

Hugo's Stories

by Daniela Mattes

and Hugo

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Hugo Says Hello

Hello, my name is Hugo. Hugo Sanchez, to be exact. Now, I may look like your common hamster, but I'm not. I am much more intelligent. And I can talk. The things I could tell you...

Well, that's why I wrote this book. Or, rather, why I had it written, because I'm not really that good at typing. I'm not even from Earth. Shocked? Well, I'll tell you all about how I got here. Let me think, where should I start... ah, right!

Hugo's Journey

I was living on a small planet very, very far away from Earth, in another galaxy. The planet was called PIPS, which sounds pretty funny here on Earth, but in hamster language it means "Home Sweet Home." The planet isn't very big at all and there are only hamsters living there. That's probably hard to imagine when all you know is life on Earth, but it's true.

The land there is pretty dry, with lots of mountains and caves for hiding and building nests. But there is also blue grass and small brooks. A hamster really needs to pay attention to not to fall into one of those and drown! Among the grass grow pretty little mushrooms that taste like carrots and apples. Yellow chips grow there, too (you know chips as a snack, but where I come from chips are little yellow plants that look and taste about the same as little kernels of corn).

Planet PIPS circles like a satellite around a bigger planet that's inhabited by humans, like Earth. They discovered us hamsters living on PIPS and because we're so small and cute they took

some of us with them and put us into cages for experiments. We didn't like that one bit, of course, but what could we do?

The humans found out in their experiments that we're much more intelligent than other hamsters and can even count all the way up to five. So the humans had an idea. They would train us to be astronauts and send us into space, in tiny, remote-controlled space ships. That way, they could explore the neighboring planets. I think that on Earth they used to have dogs and chimpanzees do that.

We all got lessons on which button you press to take a picture, and every time we pressed it a little reward came out of a machine. We were very well prepared and because the space ships were much better equipped than those on Earth they could fly much faster. Our mission would only take five days and that would get us all the way across the galaxy.

The space ships looked really funny, by the way, like big walnuts. Of course I had never seen walnuts before I came to Earth (I was pretty surprised and a little scared the first time I saw one because I thought the Earthlings were eating little space ships) so back then I didn't think the space ships looked funny. I was just impressed that space travel was already so advanced, what with the hamster-sized interior furnishings and all.

Anyway, we got our training and they put us inside the small spaceships and sent us off like satellites to take pictures of the planets in our galaxy. It could have been so easy. But something went wrong with my spaceship. The remote control stopped working and I started drifting off course out there in space and couldn't do anything to stop it. I was terribly afraid and homesick, but nobody came to help me. My brothers were also in remote-controlled space ships, so even if the humans would have sent them into my orbit, they still wouldn't have been able to get me out of my space ship.

I'm not sure they even tried to send help. After all, a hamster's life didn't mean much to the humans.

Then again, they were losing a space ship, too, and those were pretty expensive. Or at least I think they were. I'm not really an expert on that.

Anyway, there I was, drifting through space and getting further and further away from the others, until I couldn't even see them anymore. It was pretty dark all around me and the only things passing me were some comets and meteorites.

And then, all of a sudden, I got sucked into a black hole. They say that if you get sucked into a black hole, you die right then and there. I was so afraid, you can't even imagine. But that theory about black holes must be faulty. Or maybe I'm just so small that the black hole never even noticed I was there. Because even though it sucked me in, it spit me right out again on the other side! Okay, so I had wet my fur a little, but at least I was still alive. I was very happy about that. I was very sad, too, because it looked like I would never be able to go home again.

One the other side of the black hole was your galaxy. I kept drifting until I got into orbit above Earth, which then pretty much pulled me in until I was tumbling down towards the ground. Good thing my space ship didn't burst into flames when I entered the atmosphere! It really is a very advanced spaceship. I kept tumbling down right until I suddenly crash-landed. Somewhere in Spain. We hamsters aren't so good with geography.

So there I was, a small extraterrestrial hamster called E300, with my little wrecked walnut space ship, all alone on Earth. First I was afraid to get out because I didn't know where I was. But then I could see grass and sand outside the window. Except the grass and the sand weren't blue and orange, like on PIPS, they were brown. So I knew I wasn't back home, which I had been hoping for even though of course it wasn't possible. I had travelled through the black hole into a whole different galaxy. At least this planet seemed to be somewhat similar to PIPS, which was good because it meant I'd probably be able to survive here. But at first I just couldn't get myself to leave the space ship. Who knew if I'd be able to breathe the air? Maybe I would suffocate, like humans when they get out of their space ships on Mars or on the moon without space suits. On the other hand, the air in my space ship would only last so long, so I would just be suffocating inside instead. Clearly, waiting wasn't a good solution. I finally plucked up my courage, got out of my seat, and pressed the red emergency button that opened a little hatch. That was what they had trained us to do, so that they wouldn't have to destroy a perfectly good spaceship just to get us hamsters out in case of technical difficulties.

Then I was sitting in the hot Spanish sun, all alone, looking around me. I had already seen the grass, but the sun was really terribly hot and I was pretty desperate for a place to hide from it. Some distance away I saw some huge leaves of grass - I later learned that those were called trees - and I ran there as fast I could to rest in their shade. I burrowed into the cool moss to ponder my situation but I fell asleep. All the excitement had just been too much for me.

When I woke up, I saw a tall human walking in my direction. He looked very different from the humans I knew. But he came right up to me and sat down beside me.

"Hello!" he said in Spanish. "I had a dream about you, so I knew you would land here today. I would like to take you home with me, if that's alright with you."

You can imagine that that left me speechless. A human on a strange planet had already been waiting for me?! But I nodded and the human took me to his home, a little cabin in the woods. And it took me a few seconds to start wondering how I was even able to understand what he said, because I don't speak Spanish. Maybe he had already put a magic spell on me. Or maybe we were talking telepathically.

I took a long look around his cabin when we got there. There were so many things I didn't know, everything was strange and exciting. I wasn't afraid anymore at that point. I was pretty sure this human wasn't going to hurt me. Then he told me he had bought a cage for me, which, I have to admit, did bother me quite a lot. I really didn't want to be locked up again. But he explained that there was no need to worry, I would only have to be inside the cage if someone was coming over. The rest of the time, I was free to do whatever I wanted. That was acceptable, I thought.

"Let me introduce myself properly," my new human said to me. "I'm Michael, the wizard. And I can do magic." At first I didn't get what he was trying to tell me but then he mumbled some magic spell and suddenly I was talking like a human, actually talking to him, with words, not just with paw gesturing and eye rolling and hamster squeaks. No, from that moment on I could actually talk, just like you! He told me to pick a name for myself, one like they have on Earth. So I picked Hugo. Hugo Sanchez. That's been my name ever since. I think it's awesome.

Michael and I became really good friends. Even though he's a wizard he wasn't able to magic me back to PIPS. He says even wizards have their limits. Bummer. I've gotten used to living with Michael but it's just not the same as being at home. I didn't have a choice in the matter, though, so I have to make the best of it.

Unfortunately, there's not much to do at Michael's. He lives by himself out in the woods because the humans on Earth are afraid of wizards. Michael has been telling me all the stories he has heard in his life so I don't get bored. That's a lot of stories. Every night he tells me a new story, each one more exciting than the last.

Because there are so many stories that I'm sure other humans and hamsters will also like, I'm going to tell you some of them. Are you ready?