



# The Adventures of **Mo**

**Chapter 29**

By Carol Patton

## Chapter 29

### **Bella and Nessie**

Mo and Finchy were standing next to a very tall statue of Big Foot. It stood near the entrance of a building that had a sign with a very long word on it.

“Except for his height, he really doesn’t look anything like our friend, Albert, or any of his Bigfoot relatives or friends,” said Finchy to Mo.

Mo stared hard at the statue’s face. Finchy was right. “Maybe one of Albert's friends, someone we didn't meet, did something special,” said Mo, knowing that humans honor people and animals who are brave, smart, or help others.

They peaked inside the front door. Only one man was inside, chatting with a woman. He wore dark sunglasses and a large dog sat by his side.

Mo and Finchy entered what looked like a museum and introduced themselves to the dog named Bella.

She quickly pushed them behind a glass case. “Animals aren’t allowed,” she whispered.

Mo and Finchy looked at each other confused. “But you’re here,” said Mo.

“That’s because I’m a special dog,” said Bella. “I’m a seeing-eye dog.”

Bella explained that dogs like her are trained to guide people who are blind. They help them walk around town, cross streets, and avoid things they could trip over or bump into so they can do more things on their own.

Mo and Finchy had never heard of a seeing-eye dog. “So you’re allowed inside every building?” asked Mo. “Even stores and restaurants?”

“Yep,” said Bella. “I’ve been training for this job my whole life. The man next to me – his name is Jason – is my best friend. And I’m his. We go everywhere together.”

Mo imagined himself guiding someone down a crowded street, how he couldn’t wander off, stop and sniff something interesting, or run when he felt like it. The more he thought about it, the more he admired Bella’s self-control and devotion.

“So are you here to learn about Nessie,” asked Bella.

“Who’s Nessie?” Finchy asked.

“She’s the Loch Ness monster,” Bella said, rather surprised they had never heard of her. “She lives in a lake, in Loch Ness, Scotland. But I don’t know why humans call her a monster. I heard she’s very nice.”

“Where is Scotland?” asked Finchy. “Is it far away from here? Can we meet her? I never saw a real monster before.”

Bella was silent. She had no idea where Scotland was or how to get there.

“Do you know where we are now or what state we’re in?” asked Finchy.

He then told Bella about his journey with Mo to Florida and how they had traveled on top of the delivery truck for about two days along Interstate 71 North, 80 East, and then US Highway 1. They saw signs for many different cities like Buffalo, Boston, and Portland.

“Hmmm,” said Bella. Let’s see . . . We’re in Portland. Our state is the only one in the

country that shares a border with just one other state. Jason eats lots of lobster and blueberries. Oh, and my favorite food – donut holes – were invented here. That’s everything I know.”

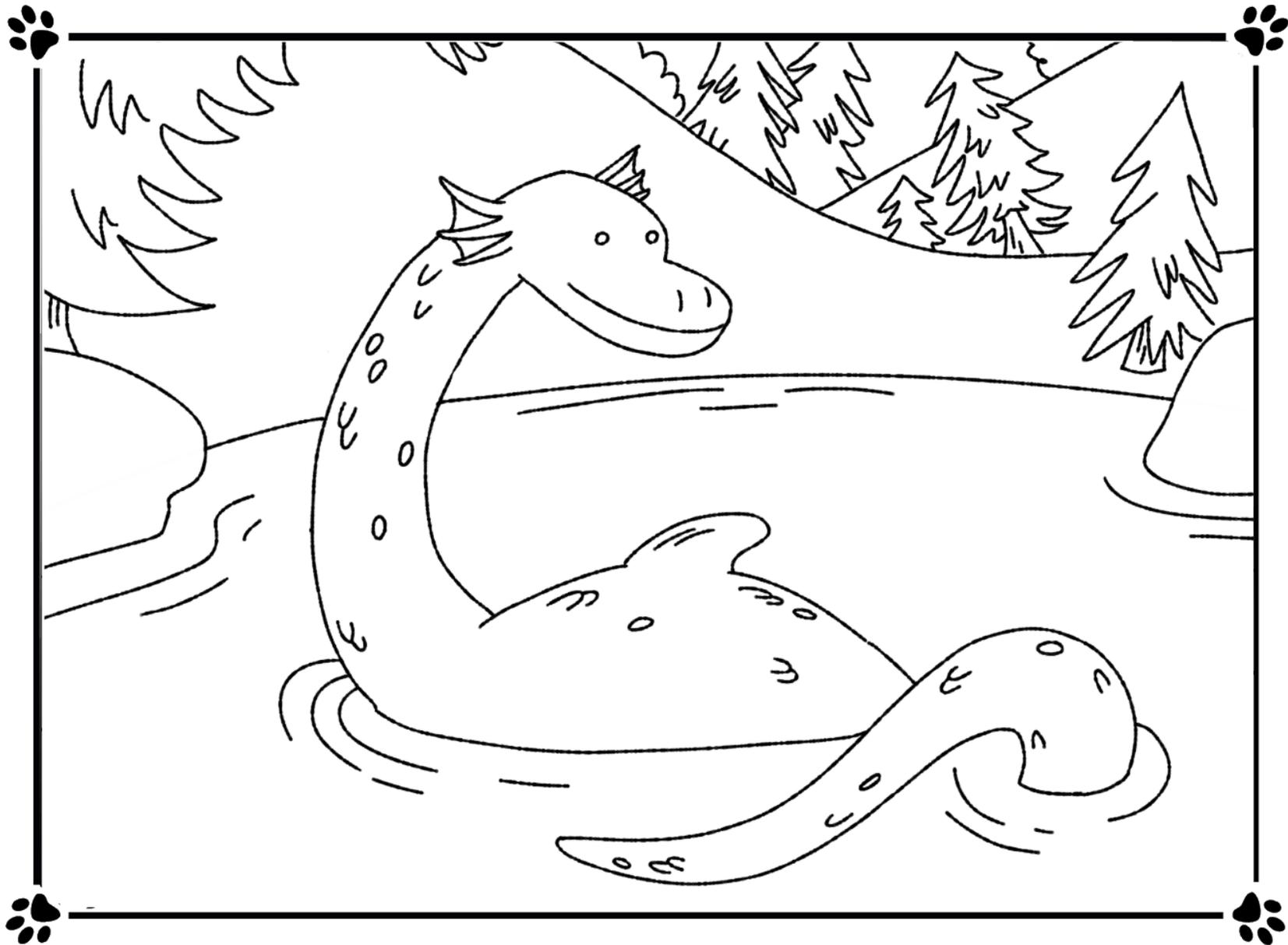
Mo and Finchy looked at each other, wondering how close they were to Florida.

As Alex, the truck driver, unloaded boxes from the back of his truck, Finchy wanted to learn more about Nessie.

Bella told them that Nessie has a small head and long neck that sometimes sticks out of the lake. Even though humans have never seen anything like her, or never spoke to her, played with her, met her family, or even invited her to dinner to learn more about her, Bella said that some were afraid of her.

“Why would they be afraid of someone they didn’t know or know anything about?” Bella said. “Nessie is very nice and very shy. She doesn’t even know what kind of creature she is. She says, ‘I’m just Nessie.’”

“How do you know all of this?” asked Mo, not fully convinced that Nessie was even real.



Bella told Mo and Finchy that her friend, Maggie, came from Scotland. Now Maggie has a friend whose cousin's neighbor visited the lake one time and met Nessie.

“Maggie said she can't figure out why everyone is so interested in her or why some people call her a monster,” said Bella. “That really hurts her feelings.”

“Well, we met Big Foot, his family, and all of his neighbors,” boasted Finchy. “They're very friendly. They just look scary because of their big size.”

Bella's ears perked up. “Really?” she said. “I'll bet Jason would like to know where they live, even meet them.”

Mo changed the subject to prevent Finchy from revealing where Albert and his friends and family lived. They liked their privacy.

“Tell us more about this place,” he said. “What does that big word mean on the sign by the front door?”

“Oh, you mean cryptozoology,” she said. “It's the study of hidden and unknown animals like Nessie. Some humans believe in them, some don't. Nessie is real but I'm not sure about any other creatures.”

They chatted for a few more minutes before Bella had to leave. Finchy wanted to see how she guided Jason and asked if he could watch. Bella told Finchy to hop on her back. Mo walked behind them.

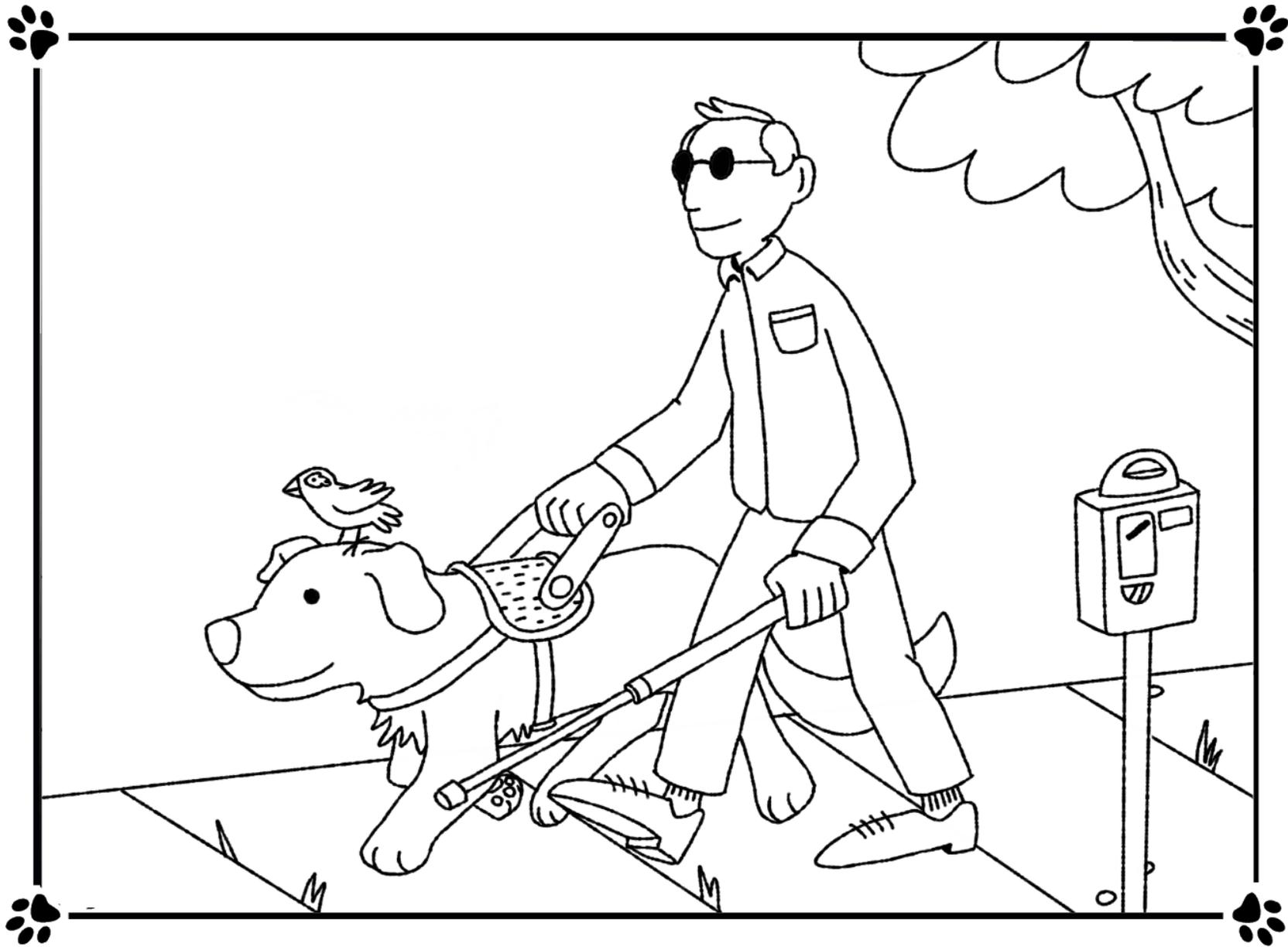
Bella walked in a straight line while Mo zig-zagged, sniffing this bush and that tree. Bella stopped at every curb, which signaled to Jason that he needed to step down to avoid falling or tripping. She also stopped at every traffic light, and guided him while turning corners and around trees, garbage cans, or signs.

Mo and Finchy didn't realize how much Bella had to learn and how good she was at her job.

They soon parted ways. Bella waved goodbye with her tail before turning the corner.

“I'll bet I could guide humans,” said Mo. “You just need to pay attention to everything around you.”

“You're on,” said Finchy while hopping on to Mo's back. “Walk back to the delivery truck as if you're Bella. “Should be easy, right?”



For the first few minutes, Mo did everything Bella would have done. He stopped at the first curb and first light and walked around a bush. Suddenly, a stray cat shot out from behind the bush, which scared Mo. He ran so fast down the sidewalk that a low tree branch knocked Finchy off Mo's back. Then Mo crossed the street in the middle of the road, not at the crosswalk as Bella would have done.

Finchy was a bit dazed. He stood up, shaking his head back and forth. He then looked around for Mo. He spotted him on the other side of the street and flew over to where he was standing.

“What the heck happened?” Finchy asked.

“Let's just say that humans need to make a giant statue of Bella,” he said. “Some things are never as easy as they look.”