

Elephantoms: Tracking the Elephant

Lyall Watson

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As a child in South Africa, spending summers exploring the wild with his boyhood friends, Lyall Watson came face to face with his first elephant. This "entertaining and enchanting" work (*Washington Post Book World*) chronicles how Watson's fascination grew into a lifelong quest to understand the nature and behavior of this impressive creature.

From that moment on, Watson's fascination grew into a lifelong obsession with understanding the nature and behavior of this impressive creature. Around the world, the elephant—at once a symbol of spiritual power and physical endurance—has been worshipped as a god and hunted for sport.

"Watson's insights and speculations are dazzling, but what lends them power is his extraordinary knowledge of evolutionary biology and animal behavior, ethnography and South African history" (Wade Davis, *National Geographic Society*). "Like a shaman, Watson conjures up the spirit of the massive beast" (*Publishers Weekly*), documents the animal's wide-ranging capabilities to remember and to mourn, and reminds us of its rich mythic origins, its evolution, and its devastation in recent history. Part meditation on an elusive animal, part evocation of the power of place, *Elephantoms* presents an alluring mix of the mysteries of nature and the wonders of childhood.

Elephantoms: Tracking the Elephant Details

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Author : Lyall Watson

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From Reader Review Elephants: Tracking the Elephant for online ebook

Sharon Baxter says

Much to love about this book; most likely you are already an 'elephant-lover' if you decide to read this; afterward, you will actually be 'in love' with them! Love that scientist/naturalist Lyall Watson is a gifted writer, and that he weaves pre-history, evolution, botany.....you name itinto a most readable book.

Maiko Morii says

I'm not familiar to Lyall Watson's fame.
At least I like this book overflowed for love elephants.

Zoë says

This book immediately drew me into it and I eagerly read and could not put it down! Then I came to the last part and my interest began to wane as the writing became more circuitous, conjecture-filled, and less authentic. The tender story of the beginning devolves into something so amorphous it is hard to follow. Also a map would be a definite plus, at least on the inside cover!

Susan says

This book was an amazing true story and gave me an incredible insight into not only elephants but the author's experiences with them. Watson writes like a poet, with emotion coloring his memories. It's a true shame he is no longer with us.

Kim Stallwood says

This is not about elephants, as I thought, but it's a book about the author, Lyall Watson, and his relationship with elephants. Although it is very well written and is interesting at times, I found Elephants to be a work irrelevant to my needs for my research on elephants. Which isn't to say it's a bad book -- just one that didn't work for me.

Jill Boniske says

If you love elephants this is required reading. It also happens to be a wonderful autobiography... with elephants... in Africa.

Jacqueline Mortlock says

Like all Lyall's books, I read Elephants in 2 sittings, forgetting everything around me, completely absorbed in the gentle magic of his writing.. Lyall Watson has sadly passed, but his books (to me) are like putting a seashell against my ear and listening to the Universe whispering its wisdom.. :)

Ross Bishop says

One of the more exceptional books I have ever read. The consciousness of elephants is extraordinary and generally dismissed because they are animals. Lyall grew up with them and speaks eloquently to their power. Well worth your time to read!

Claire Berry says

I liked the start of this book and his reminiscing as a child, living free and exploring the great outdoors, and then stumbling upon an elephant! But like many other reviewers have mentioned, towards the end it got very science-y / waffly / went off on tangents and had me thinking "just get to the point already!" I love reading about elephants and elephant behavior but if that is what you are looking for, there are better books out there (in my opinion) than this one. I did love reading about the Knynsa though and got a little thrill when it touched briefly on the forest wood cutters - who'd I'd read about in Circles in a Forest by Dalene Matthee (another great book on elephants!).

Amanda says

So far I am impressed. This is a book that I am reading for my bookclub (who generally pick heavy literature) so I always enter a book selection with much trepidation. However, I marvel at how engaging this non-fiction book about the history of the elephants is. The author is very lyrical. I will report back after finishing the book!

Stormy says

This is a most informative, heart rending, and yet hopeful book about elephants. The anecdotes of elephant encounters from his childhood and young adulthood are magical, descriptive and full of love for the creatures. A good book.

Jane says

While beautifully written, this book was more about Watson's personal journey and the development of his ideas than it was about elephants, which was my main interest in reading it. The book is rich in detail and fascinating anecdote about elephants, but presented in a way that you must read and find them like treasures rather than having an organized set of chapters that might lead you directly to them. A map of the regions Watson describes so wonderfully would also have been welcome, along with an evolutionary timeline.

Anna says

It was lovely, imaginative and interesting at the beginning, but by the end, I felt too bogged down by all the science, so the story was sort of fragmented and clunky, rather than smooth, like it was at the start.

Counsel182 says

Watson writes a very fine and timely narrative-- given the recent abhorrent slaughter of Cecil the lion--about elephants weaving in childhood memories with scientific and historical facts that made for enjoyable reading. He does however stray from the path--if you will--when he talks towards the end of the book of these possible "supernatural" aspects involving these marvelous animals.

Steve says

More a personal meditation on than a strict natural history of elephants, author Lyall Watson traces back his interest in them to a free-roaming childhood on the South African Cape coast of a couple of generations ago. His concern is not only with the elephant itself but also our perceptions and interactions with them both in reality and in thought. He compares the additional sensory powers that elephants and other animals possess to our own. He also examines the ability of the elephant to survive as a species despite our devastating impact upon them. An entertaining read for the lay reader and naturalist alike.
