

**Sabira Stahlberg**

# **Hugo's history**



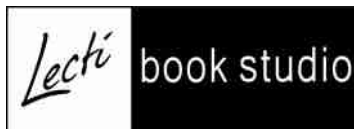
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**Sabira Stahlberg**

# **Hugo's history**

**Illustrations Maria Viitasalo**



Varna 2018

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# 1 Ice melting

Sorry! I am slightly out of breath.  
My name is Hugo.  
I have just come back from my round in the forest.  
Every day I make a tour.  
One feels much better,  
when the body gets oxygen.

This forest is a special place.  
My family has lived here since the last big Ice Age.  
We do not live in the same house, of course.  
When the climate and the forest change,  
the family has to move.  
Wooden houses usually don't last very long.

The reason for us living here is  
that my family has a task.  
We collect information from the forest.  
Many of my relatives live elsewhere.  
They have the same task as we have.

Our task is to follow something called climate.  
We note how the weather changes every day.  
Then we check the changes during a longer period.  
Our family has done this for thousands of years.  
We have a long tradition of stories,  
which everyone knows by heart.

Therefore I know that the sun melted the great ice.  
Maybe also the Earth tilted a little  
and the North Pole turned nearer to the sun.  
Anyway it became warmer.

The family had new neighbours  
and many animals appeared.  
Some ate lichen and moss,  
which grew after the ice melted.  
Others waited for better food.  
After the warmth it suddenly became colder again.

The climate is like this.  
One never knows what is going to happen.  
We try to find out, but it is not easy.

Previously my family lived in the south,  
where we had the same task.  
When the ice melted someone had to move  
up north to follow the climate.  
My ancestor was chosen.  
He was happy, for he had heard  
that there were good hunting grounds in the north.

‘One cannot hunt in the south  
any longer,’ my ancestor said.  
‘All the soil is being farmed.  
Look at those bronze ploughs. You can’t eat bronze.  
Now the mice have come from the forest, too.  
They are big and fat and lazy,

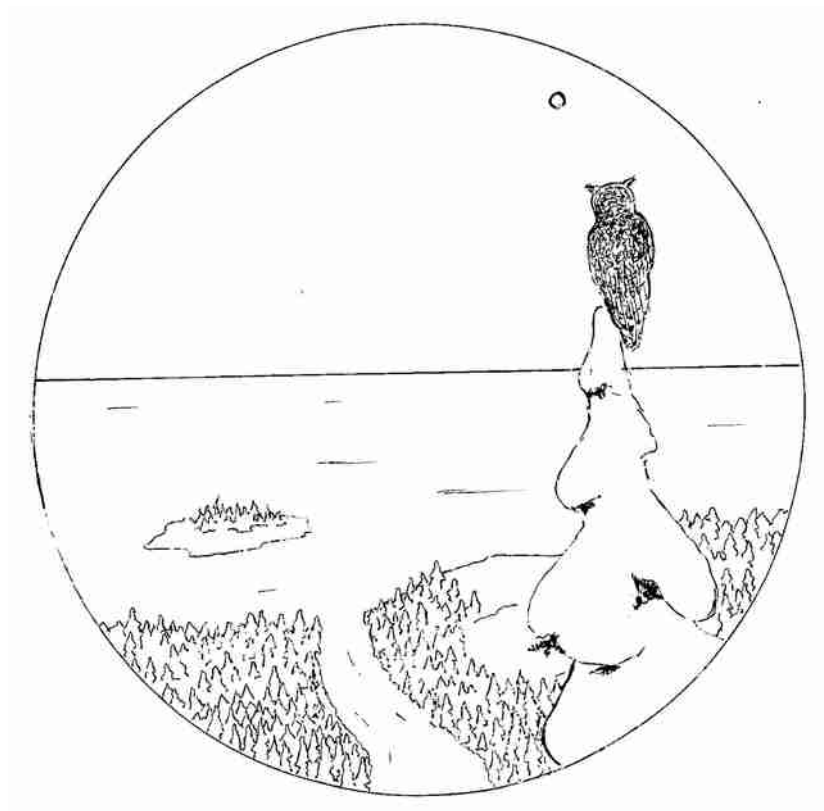
because they like to eat grain in the fields.  
It is no fun to hunt any more.'

'It is cold up north,' said his wife.  
'The sun shine is weak, especially during winter.'  
'We need fur coats for winter,' my ancestor said.  
He took the family northwards.  
At first they dug a hole in the ground.  
They lived there during the summer,  
while building a house.  
It was dry and the weather was fine.  
The sun was shining almost all day and night.

In the autumn they moved into their new house.  
The following spring it was flooded.  
They all had a cold from the icy water.  
The family was cross and wanted to go home.  
'We will manage,' my ancestor said.  
The family protested.  
There were only small birds to hunt.  
The food was too simple and poor in nutrition,  
so the children did not grow.  
'As you wish. We'll go,' sighed my ancestor.

In the south they hardly recognised the place.  
'Your children have grown tall and healthy,'  
said my ancestor to a neighbour.  
'Yes, because we have bigger and better harvests,'  
the neighbour replied. 'Iron ploughs are used now.'  
'But you have poor houses,' my ancestor said.

'You have too many neighbours.  
It is very noisy here. I want to have peace and quiet.  
We are moving north again!'



## 2 Roman volcano

One important task of our family  
is to send someone to places,  
where anything special occurs.  
The one who travels to other places  
must find out what is happening.  
After the trip he will tell all to the family.  
The information is taken into our tradition  
and all of us tell the children about it.

One of the family stories tell about a volcano.  
There were rumours in the forest  
at first that the earth moved.  
In our forest this happens very seldom,  
but in the south the earth moves quite often.  
'We believe there will be a great eruption,'  
our relatives said. 'We need more eyes to watch  
the volcano. Send somebody here!'

They live in the city of Rome  
and check also the neighbourhood.  
'We'll send Hull,' the family said.  
'He is always frozen and  
he will surely enjoy the heat in Rome.'  
In the north it was still cold.  
The mice were few and small due to lack of grain.  
Hull travelled south and fell in love.



The trees were full of fruits.  
The sky was so beautiful. It became red,  
yellow and deep blue in the evenings.  
He ate hamster and dormouse  
and many other delicacies.  
The south was pretty different.  
Some animals had kids twice or more times a year.  
Best of all, it was wonderfully warm  
after all the icy rains in the north.

Very soon Hull noted that there was  
something odd in the south.  
Everything was not right.  
Forests were cut down for firewood.  
There were not many trees left.  
Hull became ill, because epidemics spread quickly  
among so many people.  
Rabbits, mice and other animals carried diseases.  
'You are not used to the climate,'  
his relatives said. 'Rome is a perfect place to live in.  
Here is good food and always something to do.  
What do you do up north? Chew on pine cones?'

Soon also the earth was shaking.  
'Only an earthquake,' said the relatives.  
'No danger. We hope it is not the volcano...'  
But it was the volcano erupting.  
Hot lava spurted from its top  
and flowed down the slopes of the mountain.  
Thick grey and black smoke filled the air.

The smoke formed a cloud  
and the sun disappeared in a haze.

‘Run,’ shouted the relatives.  
‘But the house,’ wondered Hull.  
‘We will build a new one. Look, it is already burning!’  
Hull’s face and eyes were burning afterwards.  
‘Don’t be stupid,’ said the relatives.  
‘You could burn up or die of the poisonous gases.’  
‘My job is to check everything,’ explained Hull.  
‘You must not endanger your life doing it,’  
said the relatives. ‘Now go home.  
You are a danger to us, too.’

Hull went back north and told them  
what he experienced at the volcano.  
‘The ash cloud will not come here,’  
the family said. But they were wrong.

Suddenly there were grey ashes on the trees.  
The sun was seldom seen and it rained often.  
The house floated away with a flooding.  
Nothing grew in the fields.  
When it did not rain, there was a fog.  
The winter was icy cold for many years.  
Mice and other small animals died  
and food was scarce.  
‘What do we have for lunch?’ asked the kids.  
‘Crunchy ashes,’ answered the parents.

### 3 Viking island

Sometimes when volcanoes erupt,  
new islands are formed in the sea.  
It is interesting to see which seeds  
and animals arrive there first.  
We compete who may go there to explore.  
It happens so seldom.  
What nobody likes to see is trees being cut down.  
In our family we like trees.

The Vikings started to travel east  
and west to trade and rob.  
In the north the weather became  
warmer and drier than earlier.  
There was less snow in winter.  
The forest became a nicer place to live in,  
as new trees and animals arrived.  
More trees with leaves appeared.  
Previously mainly trees with needles grew here.

Suddenly there were oak and hazel.  
The squirrels loved acorns and nuts.  
The voles increased in number  
and were soon everywhere.  
Also other animals increased,  
as there was more and better food to eat.

New neighbours moved into a house nearby.  
'Where we come from people burn down  
the forests,' the neighbours said.  
The family did not understand at all  
why trees were destroyed.  
'Taste this!' the neighbours said.  
'The fruit was grown where forests  
were burnt down to create farmland.'  
'Thank you, but we like our wild berries,'  
the family replied politely.  
'It is not good to eat too many sweets.'

A relative sent a warning.  
He travelled west with the Viking ships.  
Someone had to go to their island to look.  
The Vikings were burning down great forests  
of birch to grow grain.  
Their cattle needed grazing space.  
Yet when the forest was cut down,  
the weather became unstable.

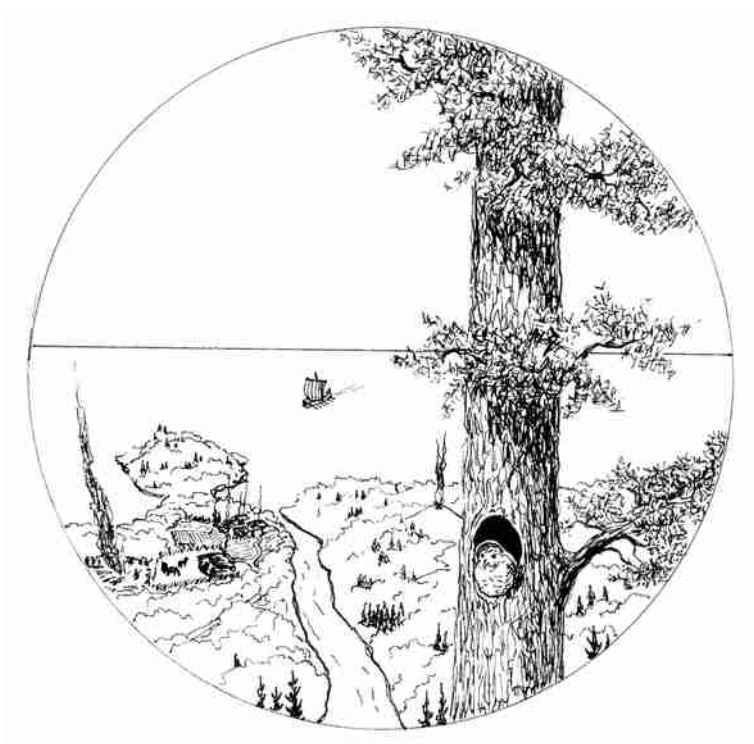
Nobody wanted to go, so the family  
drew a lot who must travel.  
Just then Hulda happened to visit.  
She was the neighbours' daughter  
and she liked to meddle.  
She did not like it at home in the forest,  
and she wished to see the world, she said.  
Immediately the family smiled:  
'All your friends go away,' our family said.

‘They experience interesting things,  
while you just sit at home.  
Would you like to go to an island in the ocean?  
You can check what happens there and report.’

Hulda did not need persuasion.  
She was happy to go to the island.  
The nature was very beautiful and  
it would be green and warm, she thought.  
But it was not easy to get there through  
stormy winds blowing around the island.  
Ice floated in the water  
and she almost crashed into an iceberg.

The sea had warmed up due to warm weather  
and ice melted at the North Pole.  
Humidity rose from the sea and there was  
a fog over the surface.  
Soon Hulda came home again.  
‘It is not warm or green as you said,’ she moaned.  
‘We did not say anything about the climate  
on the island,’ replied the family.  
‘In autumn it was icy cold,’ Hulda said.  
The Vikings have changed the island  
so nobody can recognise it.  
How can so few people do so much?  
Naturally the animals help, too.  
Where the cattle grazes no new forest grows.  
With no forest the winds are terrible.  
I have been so frozen in my life!’

‘Did you not bathe in the warm springs?’  
the family asked.  
‘Never,’ shouted Hulda, frightened.  
‘The head freezes, while the feet are burning!’



## 4 Black Death

It is not only weather and climate  
my family takes notes about.  
We also check how climate affects the health.  
The weather does not depend only on  
the volcanoes, it also depends on solar cycles.  
When the sun is weak and less active  
all life on earth is affected.  
It is cold, rainy and food is scarce.  
Many starve to death  
and birds lay fewer eggs.

Drought and heat are not good either.  
Nearly nothing grows.  
If the food is too one-sided or poor,  
the body becomes weaker.  
Then illnesses can attack it.  
The best for all animals and plants  
is a stable temperature.  
Also rain and humidity must not be  
too much or too little.  
But nobody can say exactly what is the best.  
Only approximately.

When the sun was weak during the Middle Ages,  
a terrible illness arrived to the forest.  
First there were strange rumours.

No, rumours is not the right word.  
They were terrible stories that the neighbours told.  
The family did not listen, as they thought  
the neighbours as usually exaggerated.

One day a ship sailed out at sea.  
It was burnt and abandoned.  
'The Black Death is here!' the neighbours screamed.  
They packed their belongings  
and ran far away from the forest.  
The family stayed.  
'Finally we got rid of them,' our family said.  
'Now the forest will be quiet again.  
And we can stay in their home, too.  
It is somewhat crowded in our old home.'

After all the family thought  
perhaps it was not a good idea to stay.  
But were could the family move?  
We have our task here and nowhere else.  
The family decided to send out Hua.  
She was to find out what was going on  
and how to stop the epidemic.

Hua travelled south where millions of people  
already had died in the epidemic.  
She returned home with bad news.  
'The mice have almost disappeared', she said.  
'Rats walk on the streets.  
They taste like the plague and spread the illness.'



Also the crows are getting bolder.  
You cannot eat in peace for they  
steal the food right under your nose.'

'We must make sure nobody falls ill here,'  
mumbled the family.

'The Black Death first kills those who are  
in poor health,' explained Hua.

'We must eat healthier food.

On the continent many are starving.

It is cold and not even a vole can be found.'

'We had snow in July and August,'  
the family said.

'How awful!' Hua cried. 'How did you survive?'

'We managed,' said the family.

'The only food we had was dried mushrooms.'

'I learnt to make a good porridge,' said Hua.

'Do you have something else than mushrooms?'

'We have spruce and pine in the forest,'

the family said. 'Until spring we'll eat mushrooms.

Then we'll have new spruce shoots  
during the summer until autumn.'

'Terrible!' Hua made a face. 'How can you live on it?'

'We eat what we have,' the family replied.

'Try the mushroom, you will soon like the taste.'

'I don't think so,' Hua said firmly.

## 5 Little Ice Age

When the climate is cold during a longer period of time, one must invent something new. You cannot go on living as before and pretend everything is as usual. The same goes for dry and hot periods. We need new inventions and we must change our way of living.

The cold period only continued. Soon nobody remembered how it was before. 'A little ice age,' said our family. 'Previously it has not been cold for so long. It rained and then it became warmer again, but not for a long time. The house is rotten and full of mould. What shall we do?'

'We can send out travellers into the world,' suggested Aunt. 'They can find out how the problem has been solved elsewhere. I have heard the whole world is cold. They must find a solution somewhere.' The travellers went away. After many months Hubert came back. 'Hello everybody!' he shouted. 'Do you recognise me?'

‘You have a nice tan,’ said the family.  
‘And you are thinner.’  
‘Well, I had pneumonia,’ Hubert explained.  
‘Or was it typhoid fever? I can’t remember.  
Some dangerous illness.’

Hubert had visited everywhere.  
‘I have sailed on big ships on all oceans,’ he said.  
‘You are just bragging,’ cried the children.  
‘No, I am not,’ protested Hubert.  
‘From other continents new vegetables and fruits  
are brought to us. Have you heard of potatoes?’

Everybody looked at each other.  
They had never heard of anything like that.  
‘We eat mostly meat,’ said the family.  
‘Vegetables don’t grow well in the cold.’  
‘Meat? I love roasted guinea pigs,’ said Hubert.

‘How does it taste?’ asked a child.  
‘Be quiet and listen,’ said the adults.  
‘Guinea pig is surely something spicy or sweet,  
like most of what they eat in the south.’  
‘That is not true’, Hubert cried.  
‘You have forgotten how good food tastes.’  
‘Certainly,’ old Grandma mumbled.  
‘We are cold and starve most of the time.’

‘People are no longer ill,’ continued Hubert.  
‘They live longer, too.’

‘That sounds too good to be true,’  
mumbled Grandma. ‘Here we skate on the sea.’  
‘They have started to build better houses,  
which can stand the rain and cold in the north.  
In the south they need houses,  
which can stand heat and drought.  
In the south it is very dry,’ said Hubert.  
‘And it gets even more dry all the time.  
The mice there are as big as our rats.’

‘How big are the rats then?’ Grandma asked.  
‘As big as our cats,’ replied Hubert.  
‘Hubert is bragging again,’ shouted the kids.  
‘I am telling the truth, Hubert cried angrily.  
‘If you don’t want to hear, I won’t tell you more.’

‘Why did you leave the warm climate  
and the sun?’ wondered Grandma.  
‘I needed a break,’ Hubert replied.  
‘Did you get tired of guinea pigs?’ Grandma asked.  
‘Oh no,’ snorted Hubert.  
‘It was simply too warm. At the equator  
are the tropics, which are very hot.  
Every afternoon rain poured down.  
Then the sun shone and steam filled the air.’

‘It is either too hot or too cold.  
We are never satisfied,’ wise old Grandma said.

## 6 Modern life

One of the most important tasks  
of our family is to keep an eye on people.  
'Why? They have nothing to do with  
the climate,' asks our neighbour.  
He does not know that people at first influenced  
the climate without knowing it.  
They did not understand that the factories  
and firewood they were burning created heat.  
The more people in the world,  
the more forests were burnt down.

When it gets warmer the ice melts  
and the sea level rises.  
The weather becomes unstable.  
Formerly the changes happened slowly,  
but now the weather changes quickly.

When the animals and plants started to die,  
our family knew that something was going on.  
The neighbour did not understand.  
He believed it was again some epidemic.  
'We must contact our relatives around the world,'  
said the worried family.  
'They may be able to explain what is happening.  
It surely concerns the whole Earth.'  
The family asked the relatives

and received replies, which scared them all.  
The forest was dying in some places.  
Others had no forest at all,  
because it had been cut down.  
'The trees were sent to the saw mills,' relatives said.

'Our forest has been cut down for firewood,'  
other relatives informed.  
'People need more wood than previously.'  
'The forest near us has been burnt down,  
because people dig mines into the ground,'  
some relatives said.  
'We must know more about those people,'  
said Uncle Hugh. 'We don't know everything yet.  
What are they really up to?  
I can't believe it is that bad.'  
Uncle Hugh asked even more relatives  
and they gave alarming replies.

'They are building factories here,'  
said the city relatives. 'The city has grown  
and the factories are now in the centre.  
They are letting out smoke and soot.  
We are sweating in town, because the smoke  
and soot lie like a cover over our heads.  
It is difficult to breathe.'

'We hardly survive,' said the countryside family.  
'The weather is bad here, too.  
It is warm and the winters are mild,

but it rains too much.'

'We wish to move to a place,  
where the weather is more stable.

We are fed up with the temperature changes,'  
cried some relatives.

'But the soil has started to thaw  
and the grain is growing better.  
There are lots of mice and voles,  
which live on the grain.'

'The weather is really awful with rains  
and flooding,' said one branch of the family.

'The rivers are full of water.

It looks as if the sea is coming closer to our house.  
We feel that the water tastes like acid.'

'They just imagine things,' said Uncle Hugh.

'The forest has changed,' said the family.

'We no longer eat the same things as earlier.  
There are new trees and many animals  
have disappeared.'

'Where shall we move?' asked Hugh's sister.

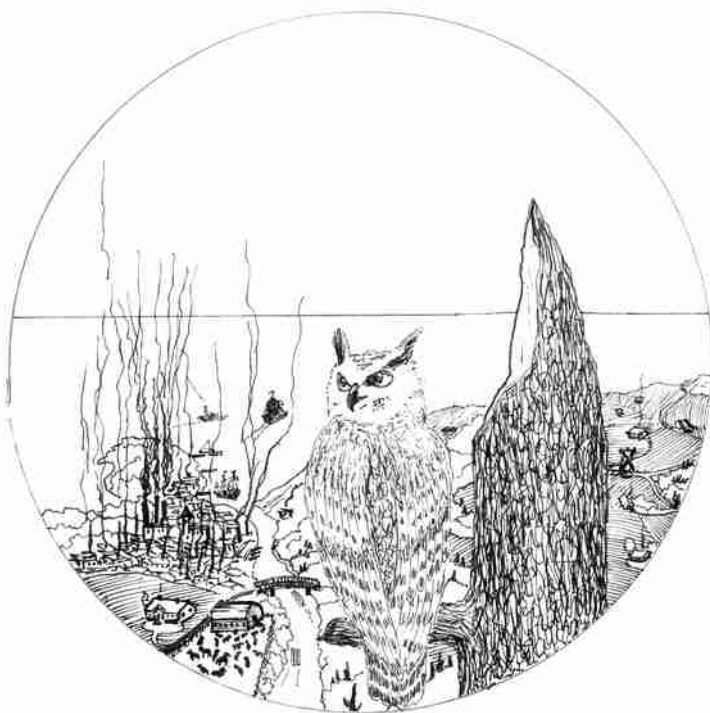
'Nowhere,' replied the family.

'We must stay here to collect all information  
we can find. Nobody knows how  
the factories affect the climate.

When we have enough knowledge,  
we can make a decision what to do.'

'Unless we starve to death before that,'  
mumbled Uncle Hugh.

‘We have managed so far,’ the family said.  
We’ll find a solution,  
we just need to understand what it is all about.’





## 7 Benefits of industry

Sometimes I wonder if people are a bit crazy.  
If something goes wrong, you should stop, right?  
My family is good in saying stop,  
when they notice something does not work.

Then we sit down and discuss matters.  
We find a solution and we support each other.  
But not all do it. Many of our relatives  
thought we worried too much about the climate.

‘Technology and industry are good,’  
they said. ‘Look at our nice houses.  
We enjoy living in the middle of the city.  
The forest is not for modern people.’  
‘Why not? Right now everything grows better,’  
because of warmth and humidity,’ said our family.

‘Move into town,’ encouraged the relatives.  
‘Then you stop caring.’  
‘We don’t want to live in the city,’ the family replied.  
‘The air is so polluted that you can’t see  
your hand in front of you.  
It smells badly and many fall ill.  
Even the rats die of poisonous gases.  
We prefer living in a clean environment.  
There is running water in a brook behind the house.’

‘The world will not develop, if everybody thinks like you do,’ the relatives declared.  
‘The future does not wait for us.  
We must use nature and all its resources to create a new world.  
Look at the ships! They move by steam.  
You can travel almost anywhere quickly and easily.  
Technology is moving ahead with speed.’

‘We don’t need to travel,’ the family said.  
‘Our work is here in the forest.’  
‘People heat houses with coal from the mines.  
You don’t need to be cold during winter.  
Nobody is starving now,’ said the relatives.  
‘You understand nothing,’ our family said.  
‘Black rain from soot and dirt falls in the forest.  
We are not happy seeing flowers drooping.’

The relatives became angry and stopped speaking with our family.  
‘New technology is fairly good,’ said Uncle Huss.  
‘I agree with those relatives. Industry must develop.  
Also people have a better life than before.’  
‘But they live in a greenhouse,’ the family replied.  
‘It is hot and stuffy. The dirt filters the sun’s rays.  
How can they live without sunshine?’  
‘Perhaps it is better that way,’ said Uncle Huss.  
‘The sun shines stronger on our relatives now.’  
‘What are you talking about?’ the family wondered.  
‘There is a layer high in the sky,

which protects the Earth. A hole has opened in it right above the city,' explained Uncle Huss. 'The sun's rays are shining right on them and those rays are burning hot.'

Our family heard nothing from the relatives for a long time. The relatives enjoyed technology and industry, and all the things they thought were good. Then one day a message arrived.

'We need help. We can't live here any longer. The factories smell badly and there is a yellow cloud over our home,' they cried. A week later the relatives appeared. They did not speak about technology, industry or similar things. 'Cough, cough, can we live here in the forest with you?' they asked. 'Welcome, we have food and space for you. A blue sky with a sun above all. But we are not modern, so you will have to go outside to the toilet.'



## 8 The world is burning

One thing the family has understood:  
a quarrel will destroy more than anything  
in the world. What has been destroyed  
will never be the same as before.  
A horrible form of quarrel is war.

After the first relatives had arrived,  
more were coming. They did not try  
to escape pollution, but war.  
'Everything is destroyed,' they told us.  
'Many are ill and others dying.  
There is hardly any food.'

'You are safe here,' the family said.  
'We hope so,' replied the relatives.  
Soon the war came also to the forest.  
One day our family woke up to a rattling noise.  
At first they did not understand what it was.  
They all looked out of the window.  
'They are shooting in the field,'  
shouted the relatives, who knew what it was.  
'Hide yourselves quickly!'

All neighbours had fled, but the family stayed.  
'We must fulfil our task,' said the family.  
'We want to leave,' cried the relatives.

‘We must not leave our home,  
even if our lives are at stake,’ the family replied.  
‘You will regret it,’ said the relatives  
and rushed after the neighbours.

Sadly they were right. A day came,  
when the family regretted its decision.  
A bomb fell right on our house.  
‘My brother is gone!’ shouted a child in panic.  
‘When did you see him last?’ the family asked.  
‘He went inside to get a ball,’ the child said.  
‘Just at that moment the bomb fell.’

The family was shaken and sad.  
‘Fortunately the tradition survives,’  
Uncle tried to comfort everybody.  
‘Luckily we know all stories by heart.  
If we can’t give our traditions to the young,  
how can coming generations know,  
what we have experienced?  
They must understand that  
war is dangerous for everybody.’

‘The air is poisonous,’ coughed the children.  
‘Half of the forest is burning.  
We can’t play anywhere.  
All is destroyed or burnt down.’  
‘The air is bad because of the factories  
producing weapons,’ muttered Uncle.  
‘Look there! The sawmill now produces weapons.’

They throw all the rubbish into the river  
and it flows out into the sea.'

The family tried to build a new house.  
but materials were scarce.  
There was a lack of everything.  
They searched and asked everywhere,  
but the answer was no.  
Too many houses had been destroyed  
and were being rebuilt.  
The winter was cold and long.  
At midsummer it was still snowing.  
No plants dared to get out of the soil.

When the war ended, the family still had no house.  
'Now we shall have peace and quiet,' Uncle said.  
'Finally. I look forward to peace.'  
'I don't think you will have it,' replied the family.  
'Why not?' asked Uncle. 'We will build  
a new home and live as before.'  
'Look outside! Our relatives and neighbours  
are coming back and moving in with us,'  
the family said.



## 9 Chemical smell

Certain things have a good and a bad side.  
Our neighbour is a good example.  
He is interested in all new things,  
but he does not find out about them.  
That is why so much can go wrong.

The neighbour found a cheap fridge.  
Almost nobody in the forest had a fridge.  
The family did not know why he needed one.  
To keep food cool, our family dug it into the earth.  
'You are welcome to a party and to admire  
my wonderful fridge,' the neighbour invited.

Only Grandma thought a fridge was a good idea.  
'Considering that global temperatures  
are rising,' said Grandma, 'you are clever.'  
'Last winter was cold,' said Grandpa.  
'The average temperature is rising,'  
said Grandma firmly. 'It may be colder at times,  
but the average temperature is important.'

'I found a spray bottle, too,' the neighbour said.  
'It contains a poison to kill flies and mosquitoes.  
Even the cockroaches die.'  
'Cockroaches carry disease,' said the family.  
'Yes, but insects are important,' explained Grandma.





'They clean up after us and they become food to other animals.'  
'I hate mosquitoes,' chirped a little sister.  
'You ought to be careful with that bottle,' Grandpa told the neighbour.  
'Where they spray with this kind of bottle, also the birds die.  
The forest falls completely silent.'

'How can we know when spring comes, if there are no birds?' asked a little brother.  
'Look at the bees and wasps,' suggested Grandma.  
'They disappear too,' replied Grandpa.  
'The poison kills all insects.  
It affects also the birds who eat insects.  
The egg shells become thinner  
and no chicks are hatched.  
Other animals and humans are also harmed.'

'That does not sound very healthy,' Grandma told the neighbour.  
'You should throw the bottle away.'  
'Certainly not,' the neighbour protested.  
'Now I have finally got rid of all the small creatures in my house. Why should I throw it away?'

'The neighbour is right,' said Grandpa.  
'You must not throw the bottle away, because the poison will get into the forest.  
The bottle must be taken back to the city,

where they can destroy it without affecting nature.’  
‘That will be difficult,’ mumbled the neighbour.  
He was not so sure of himself any more.

The next day the spray bottle was gone  
and the fridge had disappeared.  
The neighbour explained:  
‘After our discussion yesterday  
I thought the fridge had a strange smell.  
I took it back to the city.  
They said it contained some dangerous gas.  
I did not want my kids to play with the bottle.  
It smelled bad, too.’

‘You are wise like an owl,’ smiled Grandpa.  
‘But it is not enough to keep the forest clean.  
We are many on the Earth nowadays  
and food must be produced in greater quantities.  
Chemicals are added to soil to increase the harvest.  
There are poisons and gases everywhere  
in the air, water and soil.’

‘Will it never end?’ asked the neighbour.  
‘The world will never again be what it was,’  
Grandpa said. ‘Also in our bodies we have plastics  
and many chemicals. We have to live with it.’

‘Can we do something?’ asked Grandma eagerly.  
‘We can change our lifestyle  
and show an example to others.’

'We can get together with others,  
who share the same opinion,' chirped a little sister.  
'Then perhaps we can succeed.'

I like my family.

They never say never or 'it can't be changed'.

Instead they say: 'Let us try.

If it does not work, then we'll think  
of something else. Or try again.'



## 10 Faster or slower?

Can we really change our way of life  
and what we eat?

Is it possible to change our lives?

Can we also get others to understand  
that we have to change something?

Our family's work with the climate shows  
that the planet is getting warmer.

The weather is becoming stranger all the time.

Pollution is everywhere.

Also in places where no factories or cities exist,  
there are poisons.

Many have started to understand that  
something must be done now.

Others are stubborn...

I think we must say stop  
and start thinking in new ways.

We must slow down climate changes.

I don't want poison in my food or  
disgusting gases around me.

I want to feel good and to be healthy.

To help the world I am ready  
to give up certain things.

My brother Huck is exactly the opposite.

He never cared for the climate.

He lived in a luxurious apartment near the stadium.  
He loved sports. Huck flew around the world  
and stayed in expensive hotels.  
He ate rare plants and animals.  
'Many species have disappeared,'  
the family told him. 'When species disappear,  
nature is not in balance.  
That affects the climate, too.'  
'So what?' Huck laughed. 'The strongest win.'

He thought that talk about climate changes  
was just a lot of crap.  
He was indifferent to all who tried to explain.  
'You talk rubbish,' Huck said.  
'The climate has always changed  
and it is solar activity, which causes it.  
Sometimes the mice and at other times  
the rats are the strongest.  
But there is always food for us owls.'

'We don't know what will happen,'  
the family said, worrying.  
'So what? More warm weather is only pleasant.  
You use such difficult words,' Huck said.  
'Why do I need carbon dioxide or methane gas?  
Speak so that I can understand!'

Huck did not care about anybody or anything.  
He just wanted to have fun and not to think.  
He liked cars.

‘They drive faster than we fly,’ Huck said.  
‘Just to press the gas pedal in a car...  
What a feeling!’

The family tried to explain to Huck  
why he should care for the climate.  
‘We try to gather information as much as possible.  
Otherwise we will suffer more  
or even die,’ said the family.  
‘Flooding and natural catastrophes  
increase every year.  
It rains in the wrong places and  
hot weather moves into cold areas.  
We must do something,’ the family finished.  
‘Well, you do something,’ laughed Huck.  
‘So long, I am off.’

Then something unexpected happened.  
Huck fell in love with a girl,  
who liked fibres of nettles and  
wanted to live in a house of wood.  
Huck changed his opinion. Completely.

Huck now tells us about plastic bags floating  
in the seas and other waste in the environment.  
He explains about gases and poisons.  
‘We’ll move north,’ he said. ‘It is getting  
crowded here. It is also too warm.  
The sea smells badly and has a strange colour.  
It looks like pea soup.’

Sometimes I don't know if my family  
or our neighbours are the craziest.  
Huck went from one opinion to the other.  
But I am glad that Huck finally thinks for himself.  
Now he notes the weather up north.  
He takes the family task seriously  
and he teaches his children to manage in the forest.

Also our neighbours are quite crazy.  
They don't care about the climate.  
When a flooding occurs, they talk only  
about the climate and what we should do.

I think we need to find a balance.  
I continue to observe the weather  
and now I know more about the changes.  
Mostly I sit on a spruce branch watching.  
From there I have a good view.  
Come and talk to me some time.

Oh! The children are screaming for food.  
I have to fly off to catch a mouse for dinner.



# Key

Hugo's history tells about the **climate** and its changes. Knowing the environment and how nature reacts to changes is important. It is called **local knowledge**. Knowledge can save lives and reduce damages after natural disasters. With knowledge we also can try to predict what will happen and how we should act or adapt.

It is important to distinguish between **climate** and **weather**. Weather is the atmospheric condition we experience every day, such as temperature, thunder or wind. We speak about weather during a shorter period, a day, week or month.

We speak about **climate** when we observe the conditions in the atmosphere for longer periods. To understand the climate we measure physical conditions, such as temperature, humidity, air pressure, wind and many others. Their average values and variations show what is going on, and we can see how the climate changes.

Climate is affected by different factors; some are global and others are caused by human beings. **Global** factors are among others solar activity, natural catastrophes and various climate cycles. When the sun is more active, the climate becomes warmer and drier; it is colder and more humid during less active periods. The global factors can



lead to some areas drying up, being flooded or to landslides. Natural catastrophes are for instance volcanic eruptions.

**Humans** can affect the climate through over-farming: the soil dries up or it cannot be cultivated any more. Also by cutting down large areas of forests, drying out or turning rivers, through wars and certain kinds of pollution humans affect the climate.

**Chapter one** tells about the period after the Ice Age; Bronze Age and Iron Age. Among the natural factors, which influence the climate, is **solar** activity. It affects the temperature and how ice spreads. Other factors are cosmic **radiation** and the tilting of the Earth's axis. Also the position of the continents and how much the Earth reflects the sun's rays affect the climate. The climate is **cyclic**; it changes between warm/cold and drought/rain.

There are also other factors supporting or hindering heat or cold. **Oscillation** or variations in air pressure influence winds and function like a pump. Cold winds are pumped out from the North Pole in some years. Also the El Niño phenomenon in the southern hemisphere is an oscillation. It brings massive rains with it.

**Chapter two** tells about the warmer centuries at the beginning of our era. Several cultures flourished in this period, among them the Roman. At this time **volcanoes** erupted, creating clouds of sulphur and

ashes. The clouds cooled down the climate and the weather turned to worse for humans. The result was rain, flooding, poor harvest, disease and famine.

When the sun's rays reach the Earth they can be **reflected** or absorbed. Snow and clouds reflect the light, while oceans and forests absorb them. Approximately 70% of sunlight is absorbed on Earth.

**Aerosols** are small particles or drops in the atmosphere, which hinder sunlight from reaching the ground. Smoke, pollution and fog are aerosols, which cool down the climate. Black coal and soot attract heat.

**Chapter three** tells about the time around one thousand years ago, when Vikings sailed the seas. Signs of a warmer period are found in glaciers, annual rings of trees, coral reefs and rocks. Especially in the North temperatures stabilised.

During this period international trade grew, the human population doubled and many moved to cities. Forests were cut down to build ships and houses. In the warm and dry climate deserts expanded. **Oceans** stabilise strong climatic variations. The amount of steam and the melting of glaciers also influence. Steam and melting are not direct causes to changes, but **indirectly** influence the effects. Positive factors support the processes. Negative are for example certain clouds and the carbon cycle, which weaken the on-going processes.

**Chapter four** describes the Middle Ages, when the climate turned colder. Volcanoes contributed,

but also the low solar activity influenced. The weather was rainy and humid, and food was scarce. Farming and trading was reduced. Humans could not get nutritious food or starved, their health was poor and many died in epidemics. The largest epidemic was the plague or the **Black Death**, which made everything worse. The population diminished drastically.

**Chapter five** tells about the Little Ice Age, which lasted for about four hundred years. The weather varied a lot: drought and rain, cold and heat. On the whole the period was cooler than the earlier period.

After the plague the population again increased and Europeans **colonised** other continents. New plants and animals were introduced to Europe. The number of cities increased and instead of cultivation **animals** were kept. The houses were still poorly built and did not keep out the cold winters. The forests were cut down for firewood. At this time experiments and inventions were done.

**Chapter six** arrives at the period of modernisation. The industrial revolution began. **Coal** slowly replaced wood in many countries, where the forest had been cut down. The population increased and prosperity, too. **Technology** and the use of various energy forms were developed. The climate became warmer than during the Little Ice Age, and in the south droughts spread, while in the north the winters became milder.

## **Humans now started to influence the climate.**

Historical and archaeological data show that sea levels began to rise. From this time also the global and sea **temperatures** increase, while polar ice and glaciers diminish. The oceans become more **acid** due to increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is absorbed by the oceans. The carbon dioxide originates from human activities, mainly from fossil fuels.

The forests are changing, and vegetation and animals decrease. New species invade from other areas, disrupting ecosystems. **Biodiversity** in general is reduced, and ecosystems are getting more difficulties to adapt to changes. The weather becomes more extreme with heat, drought, forest fires, flooding, downpours, storms, tornadoes and hurricanes.

**Chapter seven** reached the industrialisation. The weather became increasingly unstable and observations about the polar ice beginning to melt became frequent. Human population doubled many times and many more suffered from pollution, rising temperatures and natural catastrophes.

The **carbon dioxide** is since then increasing in the atmosphere and the oceans, mostly due to human activity. Carbon dioxide and other gases, such as methane and steam tie warmth to the Earth and form a cover. This is called the **greenhouse effect**.

Carbon dioxide increases most when burning fossil fuels and cutting down trees. Also animals and humans exhale carbon dioxide, and volcanoes let out carbon dioxide during eruptions.

A few others are also counted as greenhouse gases: **Methane** is a gas, which comes from farming and domestic animals. Also wetlands contain methane. **Laughing gas** (nitrous oxide) is found in fertilizers, and it is used in the chemical industry. **Chlorofluorocarbons** (CFC), also called freons, were used in fridges, fire extinguishers, pesticides and different types of sprays.

**Tropospheric ozone** is formed when motor vehicle exhaust meets the sunlight, at power plants and other industries, and in copying machines. **Ozone** is found in the atmosphere and it protects the Earth from the ultraviolet light, but the use of CFC has caused a hole in the ozone layer, which is dangerous to life on Earth.

**Chapter eight** discusses the effect of **war** on the climate, in the light of experiences from World Wars I and II. War causes destruction of the environment, fluctuations in temperature due to fires and devastation of forests, changes in rains and destruction of farmland. They all affect the climate. During wars the winters are often cold and long, the weather is unstable and there is food shortage and epidemics spreading. Effects of industrialisation in combination with war has **increased the speed** of climate change.

**Chapter nine** shows how chemical industry and gases influenced the climate. New **chemicals** were sold, such as DDT, which did not only kill insects, but harmed other animals and people as well. Nowadays only certain plants are cultivated, which **depletes** the soil and it has to be fertilized chemically.

**Smog**, fog and pollution became more common. Pollution still grows and part of the world is today under solid clouds of pollution. Also the **greenhouse effect** becomes more intensive and carbon dioxide increases, as fossil fuels are still mostly used. Acid rains, storms, drought and extreme weather conditions are becoming more common, and often lead to landslides and other natural catastrophes, where more humans are affected. This is partly because there are more humans today and they have **spread** over a larger area. The climate continues to become warmer overall, despite short colder periods.

**Chapter ten** considers our attitudes, what we can do to adapt our needs and not burden our planet more than necessary. Important questions are what **resources** we have. How long will they last? Where is the limit for population increase and the use of natural resources? How much pressure can we put on nature through **pollution** and waste? How many species will disappear before humans remain without food?

The most important question is: do we have **enough knowledge** about our planet? The answer is no. We know a great deal about the soil, but not about oceans and the air. Only a few per cent of the oceans have been studied, so it is difficult to know what the future will be. We do not know yet how the planet functions.

Nature cannot go back to what it used to be, it can only try to find a **new balance**. Even if we stopped now to use greenhouse gases, it would take several thousand years before the Earth's temperature would drop to the level it had before human activities started influencing it.

All changes in the climate occur in the long perspective. That is why we have difficulties to understand the whole picture. Money and **power** over natural resources play a crucial role today. The question is who wins? Whose rules are we following, and who is responsible? The answer to the last question is simple: we all carry **responsibility** for our planet and our future. There is a lot we can do, even if we are no politicians or participate in global decision-making. Our future is in our hands.

### **What can we do?**

We can adapt to climate changes, anticipate what will happen and act, or actively try to meet the challenges, or all three. Research provides possibilities to think in new ways and learning a lot

of new things. Here are some suggestions you can do in you everyday life:

- save water and electricity, for instance with energy-saving lamps
- use energy from non-fossil sources
- choose organically grown products or grow your own vegetables
- eat less meat and more vegetables
- reduce pollution by avoiding use of plastic and other non-ecologically produced products
- bicycle, walk or use public transport, not car
- plan your trips with less flying; air planes emit huge amounts of carbon dioxide
- insulate your house and heat sparsely
- plant trees and take care of your environment
- create your own garden outdoors, on the balcony or window sill
- decrease your consumption
- reuse and recycle
- read and inform yourself about climate change and new research
- talk with friends, acquaintances and strangers about climate change
- influence your community and globally

...your ideas?

Write them here:



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