



How To Convince Your Parents You Can... Care For A Pet Hedgehog



Tammy Gagne



PUBLISHERS

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A Robbie Reader/How to Convince Your Parents You Can...

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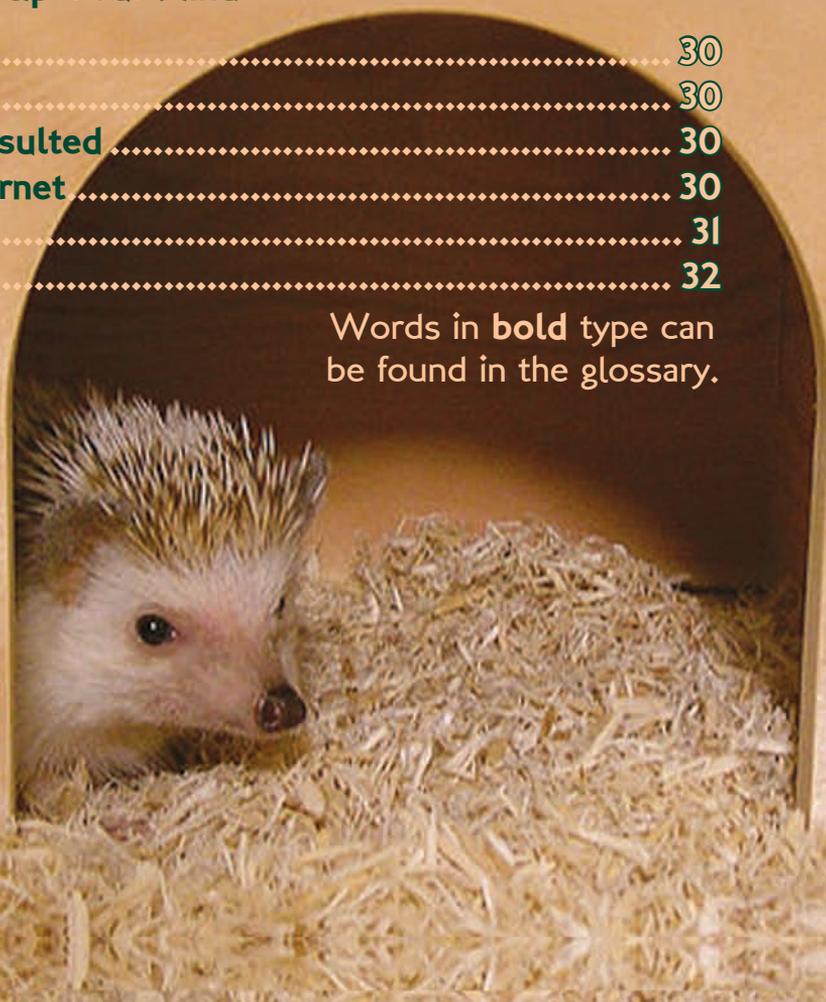
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Chapter One

1



GO HEDGEHOG WILD

“What is that?” your friends may ask when they first see your pet hedgehog. “It looks like a tiny porcupine!” Hedgehogs do indeed remind many people of porcupines. Like porcupines, hedgehogs are covered with spines, also called quills. Yet the two species are not related. Hedgehogs are related to moles and shrews.

Hedgehogs can make fun pets for the right people. Because they are so small, you can take hedgehogs almost anywhere. They are not the most social pets, though. When they see strangers, most hedgehogs curl up into balls to protect themselves. Many squeal when they are especially frightened. But these behaviors usually just make people want to know more about these interesting little creatures.

In the popular videogame series *Sonic the Hedgehog*, Sonic’s best friend is a fox. In real



life your hedgehog probably won't get along this well with other animals. In the wild, hedgehogs are lone creatures. Most cats and dogs, however, can be taught to live peacefully around hedgehogs. Once these bigger animals have been poked by a hedgehog spine, they quickly realize that chasing these prickly animals just isn't worth the game.



fun FACTS

Hedgehogs have appeared in many children's books. These include *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle* by Beatrix Potter.

Hedgehogs are **nocturnal** (nok-TUR-nul). This means they sleep during the day. They are alert and active at night. This trait makes the hedgehog a great pet for children, since kids are in school most days. By the time your hedgehog is waking up, you will be home to care for and play with this pet.

Hedgehogs use their bodies to express their feelings. This form of communication is called **body language**. When a hedgehog's spines lie flat, you know the animal is feeling relaxed. When a hedgehog raises its spines, then the animal is feeling uneasy about something. If a hedgehog raises only certain

spines, whatever is bothering your pet is likely in that direction.

Parents may worry that you could be hurt by your hedgehog's quills. It is true that a hedgehog can injure the hand holding it. Once you learn how to properly pick up this animal, though, your risk of being pricked is small. This is especially true once you and your pet have gotten to know each other. The good news is that hedgehogs do not throw their quills.

Convincing your parents that you can care for a pet hedgehog is not an impossible task. But it may take some effort on your behalf. Hedgehogs are fairly easy to own, but like all animals, they need regular care and attention. You must be sure you are ready for a hedgehog before you ask for one.

Most parents know little about hedgehogs. It is up to you to learn as much as you can about them and share the information with your mother and father. By doing this, you will encourage them to say yes to your request. If your parents see that you have done your research, they may be more comfortable with the idea of buying you this pet.



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