



# The Adventures of **Mo**

**Chapter 37**

By Carol Patton

## Chapter 37

### The Best Costume

Mo had never seen this much chaos.

Thousands of humans were walking on wooden planks, up and down the oldest and longest boardwalk in the country. Hundreds of stores selling everything from T-shirts to flip flops were lined up in a row for more than five miles. People were walking in and out of shops, trying on hats or sunglasses, eating at outdoor restaurants, licking ice cream cones, or laying on the nearby beach.

*Why do humans need so many T-shirts or sunglasses? How many can they possibly wear?*

It felt good for Mo to stretch his legs. Finchy and him had been traveling on top of the delivery truck for almost six hours, mostly along Interstate 95 South and Garden State Parkway.

Alex, the truck driver, was making a large delivery to a hotel that faced the ocean and decided to spend the night there. So Mo and Finchy had the rest of the day to explore.

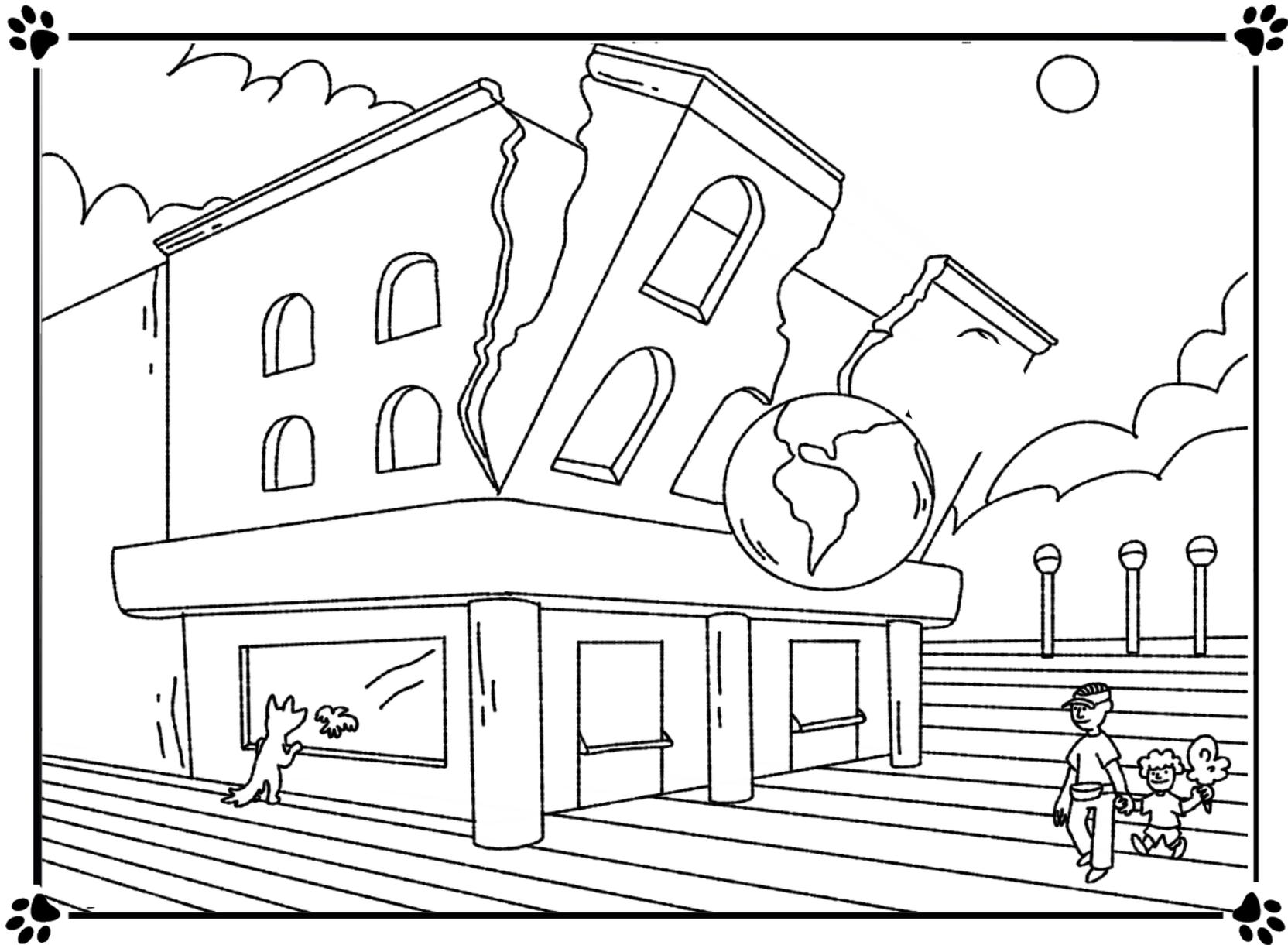
“Do you think these are the same people we keep seeing in the other places we’ve visited?” Mo asked Finchy. “Maybe there aren’t as many humans as we think.”

They walked along the boardwalk, stuffing themselves with food from a wide variety of trash cans. Mo even tried salt water taffy for the first time but didn’t like how it stuck to his teeth.

Suddenly, Mo shouted, “Finchy, look! That building is going to collapse!”

They were standing in front of a museum. The top part of the building was tilting forward. Mo and Finchy were afraid it was going to fall. But it never did. It seemed to be frozen in mid-air.

They looked at each other wondering why someone would build a museum that looked so strange. But then the signs on the building explained why. Everything about this museum was supposed to be strange and weird.



They peered through the front windows but couldn't see anything. But they did notice the giant poster on the door: Employee Costume Party. Tonight. 7pm.

Mo and Finchy thought this would be the perfect opportunity to see what was inside the museum. They could both wear costumes and no one would know that they're not humans.

What should they be? Aliens from another planet? Sea creatures? Superheroes?

They decided that the best costume idea would come from the stores and people around them. They continued walking down the boardwalk, looking at the displays in store windows. Nothing grabbed their attention. They sat near a trash can, watching all the different ways people were acting or dressed. They quickly grew bored. They even snuck into a clothing store that seemed to have strange clothing in its window. They left the store moments later without any ideas.

“I know what we can do,” said Finchy. “Whenever I get stuck for ideas, I close my eyes, count to ten, and relax. I get the best ideas that way.”

Mo and Finchy headed to a remote spot on the beach, far away from other people.

The warmth of the sun and sand and sound of the ocean waves hitting against the shore made them very relaxed, so relaxed that they both fell asleep.

Several hours later, Mo woke up. He couldn't believe he had slept that long.

“Finchy, wake up,” he said. “We both fell asleep. The party is going to start soon and we still don't have any ideas for costumes.”

Finchy sat up, yawned, and stretched his legs and wings.

“My idea, you know the one about relaxing to come up with great ideas, doesn't always work the way it's supposed to,” he said. “I usually fall asleep. But I always wake up so refreshed. How about you?”

Mo rolled his eyes. “What are we going to do?” he asked.

He noticed a person on the beach, off in the distance. He was throwing a round plastic disk high in the air over and over again. His dog would chase it, sometimes catching it in mid-air.

Mo was sad. He really wanted to see what strange or weird things were inside the museum. But now it looked like he would never get the chance.

Finchy tried to cheer him up.

“So we miss one party,” Finchy said. “No biggie. Some of the humans will probably be dressed up as animals, maybe even dogs or birds. Not very exciting. But none of them will be as handsome as us.”

Mo turned toward Finchy with a giant smile on his face.

“That’s it!” said Mo, rather excitedly. “That’s exactly what we’ll wear. Nothing!”

Finchy was very confused.

“We’ll go as ourselves,” explained Mo. “Everyone will think that we’re wearing a costume and makeup. They’ll have no idea that we’re really animals!”

Mo jumped up on all four paws and told Finchy to follow him into the ocean. One small wave completely drenched them. They wanted to go to the party looking their best, not covered in sand or dirt.

They walked back to the delivery truck. Finchy brushed Mo's fur to make it shiny and smooth. Mo fluffed up Finchy's feathers to make them full. They hurried toward the museum. By the time they arrived, the party had already started.

Mo and Finchy stood in line as if they belonged there. When they got to the front door, a man dressed as a vampire asked to see their employee badge.

Before they had a chance to respond, a woman approached the door.

"Hey Brad, is that you?" she asked from inside the museum. She was staring straight at Mo. "You said you were going to be dressed as an animal. Your costume is great! You look like a real dog. Well, almost. Your ears don't seem real. And you even brought a toy bird as a companion!"

She turned toward the vampire and added, "That's Brad. I work with him. He's OK to let in."

Mo and Finchy entered the museum. Mo wondered what was wrong with his ears. *I thought they were among my best features.*

The lights were dim. The music was so loud that it hurt Mo's ears. Finchy and him

tried really hard to hear what people were saying to each other.

As they walked around the party, they learned some interesting things about the state they were visiting. One woman talked about how it was home to the first drive-in movie and Thomas Edison's lab where he invented the light bulb and motion picture camera. They overheard a man say that he was dressed as a Hadrosaurus, the state's official dinosaur.

While it was all very interesting, Mo and Finchy wandered off to see what kinds of strange and weird things were in the museum.

They saw a table made out of fourteen thousand jelly beans. Finchy wanted to eat one since he had never tasted a jelly bean but Mo talked him out of it.

They both cringed when they saw a spider sculpture made from scissors and knives. They saw the world's smallest car, a figure of the tallest man who stood over eight feet tall, and shrunken heads. Finchy said one of them reminded him of his Uncle Bruce.

Mo and Finchy were amazed at what they saw and were very glad they came.

But now it was time to go home. They began walking toward the front door when the same woman who thought Mo was Brad, her coworker, spotted him.

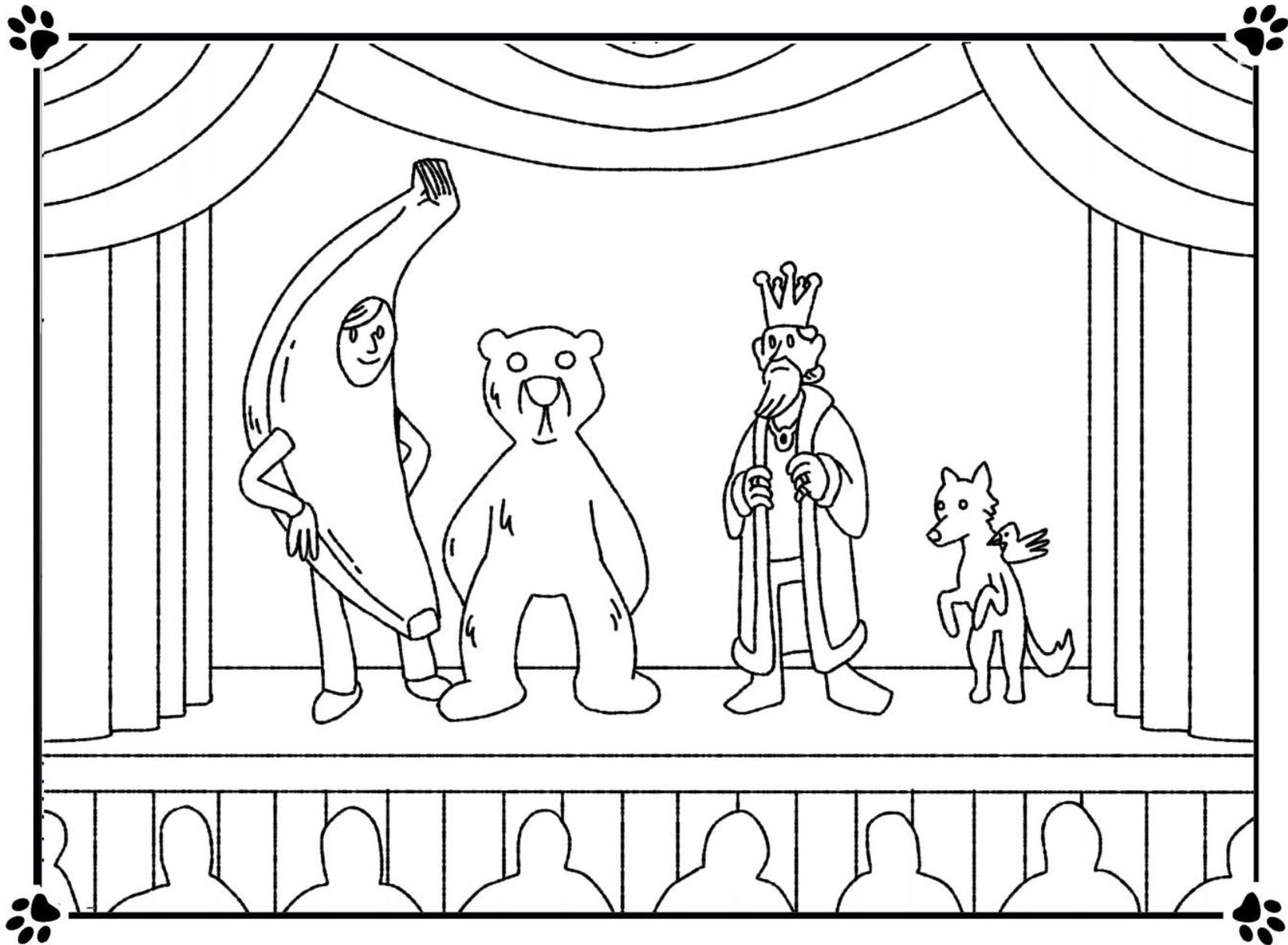
“There you are, Brad” she said. “I’ve been looking all over for you. The contest for best costume is about to begin. You and your toy bird have to compete.”

She pushed Mo toward the stage.

“I know how shy you are,” she whispered in his ear. “Don’t be nervous. All you have to do is slowly turn around so people can see your costume – front and back. Too bad you can’t bark like a dog. Then you’d win for sure!”

Mo and Finchy climbed the stage. Standing next to them were people dressed as a giant bear, banana, and king. Each person stepped forward, slowly turned around, and then bowed. Mo did the same but then started barking while Finchy flapped his wings and flew on to his shoulder.

The other employees started cheering and clapping, surprised at how much their coworker sounded like a real dog and how his toy bird was able to fly on to his shoulder.



At the end of the contest, the winner was announced. Mo won first prize. The judges gave him a big trophy, almost as big as he was tall.

Mo and Finchy were very excited they won but knew they had to leave before anyone found out they were really animals. They left the stage and headed for the front door.

People patted Mo on the back to congratulate him. One woman picked up Finchy, saying how cute he was for a bird. Finchy's tiny heart was pounding. The moment she loosened her grip on him, he stretched his wings and quickly flew out the front door with Mo close behind.

Mo ran as fast as he could, all the way back to the delivery truck.

“Whew!” said Finchy. “That was close, a little too close for comfort. I thought that woman was going to stuff me in her pocket or purse and take me home!”

Finchy and Mo then gazed at the trophy.

“Since we know the name of Brad's employer, we should really mail this trophy to him,” Mo said.

Finchy nodded in agreement and together, they wrote Brad this note:

Dear Mr. Brad,

It's a long story but this trophy belongs to you.

Mo and Finchy

PS: Mo wants to know what's wrong with his ears.

After they attached the note to the trophy, Finchy asked Mo something he had been wondering all evening.

“Many of the people who came to the costume party tonight dressed up as animals,” he said. “If you went to a costume party, would you ever dress up as a human?”

Mo thought about it for a few seconds.

“To look human, I'd have to wear clothes that would cover my beautiful, furry body and curly, fluffy tail,” he said. “Why would I ever want to do that? I look best the way nature intended me to look – naked!”