



Puppy Tails

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After spending most of the morning and some of the afternoon curled up among his favorite books, Doodle Dog tucked a nearby pile of paperbacks onto a low shelf, making sure everything was as neat and tidy as it had been when he arrived. The floppy-eared puppy took another look at all the stories hibernating in their cozy covers and then he bounded out the library door and down the driveway. A crisp wind blew sharply over his ears as he turned the corner to the street. Hmmm, that wasn't the breeze he was used to – there was something different about it! Doodle Dog recognized the change in the air and he knew that not only were his book friends hibernating on their inside bookshelves, but that his forest and meadow animal friends would soon be hibernating in their own cozy little outside homes as autumn was just around the corner. If Doodle Dog hurried, maybe he could catch one last outside adventure before he too needed to hibernate in his own cozy corner of the office!

Paws pattering quickly down the sidewalk, Doodle Dog soon found himself scampering over the hard concrete of the sidewalk under his paws which then changed to the smooth pavement of the street and then the soft grass of the meadow and then squishy mud of the shoreline and finally the wet waves of the lake, still sparkling with the last of summer's sunshine. It appeared that Doodle Dog was not the only one with hopes of squeezing out one last afternoon of the warmer weather activities before the colder weather staked its claim for the next few months. Several of his favorite little humans were playing on the shoreline of the lake, not seeming to mind the temperature of the water that had already started to turn a bit chillier. A little girl in a light jacket made mud pies big and small, lining them up neatly until the gentle waves lapped them each away one by one. She didn't seem to notice – or was doing a very good job ignoring - two little boys playing an energetic game of tag, running as best they could with their bare feet sinking in the goopy sand and muck.

The best part of all, though, was a whirring sound off in the distance at the far side of the lake. It intrigued Doodle Dog, so the curious floppy-eared puppy tipped one ear in its direction to see if he could figure out what it was. Sure enough, a few moments later came the answer by way of a speedy motorboat zooming in wide circles, closer, closer to Doodle Dog's side of the lake. As it came nearer, the waves on the water's edge surged in with more intensity and rushed out just as fast. Before Doodle Dog knew it, the little girl and the two little boys climbed into the boat and called for Doodle Dog to join them! Why not! This was his chance to have some fun before summer was done. So he carefully followed them in and took a spot while the boat slowly made its way back out to the middle of the lake. Of course, it was only then that Doodle Dog noticed a giant round sea monster chasing them! No, it wasn't a sea monster, and it wasn't chasing them. It was a floating innertube attached to the back of the boat and one of the little boys was getting ready to climb onto it. Lifejacket securely fastened, the little boy went to settle on top of the airy donut but then before he left the safety of the boat, he turned back and picked up the floppy-eared

puppy! Doodle Dog was going to go for a ride too! THAT he was not expecting...

Soon the little boy and the little dog were floating out on top of the tube, enjoying the rocking of the waves. But then the boat started moving again and within moments the gentle up and down of the tide turned into a watery racetrack as the boat and its followers zipped around the lake. Eeeeeeeeeee! Slow down, slow down! Doodle Dog was glad the little boy was holding on to him so tightly – that way he couldn't fall off! Slow down, slow down! As if reading his mind, the boat changed gears and started to lose speed. Wait! Doodle Dog suddenly realised that had actually been fun! Go faster, go faster! As though on command, the boat turned the corner of a looping pattern and picked up speed again. Eeeeeeeee! It zipped and zoomed around and around the top of the water, bouncing the little boy and the little floppy-eared puppy over the whitecaps and through the waves... and with every zip and zoom and dash it brought the last little bit of summer fun as autumn zipped and zoomed just as quickly on their heels.