



HANK THE COWDOG

LOST IN THE DARK UNCHANTED FOREST
PODCAST SERIES 1, EPISODE 5

Written by
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Based on
Hank the Cowdog
Book #11, Lost in the Dark Uncharted Forest
By John R. Erickson

105-1 EXT. DARK UNCHANTED FOREST/NORTHUP CREEK - DAY

105-1

HANK (V.O.)
It's me again, Hank the Cowdog.

A FEVERED HOWL cuts through the *POURING RAIN*.

HANK
OOOOOOWWWWWWOOOOOOOO!!! Here I
come, son!

*
*
*

HANK (V.O.)
That howling belonged to yours
truly, as I led a kamikaze crash
careening headlong into the jaws of
a bloodthirsty bobcat.

MADAME MOONSHINE
Go, Hank! Go! Yes!

*

HANK (V.O.)
Madame Moonshine cheered me on from
the sideline while the buzzards did
what buzzards do...squawk.

*
*

WALLACE
Look Junior, that dog's a walkin'
carcass.

JUNIOR
A r-r-running carcass. I c-c-can't
watch.

The *SOUND* of Hank splashing into the rushing creek, his howl
turning into a ferocious *BARK!*

ALFRED
HANK! IT'S HANK!

HANK (V.O.)
Little Alfred's face lit up when he
saw me, but that's when Sinister
the Bobcat made his move.

A snarling, scratching *HISS* as Sinister's claws scrape into
the limestone wall leading up to the cave.

ALFRED
AHHH!

HANK (V.O.)
Sinister clawed his way onto the
side of the rock and took a swipe
that barely missed Alfred's leg.
(MORE)

HANK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I shot outta that creek water and
flapped my jowls back to bare my
teeth.

SPLASHING WATER AND SNARLING HANK GROWLS!

HANK (V.O.)
Sinister was dangling on the edge
of the rock wall still swatting for
the boy when my jaws clamped down
as hard as I could muster on his
back leg.

A big cat's *REEER* as the two bodies tumble and splash into
the creek.

HANK (V.O.)
As soon as we splashed down that
creek, Sinister spun around and
showed me every tooth he had.

*

HISSSSSS!

HANK (V.O.)
With a mouthful of bobcat leg, I
did the only thing I could think
of...apologize.

HANK
(mouthful of leg)
I'm sorry. I'm very sorry.

A *SMACK* sends Hank tumbling back into the creek.

HANK (V.O.)
Too late for apologies. He yanked
his foot free and whacked me with a
claw pawed right hook that sent me
swimming.

Sinister *ROARS* as his giant paws splash down with each
deliberate step toward Hank. Rain pelts the rushing creek
water.

HANK (V.O.)
Then Sinister stomped toward me
with a look as cold and steady as
the creek water I was sittin' in.
Reasoning with a killer was a short
bet at best, but it was all I had
left.

*

HANK

Cats hate water, Sinister. No need to swim over here on my account.

SCHINK!

HANK (V.O.)

His claws shot out and I closed my eyes. I would miss my life. It had been a good one, filled with more laughter than sorrow, more scratching than fleas, more snoring than...

SNORT/RIP

OOOOOOOOWWWWWWOOOOOOOO!!!!!!

Sinister lets out a *REEER* like a question mark.

HANK (V.O.)

My eyes popped open to a sight for the sorest eyes. Rip and Snort were standing on the ridge above the creek. And this was the only time I ever enjoyed watching a coyote lick their chops!

SNORT

Rip! I reckon that's the biggest cat Snort's ever seen!

RIP

Uh.

HANK

He's all yours fellas!

HOWLING! SPLASHING!

HANK (V.O.)

Rip and Snort shot across that creek like the howling lunatics I always knew they were.

WALLACE

(with a *FLAP*)

Well, that ain't no good. You can look now, Junior.

HANK (V.O.)

Sinister lit out like a bolt of lightnin' with Rip and Snort nipping at his heels the whole way.

The coyote howling trails into the deep regions of the forest as a final *BOOM* of thunder cracks.

A distant RUMBLING begins to build. It grows as...

HANK (V.O.)

And fellers, I enjoyed that moment. I really did, but sadly it was not meant for savoring. At that very second, I looked upstream to see a wall of water barreling toward me.

The rumbling builds and BUILDS!

HANK (V.O.)

I'm sure you've heard of floods, but this wasn't one of those slow, seeping, soaking floods. No siree. This was a full-on, Texas-sized, FLASH FLOOOOOOOOOOOOD!

*

A *WHOOSH OF WATER!*

HANK (V.O.)

I managed to dig my claws into that limestone cliff just as the wall of water hit. It was so much water that it turned my backside to an upside and all I could hear were the bubbles gushing out of my mouth.

HANK

(underwater)

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

HANK (V.O.)

Dogs don't belong under water. It's an unnatural circumstance for us. I could barely hold on, but that's when I felt a familiar feeling. My tail was being pulled. Hard.

*

ALFRED

(from above water)

HANK! I GOT YOU HANK!

*

*

*

HANK

(from underwater to out of water)

OOOOOOOO - OWWWWWWWWWWW!

*

HANK (V.O.)

Little Alfred had my tail again,
but this time it was worth the
tugging. That water had risen so
fast it floated my rear-end right
up to Alfred's ledge.

Hank chokes and spits out water.

ALFRED

HANK!

HANK

ALFRED!

HANK (V.O.)

That boy gave me a hug that made my
heart grow three times its natural
size. And I would've let it last
too if not for my uncontrollable,
wet-wash, fur-shaking mechanisms.

Water splashes the cave walls as Hank shakes out. Fluttering
feathers signal Madame Moonshine's entrance.

HANK (V.O.)

Just then, Madame Moonshine swooped
in for a landing. Alfred's eyes
grew as big as hubcaps.

ALFRED

Wow! A real Owl.

*

MADAME MOONSHINE

It's good to meet you young man.
You're very lucky to have a friend
like Hank.

Alfred drops his eyes a little.

ALFRED

I know.

MADAME MOONSHINE

Now I must be going. I left Timothy
alone in my cave.

HANK

Who's Timothy?

MADAME MOONSHINE

Timothy, my companion and
bodyguard. He's a rattlesnake.

(MORE)

MADAME MOONSHINE (CONT'D)

Surely you haven't forgotten
Timothy.

HANK

Oh yeah, Big Tim, the diamondback.
Good looking fella. I remember him
all right. *

MADAME MOONSHINE

Well, yes. I left him unattended, *
and he has a very bad habit of
getting into mischief. So...*adieu!*

With that, Madame Moonshine is off and gone, a wisp in the
air. Hank gives a befuddled look. He holds out a paw to
feel the rain drops.

HANK

A dew? What a funny little witch *
she is, this is not a dew, it is *
definitely a rain.

ALFRED

Did you see that big tiger?

HANK

It was a bob...no, maybe it was a *
tiger. Yeah, actually I'm sure it
was, probably the biggest tiger
ever seen in Ochiltree County.

ALFRED

That big tiger was going to eat me,
but then those two wolfs came and *
ran him away!

HANK

Yeah, well, just remember who *
brought those wolves, son. They
were pals of ol Hank's here. I hope
you'll remember that next time your
ma starts chucking dirt clods at
me.

The smile on Alfred's face fades and his eyes tear up with a
sniffle.

ALFRED

Hank, I wanna go home. I miss my
mommy.

HANK

Son, there's nothing I'd love more than to get you back on the ranch with your mommy, but as long as that creek water's moving like that, I'm afraid we're stuck.

More flapping as the buzzards, Wallace and Junior, duck into the cave with a *SQUAWK*.

WALLACE

Hi there, neighbor. It's kindly damp out here on this limb, don't reckon y'all would mind sharing...

(to Junior)

Move over, Junior, you're crowding me...

(to Hank)

Mind sharing this nice dry cave 'til this shower passes over.

Hank's eyes narrow. He marches over and sticks his nose in Wallace's face.

HANK

You're the rotten buzzard who was up in the tree rooting for that bobcat to get my little buddy here.

WALLACE

No sir, no sir, I could never, in fact I said to Junior here, Junior, you git yourself down there and help that boy!

HANK

I heard what you said, buzzard, and it would serve you right if I threw you out into the rain.

WALLACE

Now, I never, Junior are you gonna just sit there and let this dog...

JUNIOR

B-b-but P-pa, y-you did say that.

WALLACE

Tattletale.

Hank bares his teeth with a growl.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Well, what did you expect? It's hard to be a Christian and a buzzard at the same time.

HANK

That's no excuse, and unless you agree to take some punishment for being such a creep, you can just stand outside in the rain.

WALLACE

I ain't never took NO punishment from NO dog and I ain't fixin' to start now. I'll go stand out in that rain and I'll enjoy ever' minute of it! Junior?

JUNIOR

I th-think I'll s-s-stay Pa.

WALLACE

Fine. Have it your way.

Wallace grimaces and waddles out into the rain. Junior turns to Hank with shrug.

JUNIOR

I-I'm real g-glad that your p-pal made it. *

HANK

Well... *

Wallace, getting soaked with wings folded in protest, sticks his head back inside the cave.

WALLACE

And furthermore, I hope all y'all's babies are born naked!

HANK

(ignoring)
Junior, you'd best meet my friend Alfred. *

ALFRED

A real buzzard too?

HANK

That's right, son. In a year or two, you won't be able to talk back and forth with us like this, cause, you know, grown ups, they down understand animal speak, but you can now and we might as well give you the full treatment. When you get home you can tell your ma that you met a real genuine buzzard and a little owl.

*
*
*

JUNIOR

H-hi, A-a-alfred.

Alfred's smile lights up the cave.

ALFRED

Hello buzzard.

From outside in the rain,

WALLACE

It's great out here, I love it, never enjoyed a rain more in my life!

JUNIOR

W-w-what was your p-p-punishment going to be for Pa?

HANK

Well, I was gonna...

BOOM!

HANK (V.O.)

At that moment, a lightning bolt streaked outta the sky and sent sparks flying from the very tree that cranky old buzzard was perched on. Wallace was back in that cave before the embers even hit the creek.

*

WALLACE

On second thought, a little punishment is good for the soul. What is it you have in mind, dog?

HANK

Hmmm, you're gonna sing a little song.

*

WALLACE

I hate songs!

HANK

About the things you love most in life.

WALLACE

I hate love!

HANK

Then get back out there in the rain with that sizzling tree, you buzzard!

*

Wallace turns back but is stopped by the sight of the crisp, steaming tree. MUSIC begins as Wallace relents.

WALLACE

Okay, but I'm not gonna like it, and you have to go first.

With a smile, Hank howls out a verse.

HANK

(singing)

I love the septic tank's emerald waters bank to bank, Oh, I love the septic tank, it makes my life worthwhile.

*

I love the septic tank's emerald waters bank to bank, I love the septic tank, it makes my life worthwhile.

*

*

*

*

JUNIOR

(singing)

I love pretty girls, makes my feathers want to curl, Oh! I love pretty girls, they make my life worthwhile.

*

I love pretty girls, makes my feathers want to curl, Oh! I love pretty girls, they make my life worthwhile.

*

*

*

*

HANK

It'd be easier if they liked you, Junior.

*

*

*

ALFRED

(singing)

*I luv playing twucks, I luv my
mommy very much, I luv her tender
touch, it makes my life worthwhile.
I luv playing twucks, I luv my
mommy very much, I luv her tender
touch, it makes my life worthwhile.*

*
*
*

HANK

There you go, little buddy.

*
*

The group turns to Wallace as the music repeats in anticipation of his verse.

HANK (CONT'D)

Your turn Wallace.

WALLACE

What's a twuck? And Junior, you
wouldn't know what to do with a
pretty girl even if you found one!
And anybody that was dumb enough to
spend time in a septic tank...

HANK

Sing buzzard, or go stand in the
rain!

WALLACE

(singing poorly)

*I love being mad, yelling,
scolding, talking bad, I love being
called a cad, it makes my life
worthwhile.*

HANK

Again! Here we go!

*

They all sing their verses on top of one another. It's a happy mess.

As the song ends, the rain does too. A ray of sunshine breaks across the floor of the cave.

HANK (CONT'D)

Now, wasn't that fun?

*

WALLACE

No! It wasn't fun at all. I hate
music, I hate singing, I hate love,
and I hate fun.

HANK

Wallace, you may be one of the nastiest scoundrels I've ever met.

WALLACE

Now you're talking dog! And look-ee there, no more rain means no more of your half-brained sing-a-songs. Ha ha!

*

Wallace flaps his wing across Hank's nose and lifts out of the cave. Hank follows him with a series of barks, but the bird is off and gone.

HANK

Well look at that, the creek water's already goin' down. In like a flash, out like a light.

Hank lets out a sigh.

HANK (CONT'D)

Now I just gotta figger out how to get us home, Alfred.

ALFRED

I don't like that forest.

JUNIOR

Y-y-you don't need to g-go through the forest. Th-that's N-northup Creek. It r-r-runs into W-w-wolf Creek...

HANK

And Wolf Creek crosses our ranch! Junior, you're a genius.

JUNIOR

I kn-n-now. It was s-s-sure nice s-s-singing with ya. B-b-bye Alfred!

ALFRED

BYE!

With that, Junior flaps his way out of the cave.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

I like buzzards.

HANK

Well then Alfred, you have just had a rare opportunity to meet some of my friends.

*

(MORE)

HANK (CONT'D)

One of these days, when you're all
grewed up, you'll look back at this
day and wonder if it even really
happened. And it did. Now let's get
you home.

*

105-2 EXT. NORTHUP CREEK/WOLF CREEK - DAY

105-2

CICADAS sing as paws and sneakers splash through the creek
bed.

HANK (V.O.)

We hit that creek running with
smiles from ear to ear. It wasn't
far now. Shoot, I could almost hear
the marching band tuning up. A
proper welcome for a returning
hero.

*

105-3 EXT. RANCH - PASTURE/MACHINE SHED - CONTINUOUS

105-3

HANK (V.O.)

We made it back to the ranch just
in time to be backlit by the magic
hour sun that was dippin' low on
the horizon.

*

*

Hank notices Little Alfred lagging a bit.

HANK

Keep up, son. I want this outfit
looking snappy in case there's a
parade.

HANK (V.O.)

We came up over a hill in the outer
pasture and there it was...home.
And there was Drover by the machine
shed, playing footsie with Pete the
Barncat.

HANK

That little...DROVER!

DROVER

(to Pete)

...and I said, "I'll see ya next
week. Haha!"

*

*

*

*

DROVER (CONT'D)

Hank! It's Hank! Hi, Ha... Oh no
Pete, I forgot about the alarm.

*

PETE

What alarm?

DROVER

I was supposed to sound the alarm
for Little Alfred, but I...

HANK

DROVER!

Drover sprints toward Hank and Little Alfred spooling out his
yip-yip bark.

DROVER

Oh gosh, you're back, Hank, I'm so
glad! And I guess you found Little
Alfred.

HANK

Looks that way.

DROVER

Did you run into that bobcat?

HANK

Ha! It was a full-grown tiger. *

DROVER

A tiger?

HANK

And yes I did. He got a thrashing
he won't soon forget either. And
yes, you missed all the adventure. *

DROVER

Well if this old leg hadn't been... *

HANK

Forget the leg, Drover. Where is
everybody?

DROVER

Well, Pete's over there in the
yard. J.T. Cluck's up by the
machine shed and, uh, the cows are
catching a little shade down by... *

HANK

Loper and Sally May, you weed!

DROVER

Oh. Gee, maybe they're out looking
for Little Alfred, you reckon?

HANK

Sounds plausible. They're out looking for the lost child and you're here playing footsie with the cat.

DROVER

It was Chase and Romp, and Pete made me play, Hank.

*

HANK

Never mind, Drover. It will all be in my report.

DROVER

Oh drat.

HANK

Hush. Here comes Sally May and Loper now. Everybody get ready for the welcoming committee.

*

DROVER

Sally May doesn't look too welcoming to me.

HANK

Hm. I've seen that walk before. Na, that is not a welc...boys, watch out for the dirt clods.

*
*
*

SALLY MAY

Alfred, where on earth have you been? We've been worried sick about you.

ALFRED

Mommy, Daddy!

Alfred rushes to his mom and grabs her tight around the legs. She immediately softens.

SALLY MAY

Oh Alfred, why do you do things like this to your parents?

ALFRED

I'm sorry, Mommy. I ran away from home, but I got lost in the woods and I didn't like it and I'm never gonna run away again.

*

She bends down to his eye level.

SALLY MAY

Honey, why did you want to run away?

ALFRED

Well, you brought home that baby and you didn't want me anymore.

SALLY MAY

Oh Alfred, how could you even think such a thing?

She gathers him up in a hug.

SALLY MAY (CONT'D)

Mommy loves you very, very much, but for a while she's going to be busy with your new sister. I'll tell you what. If you'll help me take care of Molly, we can be together and we'll both feel better about it. How does that sound?

ALFRED

I love you Mommy.

Sally may stands and dusts off her pants.

SALLY MAY

Now Hank, did YOU lead my boy into the pasture?

HANK

Hm?

SALLY MAY

Hank you scoundrel! I don't know what I'm going to do with you!

Alfred pulls away from her arms.

ALFRED

But Mommy, I went alone and Hank saved me!

SALLY MAY

What?

ALFRED

Hank brought two wolfs that came and saved me from a big huge tiger!

SALLY MAY

Two wolves? A tiger!

HANK

Well...it wasn't exactly a...

DROVER

You said Tiger, Hank.

HANK

The term is coyote, Drover, and it is was more of a bobbed cat-like...

DROVER

You said Tiger.

HANK

Hush, Drover.

ALFRED

Hank came, and saved me, and licked my face, and I met a real buzzard!

SALLY MAY

A buzzard!

Hank's eyes find the clouds again. Sally May turns to Loper.

SALLY MAY (CONT'D)

Loper, do you hear what your son is saying?

LOPER

Yup. Two wolves ran off a tiger and he met a buzzard, and Hank did something or other. Sounds like a windy tale to me.

ALFRED

(agitated)

It's not a windy tale, it's true! I talked to them! Hank is my friend and I want him to sleep in my bed with me tonight.

DROVER

Hank, the inside house bed? They've never let us sleep in the inside house bed.

HANK (V.O.)

I could tell by the look in Sally May's eyes that it was a hard bargain to swallow. But...

*

SALLY MAY

All right, just this once we'll let Hank sleep in your room, but only if you promise to never run away again.

*

ALFRED

I promise! Yay!

*

Little Alfred gives a cheer and flies around in circles. Hank gets caught up in this celebration and is about to join in when Sally May catches him by the scruff.

SALLY MAY

Now Hank, you listen to me, I don't know what really went on this afternoon, but I know that you were involved in it up to your ears.

Hank gives a whap of his tail and tries to look mystified as he pants.

HANK

Well...

*

*

SALLY MAY

Against my better judgment I'm going to let you sleep with my child because for reasons I don't understand, he seems fond of you. But if you throw up on my clean floor or wet on my nice furniture or dig holes in my sheets, Hank, I swear I will send your...

*

*

LOPER

Honey. Come on now.

*

She closes her eyes, takes in a deep breath, and forces a smile.

SALLY MAY

(standing)

Okay. Okay. Okay. They're impossible, Loper, both of them. One's just as bad as the other.

*

LOPER

Shall I do the honors?

SALLY MAY

Please, and thank you.

LOPER

Come on, Hank, let's put this horse up and then we'll get to the fun part.

DROVER

Fun part? Hank, what's the fun part?

HANK

You see what comes of courage, Drover? I myself am going to be decorated for heroism and honored with awards, while you stay outside with your friend the cat.

*

An unimpressed REER from Pete.

HANK (CONT'D)

No risk, no reward, Drover, and with that I bid you good night!

DROVER

Good night, Hank, I'll miss you.

HANK

You bet you will.

DROVER

Geez. I wonder what kinda award them awards is gonna be?

*
*

105-4 INT. BARN - NIGHT

105-4

A BUCKET OF WATER SPLASHES!

HANK (V.O.)

What a lousy trick! The so-called "award" turned out to be a trip to the bathtub.

AGGRESSIVE SCRUBBING AND SPRAY HOSING.

HANK (V.O.)

I was de-ticked, de-flead, de-dirted, de-scented, almost de-skinned, and derned near drowned.

Hank gives a massive, splattering shake off.

HANK (V.O.)

When I crawled out of that dipping vat, fellers, I could hardly stand myself. I was so...so...clean!

LOPER

Come on, boy. Bathtime's over.

The squeak of a screen door.

HANK (V.O.)

But...cleanliness does have a few rewards.

Hank's claws click on the porch as he follows Loper into the warm glow of the house.

105-5 INT. RANCH - HOUSE - ALFRED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

105-5

Crickets chirp outside the bedroom window.

HANK (V.O.)

There I was. On top of the covers at the end of Alfred's bed. It truly was a throne befitting of a king.

*

Sally May leans in to kiss Alfred's forehead.

SALLY MAY

Sleep tight Alfred.

ALFRED

Mommy, can you leave the door cracked?

SALLY MAY

Okay, honey.

HANK (V.O.)

It was so nice to hear Sally May sound so sweet, but then she shot me a glare and swiveled a finger at me from her eyeballs.

SALLY MAY

(whispering)

Hank. I'm watching you.

Hank pants and gives a tail flap as Sally May clicks off the lights and eases the creaking door half-closed.

Hank snuggles down into the soft sheets with a satisfied groan.

HANK (V.O.)

I'm proud to report that I went all night maintaining control of all my various bodily processes and fluids, so to speak, and I didn't make a single mess.

*

A quiet voice comes from the dark headboard.

ALFRED

I love you Hank.

HANK

I love you too, pal. You sleep tight, now.

*

*

Alfred's eyes close and the sound of his breathing catches rhythm. Hank takes a deep breath that flaps his jowls and settles in.

HANK (V.O.)

Okay, now between you and me, I gotta admit, there was one small mishap in the middle of the night, but it occurred under the bed and Sally May won't find it for weeks. Shoot, by that time I'll be well out of her range, and around here, well, endings don't get any happier than that. Case closed.

*

*

*

*

The house is quiet as the two boys drift to sleep. Hank begins to SNORE.

HANK

SARFLE FLARPLE PANCAKES STARFLE.

THE END.