

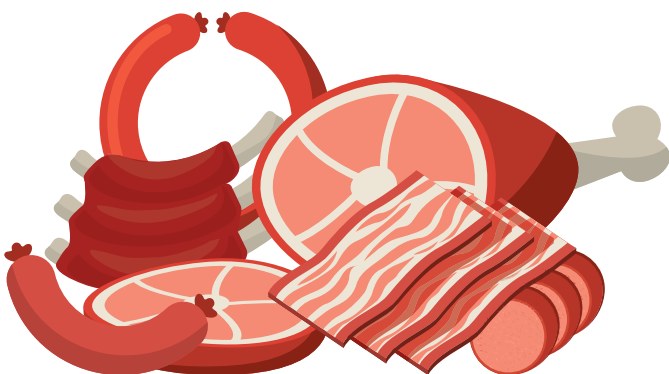
Hamilton the Hamster

Once upon a time there was a very clever little hamster named Hamilton. He lived in a butcher shop owned by Mr. Roberts, but Mr. Roberts didn't pay much attention to Hamilton.

Hamilton didn't have a cage, so he went anywhere in the shop he pleased, and sometimes Mr. Roberts would put out some breadcrumbs for him to nibble on, but mostly Hamilton was on his own. He spent most of his time scrambling around looking for food and water.

Hamilton felt very lonely living like this, and he longed to be someone's pet where he could have a cozy cage with shavings to make a nest, and lots of lovely crunchy food. Hamilton was tired of being hungry, and he just wanted to be loved.

Each day, when Hamilton heard the bells jingle on the shop door, he knew a customer would walk in and look at the meats. Hamilton would scramble up on top of the wooden crates in the shop and yell "Hey Mister! I'd make a great pet! Will you take me home? Look, I can do tricks!" Then he would jump high into the air and do a fantastic backwards somersault.



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Unfortunately though, no matter what Hamilton did, the customers didn't notice him, and to a human, Hamilton's yelling just sounded like hamster squeaks!



Mr. Roberts would place a new sign in the shop window each day with a special offer written on it, like "Pork Chop Special! Just £1.99 per Kg!" or "100% Pure Grain Fed Lamb!" One day, like most other days, a man stood outside Mr. Roberts' butcher shop reading the signs, this is when Hamilton had a wonderful idea! He would make his own sign! Surely that would get people's attention?

Hamilton saw a big purple pen, and found some poster paper scraps that were just the right size. He grabbed the pen (which of course was very long for a hamster) and wrote on the poster paper, "My name is

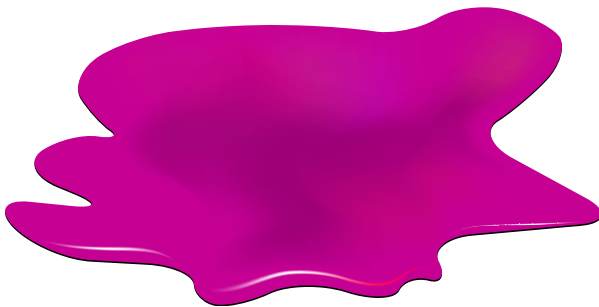
Hamilton, please take me home to be your pet!" Then he waved the sign all around in the air.

The man, who had now come into the shop, saw something moving over to the side of the shop, and when he looked more closely he was amazed to see a little hamster holding a sign.

The man knew that most hamsters can't read or write, and so he thought it must be some kind of trick. So he asked Mr. Roberts, "are you trying to get rid of your pet hamster?"

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"Nah, the little guy just hangs out here, he's no bother," said Mr. Roberts. Hamilton knew this was his chance to become someone's pet, and so he grabbed the purple pen once more and turned the poster paper over to write another message. Just then the pen began to leak and he got purple ink all over his paws and fur.

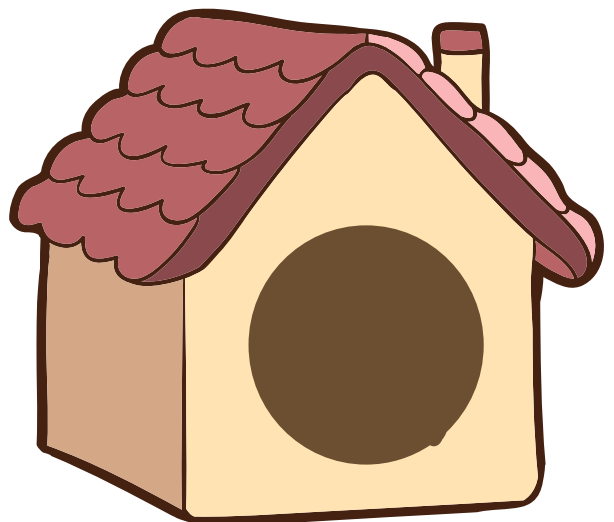


The man stared at Hamilton, thinking he must have chewed on the pen and he said "what a mess!" Thinking quickly, Hamilton wrote on the paper, "Pets Are Purple Too!"

The man quickly realised that this hamster could actually read and write, which gave him an idea. "This little guy would make a great pet! The kids would love him! Can I take him home Mr. Roberts?"

"Of course, I think he would like that." Said Mr. Roberts.

And so with Mr. Robert's permission, the man scooped Hamilton up and put him carefully into a nice box that had been sitting in the back of the shop. Then he took him straight to the local pet shop where he bought all of the fancy equipment he could find to make Hamilton comfortable and happy.



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At home, his children carefully cleaned off all of the purple ink, and gave Hamilton his very own teeny-tiny pen and notepad. The very first question they asked him was "what is your name?" and were overjoyed when they read the little sign that read "Hamilton".

From then on, Hamilton lived happily ever after with his new family, and was finally loved as someone's pet.

