

DEL & ESTELLE
SERIALIZED

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THE PIER

Del continued his flight across the bridge. He now had a clear view of the San Francisco skyline.

“Pheew! What a viceew!” he said. “Beauuuutiful!”

Along the embankment stood a large white building with a big clock tower. A sign read:

PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO.

Behind the building, a cement ferry pier reached into the bay. On the pier, people were picnicking at wooden tables.

Del cut across the water toward the pier. “Halleluuujah!” he shouted. “Pigeon foood and I’m famished.”

In the meantime, Estelle watched Del glide toward the picnickers.

“That pig-headed pigeon has no idea what perils await a pigeon on that pier,” she said. “That’s seagull territory.” Then, with a longing glance toward the eastern shore, she flapped after Del.

A short time later, Del landed on the ferry pier. He stood there bobbing his head. The sights, sounds, and smells overwhelmed him. A man in sandals almost stepped on his tail feathers before he collected his senses and fluttered toward a picnic table.

“Woohoo! Sourdough bread! Fresh sea foood!” Del yelled. “Toss me your crusts! Your sandwich corners! Coooo! And best of all, the tips of your ice cream

cones!"

A small girl sitting at the end of the table spotted the pigeon. She flung a pretzel toward him.

"Woohoo! All for me!" Del cried and raced toward the snack.

He was about to stab at the pretzel when a dark shadow fell upon him. The next thing he knew—*swoosh!*—a large white form had snatched the piece from under his beak.

Confused, Del strutted in a circle. His head rocked to and fro. "Coo! Coo!" he said. "Whooo did that? Coo!"

He looked up to see a fat seagull standing on a wooden piling. The pretzel stuck out of its long yellow beak.

"No fair! I had dibs on that foood! Coo!"

Del flew to a table on the far side of the pier. Here, a woman in a wheelchair tossed him an oyster cracker.

"Dibs! I got dibs!" he cried. But again, before he could reach the cracker, the seagull swooped down and grabbed it.

"Foul! No fair!" said Del, racing to another table.

This time, a man in shorts tossed him a grape, and the seagull had it in its beak before it hit the ground.

"Ruuude bruuute!" Del cried. "Let's share! Wait your turn!"

As Del hurried table to table, Estelle watched from the roof of the Ferry Building. Time after time, she saw the seagull rob him of any handout. The people at the tables laughed as they tossed Del more scraps—pizza crusts, onion rings, ends of hot dog buns--only to see the seagull grab them from him and fly to the piling.

"Coo-a-roo! This is huumiliating," she said. "Del, where is your pigeon pride? Fly out of there, foolish coot."

"I've got to get out of here," said Del, as another seagull hovered over him. "Foood everywhere but not a morsel for poor Del."

Fanning his wing, he fluttered over the Ferry Building. He landed under a palm tree by some trolley car tracks.

"Coo! I'll starve in this city if I don't get some foood," he cried. "Poor, Del. Coo! What am I tooo dooo? Poor, poor pigeon."

As Del sulked, something struck his backside. He turned to find the heel of a sourdough bread loaf lying in the grass.

“Yahooo! All for me!” he said, and sank his beak into the soft, white bread.

When he came up for air, his face was full of crumbs. He looked around and saw no other birds.

“Booohooo, gulls,” he called out. “No sourdough bread for yooou! It’s all for Del, the smooothest, cooolest pigeon on the bay.”

Perched on a palm frond directly overhead, Estelle looked down at Del. She dropped a second chunk of bread onto his back.

“Pig out, pigeon,” she said to herself. “You’ll need the energy to fly home.”

