



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 19

By Carol Patton

Chapter 19

Learning to Fly

“What’s that tall thing over there?” asked Mo.

“It’s a rocket,” said Finchy, a bit surprised. “You’ve never seen one before?”

“No,” said Mo, tilting his head all the way back to see the top of the rocket.

“Humans use rockets to blast into outer space and sometimes live inside of them for many days,” said Finchy. “But no matter how hard they try, humans are far from perfect at flying, not like us birds.”

Since their vacation on the cruise ship, Mo and Finchy had traveled for several days on top of the delivery truck. They saw many signs for places like Lincoln and Waverly while traveling on Interstate 80 East and Highway 6. The truck driver drove to a city called Ashland to deliver packages to a big building that displayed a rocket near its front doors.

Mo read the sign next to the building: Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum.

It was early in the morning. Mo and Finchy wondered if more rockets were inside the building. Mo wanted to sit inside one of them so they followed the truck driver through a side door. When he turned left, they turned right into a very big room.

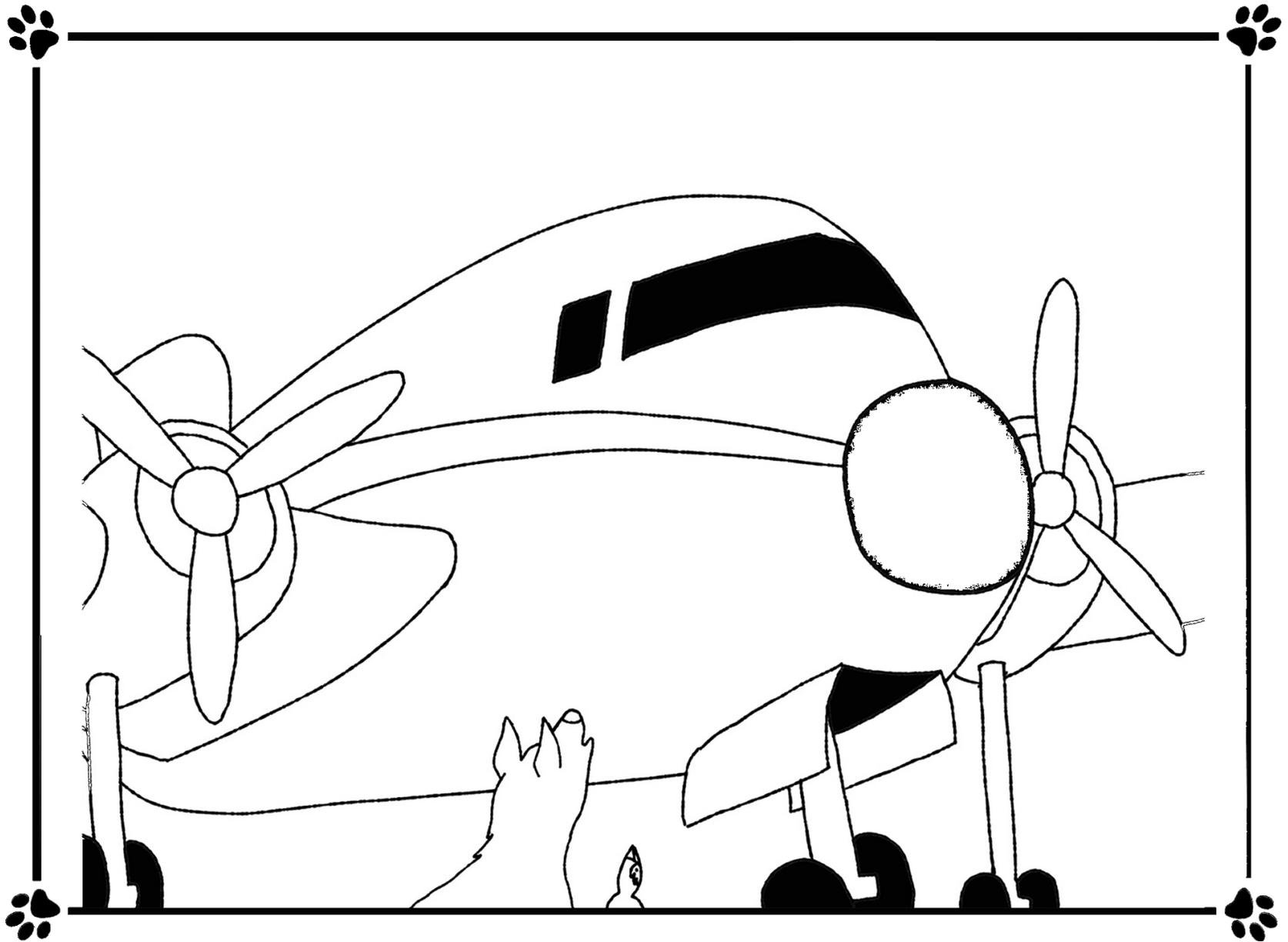
“Wow, look at all of these. . . these. . .what exactly are they?” Mo asked Finchy.

“Airplanes,” said Finchy. While he couldn’t fly as fast or as high as airplanes, he thought birds were more graceful at flying through the air.

All of these airplanes had names. One was called the Invader, another the Intruder, and the one with the giant wings was called Skytrain. Mo had never seen so many giant machines in one place.

Mo had so many thoughts. *What’s inside the huge planes? How do they stay in the air? Do they bump into clouds?*

While Mo searched for a way to climb inside one of the planes, Finchy flew into every room in the building, searching for more rockets. When he returned, he shouted, “Mo, follow me. I’ve got a big surprise for you!”



Mo and Finchy entered an area called the *Atlantis Shuttle Trainer*. They saw two big seats that were surrounded by computer screens and more than six hundred switches.

“This machine teaches people how to fly airplanes and rockets into outer space,” said Finchy. “Let’s turn it on so you can feel what it’s like to fly.”

“Well. . .I don’t know,” said Mo. “Are you sure you know how to use this machine?”

Finchy looked Mo straight in the eye. “Who knows more about flying than birds?” he said. “I can fly any plane in this building. I don’t even need a lesson. I’m a natural.”

Mo hesitated. He wasn’t sure if Finchy knew as much as he thought he did. Still, he took a deep breath and climbed into the seat on the right, what Finchy called the co-pilot’s seat.

Finchy hopped on to the left seat, the pilot’s seat, and began turning on many switches with his beak. Lights started flashing. Loud, strange noises came out of the machine. Both of their seats started shaking back and forth, up, down, and even sideways. Red lights started flashing on and off. A voice boomed, “Warning! Warning!”

Something was wrong. Very wrong. Mo didn't know what to do. Finchy started to panic, turning on this switch and turning off that switch, which made everything worse. More red lights started flashing and the strange noises grew louder.

“Run!” shouted Finchy.

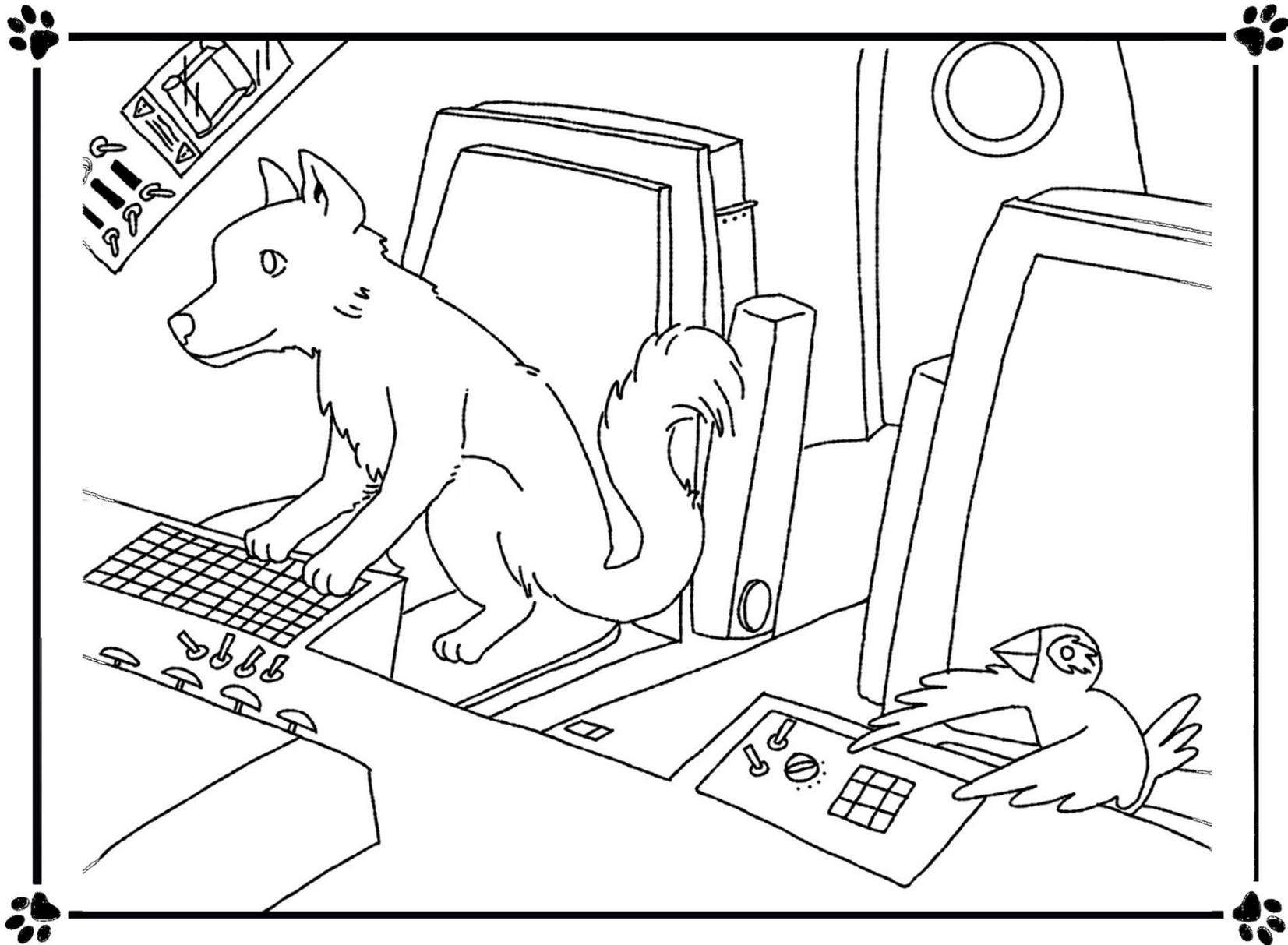
Mo leaped off the chair and ran as fast as he could. Finchy flew ahead, leading the way out of the building, back to the delivery truck.

Mo raced up the truck's ladder and was safely on top. His heart was pounding. His paws were shaking. He wrapped a warm blanket around his body to help calm down.

“I'm. . . I'm really sorry,” said Finchy in a quiet voice while looking at the ground. “I just wanted to do something nice for you, make you feel like you were flying. It's the best feeling in the world.”

Mo knew Finchy really cared about him. But why does he need to show off?

“Finchy,” said Mo, trying to remain calm. “You're smart. And brave. You don't need to pretend that you know everything or can do everything.”



Finchy wrapped his wings around Mo's neck.

"Thank you for not yelling at me," said Finchy. "I just saw the machine and thought . . . well, I guess I was wrong."

"It's OK to ask for help if you don't know something," continued Mo. "That's how everyone learns."

"So does that mean you'll stop pretending, too?" asked Finchy.

Mo gave Finchy a puzzling look.

"You thought you could paddleboard and swim, but really couldn't," said Finchy.

Mo never thought of himself as a know-it-all but had to admit that Finchy was right.

"I guess we both have a lot to learn," said Mo.