



Puppy Tails

MIALIE T. SZYMANSKI | CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

*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.*

EEK! Doodle Dog raced around the office trying to find it but it didn't want to be found! The little floppy-eared puppy knew he had something just perfect to wear for Halloween but it seemed to have disappeared like a friendly - but quite invisible all the same - ghost on All Hallows' Eve.

Hmmm... he poked his nose around the corner of the bookcase hoping it would jump out at him, but the only thing there was a glossy spider web strung between a shelf and the wall and Doodle Dog didn't want to wait for a spider to be what jumped out at him instead! Bounding over to the other side of the room, as far away from any possible creepy crawlies as he could get, Doodle Dog peeked under the desk to see if it was squished below there, but the only fuzz squeezed beneath the sturdy wood legs was a cluster of dust bunnies minding their own business. Achoo! The floppy-eared puppy tried to hold his sneeze so not to blow them in all directions as he scampered to the window for some fresh air. Would it have escaped out of the office when he wasn't looking? Breathing in the fresh, crisp breeze, he peered outside just in case he could catch sight of it drifting away, but the only fluff floating by was a caravan of clouds trailing behind each other high in the sky. Hmmm...

Needing to think, the little floppy-eared puppy made his way to his best thoughtful spot, the cozy corner with all his blankets and comfy cushions. The second his paws hit the pillows he knew where his costume was! Doodle Dog gently grabbed on to the edge of the pillowcase with his teeth, turned it upside down and dumped its contents. It was right where he'd left it, hiding in plain sight quite effectively disguised as a pillow! The soft batting tumbled out into a plush pile and Doodle Dog immediately dove right into the middle of it, white wisps creating a foggy mist around him. When he emerged a moment later, his head peeked out from one end and his tail swished out the other side. One paw carefully poked out the bottom of the mound and then the second paw and the third and fourth finally followed until all that was left to be done was unfurl his floppy ears one by one! The half canine, half cotton ball concoction waddled out the office door and down the steps to the street on his way to Trick or Treat! Pausing by the porch to pick up a basket's handle in his teeth, Doodle Dog quickly determined the route of the evening and set off in the direction of the places he knew would have the best doggie-friendly treats.

The first stop was the cupcakery, so close by to the office that when the wind blew just right Doodle Dog could smell the yummy treats all the way from the porch. He knew the bakers from the bakery would have something extra special for the holiday and he was right: as the floppy-eared puppy pattered over, one of them gently placed a wrapped biscuit in his basket. With all his tufts of billowing creamy pillow-stuffing fur, the baker almost mistook the puppy for cotton candy! As sweet as he is, Doodle Dog couldn't wait to find out what kind of delicious tastes were to be found beneath the paper, but he didn't have time now - too many places to visit before the night was done! Next he ambled down the sidewalk to the fire station where a Dalmatian guarded a water bucket, filled for tonight, not with liquid but overflowing with paw-sized cookies in the shape of fire hydrants. The spotted dog carefully dropped one in Doodle Dog's basket before the floppy-eared puppy went next door to visit the police station's K-9 pup with its mini bone snacks. Two treats at one stop!

Soon the veterinarian's office came into view and as Doodle Dog meandered his way there, he couldn't help but hear a few children cloaked in their own costumes calling to

him with a baa baa sound. Did they think he was a sheep? Well, he WAS getting a little sleepy from all this walking around and the idea of curling up on the soft cloud traveling with him was quite a nice notion now that he thought of it. And if he had trouble dozing off, apparently he could count Doodle Dogs instead of sheep to help himself fall asleep. But he didn't have time to float along to a nap now - he had a few more very special places to go before night fell and dreamland beckoned. With an extra healthy kibble to nibble added to his basket by the vet's assistant, the floppy-eared cotton-candy cloud-sheep continued past the park where he knew his favorite humans would soon be making snowmen - the chill in the air told him sugary frost and delicate snowflakes would disguise the colorful falling leaves dressing the ground before he knew it. The little puffs blowing off the floppy-eared puppy's costume left a tiny trail of snowballs in the air behind him that would most likely still be around when the real ones came!

Just beyond the park Doodle Dog could see several ghosts, ghouls, witches and other unusual characters - er, children - standing at the entrance to a brightly decorated building with large windows facing the meadow. In each window peered out a black cat, or a tabby or a calico or some even orange tigers, all of them very real and very curiously watching the trick-or-treaters. But at this big house the children were not taking treats from a bowl and putting them in their own bags. Instead they drew cans of pet food from their sacks, pockets and buckets and were dropping them off, each adding to a pile in front of the animal shelter. Doodle Dog politely made his way to the front of the line and bent down to offer his basket to a lady sitting outside the door. With a smile she reached in to the very bottom of his basket where a can for the kitty cats had been carefully stowed, placed it on the pile by the door and patted Doodle Dog on the very top of his floppy ears. He hoped his furry friends would enjoy the snack, but the floppy-eared cotton-candy cloud-sheep snowball-giant dust bunny, er puppy, didn't have time to stick around. He still had places to see before going home, so off he went into the night without a trace except, well, maybe the fluffy fuzz dust bunnies hopping off his misty fur that he didn't know he was leaving behind him!