

## The Lions' Legacy

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### Foreword

By Virginia McKenna  
(the actress who played the role of Joy in Born Free)

Hundreds of hundreds of people visited George Adamson's camp at Kora during the nineteen years that he lived there. Hundreds and hundreds of words have been written about him. But it seems that there is always something new to say, each person finding a new dimension to the experience--perhaps because to each person the visit was intensely personal.

Gareth's discovery of George's world, through reading his book, *Bwana Game*, as a young boy, led him inexorably to their meeting just over twelve years later in 1988. The old man's passion for lioness and his deep understanding of their nature was reflected in the young man's own perception of the king of beasts. Both respected the lion's character and its place in nature's hierarchy. Both wished to share their lives with this predator. Both have had their wish fulfilled.

Although Gareth knew George for only a few months, their deep and mutual concern for the wilderness of Kora and the creatures and plant life it contained, and their extraordinary rapport with lions, established a spiritual bond which continues today, two years after George's brutal murder.

On George's death the three young lions at Kora which he was rehabilitating back to the wild were suddenly left without the "teacher." Their father figure. For Gareth there was now only one path to tread--a path he would share with his new "family"--though not, sadly, in the wilds of Kora, where George's other lions still haunt the river bank and move silently through the sea of thorn trees.

George's body may be buried at Kampi ya Simba but his spirit is everywhere, touching all of us who knew him--whether through his books or in person. And guiding and inspiring Gareth as he, in his turn, dedicates his life to lions--and to protecting animals and their future in the wild.

### Author's Note

By Gareth Patterson

During and after the writing of the first draft of this book I felt an uneasiness. Was it not presumptuous of me to write about George Adamson and the short time I knew him? Did I have a deep enough insight into George and his life? Time, reflection and rewriting has now dismissed that uneasiness and I wish to explain how.

I did not know George Adamson for long and, because of this, I cannot claim to have a "biographer's" understanding of the man. Mine is a different understanding, an understanding which has developed since his death as I have continued the work with his three lions.

Many people knew and loved George for long years. Hundreds of people, visitors from diverse backgrounds, were enriched by meeting George at his home, Kora. There are also thousands of people who never met George but were nevertheless influenced or inspired by what they heard of him. Such was the powerful aura of a living legend.

## Prologue

By Gareth Patterson

The lions had arrived, their presence announced only by the soft sound of low calls between the pride members, their forms shadowy in the typical inky African night. George Adamson turned his head to the sound and, as I touched the switch of the floodlight, the milling forms of eight lions could be seen outside the camp.

"Letea nyama," George called (Bring meat), without turning from the lions. A gentle murmur of African voices could be heard from the darkened shadows of the staff quarters. "Simba waliafike," (The lions have come).