



Puppy Tails

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With his extra-special holiday letter signed with a paw print, sealed with a wish and delivered (well, on its way!) to the North Pole, and all his shiny Christmas packages successfully sparkling on the stoops scattered from one neighborhood to the next, Doodle Dog decided it was the perfect opportunity to take some time for a leisurely meander to see the sights through town.

In addition to the streetlamp posts decorated like very skinny trees with big bulbs of light for stars that Doodle Dog raced past on his delivery route, each street seemed to be draped in a different kind of festive covering just for the season. The sidewalk leading from the office to the quaint little shops opened his journey with a border of itty bitty candles lining the edges of the path. Each tiny dot glowed with all its might like the stars that would shine in the sky that night. Up above now, though, what caught the little floppy-eared puppy's eye was a series of glittering tinsel strands looping from one storefront to the next, connecting the awnings back and forth, back and forth as though it was an oversized game of jump rope across the paved main street. Carefully tied so not to dip too low, the silver strings reminded Doodle Dog of what might happen if a spinning disco ball were flattened and unraveled and pulled like taffy. The floppy-eared puppy wondered what then would happen if too many curious birds settled in for a landing on the garlands – they might break apart and shower the streets in confetti in time for the New Year's celebration!

Just off the center route, the trail turned to the right and to Doodle Dog's delight the next section of town had snowflakes in every shape, size and material a little puppy could imagine! White wisps made from pretty papers hung in shop windows while small squirts of snowy foam drew dainty designs on the glass itself. As though he'd stepped inside a snow globe himself, bits of creamy confetti fastened to balcony railings pretended to fall over the little floppy-eared puppy as he pattered along and the bulbs on top of these streetlamps were round and frosty making a muted hush of light beam gently around him.

Beyond the snow globe street, Doodle Dog could see the path to the park and his favorite meadow and he scampered quickly toward his next destination. The floppy-eared puppy gleefully wove through the forest of trees lining the edge of the meadow, some skinny, some tall, some wide and some small. Doodle Dog loves them all! A dusting of real snow tickled the treetops like a smattering of sugar from the bakery. Up and up Doodle Dog gazed, trying to take in each beautiful branch and its evergreen coat. The quite calm and peaceful atmosphere helped the little puppy to enjoy the view from the ground to the top and everything in between... that is until a sudden wintry gust grabbed his scarf and took it up, up, up to the very top of one of the tallest trees! Oh no! Though his gaze climbed up the tangle of twigs and boughs quite quickly to where the colorful fabric rested, there was no way his paws could scamper up that high so Doodle Dog tried everything he could think of to get his scarf back down to him where it belonged. First he nudged the trunk with his back legs to see if he could shake it loose but all that did was get him showered with snow! Brrrr! Then, considering how it went up in the first place, Doodle Dog took a deep breath to see if he could blow it back down, but all that managed to knock off a limb was some dried leaves and sticks a few inches above his nose. Finally, Doodle Dog decided to try and ask nicely for the tree to give him back the scarf, but apparently his request was lost in translation or maybe airmail didn't deliver to those parts of the woods.

With nothing left to do for now, the little floppy-eared puppy made his way back to the office to warm up at least and come up with a plan. When Doodle Dog made it home, he snuggled into his blanket, trying not to be mad that the wind had taken his scarf. He was a bit sad since he loves his scarf, but maybe the tree needed it more than he did. Probably, he thought, since the tree is outside ALL the time and the floppy-eared puppy has the chance to come inside when he gets too chilly. Trying not to be too sad, he nuzzled the soft fabric and stepped into the mound to get comfy, but when his paw touched the cozy blanket, his claw caught on the edge. RIIIIIP! Oh no! Doodle Dog stepped back out of his bed to see better what had happened to his blanket. A poke from his claw a few inches from the edge started to tear even more and Doodle Dog suddenly had an idea. Clasp the smaller piece in his teeth, he gently tugged and tugged until the strip of blanket ripped off completely. It was just about the same width as his scarf settled in the tree so Doodle Dog wrapped it around his neck to try it on for size. His blanket wasn't quite as big now but it was still plenty comfy and now he had a matching scarf to wear outside. It was like taking his comforting blanket with him wherever he went!