



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 38

By Carol Patton

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The Lie That Wouldn't Stop

A dog carrying a briefcase wasn't paying attention to where he was going and bumped into Mo, knocking him to the ground.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," the dog said. "Are you hurt?"

Mo stood up, unsure of what had just happened. Finchy flew to Mo's side, making sure he was OK.

"My name is Jonathon," he said. "I'm a judge for animal court and am trying a case that has upset the entire animal community. I can't seem to focus on anything else. I didn't even see you standing there. My apologies."

Mo or Finchy had never met a judge.

"What's the case about?" asked Mo.

“A dog in our community lied about our annual marathon race,” said Judge Jonathon. “Some animals believed her and spread her lies to other animals throughout the state. Now everyone is in an uproar, taking sides, and arguing with each other.”

He explained that when animals disagree or have problems they can’t solve, they go to court. He listens to each side of the story, asks lots of questions, and then makes a fair decision about what the animals need to do to make things right again.

“Can we come and watch?” asked Finchy. “I’ve never been to court.”

“Don’t see why not,” said Judge Jonathon. “But it may be very crowded, sitting room only.”

Mo and Finchy followed him to the courtroom, a private spot in the local park hidden by bushes and trees. Dozens of animals, not just dogs, crowded around his bench, which was a large, flat rock. Mo and Finchy sat behind them, not knowing what to expect.

Judge Jonathon entered the area and sat on the ground behind his bench. He removed a gavel from his briefcase and pounded it three times.



“As soon as I organize my legal papers, this trial will begin,” he said.

Everyone sat down and patiently waited.

Earlier that morning, Mo and Finchy had been riding on top of the delivery truck for roughly 90 minutes along Atlantic City Expressway West and Interstate 95 South. Alex, the truck driver, pulled off the highway and then stopped at a big building in the city of Wilmington to make a very large delivery.

Mo and Finchy walked around town. That’s when Judge Jonathon bumped into Mo.

While waiting for court to begin, Mo and Finchy heard animals talk about the case.

“I heard that Eddi’s lies spread all over this state, as far south as Delmar, as far east as Lewes, and as far west as Kenton!” said a turtle to a rabbit.

“Do you think she’s a liar?” asked the rabbit. “A lot of animals believe she was telling the truth. I don’t know what to think anymore.”

Judge Jonathon pounded the table with his gavel once more, announcing that the trial would begin. Eddi sat on the grass next to him, facing the crowd.

“Eddi, you may start by telling your side of the story,” said Judge Jonathon.

“This is simply not fair,” said Eddi. “I really won the marathon race. Everyone thinks Chad won but he cheated.”

Judge Jonathon interrupted Eddi.

“Do you have proof that Chad cheated?” he asked.

“Well, everybody has been saying it so it must be true,” said Eddi. “That trophy belongs to me!”

“Who’s everybody?” he asked.

“You know, everybody,” said Eddi.

Everyone in the courtroom began whispering to each other. Judge Jonathon banged his gavel on the bench.

“Quiet in the courtroom!” he shouted.

“Eddi, you are on trial for lying,” he said. “You are accused of telling everyone that you won the race. You claim that Chad won because he cheated.”

Mo and Finchy looked at each other. Eddi looked so sweet and nice. Was she really a liar or telling the truth?

Judge Jonathon asked Eddi many questions that Mo and Finchy would have never thought to ask. How did she know Chad cheated? How did Chad cheat? How long had she been training for this race? How many miles could she run? He did everything he could to reveal the truth. He even asked Eddi if she wanted to run a short race with Chad that same day.

She didn’t answer any of his questions. Instead, she kept saying, “I won the marathon race.”

Chad, a large black and tan dog that that was in the courtroom, jumped up and shouted, “I did not cheat. I trained for one year to win this race. You’re lying!”

There were murmurs in the crowd. Once again, Judge Jonathon pounded his gavel on the table, asking everyone to remain quiet.

“Eddi, point to anyone here that knows Chad cheated or even saw you train,” he said.

Eddi pointed to three animals. He asked them to stand up and tell him what they knew.

“Well, Eddi said Chad cheated so it must be true,” said the first animal. “She wouldn’t lie.”

The other two animals said they had heard the same thing from Eddi. But they never saw Chad cheat or Eddi train for the race. No one did.

“Eddi,” said Judge Jonathon. “I know how badly you wanted to win this marathon. But so did Chad. You have to do more than hope or want something to come true. If you want to be a doctor, you can’t just wish for it to happen. You have to go to medical school. If you want to be a singer, you need to take lessons. And if you want to be a marathon runner, you have to train.”

Eddi refused to look at him. She kept shaking her head back and forth, mumbling that Chad had cheated.

This time, everyone in the crowd was silent.

“No one saw Chad cheating,” Judge Jonathon said. “You simply wanted to win so you made up this story. You repeated this lie so many times that many animals started believing you.”

He stood up to announce his verdict or decision.

“Since you offer no proof or evidence that Chad cheated, I have no choice but to find you guilty of lying,” he said. “Eddi, you must stop lying now or you’ll be kicked out of this community.”

Eddi began crying.

“One more thing,” added Judge Jonathon. “You must admit that you lied and apologize to Chad and everyone here today.”

Would Eddi do this? Could she do this? Could she admit that she wanted to win so much that she made up this big, ugly lie?

Everyone waited for her response. Several seconds went by. Then twenty seconds.

After thirty seconds, Judge Jonathon was about to bang his gavel on the bench one last time. Eddi saw him raise his gavel and jumped up. She stared at the ground. Tears were still streaming down her cheek.

“I . . . I don’t know what to say. . .” she said. “I’m so ashamed. I lied. I didn’t mean to. I just wanted to win. But the more I lied, the more it spread, and the harder it was to control. I didn’t know how to stop it.”

Everyone in the crowd gasped, especially those that believed her.

Then she apologized to Chad, his family, and everyone there.

“I’ll never believe you again!” shouted one dog. “I trusted you!”

“I was mean to Chad because of your lies!” cried an angry deer.

“Based on your lie, I believed the judges of the marathon were also liars,” screamed a small bear. “And I told everybody not to enter next year’s race!”

More animals in the crowd stood up and told Eddi how her lie not only hurt Chad and the community, but that it also casted a dark shadow on the marathon race. All of the

animals that believed her, stood by her, and defended her, now felt very foolish. One by one, the animals left the courtroom, vowing never to speak to Eddi again. The only animals left were Mo and Finchy.

“Should we say something to Eddi?” whispered Finchy to Mo.

“Like what?” asked Mo. “Her lie hurt everyone.”

As Mo and Finchy were leaving the courtroom, they overheard Judge Jonathon speak to Eddi.

“Eddi, what you did was wrong, very wrong,” he said. “I hope you understand why you always need to tell the truth, no matter how painful it may be.”

Then he walked out of the courtroom. Eddi was now all alone.

Mo and Finchy walked back to the delivery truck in silence. They had never expected this much drama.

They passed many stores with signs hanging above their doors that had “First State” in their name. They later found out that the state they were visiting was the first one in the country to approve the U.S. Constitution, a set of rules that guide this country.

“I wonder if Eddi will ever lie again,” said Finchy to Mo, once they were on top of the delivery truck.

“I hope not,” said Mo. “I would never lie to you or anyone. I have too much respect for you, other animals, and just as important, myself.”

