



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*

The view outside the window hadn't changed much since Doodle Dog looked out last. It seemed as though whenever a tiny bit of snow mound melted even the slightest, more snowflakes came floating right on down to take its place. And every time the office door opened, a brisk winter wind dashed in, darting from room to room on a repeating route, just long enough to say hello before disappearing through the walls as quickly as it had come in the first place. Doodle Dog didn't mind its hasty exit - that the vigorous visitor kept the chilly conversation short was just fine with him! Brrrr! The floppy-eared puppy didn't need to see for himself or go scampering down the sidewalk to know that Mother Nature wasn't in a warm mood yet, and staying inside appeared to be just the way to spend another day.

There was one problem with that plan: there had been a LOT of inside days lately and Doodle Dog couldn't quite help but feel a little cooped up! Sure, being curled up in a cozy blanket could be very comfy on a cold, snowy day and the floppy-eared puppy very much appreciated his soft bed snug on the rug in his corner of the office. But too much of a good thing could make even the most relaxed puppy go a little stir-crazy and Doodle Dog decided he needed to stretch his paws somehow. As he un-nuzzled his nose from its warm wrappings and touched his toes one by one to the floor, trying to avoid the tiny draft that was still a little hard to ignore, three of Doodle Dog's paws connected with the mushy mat, but one claw caught on something squishy and not exactly soft. A scrunched up wad of paper left over from the week's writing assignments had made its way onto the fuzzy fabric before now, winding up crinkled and crunched under the puppy's last paw. The tiny ball, no bigger than a dust bunny, bounced back from being accidentally flattened under Doodle Dog's fur and sprang away across the threads of yarn, skittered over the next portion of wooden panels, and out the door into the hallway. Where it planned to go, Doodle Dog didn't know, but he figured he could find out! The floppy-eared puppy untangled the rest of him from his blanket and pattered the same path as the paper ball, stopping the second he reached the hall.

The paper ball apparently had stopped too, as the moment Doodle Dog rounded the corner to the foyer he felt the familiar scrunch under his claws again. Well that wouldn't do! What fun would it be if the little ball just sat there? Gently lifting up his paw, Doodle Dog peered under it at the piece of paper scrap scrunched up even more tightly than before. Nudging it with his nose, the floppy-eared puppy gave a gust of air from his mouth to get it moving in the right direction again and off it went! The chase continued to the foot of the staircase and when the paper ball slowed down again, Doodle Dog batted it with his front paw and then the other, up each step one by one. When the pair reached the top of the stairs, Doodle Dog dashed across the upper floor of the office, his newfound play friend bouncing along inches ahead. It bounced so high, in fact, that before the floppy-eared puppy knew it, the little paper ball had bounced from the floor, past the wheels of a desk chair, and right into a nearby trash can! Doodle Dog quickly tipped over the plastic container, scattering its contents under the desk and over whatever dust bunnies were living under it, until he found his sort-of flattened friend. Successfully rescued, the paper ball fluffed back up and boing, boing, boinged all the way back down the staircase, the floppy-eared puppy not far behind. But as four paws touched down at the base of the staircase, the little paper ball disappeared again! Doodle Dog didn't know where it could have gone until he noticed another plastic container like the one by the desk sitting near the corner of the last step. Peering

into the very middle of the mess, what did Doodle Dog see? Yep... there was the paper wad which apparently wanted to be a miniature basketball for the afternoon.

So the floppy-eared puppy spent the rest of the day running up and down the stairs, trying new ways to launch the little paper ball into one trash can or another. First from the bottom step, then up to the next, then all the way from the tippy top with no bouncing in-between, the two made a pretty good team. At one point Doodle Dog ran all the way up to the top, immediately turned around and took a flying leap himself, contentedly soaring through the air with the ball in flight right beside him and plopping past the bottom stair on all four paws! Just as the sun setting outside the windows splashed rays of color over the wood floors and the carpets, under the chairs and desks and through every part of the office, Doodle Dog once again sized up the distance from the top of the staircase to the plastic container below. Tossing the little paper ball once more with all the energy he had left, the floppy-eared puppy watched as it bounced off the wall, rebounded between the stairwell, flew over the landing and through the slats in the railing... and made a perfect basket settling right where it was meant to go. Doodle Dog hadn't been keeping score, but the fun the floppy-eared puppy had was worth all the points in the world!