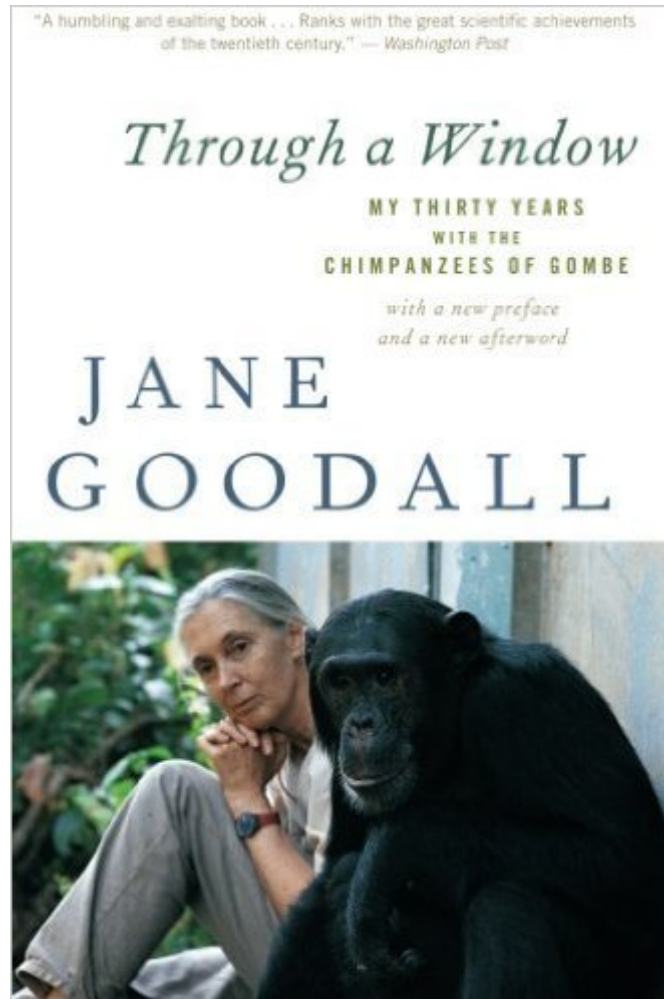


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# Through A Window: My Thirty Years With The Chimpanzees Of Gombe



## Synopsis

Through a Window is the dramatic saga of thirty years in the life of an intimately intertwined community—one that reads like a novel, but is one of the most important scientific works ever published. The community is Gombe, on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, where the principal residents are chimpanzees and one extraordinary woman who is their student, protector, and historian. In her classic *In the Shadow of Man*, Jane Goodall wrote of her first ten years at Gombe. In *Through a Window* she brings the story up to the present, painting a more complete and vivid portrait of our closest relatives. We watch young Figan's relentless rise to power and old Mike's crushing defeat. We learn how one mother rears her children to succeed and another dooms hers to failure. We witness horrifying murders, touching moments of affection, joyous births, and wrenching deaths. In short, we see every emotion known to humans stripped to its essence. In the mirror of chimpanzee life, we see ourselves reflected.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book clearly deserves more than five stars. *Through a Window* is the popular version of the first 30 years of Dr. Jane Goodall's pioneering primate research at the Gombe reserve in Africa. Arriving in Africa as a young woman who found she did not like office work, she looked for something to do. The legendary Dr. Louis Leakey became interested in the idea of doing parallel research on chimpanzees in the wild to shed light on the development of early man. He persuaded Dr. Goodall to trek into Gombe, and helped her raise money and respectability for the project. From the

beginning, he knew it had to go on for at least 10 years. Overcoming great deprivations and dangers, Dr. Goodall turned this into one of the most important animal observation studies ever. In this book, you will get the highlights of what has been learned from that research. The book emphasizes the closeness between humans and chimpanzees. The two species have 99 percent genetic similarity. Each can catch diseases that no other species can. In fact, Gombe was overwhelmed by a polio epidemic that affected the chimpanzees and the humans in the 1960s. As you walk through the forest with Dr. Goodall, you will find behaviors that are very similar to what humans do. Is it any wonder that she supposes that chimpanzees feel many of the same emotions that humans do? The only major difference she finds is that chimpanzees never torture each other or other animals like humans do. You will follow along with families of chimpanzees over three generations, and find out about what works well and what doesn't for them. There are even chapters about memorable individuals who had a large impact on the chimpanzee community. Before Dr. Goodall did her work, people thought of chimpanzees as being insensate animals.

When I picked up this book it was because I randomly chose it from a pile of recommendations a friend gave me. I had no desire to read it, and the only reason I actually went through with it was that a) I would have to give the book back someday and b) she always recommends good-to-decent books. And despite the obvious reputation that Goodall has, I still had no desire to read it. Having recently picked up (and put down) Rachel Carson's *The Edge of the Sea*, I was in no mind to read another nature-based book. That gives you a good indication of my mindset going into this. I'm glad I was wrong. I enjoyed this book much more than I would have imagined - it's a fascinating read. I say that having had virtually no prior interest in chimpanzee's nor Jane Goodall. I doubt I would have read this book on my own, since there are a million books begging to be read every time I open my eyes. Sometimes you need to go where you don't necessarily want in order to find a jewel. The title of this book refers to the window that Goodall gets when she observes the chimps over the years. Through this window she gets an idea of how we, humans, have evolved from where we were to where we are. It gives her a glimpse of the similarities - sometimes uncanny - between chimps and humans. This window often leads to observations you can never expect. Goodall's observations and her way with words fully draw you into the narrative. Goodall writes anecdotally, attempting to illustrate her point with examples of behavior she observes in the field. These instances make the book much easier to read than a pure scientific approach.

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