



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.*

It was time to go outside – Doodle Dog was tired of being cooped up indoors! Some furry rodent had supposedly predicted that winter would be camped out for quite a while longer, but some other furry rodent claimed that wasn't true. Doodle Dog didn't know who to believe so the only thing he could do was go and find out for himself and see what his own floppy ears told him!

A quick breeze snapped at his nose as he turned the corner to the sidewalk. Doodle Dog bounded away from it in one bounce and the gust took a wrong turn. Ah ha! Can't catch me now! The floppy-eared puppy scampered down the street as though ready to chase winter away and escort spring into town.

Soon the coarse grass under his paws told him he arrived at the outskirts of the park and the warmer wind in his ears told him spring was trying to decide whether or not to show up today. Doodle Dog hoped it would! In the meantime Doodle Dog watched as the vast field next to the playground filled up with dozens of townspeople, their children (Doodle Dog's favorite kind of humans!) and their pets who HAD apparently decided to show up today at the park. The little puppy watched curiously from a safe distance as the crowd gathered around several somethings in the middle of the field. Too far away to see clearly and too short to peer over all those people even if he could get a good view, Doodle Dog couldn't quite figure out what had everyone's attention. A loud WHIRR started up, almost like the engine of the delivery truck starting up every morning at the bakery down the street. Almost, but not quite. This sound wasn't as thunderous. It was sort of like the hairdryers Doodle Dog heard when he meandered past the beauty shop in town. Almost, but not quite. Although this sound didn't roar like the car engine, it was much noisier than the hairdryers and it seemed to sputter and hiccup as it turned on. It sort of resembled the lawn mowers Doodle Dog saw cutting grass as he hurried past yards so not to get green clippings sprayed on his fur. There would be plenty more of those to avoid once spring did arrive again. But no, that wasn't the right sound either. His floppy ears didn't seem to be telling him much of anything, so Doodle Dog decided his eyes would have to do the talking this time and that meant slowly and carefully sneaking up to the crowd for a better look.

But apparently he wasn't sneaky enough!

As Doodle Dog JUST nudged his way to the front of the group to see a scaled down, miniaturized version of the cars which zoomed past the office every day, the floppy-eared puppy's paws started to leave the coarse grass behind them and now had nothing but air squishing through them. Doodle Dog noticed several of these go-karts in a row, brightly colored dots lined up together. Some of them already had drivers settled in to their seats – Doodle Dog's favorite humans taking up the spots! And next to the driver's space in each go-kart was a special seat for a friend. The strong hands that lifted him off the ground now gently dropped Doodle Dog into one of those special seats and buckled him in a pet harness next to a little boy with spiky dark hair, its wild, tousled style reminiscent of a cartoon character in one of the stories about playing games with cards full of dragons and other mythological creatures.

Doodle Dog barely had time to glimpse the shiny purple paint on the side of his go-kart before a green flag



dropped in front of them and his cartoon boy hit the gas pedal. Eeeeeee! As they made the first turn around a stack of hay bales marking the trail in front of them, Doodle Dog was thankful for the harness keeping him strapped in, though his floppy ears sure were being hit with more than that quick breeze that had wanted to nip his nose at the office! Just at that moment, his pint-sized chauffeur swerved to the left and both driver and passenger bounded away from it in one bounce and this gust took a wrong turn too. Ah ha! Can't catch us now! The floppy-eared puppy let out an excited bark as the duo continued to dart and dash around obstacles, path markers and other go-karts, round and round they went in a blur of violet leading a larger blur made up of several mini blurs in blue, yellow, orange, red and green. To the spectators the racers probably resembled a melted rainbow streaking across the park hunting for the pot of gold.

Just before the next curve, the red car's driver sped up and cut right in front of the purple blur. A fluffy blond dog glanced at the floppy-eared puppy with the same expression – a blend of excitement and terror – that Doodle Dog was giving him as they whizzed past. Almost as quickly, the purple blur's driver hit the brake just at the right time and slid sideways behind the red car, squeezing between its back bumper and a yellow go-kart nipping at their heels. With a heavy foot on the gas pedal, Doodle Dog's driver zipped in front again.

Before he knew it, the black and white checkered flag that dropped in front of them turned into a bright red banner announcing the final finish line of the day and all the young drivers and their furry copilots glided into the center ring of the track. Once the whirr of the minute engines quieted and the occupants piled onto the grass, the flag man draped medals over the front of each go-kart with the blur that once was purple now receiving a drop of shiny gold to add to its color scheme. Hip, hip, hooray!