



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 18

By Carol Patton

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Diana, the Butterfly Actress

“You’re a terrible singer,” shouted Finchy to Mo while covering his ears. “Much worse than Elsie. She was a frog who lived in our neighborhood.”

“Maybe for a bird, but not for a dog,” replied Mo. “I sang in the choir back home. I was everyone’s favorite howler.”

Mo and Finchy had spent the last four days on a cruise ship. Since their truck driver was on vacation for two weeks, they decided to go on a cruise, hoping the big ship would take them to Florida. After their first day at sea, they couldn’t believe how much food there was to eat and all the great places they could hide, nap, sleep, play, and of course, sing.

Now they were on dry land. But where? They saw tall palm trees and an ocean. Florida has palm trees and an ocean. Could this be Florida?

They soon discovered they were on an island. Florida isn't an island. It's a peninsula that's connected to land on one side and surrounded by water on three sides.

Mo and Finchy sat on the beach, listening to the waves gently break on the shore, trying to figure out what to do next.

“Why don't we take a vacation?” asked Finchy, showing Mo all the travel brochures he found on the ship. “We've got at least a week before the ship leaves.”

One of the brochures caught Mo's attention. It had a strange name on the cover: Haleakala Crater.

“It says this is the largest dormant volcano in the world,” said Mo. “What's a volcano?”

The pair looked at the photos of the volcano in the brochure.

“Looks like a big mountain with a hole in it,” said Finchy.

Mo knew there had to be something special about this mountain. Why else would someone create a brochure about it?

Mo and Finchy decided to take turns picking out things to see or do. They would do what Mo wanted on one day and what Finchy wanted on the next day. Neither could complain about each other's choices.

Mo wanted to visit the volcano. So the next morning – before the sun woke up – he climbed on top of a tour bus that was filled with people headed for the crater. Finchy was waiting for him.

As the bus traveled along the highway, the air grew cooler. Finchy started shivering and snuggled up against Mo's warm fur.

During the long bus ride, they overheard people talking about volcanoes. One man said that when they become mad or angry, they explode or erupt with hot ash, gas, and lava, which is melted or liquid rock.

Mo and Finchy looked at each other. Neither one had ever seen a volcano erupt. Was it noisy? Was it scary? Was it dangerous?

A woman then started talking to everyone on the bus about the place they were visiting. She said this was one island of eight and that all eight islands were part of a state. The state grows pineapples and is the only one in the whole country that

grows coffee beans. There's lots of sunshine, rain, and tropical forests. Different types of people live here. Likewise, the state has the world's biggest telescope and more scientific observatories in one spot than anywhere in the world.

The bus stopped at the top of the mountain. The temperature had dropped even further. It was cold. But no one seemed to notice or even care. The sun was rising and they could see the island's central valley. The view was magnificent. So were the flowers and plants, unlike any they had ever seen.

“Watch out!”

Mo and Finchy heard a rather loud, squeaky voice but didn't see anyone.

“You almost stepped on me!” shouted the same voice. “You could have squashed me!”

Mo and Finchy realized who was speaking. It was a butterfly with bright orange wings outlined in burgundy.

Mo had never chatted with a butterfly. He didn't quite know what to say.

“I’m... I’m so sorry,” said Mo. “I didn’t see you. Are you OK?”

“Yes, but no thanks to you,” said the butterfly, rather annoyed.

Finchy hopped over to the butterfly and introduced himself and Mo.

“I know what it feels like to be so small when everyone and everything around you is so big,” he said.

Mo had rarely seen this caring and gentle side of Finchy. He was impressed. The butterfly calmed down and then introduced herself as Diana.

“Didn’t mean to shout at you,” she said. “I didn’t get the part I wanted in this play so I flew here to look at the sunrise, which always makes me feel better.”

“Yes, it’s very peaceful up here,” said Finchy.

“As long as the volcano is sleeping,” she said. “But when it wakes up, it’s like a big, ugly monster. Very scary. Simply terrifying.”

“What’s that like?” asked Mo. “I mean, when a volcano erupts?”



“First you hear rumbling sounds,” whispered Diana. “The ground starts trembling and shaking underneath your feet.”

Diana remained quiet for a few seconds. Did she finish telling her story?

“Bang!”

She shouted so loud that Mo and Finchy jumped back. Her six legs and antennae began swinging in every direction.

“There’s a gigantic explosion,” she shouted. “Everything inside the mountain shoots high into the air. Fire. Rocks. Gas. Toys. Chairs. Couches. Computers. I mean everything. Then the sky turns dark. So dark you can’t see. And then rocks that are on fire pour out of the mountain, all the way down to the main road. It seems like the world is ending.”

Mo and Finchy looked at each other, not knowing what to think. Was Diana telling the truth or putting on a show for them? Were toys, chairs, couches, and computers really inside mountains?



They spent another hour on the mountain, listening to Diana share more horrifying experiences. Finchy and Mo clung to each other and were glad when the tour bus was leaving. They said goodbye and couldn't wait to get back to the hotel.

For the rest of their vacation, Mo and Finchy sunbathed, ate pineapple and coconut, snorkeled in warm waters, caught a few shows, and argued over which garbage cans offered the best food.

Now out of suntan lotion and things to do, Mo and Finchy snuck back on the cruise ship where they would spend another four days at sea returning to the last state they had visited. Although they didn't find Florida, they discovered something much more important – how lucky they were to be friends.

