



Puppy Tails

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Bounding up and down the stairs for some inside exercise had indeed been quite fun, but Doodle Dog couldn't help wishing he was spending time outside with the warm sun. Each trip as he chased the little paper ball up to the top floor of the office, the floppy-eared puppy peered out the window to see another special round object, the big yellow orb in the sky, waking the earth from its wintery slumber. On the way back to the bottom level of the office, still in pursuit of the squished, scrunched, crinkly ball, Doodle Dog could again see the sun peeking from the window above his favorite bookcase. IT was following HIM! On the next dash to the upper rooms, Doodle Dog paused long enough to plop his paws on the windowsill and take a good look out at the bits of town stretching out around him. The reliable sunshine greeted him again, extending its rays into the office and warming the little puppy's paws. Patches of green dotted the design of streets and shops that intertwined with the lush splotches plunked here and there by Mother Nature. Doodle Dog could see little pops of individual flowers plopped one by one into the earth. He always wondered where the seeds went since he could never find them after the posies moved in!

From his perch, the floppy-eared puppy could also see right into the backyard behind his building with its own familiar flowers and piles of pebbles making colorful paths between the office, the sidewalk, the street and the trees bordering the property. And of course, above it all, the sun swung in the sky, expertly directing cloud traffic and bringing light to all the corners of the land. Though Doodle Dog was used to seeing that large circular object in most daytime scenes, as he took advantage of the expansive view, the little puppy caught sight of something unusually certainly new! Another round object visited his vision today, resembling the paper ball and the sun in shape but in not quite the same way. From way up above, this round circle appeared flat like a plate with a dark smooth border and a net for a middle. Silver prongs poked out all around the edges reminding Doodle Dog of when he wakes up after a restless night of tossing and turning to find his fur sticking out in every which direction.

The floppy-eared puppy didn't wait another moment, left his perch and scampered across the upper level, down the stairs, around the corner of the foyer and out the back door to see this new addition up close. Though his paws were already warmed, as he emerged into the yard, the sun shone down on the rest of him, making the

fur on his legs, back, tail and floppy ears just as cozy too. Mmmmmmm! Doodle Dog enjoyed the comfy moment and returned the welcome with a "hello" bark of his own before turning his attention to the creature looming in front of him. From down here it didn't look quite as round or as flat, and the metal legs extending from the bottom had been completely hidden from the view upstairs. As the little puppy curiously sniffed all around the grassy ground investigating this latest arrival, Doodle Dog decided the trampoline definitely deserved a closer look. He might be small, but with a well-placed paw and a tail-wiggle or two, up he went over the dark leathery border and landed his leap right on the cushy net stretched out between it. Success!

Getting his balance, Doodle Dog carefully stood up on his paws, the springy surface slightly boing, boing, boinging under him. With each step, the puppy tested this new trail, gingerly walking from edge to edge and back again. Once he seemed comfortable enough, Doodle Dog put more weight into his placed paw and the special material sank accordingly, its spring supporting the little puppy with ease. The more of Doodle Dog that stepped in one spot at a time, the deeper the net dropped, but it always popped right back up! Hmmmm. Doodle Dog remembered seeing the little kids at the lake bouncing on the small trampoline near the high dive and doing all sorts of twists and tricks in the air before disappearing into the water. The curious puppy wondered if he could try something simple to start so he hopped in place like a bunny on a chase through the forest. Now it was Doodle Dog that was boing, boing, boinging! As he hopped high enough, Doodle Dog tried to twist backward into a flip of sorts but didn't quite get all the way turned over, landing instead into a tangled pile of paws and tail and floppy ears. The springs supporting the net didn't let him stay flat for long, tossing him gently back into the air, encouraging him to try again. This time Doodle Dog tucked down his nose, touching his chin to his furry chest, and that led the way for the rest of him to follow. Bit by bit the little puppy turned right over into a springy somersault, landing a little more gracefully than the last time! As Doodle Dog continued to bounce, he thought of the fun he had not too long ago hopping from the river rocks over the stream or ducking under the jump rope with his favorite humans. He knew that he would see them again soon now that the warmer weather had returned. And what better way to welcome in the springtime than with a new little spring in his own step!