



WHEN THE COWS GOT LOOSE

by Carol Weis

illustrated by Ard Hoyt

Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing

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Teacher Guide

About the book:

While Ida Mae's busy daydreaming 'bout how to get famous, her twenty-six cows are busy flying the coop. Now it's up to Ida Mae and her trusty dog, Calliope, to rustle up that herd of loitering livestock. 'Cause it's the only after each of those cavorting cows is corralled that Ida Mae can finally get back to the task at hand -- making her own dreams come true.

About the author:

Carol Weis is a former teacher, actor, school librarian and pastry chef who writes poetry, essays and commentary for public radio. Inspiration for this story came after she and her daughter, Maggie, watched the cows from a nearby farm roam the neighborhood for what seemed like days, after escaping the confines of their cozy corral. Their hooves left deep impressions in the lawn, ever reminding her of the book that begged to be written. Carol lives in Easthampton, MA.

About the illustrator:

Ard Hoyt is a graduate of the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA. He's illustrated several books including John Lithgow's *I'm a Manatee*. Ard lives in Arkansas with his wife and four daughters, and he absolutely adores cows -- every kind of cow. In fact, that's the reason there're twenty-six different kinds of cows in this book. He couldn't choose just one, or two, or three....

Pre-reading

Open the book and hold the jacket for the children to see the full image on both the front and back covers. Ask if they've ever seen an animal that looks like this. What kind of animal do they think it is? Can they guess how the cow got to look like a tiger. How do they know that? What do they see in the pictures that gives them a clue?

Questions to consider

1. Who is the narrator of the story?
2. Where does Granny take her bath? How often?
3. Why is Pa so irritated with Ida Mae? What does he want her to do?
4. How would you describe Ida Mae? Her looks. Her personality. Her behavior.
5. What kind of animal does Ida Mae ride? Why?
6. What is in the middle of Ida Mae's living room? What else is in the living room.
7. Who goes with Ida Mae to round up the cows?
8. How many days does it take Ida Mae to round up the cows?
9. Where does Ida Mae do her best thinking? Where do you do your best thinking?
10. What is the theme of this book?
11. What type of performer was Mr. Simpson? How do you know that?
12. What illustration is your favorite? Why?

Projects:

Language Arts:

Interview Ida Mae about the cows escaping, and how that inspired her to start her own big-top. Write five questions that you would ask her.

Write a biography about Ida Mae and her family.

Find your favorite 10 action verbs in the story. Make up your own story using these words (and others).

Keep a journal, as if you are Ida Mae, for a week. Write down what's happening and what she's dreaming about.

Write a poem about Ida Mae and her cows.

Math:

Count how many times these people or things appear in the book:

Ida Mae
Hats
Calliope
Zebra
Pa
Baby chicks
Granny

Do you notice anything about the names of the cows? What do you notice? What do you know about the cows from this information? Can you find a pattern to the names in the first column? What do you notice about the pattern? Can you find a pattern to the names in the second column? What has changed?

Alberta	Alberta
Betty	Betty
Candy	Zora
Dotty	Candy
Ellie	Dotty
Fannie	Yolanda
Greta	Ellie
Hildegarde	Fannie
Irene	Xenia
Jeanette	Greta
Katie	Hildegarde
Lucy	Winifred
Minerva	Irene
Nellie	Jeanette
Ophelia	Violet
Pauline	Katie
Queenie	Lucy
Renee	Ursula
Susie-Q	Minerva
Tilly	Nellie
Ursula	Tilly
Violet	Ophelia
Winifred	Pauline
Xenia	Susie-Q
Yolanda	Queenie
Zora	Renee

Word problems:

How many baths does Granny take in a month? In a year? What do you need to think of before you solve this problem?

Granny uses $\frac{1}{2}$ capful of her homemade herbal bubble bath for each bath she takes. Each capful of bubble bath weighs 1 ounce. Each bottle of Granny's bubble bath weighs 16 ounces. How many bottles of bubble bath does Granny use in a month? In a year?

To make his scarf, Grampy knits one row and purls one row. Grampy needs to knit and purl 18 rows to make 1 foot of scarf. Grampy is making a 10 foot long purple scarf. How many rows does Grampy need to purl to make 1 foot of scarf? 10 feet of scarf? 100 feet of scarf?

Ma has 5 stumps of wood to split and chop. She gets about twelve pieces of wood with each stump. Can you estimate how many pieces of wood she'll chop in all?

While Pa was mending the roof of the chicken coup, the vibration from his hammering broke some eggs. The first time he checked the nests, he saw he'd broken half the eggs in the coup. The second time he checked the nest, he saw he had broken half of the remaining eggs. There were ten eggs left when Pa was done. How many eggs were in the coup to begin with? How many broken eggs did Pa have to clean up?

Before the cows got loose, they were all grazing in the south field. How many groups of ten were there? How many ones?

How did Ida Mae know that some of the cows would be at Mrs. Henshaw's?

Each cow in this story is approximately eight feet long, with its tale hanging down. If Ida Mae rounded up all the cows on the same day, and walked them home one behind the other, how long is her parade of cows?

If Ida Mae's cows average 1,100 lbs each, can you estimate how much the cows weigh altogether? How much do half of the cows weigh? How did you figure that out?

If Ida Mae's cows fit into half of the barn, how many cows can fit into the barn? $\frac{1}{4}$ of the barn? $\frac{1}{3}$ of the barn?

How much should Ida Mae charge for tickets to her bovine big top? Why?

Art:

Make cow puppets using white paper bags, cone cups shaped into ears and stapled on, and stick or glue wiggle eyes on its face. Then color spots on the cow with crayons.

Make a purple scarf like Grampy's.

Music:

ANIMALS ON THE FARM

Sing to the tune of: “The Wheels on the Bus.”

The cows on the farm go moo, moo, moo,
Moo, moo, moo, Moo, moo, moo,
The cows on the farm go moo, moo, moo
All night long.

Do the same verse using other animals like chicks, ducks, pigs, etc.

THIS IS THE WAY WE MILK THE COWS

Sing to the tune of “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush.”

This is the way we milk the cows
Milk the cows, milk the cows
This is the way we milk the cows
So early in the morning

Do the same verse with ‘gather the eggs,’ ‘feed the pigs,’ and ‘ride the horse.’

Check out this website for more: [COWS: SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS](#)

Movement:

Play the game *Duck, Duck, Goose*, replacing those words with *Cow, Cow, Moose*.

Social Studies:

Create a list of food products that come from cows. Take one of those products and research how that product is made from cow to market. Create a poster to share what you have learned.

Ida Mae has a distinctive way of speaking? What part of the country would Ida Mae and her family live? Learn more about the people in that part of our country.

In small groups research find out about the Appalachian culture in the following areas:

Dwellings	Regions Inhabited
Food	Art
Religious beliefs	Music
Conflicts	

Science:

Visit these websites and then make a list of the ten most interesting facts you learned about cows. Illustrate on a poster and share with your class!

[FUN FACTS FOR KIDS](#)

[FACTS ABOUT COWS](#)

[45 FUN FACTS ABOUT COWS](#)

Service Learning:

Hold a fundraiser for ***Heifer International***. Be creative as a class on how you might raise money or goods, or get help at [Heifer Fundraising Tips](#) Some ideas:

Hoppy Hare Jigsaw - ask children to bring donations to their class each week to help buy a pair of “Hoppy Hares” for ***Heifer***. Display a large hand drawn picture of a rabbit; cut a duplicate picture of it into 20 pieces (each piece worth \$1). Show the children the jigsaw pieces they are to help put together. For each \$1 raised, have a child put a piece together on the poster. When the jigsaw is completed, take it apart and repeat the activity twice to buy a trio of rabbits for ***Heifer***.

Or perhaps you could *Purchase a Pig or Charge a Chick*. Ask children to bring donations each week to help buy a “Perky Pig” for ***Heifer***. Put a piggy-bank in the room and display a large caricature poster of Perky Pig. Children place donations in the piggy-bank. When the piggy-bank is full, send to ***Heifer***. For a flock of chicks, ask children to bring donations to their class each week. Suggest that each child bring \$1, if possible. For each dollar raised, a child pastes a chick on a poster. When a flock of chicks has been paid for, send the donations to ***Heifer***.

Related Titles:

The Day the Goose Got Loose by Reeve Lindbergh

Airmail To The Moon by Tom Birdseye

When Cows Come Home by David L. Harrison

Farmer McPeepers and His Missing Milk Cows by Katy S. Duffield

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin

Cows Can't Fly by David Milgrim

Cows in the Kitchen by Jill Crebbin

The Cow Who Clucked by Denise Fleming

Adventures of Cow by Lori Korchek

Moo Cow Kaboom! by Thatcher Hurd