

RALPH THE DOG

I remember the summer I was 5 and Ralph The Dog was my only friend.

Ralph The Dog was a Dog kind of dog. He looked like a Dog, was Dog color, sounded like a Dog, and played as only a Dog dog can play. He liked all my games and never called me “baby” or told me to go away or that he would tell Mom on me. He didn’t mind that I was Little when everyone else was SO BIG at 8 and 10! Ralph The Dog loved me and no one else. Best of all, Ralph The Dog didn’t care I was the only one who could see and hear him because things like that don’t matter when you’re best friends.

Ralph The Dog and I would sit outside, sing and talk, chase each other, look for four leaf clovers, and climb trees. We would sit in a pile and watch THE BEST TV EVER; Romper Room, Captain Kangaroo, MR. ROGERS, Bozo, Major Mudd, and BOOMTOWN until the Big Kids came and said they were changing the channel, even in the middle of a show, “and Mom said we could.” So Ralph The Dog and I would go upstairs to Mom (who never said they could change the channel) and watch her Stories, or Ralph The Dog and I would read books, take a nap, or other things Little Kids and their Dog dogs do best.

Funny thing, not once did the Big Kids laugh at Ralph The Dog or at me. They wanted to visit with him too, and knew his name and favorite games, and could describe his Dog dog appearance, and were kind and gentle with both Ralph The Dog and with me. They were also sad with me a few months later when school started and Ralph The Dog went wherever the BEST Dog dogs go.

More than half a century later my two (real) best friends and I can remember the summer Ralph The Dog was my only friend. And they still haven’t laughed at me. Not once.