



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.*

Once the game was completed and his favorite little humans started to go their separate ways down each of the various streets that Doodle Dog knew would lead them to each of their houses, the little floppy-eared puppy continued to half hop, er, half scamper along the sidewalk himself, this time being extra mindful of each thin crack in between the solid concrete sheets making up the trail stretching behind, to the side, and far off in front of him. As much time as he traveled around town, Doodle Dog had yet to explore EVERY path where the winding sidewalks went and today was as good a day as any to see what adventures could be found if his paws picked no particular way to patter, as long as it was somewhere new. That was certainly a rule he could follow!

As Doodle Dog's claws left the chalk dust in tiny clouds and splotches behind him, the squares ahead of him had different materials covering them as well. To the left of him, the dark gray mixed with a scattering of green grass clippings, more evidence that spring had finally arrived, bringing with it the sound of the whirring lawn mowers that left newly-trimmed squares of yard in their wake. Doodle Dog didn't have to take that path to smell the fresh, sharp aroma of the bendable baby blades poking out from the blanket of the earth. Mmmmm. To his right, a lighter smooth gray the shade of the clouds covering the sun just after a storm blended with a smattering of what appeared to be berries dropped from a nearby tree drooping over them. The little red balls combined to create a colorful carpet leading the way to what Doodle Dog imagined might be a yummy conclusion to the day. Just as the little floppy-eared puppy turned to spot what shared the sidewalk squares spread out directly in front of him, one of the little red berries twitched slightly. It moved?! No wind rustled the leaves in the trees or rumbled the puppy's floppy ears, so a breeze wasn't to blame, but the curious Doodle Dog knew he hadn't been imagining the quiver. His paws placed on solid ground with no earth shaking beneath him, so a quiet quake wasn't the culprit either, but as he watched, the tiny round seed twitched again!

Gently stepping over the nearest sidewalk square, being careful to avoid the crack, around the mossy obstacle of blustered grass, being careful not to sneeze, and through the scarlet sea of itty bitty beads that once draped from the delicate tree, being careful not to squish them, Doodle Dog cautiously bent down to sniff the one he was sure hadn't been sitting so perfectly still as the rest. Just as his nose was about to get a whiff to try and solve the mystery, it solved itself as a tiny round creature with a red shell just like the berries opened its wings and flew off a few feet in front of the floppy-eared puppy. Now he could see the little black dots on the bug's back which were so small from far away there had been no distinguishing it from the rest of the collection. The fact that it was flying helped quite a bit now too! As the ladybug buzzed and flittered ahead of him, Doodle Dog didn't waste a moment seeing where it would go. As it dipped here and there and skittered through the air, the little ladybug resembled one of the petite pebbles

skipping from place to place in the hopscotch game. Doodle Dog wondered what the rules for the airborne version might be. The ladybug didn't seem to care if there were instructions or not, simply letting the gentle gusts guide its commute. The floppy-eared puppy traveled right along behind it, though with at least his two back feet firmly on the ground and a front paw or two tempted to continue reaching skyward, trying to keep the ladybug's spots in view.

Over the sidewalk squares Doodle Dog's four paws went as the ladybug directed his path this way and under a limp tree limb his floppy ears ducked as the flighty creature led the chase that way, at times no bigger than a swift fleck of chalk dust for the equally quick puppy to follow. Soon the pursuit took a turn from the sparkly granite trails and the thin covering of cut grass to the thick plush landscape of the meadow Doodle Dog hadn't visited for a while. He nearly forgot how beautifully the different shades of the grass blades combined to make one endless ocean of emerald, jade, lime and olive and even some tones that looked like freshly picked pods of peas. Just past the welcoming hues of green mingling ever so politely with each other, the floppy-eared puppy's gaze followed his friend's flight to the edge of the flower field, successfully sprouting up with the siren call of spring. The colors of each bud resembled the bright chalky lines previously bordering the children's playful feet, and each yellow, orange, pink and lavender dot helped to frame the scene as the little leaping ladybug landed on the most brilliant of emerald leaves nearby. Following those little red and black stars as they swoop through the sky is supposed to be lucky, right? Since his first chance at adventure with one

wound up in his favorite meadow, the floppy-eared puppy certainly thought so!