

Hatchimal, the it toy you can't get

Even if they're not quite sure what it is, kids know they want a Hatchimal.

They've seen the commercials. They've seen the catalogues. Some lucky child in their class has gotten their sticky hands on one. This year's hot holiday toy comes in the form of a Draggie, Penguala, Owlicorn, Burtle or Bearakeet. The birdlike cyber plush creature is hidden inside the cardboard egg until it pecks its way out.

But good luck finding one. The toys, which retail for around \$90 each, were released on Oct. 7. Just over a month later, most stores across Canada are sold out, with savvy resellers offering the candy-coloured beings at nearly three times their value on Craigslist, eBay and social media. One was going for \$250 on a local buy-and-sell Facebook group, leading to a flurry of angry messages among those who felt the resale price was exploitative. On Kijiji, one hopeful seller was offering a Penguala in a teal and pink egg for a cool \$1,000.

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A message on the official Hatchimals website will likely disappoint parents looking to buy one at a reasonable price.

The consumer response to Hatchimals has been extraordinary, exceeding all expectations. Some of our first shipments have already sold out, it says in part. Another shipment will arrive later this fall, but production won't increase until 2017, according to Toronto-based manufacturer Spin Master.

A letter from Santa pleading with kids for patience until after Christmas has been circulating on Facebook, but Mellissa McDonald's 6-year-old daughter Ella has her heart set on a Hatchimal on Dec. 25.

I went to try to find one not really knowing the hype about it, said the Kitchener, Ont., mom, who has called area toy stores, searched online and even has family keeping an eye on U.S. stores. Her daughter's friends all want one as well.

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