



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.*

After all the walking around town he's been doing lately, Doodle Dog decided today he was going to relax on the front porch and enjoy the view of the neighborhood from there. Better yet, though he knew snow would soon be coming, for now his floppy ears still felt the calming warm air. Ahhhh... And for now there was no other place he'd rather be than right at home on his comfy mat surveying the hustle and bustle from afar. As he rested, Doodle Dog thought how grateful he was to be able to take a few moments to just be, to just watch the world go by from his perch, to just lie back with his paws toward the sky and his ears flopped out in both ways behind him.

Trying to keep his eyes open with little luck, the floppy-eared puppy thought that for just one afternoon he would most certainly be energetic and ambitious and go on a wonderful new adventure... energetic and ambitious, that is, in his imagination. That way he didn't have to leave his safe place on the porch! Quite thankful for this little quiet spot in the middle of it all, Doodle Dog didn't have to go far in the wide reaches of the world in his mind or think much too hard at all to remember the fun activities he'd been able to do recently. Curling up a little tighter on his mat, he tried not to shiver in his sleepiness as he thought of the impending wintry days ahead of him. Sure, they could be fun too, if he didn't have to dig himself out of a wet flurry mound again! Seeing all the beautiful ice sculptures glistening in the sliver of sunshine brave enough to peek out during the last season of the year was indeed quite fantastic. Doodle Dog wondered if the talented snow sculptors would make another one of him again this winter. It was nice to have something to count on year after year!

Of course, as much as Doodle Dog loves being able to look forward to favorite traditions, there is something great about having unexpected places to be too. The little floppy-eared puppy remembered how he had a different porch last year and, although it was a little bit scary at first to be somewhere unknown, his curiosity was quite enjoying the new view too! Indeed it took some time to settle in, and Doodle Dog thought how grateful he is that the shadows on the wall were not real spiders – he won't be going up to the attic again anytime soon thank you very much! – but now that he knows the nooks and crannies and every hidey place (well, almost), it's quite fun to explore the not-unusual-anymore space.

While he considered all the changes in his own world, Doodle Dog found himself grateful for all the exciting new aspects going on around him as well. He thought of the lovely bride and groom starting their lives together surrounded by family and friends - and a furry flower bearer or two – in a ceremony in the park. And though one of his favorite familiar places, the park itself was constantly changing whether it played host to a whirlwind romance, set the stage for zipping and zooming around a go-kart track (Doodle Dog thought he could still feel the rush of anticipation as he approached

the finish line, or was that the breeze simply getting faster as it blew over the porch...), or served as a welcome spot for planting baby bulbs that would grow up to be beautiful buds for spring.

No matter how the park temporarily transformed, one part of the experience stayed the same and Doodle Dog was grateful he was always able to find something interesting and wonderful whenever he visited. Flopping to the other side of his mat so the wind could catch that bit of his fur, he remembered the extra-special bouquet he'd found all wrapped up in one little sparkling bundle of rainbow. It seemed as though he could hold all his imagination and every memory in one paw too that day! Just as the sun shone through the clouds and peeked onto the porch, the floppy-eared puppy opened one eye just slightly and caught sight of the stoop next door where he recalled the kind man delivering a real bouquet to the neighbor. Doodle Dog was happy he had been there at the right time to provide a helping bark! Then the floppy-eared puppy thought of how thankful he is for the animals and humans who are nice to him too. If he peered right through the front window he could just see the tiny clay sculpture that looked quite a bit like him made by the smiling street artist. And posing for that one was a lot warmer than the ice sculpture for sure!

Doodle Dog hoped he would always find a reason to smile too, even on the days when the sky was gloomy and gray. As the sun now felt toasty on his toes, the little puppy remembered the sweet little spot where he could go whenever he needed a bit of cheer and made a note in his mind to go there often throughout the year. Besides, it was easy enough to find the sun, not so easy to find his chewy toy as he certainly discovered not too long ago. To be fair, that one time when he wanted nothing more than to take a nap, the warm spot of sun shining through his window sure was a tricky little character! Doodle Dog was grateful it seemed to be staying put for now. Next time it moved, he would just have to find his favorite human with the little red wagon full of books. Diving in to a new story always made him smile from ear to floppy ear no matter where he was sitting. The sandy shore may not be the best place for books so perhaps the lake's edge was better left for taking leaps of the splashy kind! Now that Doodle Dog thought of it, he really did successfully put in more than just a paw this year! The floppy-eared puppy started to smile as he thought of another successful adventure during his class at the cupcakery and the fun picnic with all the cats and dogs! He was grateful for all the pretty posies to smell and all the yummy doggie treats to eat. The colors of the cakes followed him long after, first for his pawdicure – there's still a tiny spot on his toe! – then on the balloons bouncing along the breeze, then on the saddles of the carousel horses going round and round. (Doodle Dog now wondered if perhaps they would have liked their hooves painted. A hooficure?) It must be boring sometimes for those ponies riding up and down and nowhere in particular. On the porch, the little floppy-eared puppy turned around and around on his mat before plopping down again. Going round and round the neighborhood himself, sniffing out yummy biscuits for Trick or Treat wasn't boring though. By now he'd become pretty good at searching with all his senses! Sunshine, chewy toys, biscuits, fairy princesses in distress and not-so-scary squishy toy noses... what could be next for the doggie detective?

Without opening his eyes fully, he could feel the familiar mat under his back and thought of the sidewalk under his paws whenever he walks. He could still taste the flavor of the homemade pumpkin biscuit from the barkery and smell the crispness of almost-exiting autumn mixing with the fresh chill of nearly-entering winter air. Then his floppy ears picked up a sound he loves to hear: bong Bong BONG. A definitely wonderful part about the new office is that it is even closer to the town's tall clock tower! And just as he coaxed his eyes open, a familiar sight greeted his gaze: the brilliant hue of his red leaf friend wafting on the wind. Doodle Dog was grateful for their next adventure – whatever and wherever it may be!