



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.*

Leaves swirled like colorful kites guarding the outside of the office as the floppy-eared puppy looked out the window and watched the gusts of wind blow over the land. He couldn't see the wind itself but he COULD see everywhere it went and how it touched what it left behind. A rustle through the trees tickling the leaves, a ruffle of the fur on a kitty cat who was padding home, and a tousle of a little girl's curls as she bounced alongside her mother on the sidewalk in front of the shops in town. Doodle Dog knew that soon there would be piles and piles of leaves made by the wind which gathered each one and carefully scooted it into the mound to craft something much bigger than each leaf could be alone. And that pile would be perfect for the floppy-eared puppy to jump in – one of his favorite parts of fall! Before he did that, however, Doodle Dog knew there was something else very important and just as fun to do and he was very much looking forward to getting started.

Right then there was a soft knock at the office door and Doodle Dog scampered to it just as it opened. One of his very favorite humans – a little girl with curls just a bit darker than the one shopping with her mother – stood on his doorstep with a tiny orange object in her hands. The miniature pumpkin was just the right size for a little floppy-eared puppy, and Doodle Dog wagged his tail in appreciation as he gently took the stem in his mouth and nudged the pint-sized pumpkin into the perfect place perched on the porch. Then he bounded down the steps to the little wagon waiting on the sidewalk and waited patiently – okay, more like quite excitedly – for today's friend to catch up to him. The little wagon was filled to the top with pumpkins in all shapes and sizes piled as high as they could go without starting an avalanche which would surely topple down if the wagon was pulled too quickly. Straw lined the bottom of the wagon so that the pumpkins would not roll around too much, but as the wind picked up speed around them, seemingly wanting to be a playful companion to the pair's



travels, tufts of dry straw poking out from between the pumpkins were picked up and scattered over the sidewalk, leaving a curious trail behind them.

Up and down the sidewalk they went, scattering bits of straw - delivered by the wind to the nooks and crannies of the landscape. While their breezy accomplice did its natural work, the floppy-eared puppy bounded along with the girl with the bouncy curls and paused for a moment at each doorstep to gently place a pumpkin on the stoop of each shop, house and office along their way. Before carefully crossing the street to the meadow, Doodle Dog glanced behind them and saw the scattered bits of orange - delivered by the duo to the nooks and crannies of the little town.

Once at the meadow, the floppy-eared puppy padded along with the soft grass under his paws. There were still plenty of pumpkins left in the petite wagon, but they had to go a bit slower because the wheels sort of sank into the squishy earth like a black hole sucking in stardust way up in the universe. The bits of straw would disappear into the oblivion of the muck under them if they weren't careful!

Just like in town where all the humans lived, Doodle Dog and the little girl left a pumpkin present at each abode where all the woodland animals lived. There was a hole in the ground for the rabbit, a knot in the tree for the squirrel and the side of a grassy knoll where the red fox liked to curl up for a nap – now all dotted with a smattering of tiny orange orbs.

On the other side of the meadow, the sidewalk started up again and it was much easier to pull the wagon now especially since there were only a few pumpkins left. They were the biggest ones, though, bigger than all four of Doodle Dog's paws combined, so he still had to do his part – while the little girl pulled the wagon from up front, Doodle Dog pushed from behind!

A few houses scattered here and there received some pumpkins too, and Doodle Dog was a little sad that their task was almost done because he quite enjoyed the company of his sweet friend and the warm and fuzzy feeling – even warmer and fuzzier than his fur! – way deep down inside for doing something sweet too.

As the two turned back toward town, there was one last house on their route. It was quite large already but seemed even more so to the little floppy-eared puppy and the little girl with their little wagon, appearing to grow up out of the earth and loom over the town, its shadow darkening the sidewalk as far as Doodle Dog could see. A wrought iron fence and heavy gate protected the edges of the yard, overgrown with brambles, bushes and once-beautiful landscaping neglected over the years. Cobwebs wove in and out of the scrollwork in the fence and these weren't the fake ones made of clusters of string meant to fool trick-or-treaters. These ones were very much real, hairy spiders included! But among all the dark and dreary elements, Doodle Dog caught sight of bits of orange too, just like the ones he'd left throughout town for the people and the meadow for the animals. These bits were certainly bright spots cheering up a gloomy garden. Until, that is, Doodle Dog saw that it was more like bits and pieces scattered in the leafy green and dusty flecks of brown. What once had been cheery orbs were now smashed pumpkins making the front of the house even sadder. Doodle Dog knew a lonely lady lived there by herself and he'd never seen any visitors coming or going to brighten her day. Apparently the last people to come her way were none too kind to her decorations! Doodle Dog quickly nudged the broken bits behind the hedge to hide them from sight and put the last of the pumpkins from his wagon in their place, standing guard at the gate for the home's inhabitant.

As the pair turned toward home, Doodle Dog glanced up at the looming house. Up on the top floor a man watched them from a cloudy window and Doodle Dog smiled that the lady had some company after all. Within a second, however, the figure dissolved behind the curtain, but then the floppy-eared puppy noticed there WAS no curtain to disappear behind... Perhaps it was just his imagination. What else could it be...