

The Book of
HOPE

JANE GOODALL
and **DOUGLAS ABRAMS**

with **GAIL HUDSON**

A
SURVIVAL
GUIDE
for
TRYING
TIMES



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To Mum, Rusty, Louis Leakey, and David Greybeard

—JANE GOODALL

To my parents, and to Hassan Edward Carroll and all who
struggle to find hope

—DOUG ABRAMS



(JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE/BILL WALLAUER)

An Invitation to Hope

We are going through dark times.

There is armed conflict in many parts of the world, racial and religious discrimination, hate crimes, terrorist attacks, a political swing to the far right fueling demonstrations and protests that, all too often, become violent. The gap between the haves and have-nots is widening and fomenting anger and unrest. Democracy is under attack in many countries. On top of all that, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused so much suffering and death, loss of jobs, and economic chaos around the world. And the climate crisis, temporarily pushed into the background, is an even greater threat to our future—indeed, to all life on Earth as we know it.

Climate change is not something that might affect us in the future—it is affecting us now with changing weather patterns around the globe: melting ice; rising sea levels; and catastrophically powerful hurricanes, tornadoes, and typhoons. There is worse flooding, longer droughts, and devastating fires that are breaking out around the globe. For the first time, fires have even been recorded in the Arctic Circle.

“Jane is almost ninety years old,” you may be thinking. “If she is aware of what is going on in the world, how can she still be writing about hope? She is probably giving in to wishful thinking. She is not facing up to the facts.”

I am facing up to the facts. And on many days I admit that I feel depressed, days when it seems that the efforts, the struggles, and the sacrifices of so many people fighting for social and environmental justice, fighting prejudice and racism and greed, are fighting a losing battle. The forces raging around us—greed, corruption, hatred, blind prejudice—are

ones we might be foolish to think we can overcome. It's understandable that there are days we feel we are doomed to sit back and watch the world end "not with a bang but a whimper" (T. S. Eliot). Over the last eight decades I have been no stranger to disasters such as 9/11, school shootings, suicide bombings, and so on, and the despair that some of these terrible events can elicit. I grew up during World War II, when the world risked being overrun by Hitler and the Nazis. I lived through the Cold War arms race, when the world was threatened by a thermonuclear holocaust, and the horrors of the many conflicts that have condemned millions to torture and death around the globe. Like all people who live long enough, I have been through many dark periods and seen so much suffering.

But each time I become depressed I think of all the amazing stories of the courage, steadfastness, and determination of those who are fighting the "forces of evil." For, yes, I do believe there is evil amongst us. But how much more powerful and inspirational are the voices of those who stand up against it. And even when they lose their lives, their voices still resonate long after they are gone, giving us inspiration and hope—hope in the ultimate goodness of this strange, conflicted human animal that evolved from an apelike creature some six million years ago.

Ever since I began traveling around the world in 1986 to raise awareness about the harm we humans have created, socially and environmentally, I have met so many people who have told me they have lost hope for the future. Young people especially have been angry, depressed, or just apathetic because, they've told me, we have compromised their future and they feel there is nothing they can do about it. But while it is true that we have not just compromised but stolen their future as we have relentlessly plundered the finite resources of our planet with no concern for future generations, I do not believe it is too late to do something to put things right.

Probably the question I am asked more often than any other is: Do you honestly believe there is hope for our world? For the future of our children and grandchildren?

And I am able to answer truthfully, yes. I believe we still have a window of time during which we can start healing the harm we have inflicted on the planet—but that window is closing. If we care about the

future of our children and theirs, if we care about the health of the natural world, we must get together and take action. Now—before it is too late.

What is this “hope” that I still believe in, that keeps me motivated to carry on, fighting the good fight? What do I really mean by “hope”?

Hope is often misunderstood. People tend to think that it is simply passive wishful thinking: I hope something will happen but I’m not going to do anything about it. This is indeed the opposite of real hope, which requires action and engagement. Many people understand the dire state of the planet—but do nothing about it because they feel helpless and hopeless. That is why this book is important, as it will, I hope (!), help people realize that their actions, however small they may seem, will truly make a difference. The cumulative effect of thousands of ethical actions can help to save and improve our world for future generations. And why would you bother to take action if you did not truly hope that it would make a difference?

My reasons for hope in these dark times will become clear in this book, but for now let me say that without hope, all is lost. It is a crucial survival trait that has sustained our species from the time of our Stone Age ancestors. Certainly, my own improbable journey would have been impossible had I lacked hope.

All of this and more I discussed with my coauthor, Doug Abrams, throughout the pages of this little book. Doug proposed the book as a dialogue similar to that of *The Book of Joy*, which he had written with the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In the chapters that follow, Doug serves as the narrator, sharing the dialogues that took place between us in Africa and Europe. With Doug’s help, I am now able to share with you what I have learned about hope throughout my long life and study of the natural world.

Hope is contagious. Your actions will inspire others. It is my sincere desire that this book will help you find solace in a time of anguish, direction in a time of uncertainty, courage in a time of fear.

We invite you to join us on this journey toward hope.

Jane Goodall, Ph.D., DBE, UN Messenger of Peace



Reaching across the nonexistent barrier once thought to divide us from the rest of the animal kingdom. (JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE/HUGO VAN LAWICK)

I

What Is Hope?

Whisky and Swahili Bean Sauce

It was the night before we were to begin our dialogues. I was nervous—because the stakes were high. The world seemed to need hope more than ever, and in the months since reaching out to Jane to ask if she wanted to share her reasons for hope in a new book, the subject of hope had been uppermost in my thoughts. What is it? Why do we have it? Is hope real? Can hope be cultivated? Is there really hope for our species? I knew my role was to ask the questions we all wrestle with as we experience adversity and even, at times, despair.

Jane is a global hero who has traveled the world for decades as a messenger of hope, and I was eager to understand her confidence in the future. Equally, I wanted to know how she had sustained hope during her own challenging and pioneering life.

As I was eagerly and anxiously preparing my questions, the phone rang.

“Would you like to come around for dinner with the family?” Jane asked. I had just landed in Dar es Salaam, and I told her I would be delighted to join her and meet her family. It would be a chance not just to meet the icon but to see her as mother and grandmother; to break bread; and, as I suspected, to sip whisky.

Finding Jane’s house is not easy, as there is no real street address. It is down a number of dirt roads and next to the large compound of Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania. I was afraid I might be late as the taxi tried unsuccessfully to find the right entrance in the tree-covered neighborhood. The red sun was descending quickly and there were no streetlights to guide us.

When we finally found the house, Jane greeted me at the door with a warm smile and wide, penetrating eyes. Her gray hair was pulled back in a ponytail, and she wore a green button-down shirt and khaki pants, which looked a little like the uniform of a park ranger. On her shirt was a logo for

the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) with the symbols of the organization: a profile of Jane, a chimpanzee knuckling on all fours, a leaf for the environment, and a hand for the humans that she has come to realize need protection along with the chimps.

Jane is eighty-six, but inexplicably she doesn't seem to have aged very much since she first went to Gombe and graced the cover of *National Geographic*. I wondered if there is something about hope and purpose that keeps one endlessly young.

But what stands out most is Jane's will. It shines from her hazel eyes like a force of nature. It is the same will that first moved her halfway around the globe to study animals in Africa and has kept her traveling for the last thirty years. Before the pandemic, she was spending more than three hundred days a year lecturing about the risks of environmental destruction and habitat loss. Finally, the world is starting to listen.

I knew that Jane liked her evening whisky and had brought her a bottle of her favorite, Green Label Johnnie Walker. She graciously accepted it—but later she told me I should have bought the cheaper one, Red Label, and donated the extra money to her environmental organization, the Jane Goodall Institute.

In the kitchen, Maria, her daughter-in-law, had prepared a Tanzanian vegetarian meal. There was coconut rice served with a creamy Swahili bean sauce; lentils and peas with a hint of ground peanuts, curry, and coriander; and sautéed spinach. Jane says she cares nothing about food, but I can't say the same and my mouth was already beginning to water.

She placed my little gift on the counter next to a giant, four-and-a-half-liter bottle of Famous Grouse whisky. Jane's adult grandchildren had gotten it for her as a surprise, and they explained that it was so much cheaper to buy in bulk and would surely last for the time she would be with them. Her grandchildren live in the house in Dar es Salaam where Jane moved when she married her second husband, though in those days most of her time was still spent in Gombe. Now Jane spends time in the house only during her short twice-a-year visits to Tanzania and only for a few days at a time, as she also goes back to Gombe and other towns in Tanzania.

For her, an evening tot of whisky is a nightly ritual and an opportunity to relax and, when possible, toast with friends.

“It all started,” she explained, “because Mum and I always shared a ‘wee dram’ every evening when I was at home. So we went on raising a glass to each other at 7 p.m. wherever I was in the world.” She has also found that when her voice gets really tired from too many interviews and lectures, a small sip of whisky tightens the vocal cords and enables her to get through a lecture. “And,” said Jane, “four opera singers and one popular rock singer have told me that this works for them, too.”

I sat next to Jane at the outdoor table on the veranda as she and her family laughed and told stories. The thick bougainvillea surrounding us almost felt like a forest canopy in the candlelight. Merlin, her eldest grandson, was twenty-five years old. Years earlier, when he was eighteen, after a wild night with friends he had dived into an empty swimming pool. He was left with a broken neck, and the injury had caused him to change his life, to give up partying, and, like his sister Angel, follow his grandmother into conservation work. Jane, the understated matriarch, sat at the head of the table, her pride clearly evident.



With my family in Dar es Salaam. Left to right: grandson Merlin; his half brother Kiki, son of Maria; my grandson Nick, half brother to Merlin;

granddaughter Angel; and my son Grub. (JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE/COURTESY OF THE GOODALL FAMILY)

Jane put mosquito repellent on her ankles and we joked that the mosquitos were not vegetarians. “Only the female sucks blood,” Jane pointed out. “The males just live off nectar.” Through the eyes of the naturalist, the bloodsucking mosquitoes were simply mothers who were trying to get a blood meal to feed their offspring. That didn’t quite change my dislike of these historic foes of humanity, however.



Angel is working with our Roots & Shoots program and Merlin is helping to develop an education center in an ancient remnant forest near Dar es