



The Adventures of **Mo**

Chapter 9

By Carol Patton

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Finding Florida

“Wow, look at all those computers!” shouted Finchy. “There must be hundreds, thousands, maybe millions of ‘em!”

“Shhh,” whispered Mo. “Do you want them to find us?” After a few seconds, he asked, “What’s a computer?”

“As far as I can tell, people use computers to find, get, and send stuff to each other,” said Finchy. “It may help us find Florida.”

Mo and Finchy were in a large, dimly lit room in a business complex called something Data Center. Mo didn’t catch the first name as the truck driver pulled into the parking lot.

People were busy chatting and staring at information on their computer screen. They wore long necklaces made of string that were attached to small photos of

themselves that stated their names.

Don't these people know their names or know what they look like?

Mo and Finchy hid in a corner for what seemed like forever, peering at all the information, data, maps, images, and photos on the different computer screens. There were also close-up shots of people. Finchy was convinced they had stumbled upon a secret spy ring.

“Psst,” whispered Mo to Finchy. He pointed to a computer on top of a desk in the far right corner. No one was using it or even close by. They slowly moved toward it, careful not to attract attention from the dozens of people in the room.

Mo jumped onto the chair in front of the desk, which fortunately, had a tall back to hide his white, furry body from view.

He stared at the dark computer screen. *Now what?*

Finchy flew toward the computer, landing on the desk next to the keyboard. He began pecking out a random series of letters and numbers with his beak.

Nothing happened. So he pressed more keys with different letters and numbers. Still, nothing.

“What are you doing?” asked Mo.

“The same thing everybody else is,” he said. “Hitting a bunch of keys.”

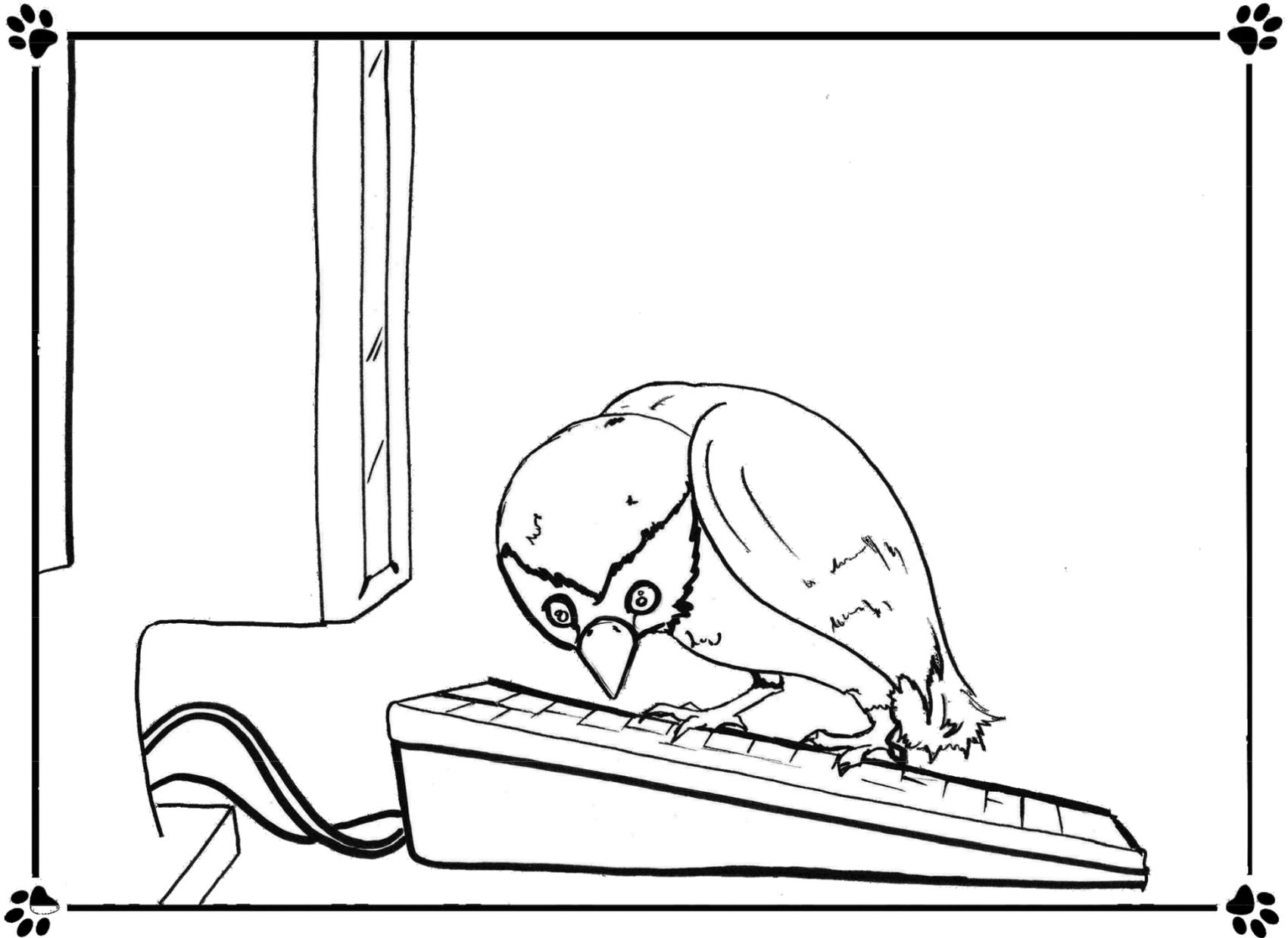
Mo realized they had to use the correct combination of keys to use the computer. But which ones?

He had an idea. Finchy could fly to the top of the tall cabinet that stood against the wall and watch which keys humans typed and in what order.

As Mo turned to Finchy to tell him, he leaned his left paw on the keyboard. Suddenly, the screen came to life, displaying a big world map.

Finchy fluttered his wings in excitement. “How’d you do that?” he asked.

Mo’s eyes grew large. “I have no idea.” He focused on the screen. “Let’s find Florida.”



With his beak, Finchy tapped out the letters that spelled the name of the state. The screen changed again, showing a red dot on a map and then lots of pictures of different people. In the background of one photo were several birds hunting for food in the grass.

Finchy pressed his left eye directly against the screen, and then sighed. “I was hoping that one of the birds was my cousin, Flo,” he said, rather disappointed.

But at least now they knew more about Florida. They learned it was a state in the southeastern part of a country called the United States of America. It had palm trees. White sandy beaches. Enormous buildings. Birds, dogs, and people, too.

Most interesting of all was that there was a chain of islands off the southern coast of Florida that had the word “keys” in its name.

Mo was convinced that the key he found back home must be valuable. Maybe it unlocked everything on the whole island.

There was just one problem. Since Mo and Finchy had no idea where they were, how would they know which way to go?

They thought about all the road signs they passed while traveling to this strange place. I-84 East. Great Salt Lake. Ogden. Still, they were clueless. Would they ever find Florida?

“Where’d you come from?” said a strange voice from behind them.

Mo leaped out of his seat. Finchy’s wings fluttered. A short, plump woman was standing next to them. They didn’t know what to say or do. Mo looked down at the floor, hoping they weren’t in trouble. The serious kind of trouble.

“Aren’t you just the cutest little things,” she said. “Hey, Jen, come here. Look what, I mean who, I found sitting in my chair.”

Suddenly, a group of people surrounded Mo and Finchy.

“They’re foreign spies,” said Jen. “Interrogate them, or better yet, throw them in jail.”

Mo and Finchy froze. They were so scared that they forgot to breathe. Then everybody started laughing and began making jokes about dogs and birds as intelligence officers.

Mo and Finchy glanced at each other. Since these humans believed animals were too dumb to use a computer, Mo and Finchy would use their ignorance to get out of this mess.

Finchy chirped and hopped around the desk. Mo wagged his tail, licking everyone's face, something he knew all humans enjoyed. He didn't think he was ever petted, patted, and praised so much in his entire life.

“Okay, everybody back to work,” said Jen. “I’ll escort our new friends out of the building.”

Mo and Finchy followed Jen, eager to leave. They walked through the back door, which had been propped open by the truck driver who was still delivering packages.

“Whew!” said Mo. “That was close. Really close. I thought we were going to jail!”

“Can you believe they bought our act?” said Finchy. “Are humans really that stupid? And you had to lick their yucky faces. What did they taste like?”

“Sweet,” said Mo. “Freedom always tastes sweet.”

