



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 12

By Carol Patton

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Mo Falls In Love

“Don’t ever - and I mean NEVER - tell anybody you saw me doing this,” said Mo while climbing out of a garbage dumpster, searching for food. “It would ruin my repu...”

“Psst.”

Mo’s ears pointed straight up. He turned around to see who or what was making that noise.

“Psst.”

The sound was coming from behind a bush.

“Can we catch a ride with you?” asked a black shaggy dog. “My name is Ben. My sister, Maggie, and I are going to Pahrump, same as you. I overheard your truck driver

tell the cashier that's where he's headed and that he was glad to finally get off of Interstate 40. Said something about limes?"

Mo was about to explain how a truck driver lost his cargo on the highway—thousands of limes—but then Maggie came out from behind the bush. *What beautiful brown eyes.*

“Well?” said Ben, waving his paw in front of Mo’s face. “Hellooo?”

Mo tried to answer, but he couldn’t talk. He couldn’t breathe. He couldn’t concentrate.

She’s the most beautiful animal I have ever seen.

Not knowing why Mo was acting so strange, Finchy asked, “Pahrump? What’s a Pahrump?”

Ben told them that Maggie and him were going to a city called Pahrump to hunt for buried treasure. “There’s a ton of silver out there,” Ben said. “We’re going to be rich. Filthy rich.”

Mo remained silent.

“You’ll have to excuse my friend,” said Finchy. “He . . . uh . . . has a sore throat.”

Somewhat embarrassed, Mo cleared his throat, and introduced himself and Finchy.

Ben was impatient. “We know where the silver is buried,” he boasted. “Some guy in Las Vegas buried a bunch of it on his ranch in Pahrump. I know a dog who knows a horse who knows a bird who knows a cat who watched him bury it. I have the exact location.”

Mo wondered if the silver was so valuable, why didn’t the dog, horse, bird, or cat dig it up by now?

“Oh, please let us come with you,” pleaded Maggie. “You’d have lots of money and never have to climb into a garbage dumpster again.”

Mo’s furry, white face turned red.

They struck a deal. Ben and Maggie would ride to Pahrump on top of the delivery truck with Mo and Finchy who would help them dig for the buried treasure. In

exchange, Ben and Maggie would give them a portion of the silver. But Mo didn't care about the silver. He just wanted to be next to Maggie.

They sat on top of the delivery truck for more than an hour along a state road called SR 160 and drove along a mountain pass called the Mountain Springs Summit. The weather turned cooler. Except for watching the sun set in the western sky, the ride to Pahrump was boring for everyone but Mo. He was in love.

The truck driver pulled off the highway and stopped at a motel for the night. Mo and Finchy knew they had many hours before they needed to return.

“So where's this ranch?” asked Finchy.

Ben guided them through the desert before finding the ranch. They crawled under a barbed wire fence and headed toward the house off in the distance.

Ben counted every step. “Fifty-three, fifty-four . . .” When he reached fifty-nine, he stopped, pulled out shovels from his suitcase, and told everyone to start digging.

They dug for two hours under a full moon. No silver. “Maybe it was seventy-nine steps,” he said. He recounted his steps. They dug some more. Still, no silver.

Mo was physically exhausted. He climbed out of his hole and looked around. He spotted two large holes off in the distance near the front of the house. “Look,” he shouted,” pointing to the holes.

Ben ran toward them.

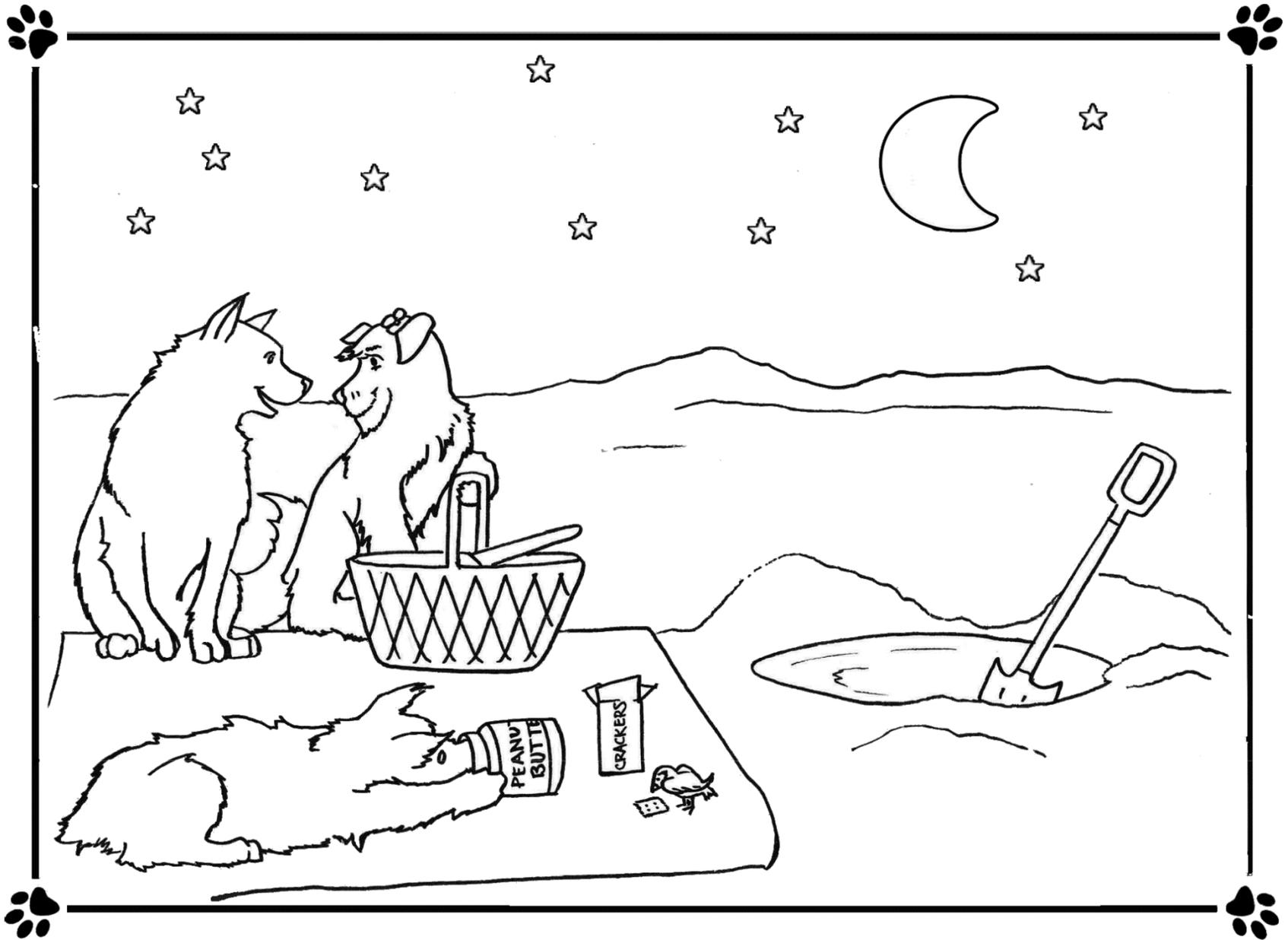
“Dagnabbit!” he shouted. “We’re too late. I’ll bet the cat gave me wrong directions to throw me off course. She told me she didn’t care about silver. Ha! Should have never trusted her.”

He sank to the ground with his head hung low. Mo placed his paw on Ben’s shoulder to comfort him and then turned toward Maggie. She opened her suitcase and pulled out a picnic blanket along with crackers, cheese, peanut butter, and bottled water.

Without asking, Finchy tore open a box of small crackers and popped one in his mouth.

“Please excuse my friend,” said Mo who wanted Maggie to think that Finchy and him had good manners. “It’s been a long time since we’ve eaten anything.”

“Manners, schmanners,” said Ben. “Who needs ‘em?”



As Mo and Finchy stuffed themselves, they listened to Ben's story about the man who owned the silver.

“This guy stored millions of dollars in silver in a vault. To protect it from greedy people, he moved it to this ranch. Then he died. Or maybe he was murdered. Anyway, the silver was never found.”

It was almost sunrise. Mo and Finchy had to return to the truck. Maggie and Ben decided to stay and search for the cat who gave them wrong information.

Mo pulled Maggie to the side.

“I wish I could stay,” he said. “But I made a promise to everyone back home. I have to find the owner of this key and keychain.”

He gently kissed Maggie's paw and said goodbye. He didn't know if he would ever meet anybody that would make him feel this way again.

