



Puppy Tails

MIALIE T. SZYMANSKI | CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

*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.*

With thoughts of his adventures on the high seas – er, high cushions – fresh in his mind, Doodle Dog considered what life as a pirate might be like, spending his days floating along on a calm ocean or sometimes being tossed to and fro on an angry sea, left at the mercy of the stormy winds and crashing waves. How frustrating that would be to know your destination and be constantly thrown off course!

The floppy-eared puppy wondered how the sailors kept going on their journeys even during the times when all seemed lost and that they could never possibly make it to their goal because the whole world (or at least the watery part of it) seemed to be against them! Doodle Dog imagined how even all the usually friendly elements of nature could turn not-so-friendly, like the rocking water dipping and rolling so soothingly and the white caps bobbing along the top of the tides that had so suddenly morphed into goopy streams of hot lava and sinister chunks of glowing coals!

From what he had heard from all the storybooks making his bookcase sink deeper and deeper like a boat in choppy waters, pirates usually had maps to show them how to get to the treasure they wanted. And they usually had tools to help them get there, like the ship, a compass and a spyglass to see things that were far away, all to help the seamen do their very important jobs. Doodle Dog thought of all the very important responsibilities he has and the tools he uses to try and accomplish his goals. Even a little floppy-eared puppy has jobs to do! He imagined what he would do if he was a crew member on a pirate ship set out for treasure. First Mate Doodle Dog at your service! Doodle Dog knew he was very talented at digging things up, so the captain wouldn't even need a shovel when he found the treasure. And he was very good at hunting things and sniffing them out, so he could help locate just the right place where the treasure should be according to the giant X on the map. Well, first he would have to get to the shore from the boat and he knew that would be easy – he is a very good doggie-paddler! The curious floppy-eared puppy let his mind wander to the imaginary island where he and his shipmates would actually be wandering in search of the trails marked by whoever had hid the sparkling gems and piles of gold in the first place.

But as he thought of his imaginary responsibilities on this deserted island with its sandy beaches and lush foliage, Doodle Dog began to think of his real doggie duties – the ones that he completed every day, not as a crew member on a plundering pirate ship, but rather as the quiet, friendly inhabitant of an office in the corner of a small town far, far away from the raging seas. And his goals didn't really include rewards of piles of gold and boxes of glittering gems. Doodle Dog would much prefer a doggie biscuit and a squeaky new chewy toy. Speaking of chewy toys, his were all scattered around the room. One of his very important tasks was to keep his corner of the office neat and tidy. Better get to it! But wait, as the resident guard dog he also had to make sure the office was safe from possible intruders, like the birds outside on the telephone wires that often looked like they were trying to figure out a way in. The floppy-eared puppy glanced out the window to see the birds were still there, squawking like the parrot balancing on the pirate ship's helm. With a bold bounce past the couch, Doodle Dog started over to the windowsill to bark them away. But then Doodle Dog remembered just how MUCH he had left to do! How was he possibly going to accomplish it all? He didn't want to wind up swabbing the decks with his furry tail because he didn't get it all done!

The floppy-eared puppy sat back on his paws and thought for a minute, considering how his own treasure map might look to get him where he wanted to be. Each mark on the map was a step closer for the pirates, and Doodle Dog decided that each of his goals could be achieved one paw at a time. He didn't have to do EVERYTHING right this very second, so he carefully thought out a plan to carry out each of his duties. To tidy up the office, first he would gather up his chewy toys, second he would huff away all the dust critters and third he would carefully straighten up all the rugs and cushions that had gone askew when he was playing. Completing the three little tasks eventually added up to one big success! So off Doodle Dog went to make a mental map for each of his very big important goals, putting one paw in front of the other all the way to the giant X at the end to mark where his "treasure" of a job well done – and chewy reward – would be found!