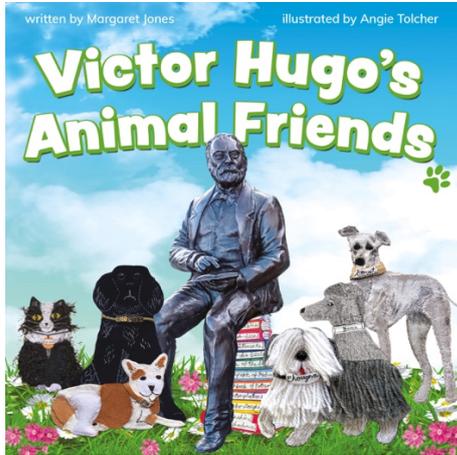


Educational Resources for Victor Hugo's Animal Friends



Victor Hugo's Animal Friends is a book by Margaret Jones and illustrated by Angie Tolcher which introduces young readers to the celebrated French writer.

This delightful series of illustrated rhymes is the first of its kind in English. It aims to engage and acquaint readers not only with Victor Hugo's literary works but also with his strong advocacy for social justice which he championed through education.

The book highlights his deep affection for animals, his love for his grandchildren and his years of exile in the Channel Islands.

It aims to foster an early sense of environmental stewardship in its readers reflecting on Hugo's profound appreciation for the natural world and his commitment to the protection of the flora and fauna of the Islands.

Price: £12

Available from www.blueormer.gg

The book's QR code contents enable readers to access a pack of reference notes and educational resources. The pack contains the author's own research findings about Victor Hugo's life, his grandchildren and particularly his love of animals. It also contains examples of some of Hugo's writings which appertain to the inspiration he derived from the natural world, and especially the flora and fauna of the islands of Guernsey. For school and home educators, the pack contains ideas for creative activities connected with the themes of the book.

**The latest version of this pack can be found at the website of
The Victor Hugo in Guernsey website (www.victorhugoinguernsey.gg)
under Educational Resources.**

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1. Victor Hugo in Exile

Victor Hugo (1802–1885) was a French poet, dramatist, novelist, statesman and a prominent campaigner for peace and human rights. He became one of the most important French Romantic writers of all time. He is best known as a poet and for his epic novels, *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Les Misérables*.

Adèle Hugo née Foucher (1803-1868) was Victor's childhood sweetheart who became his wife. Adèle's wish to help mothers and the starving children of Guernsey was the inspiration for Hugo's project to feed the poor children.

Exile is where it is necessary to leave one's country and live in a foreign country. When Napoléon III took absolute control of France in 1851, he undermined their democratic system of government. For this, Victor labelled him 'a traitor to his country.' This remark made him unwelcome in his homeland and he went into exile. He first fled to Brussels, then to Jersey. Finally, he took residence in Guernsey where he lived in exile from 1855-1870. He returned to live mainly in France after the fall of Napoléon III.

Poor children. Victor saw that many of the poor children in Guernsey were starving and so found it difficult to learn to read and write. Adèle gave practical help to women and children and Victor made speeches to support his project to feed them. He said that all children should be able to eat healthy food and receive a good education.

Hauteville House was where Victor lived for nearly 15 years (1855-1870) during his exile from France. He was able to buy this property from the proceeds of *Les Contemplations*.

The 'Look-out' at the top of the house became Victor's writing room with views across to the islands of Herm and Sark. He liked to write standing up. On a fine day, he could see the coast of France.

The Toilers of the Sea, *Les Travailleurs de la mer*, is a novel which explores the themes of honour, love, and betrayal. At the very beginning of the book, Victor dedicated this novel to the island of Guernsey in gratitude for the island offering him sanctuary:

"I dedicate this book to the rock of hospitality and liberty, to that portion of old Norman land inhabited by the noble little island nation of the sea, to the island of Guernsey, severe yet gentle."

2. Victor Hugo and Nature

The Oak of the United States of Europe. On Bastille Day, 1870, days before the start of the Franco-Prussian war, Victor planted an acorn in his garden at Hauteville House in the presence of his son, Charles, and his grandchildren, Georges and Jeanne. He hoped it would grow into an oak and would see Europe united and at peace.

The Serpentine Fountain *La Fontaine aux Serpents*. According to Victor's son, Charles, this fountain was in the gardens of the Hôtel de Rohan Guéménée, Place Royale, where he had lived in Paris. It was brought to Guernsey and installed in the garden at Hauteville House in 1856.

Ormers are edible sea-snails or abalones. They have ear-shaped shells lined with mother-of-pearl. Until the late 19th century, Norman French was the dominant language in Guernsey and until then, an ormer was known as an *oreille de mer*, sea-ear in English.

Moulin Huet was where Victor's family and friends liked to go to have picnics. This place inspired his creativity as a writer and he liked to take his walks there with his dogs. There are photographs of him with his family and friends outside a cottage that Renoir later depicted in his paintings.

Campions are star-shaped flowers that vary in colour; red, white, or pink. They have been described as 'little warriors coming to change the world.' In flower language, they convey a message of quiet strength and a love as enduring as the coastal paths to which they cling. In *The Toilers of the Sea*, Victor described the flowers he saw in the natural environment of Guernsey:

'The fruit-trees filled the orchards with their heaps of white and pink blossom. In the fields were primroses, cowslips, milfoil, daffodils, daisies, speedwell, jacinths, and violets. Blue borage and yellow irises swarmed with those beautiful little pink stars which flower always in groups, and hence called *compagnons*.'

My thanks to Timothy Adès for his English translation of these poems that Victor Hugo wrote about his love of **spiders** and **stinging nettles**, **butterflies**, and **flowers**.

The poem, **I Love the Spider and I love the Nettle** *J'aime l'araignée et j'aime l'ortie* in Victor Hugo's *Les Contemplations*, published in 1856, challenges readers to overcome prejudice. It highlights the hidden utility and beauty of despised things, urging compassion for the 'ugly' and 'hateful' aspects of nature. The poem champions the ignored and maligned 'weed' which can often have a value when properly understood or 'cultivated.' The nettle represents the outcasts from society or neglected individuals who, with care, could be useful. The poem is part of a broader theme in Hugo's work that advocates for empathy, notably referenced in *Les Misérables*.

'My friends, there is no such thing as a weed and no such thing as a bad man. There are only bad cultivators.'

This poem reflects Hugo's philosophical view that nothing in nature is inherently evil, rather, it is often human perspective or neglect that deems it so.

I Love the Spider by Victor Hugo Translated by Timothy Adès

I love the spider and the nettle
Since they are hated;
Their sorry needs are penalised
And never sated;

Since they are paltry and accursed,
Dark lurking things,
Since they are wretched prisoners
Of their snarings:

Since they are caught in their own toils,
Coiling too clever,
And since the nettle is a snake,
Ragtag the weaver,

Because they have the shade of chasms,
From which we flee,
Because they both are dark night's victims,
They gladden me.

Passer-by: pity the dim weed,
The hapless creature!
Carp at the sting, the ugly sight,
The misadventure!

All things know sadness, all desire
To be embraced.
Untamed and vile they are: but - spare,
Leave them uncrushed!

Throw them a less disdainful glance
From far above:
The loathsome beast, the evil plant,
Will murmur: Love!

The Butterfly and the Flower *Le papillon et la fleur* is a poem from Victor Hugo's 1835 collection *Songs of Twilight Les Chants du crépuscule*. It depicts a, melancholic, unequal love between a rooted flower and a flying butterfly, symbolizing the impossible romance between a stationary lover and a restless, fleeting beloved. Written in 1834, the poem reflects the relationship between Hugo and his mistress, Juliette Drouet, with themes of abandonment, longing, and the pain of separation. The 'poor flower' *la pauvre fleur* represents the waiting, devoted party, while the 'heavenly butterfly' *papillon céleste* represents the fleeting, free spirit. The flower complains of being chained to the earth, while the butterfly constantly flies away. The poem contrasts the stillness of nature with the desire for connection, featuring the recurring image of the flower left alone, watching her shadow at her feet. It is famously set to music by Gabriel Fauré as the first of his two *Mémoires*, Op. 1. The poem was a significant part of the shared imaginary world of Victor Hugo and Juliette Drouet, often referenced in their personal correspondence.

The Butterfly and the Flower by Victor Hugo. Translated by Timothy Adès

Poor flower to glorious butterfly would say:
Hold hard! Stand by!
Observe our destinies, ill-matched! I stay,
You leave; you fly.

Yet we are lovers, and we sojourn far
From humankind.
We are alike: it's mooted that we are
Flower-forms, twinned.

But, ah! You ride the air, I'm chained to earth,
So cruelly!
I'd make your soaring fragrant with my breath,
In heaven high.

But you depart to where no pallor shades
The petals sweet,
While I, left lonely, watch my shadow fade
Around my feet

You leave, and you return, and you are gone,
Mercurial, bright,
Discovering anew at every dawn
My tearful plight!

Let faithful days inform our flutterings,
My king of love:
Take root like me, or fit me out with wings,
Like yours above!

3. Papapa's Animal Friends

Grise was one of the female cats owned by Auguste Vacquerie, a friend of the Hugo family. In his *Profiles and Grimaces* 1856, he devoted several pages to describing Victor's animal friends including Ponto, Chougna, Lux, Mouche, and Marquis, alias Sénat. Grise was known as the 'prison cat' because she was born in the Conciergerie in Paris. She was a consolation for Auguste Vacquerie when he was imprisoned there for collaborating with Victor and his two sons on articles in the newspaper *L'Evènement*. Grise accompanied Madame Hugo and her daughter, Adèle, to take exile in Jersey.

Mouche was a big black and white cat and daughter of Grise who belonged to Auguste Vacquerie who commented that Mouche seemed to know she was born in exile to a mother born in prison. He described her as: 'silent and reserved, shady and sinister, truly the cat of the prison and of exile.' Victor described Mouche as 'solitary and beautiful, black and glossy, a dark light.' He thought she looked:

'as if she was dressed for the masked ball, wearing her black velvet mask on her forehead that reveals her white chin, her fine teeth, and the tip of her pink nose, and wearing her black velvet coat trimmed in front with wide ermine bands on her shoulders.'

Sénat was a magnificent white Italian greyhound which Victor's wife, Adèle, brought to Guernsey from Brussels. Victor did not like the noble title of Marquis that his son, Charles, gave to this dog. Despite family objections, he insisted Marquis should be renamed Sénat, the name of the upper house of the French Parliament to which he was elected in 1876. Sénat liked to sit on a red chair in the Red Salon at Hauteville House. Victor had a rhyme engraved on a medallion and attached it to Sénat's collar. It read:

'Je voudrais que chez moi quelqu'un me ramenât. Mon état, chien; mon maître, Hugo; mon nom, Sénat.'

'I would like someone to bring me back home. My status, dog; my master, Hugo; my name, Sénat.'

When Sénat died, he was taxidermised and eventually presented to the Guille-Allès Museum by Victor's sister-in-law, Julie Chenay. He has since disappeared, but his collar is kept safely in Paris.

Ponto was Victor's beautiful and good-tempered spaniel. He wrote about him in a poem entitled *Le Chien Ponto* which he included in his collection *Les Contemplations*. In this poem, Victor described his dog's faithfulness and his simple and virtuous nature. Graham Robb described Ponto as 'a thinker and silent conversation partner who followed Victor on his walks and inspired his poetic meditations.' This extract from the poem shows how Victor used nature and animals to express ideas about life, truth, and spirituality. Here he contrasts his dog's virtuous nature with the false virtues of men. In this extract written in March 1855 at Marine Terrace, Jersey, he wrote:

'And although I say "All is deception, imposture and lies, iniquity, evil dressed in splendour,"

I say to my black dog: Come, Ponto, come to us!
And I go into the woods, dressed like a peasant;

I go into the great woods, reading in the old books.
 In winter, when the foliage is a case of frosts,
 Or in summer, when everything laughs, even the weeping dawn,
 When all the grass is but a triumph of flowers,
 My dog Ponto follows me
 The dog is virtue that, unable to become a man,
 Has become a beast
 And Ponto looks at me with his honest eye.
The Contemplations (1856) Book 5 XI 'En Marche' (Forward)

Gavroche was the name Victor called the kitten that he gave to his grand-daughter, Jeanne. This kitten was probably named after the fictional young boy fighter who lived on the streets of Paris and took shelter with his brothers in an elephant statue. In *Les Misérables*, the character Gavroche is depicted as having played a short but important role in the June rebellion in 1832. Victor is thought to have named two or more of his cats Gavroche.

In *Les Misérables* 1862, Victor described the thoughts of another young student fighter, waiting at dawn on the barricades and musing about the reason for the creation of the cat:

'After all, what is a cat?' he asked. *It is a correction. Having created the mouse, God said to himself, "That was silly of me!" and so he created the cat. The cat is the erratum of the mouse. Mouse and cat together represent the revised proofs of creation.'*

Jean Valjean. Tome V. *Les Misérables* 1862

Lux, Latin for light, was a handsome white greyhound with two darker spots on his back and head that apparently made him look like a small saddled and bridled horse. He may have been named after the last poem in *Les Châtiments*, The Punishments (1853), the hymn that Victor wrote to 'universal peace' when he was in exile. Lux was described as: 'restless, delicate and fearful' but Charles Hugo, the father of Georges and Jeanne, loved this dog's gentle and affectionate nature. He took a photograph of him playing with Sénat in the garden at Hauteville House.

Chanoine, Chancellor was the name Victor gave to his famous long-haired Abyssinian cat. He was fond of him and described him as a 'good companion and a wise cat.' There are anecdotes about Chanoine's intelligence; his ability to open doors and his habit of sitting on Victor's desk while he was writing. A drawing of Chanoine, entitled The Cat of Victor Hugo, appeared on the cover of *The Cats - History, Morals, Observations and Anecdotes* 1869 compiled by Champfleury whose real name was Jules Fleury-Husson, a French art critic and novelist. He said that, in his youth, he was received by Victor Hugo at the Place Royale in Paris in a salon decorated with tapestries and gothic monuments. In the middle of the room there was a large red cushioned seat on which sat a cat that seemed to be awaiting the homage of its visitors. He wrote this description of Chanoine:

'A vast collar of white fur stood out like a chancellor's cloak on his black robe. The moustache was that of a Hungarian Magyar, and when solemnly the animal

approached me, looking at me with its fiery eyes, I understood that the cat had shaped itself after the poet and reflected the great thoughts that filled the home.'

Beneath Chanoine's picture in the book, Victor wrote a quote from Joseph Méry (1797-1866), a French writer who said he had once stroked Chanoine 'with cautious joy', and had observed that:

'God invented the cat so that man would have the pleasure of stroking a tiger in his own home.'

Baron was Victor's hunter poodle which, according to Rupert Willoughby's 'Account of the incredible journey of Baron, Victor Hugo's dog' in the Telegraph 2010, was 'a sturdy, retrieving type' of whom Victor was very fond. However, it seems that Baron demanded constant attention. His granddaughter, Jeanne, remembered it in Guernsey. She said that, in 1877, Victor gave this dog to an old Marquis, possibly the Marquis Nicolas de Faletans, who was returning to Russia. The Marquis was thought to have lost the dog and Baron was presumed dead. However, on Christmas Day, the poodle arrived, hungry, tired, and barking at Victor's front door; it had somehow managed to make the trip home. When Victor's granddaughter, Jeanne, became Madame Daudet, she listened to this story and said she had grown up with this dog in her grandfather's house in Guernsey. She remembered how deeply moved her Papapa had been by Baron's devotion to him.

'One evening, early in 1877, the Marquis de Faletans was attending Hugo's salon in his 4th floor apartment in Paris, at 21 rue de Clichy. Victor noticed him making a fuss of the dog. 'Does Baron please you?' he said. 'He's yours!' Eight days later they departed for Russia, where the Marquis was to reside for a time with his wife at Great Bokino, her country estate, some 200 miles south-east of Moscow. Regular news was sent to the Hugos, but in mid-December, after a period of ominous silence, the Marquis reluctantly reported that the dog was missing, feared seized by a wolf or a bear. Hugo, who had resigned himself to the loss, was roused from his bed on Christmas morning by his cook, who lived on the ground floor. An exhausted, emaciated Baron had appeared on the doorstep and announced himself with frantic barks. Victor was touched to the core, and amazed that Baron had travelled nearly 2,000 miles in less than a month. He resolved that they should never again be parted, and, indeed, Baron accompanied the family to Guernsey and later to a new apartment in Paris, where he died, a few months before his master, in 1884.

By kind permission of Rupert Willoughby

Chougna, (fr. slang *chougner*- to whine) was a long-haired sheepdog that had once belonged to François-Victor, one of Victor's sons. She was an affectionate female dog always ready to jump on people's necks with her big paws. Chougna became Victor's guard dog. In a letter to Paul de Saint-Victor, French essayist and literary critic, Victor wrote: 'I take great care of Chougna and Mouche. Tell Auguste this, passing on my handshake.' V.

Correspondence, National Library, Paris.

In his poem *Ma chienne, la Chougna*, My bitch, the Chougna, Victor admitted that this dog was a source of frustration but showed the great affection he had for this dog:

'I took her by the ear and said to her, 'Why, Chougna, do you behave badly, before the everyone? Why, when we go out, do I have to scold you? Why do you run barking, howling, through the bushes after the young dogs and the little boys? Why can't you see a rooster without chasing it? You seem to me like a drunken dog! It makes us look bad and people are irritated. I know you have many good qualities, faithful, intelligent, affable; but really, when you go out, you are not reasonable!' Victor Hugo, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris: Hetzel-Quantin, 1880 -1889, T. X1V.

Victor's friend, Juliette Drouet, disliked this whining guard-dog who was hairy and unkempt and always barking. She complained to Victor that Chougna was mangy and badly-behaved. In one of her letters to Victor in November 1862, she described Chougna as 'a poor mangy bitch' and urged him to get rid of her, but he refused. Victor was devoted to Chougna and continued to care for her.

4. Fun and Games with Papapa

'**Pain sec**,' Dry Bread, is a poem from '*L'Art d'être grand-père*' (1877) which concerns a pot of jam. In this poem, Victor admits to being a rogue grandfather. He doted on his grandchildren and enjoyed their laughter and their company.

Pista was the name of a mischievous chicken in a story Victor told his own children - Charles, François-Victor, Léopoldine and Adèle.' He would divide a big piece of writing paper into seven or eight boxes and write captions to illustrate the story e.g. 'Pista, the very naughty chicken, launches herself at Big Charles.' 'Wait! Here comes Toto to help his brother' 'And Didine, following Toto' 'And Dédé, following Didine' 'And Cabbage-stalk, following Dédé' etc. Victor used these nicknames for his children. François-Victor was Toto. Didine was Léopoldine and Adèle was Dédé. He called his son, Charles, 'Big Charles.' As a grandfather, Victor amused Georges and Jeanne with this story. J. Claretie (1840-1913) mentioned Pista in 'Victor Hugo' (1882) and in his magazine *Journal de la Jeunesse* (1911).

5. Adventures with a Sea Monster

La Pieuvre was the name Victor used to describe the octopus in his novel, *The Toilers of the Sea*. In France, an octopus was better known as *un poulpe* until Victor called it *une pieuvre* following his visit to Sark in June 1857. There, he witnessed an octopus pursuing his son, Charles, as he swam into a cave. This event may have influenced the story of Gilliatt's famous battle with a pieuvre in his novel. When it was published, some fashionable Parisians wore pieuvre-inspired hats, coats, and other fashion items.

Sark provided much of the inspiration for Victor Hugo's poetry collection, '*Les Chansons des Rues et des bois*' (1865) *Songs of the Streets and the Woods*, and some parts of *Les Travailleurs de la mer*, *The Toilers of the Sea*. During his exile, Victor described Sark as: '*une sorte de château féérique, plein de merveilles*' - a sort of fairy castle, full of wonders.

Gilliatt is the name of the Guernsey mariner in *Les Travailleurs de la mer*, *The Toilers of the Sea*, who falls in love with Déruchette and volunteers to salvage the ship's engine stuck between rocks. Lethierry had promised that whoever could salvage the ship's steam engine would win Déruchette's hand in marriage.

6. Victor Hugo's Famous Novels, Poems and Stories

Notre-Dame de Paris. Victor set this novel in 15th century Paris. It inspired people to 'rise up' and save the historic Notre Dame Cathedral. The sad story highlights the plight of outcasts from society like Quasimodo, a hunchbacked bellringer, and Esmeralda, a girl around 16 years of age who danced in the street below. In this novel, Victor wrote that Esmeralda spent her days stroking her pet goat, Djali, and crumbling her bread for the swallows. He described Djali as: 'a pretty, little white goat, alert, bright, shiny, with golden horns, golden feet, and a golden collar.'

In this extract from the novel, we read how Esmeralda could make Djali perform counting tricks using her tambourine, an act later used as courtroom evidence that she was a witch:

"Djali," said the dancer, "your turn." And sitting down, she graciously presented the goat with her tambourine. "Djali," she continued, "what month of the year is it?" The goat raised its front foot and struck the drum. It was indeed the first month. The crowd applauded. "Djali," continued the young girl, turning her tambourine to the other side, "what day of the month is it?" Djali raised her little golden foot and struck the drum six times. "Djali," the Egyptian woman continued, still beating the drum, "what time of day is it?" Djali struck seven times. At the same time, the clock of the House of Pillars struck seven. The people were amazed.'

Quasimodo, the hunch-backed bell-ringer, watched Esmeralda and the goat from the bell-tower of Notre Dame and thought how much he would like to look like this goat:

'He stayed for a few thoughtful moments in front of this graceful scene of the goat and the Egyptian. Finally, he said, shaking his heavy and poorly-made head: "My misfortune is that I still look too much like a man. I would like to be completely a beast, like this goat."

Notre-Dame de Paris. Victor Hugo. Sandstone and Crystal. Book IX Chapter 1V.

Les Misérables. Victor began writing *Les Misères* in Paris in 1845, two years after his daughter, Léopoldine died in a boating accident in 1843. His project was then interrupted in 1848 because of political upheaval in France. In 1860, after a break of nearly twelve years, he resumed writing *Les Misères* in exile in Guernsey where he changed the title to 'Les Misérables.' The novel was finally published in 1862. The character, Cosette was the young daughter of a working woman, Fantine, who left her in the care of the Thénardiens who exploited and victimised her. Jean Valjean rescued Cosette and raised her as his own and gave her the opportunity to have an education and, as a result, a better life. In the same book, through the character of a young philosophy student waiting at dawn on the barricades, Victor mused about why the cat had been created:

"After all, what is a cat?" he asked. It is a correction. Having created the mouse, God said to himself, "That was silly of me!" and so he created the cat. The cat is the erratum of the mouse. Mouse and cat together represent the revised proofs of Creation.

Les Misérables Jean Valjean. Tome V 1862.

L'Homme qui Rit (1869), *The Man who Laughs*. Victor set this novel in England at the end of the 17th Century. It is about a young man in a travelling fair. He was cruelly made only able to grin. It is thought to have had an indirect influence on the Joker character in Batman films.

L'Épopée du Lion (1877), *The Epic Story of the Lion*, is a poem that Victor wrote supposedly for his grandchildren but through his writing, he was also continuing his fight against tyranny and oppression. The poem can be read on several levels and appreciated by adults and children alike. It appeared in his collection of poems, entitled *L'Art d'être Grand-Père*, *The Art of being a Grand-father*, which was probably one of the first books in French literature to deal specifically with childhood. The poems describe Victor's feelings as a grandfather entrusted with the care of his young grandchildren and reveal his tenderness towards them. One of the poems, 'The Epic Story of the Lion' was probably among the last poems Victor wrote.

By kind permission of Timothy Adès, here are the last four lines of his English translation of the poem. The full translation, along with other poems he has translated, can be found in his book, *How to be a Grandfather*.

The lion by the cradle of silk and lace
 Put her brother down before her face,
 As a mother might do with her arms across,
 And he said, "Here you are now. Don't be cross!"

In extracts of translations by Timothy Adès of other poems that Victor wrote for his grandchildren, there are some vivid descriptions of the wild animals that Victor and his grandchildren would have seen in the Paris Ménagerie.

To Georges

Let's go, dear Georges, and see the zoo:
 'Jardin des Plantes,' Big Top, wherever:
 Off to Assyria! and we'll never
 Leave Paris. Off to Timbaktu!

Zebras and jackals and ounces, regal
 Lions; the sly lynx and the bear,
 (Growl, growl) and that poetic pair,
 Vulture of night and sun-drunk eagle;

Leopards from Nineveh and Tyre;
 Boa constrictor, silent, feared,
 And the great bird that grows a be
 And steals our sheep, the lammergeier;

To Jeanne

I like the wild beasts too, I won't deny.
You they amuse, and me they edify.
It's surely by design that God displayed,
In these fierce heads, the jungle's light and shade.

The Staircase *L'Escalier*.

Hauteville House mirrors Victor Hugo's exile and creative growth and symbolises his journey from darkness to light. From the darkness and severity of the dark wood panelled ground-floor rooms, the visitor gradually makes his way up the staircase to the brightly coloured and lavishly decorated reception rooms which reflect Hugo's creativity and art. The initial shadows of exile are left behind as the visitor continues to climb the stairs towards the brightness at the top of the house where Victor could look-out over the sea to France, a space where he could connect to the world and find inspiration for his profound and famous creative writings such as *Les Misérables*.

Translated excerpts from Georges Hugo's biography of his grandfather, Victor Hugo.

"Bonjour, Papapa!" We used to call him Papapa. Legend has it (he surrounded us with legends) that one morning long ago, at Hauteville House, while he was working standing in that glass cage perched at the top of the house, little Georges came in and said: "Good morning, Papapa!" But little Georges could hardly speak. Hearing his grandson, whose father Charles had just died, pronounce this unknown word, the grandfather felt immense joy, for he knew the secret language of children: Georges's stutter made him a father twice over, much more than a grandfather. He took Georges in his arms and went downstairs to join his family for the communal meal. And in that beautiful room of Hauteville House, with its white and blue Delftware tiles, he accepted the name that little Georges had bestowed upon him: "Now, my name is Papapa," he said softly.

And until his death, my sister and I called him by that doubly tender name, which he always cherished. With every step he took, like a child, behind him. He leaves behind several little ghosts of himself. Since I learned who we loved, I often call upon those little ghosts to speak to me of Papapa. I find, deep in my memory and my heart, indefinable impressions; but the little ghosts have carried away the oldest memories, and their existence has vanished with my childlike soul. Now they are nothing more than fragments of lost dreams, these burials of my head in a prickly beard, these strong, cradling arms, and these large, caressing hands; bursts of laughter, smiles, tenderness, kindness, much happiness, and adoration; and I give names to what had none for the little ghosts. Yet here is an apparition: some high window and noise in the street. I want to see the soldiers I recognized by the sound of the drums. Papapa sits me on his arm; while I watch, he taps on the glass with his fingers and marks time. I know now where to place that moment, but I do not believe my childhood feeling has been distorted by what I've learned, for it has remained fresh and clear to me, though quite small. It was during the siege, at the Pavillon de Rohan, in a vast room that my mother often described to me: amidst the sadness and anguish, Papapa was showing me a marching battalion, on its way to the ramparts. And it was perhaps on that day that he wrote:

'You make your bee-like noise in the woods, Jeanne, and you mingle your charming murmur with the great Paris, its grand armour resounding.'

It was in Guernsey, then, from where I have kept hidden in my mind the oldest image of my grandfather. A wide stone staircase, between two walls, in the town, and we climb this staircase. Papapa is between Jeanne and me. I am too small to see anything but his foot on the steps, attentively followed by mine. I feel the pressure of his hand, which touches my cheek with each step. He climbs slowly. He laughs. At the top of the stairs, cheerfully, he helps us by pulling us up a little and kisses us. That is all.

Why did this simple vision strike my childhood memory so vividly that, so many years later, it remains as precise and alive as an hour from yesterday? It is the mystery of naive sensations. Often, we see loved ones, their whole lives, our whole lives, based on a first, almost indescribable impression. On that day, which shines brightly in my memory, full of light and joy, perhaps I understood the love of the great old man. It is this love, this affection which becomes childlike to speak to children, to touch their young, nascent hearts, which later becomes more serious; it is our Papapa who, after playing like a little

boy with the very young, talks with the adolescent, advises the young man; who tells beautiful stories, stories for the eyes, and speaks of conscience, of beauty, of love; it is his cheerfulness, despite the torments and the end of life, this cheerfulness which he always preserved for us; this laughter with beautiful teeth which he made, for us, clearer and more sparkling; his calm voice, the gentleness of the caresses of his old hands, it is this Victor Hugo that I would like to evoke, with trembling fervour, full of gratitude and adoration, thinking of my childhood spent near glory, at the moment when I say goodbye to my young years.

These are the first moments of happiness in my life, as Papapa plays with us, and is like us. He pretends to be our age, speaks our language, loves what we love. He runs, he laughs, he is exuberant. We hide behind large armchairs; he discovers us there, for he is even bigger than they are. How immense he is, all black at the bottom, with, very high up, his smiling white face! We play at moving everything, at breaking everything; and we make forests with the chairs, caverns with the tables, forests that he leads us through and makes real, caverns where he hides, roaring like a real lion. We are afraid, our fear delights us, and Papapa, happy, triumphant, carries off his little ones and kisses them, quite breathless.

An old woman, seated in a corner, watched this joy swirling around her. She was placid and respectful. With her wrinkled hands, she kept time to our songs, and we always found ourselves before her smile. Later, I came to know better that pale face with its silken white headbands, a face as gentle as that of an old Luini Madonna. As she walked, she left behind a light scent of verbena. She wore silk dresses in the Romantic style, and on the lace of her gowns, at the end of a fine gold chain a cameo swung. Her short-skirted, slightly low-cut tops, as befitted the coquettishness of her age, had pagoda sleeves; over her hands fell a fine bouffant of batiste fabric that restored to the gestures of her numb fingers a touch of their former grace.

I can still see the living room where Papapa played so well with us: two windows, a jumble of furniture, green velvet, carved oak. At the far end of the living room, overlooking the courtyard, was a small dining room where we often dined near him. By lamplight, after the meal, we would watch, with awestruck and never-ending admiration, the balancing acts that Grandfather performed with the cutlery on the necks of the bottles. He formed fragile, swirling arabesques, so delicate that they nearly collapsed with every flick of Papapa's finger. But they rotated for a long time and never collapsed.

Hugo, Georges Victor. *Mon grand-père*. Librairie de France, Paris. 1931

Useful Websites

The Priaulx Library in Guernsey (www.priaulxlibrary.co.uk)

The library is the centre for local studies and family history. It holds a significant collection relating to Victor Hugo's 15-year exile on the island.

The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society (www.victorhugoinguernsey.gg)

The society promotes, celebrates, and educates on the life, works, and 15-year exile of the French author in Guernsey. It hosts an annual June weekend with lectures, plays, and music, produces educational resources for schools, and runs events to highlight the deep connection between Hugo and the island, including his work on *Les Misérables*.

The Victor Hugo Centre in Guernsey (<https://www.vhc.gg>)

A proposed multi-purpose cultural, educational, and tourism hub dedicated to celebrating the life, literature, and social activism of Victor Hugo during his 15-year exile on the island. It will feature a museum, interactive displays, and a performance space to showcase local arts and international heritage.

The Maisons Victor Hugo (Paris and Guernsey) (www.maisonsvictorhugo.paris.fr)

Operate as a combined museum institution dedicated to preserving and exhibiting the life, work, and personal spaces of the famous French author. They manage his former home in Paris and his exile residence on Guernsey, featuring permanent collections, temporary exhibitions, research archives, and educational activities to showcase his roles as writer, artist, and thinker.

The Guernsey Museum & Art Gallery at Candie (<https://museums.gov.gg>)

The museum features significant items relating to author Victor Hugo's 15-year exile on the island. Key displays include an 1883 Rodin bronze bust of Hugo, the original lintel from the "Haunted House" in *Toilers of the Sea*.

The museum is situated in **Candie Gardens** which features a large bronze statue of Hugo facing the sea, unveiled in 1914. The gardens also contain a special floral trail with plants referenced in his novels and from his home.

Outside the **Town Church** is a 2021 bronze bench sculpture depicting Hugo with an octopus, referencing *Toilers of the Sea*.

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