

'Lollie' the Rough Collie and the magic kiss

(A story to tell to children bedside when they are in hospital undergoing treatment or they are poorly at home)

By

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If I had a dog it would be a rough collie dog. My mother had one and my grandfather had one and my great grandfather had one. If I had a dog, it would be a large, slim, intelligent dog like my mother's dog. It would have arched eyebrows and dark almond-shaped eyes like my grandfather's dog. It would have a white and brown coat with a long tail with a twist like my great grandfather's dog. My dog would be the most beautiful dog and I would call her Lollie, my adorable rough collie!

I think about this dog when I am in hospital. When the lights are off in the ward and I can see no stars in the night sky out of the window, Lollie is coming to my dreams and we go on adventures.

Together, we play and laugh and dance and bark and together we are happy. We don't eat the same food but we have lots of lollies. We don't have the same age but we have the same hobbies. We don't speak the same language but we like playing with dollies. When I say to her 'stop' she would stop, when I say to her 'sit', she would sit, and when I say to her 'up', she would stand up on her back feet and lick my face.

In my dreams we walk on the seaside and run after the seagulls. We race and fall and get covered with sand. We see the fishermen putting out fish nets on their boats in the morning. We see the sun setting on a pillow of orange and purple colours in the evening. Our last stop is the little sweet shop. Lollie and I always treat ourselves with a ball of the most delicious ice cream.

One night I dreamt we were in my grandfather's farm. My grandfather lives in a farm filled with cherry trees. It is a paradise in the spring. The cherry blossoms bloom in spring and they are heavenly breath-taking. When the skies are clear and the sun is bright, the trees show off

their flowers. When the wind blows the petals dance in the air like ballerinas. That night I dreamt I visited the farm with Lollie.

It was a sunny morning. My grandfather was waiting for us at the gate. We walked to the field at the back of the house. He asked if we were ready to see the most beautiful scene. He pointed to the cherry trees. The trees were covered in pink petals and busy bees were buzzing saying 'spring is here!' We admired the pink colours and we smelled the scent.

Lollie was excited! She kept jumping and hopping. She was rolling in the grass and rubbing her neck and back on my grandfather's boots. She looked so happy to me but my grandfather said that Lollie was behaving strangely and that he hadn't seen her being so weird for weeks. One moment she was jumping and stretching, the next she dropped on the ground doing impression of a corpse. My grandfather said 'I am going to fetch her ball from the shed' and disappeared behind the truck. Lollie and I were left alone.

I didn't know what to do with her. I told her to 'stop', but she wouldn't stop. I told her to 'sit' but she wouldn't sit. I told her to stand 'up' but she ignored me completely. Lollie started jumping around. She was out of control. She ran away from me in the field where I could not see her anymore. I called out her name many times with no reply. I whistled but still nothing. Suddenly I felt alone. The sky turned grey, and the cherry petals fell from the trees. I climbed to the top of a tree to look for Lollie. No sign of her. The world seemed empty without her.

The following day I asked my mum if she had ever had a bad experience with her dog. She told me a story. She said that her dog was once stung by a swarm of bees and she had to take him to the vet. It was really painful for her dog. The vet said that he had never seen a dog stung so many times, the dog had an allergic reaction to the stings. Mum said his face was swollen and he had problems with breathing but the vet pulled out the sting, gave him a syrup and she looked after him. She bathed him in soda and water and applied ice packs on his nose every 5 minutes to reduce the swelling. He was fine after couple of days.

Mum smiled and told me that dogs have feelings like us and sometimes they know how we feel. They suffer from pain like people do and they recover with love. It is something that we don't understand but it's good to remember it. She kissed me goodnight and took a seat next to me. I wish I was in my grandfather's field. I wish I could see the stars glimmering. That night, like the other night, I dreamt of Lollie my adorable rough collie.

I was in the middle of the cherry farm looking for Lollie. At that moment I thought I saw something moving behind the trees. It was not clear at first but it was her! Lollie! I ran to her with my arms open calling her name, Lollie! It's you! It was her but, 'Oh no!' Her face was all swollen up! Her mouth and nose had doubled in size! I took her in my arms. 'What happened to you girl?' 'Are you stung?' 'Were you playing with the bees?' I asked her. She looked at me sheepishly. She was scratching her nose to let me know that something was wrong with it. She wouldn't let me touch her nose but I could tell it was bad. She wasn't jumping up and down any more. She laid flat on her one side and looked at me. A teardrop fell from her eye down on my hand. 'Lollie, are you crying? I didn't know dogs could cry! Oh Lollie!' I remember that teardrop on my hand. It looked like a pearl tattoo. And then, she closed her eyes. I panicked.

'Lollie, wake up! Please!' I was so scared. Lollie, my rough collie, is the most beautiful of all dogs because she is mine. Lollie, my rough collie, is the most precious of all dogs because she is my friend. Lollie, my rough collie, is in pain. I looked around seeking for my grandfather but it was me alone with a suffering dog under an old cherry tree. And then I heard a voice saying 'Remember, dogs have feelings. They suffer from pain and they recover with love, like people do.'

Suddenly I felt strong. 'That's it.' I thought. 'I know what to do. I will show her that I love her.' My dog needed me. I was not a baby anymore. I was big enough to look after her. I was brave enough not to let her suffer. I was strong enough to take good care of her and tell her not to be afraid. I didn't worry anymore. I searched for the sting. It was like a small black needle. I pinched it from her skin with my fingers.

'All I can do is love you', I whispered to her ear and gave her a warm adoring kiss. For a moment or two nothing happened but then, the sun came out, the cherry blossom scent filled the air and the trees around us showed off their bright colours again in full spring blossom. Pink petals fell on Lollie's nose just where the sting was. I looked up in the sky and the petals were dancing like ballerinas above us. It was a magical moment.

Lollie opened her eyes, sneezed, and stood up. She barked happily and licked my face like a lollypop enthusiastically. That was some kiss! I knew that she was letting me know she loved me. Her face looked just fine. It was back to normal. She was her old good self again. She was jumping and hopping around. 'I love you Lollie!'

Next morning, there was a cherry petal on my pillow. I stretched my hand to touch it and I saw the most amazing thing. A pearl drop was marked on my skin. 'Lollie's tear!' I said to myself, 'a tattoo to remind me that love is the best of all remedies and cures everything.' Love makes cherry trees blossom.