



Puppy Tails

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It had been quite a while since Doodle Dog found himself outside after dark. Though indeed quite curious most hours of the day, the little floppy-eared puppy always tried to make sure he was home, tucked safely in the office, before the sun went to bed and the street lamps lit up to take over its job for the evening. It was then, on this particular occasion, just a bit unusual that as the shade of the sky deepened into a blue so dark it was almost violet Doodle Dog was not, in fact, inside his warm blanket in his favorite corner of the office, but was actually still admiring nature's morphing ceiling... under the earth's soft covering that is the sky itself!

Sometimes Doodle Dog's imagination could get the better of him should he be caught in the dark and he would think of all the creepy, menacing and otherwise scary creatures that might be outside whether real or not, but tonight he felt perfectly safe – he was just in the backyard after all and could see the warm glow of the light from inside the office. He knew if he really needed to, he could bark at the door and someone would let him in. But for now, the little floppy-eared puppy curled up on the cool grass and let the night air breeze over his nose. Soon not only did Doodle Dog find himself outside and in the dark, but he also found that he was quite enjoying himself as he gazed up at the quite-dark-now heavens above him. Little spots of light were just beginning to shimmer like the street lamps dotting the sidewalks through town. These little spots twinkled in and out as a few new ones popped out from this side and then from that side to join the earliest shiners. With the wind

quietly blowing a few darkened clouds across the moon in an impromptu type of celestial dance, the giant orb shared the stage with the tiny stars that seemed to form their own little groups across the distinctive canvas.

As Doodle Dog continued to watch each element join in with the others, he began to notice different shapes seemingly appear above him like the day he spent all afternoon watching the clouds form marshmallow scenes right before his eyes. The sparkly outlines of the scattered dots reminded Doodle Dog of the books he had seen his favorite little humans drawing in, connecting each little point to the next, and the floppy-eared puppy imagined what scenes might appear if he drew a make-believe line from one star to the next. Right overhead was a square with a tail that looked a bit like a giant spoon or a ladle. Not too far from it there was a smaller version of the same picture too! Doodle Dog was going to see how many more of those similar spoons there were way up there, but he suddenly saw a very, very bright spot – the brightest above him! – that caught his attention and momentarily distracted him from his space-centered quest. Perhaps it wasn't a star at all, but maybe it was a planet or something made by man like an airplane that could fly really, really high. But before Doodle Dog could decide what that very bright star could be, he caught sight of something flying very, very fast out of the corner of his eye. Was that a spaceship? A comet? No! It was a star shooting straight across the very top of the heavens! A faint streak from the zipping speck left behind a trail of star dust that stretched a very long way indeed! Doodle Dog wondered how long it would take to follow that trail and how long it would take to get there. The moon and the stars and the sparkles they created seemed so very far away. The floppy-eared puppy figured he would probably never know exactly how far.

The sky now fully glittered above him and Doodle Dog could see even more shapes appearing. He tried to figure out what they were or what they could be and soon found himself not only outside in the dark but very, very sleepy. As the floppy-eared puppy began to doze off under the starry canopy, he spied yet another imaginary outline of something else with a tail just like the streaking star but very similar to the little puppy too. Doodle Dog remembered hearing a story about a dog star but never knew quite where to find it. As his thoughts started to drift just a little bit, the floppy-eared puppy continued to look up into the stars and connect the shimmering dots, and another constellation formed right before his droopy eyes. There it was...the dog! Peering out from the gleaming outline was a dog just like Doodle Dog but glowing above the stars instead of snoozing under them. Maybe someday that dog would come down to the backyard and Doodle Dog could ask him all about his adventures!