

A prickly encounter with nature

✖ After a morning trip to the library, we pulled up outside the house, and our sons jumped out and ran toward the front door.

I started gathering the 25 books we had managed to scatter through the minivan during the quick drive home.

All of a sudden I heard Leo yelling for me.

Oh, no.

Just when you think they're old enough to travel between the car and the door without holding their mother's hands, something happens. I'm constantly walking this line between giving the boys independence and letting them explore the world on their own, while also trying to keep them safe.

I tend to be overly cautious, but the car and the house aren't even 30 feet apart.

Looking over, I could see the boys bending over something next to the house.

Please don't let it be a snake, I thought. The boys have given me a superhero title—Mamagirl—but my superpowers are more along the lines of keeping pretzels in the car and knowing back roads to escape beltway traffic.

"Mama," Leo yelled as I hurried toward him. "I think it's a porcupine!"

OK, I think I'd rather face the snake.

As I came up next to the boys, however, I could see we were well out of danger.



Whew.

Did someone tell our 5-year-old that today was April Fools' Day? If he hadn't been completely serious, I would have credited him with tricking me.

I bent down and introduced our preschoolers to one of the first signs of spring.

"Can we...touch it?" Leo asked tentatively.



Hmm. Maybe these boys aren't spending enough time outdoors. It might be time to go on a porcupine hunt.

