



Puppy Tails

MIALIE T. SZYMANSKI | CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

With his freshly trimmed claws and his newly-washed paws, Doodle Dog felt and looked (well, almost looked but definitely felt!) like an entirely new puppy. And what better way for a new puppy to spend the day than with a new adventure!

The colors of the definitely-here-now fall still intrigued Doodle Dog and continued to entice him as he scampered down the sidewalks and crossed the streets of town one by one. Within no time at all, the floppy-eared puppy reached the field next to the landscaped park, which was usually a wide-open space occupied only by blankets of grass, pillows of posies and curtains of ivy draped from the border of trees, naturally fencing in the property on three sides. Just with the changing of the season which allowed a new ethereal artist to take up residency in Earth's studio, it appeared that for today, the field was not quite itself either. As Doodle Dog looked around, he did indeed see the grassy blankets, the clusters of posy pillows and the ivy cascading down from the long, spindly branches, but only if he looked really hard to find them poking out from in between bits of colorful cotton candy covering the field like a downy comforter broken into pieces of clouds that blew around as tumbleweeds through the skies, a garden of rides with their brightly painted seats clustered this way and that, and electrical cords swinging down from those rides and drooping over to temporary food trucks and makeshift souvenir stands lighting up big, round blinking bulbs like a technologically-enhanced ivy strand powered by batteries.

Disappearing under a nearby ticket booth, the floppy-eared puppy surveyed the scene from a safe miniature cave, a momentarily peaceful location amid the shining lights, energizing sounds and thrilling rides meant to amuse and excite. Spotting a contraption that reminded him of the spinner-go-round from the playground, Doodle Dog darted out in its direction. Eep! Not only was the field full of new buildings and unusual structures serving as a stationary obstacle course, the little curious puppy had to deal with many moving parts as well, as countless feet belonging to a seemingly endless swarm of visitors created an impromptu gauntlet for Doodle Dog to dash through to get to his destination. Big humans hurried around trying to make the most of the day, tightly clutching the hands of their children while the little humans licked ice cream cones and held giant stuffed animals with their free fingers. Some of the fuzzy blue teddy bears, purple unicorns and neon green tigers were so much larger than their little owners that it appeared to Doodle Dog to be a sea of walking fur instead of a crowd of children! Doing his best not to get trampled by their stomping feet, the floppy-eared puppy stepped this way and jumped that way, making it across the rowdy river of people and prizes to get to the other side of the midway. There, between two bunches of bright balloons billowing high above them all, their hues and design resembling the colorful kite he had seen during his pawdicure, Doodle Dog looked both ways, then up and down before bounding onto a high platform slowly spinning in the center of the carnival.

As Doodle Dog peered around, he saw the ponies with their beautifully painted coats, delicately engraved saddles and determined expressions ready for riders. The floppy-eared puppy admired each carved statue permanently poised in a different pose with hooves dancing and prancing in thin air. They were decorated so exquisitely that no two horses were alike, each one with a unique personality like the creative work painted on the customers toes at the beauty shop. Before he knew it, the carousel started to pick up speed so the floppy-eared puppy hurried to choose a safe spot to sit. Disappearing under a nearby loveseat bench, he surveyed the space from his hiding place. Spotting a steed with a glittering saddle the purple-blue shade of the sky just before twilight, Doodle Dog darted out in its direction. Eep! Not only was the platform full of posing ponies on parade and their little human riders beginning to shriek with glee and excitement creating a puzzle to peruse, the little curious puppy didn't notice that the horses were beginning to move up and down as well, as hundreds of hooves belonging to dozens of ponies rained down upon the little puppy as he dashed and darted to get to his destination! Doing his best not to get trampled by their prancing feet, the floppy-eared puppy anxiously stepped this way and jumped that way making it partly around the platform. A little girl with bouncing brown curls stepped in front of the horse with the sparkling saddle and swept Doodle Dog up with her, tightly clutching him around the middle while she held onto a pole with her free fingers. The little girl and the little floppy-eared puppy were just the right size to share the saddle and around and around they went. Safe from the dancing hooves, Doodle Dog peered out over the top of the horse's ears and watched the scenes change as they went by, the ticket booth melding into the souvenir shop blending into the giant slide morphing into the concession stand and then finally transforming back to the beginning. He knew soon enough the field would transform back to its beginning as well so he made sure to enjoy the ride while he could.