

SPIKEY



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*For John, Taz, Gordon and all the many other very special human beings
who made this book possible, with love and thanks.*

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Throughout the book, the quiz questions on the left-hand pages are for younger readers to answer:

- ★ Who is Spikey?
- ★ Where does he live?
- ★ What do you think might be special about Spikey? And what do you think might be special about you?

Welcome to Spikey's World!

Hello, I am Grandma Hedgehog, and I am here to tell you about my grandson, Spikey. He is a hedgehog like I am, but to be honest with you, he is a very special hedgehog. He lives in a wonderful, big park. It might just cover the whole wide world! People call it Regent's Park, and it's in London, England. Every day, he wakes up in this park and he is excited to see where new adventures will take him.

And the questions on the right-hand pages are for older readers to answer, think about or discuss:

- /** What do you think it's like to live in a park?
- /** What do you think hedgehogs believe is important?
- /** Why do you think Grandma Hedgehog thinks Regent's Park is the whole wide world?

Spikey

I think being a hedgehog is pretty amazing. We have been walking around on the earth for almost 15 million years, and we have hardly changed. We are curious and slightly nose-y. In fact, our noses wiggle when we smell something interesting, and we love discovering new things. We cannot see very well, but we make up for it with a good sense of hearing and an excellent sense of smell. And we are always hungry!

I am now very old for a hedgehog (over seven winters), and I have seen many, many things. My great joy in life is looking after Spikey. I love him dearly and think he's wonderful. In many ways, he is just like most other hedgehogs – handsome, with a wiggly nose, spikes and a *big* appetite – apart from one little detail. One of his back legs is thinner and shorter than the other one. It has never bothered

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- ★ How does Grandma Hedgehog describe hedgehogs?
 - ★ Which senses are the most important for hedgehogs?
 - ★ How did the other little hedgehogs behave towards Spikey?

Spikey

him, but when he was very young, his brothers and sisters and all the other little hedgehogs laughed at him because he couldn't run as fast as they could. He was so small back then that they didn't think he was a real hedgehog, and they wouldn't be friends with him.



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- ✦✦ How do you think Spikey feels about having one leg a little shorter than the others?
 - ✦✦ Why do you think people laugh at other people?
 - ✦✦ What do you think Spikey did when the other hedgehogs would not play with him?

Spikey

Growing up, Spikey spent lots of time talking to and learning from me, so he was never really lonely. He knew that the other young hedgehogs were bigger and stronger and faster than him. When the days became long and the air became warm, the others set off together during the night, in small groups of two and three. He asked to go with them, but they just laughed and said he could not keep up so they did not want him. They all left our cosy nest to find their own way in the world and become adult hedgehogs.

Spikey was left behind. But after lots and lots of thinking, his curious nose began to twitch, and he decided it was his turn to leave too. Each night, he looked into the darkness and tried to build up the courage to explore the world by himself. Boy, that must have been scary for him; sooo scary! Can you imagine how hard that decision was? So he decided

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- ★ What did Spikey think about the other young hedgehogs?
 - ★ What does Grandma Hedgehog hope Spikey will find?
 - ★ How can Spikey make it easier for himself? And if you were Spikey, what questions would you ask Grandma Hedgehog?

Spikey

that the night-time was still too much for him, and early one morning, he hugged me one last time and waved me goodbye. Now it is just him on his own, learning to stand on his four little feet.

I do worry about him. He left me with a twinkle in his eye and a smile in his voice, but with no other little hedgehogs to guide him. He set out into the morning light, although we hedgehogs prefer the darkness and safety of the night. I do hope he can keep out of sight and find his own way, and that his inner-hedgehog sense of right and wrong and safety and danger will guide him on his journey.

More than anything, I really hope he can find some friends, and maybe a slug, a beetle or a juicy worm or two. He's too thin.

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- ✎** How would you have helped Spikey if you were a baby hedgehog?
 - ✎** Do you think Spikey learned anything good from being left behind?
 - ✎** Why does Spikey leave in the morning and not at night-time? And would it be safer for Spikey to go by himself?