



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.

The floppy-eared puppy stood on the sidewalk bracing against the chilly wind. Mini mounds of snow served as the only other evidence that winter had been there as most of the soft white blanket had melted into little droplets dripping off rooftops and plopping onto the grass below or meeting together where the sidewalk ends and the road begins and gushing down the hill in one big makeshift stream. Doodle Dog didn't know why anyone would want to be out in this weather if they could help it, but he bounded down the path, following the tiny river of water droplets, knowing they would soon lead him to the answer.

Walking briskly kept Doodle Dog warm and made quick work of the journey to the park. Before he knew it, he'd reached the edge of the forest that overlooked the pond where all the little kids like to go ice skating and make those beautiful designs like the glistening patterns that decorated the office window. But there were only shimmering skate marks on one side of the pond today as most of the ice had melted just like the blanket of soft snow. Instead, in its place, was the water of the pond that had been hiding under the cover of the ice, bright blue and sparkling clean from the melted snow and ice chips. The little stream that Doodle Dog followed from town was slowly sprinkling into the pond at one edge. At the other edge a crowd of other dogs and their humans were cheering and jumping up and down. What was all the excitement? Doodle Dog thought maybe they were moving around to try and keep warm, but as the little floppy-eared puppy curiously watched from a safe distance, the humans in the crowd dropped their heavy winter coats to the ground where the snow had once been and ran as quickly as they could into the water! A frosty mist floated up from the surface of the nearly-freezing waves as the dogs followed their humans, fur coats and all, into the frigid pond.

Doodle Dog continued to watch as what appeared to be family and friends of the daring dogs and their humans applauded and laughed at the sight before them. A few of the dogs splashed around and played with chewy toys and tennis balls floating in the water, but most of them did exactly what the humans were doing: as quickly as they had run into the pond, the shivering swimmers were running OUT of the pond. Their goal of a brisk, very, very cold dip in wintry water complete, the brave bunch dashed just as quickly to a small campfire burning brightly several yards away. The friends of the dripping dogs and their humans were ready and waiting to wrap their loved ones up in warm towels or give them hot mugs of steamy liquid and several people were snapping photos of the seasonal spectacle. Now Doodle Dog could see that many of the participants were dressed in wildly colorful outfits fit for such a silly day. Some were wearing funny hats with poufy pom-poms bobbing on the top – and not much else! – and some were covered from nose to toes in tight, slick fabric that reminded Doodle Dog of the sea lions that balanced bright balls on their noses in the picture books on his bookshelf.

The floppy-eared puppy thought of all the animals that like to swim and wondered how many of them might live in that very pond, half-covered in icy patterns and half now full of ripples from where the dogs and their humans had been. Even though they'd only been in the water for a few moments, the waves they had made were still tossing the water of the pond from one side to the next. Doodle Dog was so interested in the calming motion of the waves that he didn't notice the shower of droplets about to drip on him until his fur was covered in the random rain! Ack! That was COLD! He wasn't near enough to the pond itself to be attacked by the waves – what could it be? Doodle Dog immediately shook from head to paw and both floppy ears and then looked to see what had caused the sudden sea spray: a large dog with golden fur was shaking itself dry right next to him! The friendly dog gently nudged the little floppy-eared puppy in the direction of the pond, inviting him to take a quick dip too and join in the fun of the particularly playful plunge.

Curious as to why so many people and their pets seemed to be absolutely enjoying themselves even though they appeared to be doing something that Doodle Dog imagined would certainly not be any fun at all, the little floppy-eared puppy decided to be brave and see for himself. As he came closer to the water's edge, a chilly wind blew over the ice half and caught Doodle Dog right in the nose. Brrrr! Maybe he didn't have to be ALL brave... Doodle Dog delicately dipped a toe into the freezing liquid, little by little until... that quite was cold enough! With his paw shivering all the way, Doodle Dog went to find one of those nice warm blankets by the campfire. The floppy-eared puppy may not have jumped nose-first into this strange new adventure, at least he got his feet wet!