

Collies and kids and “Lassie Come Home” COLLIE MYSTIQUE

A large part of the mystique of the Collie is based on Collies and children—the special relationship between Lassie and his beloved boy companion. Part fact and part fiction, this legendary bond came to symbolize the heart and soul of the Collie for generations of children—children who, as adults, later added a Collie to their lives.

The mystique of the Collie began long before Lassie. Early in the breed’s development in the British Isles in the 19th century, breeders worked to create a dog of great beauty, as well as physical soundness. By the early 20th century, the Collie caught the interest of wealthy American dog fanciers including J. Pierpont Morgan and Samuel Untermyer who spared no expense to import “the best” show Collies to the U.S. The fancier-breeder who did the most to popularize the Collie for the average American, however, was not a millionaire, but writer Albert Payson Terhune (see next page) with his colorful stories of Collie heroism and humor. Eric Knight further added to the breed’s mystique with his classic story of



The Collie: A cherished part of our childhood

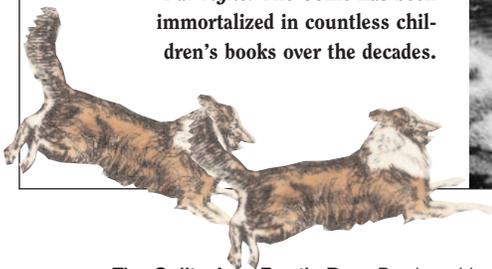
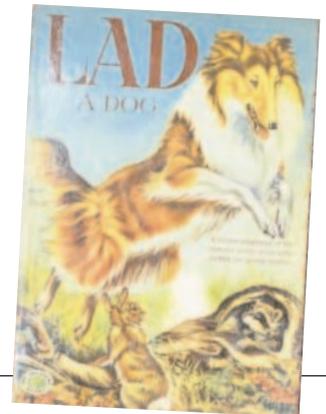
the Scottish Highlands, *Lassie Come Home* (1940), and the many movie versions of this story depicting a Collie’s heroic journey home to the family she loved. With the *Lassie* TV series of the 1950s, the breed’s popularity soared. Lassie became a cultural phenomenon, while the Collie gained prominence as a magical dog and loyal family pet who came to symbolize the important role of the dog in American homelife.

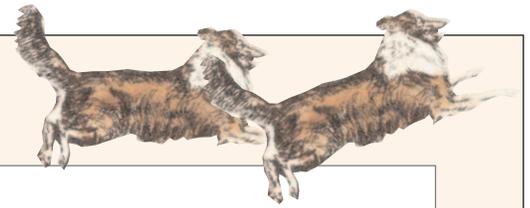
Today, the legend of Lassie lives on. True, Collies and children are made for each other. But as with all dogs, adults must teach child and dog how to respect each other. The results will be well worth the effort, for there’s nothing more amazing than watching the growth and interaction between child and dog, who, like the characters of books and TV, quickly become friends for life!

Another notable part of Collie mystique is the famous homing instinct depicted in *Lassie Come Home*. Despite rare stories of real Collies returning home over many miles, this part of the Collie legend must be considered fiction: *A Collie needs to be kept safe by fencing around the yard and the use of a leash when outside the yard or away from home. Sadly, a number of the dogs we rescue each year are lost and, unlike the fictional Lassie, are unable to find their way home.*

Right: Albert Payson Terhune surrounded by some of his Sunnybank Collies, the frequent subjects of his famous dog stories.

Far right: The Collie has been immortalized in countless children’s books over the decades.





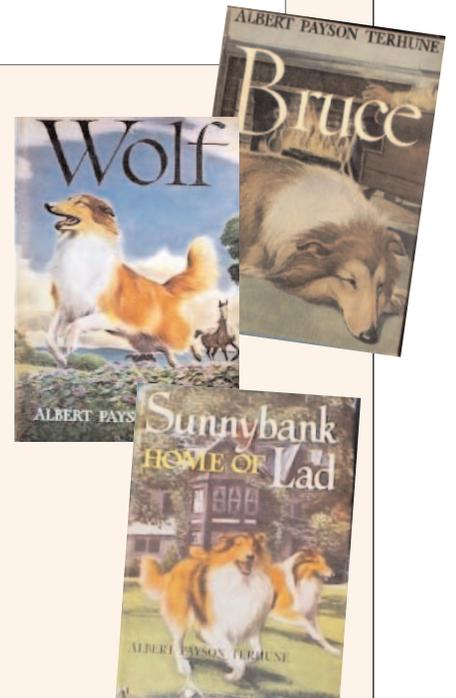
The lovable blue merle Gray Dawn with his adored plaything, a stuffed elephant. The tender relationship between dog and toy was brilliantly depicted in a Terhune short story, 'The Non-Sacred White Elephant.'

The Writings of Albert Payson Terhune

Many a Collie breeder—and owner—will fondly admit that it was the writings of Albert Payson Terhune which first inspired their love of the Collie. Even after more than 85 years, his works remain a wonderful introduction to the timeless character of the Collie. For those who may never have read Terhune: Treat yourself—or your children—to these works today. Most are inexpensive and are easy to find at your library, bookstore or on internet auctions.

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| <i>Lad: A Dog</i> (1919) | <i>Treve</i> (1924) | <i>The Faith of a Collie</i> (1949) |
| <i>Bruce</i> (1920) | <i>The Heart of a Dog</i> (1924) | <i>A Highland Collie</i> (1950) |
| <i>Buff: A Collie</i> (1921) | <i>Wolf</i> (1925) | <i>Dog of the High Sierras</i> (1951) |
| <i>His Dog</i> (1922) | <i>My Friend the Dog</i> (1926) | <i>Collie to the Rescue</i> (1952) |
| <i>Further Adventures of Lad</i> (1922) | <i>Gray Dawn</i> (1927) | <i>Sunnybank: Home of Lad</i> (1953) |
| <i>Lochinvar Luck</i> (1923) | <i>The Way of a Dog</i> (1932) | |

Note: This is a partial list only, of the easily available titles.



PART 2: Care of the Collie

