



Born Free: A Lioness of Two Worlds

Joy Adamson

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There have been many accounts of the return to the wild of tame animals, but since its original publication in 1960, when the *New York Times* hailed it as a "fascinating and remarkable book," **Born Free** has stood alone in its power to move us.

Joy Adamson's story of a lion cub in transition between the captivity in which she is raised and the fearsome wild to which she is returned captures the abilities of both humans and animals to cross the seemingly unbridgeable gap between their radically different worlds. Especially now, at a time when the sanctity of the wild and its inhabitants is increasingly threatened by human development and natural disaster, Adamson's remarkable tale is an idyll, and a model, to return to again and again.

Illustrated with the same beautiful, evocative photographs that first enchanted the world forty years ago and updated with a new introduction by George Page, former host and executive editor of the PBS series *Nature* and author of *Inside the Animal Mind*, this anniversary edition introduces to a new generation one of the most heartwarming associations between man and animal.

Born Free: A Lioness of Two Worlds Details

Date : Published May 16th 2000 by Pantheon Books (first published 1960)

ISBN : 9780375714382

Author : Joy Adamson

Format : Paperback 224 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Animals, Cultural, Africa, Biography, Autobiography, Memoir, Environment, Nature

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L K Simonds says

Long before Hemingway, Dinesen, and Markham shared their Africa with me, I knew Elsa's Africa. This was a memoir I read in my youth, perhaps the first, and it remains with me to this day.

Joy Adamson's story of returning an orphaned lion who had been raised as a pet to the wild is heartbreakng, heartwarming, and hopeful. It's also a peek at East Africa in the 1950s. All around, a good and emotional read.

Lisa (Harmonybites) says

This is the book the film was based upon, the story of Elsa the lioness, hand raised by a Senior Game Warden and his wife, Joy Adamson, and later released into the wild. This would be rated five stars except that I really try to be stingy with those. The book didn't make me cry, laugh-out-loud or change my thinking, and Adamson, while she writes well and fluently, doesn't have the impressive, lyrical prose of Beryl Markham and Isak Dinesen, two other European women who wrote celebrated memoirs about their time in Kenya.

But what this book does offer is what a friend of mine called a "lost art:" The ability to write about an animal without treacly sentimentality but rather with sharp and insightful observations that make their personality evident (and in this case lovable) without a narcissistic focus on the writer and without an evident heavy-handed political agenda. Not that it hasn't had such a political effect. A Foreword by George Page quoting Faith McNulty claimed *Born Free* "may have done for the cause of wildlife what *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did for the antislavery crusade." Not only did the book gain support for the protection of habitat and endangered animals, but the Adamsons helped pioneer the technique of reintroducing animals raised in captivity back into the wild. Not that Elsa could ever be called a captive lion. That's what made her happy ending possible. She was never confined, never treated with brutality in an attempt to dominate. Even after successfully released into the wild, when the Adamsons came to visit her she'd recognize and greet them with affection. As Joy Adamson put it, their relationship continued "to be one of absolute equality quite different from that between a dog and his master." This is a short book you can read in a few hours and filled with a multitude of photographs of Elsa. It was a pleasure to read and I highly recommend it--especially for lovers of animals and nature.

Chloe Playle says

I read this when I was young, and made me cry my eyes out. I still think of this book.

Zoe says

This is the inspiration, true story Elsa, a lioness, who is raised by the author Joy Adamson, and her husband George. When George must go on safari after a man-eating lion, his hunting party is attacked by a vicious lioness. She is shot in self-defense, but they realize later with remorse that she had been trying to protect her young, three cubs who George brings back to camp. Though Elsa's sisters are sent to a zoo when they are still cubs, Elsa remains in Kenya with the intent of joining her sisters later. When she is nearly a full grown lioness, George & Joy no longer have the heart to place Elsa in captivity; not when she has grown up in her native environment. They begin the painful process of reintroducing her to the wild. Can a domesticated lioness survive in the wild? Will she still be accepted by her own kind? Read and find out. ;)

This book is filled with rather adorable photographs. It is written from the point of view of a crazy cat lady/cat lover who truly loves her kitty.

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<http://knigolandia.info/book-review/1...>

Lesle says

A story of Elsa a lion cub raised and loved by Joy and George. A telling of the hardship for both Elsa and her human family. It seemed at times to be unattainable and a failure. The life for Elsa was torn between that of being a pet or living a free life in the wild as she was meant to have. The steps in her life are told in many fun and hard adventures. Elsa finally is her own lioness but she never forgets her human family.

Elsa's story started the wild animal rights to live wild and free and ends in a very real legacy left by both Elsa and the Adamson's.

Adamson's writing flows like a conversation between friends. The adventures with Elsa touch you in a very special way that true stories usually do. I had moments of laughter and smiles as well as tears.

Side note: This was not their first and only encounter with lions. George brought the lion and Africa back into the life of Christian A Lion Called Christian: The True Story of the Remarkable Bond Between Two Friends and a Lion born in a pen and displayed at Harrod's until two men rescued Christian as a cub, kept him till he was too big and finally also returned him to live the life of freedom with the help of George Adamson's capable hands.

Jami says

While I loved Elsa's story and enjoyed most of the pictures in the book, this was not the heartwarming story I remember from my childhood. I love Elsa, but I really didn't like the Adamsons. It may be because I keep comparing them to Lawrence Anthony, another conservationist, and I find that Mr. Anthony seemed to have more respect for the animals' right to exist in their environment. I couldn't lose sight of the fact that Elsa was orphaned because he killed her mother thinking she was a male lion, leaving the three cubs without a mother. I was confused at her reference to "beating" Elsa when she tracked a donkey, which was a purely natural instinct, and not three pages later, said that they never used force with her. In my opinion, a beating counts as force, but maybe that's just me. Finally, I can't help but think how cruel it was to Elsa to keep sneaking off and leaving her when she was sleeping. They keep reappearing and disappearing - I'm not sure that helped her adapt to the wild or simply increased her confusion about where she belonged. She didn't know why the people she loved kept abandoning her and then returning and then repeating the process. One thing I got a chuckle out of was when they returned to Elsa for a three day period several times, and when she got to know the signs they were preparing to leave, she turned her face away from them. My 16 yr old shih-tzu does the same thing when I leave for work! She'll give me kisses whenever I ask, as she is a kisser. But, when I'm off to work, she knows - when I go to kiss her, she whips her face away and refuses to kiss me. When I come home after work, well, that's a different story!

Ana says

This book turned me into a blubbering, weeping mess. Amazing, sad and uplifting at the same time.

For more on this matter check out my other review-

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Kirsty Noah-whitlock says

Bit of a hard one to review. I love Elsa's story but not entirely agreeable with Joy and George, just because of some of the animals they killed for no reason to be honest. At times I felt like giving up on the book for this reason but I'm going to continue the trilogy and try reading Living Free to see how Elsa's journey continues. I may even get a liking for Joy and George you never know, watch this space xx

Joanne Moyer says

I saw the movie Born Free as a child and loved it. I probably read the book along the way too but as usual

don't remember. The story of Elsa and the Adamsons is still an amazing one of love and devotion between a wild animal and her 'pride', George and Joy Adamson. The descriptions of where and how they lived is really interesting as it's a way of life not many will ever experience

Robin Reynolds / October Woman says

The author's husband, in his duties as a game warden, was forced to shoot a lioness as she attacked. He then found her three young cubs (and felt great remorse at having killed their mother) and took them home. Two of the cubs were eventually sent to a zoo, but the smallest, Elsa, stayed on as a member of the household.

The bond between Elsa and the Adamsons is incredible. While raising Elsa as a pet, they rarely kept her penned up or chained and gave her a lot of freedom to still act like a lion. She was very loving and affectionate to them, and to other people who came into contact with her. You can almost feel the love that Joy and Elsa shared, and Elsa's personality comes through very clearly. The descriptions of her playful antics are amusing, and it's an interesting peek also at life in the bush.

When the time inevitably came, Joy and George made the hard decision to release Elsa into the wild. After finding a suitable location, they spent a lot of time teaching Elsa to hunt for herself. They would make camp, spend time with Elsa, and then leave her on her own for a day, then a couple of days, then a week at a time. She was always happy to see them on their return, while at the same time growing more and more self-sufficient.

Even after being in the wild on her own for several months, Elsa would still get very excited when George and Joy visited her, showing them much affection and wanting to play with them. But she also grew more independent, and began to show signs of wanting them to leave her alone, and her transition from family pet to wild lioness was successful.

A heartwarming and well written story, with lots of pictures (in my edition of the book anyway), and now I want to watch the movie again.

Carlissa says

I read this when I was a child and remember loving it. Would love to read it again someday.

Sally68 says

Ho un ricordo stupendo del telefilm tratto da questo libro...Allora ero una bambina, ma la vicenda di questa leonessa, di Joy e George che con cura allevarono questa cucciola mi ha emozionato nuovamente oggi, come lo fece allora.

Per il grande rispetto e amore che avevano per Elsa e per la sua natura, riuscirono a rimetterla in libertà.."
"Per quanto ci fossimo preparati al distacco e sperassimo di poter così dare a Elsa un avvenire migliore di quello che avrebbe avuto in cattività, il momento della separazione effettiva era una cosa molto diversa."

Noran Miss Pumkin says

You saw the movie, you sang the song, you begged mother for the vinyl, and she bought you the book as a surprise. Elsa had all our hearts back then, and her was amazing and truly free in the end. It was the Feel Good story of the decade. so, I think it might be time to bring it back once again for the new generation. What better message to save the Earth?

Iskreads says

Born Free
By Joy Adamson
Review by Graham W

Born Free is an amazing story, that is also true and is unlikely to happen to just anyone. One of the people lucky enough to experience this was Joy Adamson, the author of the book.

Just being in a Safari car on a bumpy road is all worth it, even in tall grass never knowing what is coming around the corner. But as long as the truck is moving you can never take even a half decent picture, and when searching for lions, its just part of the adventure. But Joy Adamson never had to do that she could almost always walk out onto her porch and let her pet lion Elsa suck her thumb.

This incredible story is of a lioness that starts with the very beginning of its life. I have lived in Africa for about 3 years and have never heard anything like it until reading this awe-inspiring book.

Although she originally had three lions she gave the bigger two out into a zoo in London after they were old enough to care for themselves. The smaller one, Elsa, was too reliant on people for food so they kept her.

When she was around two years old, they tried to release her gradually but failed. Could they do it and release her with ease? Read "Born Free" to find out. Graham W.

Summer Lane says

This is one of the best animal stories of all time. Why? Because it isn't just about a lion named Elsa, it is about a companion, a friend and a loving creature who shared in the lives of Joy and George Adamson when they lived in Kenya. Originally penned in 1960, it is the touching tale of how they raised an orphaned lion cub named Elsa and she grew to be their nearest and dearest friend - she was family. I have rarely read a book so heartwarming. Elsa was really very magical and unique, and after reading this book, having a lion around suddenly begins to sound much more enjoyable than a dog.

The movie, Born Free, is of course based on this book, and it is one of my favorite movies of all time. The book encloses a lot more detailed information about Elsa, her habits and her charismatic personality. How lucky we are to be able to read about Elsa and appreciate a little slice of the African animal population through the eyes of two people who sincerely loved and understood these creatures better than most people

could ever hope to. Everybody should read this book.

Amalie says

Before this Elsa:

AND

That adorable Kiara:

There was THIS Elsa. An orphaned lion cub, the weakest of the litter that grew up into a beautiful lioness named Elsa, who got involved in many adventures with her foster parents.

Oh, my goodness, how did I forget this one!!!

LibraryCin says

I love animals, and it would be a dream come true to bond with a wild animal like Joy and her husband George did. It was an easy read, and there were lots of wonderful photos. What a fabulous lion Elsa was - she learned to live with other wild lions, but at the same time, she was gentle and always careful around her human caretakers, who she seemed to love just as much as they loved her.

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Shirley Revill says

I read this book ages ago and I really enjoyed reading it. I also loved the film where her love for animals came shining through. Truly exceptional story.
