



Encountering Gorillas: A Chronicle of Discovery, Exploitation, Understanding, and Survival

James L. Newman

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Gorillas, the largest of the apes inhabiting our planet, have been a source of fear, awe, and inspiration to humans. In this book, James L. Newman brings a lifetime of study of Africa to his compelling story of the rich and varied interaction between gorillas and humans since earliest contact. He illuminates the complex relationship over time through the interlinked themes of discovery, exploitation, understanding, and continuing survival. Tragically, the number of free-living gorillas—facing habitat loss, disease, and poaching—has declined dramatically over the course of the past century, and the future of the few that remain is highly uncertain. At the same time, those in zoos and sanctuaries now lead much more secure lives than they did earlier. Newman follows this transition, highlighting the roles played by key individuals, both humans and gorillas. Among the former have been adventurers, opportunists, writers, and scientists. The latter include real gorillas, such as Gargantua and Koko, and fictional ones, notably King Kong and Mighty Joe Young. This thoughtful and engaging book helps us understand how our image of gorillas has been both distorted and clarified through culture and science for centuries and how we now control the destiny of these magnificent great apes.



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