



Cowboy Kade and the Missing Feed Bucket



Cowboy Kade had just finished breakfast when he put on his black cowboy hat, walked down the steps and met Rusty to start their morning working on the ranch.

Rusty was waiting at the bottom of the steps, his tail wagging as if he had been awake for hours.

As they walked to the front of the barn, Troy came around the corner carrying a bale of hay.



"Hey, Kade, did you move the blue feed bucket, its gone." Kade shook his head, "No, Troy, it's always on the hook."

Troy thought about seeing the blue bucket hanging on its hook yesterday, and wondered how it could be missing since he placed it on the hook last night!



Kenzie and Mom Nina were sitting on a bale of hay going over her notes on the missing bucket.

Kenzie explained, "Mom, I looked inside and it isn't there. I checked the tack room, the shed and behind the barn. No bucket was found in any of those locations. Mon, the bucket is gone!"

Mom Nina said, "It has to be somewhere. Nobody is going to sneak onto a ranch just to steal one old feed bucket, would they?" Kenzie shrugged her shoulders, "Mon, Ya never know what people will do."

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Grampa Don walked over from the house and listened while Kade explained the mystery. Then Grampa Don looked toward the pasture.

“Sometimes,” Grampa said, “something that seems missing has just gone somewhere you didn’t expect.”

Kade looked toward the pasture. That sounded like a clue. Now he just had to figure what Grampa Don meant, which at times was usual when Grampa Don said things.



They searched along the fence line and around the water trough. Rusty sniffed everything they passed, including several fence posts, a pile of leaves and one place in the grass that seemed especially interesting to him. But they didn’t find the bucket.

Finally, everyone went back to their daily chores and were going to meet in the morning to go over where that bucket could be.

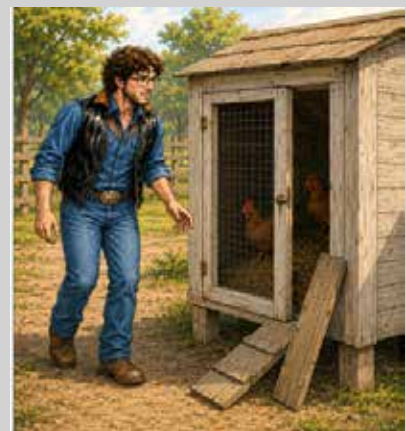


The next morning, Kade and Grampa Don walked toward the pasture gate and suddenly stopped!

They were both shocked to see that the blue bucket was back. Not where it usually was supposed to be, but it was lying on its side near the pasture gate. Kade, said, “Grampa, how did the bucket get here?” Grampa answered, “That’s a mystery, Kade.”



Troy came out of the barn carrying the spare red bucket and repaired a board on the chicken coop. Then carefully left the red bucket next to the coop stairs and went for lunch. When he went back to the coop the red bucket was gone. Troy stared at the empty spot.



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Kenzie and Mom Nina stood at the chicken coop reviewing notes. “Mom, listen to this, yesterday the blue bucket disappeared from beside the barn and turned up near the pasture gate. Today the red bucket disappeared from beside the chicken coop. What do you think?”

Mom thought for a moment and said, “Grampa said maybe we should stop looking where the buckets disappeared from to where they were found.”

Kenzie understood immediately. “We should look for where they go, Grampa is right.” She yelled, “KADE, come on! This time Rusty raced ahead instead of sniffing.



Near the corner of the pasture, Rusty stopped and began barking. Kade and Kenzie ran toward him.

There on the ground was the red bucket lying beside the fence. Kenzie marked the location in her notebook.

Then she looked at the two places where the missing buckets had been found. “The blue bucket was over there yesterday,” she said, pointing toward the gate. “The red one is here today, by the gate fence.”



Kade studied the pasture. Both buckets had traveled away from the barn in almost the same direction. Then he realized it was toward the goat pen. Kade slowly walked to the fence. Biscuit was standing at the fence watching him.

“Biscuit,” Kade said, “do you know anything about these buckets?” Biscuit looked guilty and quickly walked away.



Kade carried the red bucket back to the barn but remembered Grampa always said, “Kade always have a plan.”

Kade decided not hang it on the usual hook inside the barn. He had a plan.

Instead, Kade set it outside the barn, on the ground by the barn door.

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Kade, Kenzie and Troy hid in the barn knowing someone would come for the red bucket. All they had to do was be quiet and wait. Everyone waited. Nothing happened. Five minutes passed. Then ten. Kade whispered, "We just have to wait."



Grampa Don and Mom Nina hid in the barn but kept laughing.

Kade whispered, "Shhhh, this is a mystery we're solving."

Grampa said, "What exactly are we doing?"

Mom Nina answered, "Watching a bucket?"

They then burst into laughter but quickly quieted when Kenzie, Troy and Kade all gave them a stare and whispered, "Shhhhhh, quiet."



A few minutes later Biscuit appeared. He looked around but didn't see anyone. Then the little goat walked straight to the red bucket and sniffed inside. He was looking to see if there was any food in it.

Kade thought Biscuit would then leave but Biscuit had other ideas for the bucket.



Biscuit grabbed the handle in his mouth and raced out of the yard. They all had to admit that Biscuit looked quite happy as he ran into the next pasture. Then he started playing with the bucket by throwing it into the air!



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The all watched and were trying not to laugh – but then they all burst out laughing.



That afternoon, Kade hung the feed buckets on higher hooks inside the barn.

Biscuit stood looking at the bucket now out of his reach. Kade noticed him.

“Don’t even think about it, Biscuit. No bucket stealing.”

Biscuit gave a small bleat.

Grampa Don looked at Kade. “I don’t think he’s sorry for taking both buckets.”

Kade shook his head. “Neither do I.”



Everyone sat in the barn relaxing and going over how the day was fun. Mom Nina retold the story of the day how the mystery was solved.

Rusty stretched out chewing a dog biscuit, perfectly satisfied that he had helped with the investigation and thought that he solved it.

Kenzie wrote one final note in her notebook: The missing bucket was solved. Biscuit wasn’t stealing the buckets he was playing with them.”

As the afternoon settled over the Lazy K Ranch, everyone laughed. Troy looked over at the buckets and didn’t say anything but decided he would make the new bucket hooks a bit higher later that night when everyone went to sleep.