



# The Adventures of **Mo**

**Chapter 33**

By Carol Patton

## Chapter 33

### **Rescue Mission**

Mo, Finchy, and other forest animals were looking at a giant map that revealed the best places for shelter, fresh water, berry picking, fishing, playing, and napping on Mount Washington, the highest mountain in the White Mountains.

Many local animals had gathered to search for a lost bear named Arthur. He grew up in these mountains so he knew his way around. But when Arthur didn't come home last night, his family began to worry and asked every animal in the area to help find him.

Even Mo and Finchy were asked to join the rescue mission. They had been traveling on top of the delivery truck for more than three hours that morning, mostly along Interstate 91 North and US 302 East. They passed signs for cities called Claremont and Lebanon before arriving in a village called North Conway.

As Alex, the truck driver, began unloading his truck that was packed with boxes for local stores and restaurants, Mo and Finchy wandered off into the forest and were immediately approached by a young bear.

“My big brother is lost in the woods,” he said. “Will you help us find him?”

Mo and Finchy agreed, although they weren’t quite sure how they could help since they didn’t know the area. They walked to the Hidden Café, a nickname for a place in the forest where many animals gather to eat, play, and gossip. A group of animals had already been waiting there to get directions from George, a giant black bear that was heading the rescue mission.

George pointed to a spot on the map.

“Here’s where Arthur was last seen,” he said. “We should go there, form teams of two, and then each team should head off in a different direction. But some of you should stay here in case Arthur shows up. If you find Arthur, shout my name really loud so we can hear you, find you, and give help, if needed.”

Mo felt someone tap him on the shoulder.



“Let’s team up,” said a moose. “My name is Marvin. I know this forest inside and out. I’ve never been lost. Ever. Arthur has never been good with directions. Don’t tell anybody I said that. Oh, and he has a cold. My guess is his nose is stuffed up and he can’t smell his way back home.”

In the meantime, Finchy flew off with other birds to search for Arthur. But the trees in the forest were so thick with leaves, they couldn’t see the ground.

The rescue team walked to the spot where Arthur was last seen and then split off into different directions. Mo and Marvin headed south. The ground was covered with fallen branches, leaves, bushes, rocks, vines, and plants.

Mo and Marvin walked deep into the forest. Marvin shouted Arthur’s name over and over but there was no response.

“So are you and Finchy just visiting?” asked Marvin. “It sure is nice of you to help us find Arthur.”

Mo explained about their mission, how Finchy and him were trying to return a valuable key to someone who lived in Florida.

“Do you know where Florida is?” asked Mo.

“Not really,” said Marvin. “But I often hear birds talk about it. They fly there in the winter, mainly for food, since food is hard to find when it snows or gets really cold.

Marvin then started talking about his home, here in the White Mountains. He told Mo that many different animals lived here besides bears and moose. He mentioned bald eagles, racoons, deer, coyotes, bobcats, minks, and porcupines.

He told Mo that he lived in this forest his whole life and that animals from all over the state vacation here.

“They say this state is the Switzerland of America, whatever that means,” said Marvin. “Oh, and that it borders three states, a country, and an ocean. It was also one of the thirteen original colonies and became the ninth state in this country.”

Mo listened carefully. There was so much he didn’t know. So much to learn.

Marvin then shouted Arthur’s name again and again.

Mo’s ears perked up. “Hear that?” asked Mo.

“Hear what?” asked Marvin.

Mo’s ears twitched. “I hear something,” he said.

Mo led Marvin toward the sound, which grew louder and louder. It was Arthur calling for help.

“Help!” shouted Arthur. “I’m here, over here, trapped in this deep hole.”

Mo and Marvin looked down into the hole. They saw Arthur sitting on the ground.

“I was exploring, not paying much attention and fell . . .,” his voice trailed off. “Who’s your friend, Marvin?”

Marvin introduced Mo and told Arthur that Mo was the one that heard him cry for help. Arthur knew that dogs could hear just as well as bears.

Now that Arthur was found, Mo and Marvin wondered how they were going to get him out of this deep hole. He was way too big and heavy to pull out.

By now, several animals had gathered around them and offered to help.

Mo looked around the forest and had an idea.

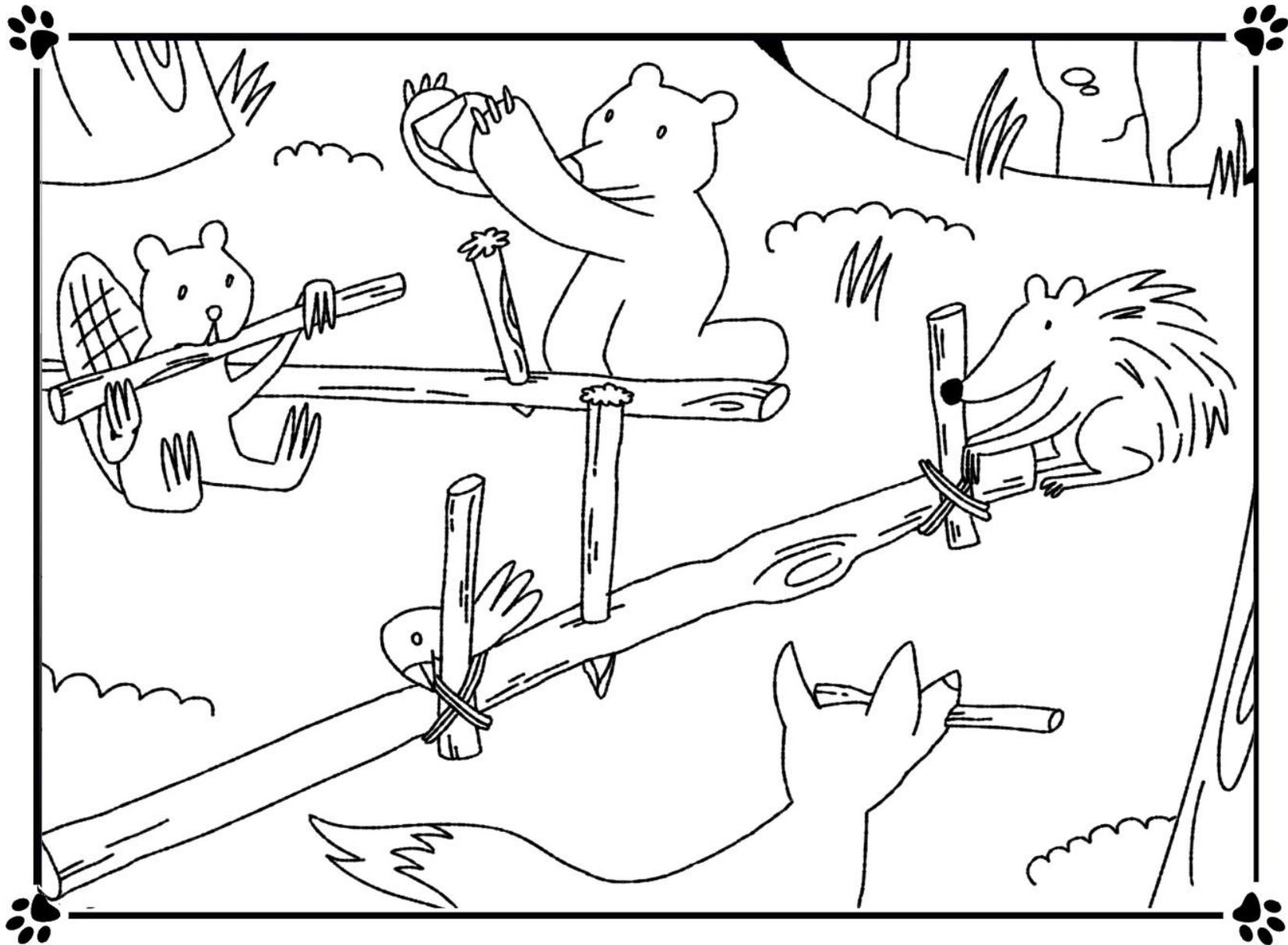
“Why don’t we make a ladder,” he said. “There’s plenty of stuff we can use.”

The animals got to work. Marvin found two very long tree branches on the ground for the frame or sides of the ladder and dragged them near the pit. Mo and the other animals found shorter branches for rungs or steps and placed them into a pile.

Now they just needed to attach everything. They used stones as hammers to pound the steps into the frame. The smaller animals then used strong vines to tie each step around the frame to make sure the ladder wouldn’t break when Arthur was climbing it. Arthur weighed about five hundred pounds. That’s almost the same amount if one deer, ten foxes, and fifty rabbits stood on the same scale at the same time.

The gigantic ladder was finished. The only thing left to do was place it inside the hole. They pushed and pushed but the ladder wouldn’t budge, not even an inch.

The animals grew tired from pushing. Did they do all that work for nothing?



Mo rested for a few minutes. He closed his eyes and suddenly remembered what George had told them. If they found Arthur, they should shout his name really loud so the rescue team could hear them and come to their location.

The group of animals shouted, “G-e-o-r-g-e” so loud that every animal within one mile came, including the animal rescue team.

Together, they pushed the huge ladder into the hole. Arthur climbed out and thanked all the animals for their help.

Before leaving, the animals then filled the hole with dirt, rocks, sticks, and leaves to make sure no one else would fall inside.

The rescue team walked back to the Hidden Café. After giving and getting many hugs, Arthur told the animals that stayed behind that it was really Mo that found him and that it was also his idea to build a ladder. Everyone was impressed. It wasn't every day that a stranger was that smart and that willing to help.

For the rest of the afternoon, Mo was the guest of honor and treated like a hero. Even Finchy was proud of him and told him so. Mo grew so full of himself that he

grabbed all the credit for the rescue mission and never mentioned the other animals that helped make the ladder and push it into the hole.

After a giant feast of mixed berries, it was time for Mo and Finchy to leave. They said goodbye and walked back home, to the delivery truck.

Mo asked Finchy what he and the other birds did that day, thinking nothing could ever compare with what he had done.

“Well, we couldn’t see the ground from the sky because the trees had too many leaves,” Finchy said. “So we built nests for three birds with sick families and then stocked them with all kinds of food so they could get better.”

Mo was stunned, not only by Finchy’s kindness, but more so by his modesty. Finchy didn’t tell anyone what he and the other birds did that afternoon. He didn’t brag, boast, or blab about it. He let Mo be the center of attention.

Although Mo should have felt good about himself because he helped a stranger in trouble, he learned that it was still no excuse to feel that he was better than anyone else.

Mo reached under his pillow and pulled out a bag of chocolate fudge cookies.

“We should celebrate,” said Mo, as he ripped open the bag and then raised a cookie high into the air. “Here’s to you, Finchy, the real hero of the day.”

Finchy bowed and grabbed the cookie out of Mo’s paw.

“Ya know, I bet we’re the smartest and nicest animals anywhere on the planet,” said Finchy. “Although, I am more handsome than you, Mo. It’s not your fault that you’re just one color.”