

## Felix and Finn meet Hugo the Lion

By Ellie Tandeta



Last Wednesday, Felix and Finn visited the zoo for the first time. They had heard about the zoo from books about ferocious lions and howling monkeys, but could only dream about what it would be like. That morning, Felix and Finn woke up extra early.

“What do you think it’s going to be like Finn?” Felix asked.

“There will probably be a lot of scary animals that could eat us,” answered Finn.

“I don’t think so, mom said all the animals are in cages,” said Felix.

Finn was still a little scared, but his mom assured him that the animals will never eat anyone. It was a ten minute car ride to the Albuquerque zoo and by the time they had parked and got to the ticket booth, both Felix and Finn were giggling with excitement. The first thing they saw was a huge pond, filled with bright pink birds with legs almost as tall as Finn.

“What do you think those things are? A pterodactyl? I bet that’s it. I read about those once. They lived at the time of the dinosaurs,” said Felix.

“Don’t dinosaurs eat people?” asked Finn, very worried.

“I think some of them eat leaves,” answered Felix

Suddenly a horrible smell traveled into the noses of both boys. They wrinkled their noses and shouted, “EEEEWWWW!” They had never smelled anything so gross in their entire lives. It smelled like rotten eggs and wet dogs.

“Look over there Finn, its pigs! That is where the smell is coming from, I’m sure of it. This is stupid, I’m not sure I even like the zoo. Where are the lions and tigers?”

“...and bears. Shouldn’t there be bears? You’re right Felix. I’m bored. This is not fun.”

Finn and Felix walked around for what seemed like hours. They searched for the polar bears and only found the anchovy tank. Instead of the fierce tigers they had dreamed about, all they found were two old, tired camels lying in the shade.

“Wouldn’t it be cool if we could just go to where the lions are in the wild? I’m pretty sure they live in Africa with the elephants. That would be a hundred times better than this stinking zoo,” said Felix.

“Yeah, I guess so,” muttered Finn.

Suddenly, a burst of bright blue light flashed in the sky. Finn and Felix covered their eyes from the blinding lights. When they opened them again, they noticed that it had gotten incredibly hot in the last twenty seconds. They also noticed that instead of looking at the public restrooms at

the zoo, they were facing a huge open field of grass that seemed to go on forever, as far as they could see.

“What just happened?” asked Finn.

“I don’t know. Maybe we got transported. This is defiantly not the zoo. Let’s just look around,” suggested Felix.

As they walked along in the blazing heat, the brown grass rustled beneath their feet. Suddenly a loud noise behind them made them jump. Finn grabbed Felix by his shoulders and whispered, “Did you hear that?”

“Yeah,” Felix replied. He squinted trying to see where the noise came from, but all he could see was a very large bush. But then, the whole bush seemed to shake, Felix felt Finn squeeze his arm tighter. As the boys backed away, a large figure emerged from the leaves.



It was a LION! As it padded closer to them, Finn and Felix shut their eyes and prepared themselves to be eaten.

“What *are* you?” rumbled a low voice.

Felix and Finn opened their eyes, but couldn’t believe what they were seeing. The huge lion stood on his hind legs, looking down on the boys.

“You-you...aren’t gonna eat us?” Finn stammered, still holding onto his brother.

“I don’t know, should I? I don’t even know what you are. You don’t look like gazelle, or elephants. Are you giraffes? You don’t look like them either.”

“I’m human...I mean I’m Felix,” said Felix bravely, stepping forward out of his brother’s grasp.

“That’s odd,” said the lion, “I’ve never heard of those before. Well, my name is Hugo. Where did you guys come from?”

“We are from Albuquerque. That’s in New Mexico. Have you ever been there?”

“I don’t think so,” Hugo answered, thinking hard to remember if he had ever even heard of New Mexico. “I have lived in Africa my whole life; it’s actually called the Serengeti.”

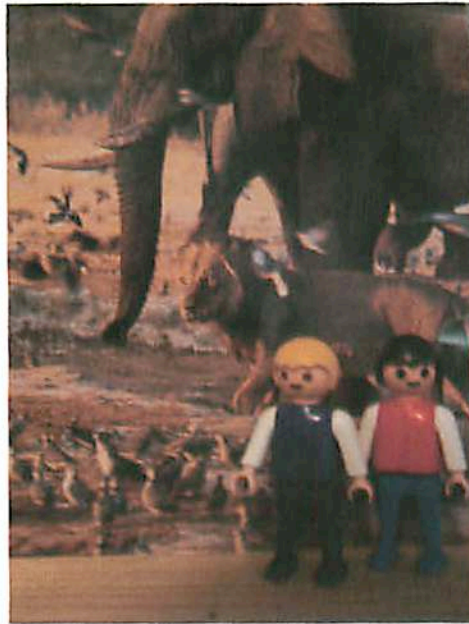
“Af-f-f-rica?” stammered Finn, “How did we get here???”

“Don’t worry, very little can go wrong if you’re with me. What do you want to explore first? Leopards? Hippos? But don’t say Gazelles because we aren’t on the best terms right now,” the lion growled kindly.

At first, Felix and Finn weren't sure what to think. They were scared to be in such a far away place, but felt safe with Hugo.

“Well, since you have clearly never been to Africa, I will gladly show you two around. First I want to introduce you to one of my very close friends, Duffy; he's an elephant.”

As Felix, Finn, and Hugo were walking, Felix spotted a large group of elephants all gathered around a pool of water. “Is Duffy one of those, Hugo?” he asked, trying to show off his knowledge of animals.



“Yes, it is!” Hugo replied, “He happens to be that very large brown one walking over to us right now!”

“Hello Hugo, how has your day been?” boomed the elephant, rather slowly.

“I'm fantastic; I met two new friends, Felix and Finn. They are *humans!* I'm just showing them around.” Hugo paused, and then asked, “Have you seen Francis anywhere?”

Duffy thought for a minute, “Sure, I think I saw him walking, or running, I forget, over by the patch of umbrella trees. Or maybe by that watering hole over there. Wait...maybe that was Tuesday. But watch out, I heard Sue is over there, and not in a good mood. Just watch your backs.”

“Whoa!” yelled Felix. “I am very confused. Who *are* all these animals you’re talking about?” He was getting very hot, and didn’t want to keep standing in the sunlight; it was getting very uncomfortable in his dark blue shirt.

“Francis is my friend, a zebra in fact. And Sue is a very angry leopard that has a short fuse. You wouldn’t want to get on her bad side, I’ll just say that,” said Hugo.

“Like she would...eat us?” asked Finn.

“I wouldn’t put it past her, but don’t worry, she only attacks when she’s hungry. But that is most of the time, so let’s just not go over there, okay?”

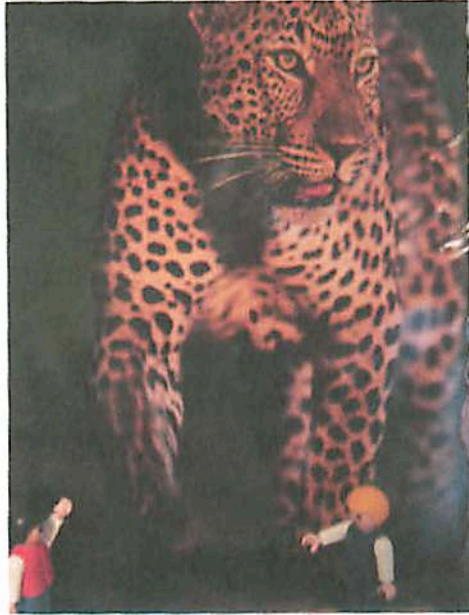
That was the moment that Felix and Finn began to get scared. Neither had ever thought that the African Savannah would be this scary. Felix didn’t like the hot sun and wide open spaces. Finn didn’t like the hungry leopards.

“I kind of want to go home, don’t you Finn?” asked Felix.

Suddenly, a low, scary growl made them jump. They both hid behind Hugo, afraid of what might have made the noise. “What’s making that sound, Hugo?”

“I think that’s Sue. I don’t know how you kids got here, but now is the time you might think about leaving. She sounds hungry.”

Felix and Finn grabbed each other's hands and wished and wished and *wished* that they were home again at the Albuquerque zoo. As they were frantically wishing to be safe, a huge animal came into view. It was spotted and was sneaking very close to the ground.



“That’s Sue,” whispered Hugo to the boys.

“Please can we go home now!” they both said at the same time. “PLEASE!”

As quickly as they had left the zoo, with another bright blue flash of light, they were back on the wooden bench in front of the reptile house.

“We did it Felix! We are back!” shouted Finn.

“Back from where?” a familiar voice said.

“Mom!” shouted Felix. “You will never guess what happened to us!”

“We went to Africa,” Finn said proudly.