



Puppy Tails

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Peaceful and quiet, the breeze blew gently through Doodle Dog's floppy ears, bringing with it the scent of spring tickling his nose. The baby birdies above him must be taking a nap too, as their chirps had softened quite a while ago, and even the squirrel with its chattering and acorn attacking had halted the noisy nutty assault. A few leaves next to the floppy-eared puppy rustled calmly, echoing the unhurried melody of the meadow's invisible guardian. The wind curved them to and fro, showing off the two-tone hues of the foliage's underbelly and turning up the sides to soak in the bit of sunshine poking through the branches.

Even with the mildest draft of air, one of the leaves broke loose from its twig, the green triangle wafting along under a branch or two before looping down over the stretched out carpet of field and the grassy knoll below. Doodle Dog's gaze followed the leaf lazily grasped by the gust as it gathered the tiniest bit of speed, dipping and twirling here and there on the still mostly leisurely air. The floppy-eared puppy likes to chase after leaves, especially the bright scarlet and orange ones that catch his attention in the autumn, but this was a new friend enticing him to come play today. The green speck zipped and swirled for a moment but slowed right back down just as quickly as it had sped up, Doodle Dog never losing sight of it while it danced along. Under the spot where the leaf flew now, the floppy-eared puppy could see the meadow extending its reach from the base of the tree where he perched to the playground and all the way to the sidewalk that would lead to town and even then farther and farther than the little puppy's eye could even view. This really was the best place to see everything at once! But from way up here the normally large monkey bars, the wide spinner-go-round and the tall slides and high dives all seemed quite small indeed.

The leaf nearly disappeared as it floated just a bit too near the emerald blades of grass, its similar shade momentarily blending in with the blue-green blanket of a particularly mossy part of the meadow. But soon Doodle Dog changed his focus and caught a glimpse of the friendly flowers poking up like lollipops scattered through the field and the leaf immediately reappeared against the brilliant background of kaleidoscopic colors. The floppy-eared puppy certainly wanted to romp in the rows of posies that had finally popped up all around, but he couldn't very well do that from way up in the tree. He'd worked hard to get up here in the first place but it looked like the leaf was having quite a bit of fun without him! So now how to get his paws back on the ground?

Surveying the scene waaaay down below, Doodle Dog tried not to be dizzy just looking at all the branches under him. All those branches... which meant a lot of open space in between those branches which meant a

loooong way between where he currently was and where he wanted to be. What would be the easiest way to make quick work of the distance and land safely on the firm earth under the quite tall tree? Doodle Dog tried to think of some methods of transportation that could come up into the sky. It was a shame there were no balloons floating around that he could tie around his paw and drift carefully to the ground, colorful dots steadily escorting the little floppy-eared puppy one whiff of air current at a time. And the red bird that couldn't fly him up into the tree certainly wouldn't be able to drop him down the tree either. Hmmmm. Well, if there was nothing around that could carry him out of the tree, the curious and resourceful little puppy would just have to get himself out! He thought of animals that climbed trees and how they managed to make it back to the ground. Maybe he could swing like a monkey and then land as gracefully as a gymnast dropping from a high bar. No... his furry limbs weren't nearly as long as a monkey's arms or limber as a gymnast's legs! What about just bounding down like the squirrels do, flying through the air and skipping large sections of branches at a time? Doodle Dog had learned that being heavier than the furry critter didn't help much in climbing up with his claws, but the extra weight in this instance would make it easier to drop faster. On second thought, the momentum of falling might be too much for the branch to handle and Doodle Dog didn't want one to snap and drop him ALL the way toward the earth too quickly! The loud crash would be sure and wake the baby birdies too and the floppy-eared puppy didn't want to disturb them or knock them out of their nest. Hmmmm...

As he watched the leaves still attached to the tree flutter serenely in the breeze, Doodle Dog decided he would just have to go down the tree the same way he went up – one branch at a time. Digging his claws into the bark to steady his balance, the floppy-eared puppy started his descent, wobbling just a bit as he suddenly saw just how far it was to drop. Don't look down! Focusing on the twiggy abode securely nestled above him instead of the flitting leaf, Doodle Dog stretched his back leg as far as it would go, feeling around for the branch below. Once he knew his claws firmly clasped into the new branch, his other back leg followed and then his front paws met them. A wiggle to the left and wiggle to the right, going backward all the way, the determined puppy even made it past the hollow where the squirrel stored its acorns without getting beaned again!

Finally safely on the ground, Doodle Dog turned around and around but the green leaf was nowhere to be found. Now where did that leaf run off to? No matter - the floppy-eared puppy was sure another adventure would find him soon enough and he had the blossoming buds to keep him company for now!