

By Julie Guirgis

(Based on a true story)

*"I know Heav'nly Father loves me"*

(*Children's Songbook*, 228).

This was the worst day ever! I got home from school and threw my bag down. Then I flopped into the chair and tried not to think about my best friend.

"Want some choc balls?" Mum held the bag out to me.

"I just bought some."

"Not today," I answered.

That's when Mum figured out something was wrong. She knows I hardly ever pass up chocolate.

"Everything OK?"

I let out a long sigh. "Not really. I just found out Tim's moving next week. We promised to keep in touch, and he's coming back for spring break and all, but it won't be the same. I won't have anyone to play with after school!"

Mum patted my shoulder. "I'm so sorry. It's never easy when friends move away."

She glanced across the room at our dog. "You know, Ralphie looks like he could use a friend too. Why don't you take him for a walk?"

"I dunno, Mum . . ." Taking Ralphie out was the last thing I felt like doing. But I couldn't remember the last time I took him out, because I had been with Timmy so much. When I looked over at Ralphie, he looked sadder than I did. He whimpered as he ran over and stared up

at me with big eyes. How could I say no to a cute face like that?

"I get the message." I laughed as Ralphie's tail started wagging when I put the lead on. He knocked me back a step and licked my face. Then he turned and ran out the door so fast that I fell over.

"Whoa!" I shouted as I tried to grab the lead. It slipped right through my hands.

"Wait up, Ralphie!" I got up and raced after him, but all I could see was his bushy tail bouncing through the dusty streets and then into the forest.

Branches whipped my face as I sprinted after Ralphie through the trees. We'd explored all through this forest, but never this part before. Where was he going?

"Ralphie!" I caught a glimpse of him as sunlight cut through the shadows. He had stopped and was waiting on a huge brown rock up ahead.

His happy woofing sounds told me he'd found something great. I raced over to see. I couldn't believe my eyes as I looked around.

"Wow, this place is awesome! Good find, Ralphie!"

A huge white waterfall crashed over rocks. We crossed the stream below the waterfall and discovered rocks covered in moss.

Bright flowers surrounded the waterfall, and birds flew over our heads.

We even found a sandy beach with deep pools of water. Perfect for fishing! The sand was as soft as candy floss. I took off my shoes and dug my toes into the sand.

The sun hung over the trees like a big golden ball. As I sat there, I felt its warmth hug me like a thick blanket. God's love surrounded me, and I no longer felt alone. I didn't ever want to leave.

*This rotten day just took  
a turn for the better.*



Finally, after some more exploring, Ralphie and I headed home. Mum asked how the walk went.

"Ralphie found an amazing place! It has a great waterfall with beautiful flowers and everything."

"That sounds wonderful," Mum said. Then she grinned. "Want those choc balls now?"

"Yes, please!"

The next day Tim sat by me at lunch. "Sorry I couldn't hang out yesterday. I had to pack."

"That's OK. I took Ralphie for a walk and found an awesome place where we can go fishing when you visit. Sound like a plan?"

"Deal!" he said as we knocked knuckles, something we always did when we made a promise.

Even though I may feel lonely sometimes, I know I'm never alone. God is always with me. ♦

The author lives in New South Wales, Australia.

# Ralphie's Amazing Find



Ireland A., age 9, Hawaii, USA

When my mom and dad told me that we were moving to Hawaii this year, I was scared to meet new people, but I prayed and Heavenly Father told me that it would be a good experience. Now I am really excited that we moved here. That's how I know Heavenly Father answered my prayer.