



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 silver bumblebee glittered at Doodle Dog from his bookshelf, glinting as though reflecting an unseen source of light. Nestled among the stories sleeping there, the tiny insect reminded the floppy-eared puppy of all the wonderful things that could surround him when he immersed himself in the world. Doodle Dog thought how fun it might be to see if any real bumblebees were flittering about with their black stripes and white wings sailing them through the airy landscape, so he scampered outside hopeful of what he would find.

But when the floppy-eared puppy reached the other side of the office door, it was not a bright, dazzling day that greeted him. As his paws touched the sidewalk, gray and smooth, the clouds overhead mirrored the same subdued shade. The quiet puffs made it look like rain was coming or as if the sky was about to cry, though no tears had fallen yet. Doodle Dog continued through the streets hoping to find something to brighten the day, but as he meandered by storefront after storefront, it became more elusive still. He paused for a moment at the window of the yummy bakeshop, the treats of which usually cheered him up. Today, instead of the brilliantly-hued icings on cakes and puppy-friendly pastel pastries that always caught his curiosity, the platters in the treat case were filled with teeny truffles shaped perfectly round like mini moons, full circles in the sky. A few were cut open to reveal the creamy cookie center and they did look quite tasty. Covered in the darkest of chocolate, Doodle Dog knew these delicacies were not for four-legged friends so he kept going to the next window on his route! But as the floppy-eared puppy continued along, every view was the same. Even the formalwear shop in town that usually had bright dresses in the front windows – the display there too was bare of color as prom season was over and now smart tuxedos stood by each other enticing potential groomsmen to stop on in for summer ceremonies.

Enough of this! Doodle Dog decided to go to the park where he knew there was always another world of vivid and vibrant creations. As the floppy-eared puppy went by the last shop on the street, a stack of newspapers piled in front of the stoop toppled over from the wind and slid right under his paws. Stepping gently on and then off the newspaper, Doodle Dog continued along... the newsprint leaving a grayscale trail of paw prints on the stone-colored cement sidewalk behind him. Turning down the path that he'd walked many times before, Doodle Dog expected to see the lush, sprawling lawn of the park any minute now. He DIDN'T expect a series of black tiles alternating with a series of white tiles to be covering the meadow as he approached! A giant chess board greeted him, the oversized horses guarding the gate to the park seeming quite a lot more enormous than they already were to the little floppy-eared puppy looking up at them. His petite paws pattered across the slick surface as Doodle Dog carefully avoided a tower that resembled a castle and made sure not to run smack into a cluster of similar-looking pieces making up an army advancing across various parts of the pale panels and their contrasting counterparts. With their limited color palette, the sights around him were all starting to resemble an old timey movie with the voiceless actors – Doodle Dog half expected lines of static to roll across the scene in front of him.

The floppy-eared puppy had yet to see a buzzing bumblebee, but another type of tiny winged creature the color of a starless sky at midnight circled over the treetops. The crow quietly looped in and out of the forest's edge clearing the very tips of the branches. And, on the other side of the park, Doodle Dog noticed another bird floating above the land too – a dove the color of the ocean's snowy surf peacefully dipped on the air currents over the meadow. As he watched the pair of flying friends soar under the sky, the clouds above them billowed from a steely gray to silver to slate to a smoky charcoal as Mother Nature seemed to be in quite the murky mood! Even the soil surrounding Doodle Dog's flower garden was under a shadowy blanket as the baby bulbs slept soundly. But there, in the middle of the garden, poking just out of the dirt, was an itty-bitty blossom the neon color of a bumblebee's other brighter stripes. A yellow tulip shone through the shadows like a miniature sun, gleefully glowing with all its might. The tough, tiny tulip seemed to smile at Doodle Dog as he gave it a friendly sniff. And with that the floppy-eared puppy knew that even though today was gloomy and gray, the sun was only sleeping, and there would be more sunny days around the corner. Just in case, he knew the spot where his own personal planted sunshine bloomed and he would be sure and visit any time he felt lonely or needed some extra cheer!

Author's note: In honor of my feline furbaby, Alistair, who is the inspiration for many "Puppy Tails" adventures and never minded that I write stories about a dog. You will be my sunshine always.