



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 2

By Carol Patton

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Mo Meets Finchy

I've never seen so many humans in my entire life.

Mo didn't know whom or what to look at first. There were tall people. Short people. People with yellow hair. People with red hair. People with drawings on their arms and hair hanging from their chin.

Mo tilted his head all the way back. The gentle rain felt cool against his furry white face. The buildings were so tall. One called the Space Needle even poked through the clouds. Back home, every village had buildings but none of them were this tall, or never this big, and there were never this many. Not even close.

This was not what Mo had expected. He believed there were only a handful of humans in the world. *Maybe most of them live here, around Elliott Bay, or in this Public Market.*

He rested on the damp grass, wondering what to do next.

“You’re not from around here, are you?”

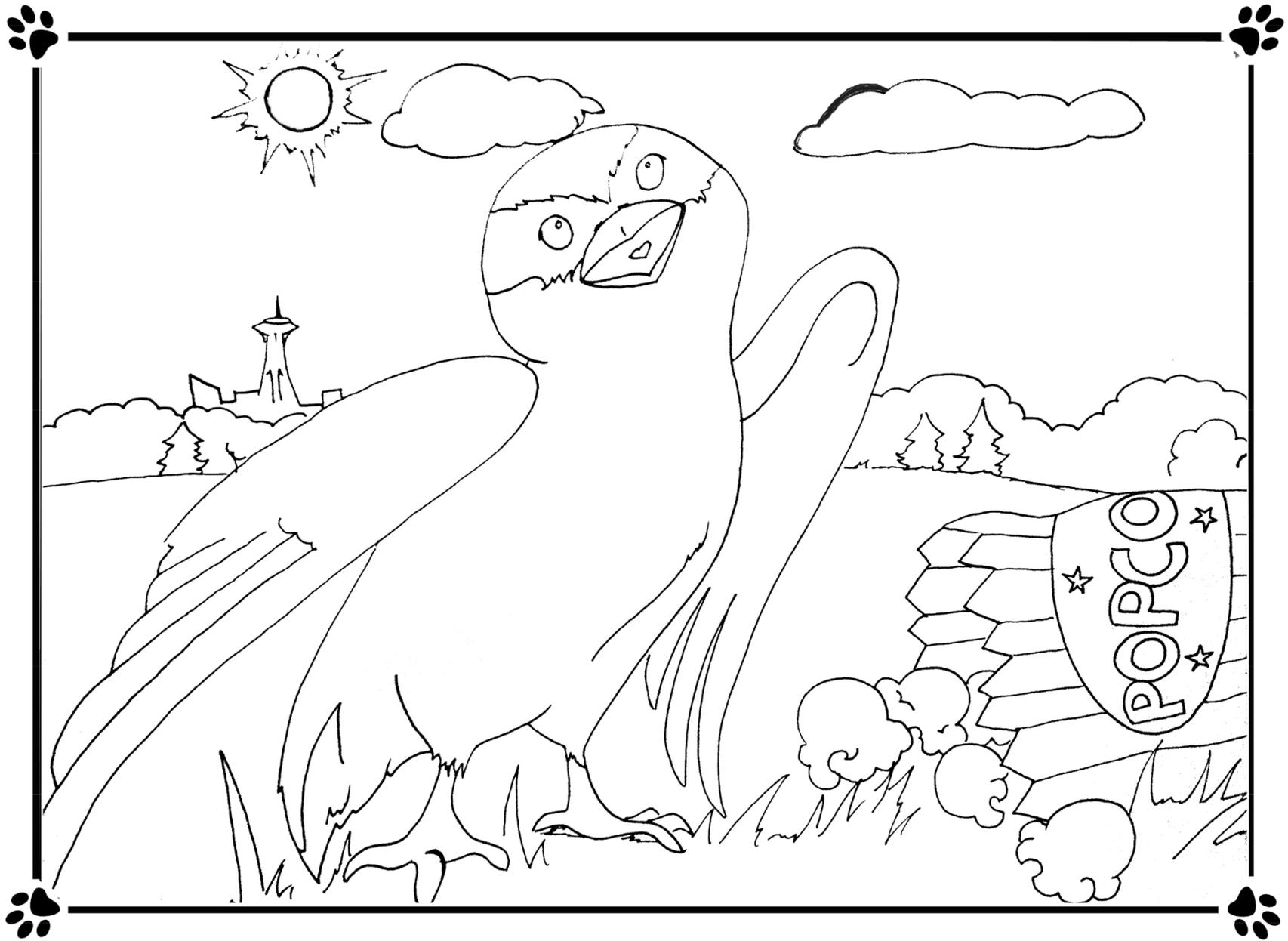
Mo jumped up on all fours. A beautiful yellow and black bird was standing next to him.

Before Mo could answer, the bird said, “My name is Finchy. My family and I live over there, on the top branch of that tall tree.”

Mo looked to his right. “Not that one,” said Finchy. “That one,” he said, pointing with his right claw to a tree not far from where they stood.

Finchy began sharing his family history. How his parents, grandparents and great grandparents had occupied the same tree. How he has eighteen cousins. How he loves to eat popcorn people throw on the grass. “Better than worms,” he said.

Finchy kept talking and talking. By now, Mo had stretched out on the cool grass, trying so hard not to cover his pointy ears with his front paws to drown out Finchy’s voice.



“If I may interject, Mr. Finchy,” said Mo, ever so politely. “I’m hoping you can help me. I’m looking for a place called... He sounded out the name very slowly. F-l-o-o-r-i-i-d-a-y. Mo repeated it. “Have you heard of it?”

Finchy ignored Mo’s question and asked, “Why do you want to go there?”

“I need to . . .” Mo abruptly stopped. He didn’t want to share his important mission with just anyone, especially a stranger.

“I need to return something to someone,” he mumbled.

Finchy hopped over toward Mo’s head and stared him straight in the eye.

“What’s the something and who’s the someone?” he chirped.

Mo remained silent. He didn’t want to offend Finchy. His mother had taught him to be polite.

“Sir, I really don’t know you,” said Mo. “You’re a perfect stranger.”

“I’m far from perfect,” said Finchy. “Believe me pal, I’ve got flaws. Lots and lots of ‘em. Just tell me. Please, please, please. I haven’t heard any good gossip since my cousin, Flo, flew to Florida last February.”

Mo’s ears perked up. “What did you say?”

“I said you can trust...”

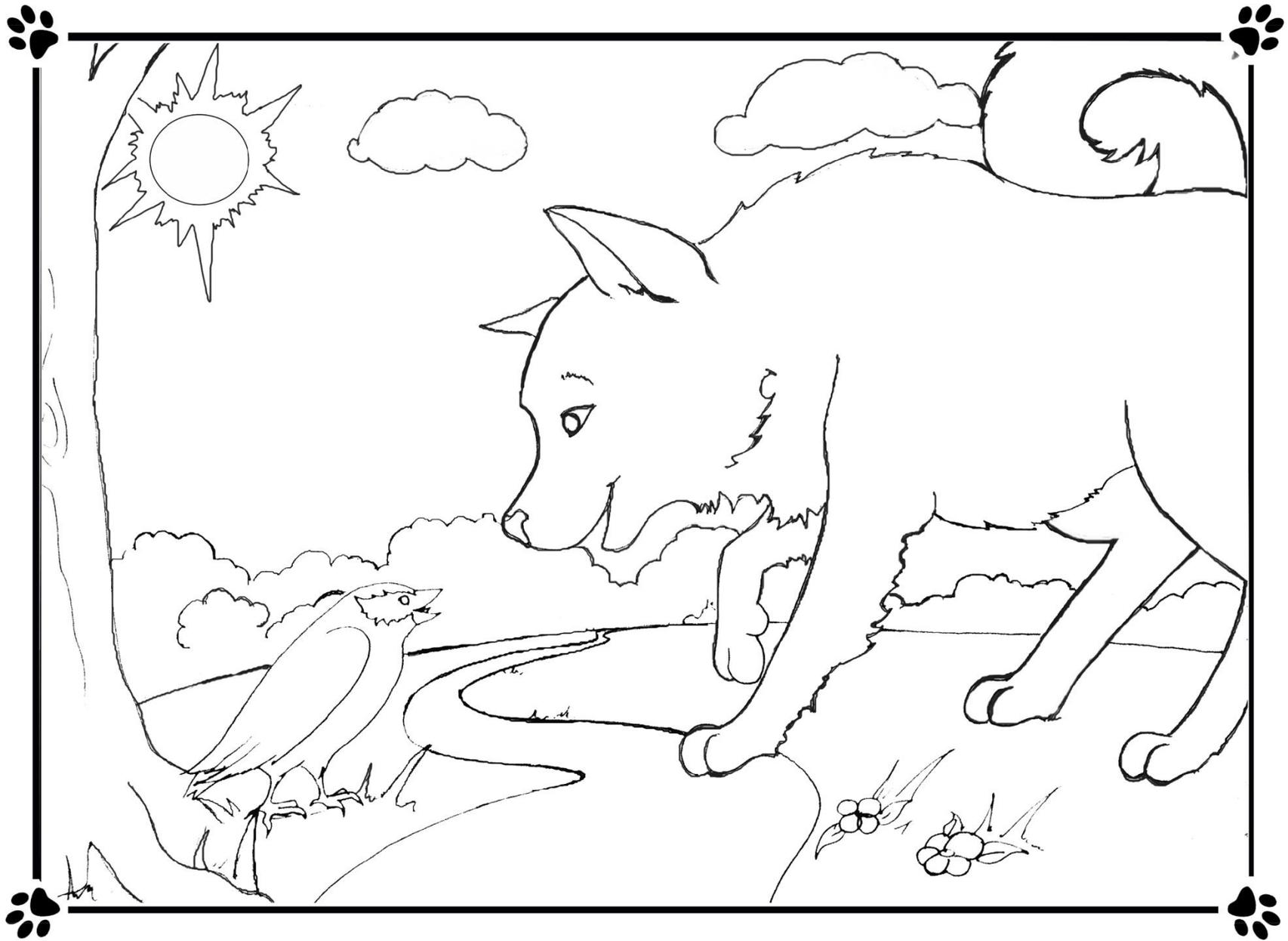
Mo interrupted Finchy.

“Did you say F-I-o-o-r-i-i-d-a-y?” asked Mo, who was starting to get excited.

Finchy waited a few seconds before answering. “I think you mean Florida,” he said.

Mo jumped off the ground. “That’s where I need to go! Can you tell me where it is? How do I get there? Is it far? Do many people live there? How...”

“Wow, slow down there, pal,” Finchy said. “Why didn’t you say Florida? You said F-I-o-o-r-i-i-d-a-y. I heard you. That’s what you said. I know what I heard...”



Mo took a deep breath as Finchy continued chattering. *Patience, patience.* “I’m... I’m sorry I wasn’t clear,” Mo said calmly. “Do you know where Florida is?”

“Well, not exactly,” said Finchy. Trying to impress Mo, he added, “It’s south of here.” Then he hesitated. “Or maybe east. Anyway, it’s a warm place with strange trees called palm trees and an ocean. At least that’s what Flo said before she moved.”

Mo asked Finchy for directions to this faraway place.

“I’d love to visit Flo in Florida,” said Finchy, ignoring Mo’s request. “Can I come with you?”

Mo had thought about a travel companion but never imagined one like Finchy, who never stopped talking.

“Please, please, please,” pleaded Finchy. “I can fly ahead and tell you where to go. I know which way is south. We have to follow Interstate 5 to Everett, which is about thirty minutes from here. Or is it Tacoma? Anyway, I know how we can get there real fast. You won’t even have to walk, well, at least not all the way. I know how to find food and . . .”

Mo looked at Finchy. The bird was so excited and trying to be helpful. But could he put up with his constant chattering?

“Okay, Finchy,” Mo said. “You can come. But before we leave, I have one more question. Do you know where I can get some ear plugs?”