

# I Smell A Rat...

Make that 4 rats. We now have 4 pet rats. How did that happen, you ask? A bit of mistaken identity when they were picked out at the pet store resulted in rat babies? No, all 4 are male – I don't think there's any mistaking that. What happened is this...

We got our two pet rats, and the kids' friends decided they wanted pet rats. This family has a history of obtaining and disposing of pets at a record rate. It bugs the heck out of me, but I don't want to say anything to them and step over the boundary of telling people how to raise their kids. We took a cat they decided they didn't want anymore, but we had to give it back because our dog was constantly trying to eat her and I was more allergic to that cat than I am to most cats. So anyway, this family is notorious for getting pets and then "getting rid" of them when they're tired of them, want new pets, or just plain can't take care of them anymore. To a degree, circumstances like these are understandable. We had to "get rid" of a dog because she bit my daughter in the face – understandable that we can't have a dog in the house who bites kids when we have 4 kids. Getting "rid of her" upset me at the time, but I also knew there was no choice. I'm putting "get rid" in quotes because it's a term I don't like to use about pets. I don't like to think that this is something people should regularly do with animals. I'm a firm believer in pets being commitments – you must keep them until they pass away (extenuating circumstances don't count – stuff happens sometimes, but not to EVERY pet, as in the case with this family). You need to do all the research about care before you obtain the pet; such as cleaning up after it and how much it will cost to feed it – which is why our daughter's friend's family needed to "get rid" of their rats.

It was a fine line to walk. I don't want to encourage these people to get more pets by taking their leftovers, but on the

other hand, I'm an animal lover, and I can only imagine what would happen to unwanted rats (snake food, turned loose in a field = hawk or cat or coyote food, etc). Besides, my kids have been just GREAT about caring for their pet rats. I barely know the rats are in the house, except when I actually have time to play with them, which is exactly how I wanted it. The girls feed and water their rats, clean the cage weekly, and play with them and give them exercise daily. So how could I say no to getting their friends' rats and yes to sending them to certain doom?

So, yes, we now have 4 rats in the house. Please don't start calling me 'crazy rat lady'; it wasn't entirely my fault; I was just trying to help! Here are the new additions – Buckeye and well, I can't remember his name, so here is Buckeye and what's his name (his head is barely visible underneath Buckeye – he looks just like Oreo, one of our original rats).



And while I'm at it, here are our original rats, Oreo and Bobby Jack:



My Bookshelf 0' Rats – just what I've always wanted ☐

