



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 10

By Carol Patton

Chapter 10

Hotel for the Furry and Feathered

“How do you get out of this place?” asked Mo.

“Maybe it’s this way, or that way,” said Finchy, a bit confused.

Mo and Finchy were lost in a huge house that no one seemed to live in.

For the last two days, they had been traveling along Interstate 94 East. Mo spotted many road signs like the ones for Moorhead, Minneapolis, and Saint Paul. But none of them mentioned anything about Florida.

It was early morning when the truck driver pulled up to a building’s loading dock to pick up hundreds of boxes. This was Mo’s chance to stretch his legs and do some serious sniffing.

Mo walked for nearly an hour, smelling every plant and bush along the way while

Finchy flew from treetop to treetop, chatting with other birds. That's when they saw it – this huge house on a street called Summit Avenue.

Mo and Finchy looked at each other in disbelief. This house looked as big as an iceberg.

“Wanna go inside?” asked Finchy. Mo eagerly nodded.

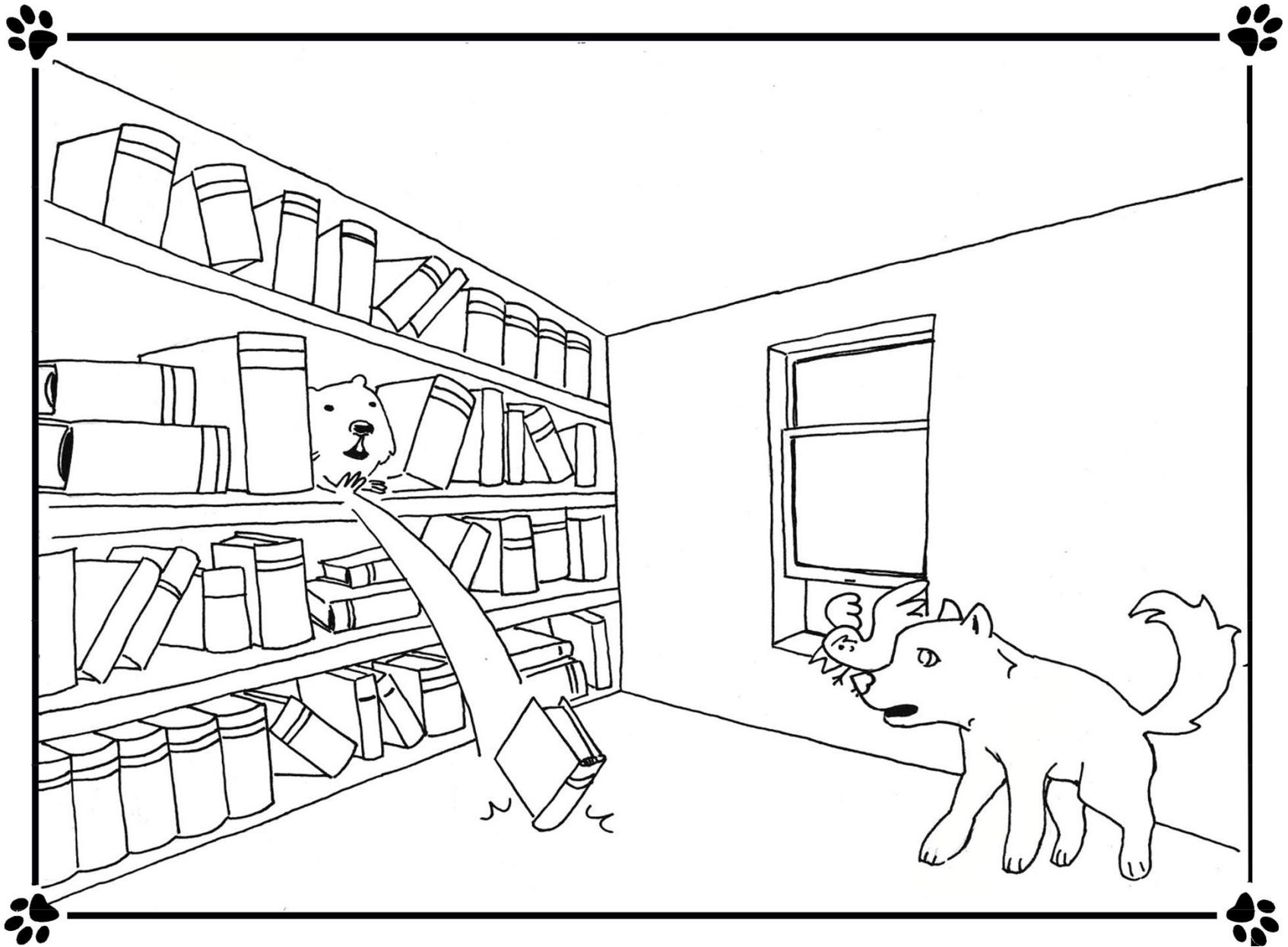
Finchy noticed that one window was slightly opened. After squeezing through the crack, he entered a large room. There were dozens, maybe even hundreds, of leather-bound books on different shelves, too many to count.

“Look at all these books,” he said to Mo, while pushing up the window so Mo could crawl inside. “Smart people must have lived here.”

Suddenly, one of the books fell off a shelf and slammed onto the floor. Mo jumped back while Finchy flew to the far end of the room.

“Didn't mean to scare you.”

A furry animal with big front teeth and a flat tail crawled out from the bookshelf.



“I’m almost finished reading this one,” said the animal, pointing to the book on the floor. “It explains how to build things. Quite fascinating.”

Mo didn’t quite know what to do or say. Neither did Finchy.

The animal walked right up to Mo. “My name is Kit,” she said. “Checked in yet?”

After introducing themselves, Mo asked, “What do you mean, checked in?”

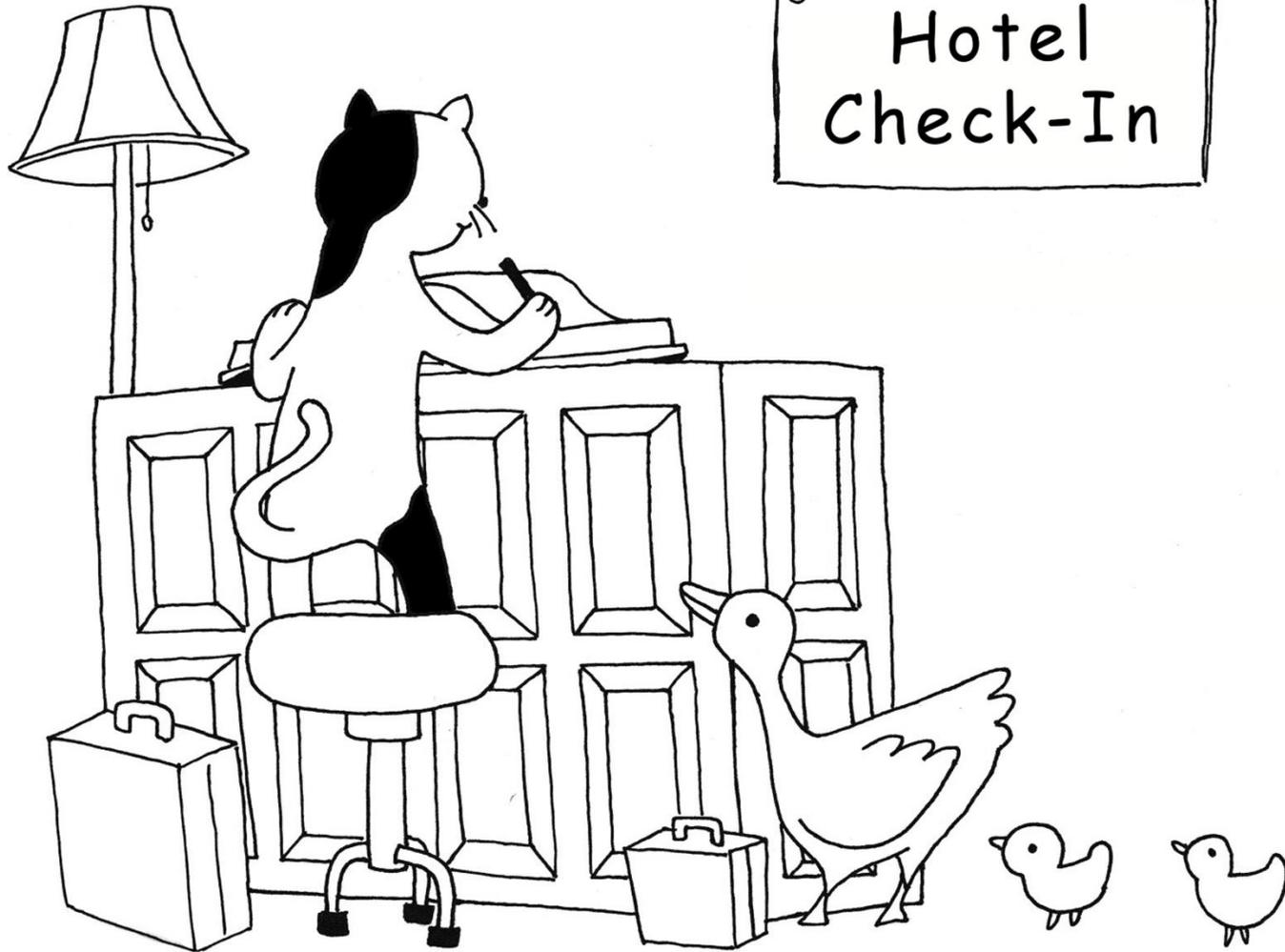
“You’re at the Hotel for the Furry and Feathered,” Kit said. “Animals from all over come here. Some rich guy and his family lived here many years ago. But no one lives here now. People tour the house almost every day. They usually wake me up. Very annoying.”

“What’s so special about this place?” asked Finchy.

“Let me show you,” said Kit, who gave them a tour of the mansion. She knew every hiding spot, the most comfortable places to take afternoon naps, the best spots to stay warm, or keep cool, and the easiest way to get in and out without anyone noticing.



Hotel
Check-In



Mo and Finchy were very impressed but couldn't figure out why people needed so many bathrooms. There were thirteen, to be exact.

“And we never have to pick up after ourselves,” Kit said, explaining that people clean the house almost daily. “We have the place all to ourselves throughout evenings and early mornings.”

Kit brought them into the dining room. “This is where we eat our meals,” she said, pointing to the floor underneath a huge table. “We share whatever we find.”

She invited Mo and Finchy to stay for brunch. But Mo politely declined, saying they were on their way to Florida.

“Do you know where Florida is or how far away it is?” asked Mo. “Maybe one of the books in the library could help us.”

Kit shrugged her shoulders.

Mo sighed. *Will I ever accomplish my mission?*

“So how many books have you read?” asked Finchy. Trying to impress Kit, he added,

“I once read a book about building nests.”

“Oh, really?” said Kit. “Excuse me for saying so but birds are stuck in the past. You’ve been using the same stuff for hundreds of years – sticks, twigs, mud, and leaves. This is the twenty-first century. Why don’t you make permanent nests out of hard materials so you don’t have to renovate or rebuild each year?”

Finchy didn’t respond. He couldn’t. He didn’t know anything about hard materials and was too embarrassed to ask.

Mo sensed how uncomfortable Finchy was and quickly changed the subject.

“So what kinds of animals stay here?” he asked.

“Hmmm.... let me think,” said Kit. “There are all kinds of birds who meet here before flying south for the winter. Badgers, bats, and bunnies have also been guests. Cats and chipmunks, too. There were a few mice but they quickly left. Too nervous about the cats. Even a porcupine stayed here once. But we asked her to leave. We kept stepping on her sharp pine quills.”

All three animals continued chatting underneath the massive dining room table about

where they lived, their families, and friends.

Mo grew homesick. It seemed forever since he had left home. He wondered if Monty the Moose was better at adding numbers by now, if Guy, the old grizzly bear, still led the forest meetings, or if Chachat, the wolf, moved his family into Mo's cave.

He missed them. Each and every one.

Mo glanced out the window and realized it was getting late.

“We better be going,” said Mo. “It was very nice meeting you. We’ll make sure to mention this hotel to everyone we talk to on our journey.”

“Everyone?” whispered Finchy to Mo as they started walking back to the delivery truck. “Not me. No way. Not ever. I’ll never mention a word about it to cats, foxes, weasels, oh, and owls. They wouldn’t think twice about eating me for lunch. Don’t you care about me? After all this time, I thought we were friends.”

Mo gently placed his paw around Finchy. “You’re my best friend,” he said. “I’ve got your back. Always and forever.”