



# The Adventures of **Mo**

**Chapter 15**

By Carol Patton

## Chapter 15

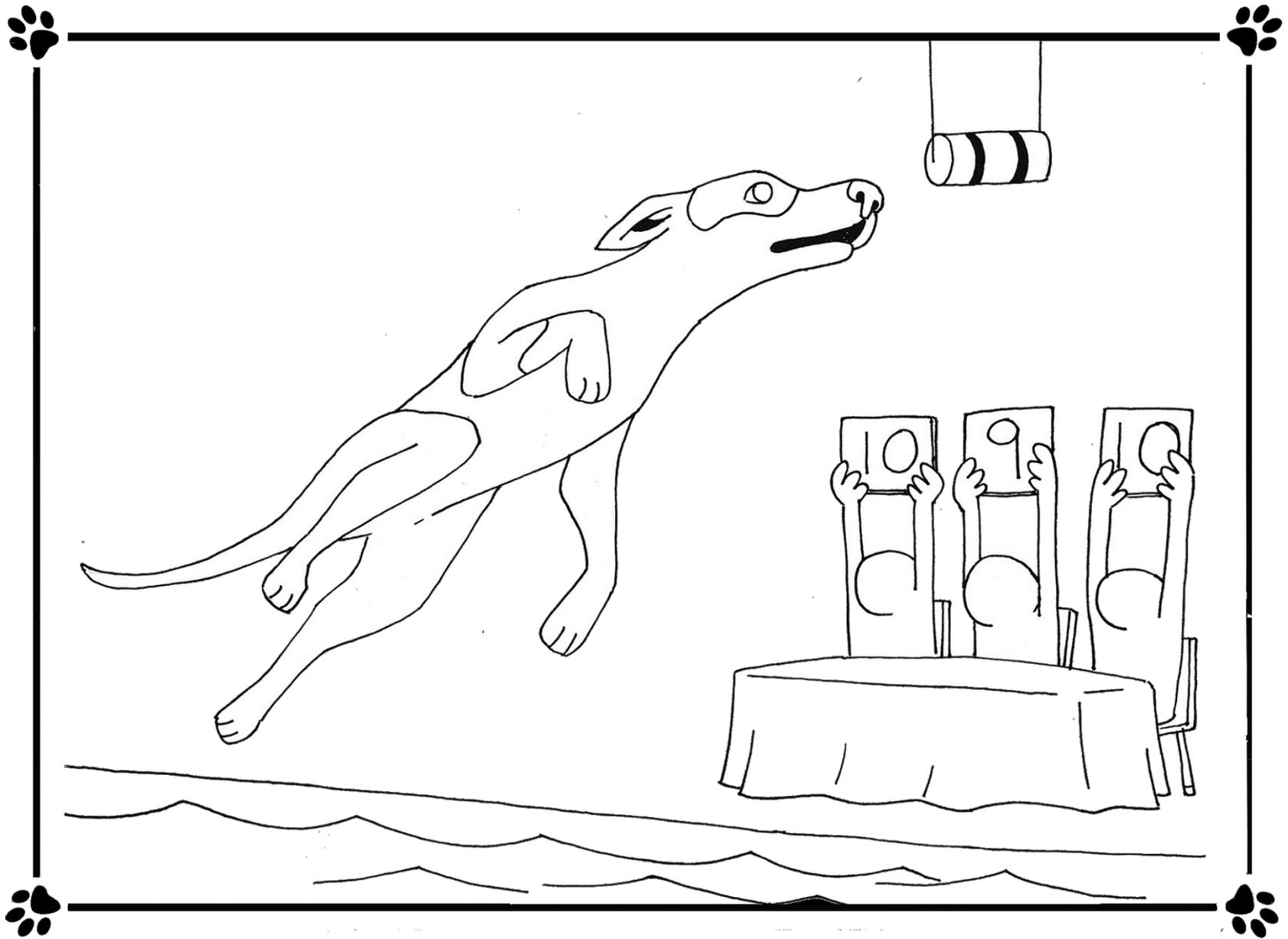
### Finchy Teaches Mo a Lesson

Buddy ran very fast and then jumped as far as he could into the pool. A handful of people clapped and cheered the dog's name.

"I don't understand," whispered Finchy to Mo. "Why are people clapping? Dogs jump and swim all the time. What's the big deal?"

A few minutes earlier, Mo had heard several people talking about these very cool sport competitions for dogs. The first was the long jump – which dog could jump the farthest distance into the pool. Next came the high jump – which dog could jump the highest. The last contest was a swim race.

"Look at all the people who came here to watch," said Mo, grateful that he blended into the crowd, which included just as many dogs as people. "I wonder if we're at the Summer Olympics."



But while traveling on top of the delivery truck, Mo saw signs for SD Highway 79 South, Sturgis, Black Hills National Forest, and something else that he never heard of – Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Not one mentioned anything about the Olympics, an event that attracts athletes from all over the world who compete in more than thirty sports.

Still, Mo was very excited to see so many dogs. It reminded him of summers back home when all the forest animals competed in different sports, such as who could climb the farthest and fastest, sniff the best by naming all the ingredients in a prepared dish, or dig the deepest hole within five minutes.

Finchy, however, was bored. He took off, flying high into the air to see why there were so many people walking around. There seemed to be hundreds, maybe even thousands. Why were they here? What were they doing?

Mo watched the rest of the dogs compete. He clapped and cheered for every dog, no matter how they performed.

“C’mon, let’s go,” said Finchy when he returned. “I’m hungry. The trash cans around here are overflowing with food.”

They walked along Main Street. There were big banners everywhere with the words, “Wild Bill Days.”

Neither Finchy nor Mo knew anyone named Wild Bill, William, or even Bill. Who was he? Where was he? What was all the fuss about?

On the left side of the street, people were signing up to play Make Ten, a card game. Mo loved all types of games, especially this one where players try to find as many combinations of cards in their hand that equal ten by using addition and subtraction. He walked to the back of the line when a dog started barking at him, motioning with his paw for Mo to come over.

“People won’t play cards with animals,” said the dog, who introduced himself as Charlie. “Probably because we’re so much better than they are. We formed our own group of card players. No humans allowed. Why don’t you join us?”

Mo eagerly nodded and thanked him for the invitation.

“But I’ve got to warn you,” said Charlie. “Ken is playing today. He’s the best card player ever. And the nicest. Even when he wins, which is most of the time, he still makes you feel good about trying your best.”

Back home, Mo won the Make Ten championship every year for the past five years. He spent many long, harsh winters playing the game with his animal friends. He doubted anyone, anywhere, could ever beat him.

Mo and Finchy followed Charlie to a small grassy area that was surrounded by bushes. Several dogs were sitting on the grass, eating pizza, hot dogs, and hot pretzels.

Charlie introduced them to Mo and Finchy.

“Nice to meet you,” said Ken. “There’s plenty of food. Why don’t you join us for lunch? Can’t play on an empty stomach.”

Mo and Finchy ate everything in sight, stuffing themselves until they could barely breathe. Mo carefully listened to what everyone was saying, hoping that he would find out more information about Ken.

*He’s a real nice guy but is he a better card player than me?*

Ken was very good at playing cards because he was very good at math. He could quickly add, subtract, and even multiply really big numbers in his head.

Mo knew math was important. Everywhere he went, people and animals used it. He remembered Ben had to count his steps before digging for buried silver. The cashier at the gift shop at Chaco Culture National Park used math when giving customers their change. Even astronomers at Kitt Peak National Observatory used math to figure out how far planets and stars were from the Earth.

Now it was time for Mo to test his skills. After lunch, the dogs formed a circle. Charlie dealt everyone five cards.

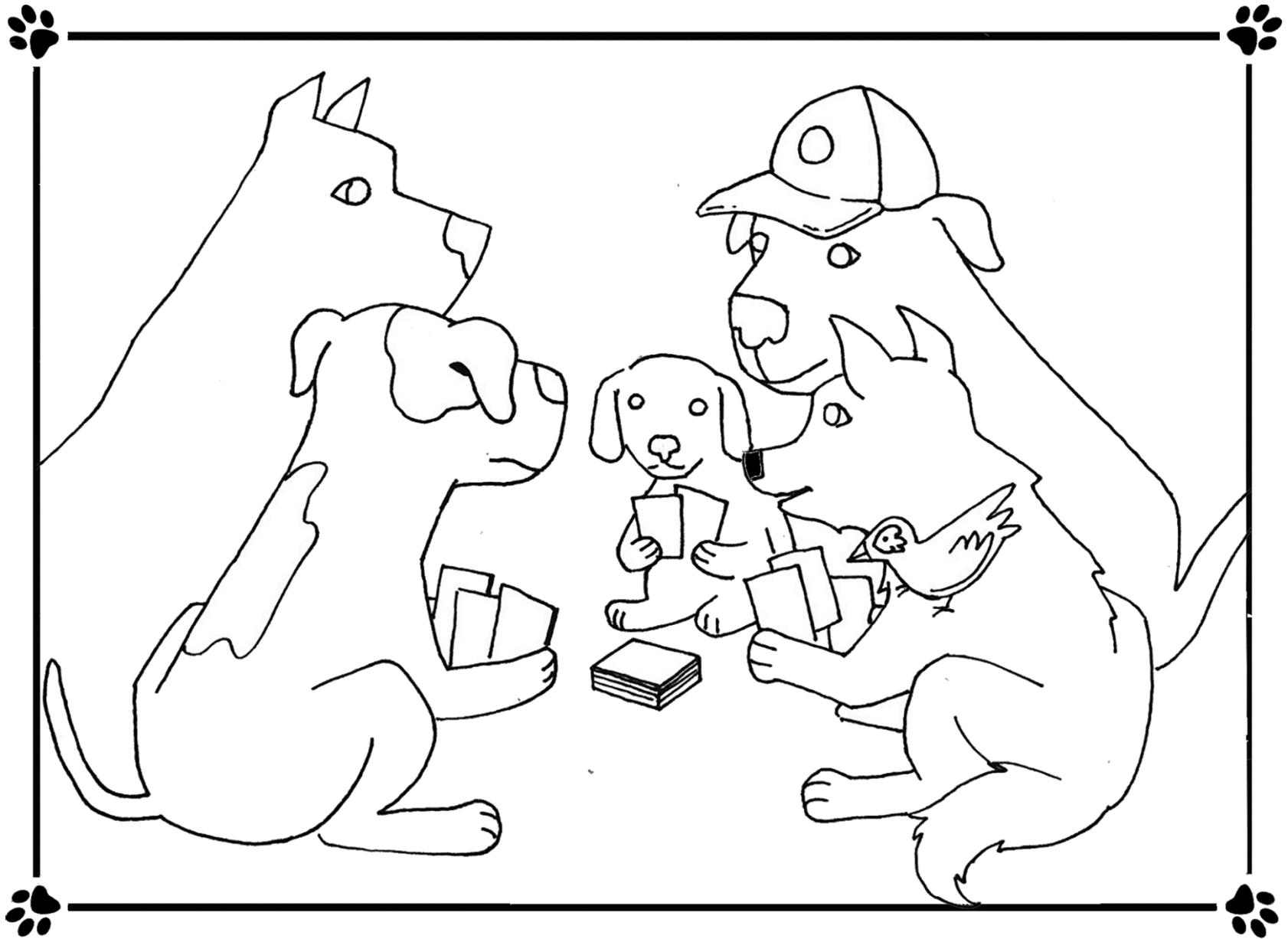
“Oh look,” said Finchy, who glanced at Mo’s cards. “These two cards add up to ten and so do these three cards minus that one.”

The other dogs threw their cards into a pile in the middle of the circle.

“You can’t help Mo,” said Charlie. “That’s cheating.”

Mo’s furry white face turned bright red with embarrassment. He gave Finchy a stern look.

“Sorry,” mumbled Finchy.



The dogs played throughout the afternoon. They talked about many things, including Wild Bill Hickock, who was a famous soldier, spy, outlaw, sheriff, actor, and even card-player in the 1800s.

“Everybody from Deadwood to the Badlands knew who he was,” said a dog named Cooper. He then began complaining about his grumpy cousin while Duke and Ace, who were usually friendly dogs, started fighting over the last piece of pizza. Charlie just rolled his eyes and asked Mo and Finchy if they had ever heard of Mount Rushmore.

“What’s that?” asked Mo, remembering the sign he saw along the highway.

Charlie explained that it was a huge sculpture carved into the side of a mountain in the Black Hills, about one hour south from where they were now. It took fourteen years to complete and shows the faces of four US presidents – George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt.

“Are there any carvings of dogs?” asked Mo.

Charlie shook his head back and forth. “Not one,” he said. “Tragic, simply tragic. People pet us, feed us, walk us, bathe us, train us, play with us, and strange ones

dress us up, but no one gives us credit for the important things we do.”

The dogs nodded in agreement.

By now, Mo had lost many more hands than he had won. His ears fell flat against his face. He had to admit that Ken really was the better card player. By swallowing his pride and thanking Ken for teaching him a few math tricks, Mo showed the other dogs that he was a good sport.

After leaving, Finchy tried to cheer him up.

“Mo, you can’t be great at everything,” Finchy said. “But you are great at being my friend. To me, that’s better than winning any game.”