

The Girl and the Rescue Hamster



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Ava skipped into the animal shelter with her mom. Her yellow t-shirt had a tiny hamster printed on it. She wore her green gardening gloves, just in case. In a cozy corner, a small hamster with golden-orange fur and a white belly peeked out from a soft blue tunnel. His tiny pink nose wiggled. "That's Pip," said the shelter lady. "He's a rescue hamster."



Ava pressed her face close to the glass. Pip had plump cheeks and dark round eyes that sparkled. He ran on his wheel, then dug in his bedding, then ran again. "He's so busy!" Ava laughed. Mom smiled. "Hamsters have lots to do. Do you think you can take care of him?" Ava nodded. "I will learn everything!" That very day, Pip came home in a little carry box.



At home, Ava set Pip's cage on a low table. She watched him dig in the corner. "He loves to burrow!" she said. Mom nodded. "Hamsters dig deep tunnels in the wild. Pip needs a burrow to explore." Ava put on her green gardening gloves. "Then I'll build him one!" She gathered cardboard tubes and a small wooden box. Pip's tiny pink paws twitched with excitement.



Ava lined a box with soft, safe bedding. She made a dark tunnel with a cardboard tube. Pip sniffed it, then zoomed inside. His plump cheeks wiggled. "He's digging!" Ava cheered. She added another tunnel that curved like a slide. Pip popped out, covered in bedding fluff. Mom said, "A burrow makes him feel safe." Ava beamed. "I'm going to make the best burrow ever!"



Next, Ava noticed Pip running on his wheel. He ran fast, then stopped, then ran again. "He needs exercise," Mom said. "A hamster wheel is important." Ava checked the wheel. It had a solid running surface, safe for tiny paws. She placed it in the cage. Pip hopped on and ran. His little legs blurred. Ava giggled. "He's a speedy hamster!"



Ava learned that hamsters need lots of space. She asked Mom, "Can we make his habitat bigger?" Mom helped her connect a second cage with a tunnel. Ava added soft bedding, a small house, and a chew toy. Pip explored every corner. He stuffed a piece of apple in his cheek and scurried to his burrow. "He's storing food!" Ava said. "Just like a wild hamster."



Ava wanted Pip to have fun toys. She made a cardboard maze and hid sunflower seeds inside. Pip sniffed and dug through the tunnels. His dark eyes gleamed. He found every seed! "He's so clever," Ava said. Mom smiled. "Toys keep his mind busy." Ava added a small ladder and a wooden chew block. Pip climbed and chewed and dug. He was one happy hamster.



One morning, Ava saw Pip digging in a corner. He looked restless. "Maybe his burrow is too small," she said. Mom nodded. "Hamsters need deep bedding to dig." Ava filled the cage with extra bedding. Pip dove in and disappeared. Soon his nose poked out, then his head. He had made a cozy nest. "He loves it!" Ava whispered.



Ava checked Pip's water bottle and food bowl every day. She gave him fresh vegetables and a little fruit. Pip's plump cheeks grew rounder. "He's healthy," Mom said. Ava felt proud. She wrote a list of Pip's needs: burrow, wheel, toys, bedding, food, water. "Small pets have big needs," she told Mom. Mom hugged her. "You're learning fast."



Pip grew braver. He let Ava stroke his soft fur. He sat in her green-gloved hand and nibbled a seed. "He trusts you," Mom said. Ava's gap-toothed smile shone. She watched Pip run on his wheel, dig in his burrow, and explore his tunnels. "I'm so glad we rescued him," she said. Pip twitched his tiny pink nose as if he agreed.



One evening, Pip did not come out of his burrow. Ava worried. She peeked inside. Pip was curled up, sleeping deeply. "Is he okay?" Ava asked. Mom explained, "Hamsters sleep during the day and wake at night. He's just resting." Ava sighed with relief. She covered the cage with a light cloth to keep it dark and quiet. "Sleep well, Pip," she whispered.



Ava decided to make Pip's habitat even better. She added a small sand bath for cleaning. Pip rolled in it, kicking up sand. "He loves it!" Ava laughed. She rearranged the tunnels so they led to different rooms. Pip explored every new path. "You're a great habitat designer," Mom said. Ava's brown eyes sparkled. She felt like a real pet expert.



Ava showed Pip to her friend Ben. "This is Pip," she said. "He's a rescue hamster." Ben watched Pip dig and run. "He's busy!" Ben said. Ava nodded. "Hamsters need burrows, exercise, and toys. I built them all." Ben was impressed. "You take great care of him." Ava's heart swelled. She had given Pip a wonderful home.



That night, Ava watched Pip run on his wheel. His golden-orange fur shone under the lamp. He hopped off and dug into his burrow, then popped out with a seed in his cheek. "He's happy," Ava said. Mom smiled. "Because you listened to his needs." Ava hugged her mom. "Small pets have big needs," she said. "And I'm glad I can meet them."



Ava kept a journal about Pip. She drew his burrow, his wheel, and his toys. She wrote: "Pip needs to dig, run, and explore. I give him bedding, tunnels, and love." Mom read it and smiled. "You've become a wonderful pet owner." Ava felt proud. She knew that rescuing Pip was just the beginning. Every day, she learned something new.



Pip sat in his blue tunnel, his plump cheeks full. Ava wore her yellow hamster t-shirt and green gloves. She stroked his soft fur. "You're safe now, Pip," she said. Mom put an arm around her. "You gave him a second chance." Ava's gap-toothed smile was bright. She had learned that small pets have big needs, and she was proud to give Pip a wonderful new home.