



WILD HEART PRESS · A COMPANION TO BEYOND CATS AND DOGS

# Before You Fall in Love

*A pre-adoption gut-check for the wonderfully unusual pet*

Answer every box **honestly** — the goal isn't a perfect score, it's a truthful one. A blank box isn't a "no." It's a "not yet": something to research, resolve, or reconsider before an animal pays for the gap. Tick them all in good conscience, and you're genuinely ready.



## I The animal, honestly

- I've read its **real, full** care needs — not just the cute thirty-second clips.
- I know its **adult size, true lifespan**, and what it will cost me over that whole life.
- I can live with its **schedule, noise, smell, and mess** (many are nocturnal).

## II Its needs, not mine

- I understand its **social needs** — and I'll keep a pair or group if it needs company.
- I know **exactly what it eats**, and can source and afford that diet for life.
- I can give it the **daily and weekly time** it genuinely requires.

## III Home & climate

- I have the space and the **correct setup** — ready **before** the animal arrives.
- I can hold its **climate** (heat, cool, humidity) year-round — even in a heatwave or outage.
- My home or rental genuinely suits it (escape-proofing, rooting, room to roam).

## IV The money

- I've budgeted the **full setup cost** — often more than the animal itself.
- I've budgeted **ongoing costs**: food, supplies, power, and replacements.
- I have an **emergency fund** set aside for exotic-vet bills.

## V The law — do this first

- I've checked **national and state/provincial** rules — bans and permits.
- I've checked **local city/county zoning** (especially anything classed as "livestock").
- I've checked my **lease, HOA, or landlord** — and have any permit **in writing**.

## VI Vet, sourcing & timing

- I've found an **exotic vet** who treats this species — **before** I need one.
- I'm sourcing **ethically**: a reputable breeder or rescue, captive-bred over wild-caught.
- I **didn't buy on impulse** — I slept on it, and I'm still sure.

## ◆ The honest gut-check

- I want this animal **for the animal** — not for a photo I fell in love with.
- Every box above is honestly ticked — or I've resolved what wasn't.
- I've read the **hard truths**, and I'm **still a yes**.
- If I'm not ready, I accept that **waiting is the kind choice**.

*Couldn't tick them all? That's the checklist working — wait, research, or reconsider. **The kindest decision is sometimes not to.** Tick them all honestly, and you're not just ready. You're the keeper this animal deserves.*

Animal I'm considering: ..... Date: ..... My honest verdict:  Yes  Not yet  No

Beyond Cats and Dogs · Wild Heart Press

For education and entertainment only — not veterinary or legal advice. Exotic-pet laws vary by location and change; always verify locally and consult a qualified exotic veterinarian before acquiring any animal.