is always greener when the grass greens up."

Vocabulary:

transcript - a written or printed record of what someone spoke

sprint - to run very fast for a short distance

blustering - talking in a loud, aggressive or annoyed way with little to no effect on those listening

indigestion - pain or discomfort in the stomach due to difficulty digesting food

state of affairs - situation or set of circumstances

increase - to become more

protein - something found in certain kinds of food that helps the body. One way it helps is by giving the body energy to do what it needs to do.

alimentary - the pathway between where food enters the body and exits it as solid waste.

data - facts collected for reference or to study and analyze

bliss - a feeling of extreme happiness or delight

Stuff to 'ponder for a while:

Garbage

Hmm... Hank says there isn't time to discuss why he keeps eating the garbage Slim puts in front of him (like milk with weevils swimming in it). But why do you think he keeps doing it? How could he make a better choice? What might have helped him avoid this?

Comprehension Questions:

- Hank wanted to forget his whole interrogation of Drover and just conclude that: _____
- Why was it strange that the telephone rang? (Hint: for the same reason Slim doesn't "make" breakfast) _____
- What did the passing of the spell of indigestion prove? _____
- What happens in an average day for:
 - Heads of Ranch Security _____
 - Ordinary Mutts _____
- What do the data and the evidence conclude? _____
- What is Hank's first reason for refusing to let Drover ride shotgun? _____
- Why does Drover say that happened? _____
- Hank knew that deep down inside _____
- What did Slim say is one for the record books? _____
- Because Hank was distracted and didn't witness the coon, what did he miss? _____

WRITING

"This gives you a glimpse at the kind of issues a Head of Ranch Security has to deal with in an average day. Ordinary mutts are free to goof off and live carefree lives, but those of us on Life' High Ground must carry a heavy load."

Think of someone you know who is very responsible with their job. Then go interview them and write about what it means for them to work hard and be responsible at their job. Also include what happens if they *don't* do their job well.



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Chapter 3 - A Town Mutt Shows Up on the Ranch

"I didn't care about the weeds - but a guy has to be firm when town dogs show up on his ranch."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Cowdog Wisdom:

"You've got to grab your glory fast, while it's there, because it doesn't last long."

Vocabulary:

warped - abnormal or strange; distorted

recognition - acknowledging someone's existence or value

accountant - a person whose job is to keep or inspect financial records (accounts)

injustice - not just, not fair

defuse - calm down

combat - fighting

maturity - the ability to respond to what is happening around you according to proper behavior

frazzling - something that is making you feel exhausted and worn out

tensionous - A made up word that means there was a lot of tension between the dogs, they were upset at each other

Stuff to 'ponder for a while:

Counting your blessings

Slim is teasing Loper when he tells him to be thankful for little blessings. But focusing on things you are thankful for actually DOES make people feel better! What "little blessings" are you thankful for?

Comprehension Questions:

1. When Slim tells Loper to be thankful for little blessings, what "blessing" is he implying Loper should be thankful for? _____
2. Complete the phrase: "Me, a hero! I was amazed. I mean, _____"
3. What is the problem with Slim's claim that a couple of big strapping lads like himself and Loper won't have any trouble with the cake? _____
4. What accusation does Slim make of Hank when he's talking about the injustice of the world? _____
5. What is the machine shed? _____
6. What is this "cake" that is being talked about? _____
7. How does Hank feel about most Aussies? _____
8. Why does he conclude that this one has a cocky air and a shifty look? _____
9. List the things Hank and Roy argued about in order of when they happened:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
10. What did Hank and Roy decide really mattered? _____

WRITING

Someone needed to step up and show some maturity, so I said, "Okay. I'll admit it's your truck."

What does maturity look like in an argument? When someone starts saying something you don't like, does it take more or less maturity to ignore what they are saying? When is it a good idea to ignore the words being spoken and when is it a good idea to argue back? Is it ever a good idea to respond with violence?

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Chapter 4 - I Give Roy Some Schooling

"A wasp is a wasp but nobody knows more about the wasps on my ranch than I do. If that hurts your feelings, I'm sorry, but I must remind you that I'm the Head of Ranch Security."

Name: _____
Date: _____

Cowdog Wisdom:
If you bite a wasp, he'll bite you back.

Vocabulary:

1. **nuisance** - pest, annoying
2. **technique** - a way of carrying out a particular task
3. **vigorous** - strong, healthy and full of energy
4. **demonstration** - showing by reason or proof, explaining or making clear by use of examples or experiments.
5. **moron** - a stupid person
6. **Visual Radar** - a detection system that uses radio waves to determine the range, angle, or velocity of objects
7. **evasive** - someone trying to escape giving information by careful wording
8. **smithereens** - small pieces
9. **exhibition** - a display or demonstration of a particular skill
10. **mockery** - the act of insulting or making light of a person or other thing, sometimes merely by taunting, but often by making a picture of them that shows something not-so-good about them

Stuff to 'ponder for a while:
Showing off
"The mockery of small minds never bothered me before." Hank recognizes that those putting others down are the ones having problems. Is he right to ignore their insults?

Comprehension Questions:

1. What facts does Hank know about Yellow Jackets?
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
2. What two kinds of wasps exist in the world? _____
3. What did Roy says talking to Hank was like? _____
4. Describe the technique Roy used to kill the wasp: _____

5. Why does Hank need to use a live wasp for demonstration? _____
6. Because Roy had raised the level of competition, Hank would have to do what? _____
7. What happened on his first try? _____
8. What did Hank try different on his second try? _____

9. What did Slim say when the other guy told about Roy succeeding at catching wasps all the time? _____

10. What does Hank think you need to remember? _____
11. BONUS: Write the correct words for what Hank yelled at Roy, using correct spelling. _____

WRITING

Hank did some really stupid things in this chapter for no other reason than that he wanted to show off to Roy. Tell of a time you or someone you know did something stupid just to show off to someone else.

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Chapter 5 - Drover Becomes a Smarty Pants

Drover rolled his eyes around. "Oh it's just common sense. Anyone could figure it out."

Name: _____
Date: _____

Cowdog Wisdom:
FIX THE DOOR!

Vocabulary:

- corrosive fluid** - a fluid that reacts with what it touches, causing it to wear away
- righteous** - perfectly right all the time
- disintegrate** - break up into small parts, typically as the result of impact or decay.
- tandem** - having two things arranged one in front of the other
- arsenal** - a collection of weapons and military equipment
- fraternizing** - associate or form a friendship with someone, especially when one is not supposed to.
- faith** - being sure of what you hope for and certain of what you do not see
- crisis** - a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger.
- lashing** - an act or instance of whipping

Stuff to 'ponder for a while: Blame

Hank says everyone is too busy to take the time to fix the door and so they just blame it on the dog. What are some things you tend to avoid doing that you just need to take time to do?

Comprehension Questions:

1. What did Hank do to get revenge on Roy? _____
2. What did Hank turn the bitter experience into? _____
3. How did Drover answer Hank when asked where he was? _____

4. Write out a subtraction problem showing the difference between how many yellow jackets Hank says stung him and how many really did: _____

5. What was a rotten thing for Hank to do? _____

6. Where does Drover say is the trick to catching yellow jackets? _____

7. If anyone on the ranch had asked Hank's opinion what would he have told them to do? _____
8. What is the final step in fixing the door? _____
9. Why does Hank claim it is frustrating to have a conversation with Drover?

10. What was the worst punishment Hank could think of to give Drover? _____

WRITING

"So yes, I'd had a bad morning. Did that give me the right to lure poor, trusting Drover into a dirty trick?"
How can you make good choices even when you're in a bad mood?



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Chapter 7 - I Run Afoul Of Radar Woman

"I recognized the voice. It belonged to Radar Woman, She Who Sees Everything."

Name: _____
Date: _____

Cowdog Wisdom:

No dog in his right mind will leave a delicious mess.

Vocabulary:

- insolent** - showing a rude and arrogant lack of respect.
- primitive** - early stages of something
- irreverent** - showing a lack of respect for people or things that are generally taken seriously.
- abort** - stop something before it's done
- collision** - crash
- comrade** - a companion who shares one's activities or is a fellow member of an organization
- render aid** - to provide or give aid (help)
- ominous** - giving the impression that something bad or unpleasant is going to happen
- vital** - of extreme importance
- ratio** - how many times one number contains another.

Stuff to 'ponder for a while:

Instant Decisions

Hank noted that unless he hit the "abort switch" there would be a collision. He said that in combat, he had to make an instant decision. Did he make a wise decision? How can you train yourself to think in a way that allows you to make good decisions in those last-minute kind of situations?

Quiz:

1. What kind of experience did Pete the cat hear that Hank had had? And what kind of experience did he say Pete was fixing to have? _____
2. What did Pete claim to feel about the song? _____
3. When Pete made fun of Hank and Drover, Hank said to "launch ALL dogs" but what actually happened? _____
4. What do cats have but what does it lack? _____
5. What was Hank's instant decision? _____
6. Complete the phrase: "When one of my guys goes down, I'll be the _____
7. What did Hank really have sympathy for? _____
8. There almost was no what? _____
9. What does Radar Woman NOT see? _____
10. What solution did Data Control flash when Hank considered giving Pete the thrashing he so deserved? _____

WRITING

"I stepped forward and began giving him emergency CPR licks to his face and shirt."

Hank's way of being "helpful" isn't too helpful.

Tell of a time when you or someone else tried to be helpful and it didn't turn out the way it was planned.

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Hank the Cowdog #75 - The Case of the Red Rubber Ball Chapter 8 - I Go Searching For Drover

You're probably asking yourself, "Where was Drover while all this was going on?" Great question.

Name: _____

Vocabulary:

reputation - what people think of you

fiasco - something that is a complete failure

injected - to force something into something else, usually refers to putting something into the body with a needle or interrupting a conversation to say something

sanctuary - a place you feel safe or a place set aside to worship God

urge - strong desire

shabby - in poor condition through long or hard use or lack of care.

promotion - the action of raising someone to a higher position or rank

escorted - to go somewhere with someone for the purpose of protecting them in some way or as a matter of rank

misquoted - to try to repeat what someone said and get it wrong

undetected - not seen or noticed

Wisdom for Cowdogs:

Beware of anything you hear. Our enemies are very clever and they never rest.

Stuff to 'ponder for a while:

Tricks

Hank says he tricked Drover for Drover's own good. But he didn't like Drover tricking him. How would their relationship be if they were both honest with each other instead of tricking one another?

Quiz:

1. What does Hank admit? _____
2. What was Drover doing when the fiasco began? _____
3. What is odd? _____
4. What does Hank think each of these abbreviations mean and what do they really mean? (Ask an adult if you're not sure)
 - a. M.I.A. - Hank thinks: _____
 - b. M.I.A. - Really stands for: _____
 - c. A.W.O.L. - Hank thinks: _____
 - d. A.W.O.L. - Really stands for: _____
5. What trick did Hank fall for? _____
6. What is Drover's defense when Hank accuses him? _____
7. Why is Drover scratching in the middle of Hank's lecture? _____
8. What might be the result of volunteering for first shift of coon patrol? _____
9. What is Hank glad to do anytime he can? _____
10. What does Hank actually intend to do most of the night? _____

WRITING

"Teamwork. It's one of the things that makes this old life worth living."

Tell of a time when you worked together with someone else to accomplish a project that neither of you could have done on your own. How did you each use your strengths to accomplish it?



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Chapter 9 - Eddy Walks Into My Trap

... had set up a Secured Zone to intercept thieving raccoons, and here was one right in front of me! He had walked right into my trap and was throwing a ball against the side of the cake house."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Vocabulary:

tradescraft - an old word that used to refer to the work, or craft, of any profession, or trade

masquerading - pretending to be something else

spreadsheets - an electronic document in which information is arranged in the rows and columns of a grid and can be moved around and used in calculations.

geopolitical - relating to politics, especially international relations, as influenced by geographical factors.

withering - intended to make someone feel mortified or humiliated.

barrage - a concentrated artillery bombardment over a wide area.

decompress - calm down and relax.

alleged - said, without proof, to have taken place

diagnostics - a distinctive symptom or characteristic.

intercept - to interrupt someone, to stop them

tactics - an action or strategy carefully planned to achieve a specific end.

fraud - to trick or cheat

Charlie Monster - the phrase Hank uses for an unknown enemy

Wisdom for Cowdogs:

Charlie Monsters can masquerade as chickens postal employees, wild turkeys, you name it.

Stuff to 'ponder for a while:

Gifts, Skills, Talents

Hank claims that Drover's best just doesn't cut it in his world. But what have you seen Drover do well at? Is Hank wrong and just being too hard on Drover? Or is ranch security really not the best place for the skills Drover has? If that's the case, what might be a better job for Drover?

Quiz:

1. What is a carbon-based life form? _____

2. What possible things did Hank think this unknown enemy was after?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
3. What was his enemy really after? _____
4. What did Hank think the enemy was dressing up in? _____
5. What was the sound that Drover heard? _____
6. What is Drover's consequence? _____
7. What is a waste of time? _____
8. What did Hank say had caused his dozing? _____

9. What were Hank's two clues about who the intruder was? _____

10. What could we always be sure of? _____

WRITING

"Okay, smart guy, you've got a good smeller."

Use your observation skills! Get out some peanut butter or other item and write about how it tastes, smells, feels, looks and sounds. Try to come up with as many details as you can, describing what you observe.

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Chapter 10 - The Chase-Ball Olympics

"He had gotten a head start, but deep in my heart, I felt I could beat him. I had pretty amazing speed in a short spring, don't forget, and that's one talent coons don't have."

Name: _____
Date: _____

Wisdom for Cowdogs:
No coon can out-fox a dog, not when I'm the dog.

Vocabulary:

tendencies - things we're inclined to do, or like to do, or just can't help doing.

overplayed - to exaggerate or overemphasize one's role

Houdini - a magician who was famous for his ability to escape from chains or handcuffs or straitjackets or padlocked containers. If someone seems to have the abilities that Houdini had, they might be called a "Houdini".

insignificant - not important

thrown down the goblet - Actually, the phrase is supposed to be "thrown down the gauntlet". It means to challenge or confront someone, but in its earliest use it wasn't meant as a metaphor, but was a physical action intended to issue a formal challenge to a duel.

algorithm - a process or set of rules to be followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations

trajectory - the path followed by an object flying or an object moving under the action of given forces.

proximity - how close or far away something is to you

flinched - to move back suddenly in fear or pain

earatory scanners - Hank's way of saying he followed the sound of something. Earatory isn't a real word.

Stuff to 'ponder for a while:

Hank warns against thinking you're the smartest guy in the room (although he says it's true of him). Why do you think that could be dangerous?

Quiz:

1. What makes coons overconfident? _____
2. What could Hank not believe? _____
3. Why does Hank claim he does not chase balls? _____
4. How did Hank respond to his first fetching of the ball? _____
5. Why did Hank change his mind and go after the ball the after Eddy said, "Race you to it"? _____
6. What kind of lessons did Hank offer to give Eddy? _____
7. How many total times did Hank fetch the ball? _____
8. When a dog is in top fiscal condition what can he do? _____
9. What was Hank doing when he was startled by a voice? _____
10. What eventually caused you to avoid J. T.'s company? _____

WRITING

Uh oh! Hank is distracted with the ball and not watching the cake house! What do you think will happen because he is distracted? What kind of distractions do you need to avoid, to do the things that are important in your life?



Hank the Cowdog #75 - The Case of the Red Rubber Ball Chapter 11 - I Am Forced By Circumstances To Say "Please"

"NO, OF COURSE NOT, NEVER EVER, NIX DICE, NO DEAL!! But I would have to do it anyway."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Vocabulary:

dumfounded - greatly astonished or amazed

closure - a feeling that an emotional or traumatic experience has been resolved

strangulation - the act of killing someone by strangling them

triangulation - a technique for establishing the distance between any two points

reconstroodle - not a real word. The word Hank means is reconstruct - to put back together

rely - depend on

crucial - extremely important

moral - concerned with what is right and wrong

patented - the giving of a property right by an authority to an inventor.

insolent - showing a rude and arrogant lack of respect.

Wisdom for Cowdogs:

Use self-control and humility to get what you want.

Stuff to 'ponder for a while:

Hank didn't want to sacrifice his pride to even speak to Pete, let alone say "please". Why was it a good thing he humbled himself enough to do so?

Quiz:

1. What does it not pay to be around here? _____
2. Why was Hank justified in being prideful? _____

3. Where did Hank's calculations indicate the ball had landed? _____

4. What would Hank need to find the ball? _____
5. What should be the theme song of Drover's life? _____
6. What 4 characteristics made Pete the best one to ask for help? _____

7. What was the answer after Hank's pacing and searching? _____

8. What does Hank think cats have to do to learn to walk they way they do? _____

9. What took a lot of self-control? _____
10. Complete the phrase: "I never thought I'd _____"

WRITING

"Well, that should have become the Song of Drover's Life. He should have been singing it ten times every day."
What could the theme song of your life be? Write a song about you and your life!



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Chapter 12 - Incredible Ending, Amazing

"How and why that happened, we will never know."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Vocabulary:

incident - an event or something that occurred

rigged - **something** that is fixed in a dishonest way to guarantee a desired outcome

lured - tempt (a person or animal) to do something or to go somewhere, especially by offering some form of reward.

mere - smallest or slightest

notorious - famous or well-known, often for doing something bad

villains - the enemy, the bad guys

heave - to lift or throw something heavy

lingered - stayed a while

scrounge - seek to get something at the expense or through the generosity of others or by sneakiness.

everlasting - forever

Wisdom for Cowdogs:

Watch out for nice little crooks how teach you how to make a fool of yourself.

Stuff to 'ponder for a while:

Hank tells Pete he *knew* there was something fishy about what Eddy was doing. Pete replies that "knowing doesn't always help". What Pete is referring to is known as wisdom: the soundness of an action or decision with regard to the application of experience, knowledge, and good judgment. How can you use what you know to make good choices? How can you be wise?

Quiz:

1. What big mistake of Hank's did Pete point out and say didn't sound like him? _____
2. Eddy is a natural born _____ & _____
3. What is Hank preparing you for? _____
4. What does it mean that Eddy was holding the ball? _____
5. What stretched the powers of belief? _____
6. What are the 3 possible reasons for it?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
7. What was Eddy doing even as Drover defended him? _____
8. How does Hank respond when Drover says that Hank would never have fallen for Eddy's trick? _____
9. What finally got Eddy to leave? _____
10. What award did Slim give Hank? _____

WRITING

Hank didn't want to say thanks, and said that using that word hurt like crazy. But actually, being thankful makes people feel better! Make a list of 10 people who have done something to help you in some way and what they did to help you. Then go find them and say "thank you"! Or write them a note saying "thank you".

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