



Puppy Tails

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Doodle Dog uncurled his little body and slowly stretched his legs so that they peeked out over the edge of his cozy bed, extending his paws so that they untucked from the soft blanket keeping the floppy-eared puppy, his legs and his paws quite warm and comfy. About to curl right back up again, Doodle Dog thought of all the woodland creatures who lived in the park, in the meadow and in the forest at the edge of the lake with the warm blankets of grass and flowers and leaves and thistles to keep them cozy. He wanted to keep exploring outside today, but one glance out the window (that he still thought was hung in the wrong place) and he could see the land still dressed in snowy white. Many of the other animals spent this time of year tucked in their warm homes and snoring away. They had the right idea – Doodle Dog thought hibernating sounded pretty good right about now!

If he couldn't go outside to explore today, well, not so much COULDN'T but rather really didn't want to, Doodle Dog knew there was plenty to do inside. That is, if he wanted to get out of bed at all. He hadn't had the chance yet to map out the insides of the new office and, although the new gateway to the outside world seemed familiar enough, leading him to the usual friendly creatures he knows and loves, the insides were still a bit of a mystery. Doodle Dog could either spend all day in bed or he could venture out and discover something new and even though the idea of snoozing away to see where his dreams could take him seemed quite lovely and exciting on its own, there would be plenty of time for that later. So, slowly but surely, the little puppy uncurled the rest of him, part by part and bit by bit, the last of it being his floppy ears tucked so cozily around him, and stretched his way out of his fuzzy blanket, out of his cozy bed and across the cool floor of his room, his paws gently padding along the wood planks to the door until... EEP! Though his body seemed to be almost nearly woken up, Doodle Dog himself wasn't quite awake yet and the second he reached the opening to the hallway his half-asleep eyes saw something dart along the wall. Without a second thought he scampered right back to his cozy – and safe!

– bed back on the other side of the room!

Huddled under his covers, a fluffy armor protecting him from whatever it was that crept just outside the fortress of his room, Doodle Dog cautiously peered his nose and then his eyes over the edge of his cozy bed. Through the still-open door, he could see the whatever-it-was ebbing and flowing with the light and dark designs on the colorful paint. As the floppy-eared puppy watched, the silhouette uncurled this way and stretched that way, extending one part of itself toward the ceiling where the light fixture lived and then squishing back in on itself as Doodle Dog heard noises down the hall of people busily going about their work. Doodle Dog wasn't sure what was making the shadows, and he tried not to let the unknown bother him, but that was a task proving to be easier said than done.

Trying to convince himself it really was nothing out there, Doodle Dog still couldn't convince his nose to completely come out from his protective cocoon. He nuzzled in even deeper, so low to the ground that the only view he had was the space under his nearby bookcase. Tiny piles of soft gray fluff peered back at him. Hey there! The dust bunnies from the old office must have hitched a ride on the underside of the furniture. Glad to have the friendly reinforcements, Doodle Dog lifted his head up just a bit and eyed the seemingly menacing spots of darkness in the hallway. With his newly-discovered moral support by his side, the little floppy-eared puppy and the little balls of fluff served an impromptu audience while the shadows climbed up and down the walls in acrobatic performance. At first Doodle Dog thought they resembled creepy spiders with their long, spindly legs crawling and lengthening to superbug proportions. At one point they grew long and narrow and started to writhe like snakes – EW! - but then the wispy lines quickly morphed into what appeared to be curls of smoke and fog which were slightly less scary depending on how one thought about it. And think about it is exactly what Doodle Dog did. As the floppy-eared puppy kept an eye toward the hallway, he imagined the lines and waves twisting and bending into more pleasant shapes. The fog wisps joined together with the spider and briefly made a flying bat with velvety wings which then uncurled its little body and stretched slowly like Doodle Dog did just a few moments ago. Soon the bat extended into a pretty bird with a long tail and then in just a moment more became a floating butterfly fluttering along the framed prints on the wall. Then the butterfly folded into a bunny rabbit, soft and sweet. The shadow bunny curled and unfurled its floppy ears and *POOF* like magic took a hop and turned into another familiar form: a puppy scampering from the light to the shade and back again. Even in the shadows a guard dog can be quite useful and Doodle Dog knew he was indeed quite safe after all!