

JIM

THE WONDER DOG



CHAPTER SEVEN

Written by Carolyn Mueller

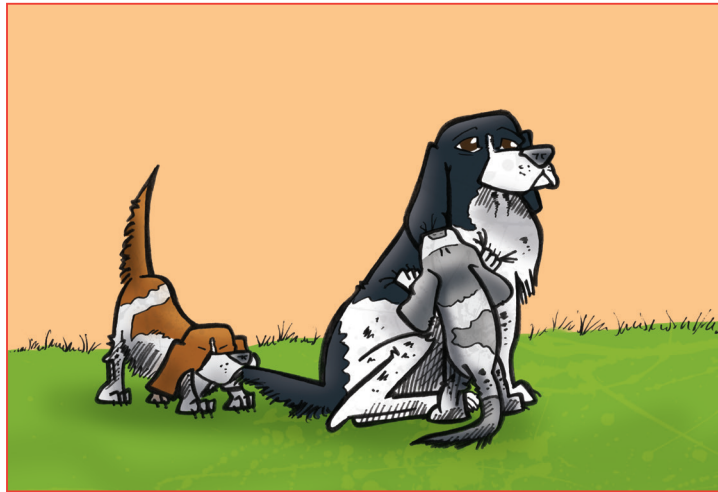
Illustrated by Christopher Grant

Jim the Wonder Dog continued to amaze all who met him. I'm proud to say that my father was once invited before a joint session of the Missouri General Assembly in Jefferson City. The legislators wanted to see Jim do his stuff!

They devised a test that they were sure would undermine Sam's training. They asked Jim a question in Morse Code! They knew that Sam did not understand Morse Code, and so could not communicate to his dog exactly how to perform the task. The legislators asked Jim to point out "a gentleman whom the ladies spoke of as tall and handsome." Jim went straight to Morris Osborn, a man well known to be the best looking fellow in town! Jim passed the legislators' test with flying colors.

Of course, throughout all of these activities Jim continued to be a perfect hunting dog and companion for the Van Arsdale family.

Sam loved Jim so much that he thought it might be a good idea for the Wonder Dog to have a few pups of his own, hoping perhaps one would inherit Jim's legendary powers. And what do you know, that's how I was born! My mother was another purebred Llewelin Setter, just like my father, and she gave birth to a litter of two — me and my brother, whose name is Son.



Son and I went to live at Ira Irvine's kennels, just as our father did. Jim and Sam would visit us often. We would romp and play, since we were just young ones back then and full of energy. I remember my father was so calm and patient as Son and I hopped all over him, tugging on his ears and his feathery tail.

Ira and Sam hoped that Son and I would grow up to be just as smart as our father. Though we are good faithful dogs and excellent hunters, if I do say so myself, neither Son nor I could figure out how to communicate with humans the way our father could. We're good dogs, of course, but we're not Wonder Dogs.

As Son and I grew up, our father began to age. One frosty November morning, Sam took Jim out to hunt. Jim was perfect, as usual, flushing quail from their coveys and responding to Sam's every command. It was a

wonderful day. After lunch though, as Jim was crossing a field, his leg got tangled in a fence! The muscle was strained, and he limped on it for the rest of the afternoon. As Jim and Sam wrapped up their hunting trip, Jim's leg began to stiffen in the cool air. By that evening, Jim was sick and

unable to get out of bed. The Van Arsdales called the veterinarian, who told them that Jim had rheumatism in his foreleg. Jim had to go to the veterinary hospital in Kansas City.

When Jim finally recovered, he could no longer hunt. The illness had taken its toll. It was hard for Jim to retire from hunting, as that is what we Llewelin Setters are born to do, but he continued to travel with the Van Arsdale family. Between travels Jim stayed at the Ruff Hotel and gave performances to those who had to see to believe in the Wonder Dog. In this way, he lived until the ripe old age of 12 years old.

It was a cool, windy March day in 1937 when Sam decided to take Jim to the lake to go fishing. Sam parked his car and opened the door for Jim. My father hopped out and ran toward the lake. Suddenly, Jim collapsed!

Sam rushed to his side, scooped him up and took him to the veterinary hospital as fast as he could. But it was too late. As Sam laid his friend on the exam table, he could see the dog's dark spots and feathery tail, the same soft ears and wet nose — but something was missing from Jim's unusually bright eyes. There was no longer a light in them. He was gone. On March 18, 1937, my father, Jim the Wonder Dog, passed away.

Son and I did what we could to comfort the Van Arsdales. We tried to fill the hole in their hearts left by the loss of their faithful companion. We were good dogs, but we were not their beloved Jim. Jim's unique intelligence and steady companionship could never be replicated. He was a once-in-a-lifetime dog. To the Van Arsdales, Jim's death felt like losing a member of their family.

Nothing could ever replace their Wonder Dog.

PAPER TRAINING

Many newspapers contain obituaries. Read the obituaries in your newspaper to see how they are written and the type of information that is included. Write an obituary for Jim.

Learning Standards: I can read historical fiction and make text-to-text and text-to-world connections. I can write for a specific purpose and audience.

Learn more about Jim the Wonder Dog and his hometown of Marshall, Mo., at jimthewonderdog.org.

