



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.*

Doodle Dog was glad he had the chance to deliver pumpkins while the weather was still being mostly friendly because today the gentle breeze had turned into something that blew and blew and howled and howled and huffed and puffed against the windows on every side of the office. The floppy-eared puppy curled up and listened to the noisy mutant gusts and figured they probably just sounded a lot worse than they really were – at least he hoped so!

To distract himself and not let his imagination get away from him, Doodle Dog directed his imagination to think of good things instead. He immediately thought of the holidays coming up and how much he looked forward to helping out with the shiny decorations again. That little tree looked so pretty in the middle of the park and Doodle Dog was glad he had a paw in making it happy! Maybe that little snowflake still glistened on the tippy top of it. Doodle Dog felt like one of Santa's elves designing Christmas magic for the little tree. And then the best part was wrapping presents to tuck under it and surprise his furry friends around the forest and in town. The glittering packages reminded Doodle Dog of the flecks of snow and ice making intricate patterns on the window when the weather was really, really cold. The floppy-eared puppy glanced up to see if the invisible ice skater had returned to his clear canvas, but not yet – right now the wind still blew and blew menacingly against the windowpane. Ahh!

Tucking his nose into his blanket, Doodle Dog imagined what would happen if the wind held its breath instead. Then all would be quiet, he bet. He tried to hold his own breath and immediately thought of all the swimmers that bravely held their breath and dove into the icy water of the almost-frozen pond at the park. Brr! Maybe this year the floppy-eared puppy would dip in more than just a paw... okay, maybe a leg, but that was it! Why not make up his own rules? Forging your own path could be fun, like the stories that Doodle Dog wrote in his head about the princess and the not-so-mean dragon. Not every creature in the forest has to be grumpy! Dragons could be fluffy and kind like a bunny hopping down the rabbit hole, right? Okay, maybe not THAT fluffy!

And although Doodle Dog had heard that dragons had piles of eggs – he'd never actually seen one so he didn't know for sure – he remembered the white bunny that he never did quite catch but he followed the trail of brightly colored eggs left throughout town. That was quite fun anyways. Spending time in town was usually fun no matter what he found to do, even the day he hid under a little fortress that was the street bench trying not to get stepped on by all the busy feet, shoes and dragon claws that stomped by ready to smush him! The painted pedicures on parade were just as colorful as that trail of rabbit eggs...

The wind picked up again and Doodle Dog listened to the pattern of sounds it made as it whooshed against the walls of the office and against the glass of the window and against the shingles on the roof. He thought of how sometimes the rain will play its own symphony using the little building as a drum, pitter-pattering a beat here and there. Maybe someday the wind would get together with the rain and they could play in tune together. Although Doodle Dog likes his alone time, it is usually more fun to spend time together with someone, and the floppy-eared puppy thought of how the rain had made puddles along the

sidewalk for his favorite humans to play squishy, muddy hopscotch and how much more fun it was to be brave and join them! But Doodle Dog didn't have to leave a mess behind to have a good time – leaving a trail of beautiful flowers behind him had been wonderful too. Little spots of color had followed his tracks all the way through town like little dots to connect of where the little floppy-eared puppy had been. Doodle Dog then thought of the sparkling dots in the sky above him that would peek out soon tonight connecting the corners of the heavens and reminding him of the twinkle lights soon to be shimmering on the trees throughout town like stars that weren't quite so far away.

Doodle Dog wondered if his couch pirate ship could sail him to the stars but then he might wind up running into a comet if he did that, and encountering that lava lake was enough excitement for him! Maybe if he made up a good plan he could figure out a way to do it. Where's that checklist... although that would leave quite another mess in the office and he had worked very hard to clean it up and wanted to keep it that way. Covering it with stardust and splattered drops of lava probably wasn't the best idea. Maybe all those boxes in the storage shed would make a suitable raft if put together just right! What a great tale that would be. Doodle Dog would be sure and remember that one by heart, just like his favorite book in the library, the one that he didn't need to read because his memory always told him the story. There was always room for one more in his mental bookcase.

Suddenly the wind whipped against the window more powerful than ever and it caught Doodle Dog's attention. There, against the glass, a pawful of leaves swirled and twirled, beckoning the little floppy-eared puppy out to play. One of them was his favorite little red leaf! It zipped and zoomed from one window to the next and Doodle Dog thought of when he zipped and zoomed around the lake on the inner tube. He was glad he had a friend to hold onto him so he didn't fly away! Then Doodle Dog thought of how he'd held onto the kite string as tightly as he could so it didn't fly away too. It twisted and turned and dipped and dived like the red leaf dancing outside the office. Soon Doodle Dog could see the red leaf floating toward the porch where it swirled around the pint-sized pumpkin perfectly perched there. In the distance, the floppy-eared puppy heard the chimes of the clock tower BONG-BONG-BONGING the hour and he knew he would have plenty of time to follow his favorite red leaf wherever it wanted to go. Hello, old friend! Ready for another adventure?

