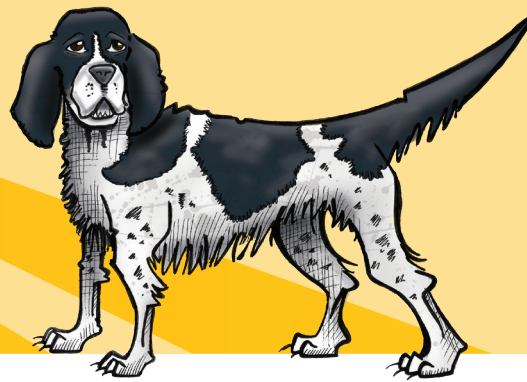


# JIM

## THE WOODER DOG



## CHAPTER THREE

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Illustrated by Christopher Grant

**H**ow did my father, Jim, identify different types of trees that fateful afternoon? Well, in my humble opinion, to really know a dog is to understand where he came from. So, let's start from the beginning.

Jim was born on March 10, 1925, in the state of Louisiana. He was a purebred Llewellyn Setter, meant to grow up and be a faithful hunting companion. Jim's father, my grandfather of course, was named Eugene's Ghost, and he was well known for winning more than 1,000 field competitions. His grandfather was Candy Kid, a champion dog, famous for his skill in the field and for his intelligence.

So you see, my family comes from a long line of smart, hard-working, prize-winning dogs! I'm not trying to brag, but we are a very successful bunch. Of course, like most dogs, Jim was one pup out of a large litter. He spent his early days tumbling about in a kennel with his six brothers and sisters.

As is usual in the life of a dog, the pups grew older and larger and eventually it was time for them to find new homes with new owners. Hunters came to look at the puppies to decide which ones they'd like to buy. Jim's six brothers and sisters were wild things, always wrestling and running around, but Jim was a shy puppy who simply liked to loll about in the sunshine and watch the day go by. When visitors saw this, they didn't think my father



would grow into a very good hunting dog.

A man pointed to one of Jim's sisters and said to Mr. Taylor, who owned the dogs, "I'll give you \$25 for this fine pup." The men greatly admired the puppy's size, shiny coat and energy.

Mr. Taylor pointed toward Jim's sister and then to Jim and said, "I'll tell you what. I'll sell you that pup for \$25 or this one for just \$5."

Mr. Taylor thought Jim's sister was worth five times more than Jim!

"That is the most ungainly pup I've ever seen," the man answered. "He's either too weak or too lazy to play. No thank you."

One by one Jim's brothers and sisters were sold. Jim remained in the kennel with his mother, waiting for his forever home. He grew larger each day. Then one morning Mr. Taylor went into the kennel and told Jim he would be sending him to Missouri!

You see, during recent travels Mr. Taylor had met Sam Van Arsdale. Sam was a quail hunter, and when he heard about the litter of fine Llewellyn Setters in Louisiana, he was interested. When Mr. Taylor offered to ship him a dog for \$25, Sam hesitated.

"That's too much," he said.

"Not for these fine dogs," Mr. Taylor replied. "A good dog costs something more!"

Mr. Taylor told Sam all about how his pups were descendants of the great Eugene's Ghost and Candy Kid.

"You're a braggart," Sam told him, partly in jest. "I doubt your dogs are worth more than my shoelaces."

"You'll see!" Mr. Taylor insisted.

When he got home, Mr. Taylor decided to ship the puppy to Sam in Missouri. The awkward runt would be a gift. Mr. Taylor wouldn't charge Sam any money at all.

Little Jim rode the train all the way to Missouri. Sam was shocked to see that a pup had been delivered! Mr. Taylor's gift was a complete surprise.

"He's really a clumsy, little pup," Sam said after taking one look at my big-footed father.

Of course, Jim was just a little one then, taking it all in. He didn't let the words of these men get to him. He knew what he was made of.

Sam named Jim after the famous cowboy/comedian Will Rogers' son, Jim. He took the pup to live in a kennel owned by a man named Ira Irvine. Ira's job was to train pups like my father into fine hunting dogs. When Ira saw him for the first time, he noticed something different about Jim.

"Look at his eyes," Ira said. "It's like he understands what we're saying."

Soon, everyone would see that my father was more than the awkward runt of the litter. Jim was something special.

### PAPER TRAINING

Newspapers are a great place to showcase champions — just like Jim's ancestors. Look through the newspaper and find 3-5 examples of someone being honored as a champion.

**Learning Standards:** I can read historical fiction and make text-to-text and text-to-world connections.

