



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 31

By Carol Patton

Chapter 31

Being Nice to Someone Mean

The doors slammed shut. Mo and Finchy didn't know where they were or what to do.

They were stuck inside a very long train that was traveling very fast underground and jam-packed with hundreds of humans. They didn't know where they were going or how they would ever find their way back to the delivery truck.

Mo and Finchy clung to each other. The rumbling of the train shook their bodies. Mo looked at the people around him. One young woman had purple hair. One man stood in the center of the subway car playing the violin while passengers threw coins in his violin case. Others spoke in at least four languages that Mo and Finchy had never heard before.

Earlier that day, Mo and Finchy had been riding on top of the delivery truck along Interstate 95 South for more than four hours. They crossed three state lines and saw highway signs for many cities, including Newport, Stamford, and Yonkers.



Alex, the truck driver, drove onto a crowded street. Hundreds of very tall buildings stood on both sides of the road. There was bumper to bumper traffic for miles in every direction. The sidewalks were crowded with thousands of people who all seemed in a hurry to get somewhere.

How many humans are there? Could there possibly be more humans than dogs? Mo trembled at the thought.

Alex drove down a one way street and then stopped behind a big hotel. A man was waiting for him on the dock. While still on the truck's roof, Mo and Finchy overheard their conversation.

“Have dinner plans tonight?” asked Alex. “I loved that Mexican restaurant we went to last time I was in town.”

Mo and Finchy now knew they had the rest of the day to explore. After both men walked inside the hotel, Mo climbed down the truck's ladder and began walking down the street with Finchy.

They spotted a sign that said, “Subway” next to a staircase. After climbing down the

steps, Mo and Finchy were pushed inside the long subway car by a large group of people. The doors closed before they could get out.

The only human who paid any attention to them was a man reading a newspaper. He removed his briefcase from the seat next to him so Mo and Finchy could sit down. He didn't even say, "Hello".

A few moments later, a dog approached them.

"I never saw a dog or a bird ride the subway before," said the dog. "I spotted you entering the subway car. "My name is Trouble. What's yours?"

Mo was relieved to find someone he could trust. A dog. After introducing himself and Finchy, he told her about their mission to find Florida.

"Is that a state?" she asked. "I don't know anything about Florida, but I can tell you some things about this state."

Trouble told them that it's bordered by five other states, another country, and two really big lakes. The first capital of the United States was in this state. It was also the

first one to give people a license plate for their car. Even the first pizza place opened here more than one hundred years ago.

“So where are you going?” asked Finchy.

“I’m headed to the Theater District for an audition,” she said. “I’m an actor trying out for a new play that I read about in Barkstage.com. There’s a brilliant part for a dog that will probably steal the show. I’ve been studying my lines all week long. Why don’t you come with me? I could use the support.”

Mo and Finchy thought it would be fun. They had never been to an audition. While riding the subway train for the next thirty minutes, Trouble told them all about herself.

“I’ve performed in eight Broadway plays,” Trouble said, adding that she started acting when she was a puppy. “I played dogs that were a gymnast, brain surgeon, drummer, chef, astronaut, superhero, waitress, and race car driver. I can also tap dance using all four paws, howl in three languages, juggle, and roller skate.”

Mo and Finchy had never met anyone so talented.

After the train stopped, the doors to the subway car opened. They walked upstairs to the street with Trouble and then headed to a theater on Broadway.

They entered the backstage door. Many other dogs had already arrived.

“See that black dog over there, the one with the red bow on her head?” whispered Trouble to Finchy and Mo. “Her name is Princess. She’s difficult to get along with. Just plain mean.”

Princess spotted Trouble and walked over to her.

“I don’t know why you bothered to come,” said Princess. “You know I’m much a better actor than you.”

Mo and Finchy wondered why Princess acted so mean.

Just then, a dog twice their size walked backstage.

“Listen up,” he said. “The auditions will start in thirty minutes. There are eleven dogs auditioning this afternoon. Here’s a list of who auditions first, second, third, and so on. Your number will be called out loud. Pay attention. We won’t call it twice.”

All the dogs gathered around the list that the big dog taped to the wall. Trouble was number ten.

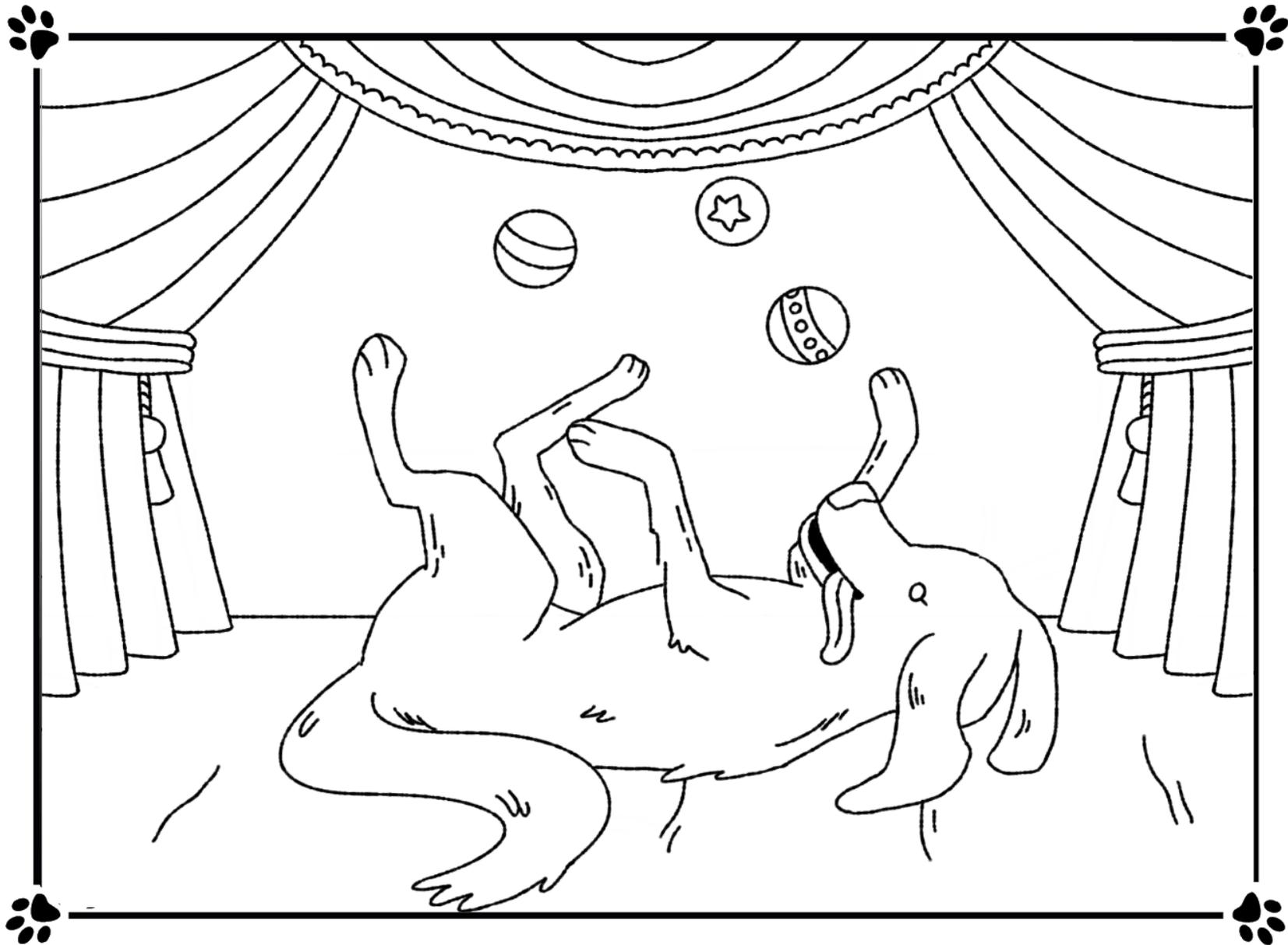
Everyone wished Trouble luck. Everyone, of course, except Princess.

The auditions began. Several dogs forgot their lines. Others disagreed with the director, which Mo later learned was a big no-no when auditioning, even if you're right. Another dog walked on stage but couldn't talk. His mouth was stuffed with part of a sandwich he found in a corner. Some ran across the stage chasing a cat that disguised herself as a dog because she wanted the part.

Now it was Trouble's turn to audition. She said her lines perfectly and, as part of the audition, she had to juggle with all four paws and lap milk from a dish. Overall, her performance was amazing. Mo and Finchy thought she should get an award.

Now it was Princess' turn. She remembered her lines but didn't juggle as well as Trouble. When she started lapping the milk, she spit it out on the floor.

"This milk is sour!" she shouted. "Who would do this to me?" She began crying and ran off the stage.



Trouble, Mo, and Finchy overheard two dogs laughing backstage.

“Did you see her face?” asked one dog to the other.

“Yeah,” said the other dog. “She’s so mean. She deserves this. I hope she doesn’t get the part.”

Trouble approached the two dogs while Mo and Finchy stayed back but within earshot.

“What you did was mean, very mean,” said Trouble to the two dogs.

“Oh, c’mon,” said one of the dogs to Trouble. “Princess is mean to everyone, including you. We just wanted to be mean back.”

“Because you were so mean, you’re no better than Princess,” said Trouble.

The two dogs didn’t know what to say. They never thought of it that way. They simply wanted Princess to know how it felt when someone was mean.

Trouble spotted Princess sitting in a corner, still in tears.

“Princess,” said Trouble. “I’m so sorry this happened. Those dogs were mean to you. I’m sure the director will give you another chance to finish your audition.”

Princess was touched by Trouble’s kindness. “Why are you being so nice to me?” she asked. “I’m always mean to you, to everyone.”

“There’s no reason to be mean,” Trouble said in a gentle tone. “It’s easy to be nice and feels much better.” Then Trouble gave Princess a hug.

The director walked backstage. He told the two dogs to leave the building, that they were banned from future auditions, and privately chatted with Princess.

Then he said in a booming voice to the rest of the actors, “Thank you everyone for coming. While many of you are very talented, we’re giving the part to Trouble because she was the best juggler.”

Trouble was thrilled. Mo, Finchy, many of the other dogs, and even the cat dressed up like a dog hugged Trouble. Surprisingly, so did Princess.

Now Trouble could feel good twice – once for getting the part and twice for being so nice to Princess.

Mo and Finchy hugged Trouble one more time before saying goodbye and then walked back to the subway station.

“Ya know, Mo, there are some birds I just don’t like and others – I know this is hard to believe – that don’t like me,” said Finchy. “But we’re always nice and polite to each other. I’m glad Trouble was nice to Princess.”

“Being nice or mean is always a choice,” said Mo. “But being nice always makes others feel good, makes you feel good, and comes back around like it did for Trouble.”