



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 50

By Carol Patton

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Mo and Finchy Say Goodbye

Mo and Finchy had been relaxing on top of the delivery truck for several hours while traveling along Interstate 75 South. That's when they saw it. It was just standing there, by itself, on the side of the highway. It was a sign that read, "Welcome to Florida."

Mo and Finchy looked at each other. Were they dreaming? Did the sign really say, "Florida"?

Finchy flew off the truck toward the sign to double check.

"It said Florida!" he shouted. "I can't believe it. We're really here!"

Mo and Finchy hugged each other, jumped up and down for joy, and then hugged each other again. They had been searching for this state for so long that they almost lost hope of ever finding it.

But now that they were in Florida, what should they do? Where should they go? Who should they talk to? They had many more questions than answers.

Finchy had a good idea. He spotted several birds sitting on top of a light pole. He would ask them to help spread the word about the lost key. Maybe they would even know his favorite cousin, Flo. She had moved here a long time ago.

“Good morning,” said Finchy to the birds. He told them the story about the lost key and asked if they could help Mo and him find its owner. The birds asked to see it. They flew to the top of the delivery truck. After Mo showed it to them, they didn’t have any idea what it unlocked or who may have lost it.

The birds decided to ask everyone they knew. Their friends would then ask even more birds. Somehow, someone, somewhere, had to know something.

As the birds flew off in different directions, Alex kept driving along the highway. Mo and Finchy saw more signs for cities named Gainesville, Ocala, and Orlando. Then Alex turned left or east toward a place called Cape Canaveral.

He stopped in front of a building and began moving boxes from the back of his truck to the inside of the building. Meanwhile, Mo and Finchy noticed a huge rocketship off

in the distance. It must have been at least three hundred feet tall! They wondered where it was going. Who would be riding in it? And for how long?

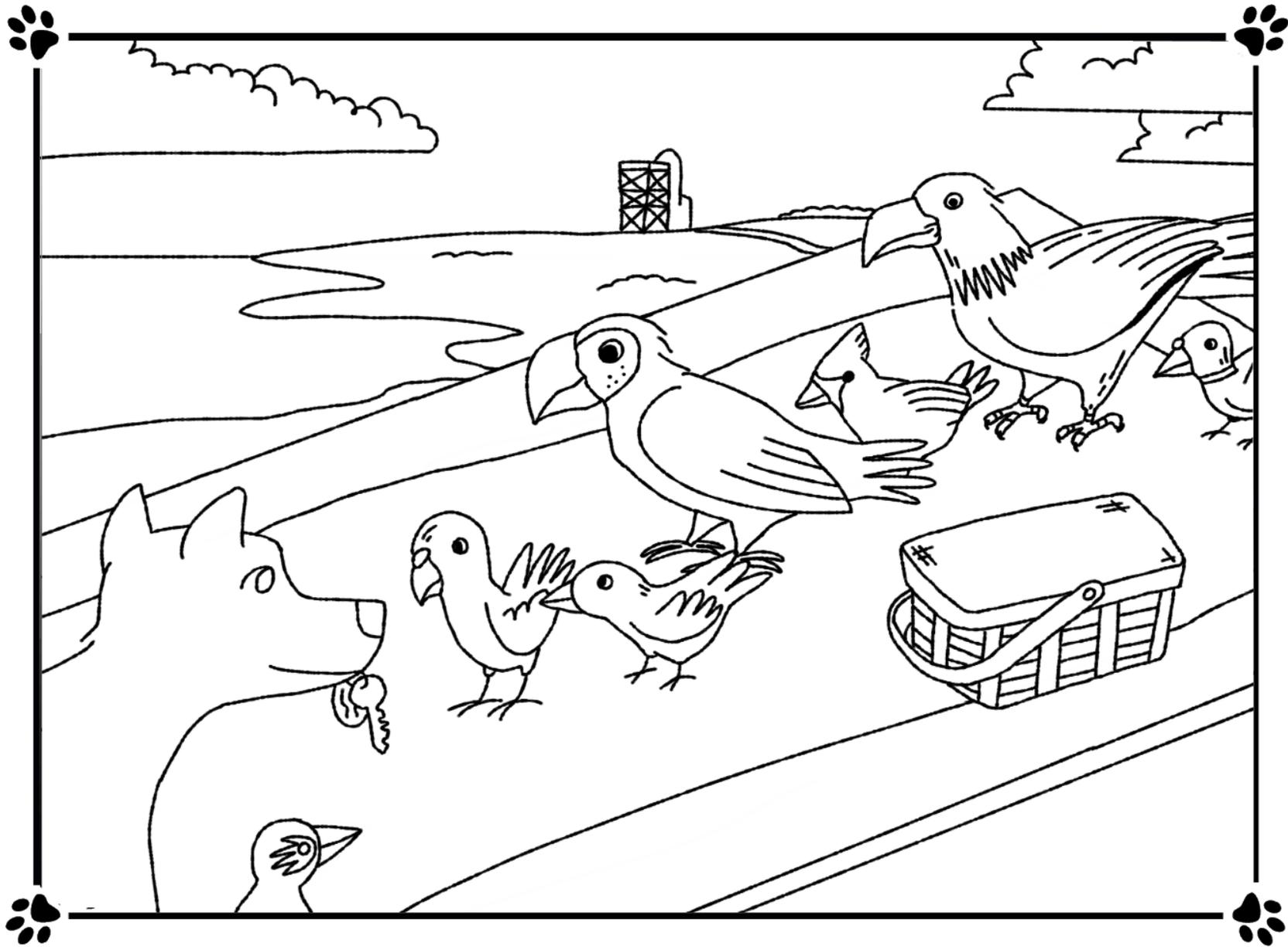
Less than an hour later, Mo and Finchy spotted dozens of birds heading straight toward them. As they came closer, Finchy shouted, "Flo, it's me, Finchy!"

The cousins hugged each other. They didn't realize how much they had missed each other until now. The other birds stood in line to see the key. Many birds in Florida, as far away as Jacksonville and Miami, were flying to the delivery truck to catch a glimpse of this now famous key.

By noon, hundreds of birds had already seen it. One bird thought it unlocked a palm tree that wouldn't drop its coconuts. Another hoped it unlocked a sports car she wanted to test drive. But Mo and Finchy knew better.

What should they do now? Mo, Finchy, and Flo were the only ones left on top of the truck.

They spotted Alex walking out of the building with another man. "Sorry I can't join you tonight," he said to the man. "I'm really tired and need to leave very early tomorrow morning."



Mo and Finchy looked at each other. They had to stay in Florida to find the key's owner. That meant this would be the last night they would spend on top of the truck's roof that had been their home for a long time. It made them sad. Very sad.

They wanted to do something nice for Alex. They wanted to thank him for driving them all over the country. Finchy counted the number of states they had visited. He thought there were fifty. Maybe forty-three. He couldn't remember.

But what present could they give Alex?

"I've got it!" said Mo. "Let's give Alex that diamond we found, the one you've been using as a footstool? It's probably worth lots of money."

Finchy agreed. Before Alex woke up the next morning, Mo and Finchy would place the diamond inside the delivery truck, on the driver's seat.

They spent their last night at home celebrating, laughing, and crying. Their adventure was coming to an end.

Early the next morning, everything went as planned. They placed the diamond on the driver's seat along with this thank-you note:

Dear Alex,

We have been traveling on top of your delivery truck for a very long time, trying to get to Florida. Now that we're here, we need to say goodbye. Please accept this diamond as a thank-you gift for driving us all over this wonderful country. This was an adventure we will never forget.

Mo and Finchy

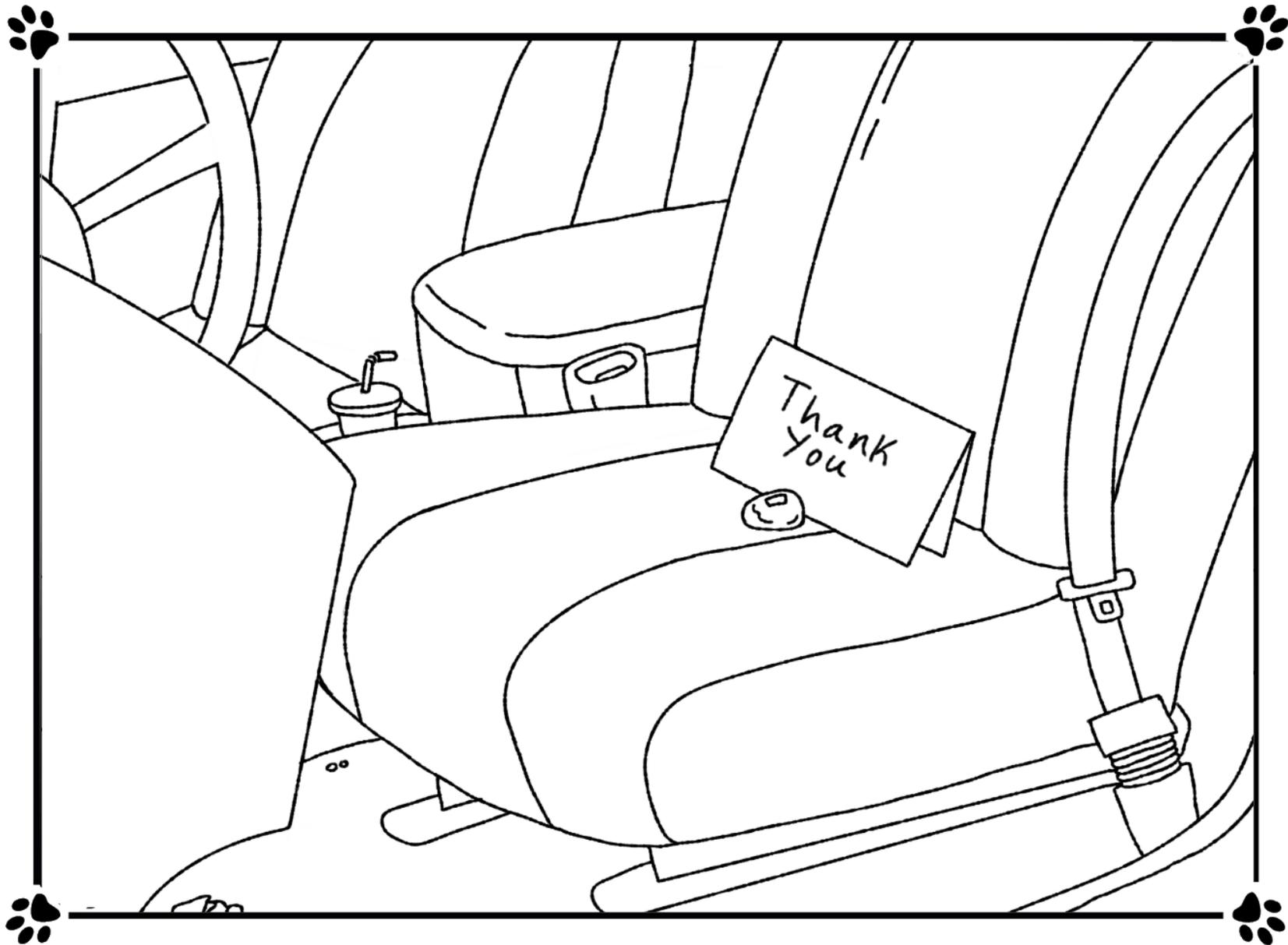
PS: This is from me, Finchy: You're a great driver except you press too hard on the brakes.

Mo and Finchy then hid in nearby bushes until Alex drove off. They knew they would never see him again.

But they didn't have much time to feel sad. Flo returned with a bird named Luke that knew all about locks and keys.

Luke looked at the front of the key and back of it, over and over.

"This is it," he said. "I'm positive."



Mo, Finchy, and Flo had blank looks on their faces.

Ever watch the news?” asked Luke. “It was all over the newspapers and Internet. The mayor lost this key. It opens the door to the rocketship, that one, over there.”

“Where is that rocketship going?” asked Mo.

“To the moon,” said Luke. “It’s supposed to take off in several months.”

“Can animals come?” asked Finchy.

“Don’t really know,” said Luke. “But I do know everyone will be grateful that you returned the key. Now they won’t have to get a new door for the spaceship. They didn’t have enough money to replace it because they spent way too much on designer spacesuits. They wanted to look good while in space.”

“How do we find the mayor?” asked Mo.

“That’s easy,” said Luke. “She always rides her bike to work while Ricky, her pet bird, flies ahead of her. Ricky and I are friends. He’ll listen to what we have to say.”



Luke led the way to the city hall and waited for the mayor and Ricky to arrive. About ten minutes later, Luke saw Ricky and chirped, “Good morning.”

Ricky perched himself next to Luke. “The mayor stopped to chat with someone who’s complaining about something not at all important,” he said.

After introducing Ricky to everyone, Luke told Ricky about the key and then showed it to him.

Ricky started flapping his wings and flying around in circles. He was so excited that he couldn’t stop chirping.

“The mayor is going to be so thrilled,” he said. “The whole town was going to have one gigantic garage sale to raise money to buy a new door for the spaceship. Now they don’t have to!”

Everyone decided that Mo should be the one to give the key to the mayor. After all, he was the one who found it.

A few minutes later, the mayor saw Ricky perched on top of the bike rack next to Mo and the other birds. She rode her bike to the rack and then took off her helmet. At



that point, Ricky began flapping his wings and flying around in circles.

“What are you so excited about?” asked the mayor.

Just then, Mo walked forward. He clenched the keychain in his mouth. The key just dangled.

“Hello there,” said the mayor as she bent down to look at the key. “What’s this?”

The mayor tried over and over to pull the keychain from Mo’s mouth so she could get a better look at the key. But Mo held on tight. Real tight. It was hard for him to let go because he had been guarding this key and keychain for many months. Finchy flew next to Mo and began whispering in his ear that the key belonged to the mayor. He needed to let go. When Mo finally did, the mayor snatched it from him.

“I can’t believe it!” she shouted after examining the key. “This is the key to the spaceship’s door! Where did you find this? How did you know that I lost it? How did you know what the key unlocked? How did you know. . .

She asked question after question before calming down.



“You’re a very smart dog,” she said to Mo. “How can I . . . I mean our country ever thank you?”

Mo walked around to the side of the building, stood up on his hind legs, and then pointed to the spaceship off in the distance. The mayor didn’t understand. Then Finchy, Flo, and Ricky flew to the top of city hall and pointed to the spaceship.

“You want to ride in the spaceship?” she asked Mo in disbelief. “You want to fly to the moon?”

Mo barked, “Yes!” Finchy chirped, “Absolutely!”

From that day forward, Mo and Finchy began training as astronauts. They quickly became famous as the world’s first dog and bird astronauts. Photos of them were shown everywhere – on TV, the Internet, and in magazines. Mo even received a message from his friends back home:

“We’re so proud of you, Mo! We knew you were smart enough and brave enough to find the key’s owner. (Mo liked being called brave.) We don’t know who the bird is but he must be as smart and brave as you are. (Finchy liked being called smart.) Take lots of pictures. And don’t forget to send us a postcard.”



The day came when all of the astronauts – human and animal – climbed inside the rocketship. The countdown began. Ten, nine, eight, seven, six . . . Smoke and fire started coming out from the bottom of the rocketship. Five, four, three . . . Mo and Finchy felt the rocketship shake back and forth. Two, one. The rocketship lifted off the ground.

Mo and Finchy were on their way to the moon, putting their names into history.

They felt afraid, sad, and excited, all at the same time.

What would they find? Who would they meet? Would they ever return home, to Earth?

The only thing they knew for certain was that nothing would ever be the same.



