



Puppy Tails

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One look outside and Doodle Dog knew spring had apparently taken a detour or was suddenly lost and hadn't bothered to ask for directions. The floppy-eared puppy is all for enjoying the scenic route but spring needed to hurry up and bring its warm weather with it. The mounds of snow grew taller than the little puppy by the day and they were so wide now too that he practically had to stop for a snack halfway when he wanted to scamper around them! The icicles hanging from the edge of the roof grew longer and longer as the drops that dripped froze to the ends of what was already there, one drop on top of one drip on top of another, connecting the solid drops so quickly it seemed they had been caught in mid-plop.

Though the snow around him seemed in no rush to leave, the air wasn't quite as chilly as it had been, not nearly as nippy at Doodle Dog's nose, not even as windy through his floppy ears. Maybe with a little luck, that idea would catch on to the rest of the atmosphere and bring a not-so-cold day here at last! So instead of waiting for spring to come to him, the curious little puppy decided he would go look for it himself and see if he couldn't encourage its arrival just a bit. Past the roof and its icicles almost reaching the ground, through the patches of yards with their frozen grass crunchy under his paws and across the street covered in mushy slush Doodle Dog bounded along. But all of them were still the same wintry wonderlands that they were the last time he had ventured out! Perhaps it was time to go somewhere he hadn't been in a long while...

Soon the little floppy-eared puppy's paws took him past the neighborhoods bordering the tiny main street, through the meadow with its hibernating flower buds just waiting for sunshine and across the playground covered in heavy wet clumps temporarily taking up the spaces where children would soon sit. Just past the painted toys, on the other side of the trees bordering the park, a fenced-in paddock stretched out the length of the pasture. Doodle Dog made his way under the lowest hanging branches, careful not to douse himself in the snow teasingly ready to pounce on unsuspecting passers-by and slowed even more when he reached the series of wood beams creating a cozy corral to keep its inhabitants safe from wandering away into potentially dangerous territories.

The mini version of Doodle Dog's usual meadow was a clean white sheet of powdery paper just like all the rest he encountered along his route. But out of the corner of his eye, the little floppy-eared puppy caught sight of something that reminded him it was not completely the same and he was not totally alone. Something quite a bit larger than his small stature, quite a bit browner than the smattering of dirt peeking out from the edges of the snowflakes and quite a bit louder as it neighed happily at its new visitor. The horse gently meandered over as Doodle Dog put his front paws up on the lowest rail to get a better look and say hello! A bright blue blanket draped over the horse's back protected it from the stubborn temperatures and its strong, solid hooves kept its feet warm just like the floppy-eared puppy's fur tried to shield his paws from the snow. Despite his thick fuzzy coat, an abrupt gust of wind made Doodle Dog shiver as he tried to talk to his new friend. He shook and shook from nose to fluffy tail chasing the chill away. Then, to the little puppy's amusement, the horse, at least ten times his size for sure, shook and shook from its nose to its blanket-covered back to its long, swishy, black tail too! But it didn't stop there – immediately turning on its hoof, the horse galloped to the middle of the field, dropped down in the snow and rolled around and around just like a puppy would do! Its hooves flailing in the air, the horse appeared to be quite content as it plopped one way and flopped the other so Doodle Dog decided to join it and see what all the fuss was about.

In no time at all the horse, now completely covered in the snowy fluff save for the tip of its nose and a few strands of hair from its tail, reminded Doodle Dog of something he had seen recently, something quite a bit bigger than the original but familiar all the same. Wait...not seen... BEEN! With all the clumps of snow making great white cotton-candy puffs poofing out here and there and everywhere from all sides of the steed, the floppy-eared puppy couldn't help but think the horse had disappeared as now it looked just like a giant sheep! Doodle Dog was pretty sure there wasn't a pillow with enough stuffing to make a cotton-candy cloud-sheep snowball-overgrown dust bunny costume for his four-hooved friend, but Mother Nature apparently had just the right supplies for this horse in sheep's clothing, well, at least until the materials melted away. Though

Halloween was long gone, and Doodle Dog hoped the snow would do the same, in the meantime he could enjoy being an accidentally trendsetting puppy and perhaps imagine that his newly-found influence inspired the season to change too!