



CHAPTER

4

Change of Fortune

JARROD DIRECTED AMY to the nursery and grain store. As they pulled into the parking area at the front of the building, he spotted his best friend, Mike.

Mike was attending college and planning a career in landscape design. He spent most of his summer vacations at Jim's farm designing and planting gardens surrounding the house. He built small ponds and rock garden spots, laid concrete pavers, and placed cement benches, fountains and statuary around the yard. There were various ornamental trees, exotic bushes, and vivid-colored flowers. Jim's wife loved the additions.

"Hey!" Jarrod called as he approached

Mike, who was lifting a flat of flowers into the back of the farm pickup.

The tall, muscular man grinned as he turned to see Jarrod. "What's going on?"

"Nothing—except La Donna and Amy have this hunting dog that they're trying to find a home for." Jarrod looked down at his feet, then at the car where the pointer sat wagging his tail. "I thought Jim might take him."



LUCKY LEO

Mike looked at Jarrod, then at the unfortunate pointer. “Oh, no—unh-uh. I’m not getting involved in this deal. Jim’s got nine dogs. There’s no way.”

Jarrold smiled. “I know, but there’s something about this dog. He looks pretty awful, but he’s tough and proud—sorta like a soldier, or warrior, or somebody like that. He’s kinda like...a sad lion.”

“He’s a dog, Jarrod, an animal who costs lots of money to take care of.” Mike shook his head. “I don’t think Jim’s gonna go for it.”

Jim finished chatting with the nurseryman Lesley in the feed store. He paid his bill and walked toward the truck. The two young men leaned against the tailgate looking sheepish.

“Hi, Jarrod, how are you?” Jim set the fern he was carrying on the tailgate of the pickup. Neither of the younger men spoke, both just grinning and nodding recognition.

“What?” Jim laughed.

Jarrold spat out the words tactlessly. “Jim, they’re gonna put this dog to sleep, if you don’t take him.”

Mike rolled his eyes and said under his



breath, “Oh, man! Good going Jarrod!”

“A dog? What dog?” Jim asked.

“That dog,” Mike said as he motioned and moved toward the car. Jarrod led the way. The pointer stuck his head out the window, giving Jim’s hand a slurppy lick.

“Where did you find him?” Jim asked as he appraised the dog. “He’s a German Shorthaired...a bird dog.”

“Yeah!” Jarrod said happily. “I knew you’d