



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 35

By Carol Patton

Chapter 35

The Argument

Mo heard someone calling his name over and over. He turned around and saw a white whale poking its head out of the ocean.

“It’s me, Casper!” yelled the whale.

Mo ran to the shoreline to get a better look.

“Casper!” shouted Mo. “It really is you. How are you? How’s your family? How’s everyone back home? Do they miss me? What about...”

This was the first time Mo had seen anyone from home since his adventure began. He asked so many questions so fast that Casper didn’t get a chance to respond.

Mo took a deep breath.

“Sorry, I’m just really excited to see you,” he said. “It feels like I’ve been gone for years.”

Finchy began tugging Mo’s fur. He wanted to meet Casper.

“Finchy, this is my friend, Casper, from home,” said Mo. “She’s a beluga whale, sort of like a dolphin that’s white but without a fin.”

“Nice to meet you,” said Finchy, a bit timid because of the whale’s size. Casper was about twelve feet long, weighed more than twelve hundred pounds, and could easily swallow Finchy in one iddy biddy gulp.

Casper took one look at Finchy and quickly turned toward Mo. She didn’t say anything to Finchy, not even, “Good morning.”

Finchy felt snubbed.

“What are you doing this far from home?” asked Mo.

Casper explained that she came to visit her friends, other beluga whales, that live in an outdoor aquarium along this coast.

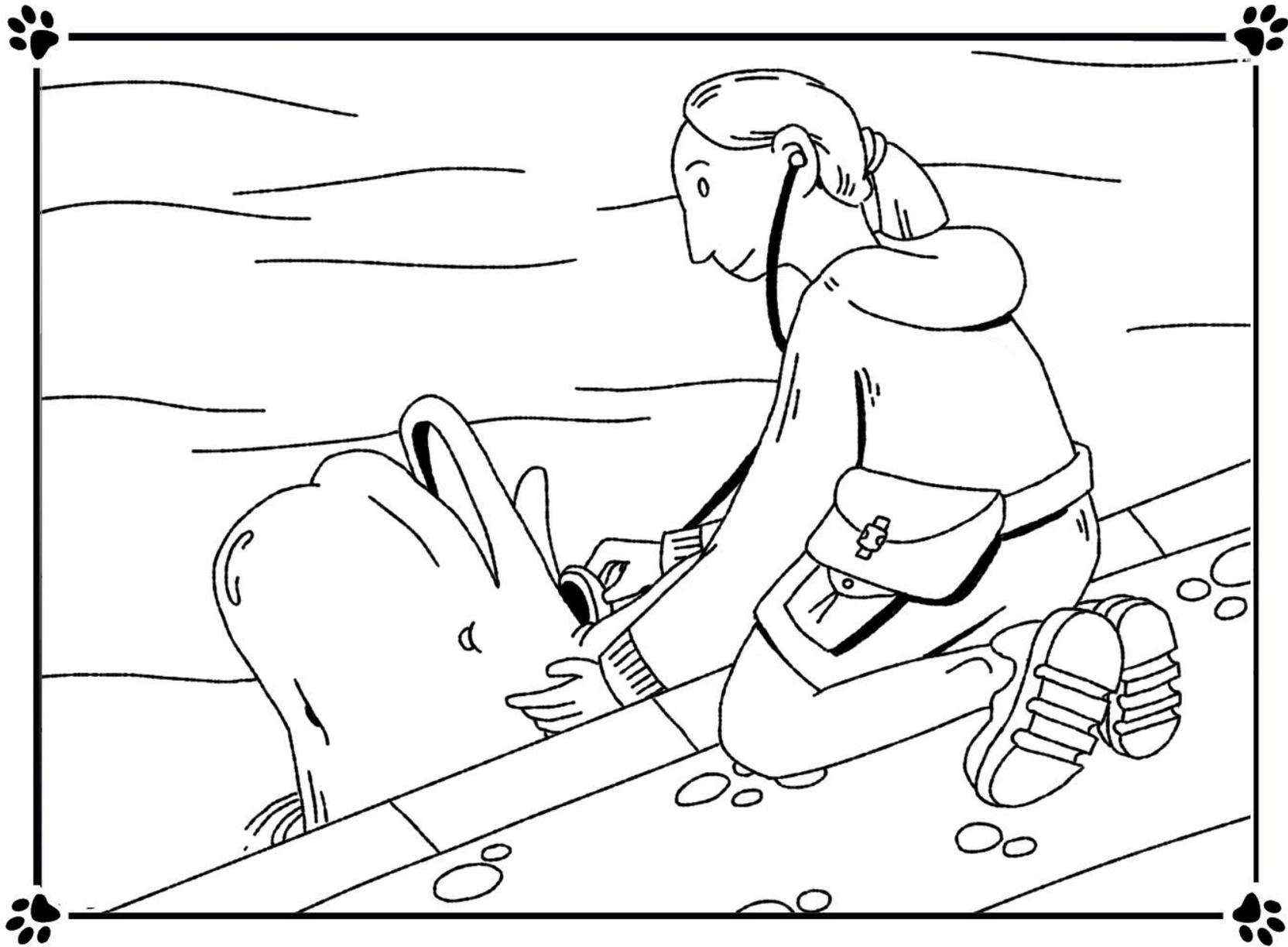
“They told me that humans feed them their favorite foods every day, give them physical exams, and that other humans visit them,” she said. “They say it’s like living in a fancy schmancy resort with their own personal chef, assistant, and doctor. This is the life whales deserve.”

Finchy decided to give Casper a second chance. He talked about how Mo and him were traveling to Florida to return a valuable key to its owner.

“We ride on top of a delivery truck all over this country,” said Finchy, rather excitedly. “Just this morning, we traveled four hours along Interstate 95 North, crossed three state lines, and passed cities by the names of Newark, Stamford, and New Haven. We’ve met so many different animals and seen so many things, everything from dinosaur . . .”

Finchy continued yakking and yakking. Casper thought Finchy was boring, so boring that she opened her giant mouth to yawn. That startled Finchy. He didn’t want to be her breakfast. Then Casper turned toward Mo and started chatting with him as if Finchy wasn’t even there.

Now Finchy knew he wasn’t imagining things. Casper was just being rude. He was mad.



“Everyone back home is the same,” Casper said. “They still discuss important matters at the forest meetings like which one can howl the loudest. But they do miss you. Some wanted to search for you since you’ve been gone for so long. But they were simply too chicken to go.”

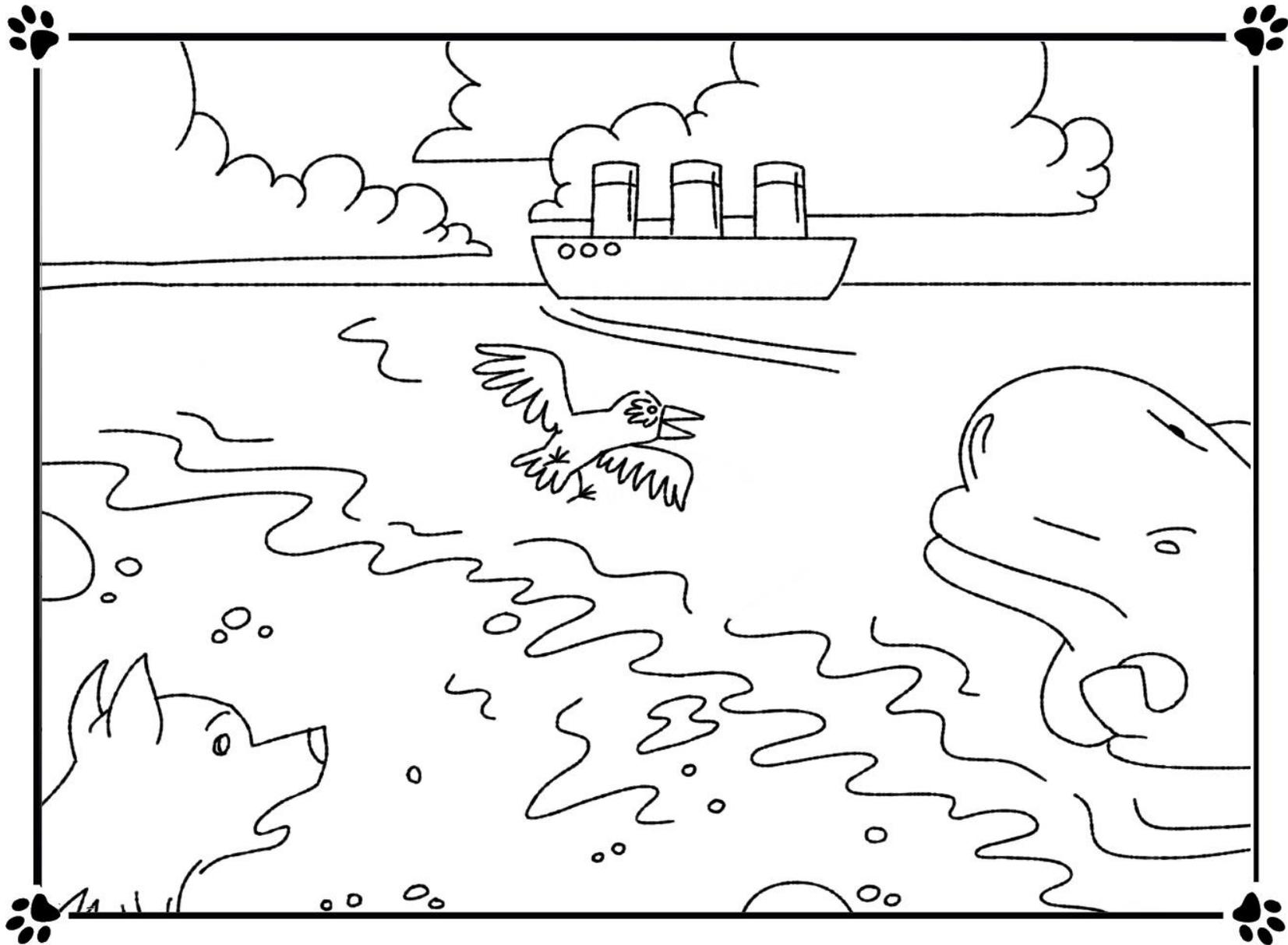
Finchy cringed.

How dare Casper insult chickens, which are birds like me. All birds have courage. I’d like to see her fly thousands of miles away from home and back without being afraid of getting lost or falling out of the sky because you’re tired.

Well, as far as Finchy was concerned, that was strike three. Before Mo realized what was happening, Finchy puffed out his tiny chest and flew straight toward Casper.

“Chickens are brave, very brave animals,” Finchy said to Casper. He was flapping his wings very fast above her head, trying to stay in one spot. “And they’re strong. You try laying as many eggs as they do without complaining!”

Casper shot Finchy a very angry look.



“How dare you talk to me that way!” she said. “You’re the dumbest and most boring bird I’ve ever met.”

“Who you calling dumb?” screamed Finchy.

“You’re only good for one thing – a mid-morning snack for a hungry fox!” shouted Casper. “Mo, how can you be friends with this . . . this bird!”

“Go ahead, tell her, Mo,” said Finchy. “Tell Casper that we’re best friends.”

Mo couldn’t believe what had just happened. He was in such a good mood. Casper was his friend. But so was Finchy. He cared for them both. Should he side with one over the other? Should he walk away and let them continue arguing? Should he help them understand that what makes them so different is what makes them so special and equally important?

Mo waited for a few seconds to carefully choose his words.

“I think both of you owe each other an apology,” said Mo. “You’re both my friends and I won’t pick sides.”

Casper and Finchy continued arguing, but this time about which tasted better – chocolate or strawberry. They didn't agree on anything.

Mo had heard enough. He never got into an argument like this with anyone. It was silly. Why were they acting this way?

They kept shouting, hurling insults at each other, one after the other.

“Stop!” shouted Mo. “Please, just stop!”

Finchy and Casper were surprised at Mo's reaction. So was Mo. Back home, he usually let animals work out their differences.

“There are millions of animals on this planet,” said Mo in a stern voice. “It's impossible to like everybody and not everybody will like you. You don't have to be friends with each other, play with each other, agree with each other, or even work with each other. But you do need to respect each other and treat each other nice.”

Finchy's and Casper's faces turned red.

Mo continued: "Casper, you just met Finchy. You were rude to him. You don't even know him well enough to either like or dislike him. Do you know that Finchy saved my life? He's funny, smart, and brave."

Casper was silent.

"Now Finchy, Casper was rude to you," said Mo. "All you had to do was ask her why she was being rude or if you offended her in some way. But instead, you made things worse."

Finchy stared at the ground.

"Both of you are great animals in your own way," added Mo. "One of you is not better than the other. You're equals. Now apologize."

Finchy and Casper each mumbled "sorry" to each other. Mo wasn't quite certain they meant it but at least it was a start.

In the distance, Mo could hear Casper's friends calling her.

“Mo, I’ve got to run,” said Casper. She turned toward Finchy. “Thank you for taking care of my friend.”

Mo and Finchy watched Casper swim away.

Mo was disappointed in Finchy. But he wasn’t the only one. Finchy was disappointed in himself. Mo’s opinion meant a lot to him so he tried to make things right.

“I’m sorry, Mo,” he said. “I don’t know what got into me. Maybe I was a bit touchy because I haven’t had anything to eat today. I’ll find us some food and bring it back to the delivery truck.”

Finchy flew off, hoping that Mo would forgive him by the time he returned.

After napping on top of the delivery truck for about an hour, Mo spotted Finchy flying toward him, carrying a giant bag.

The bag was filled with hamburgers, fries, and small packets of ketchup. Mo mumbled something that sounded like thank you. Finchy knew that he was still angry and talked about other things.

“Did you know that this state is home to the first hamburger?” said Finchy. “I overheard some people talking about it by the dumpster. They also said it was the first to set a speed limit for cars, which was twelve miles per hour. Can you imagine how long it would take us to travel from state to state at that slow speed?”

Mo didn't answer.

Finchy tried once more.

“I heard a woman say that a seven-year-old boy designed the emblem or image for the state's capital city when it turned two hundred years old,” he said.

Mo remained silent.

“Oh, c'mon, Mo,” said Finchy, somewhat frustrated. “It's not like I robbed a bank.”

“Finchy,” said Mo. “You get so angry over little things. What's the big deal if a whale you will probably never see again in your entire life ignores you? Who cares? What's important is that you respect others and, just as important, respect yourself by not being rude back.”

“Ok, I get it,” said Finchy. “Can we finally talk about something else? Something important?”

Mo smiled. “These are by far, the most tasty, yummy, mouthwatering, and lip-smacking hamburgers I’ve ever eaten,” he said. “Where did you find them? No matter. Just remind me to get mad at you more often.”