

Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: All About Pet Adoption</i>	7
Chapter 1: Exploring the Pet Adoption Option.....	9
Chapter 2: Seeking Shelter: Finding and Using Animal Shelters.....	23
Chapter 3: Rescue Me! All About Pet Rescue Groups.....	35
<i>Part II: Welcoming a Dog into Your Life</i>	49
Chapter 4: Choosing Your Dog.....	51
Chapter 5: Helping Your Adopted Dog Make the Homecoming Transition	73
Chapter 6: Caring for Your Adopted Dog.....	91
Chapter 7: Doggy Boot Camp: Basic Training and Behavior Management	109
<i>Part III: Here Kitty Kitty: Rescuing a Cat</i>	135
Chapter 8: Finding the Purrfect Feline for You.....	137
Chapter 9: Welcoming Home Your Adopted Cat.....	151
Chapter 10: Kitty Care.....	165
Chapter 11: You Really Can Train a Cat.....	183
<i>Part IV: Befriending a Little Critter</i>	197
Chapter 12: Choosing Your Critter.....	199
Chapter 13: Getting Ready for Your Critter.....	213
Chapter 14: Taking Charge of Your Critter's Care	221
Chapter 15: Critter Behavior and Training.....	231
<i>Part V: Bringing Home a Feathered Friend</i>	245
Chapter 16: From Macaws to Budgies: Choosing Your Feathered Friend	247
Chapter 17: Creating a Bird-Friendly Home	259
Chapter 18: Caring for Your Adopted Bird	269
Chapter 19: Training Your Bird.....	281
<i>Part VI: Giving an Exotic a Second Chance</i>	295
Chapter 20: Choosing a Creepy Crawler.....	297
Chapter 21: Preparing for Your Exotic Pet	307
Chapter 22: Exotic Care and Feeding.....	317
Chapter 23: Snake Charming and Herp Handling: How to Train Your Exotic Pet	329

<i>Part VII: The Part of Tens</i>	339
Chapter 24: Ten Great Reasons to Spay or Neuter Your Adopted Pet.....	341
Chapter 25: Ten Favors You Can Do for Your Adopted Pet.....	343
Chapter 26: Ten Ways to Support Your Local Shelter or Rescue Group	345
<i>Index</i>	347

Table of Contents

.....

<i>Introduction</i>	1
About This Book.....	2
Conventions Used in This Book	3
What You're Not to Read.....	3
Foolish Assumptions	4
How This Book Is Organized.....	4
Part I: All About Pet Adoption	4
Part II: Welcoming a Dog into Your Life	5
Part III: Here Kitty Kitty: Rescuing a Cat.....	5
Part IV: Befriending a Little Critter.....	5
Part V: Bringing Home a Feathered Friend.....	5
Part VI: Giving an Exotic a Second Chance	5
Part VII: The Part of Tens	6
Icons Used in This Book.....	6
Where to Go from Here.....	6
<i>Part I: All About Pet Adoption</i>	7
Chapter 1: Exploring the Pet Adoption Option	9
Making Sure You're Ready to Be a Good Pet Parent	9
Considering the time commitment	10
Being mindful of housing restrictions	12
Affording a pet	13
The Good Part: Adopted Pets = Love	14
Perfect Pet Profile Quiz: Find Out What Kind of Pet You Really Want.....	15
Beyond the Glamour: What It Means to Adopt	18
A dog	18
A cat	19
A small mammal	19
A birdie	20
An exotic.....	21
Finding Your New Best Friend through Shelters, Humane Societies, and Rescues	21
Uncovering the basics of animal shelters	22
Demystifying the rescue group.....	22
Chapter 2: Seeking Shelter: Finding and Using Animal Shelters . . .	23
Animal Shelters Explained	24
Shelter pros.....	26
Shelter cons	27

Finding a Great Shelter Near You	28
Checking the Yellow Pages and Internet	28
Rounding up recommendations	29
Walking through the Adoption Process.....	30
Checking out the facility.....	30
Looking at the pets.....	31
Asking the right questions	32
Avoiding second thoughts: The waiting period	33
Sealing the Deal	34

Chapter 3: Rescue Me! All About Pet Rescue Groups 35

Weighing the Pros and Cons of Adopting from a Rescue Group.....	36
Rescue group pros	36
Rescue group cons	38
Scouting Out a Particular Rescue Group	38
Asking around	39
Surfing the Net	39
Surviving the Screening Process.....	40
Making contact and checking references.....	41
Answering questions, questions, and more questions.....	42
Preparing for a house visit	44
Meeting the pets	45
Making a Commitment: Signing the Rescue Contract	47

Part II: Welcoming a Dog into Your Life.....49

Chapter 4: Choosing Your Dog 51

Puppies Are Precious, but	51
Pros and cons of adopting a puppy	52
Pros and cons of adopting an adult dog.....	53
Deciding on a Male or Female.....	54
Identifying Signs of a Healthy Dog	55
Bright eyes and bushy tails.....	55
Skin-tastic	56
Bringing up the rear	57
The great big world: How the dog interacts	58
Temperament Testing.....	58
Exploring the effects of breed temperament	59
Understanding the basics of temperament.....	62
Go-getters, chill-outers, and wait-and-seers	63
What Kind of Dog Is That? The Joy of Mixed Breeds.....	64
Adopting a Purebred Dog.....	66
All about breed groups	67
Good buddies: Companion dogs	67
Imposing Guardian breeds	68
Active Sporting breeds	69
Born to run: Cold-hardy Northern breeds.....	70

Eye on the prize: Sighthounds	70
The nose knows: Scenthounds	71
Feisty Terrier breeds	71
Superfocused Herding breeds	72
Chapter 5: Helping Your Adopted Dog	
Make the Homecoming Transition	73
Preparing Your Pad	73
Puppy-proofing first (even for adult dogs)	74
Gathering doggy accoutrements	76
Welcoming Doggy Home.....	80
Dog, meet potty spot	80
Showing your dog to his den	81
Introducing your people.....	83
Introducing other pets.....	85
Downtime	88
Recognizing Adjustment Problems.....	89
Chapter 6: Caring for Your Adopted Dog	91
Keeping Your Dog Healthy	92
First things first: Choosing a great vet.....	92
Giving your new friend a good once-over: The first exam	93
Noticing problems after you get home	97
Following up with an annual exam.....	99
Somebody's Hungry!.....	99
Choosing the right food for your dog	100
Addressing bad nutritional habits: What your dog	
doesn't need to eat	101
Helping Fido's tummy transition	101
Deciding when to ring the dinner bell	102
Keeping an eye on your dog's waistline	102
Administering the body evaluation test	103
Correcting a weight problem	104
Good Grooming Matters.....	105
Grooming disguised as a checkup.....	105
Brush, comb, trim, bathe, and polish	106
Chapter 7: Doggy Boot Camp: Basic Training	
and Behavior Management	109
Housetraining Made Easy.....	110
Beginning with the basics	110
Adding crate training	112
Adding schedule training	113
Dealing with mistakes	113
Teaching Good Doggy Manners.....	114
Off to school: Finding a training class	114
Socialization strategies.....	116
Teaching the building-block training cues	118

Breaking Adopted Dogs of Bad Habits	123
Managing Behavior Problems Common to Adopted Dogs.....	125
Lassie come home: Keeping your dog from running away	125
Oh the noise, noise, noise, noise, noise:	
Curtailing excessive barking	126
My dog is knocking me over: Teaching dogs	
to quit jumping up	127
Didn't I have a couch here? Ending destructive chewing	127
Ouch! Nipping that annoying nipping and biting	129
But this is my dinner! Stopping your dog from begging.....	129
Where's the garden? Reclaiming your yard from a digger	130
Comeback Kid: Coping with Separation Anxiety	130
Who's the Boss? Managing Aggression	131
Managing the Mistreated Dog.....	133
Deciding whether you can handle a problem.....	133
Getting professional help	134

***Part III: Here Kitty Kitty: Rescuing a Cat* 135**

Chapter 8: Finding the Purrfect Feline for You137

Deciding between a Kitten and a Cat.....	138
Considering a kitten	138
Acknowledging the advantages of an adult cat	139
Boy cat or girl cat?	140
What about feral and stray cats?.....	140
Recognizing Signs of a Healthy Cat.....	141
Silky coats and eyes like jewels	142
Itchy kitty? Signs of parasites and skin/coat problems.....	142
The tail end	142
Curiosity quotient: How your cat interacts	143
Temperament Testing.....	143
Determining what traits suit your fancy.....	144
Profiling kitty companions	144
Asking the experts: Shelter workers	
provide the skinny on your kitty	145
Finding a Good Match: What to Expect	
from Different Breeds and Mixes	146
Cats of undetermined origin: Mixed-breed cats	146
Perfectly stunning Persians (and their relatives)	148
Clever Siamese . . . both types!.....	149
The all-American shorthairs	149
Mellow Maine coons, America's native long-haired cat	150

Chapter 9: Welcoming Home Your Adopted Cat	151
Kitten-Proofing — Even For Adult Cats!	151
Stocking Up on Supplies	153
Gathering the basics	153
Spoiling Fluffy with fancy supplies	157
What to Expect When You Get Home	158
Getting acclimated	158
Meeting the family	159
Meeting resident pets	160
Run of the house	163
Recognizing Adjustment Problems	164
Chapter 10: Kitty Care	165
Keeping Your Cat Healthy	165
Choosing a great cat vet	166
The first exam	166
Remaining on the lookout for health problems	169
Making time for an annual exam	172
Chow Time!	173
Choosing the right food for your cat	173
Avoiding harmful foods	174
Switching foods	175
Deciding between free feeding and meal feeding	175
Do you have a fat cat or a scrawny kitty?	176
Helping Your Cat Practice Good Feline Hygiene	178
Grooming disguised as a health-care checkup	178
Brushing and combing basics	179
Clipping nails down to size, not the quick	180
Giving a cat a bath	181
Chapter 11: You Really Can Train a Cat	183
Not Going Outside the Box	184
Kitty, meet litter	184
Dealing with litter-box aversion	184
Your Cat: Mighty Hunter	185
Scratch Zone	186
Foiling the Climbing Cat	188
Attack Cat: Biting, Scratching, and Pouncing	189
The Amazing Disappearing Kitty: Shyness and Hiding	191
Harry Hou-Kitty: The Escape Artist Cat	192
Cat Talk: When Your Cat Just Won't Be Quiet	193
Cat on Cat: Sibling Rivalry and Other-Pet Issues	193
Calming Kitten Chaos	194
Finding a Feline Behaviorist	194
Training Your Cat the Easy Way	195

Part IV: Befriending a Little Critter 197**Chapter 12: Choosing Your Critter 199**

Considering a Little Critter	199
Exploring the appeal of small-animal pets	200
Deciding you and small critters aren't a fit.....	201
Pairing kids with critters: Perfect pet or potential problem?	201
Finding the Critter That's Right for You	203
Ferret facts	203
Rabbit run-down.....	205
Guinea-pig guide	205
Rats rule.....	206
Hamster and gerbil handbook	207
Mouse manifesto	208
Exotics: Chinchillas and hedgehogs	209
Save a Critter Today! Finding Adoptable Critters	210

Chapter 13: Getting Ready for Your Critter 213

Preparing Your Home for Critter Conditions.....	213
Making your home critterproof	214
Considering the free-roaming route	214
Stocking Crucial Critter Supplies	215
Settling into a new enclosure.....	215
Getting the supplies your pet needs.....	218
Helping Your New Critter Settle In	219
Understand the limits of handling.....	219
Give him space.....	219
Supervise your children	220
Know when to get help and when to back off.....	220

Chapter 14: Taking Charge of Your Critter's Care 221

Keeping Your Critter Healthy	221
Finding a good critter vet	222
Understanding potential health problems	223
Keeping your critters from breeding!	225
Knowing when to see a vet.....	226
Feeding Your Critter.....	227
Critter Grooming	229

Chapter 15: Critter Behavior and Training 231

Adopted Small Animal Issues	231
Fixing what you can	232
Managing what you can	234
Accepting what you can't change	235
Knowing when it's a physical problem	236

Understanding What Small Animals Can and Should Learn	236
Litter-box training your ferret.....	237
Litter-box training your rabbit.....	238
Hand-taming pocket pets	239
Teaching small animals to come	241
Interpreting Your Small Animal's Sounds and Movements.....	241
Understanding ferret sounds and behavior.....	241
Hearing what your rabbit is saying.....	242
Figuring out your rat's behavior.....	243
Listening to your guinea pig	243
Checking out hamster, gerbil, and mouse behaviors	244

Part V: Bringing Home a Feathered Friend **245**

Chapter 16: From Macaws to Budgies: Choosing Your Feathered Friend **247**

Understanding Your Adopted Bird	248
Knowing What Adopted Birds Need	249
Finding a Breed that Suits You	250
Choosing for health and temperament.....	251
Go large: Macaws and cockatoos	252
Talking about Amazon parrots and African greys.....	253
Conures, Quakers, toucans, and other medium-sized birds.....	254
What about doves?.....	255
Parakeets and cockatiels: Pros and cons	256

Chapter 17: Creating a Bird-Friendly Home **259**

Getting Ready for a Bird in the House.....	259
Bird-proofing	259
To fly free or not to fly free?.....	261
The Best Bird Supplies	262
Cage considerations.....	262
Food for the birds.....	263
Perches	263
Bird stimulation: Toys and climbing devices.....	264
Travel carrier or small travel cage.....	264
Cage cover.....	264
Perch cleaner	264
Cuttlebone.....	265
Nontoxic cage bedding	265
Spray bottle, grooming spray, or a bird bath.....	265
Nail trimmers or cement perch	265
Bringing Home Birdie.....	265
Introducing your new bird to its new home	266
Getting to know the family	267
Child-bird relations	267
Other pets: The Tweety and Sylvester syndrome.....	268

Chapter 18: Caring for Your Adopted Bird	269
Keeping Your Bird Healthy.....	269
Finding a good bird vet.....	270
The first vet visit	271
Common health problems in adopted birds.....	272
Bird breeding: Why — and how — not to	274
Feeding Your Adopted Bird: A Mixed Bag.....	275
Giving your bird a balanced diet.....	275
Giving your bird the best and worst foods	276
Understanding the diets of specific species	278
Knowing how often to feed your bird.....	279
Converting your bird to the proper diet	279
Grooming Your Bird	280
Chapter 19: Training Your Bird	281
Understanding Bird Behavior.....	281
Solving Bird Behavior Problems	282
The bird that won't adjust: Fear and anxiety.....	283
Noise solutions	285
Biting and aggression.....	286
Feather picking and chewing.....	287
Finding an Avian Behavior Consultant	288
Bird Bonding: Bringing Out Your Bird's Best.....	288
Bird Basic Training.....	289
Socializing with your bird.....	290
Hand-training	290
The step-up cue.....	291
Teaching your bird to behave on your shoulder	292
Cage-free manners.....	292
Mating Season and Avian Adolescence.....	293
 Part VI: Giving an Exotic a Second Chance	295
 Chapter 20: Choosing a Creepy Crawler	297
Determining Whether Exotic Herps and “Bugs” Are Right for You.....	298
Picking Your Exotic Pet	299
Constrictors: Pythons, boas, and other huggable snakes.....	300
Small slitherers: Garter snakes, king snakes, corn snakes, and other Colubrids	301
Green iguanas	301
Turtle time.....	302
Other reptiles of the tropics and the deserts	303
The slime factor: Frogs, salamanders, and newts	304

Shell chic: All about hermit crabs305
 Bugs: Tarantulas and beyond305
 Seeking Out Secondhand Snakes, Lizards, and Spiders306

Chapter 21: Preparing for Your Exotic Pet 307

Herp-Proofing Your Home307
 Exotic Equipment and Supplies.....309
 Exotic enclosures309
 Light, heat, bedding, and water311
 Exotic supply list313
 Exotic Homecoming: What to Expect314
 Traveling with your exotic — bringing him home314
 Welcoming your pet home — making him comfortable.....315

Chapter 22: Exotic Care and Feeding 317

Bright Eyes and Scaly Tails317
 Finding a good exotic pet vet.....318
 What to expect during the first exam319
 Recognizing special health problems
 adopted exotics may have.....320
 Noticing when your exotic is sick and needs a vet321
 Identifying reasons not to be alarmed.....322
 Exotics and kids: What you must know.....323
 Exotic Meals: Feeding Your Exotic Pet324
 Snacks for snakes324
 Lizard lunch325
 Turtle tidbits326
 Amphibian appetizers.....326
 Arachnids and other “bug” basics327
 Hungry hermit crabs.....327
 Herp Hygiene and Grooming327

**Chapter 23: Snake Charming and Herp Handling:
 How to Train Your Exotic Pet 329**

Exploring the Possibilities and Limits of Exotic Taming and Training.....330
 How to recognize a tamed exotic330
 How to tame your exotic331
 Handling Your Exotic Pet332
 Snake couture332
 Lizard love.....334
 Turtle touch335
 Touchy toads and feely frogs.....336
 Tarantula taming336
 Hermit crab handling337
 Dealing with a Herp Bite.....338

Part VII: The Part of Tens.....339**Chapter 24: Ten Great Reasons to Spay
or Neuter Your Adopted Pet341**

You Can Do It on the Cheap	341
Spaying/Neutering Makes Pets Healthier	341
Spaying/Neutering Keeps Pets Home	341
So What If Your Pet Is a Purebred?	342
Spaying/Neutering Improves Behavior	342
If They Never Do It, They Never Miss It	342
Reproduction Is Risky.....	342
Your Pet Won't Miss the "Family Jewels"	342
Eight Million Pets and Counting.....	342

Chapter 25: Ten Favors You Can Do for Your Adopted Pet 343

A Forever Home.....	343
The Right Diet . . . at Last	343
Indoor Shelter	343
Exercise, Exercise, Exercise.....	344
Attention	344
Physical Touch . . . or Not	344
Mental Challenges for Better Behavior	344
Family Member Status	344
Grooming and Good Housekeeping	344
Regular Vet Care.....	344

**Chapter 26: Ten Ways to Support Your
Local Shelter or Rescue Group345**

Volunteering.....	345
Donating Money or Talent.....	345
Fostering a Pet.....	345
Dropping Off Food and Supplies	346
Giving Gifts in Others' Names.....	346
Referring Your Friends	346
Staying Informed	346
Spreading the Word	346
Starting a Rescue.....	346
Adopting Another Pet.....	346

Index.....347