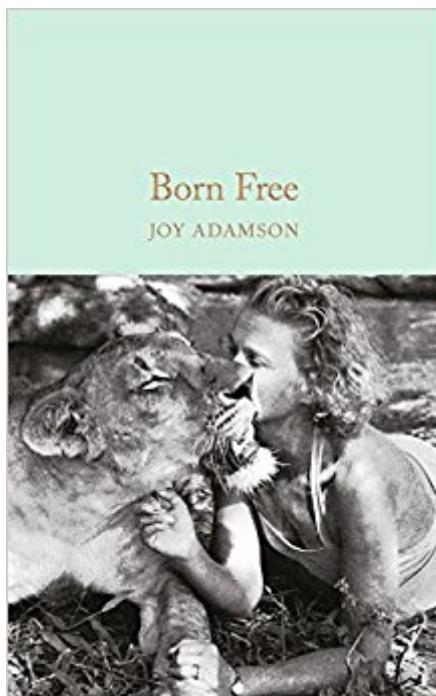


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# Born Free (Macmillan Collector's Library)



## Synopsis

In 1961, Joy Adamson first introduced to the world the story of her life alongside Elsa the lioness, whom she had rescued as an orphaned cub, and raised at her home in Kenya. But as Elsa had been born free, Joy made the heartbreaking decision that she must be returned to the wild when she was old enough to fend for herself. Since the first publication of *Born Free* generations of readers have been enchanted, inspired and moved by its uplifting charm and the remarkable interaction between Joy and Elsa. Rediscover the original story, in the words of the woman who reared Elsa and walked with the lions, in this new edition, with an introduction by John Rendall. Designed to appeal to the book lover, the Macmillan Collector's Library is a series of beautifully bound pocket-sized gift editions of much loved classic titles. Bound in real cloth, printed on high quality paper, and featuring ribbon markers and gilt edges, Macmillan Collector's Library are books to love and treasure.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Moving and incredible, [with] some of the most extraordinary photographs ever seen."

--"The New York Times" "Elsa and the Adamsons are ideal figures in a peaceable kingdom." --"The New Yorker""Moving and incredible, [with] some of the most extraordinary photographs ever seen." --"The New York Times""Elsa and the Adamsons are ideal figures in a peaceable kingdom." --"The New Yorker"

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.

Great digital transfer. Note: while the ebook is titled as "Born Free," it includes the entire trilogy (*Living Free, Forever Free*.) These aren't available separately, only in this edition. Also, this does NOT include any of the pictures that always accompany the physical book, just in case that's part of your consideration here.

Here's what I think modern readers are afraid to say: the *Born Free* legacy is incredible, but the book that started it all...isn't. *Born Free* was an exciting, eye-opening read in 1960 because it dispelled myths about the savagery of "darkest Africa," it was the most cutting edge information anyone had about lions at the time, and it sparked an interest in conversation, making wild animals personable and deserving of protection rather than fierce beasts to be hunted. Joy and George Adamson were the first two people we know of who were able to introduce a tame lion back into the wild. *Born Free* is Joy's story about that project, and the one to protect Elsa's three half-wild cubs. The 50th anniversary edition of *Born Free* is the sum total of Joy Adamson's journalistic descriptions of daily life with Elsa over the years. Once I had the idea of Elsa's duality, her habits, and how Adamson related to her and helped her, I found the rest of the book repetitive and at times tedious and too subjective. If you want the whole story of *Born Free*, watch the great BBC documentary, *The Born Free Legacy* (2010). Whereas Adamson focuses entirely on the lions in her book, the documentary does this but also covers the incredible worldwide reaction to the book, the beginning of natural history channels and interest in wildlife in general the book helped to spark, the interesting

lives of the authors and their rough marriage, the controversy about the way Adamson overused anthropomorphism, and the eventual grim murder of the authors and her husband. If you watch that documentary, and find a way to read the original, much shorter *Born Free*, you've got the whole incredible story and you've spent less hours than you would if you only read the book. Even if you do insist on reading the book, I think you'll find that Adamson's explanation of Elsa's behaviors is a little too subjective given the rigor you've become used to in the last few decades of animal research. I'm not sure anyone today would claim that an animal is apologetic, or embarrassed, or proud, as easily as Adamson does. It was distracting, and hurt Adamson's credibility in my eyes. Finally, someone else noted that all the great pictures are missing from the Kindle edition. Dude. I'm telling you, just watch the BBC documentary.

Anyone who follows my book reviews knows that I only give five-star reviews. Not that all the books I read are worthy of five stars--far from it--it's just that as a busy author myself, I don't have time to review books unless they warrant five-stars. I'm going to make the exception here. I originally read all three books in the *Born Free* series when I was about fourteen. Had I reviewed them then, I would have given each book five stars. Unfortunately, this series hasn't aged well. First, there's the packaging. I purchased the Kindle 50th Anniversary Edition, called "*Born Free: The Full Story*." Nowhere (that I could find) does the publisher state exactly what you are purchasing. As near as I can tell, this version includes "*Born Free*," "*Living Free*," and "*Forever Free*" all in one book, with the introductions of the second two books removed. The book names are missing and simply called Part One, Part Two, and Part Three. If I had the print versions of the actual books, I could compare, but there's only so much effort I'm willing to put into a review. Also, the photos are hidden in the back and not mentioned on the Contents Page. My guess is that the majority of readers will never find the photos. As I started reading the book, I became hooked. The first part is a great story. But as the story went on, I had to keep convincing myself that the parts that made me cringe were "historical." Then, shortly into what I think was the second book, I gave up. Here's why: 1) During their lives (both are dead now) Joy Adamson and her husband, George, maintained a reputation for being conservationists, but I have never subscribed to the theory of conservation-through-killing. Joy mentioned how much they hated killing animals, but then recounted what seemed like daily animal killings at the end of George's gun. At first the killings were justified, to help Elsa (though excessively so, as once George even killed three animals to leave at separate locations for Elsa), but elsewhere George shoots other animals, such as a crocodile and an "aggressive" cobra. 2) George's job was as a game warden, in charge of stopping poaching. I'm a huge supporter of

eliminating poaching, but in the Born Free series it seemed as if poaching rules only applied to blacks. Time after time when an unknown black person appeared in the book, Joy Adamson's next sentence was to accuse that person of being a poacher. Perhaps she was right. But why was it okay for George to casually shoot a crocodile and then a few days later arrest a tribesman for doing the same thing?3) Eventually the book just became redundant: look for Elsa; find Elsa; kill something for Elsa; leave Elsa for a few days, and repeat. I found myself mentally screaming at the pages: "Elsa is a wild lion now. You did your job. It's time to let her go!" But obviously if the Adamson's left Elsa alone, there wouldn't be any sequels to the first book. Finally, when Joy Adamson berated her cook/servant for not "following her instructions" when preparing her plum pudding on Christmas Eve, I had enough and dumped out of the book. I just wasn't enjoying the way she treated non-white people and animals other than lions (she even called hyenas "sinister"). In the early 1960s, the Born Free series was ahead of its time, but now I think anyone who respects people of different races and/or animals of different species would find it difficult to enjoy these books. If you do read them, the best way to do so is by repeating to yourself throughout the pages: "I'm reading this as a historical document. I'm reading this as a historical document. I'm reading this as a historical document. . . ." Marty Essen, author of "Endangered Edens" (to be published in January 2016) and *Cool Creatures, Hot Planet: Exploring the Seven Continents*

I was inspired to read this after my husband had me watch the movie. It was great to read in detail the wonderful journey of the Adamsons and Elsa. I hope the other two books soon become available on the kindle. These creatures are not just "mindless beasts"- maybe none of them are.

The Addamsons tried so hard for Elsa and all the Lions and they all paid with their lives. Joy & George had amazing affinity with the Lions. Sadly today those that are Born Free are facing some shocking situations all created by humans. Worth buying and reading a classic true story.

Loved the book when I read it as a child but was still surprised how much it moved me when I read it again. Very worth reading even you read it before

It was a good bed time story. One can learn a lot about the African animals but too many days were spent doing the same thing over and over. Of course they were pioneers in releasing lions back into the wild.

Born Free is must read for all animal lovers. It helps you put your feelings about beloved pets into words that everyone can understand. It inspires us to be an advocates for our animals who cannot speak for themselves.p

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