

# HANK

THE COWDOG®

The Original  
Adventures  
of Hank  
the Cowdog



JOHN R. ERICKSON

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## **Bloody Murder**

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**I**t's me again, Hank the Cowdog. I just got some terrible news. There's been a murder on the ranch.

I know I shouldn't blame myself. I mean, a dog is only a dog. He can't be everywhere at once. When I took this job as Head of Ranch Security, I knew that I was only flesh and blood, four legs, a tail, a couple of ears, a pretty nice kind of nose that the women really go for, two bushels of hair and another half bushel of Mexican sandburs.

You add that all up and you don't get Superman, just me, good old easygoing Hank who works hard, tries to do his job, and gets very little cooperation from anyone else around here.

I'm not complaining. I knew this wouldn't be an easy job. It took a special kind of dog—strong, fearless, dedicated, and above all, smart. Obviously Drover didn't fit. The job fell on my shoulders. It was my destiny. I couldn't escape the broom of history that swept through . . . anyway, I took the job.

Head of Ranch Security. Gee, I was proud of that title. Just the sound of it made my tail wag. But now this, a murder, right under my nose. I know I shouldn't blame myself, but I do.

I got the report this morning around dawn. I had been up most of the night patrolling the northern perimeter of ranch headquarters. I had heard some coyotes yapping up there and I went up to check it out. I told Drover where I was going and he came up lame all of a sudden, said he needed to rest his right front leg.

I went alone, didn't find anything. The coyotes stayed out in the pasture. I figured there were two, maybe three of them. They yapped for a couple of hours, making fun of me, calling me ugly names, and daring me to come out and fight.

Well, you know me. I'm no dummy. There's a thin line between heroism and stupidity, and I try to stay on the south side of it. I didn't go out



and fight, but I answered them bark for bark, yap for yap, name for name.

The coyote hasn't been built who can out-yap Hank the Cowdog.

A little before dawn, Loper, one of the cowboys on this outfit, stuck his head out the door and bellered, "Shut up that yapping, you idiot!" I guess he thought there was only one coyote out there.

They kept it up and I gave it back to them. Next time Loper came to the door, he was armed. He fired a gun into the air and squalled, something about how a man couldn't sleep around here with all the dad-danged noise. I agreed.

Would you believe it? Them coyotes yipped louder than ever, and I had no choice but to give it back to them.

Loper came back out on the porch and fired another shot. This one came so close to me that I heard the hum. Loper must have lost his bearings or something, so I barked louder than ever to give him my position, and, you know, to let him know that I was out there protecting the ranch.

The next bullet just derved near got me. I mean, I felt the wind of it as it went past. That





**It's a tough job,  
but somebody's got to do it.**

Guts, glory, danger, and sacrifice are all in a day's work for Hank the Cowdog, Head of Ranch Security. While investigating a vicious murder on his ranch, Hank finds himself the number one suspect. Resigning in a fit of despair, he heads for the hills to become an outlaw, and a band of ruthless coyotes is happy to teach him the trade. Or are they? They seem to be on his side . . . until they unveil their plan for a raid on Hank's ranch! Hank knows he can't beat them—will he be forced to join them?

**"The best family entertainment in years." —USA Today**

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