



Puppy Tails

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*As the moon goes to bed, the sun comes up
And here we meet a sleepy pup,
Who was walking through G-ville one bright sunny day,
Then saw The Villager and decided to stay.*

Chirp, chirp, cheep, chirp!

Doodle Dog poked his nose into the open window, pressing against the tight wire screen. He thought he could hear a bird talking to him, but he couldn't quite see it from this angle. A little twist to the left and a little scootch to the right and the frame of the window seemed to jump in his way no matter which direction he moved. If he leaned too far, he might fall out of the office, so the little floppy-eared puppy sat back for a moment to see if he could hear which direction the bird might be.

Chirp, chirp, cheep, cheep, cheep!

Well now that sound was getting louder by the second! The bird couldn't be too far away, but Doodle Dog wasn't getting anywhere just sitting there, so he scampered out the front door and leapt off the porch stoop to see if the flying creature wanted to play!

As he hurried around the corner of the office and scurried down the street, Doodle Dog kept an eye – and an ear – open to the sights and sounds around him so he could pinpoint just where the little friend had flown.

Chirp, chirp!

It was teasing him now! Silly little bird, where did it go? The floppy-eared puppy pattered through a patch of cool grass along the side of the road, peeking around a street sign and up to the top of a lamppost just in case the twittering would give away the bird's location.

Chirp, chirp, click, clack!

Doodle Dog paused for a moment now in the middle of a dirt trail, his paws squishing in the soft earth as he thought. Hmmm. He could hear the chirping and clicking and clacking in the distance, echoing off the sides of the nearby buildings and bouncing from one wall to the next as it made its way from the bird, through a series of airborne obstacles, and right to his floppy ears. It could be anywhere by now really, so Doodle Dog continued on, weaving around the buildings and peering around the walls as he made his way through town. Soon the chirping grew more faint, but the clicking and clacking grew louder! Now the floppy-eared puppy could tell that the clacking had a rhythm to it, not like a warbling bird but more like the constant thump, thump his purposeful paws made when he had somewhere to be and didn't want to let anything distract him on his journey.

Click, clack, thump, thump!

Doodle Dog didn't know where the bird had gone off to way up in the sky, chirp, chirp, cheeping as it went about its day, but as he turned the next corner through town, the floppy-eared puppy could finally see what was making the thump, thump, thumping sound as it hit the ground. Right in the middle of the sidewalk, a group of children enjoyed one of the last free days of summer play by doing tricks with a long rope just perfect for jumping! A little girl held one end of the thick string while at the other end a boy about the same age swung his end in teamwork with hers. Several friends gathered in a not-quite-straight line down the squares of warm concrete and one-by-one they took turns stepping into the space with the rotating rope and trying their best to avoid it as it swished and squiggled under their feet and then looped over their heads. One taller girl had to duck a bit as she jumped into the temporary trap, but as she danced around, her toes playing keep-away from the cord, she didn't miss a beat, bending down to place her palms on the ground and hopping like a frog on all fours! After another few moments of contorting into perfectly-timed shapes, the girl bounced right on out of the writhing rope without missing a step, as if she had simply been walking through the park!

A little boy about to go next spotted Doodle Dog watching curiously and waved for the floppy-eared puppy to join. Doodle Dog wasn't so sure about that! He had more feet than they did which meant more chances to get tangled up in the twitchy twine. The floppy-eared

puppy watched a bit more as the little boy stepped over the swinging rope, smoothly hopping from one foot to the next. As he hopped, he kept an eye on Doodle Dog who now inched closer and closer to the game. The rope spinners slowed down their turning as the cautious puppy approached. It didn't look TOO hard... maybe... maybe he could give it a try. Maybe if they didn't go TOO fast! As the rope gently swished again and whooshed with its own wind, the puppy poked his nose and then his paws near the skittering string. A little twist to the left and a little scootch to the right and soon the floppy-eared puppy was jumping right along with this little boy! At least being little meant they didn't have to duck! Somehow they managed to keep all six feet in time with the turning thread, no matter which direction it moved. If Doodle Dog leaned too far, he might fall out of step, but he listened to the thumping of the rope, his paws and the little boy's feet like a steady drum keeping up the pace, and they danced and skipped and jumped with the thumping until... the rope caught on the sidewalk just a smidge out of step with the little leapers, and everyone landed, laughing in a jumbled heap of jumpers!