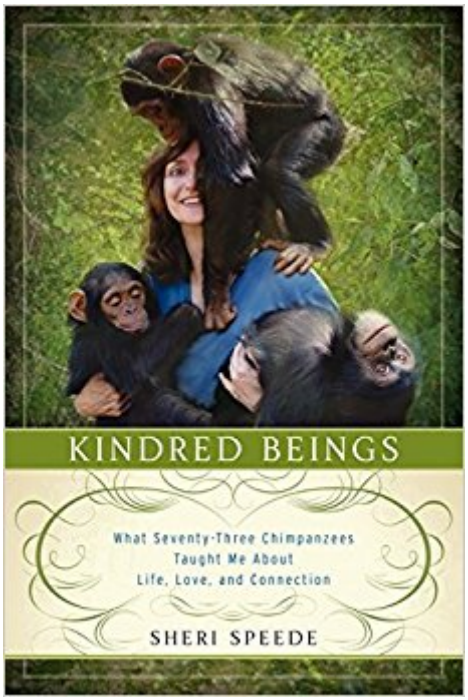
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Kindred Beings: What Seventy-Three Chimpanzees Taught Me About Life, Love, And Connection



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Synopsis

Enter a world of tender friendships, staunch loyalties, violent jealousiesÃ¢â ¬â •and enduring love.As a child, Sheri Speede knew that she wanted to advocate for animals in any way she could. But it was not until many years after veterinary school, when she was transporting a chimpanzee named Pierre away from a biomedical facility as part of her job as a conservation advocate in Cameroon, that Dr. Speede discovered her true calling. She began to search for land for a forest sanctuary for captive chimpanzees that were held on chains and in small cages at local hotels.Dr. Speede eventually founded the Sanaga-Yong Chimpanzee Rescue Center, a forested home for orphans of the illegal ape meat trade. One chim- panzee, Dorothy, was rescued by Dr. Speede and her colleagues from a bleak existence imprisoned on a chain and forged a deep friendship with her. Dr. Speede explains how chimpanzees, like humans, are capable of a broad spectrum of emotional behaviorsÃ¢â ¬â •both hateful and loving. Dr. Speede also candidly reveals her own struggles as a stranger in a foreign culture trying to adjust to rural African village life. And she admits that unlike Dorothy, she was not always kind, gentle, and forgiving.Dorothy died of old age at the sanctuary, and a photograph of Dorothy's funeral, in which Dr. Speede cradled Dorothy's head while her family of chimpanzees mournfully viewed her body, went viral after being published in National Geographic. The world was surprised at the depth of the chimps' grief at the loss of their friend, but Dr. Speede was not. Through the chimps, she had come to understand the meaning of love, loyalty, and true connection.While this is a compelling story about the emotional complexity of the chimpanzees she rescued and befriended, it is also Dr. Speede's story. Major events in her personal life, including love affairs, dangerous run-ins with criminals, and the birth of her daughter, unfold as the development of her primate rescue center runs parallel to her own development. Ultimately, Kindred Beings is a story of profound resilience, of both the apes and the woman who loved them.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Kindred Beings is both an engrossing African adventure and an inspiring story of how an animal activist has devoted her life to chimpanzees. This fascinating book will forever change how you see chimpanzees-and how you feel about the importance of safeguarding their places on our planet.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Dr. Marty Becker, "America's Veterinarian")Sheri Speede chose to make a difference in the lives of Jacky, Nama, Dorothy, and dozens of other apes, which says as much about SheriÃ¢â ¬â„¢s commitment as the chimpanzeesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ inner strength. Sheri ultimately emerged triumphant, perhaps for one simple reason: humanity is not restricted to human beings. (Douglas Cress, program coordinator of Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP))In Cameroon, Dr. Sheri Speede has enabled law enforcement to fight wildlife trafficking by establishing an excellent forest sanctuary where rescued chimpanzees get care and love. Without facilities like hers, animals would suffer lives of abuse or move on in the sordid international trade. Read this book! (Dr. Shirley McGreal, founder of the International Primate Protection League)Sheri SpeedeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s powerful story shows the reader the broad range of personalities seen in chimpanzees, with complex emotional needs, a rich social fabric, and self-awareness. It opens our eyes to the reality that all animals have emotions, and it pleads for an end to animal abuse. (Marilyn Kroplick, M.D., president of IDA-Africa)

Sheri Speede, a doctor of veterinary medicine, collaborated with the Cameroon government to found the Sanaga-Yong Chimpanzee Rescue Center, a forested home for orphans of the illegal ape meat trade. With Edmund Stone, she established In Defense of AnimalsÃ¢â ¬â œAfrica (IDAÃ¢â ¬â œAfrica) as a division of IDA International and as the U.S. base of support for the work in Cameroon.

Kindred Beings is a wonderful book! Proving that one person with a dream can make the world a better place, Sheri Speede's book is inspirational, heart-warming, and a page-turner. She describes the deplorable conditions in Cameroon where she finds "hotel chimpanzees," filthy, chained at the neck, malnourished and utterly deprived of contact with any other living thing. Seeing past the

warning signs to stay away, Sheri befriends them. She feels, sees and hears their desperate plea for help; and she answers it. She promises to come back and free them; to give them "a better story." She doesn't go home to her veterinary practice in Portland Oregon and surrender to reason, letting the plight of the chimpanzees ebb away. Instead she sells her practice and heads back to Cameroon, with her companion Edmund Stone, and begins a crusade to create a forest sanctuary for these and other dreadfully abused chimpanzees. Hers is a story of unyielding determination, undeterred by the countless obstacles they face, from truck swallowing mud and malaria to enraged chiefs bent on thwarting her. It is truly against all odds that Sheri does rewrite the story for those chimpanzees, literally, personally, freeing them from the bonds that have tethered them to tiny plots of hard concrete for as many as 40 years and transporting them to a new home in the forest. And from there the story broadens to include the indomitable spirit and strength of those chimpanzees who, out of the hell of brutal captivity, thrive in the newfound freedom of Sanaga Yong, their forest sanctuary home.

Oh my. All I can say is please read this book. It will change you ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • for the better. :) Sheri Speede took the brave step to create a chimpanzee sanctuary for chimpanzees who were suffering as "entertainment" or "attractions" for hotels and businesses seeking tourist trade in Africa. Dr. Speede sanctuary is called the Sanaga-Yong Chimpanzee Rescue Center and it is located in Cameroon, Africa. She is also the founder of In Defense of Animals-Africa (IDA-Africa) as the U.S. base of support for the work in Cameroon. Currently, splitting her time between Cameroon and the United States, she serves as Director of IDA-Africa and Sanaga-Yong Chimpanzee Rescue Center.The poor chimpanzees whose lives were saved by Sheri spent their lives suffering, chained and/or confined and neglected in small cages until Sheri gave them a second chance at life. At the Sanaga-Yong Chimpanzee Rescue Center, these chimpanzees now have the opportunity to be chimpanzees again, to live in social groups, have friends, make choices, and share in the joy of friendship and family. Sheri's story about funding, establishing, and keeping her sanctuary up and running is extraordinary! You will fall deeply in love with these great apes who find HOME in her sanctuary, especially the beautiful, beloved sweet old Dorothy.I can't say it better than this review: "Sheri SpeedeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s powerful story shows the reader the broad range of personalities seen in chimpanzees, with complex emotional needs, a rich social fabric, and self-awareness. It opens our eyes to the reality that all animals have emotions, and it pleads for an end to animal abuse." (Marilyn Kroplick, M.D., president of IDA-Africa)Please read this touching story. You will not be disappointed!

I loved this book. I loved the incredible tale of enviable determination I was shown in Sheri Speede. Once she came to know the true pain and suffering of her fellow beings, these chimps who are apes like us only different, that cannot speak or tell their pain, rage and frustration, she felt it, and unlike any who had encountered the first of the chimps, for whom Sanaga-Yong was founded, she was the first to feel it enough to do something about it, because she loved them. And that is a powerful part of this story, the unfolding of Sanaga-Yong Sanctuary is a lesson in how the power of love can and does change the universe, one small part at a time. Things happened I thought at times, because Sheri Speede would simply not let the universe unfold any other way! I don't know if anybody but Sheri and the chimps knew how important that was. More than once the book made me feel "this was meant to be

Kindred Beings reads like a mythical hero's journey. The reluctant hero (Dr. Speede) leaves all that is familiar and safe to pursue a quest for something magical in a strange and foreboding land--in this case the creation of a sanctuary for the abused chimpanzees of Cameroon. Like most such journeys she faces a multitude of trials and tribulations along the way, from defiant owners of captive chimpanzees to thieves who attack Dr. Speede. And then there is the rain, mud, mosquitoes with deadly diseases, local villagers needing life-saving intervention, and a race against the clock to save chimps in dire straits.Like a classical myth, our hero Dr. Speede is aided in her quest by people who seem to magically appear when obstacles block her progress, from colorful expats to wise village folk to a generous ophthalmologist.Dr. Speede's intense interactions with the chimps, from her first meeting with Dorothy and Nama to her sad farewell to others, allow the reader to vicariously experience what our hero has learned when it comes to life, love and connection. This is a book that will reward the reader with untold riches, a fitting end to a mythical journey.

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