



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 34

By Carol Patton

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Which Way is North?

“Look at this huge crack,” Finchy said to Mo. “Wonder what happened.”

“I wonder how much it weighs,” said Mo.

Mo and Finchy were looking at a giant bell that was mostly made out of copper and weighed around two thousand pounds, which is heavier than a polar bear.

They had been traveling on Interstate 95 South for more than seven hours, passing three states and cities named Trenton and Bensalem. Twenty minutes after passing Cornwells Heights, Alex, the truck driver, pulled off the highway and headed toward Market Street, which was crowded with thousands of people.

Mo was always surprised to see so many people in one place. *No one back home will ever believe me that there are so many humans. Where do they all come from?*

As Alex was unloading the truck, Mo and Finchy decided to do a little sight-seeing. They spotted signs for Independence National Historic Park and Liberty Bell Center.

“I want to see the bell,” said Finchy. “I want to know why it’s so important.”

As they walked among the tourists, they learned that the bell was more than two hundred sixty years old and was called by two names - the State House Bell and then later, the Liberty Bell.

The tour guide continued: “Back then, people didn’t have cell phones. They couldn’t call, text, or even email each other. Instead, the people who lived here rang the bell for many important reasons like when town hall meetings were about to start and the US Constitution was signed, which is a set of rules that guides how this country works.”

People in the crowd began shouting questions. Many asked about famous people who lived here many years ago. They asked questions about Betsy Ross, who made the first American flag, and Benjamin Franklin. Did he really invent the lightning rod and glass harmonica?

Finchy was more interested in the Liberty Bell than the people who once lived there, whether they were famous or not. His question was unique: What musical note did the bell strike when it rang?

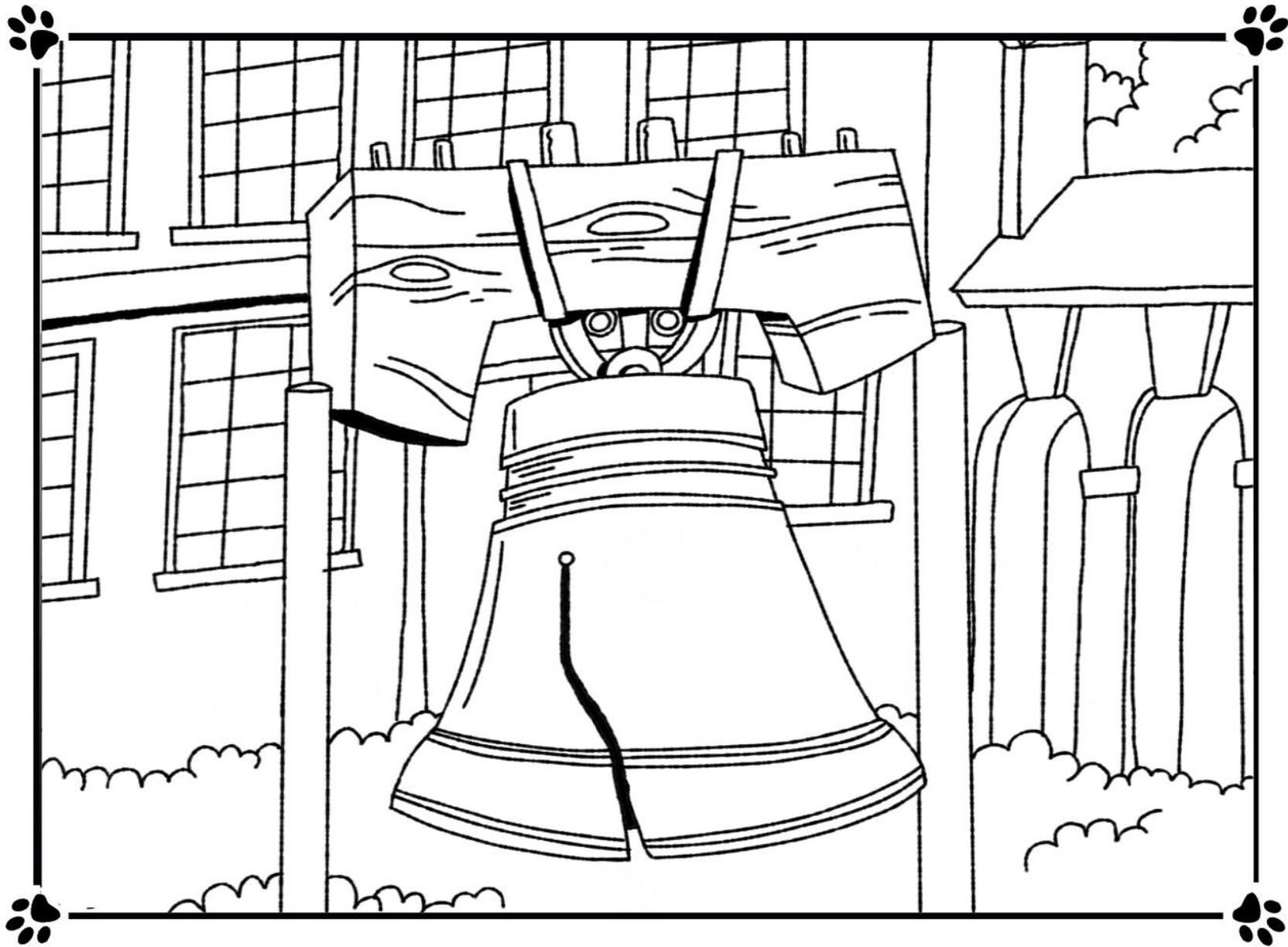
“E-flat, but the last time it rang was more than one hundred fifty years ago,” she said, not seeing who asked the question.

“Too bad about that big crack,” whispered Finchy to Mo. “I could have sung along with the bell. Some of the songs I sing are in E-flat.”

Mo and Finchy walked around the area trying to imagine what it would have been like to live here that long ago. Were there as many people, dogs, or birds? What did they eat? What did they do for fun? Did everyone follow the new rules?

As they turned the corner, they noticed a small group of animals listening to an older dog wearing glasses and a bow tie.

“So how many of you know what direction we’re headed in now?” asked the older dog. “Anyone? Just as important, what did we just do?”



“East, we’re headed east, Professor Swen,” said one dog. “I’m absolutely certain, positively positive, I think.”

The other dogs looked confused, not knowing what to say.

“We are actually heading north,” said Professor Swen. “When we first started this field trip, we walked north for three blocks, turned east when we saw the ice cream shop, walked south when we saw the market, turned west toward the museum store, and now – after that nasty cat chased us down a side street – we’re walking north again.”

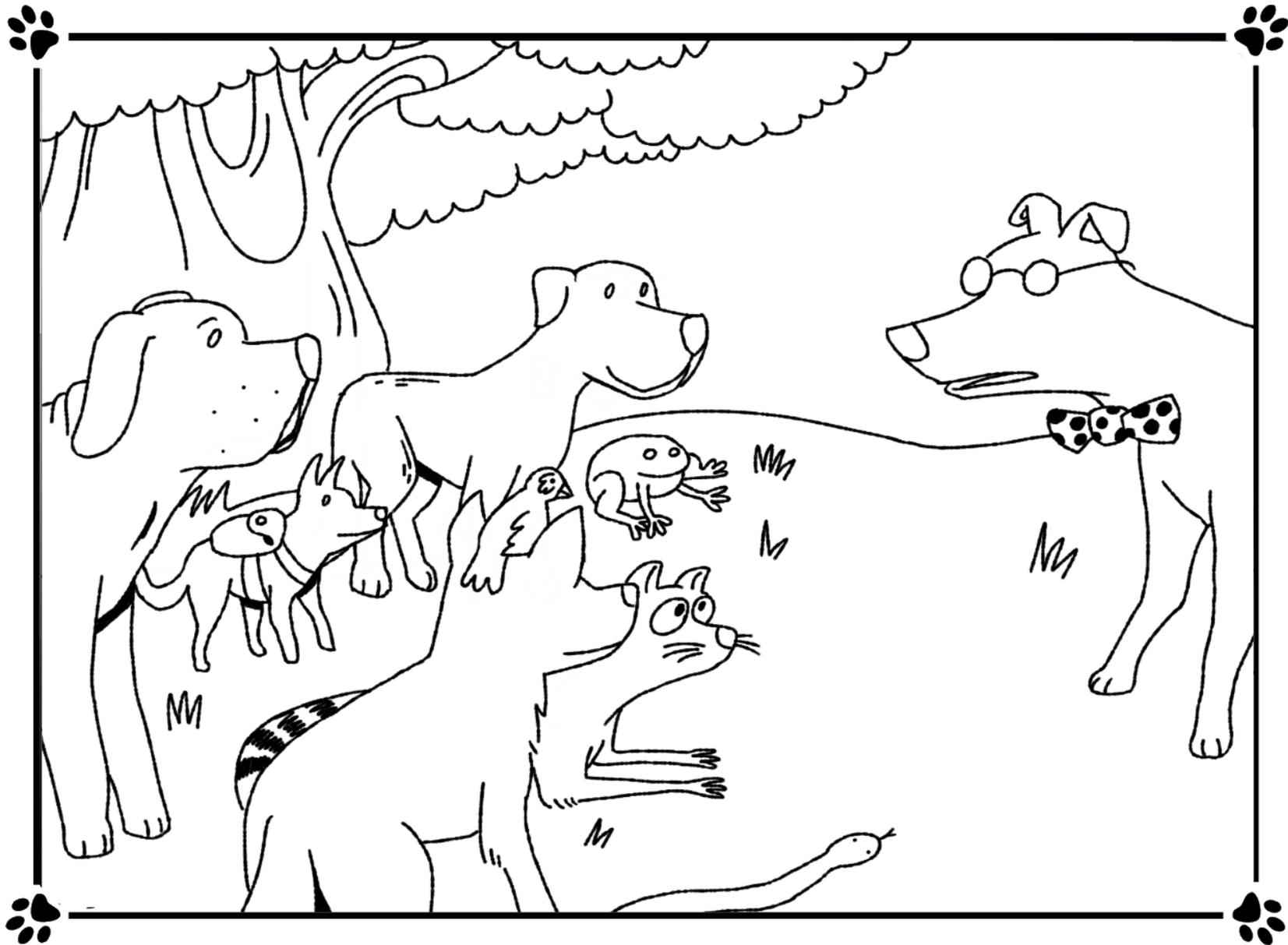
The dogs had blank expressions on their faces.

“In other words, we just walked in a giant circle,” he said.

The dogs were simply amazed at their teacher’s brilliance.

Professor Swen then noticed Mo and Finchy peering around the corner.

“May I help you?” he asked. “I am Professor Swen, an expert in directionology.”



“Uh . . . we hope you don’t mind us listening,” said Mo. “Even though we see tons of highway signs that tell us which direction we’re going, we really don’t understand directions. Can you teach us?”

“Speak for yourself,” said Finchy. “I know exactly where to go and which way to turn when flying. I’ve never been lost.”

“So where are you now?” asked Professor Swen. “And which direction are you going?”

Finchy was speechless.

“Everyone is welcome to join my class,” said Professor Swen. “My goal in life is to teach everyone directions so they know which way to go, will never get lost, and can always find their way back home.”

The students welcomed Mo and Finchy into their group as Professor Swen continued his lecture.

“Every time you go somewhere, you’re headed in a direction,” he said. “There are four basic directions – north, south, east, and west. Now here’s a little secret that will

make me world famous and is mentioned in my latest book that goes on sale next week. All you have to do is know just one direction and then you can figure out the other three.”

The dogs gasped. Why didn't anyone tell them this before? It would have made their lives so much easier.

Professor Swen explained that if you're facing north, south will always be behind you, east will be to your right and west to your left.

“Now what happens if you're facing west,” asked the Professor. “Which way is south?”

The dogs turned to their left and right and then consulted with one another. Still, no one could answer his question.

“North is always the opposite direction of south and east is always the opposite direction of west,” he said. “So if you're facing west, east will be behind you. If you're facing south, north will be behind you.”

Then the Professor asked each of the dogs to face a different direction and figure out which way was north, south, east, and west. Even though his class was for advanced students, many were still confused, including Mo and Finchy. Some asked why they couldn't just use a compass, a tool that shows the direction you're facing.

Dr. Swen forbid anyone in his class from using a compass. What happens if your compass breaks? What happens if you lose it? What happens if the store doesn't have any left? He said everyone needs to learn directions on their own. He explained that it's no different than learning math. You can't always rely on a calculator.

Mo and Finchy better understood what birds in the other states they visited had been telling them – to head south to find Florida. As long as the highway signs said south, they knew they would be heading in the right direction.

The field trip was now over and each of the dogs thanked Dr. Swen for sharing his knowledge about directions.

“Now, no matter where I am, I'll always be able to find my favorite dumpster behind the pizza shop,” said one dog.

Another dog said she won't get lost anymore going to her groomer, which moved to a new neighborhood. "Can't always go by smell," she said. "Now I know which direction to go."

Mo and Finchy thanked Dr. Swen for his help and that they better understood directions now.

As Mo and Finchy headed back to the delivery truck, they felt more certain or confident that they could find Florida, even on their own.

"Professor Swen was really something," said Finchy. "One day, I'm going to be that smart and teach other birds about . . . about . . . Well, I'm not exactly sure what but there's got to be something I can learn and be an expert in."

"There's plenty of things we can both teach dogs and birds right now," said Mo, pointing to all the different things they've learned about each state they had visited. "I can see the sign outside our office door right now – Professors Mo and Finchy, experts in smartology."