



Puppy Tails

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*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.*

Though the horse was so mostly covered in the fluffy cotton snow that it more resembled a puffy sheep than a sleek steed, the one part of its form that hadn't been hidden was its tail, long, thin and dark standing out among the short poufs of bright flakes. Watching the little floppy-eared puppy make his way to the edge of the fence to continue on his next adventure, the horse gave it a quick flick as if to say farewell for now. And as Doodle Dog happily swished his own tail right back, he noticed something that hadn't really stood out to him before. Although his new friend has four legs like he does and certainly likes to play in the snow just like he does (and maybe even moreso!) the horse's grand size wasn't the only thing that was different between them. Doodle Dog looked back at his own tail, not long, not thin and not coarse but rather just the right length for his small body, a bit thicker from all his fur and very, very soft. Doodle Dog wondered, even though they both had a tail, why they weren't quite the same. But right then, the horse's tail swished up to brush a bug off its back and that sure seemed to be a pretty good reason why it was so long and thin! Not wanting the bug, now knocked off its original course, to get the idea to follow the floppy-eared puppy instead, Doodle Dog waved his tail once more and off he went down the pasture, paying attention to how his own tail helped him balance as he carefully pawed his way through the snow drifts and along the fence line. He remembered how his feline friends had tails more similar to his than the horse's and they liked to climb trees and perch on very precarious

places. Hmm! Maybe that's why it was a little thicker and just the right size for him. If he had a long, thin tail like the horse he wouldn't be able to steady himself very well while scampering along!

Doodle Dog was glad he had a thick fuzzy tail instead of a long, thin one, and he playfully pounced from one snow mound to the next, grateful for the extra help. Just on the other side of one of the snow mounds, something small and fuzzy scurried in front of the floppy-eared puppy. Eep! As much help as he had though, the surprise made Doodle Dog lose his steadiness and he tumbled down the front of the short white hill to see a squirrel sort of running, sort of hopping through the slush with an over-sized acorn clenched in its jaw. The nut was nearly bigger than the squirrel's head so all Doodle Dog seemed to see for a second was an acorn running along with four little claws and a bristly tail. The acorn's "tail" stuck straight up at the back like a spiky brush, splayed out in all directions as if it had rubbed up against a rug that made it stick out and stay that way. But as the little floppy-eared puppy sat up in the soft snow and watched the squirrel scamper up a tree with its lunch, the tail went this way and that helping the small creature go straight on up the bark. Doodle Dog was sure the tiny claws probably helped just as well, but when the squirrel leapt from branch to branch the compacted tufts did a very important job too as through the air it flew.

Next, following the trail down the pasture with all of its snow mounds, the little floppy-eared puppy meandered along, careful not to be caught off guard again. Soon enough, the mini mountains began to turn into puffy piles and then gradually gave way to a little bit of green earth poking through winter's remaining mess as Doodle Dog pattered along the path. He wouldn't be snuck up on by another tiny brown creature with all this white and green around! Maybe he would have to use his tail to swat creatures away like the bug on the horse's back if that happened. Or so he thought...

It wasn't a small, scurrying squirrel surprising him that made the little floppy-eared puppy pause in his pawtracks now but rather something that looked like one of the cotton poufs had fallen off the sheep-like clusters mounded around him. One of the snowballs was moving! Doodle Dog carefully scooped closer to the slightly shaking snow puff and just as he bent down to sniff it, the little bunny, pure white and round like the fluffy piles, sort of hopped, sort of bounded away, its wisp of a cotton ball tail bouncing down the trail with it. The bunny's tail wasn't long, thin or coarse like the horse's or short, tufted and bushy like the squirrel's or even thick and furry like the floppy-eared puppy's. Other than helping it disappear, Doodle Dog wasn't sure why the bunny's tail was so different from any he'd seen that day, but he figured it would be quite the perfectly good mystery to solve while he scampered on his way!

