



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 7

By Carol Patton

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Sacred Ceremony

The chanting grew louder and louder. The drumbeat sounded like thunder. Mo and Finchy inched closer and closer to the crowd surrounding the exciting sounds.

Mo had never seen humans dress or act like this back home. Five men were in the center of a large circle, dancing, twirling, and singing. Maybe a dozen people were beating on several huge, hide-covered drums with mallets while hundreds more watched.

Mo couldn't take his eyes off the dancers' outfits. They were so bright, so colorful. Simply dazzling. Each one was decorated with different symbols in red, orange, turquoise, or blue. Some wore eagle feathers on the tops of their heads and along the sides of their arms.

“What are they saying?” whispered Mo to Finchy who shrugged his shoulders. Finchy had never seen so many feathers in his life, not even at family gatherings.



Mo felt someone tap his shoulder. He turned around, looked up, and saw the head of a very large dog towering over him.

“Howdy. First time here?”

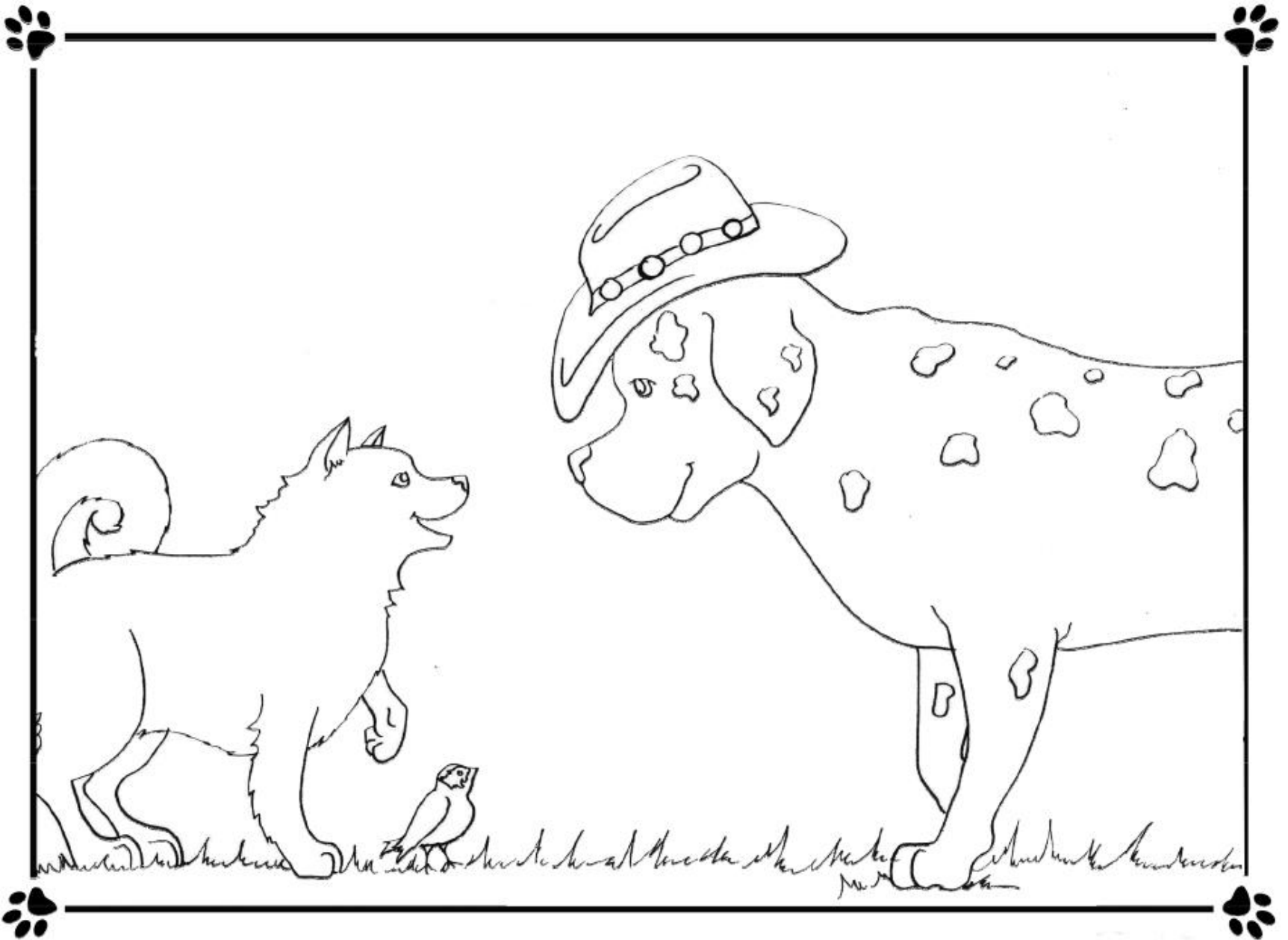
The dog was twice his size, wore a cowboy hat, and had white spots all over his tan body. Two small dogs – one gray and the other brown-speckled – were by his side.

“Finally, a fresh face,” said the gray dog. “And a handsome one at that.” She snuggled up against Mo’s body.

“Meli, quit flirting,” said the brown-speckled dog. “My name is Bly. I’ve never seen you before. Is this your first time here? Where did you come from? Who did you come with? Oh, by the way, the flatbread is very good today, but the hotdogs . . .”

“Bly, stop yammering and let the feller talk!” shouted the big dog. He turned to Mo and Finchy. “My name is Tulsa. And you are . . . ?”

Mo introduced himself and Finchy and then explained how they’re trying to get to Florida to return a valuable key and keychain.



“Don’t know where Florida is but I do know where we can get some tasty food,” Tulsa said. “You hungry?” Mo and Finchy eagerly nodded.

“Well, c’mon to our campsite for some chow.”

Tulsa started walking straight while Bly and Meli headed in opposite directions. Mo and Finchy stood still, not knowing which way to go.

“It’s this way,” said Tulsa.

“No, it’s not,” said Bly. “Gotta go around the fry bread booth, past the succotash, then the hamburgers...”

Meli rolled her eyes. “Don’t you two know anything?” she said. “Our campsite is right over there.”

After Meli pointed to the campsite, Mo and Finchy found their own way.

The four dogs and Finchy hunkered down around a small campfire, eating Indian tacos and hamburgers.

Bly couldn't wait any longer. He blurted out: "Who told you about this Powwow? Are you going to dance or sing? Did you agree with the judges at the last event?"

"You'll have to excuse my friend," said Tulsa. "He's a bit excited. Actually, we're all excited to meet a new dog. No offense, Finchy."

Finchy stuck his beak high in the air, puffed his tiny chest out, and spread his wings, trying to show off the beautiful outfit Mother Nature gave him, a striking pair of yellow and black wings.

Mo didn't know why Finchy constantly tried to impress other animals.

"So what's a Pow...?"

Before Mo could finish his sentence, Bly interrupted.

"They're held all over this state," he said. "Like here, in. . .in. . .I forgot the name of the city we're in now. It was named after Buffalo Bill, a real famous American soldier and hunter. We also saw powwows in Cheyenne, which is southeast from here, and Jackson, which is southwest from here."

For the next several minutes, the three dogs tried to describe a Powwow, but no one could agree.

“It’s a sacred ceremony for Native Americans,” said Tulsa. “They dance and sing to honor their proud culture, heritage, and traditions.”

“No it ain’t,” said Bly. “It’s a dance competition.” He started shaking his tail back and forth and kicking his legs. “I’m a pretty good dancer, ya know. If dogs could enter, I would win first prize. I just know it!”

“You’re both wrong,” said Meli. “It’s a big festival. People eat, dance, and make new friends, which is what I should start doing.”

Mo and Finchy looked at each other, not knowing who or even what to believe.

“What do they sing about?” asked Finchy, believing no human could ever sing as sweetly as a bird.

“Mother Nature,” said Tulsa. “They can sing about the howling wind, cold winter...”
“Dancing is what they sing about,” shouted Bly while Meli shouted even louder, “Celebrations!”

Mo and Finchy wondered if these friends could ever agree on anything.

After a wonderful meal, they watched the rest of the show, hoping to learn something about Powwows from the dancers and others in the crowd.

Finchy decided to ask one last question: Where were they? What was the name of the state?

The three dogs looked at each other with blank expressions on their faces.

“Well,” said Meli, “This is the first state to grant women the right to vote.”

“And the one that has the least amount of people in the United States,” added Bly.
“Or is it Mexico...”

“We’re also about five hours away from the country’s first national monument,” said Tulsa.

Despite all of these clues, Mo and Finchy still had no idea about their location. The Powwow was coming to an end. Mo and Finchy thanked their hosts for a grand

evening. “Mighty proud to know ya,” said Tulsa.

“Can you believe that Bly?” said Finchy to Mo as they walked back to the delivery truck. “He never let anyone talk, get a word in edgewise, express their opinions. Talk, talk, talk, that’s all he did...”

Mo smiled to himself, trying to remember where he stashed those earplugs.