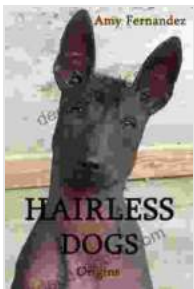


# Hairless Dogs: Uncovering Their Origins and Historical Significance

In the realm of canines, hairless dogs stand out as a captivating enigma, their smooth, hairless skin setting them apart from their furry counterparts. These unusual dogs have a rich and fascinating history, stretching back to ancient times. In this article, we will embark on a journey to uncover the origins of hairless dogs, delve into their historical significance, and explore their unique genetic makeup.



## Hairless Dogs: Origins (Dog History Shorts)

by Jeroen J. G. van Merriënboer

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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## Ancient Origins

The origins of hairless dogs remain shrouded in mystery, but archaeological evidence suggests that they have been around for thousands of years. Depictions of hairless dogs have been found in ancient Egyptian tombs, dating back to around 2500 BC. These dogs were

believed to be sacred animals, often associated with the god Anubis, the guardian of the underworld.

In the Americas, hairless dogs have also been an integral part of indigenous cultures for centuries. The Mexican Hairless Dog, known as the Xoloitzcuintli, has been revered by pre-Columbian civilizations, who prized them for their medicinal properties and their ability to guide souls through the afterlife.

## **Historical Roles**

Throughout history, hairless dogs have played various roles in human societies. In ancient China, the Chinese Crested Dog was believed to bring good luck and ward off evil spirits. In Peru, the Peruvian Hairless Dog was used for hunting and companionship, while the American Hairless Terrier was bred as a ratting dog.

In the 16th century, European explorers brought hairless dogs back from the Americas to Europe. These dogs quickly gained popularity as exotic pets and curiosities among the elite. They were often featured in paintings and other works of art, symbolizing luxury and status.

## **Unique Genetic Traits**

The hairless phenotype in dogs is caused by a genetic mutation that affects the production of the protein keratin. This protein is responsible for the formation of hair shafts. In hairless dogs, the mutation prevents the normal development of hair follicles, resulting in a complete lack of hair.

Hairless dogs also exhibit other unique genetic traits. They often have a higher body temperature than other dogs, which helps them to regulate

their body heat in the absence of fur. They may also have a slightly elongated muzzle and ears, which are believed to be adaptations for heat dissipation.

## Varieties of Hairless Dogs

Today, there are several recognized breeds of hairless dogs. Each breed has its own unique characteristics and history:

- **Mexican Hairless Dog (Xoloitzcuintli):** Known for its distinctive appearance, with wrinkled skin and a range of colors from black to white.
- **Peruvian Hairless Dog:** Similar to the Xoloitzcuintli, but with a more slender build and a pronounced crest on its head.
- **Chinese Crested Dog:** A small, elegant breed with a distinctive feather-like ruff of hair on its head, tail, and legs.
- **American Hairless Terrier:** A medium-sized breed that was developed in the United States as a ratting dog.
- **Argentine Pila Dog:** A relatively rare breed from Argentina, known for its small size and distinctive white skin.

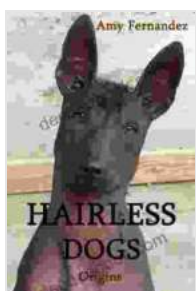
## Care and Health

Hairless dogs require special care and attention due to their lack of fur. They are prone to sunburn and skin irritations, so it is essential to provide them with adequate shelter and sun protection. Regular bathing and moisturizing are also necessary to maintain their skin health.

Hairless dogs may also be more susceptible to certain health conditions, such as dental problems and skin allergies. It is important to have regular veterinary check-ups and follow the veterinarian's recommendations for preventive care.

Hairless dogs are a unique and fascinating group of canines with a rich and diverse history. From their ancient origins to their historical roles and modern popularity, these dogs have captured the hearts and imaginations of people around the world. Their genetic makeup and special care requirements set them apart, but they share the same loyalty, affection, and companionship that is characteristic of all dogs.

As we continue to learn more about hairless dogs, their unique traits and historical significance will continue to inspire curiosity and admiration. These enigmatic companions are a testament to the extraordinary diversity and adaptability of the canine species.



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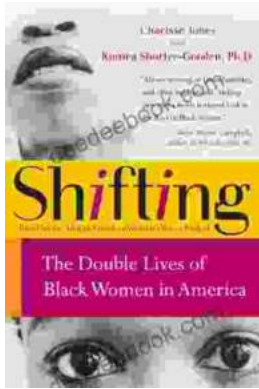
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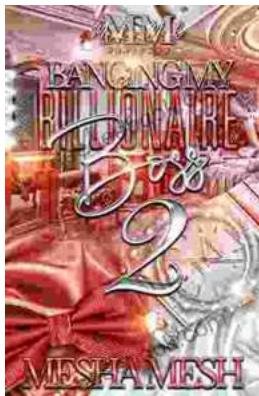
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