

SIGVARD BERGGREN

FREEDOM FOREST

*Translated from the Swedish by
Evelyn Ramsden*



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Big Game

THE grass was covered with hoar frost down in our valley, sheltered by the mountain ridge behind it. At this early hour of the morning the sun could only be seen as a warm sheen through the forest on the mountain tops. The later autumn tints grew warm above the steep inclines although they are mostly fir trees there.

Simba was always at his best, full of good humour and play, in these early frosty mornings. His mane had now begun to appear and most people thought him fully grown already. His playfulness had become a little tiresome to me as he did not, of course, realize that he was growing larger every day. Life was so wonderful when we set off up the mountains, Simba in front of me, behind me, and all round me, in spite of my protests and my 'no—no's'. But he was so happy that I did not like to protest seriously and I was knocked down once or twice before we began climbing towards the precipitous rocks.

After we had climbed for a short time Simba would be tired and would have to rest before we went on. At first I thought these pauses meant that he was sulky and did not want to follow me any longer, but I soon realized that a lion has a very small lung volume, and also poor powers of endurance. If I let Simba rest even for a few minutes he would then come immediately when I called, but

if he had not been allowed to rest he paid no attention to my calls at all.

These pauses were of value to me also. Not only because they gave me time to breathe but because I could then take advantage of the lion's renewed energy by hanging on to his mane and sometimes even on to his tail up the steeper parts of the mountain. This was not a very respectful way of treating the King of Beasts but at any rate it was helpful to me and Simba did not object. On the contrary, if I loosened my grip he stopped and waited until I caught hold of him again. But when he tired he stopped suddenly and if I tried to make him go on, or hung on to him during these rest pauses he objected strongly. Sometimes, however, the rocks were so steep that I was forced to keep my hold on him when he stopped to save myself from slipping down a few yards. Simba's way of shaking me off might have been terrifying if we had not grown so close together during this last year. If I did not leave go at once his growl would turn into a roar, and he would open his mouth wide in a dreadful gape. Then his jaws would descend towards my other arm, which was trying to move its grip from his mane to the edge of the rock, and I felt his breath and the vibrations of his roaring. At one time I would have thought that as soon as the lion sunk his teeth into my poor fumbling arm, my bones would crack, but I think so no longer. If I took no heed of the warning of his roars or of his terrifying teeth, but continued to keep a steady hold on his mane, he would sink his teeth into my other arm, but only so that I just felt them. He left very slight marks. Then he would growl a little and turn away his head while I clung to the edge of the cliff still keeping a steady hold on his mane. In this way we began to behave towards each other in the way that all lions do; in the primitive manner of children.

I crept up against the rock wall and looked out across the valley. We had climbed pretty high by now and as most of the leaves had



fallen our house could be seen quite plainly. There was a light in the kitchen window, for Celestine had just begun her cooking and it was not really light as the sun would not reach over the top of the mountains for another half hour.

Simba growled a little, and then came over to my part of the ledge. He settled down beside me panting a little, then he also began to look down at the house far below us.

I half lay beside the lion, and laid my left arm right across his neck. Then I slid down a little so that my chin rested on my arm. We had sat like this many a time before, but this particular morning was one of the most lovely there had been. I do not know whether Simba realized its beauty but he lifted his head as usual and looked away towards the blue mountain tops on the other side of the lake. When he lifted his head I also had to lift mine otherwise I would simply look into a mass of fur.

There we lay on the rocky ledge together. Simba always seemed to be fascinated by this wonderful view. Ridge upon ridge growing bluer and bluer in the distance.

Miles of savannah growing blue towards the horizon, the green mountains of Africa and the reddish dried-out river beds help the withered acacia bushes to put life into the desert landscape. Perhaps the lion dreams instinctively of the bush landscape where he was born or perhaps it is an innate satisfaction to him that he, as it were, holds sway over the landscape around him.

I drew my fingers through his mane, and was immediately answered by a toss of his head and an absent-minded lick over half my face. Then he returned to his sphinx-like attitude gazing across his domain. I too continued to dream.

Mile upon mile of savannah growing blue towards the horizon.

My Animal Family

Great herds of gnus, zebras and antelopes. Dust rising around a herd of buffalo and the silhouettes of giraffes against the thorny acacia bushes.

All this only five years ago. It is terrifying that a civilization that is the result of decades of culture in other parts of the world should be forced on Africa in only a few years. Five years ago great herds of animals, and now, in the same districts, mostly whitened bones.

I remember a lioness. She had three cubs. Her throat had been cut through by the steel wire with which she had been snared. She was still alive and the flies were following the air stream in and out of her mouth. She was not able to get food for her cubs. The game-warden shot her and gave her cubs food. Possibly the cubs survived.

Areas now under cultivation by the natives are encroaching on the grass plains, and, as a result, the animals kill the natives' cows to get food. Naturally, the natives retaliate by putting out snares for the animals. Perhaps the game-warden had not had time to shoot the lioness who needed food for her cubs, and so she went after the natives' cows. As a result they put out snares to catch her. Nobody was to blame. We humans are crowding out the animals. What will happen when we have pushed them out entirely?

I remember another snare round the neck of a rhinoceros in the Sudan. My Sudanese friends were very upset for the rhinoceros must have come from Uganda. It did not matter at all to the rhinoceros, but it did matter to the African in Uganda or even perhaps in the Sudan, who had to find money for his steadily increasing family, and his bicycle for which the Greek or Indian businessman now demanded payment.

There is money to be made from the rhinoceros, at any rate by Indians on the coast strip between Kenya and Tanganyika. They can smuggle them to the Far East—or perhaps not necessarily so

Big Game

far and can get a good price for the pulverized horns. For this is an aphrodisiac for older men who want to make their wives as happy as possible. Pure superstition, says the medical profession, and are no doubt right. But that does not matter to the Indian whose parents were imported by the Whites into East Africa as coolies to work on the railways and do other jobs which the Whites could supervise but not carry out alone. The coolies were generally much happier in East Africa than in India and their descendants had a much higher standard of living and were good businessmen so that, by degrees, they took over all the money matters in East Africa.

And cultivation proceeded almost as quickly as in India. More money was needed for the car and all the other things that the white man had. And so to obtain money for the car the 'brown' man sold to the 'black' man who also wanted to live like the 'white' man or at any rate like the 'brown' one. But the 'black' bought his bicycle on credit and then found it difficult to pay, for he had also to pay for his children. So both the 'brown' man and the 'black' man needed extra income and therefore they killed the rhinoceros, that remains of an ancient antiquity, and let the vultures take all except his horn. The rhinoceros had to die and they may well die out altogether as a species. Humans need living room, money and still more living room.

Simba gave me a push and I awoke from my dreams. The lion got up and went to the edge of the rock, looking down the almost precipitous rock wall. Then he came back and lay down beside me again.

This had been the sort of morning when a man feels deeply and remembers much. The rocks around me caused me to remember

My Animal Family

other rocks that were surrounded by close thorny bush. That was in 1955, but the problem was still the same. Living room for humans as against living room for wild animals.

PART TWO

My Animal Family

Including a lion, lioness, leopard, cheetah,
rhinoceros, hyena and several monkeys



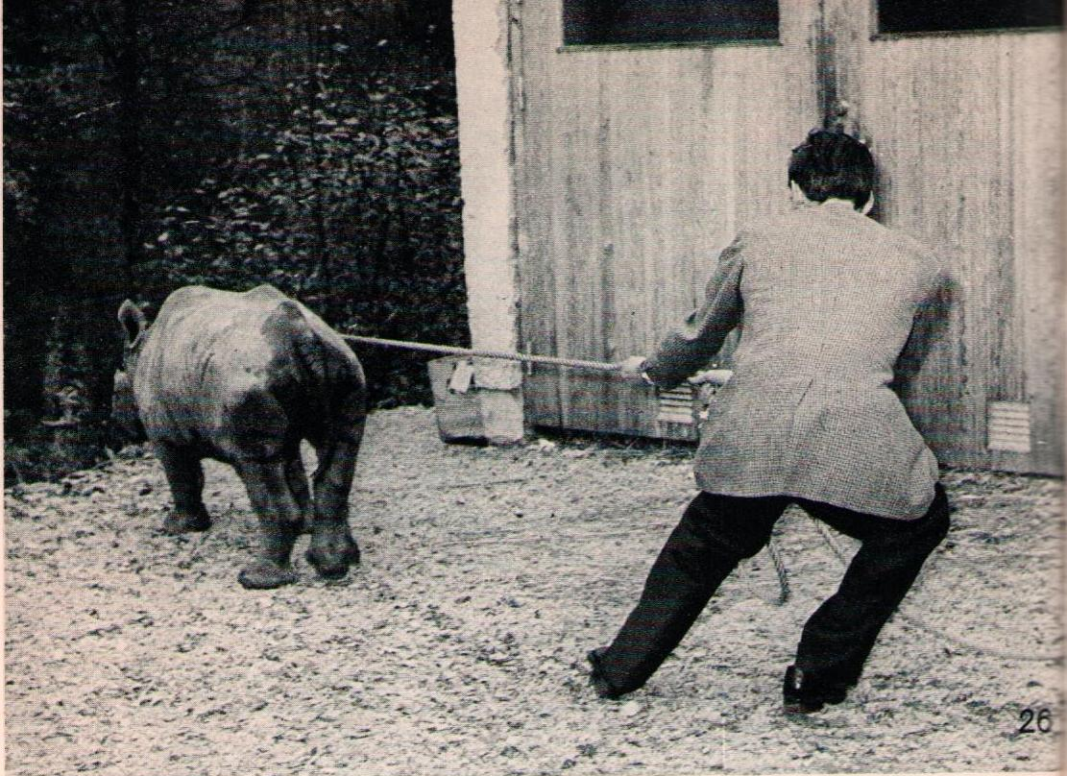
My Animal Family

cat-tribe, sleep came slowly and followed by deep sighs. I have many a time envied that method of falling asleep.

The monkeys were quite a different matter. Although monkeys on the whole are not considered to have much intelligence and their attitude to the world around them cannot always be called very sensible, ours apparently had the ability to take in quickly the difference between an ordinary evening and Christmas Eve. They noticed it at once and their reaction was a mixture of an irritating desire to touch everything and inquisitive anticipation. We were therefore able to keep them with us throughout the evening, and, strangely enough they behaved better than they usually did.

When we had eaten our Christmas Dinner, the boys' eyes began to shine with excited expectation. The time for the distribution of the presents had come at last. To the children this was naturally always the most important part of Christmas Eve. All the uncontrolled commercial propaganda which has nowadays superseded the valuable and spiritual message of Christmas, has affected the children who have now an entirely wrong idea of this holy festival. We have always tried to counteract this in them by setting aside time for a serious talk about the real message of Christmas sometime during Christmas Eve, and we have always tried to make them feel that it is very important to make others happy. For this reason we had told them that the idea of Christmas presents has developed so that we may show in a practical way that we are trying to do things for others. Without giving them a serious sermon we tried to make them realize how pleasant it is when we are all good friends together and how we should always try to be kind and understanding other people's needs.

Unfortunately, Toto and Titti paid no attention to this little talk. In their very simple philosophy of life, they held the view that whatever had been honestly obtained could be honestly kept. With their antecedents it was not therefore very strange that they paid no



attention whatever to our little talk about peace and goodwill among men.

When the Christmas presents had been duly distributed and our three boys had begun to open their parcels the monkeys seemed to come alive. They had each been given their own little parcel of special nuts and their cheeks were now bulging making them look as if they had mumps. Therefore, they were not in the least hungry, and it was not because they were looking for food that they went from boy to boy. They also wanted to see what came out of the parcels. It was only out of sheer curiosity as to their behaviour that we allowed them to stay on while all these delightful things were going on. As the mounds of paper increased the monkeys had to jump higher and higher in order to move about. Little Titti was the first to give in. She settled down under the tree, her hands resting on her well-filled stomach. Toto steered a cardboard box in front of him by putting his head into one corner and paddling away with his arms and legs as quickly as possible. As he reached the tree he let go of that box and tried to get hold of another. Titti tried later on but was not as successful as Toto and got stuck between the legs of a chair and the wall. She grew extremely angry and scolded Lars, my son, as he did nothing to help her. At last, Titti crept on to Celestine's knee completely exhausted and was asleep in a few moments.

Toto fought on for a time but ended up by spitting out one nut after the other from his chin bags and then began chewing desperately so as to get down more nuts than his stomach could hold. It was amusing to watch him as he pushed at the outside of his cheek with his knuckles so as to eject a nut into his mouth. If he did not succeed at once he began a boxing-like action, giving short, quick blows on his cheek to loosen the wretched nuts. But just before Toto fell asleep on Rolph's shoulder we saw that his stomach was completely full as an even stream of well-chewed nuts

My Animals at Home

'S.A.S. a flying Noah's Ark'. That is what the papers wrote when I returned from my last journey. A number of the young animals captured during the savings operations in the Embu district were too small to be allowed to go free again, so I brought some of them home with me to become new members of the family at Tesseryd.

So here I was back again in Sweden and the animals looked as if they were going to feel at home with us and, above all, with each other. My dog, Bill, was playing happily with the hyena, the leopard and the rhinoceros. The monkeys had an added companion in Chakula, a little baboon who promised to be a real character. Chakula means 'food' in Swahili and is very indicative of some of the little baboon's weaknesses.

The only one of the new animals who strangely enough did not really wish to stay with us was the cheetah. 'Sitaki' means 'I don't want to', so the cheetah was christened 'Sitaki'. It was not so strange that we had not been able to make friends with Sitaki in spite of the fact that so-called hunting leopards are said to be easy to tame and usually very trusting towards human beings. For even down in the camp in Africa this cheetah came across a side of human nature which, unfortunately, did not help to create trust. A cheetah can produce a spitting sound which is almost like a shot, and the sound, which is actually only a sign of fear is made entirely

My Animal Family

in self-defence. Our boys in the camp thought it exceedingly funny. As soon as they got anywhere near Sitaki they would clap their hands vigorously so as to make him produce it. I did all I could to stop them but when we were out in the bush during the day hunting for rhinos the boys were at home in the camp and quite uncontrolled. When clapping their hands had no effect they pushed sticks into the cheetah's cage to infuriate him. The result was that they knocked out two of the poor animal's teeth. As a matter of fact these have grown again, for they were his first teeth, but there were other things that cannot be repaired as easily as teeth, and in this case it was the animal's trust in human beings.

Before I went away many people had told me that it would be certain death to go in to the lions after I had been away from them for a couple of months. Actually, I felt a little apprehensive myself when I went in to greet them for the first time after my return.

Simba was now three years old and almost fully grown. Fatma, his mate, was almost two. They were splendid examples of their kind, and when I say that it is not from a wish to boast of the result of my experiment but rather from a father's pride. But, as I have already said, it was a little strange going in to them immediately on my return from Africa, where I saw again and, indeed, recognized in myself, the great respect for wild animals felt by the human race in that continent. And here I was going in to see them both, and Simba after all had been born free in the South Sudan.

Before I opened the door leading into the lion yard I stood for a time chatting with them both in the way that Simba at any rate had understood before. He growled and came violently towards the fence when he heard my voice. Fatma stayed a little farther away.

What should I do now? Everyone had told me that it was madness to go in to them after my long absence. However, I liked them so much that it was very difficult for me to stay outside. We were absolutely alone, the lions and I. All was calm and peaceful

around us. I opened the first gate and shut it after me, then I very carefully opened the inner gate. Both the lions were standing close up to it.

I had not taken more than one step forward before Simba was beside me. The lion rose up on his hind legs and his head was at least a foot above mine. Then he threw his paws around me. I was almost bent double with the weight and was forced to roar a 'No, No'. But Simba wished me no harm. He sank down in a sitting position, still closely pressed against my body and with his paws around me. Then he began to lick me all over my face. And while licking me he went right through the whole range of the language we used to each other. Deep bass notes blended with soft miaowing. My ribs almost gave way when Fatma came up from the other side. I managed to get her away but she continued to lick my hand; Simba did not release me for a long, long time. I had, very tactfully, to make him understand that I wished to be released for he has an incredibly rough tongue and he might well have injured my face if I had allowed him to go on. Then I sat down with the lion beside me.

I sat there looking out over the valley while my fingers strayed through Simba's rough mane. He growled his contentment and Fatma moved carefully nearer to smell my trousers. At that moment my heart was full of humble gratitude that I had been able, in spite of a few months' absence, to retain the trust of these great beasts of prey. As long as I made no mistakes I need not fear that they would make any.

When I sat there with my arm around Simba I saw Fatma's smooth, soft fur beside me, and I remembered another lioness.

I saw her in Africa with a gaping wound round her throat where the steel rope had cut into her. She was only one of many such examples of all the poor beasts the natives capture with snares.

Hyenas are supposed to be very unpleasant animals but either

My Animal Family

our Jambo is an exception or else hyenas are generally misunderstood. Jambo has a sense of humour and his joy in life is boundless. His small, alert bear-dog-squirrel eyes beg, and at the same time tempt, a man to devote himself to him. He became as tame as a dog, played like a dog and with a dog—and also with a leopard. Jambo is very fond of his playmates.

They were out and about with me the whole winter. I brought them up in the same way as I brought up Simba, and it has been successful every time.

There was only one event that made me a little anxious. It was towards spring and I had had some men helping me with various carpentering jobs. One of them happened to drop a plank. I was not out there at the time but one of my boys came in and told me that Jambo had been frightened by the bang and had rushed off into the forest.

I went out into the yard and towards the valley and shouted. But no Jambo came. I called Bill, our collie, and reckoned that he could help me look for the hyena. Bill put his long nose to the ground and off we went into the forest. It was obvious that the dog was trying to trace Jambo. Time passed and we went farther and farther into the forest, and I grew more and more anxious. Jambo had never been as far as this alone before. After a mile or two we emerged out of the forest and walked towards the built-up area which links up with the Bramhults district. I hoped no-one had seen the hyena. Bill smelt about eagerly and at last we reached—a nice little bitch.

I will not repeat my opinion of Bill or the words I used! We went back into the forest. But it was, of course, like looking for a needle in a haystack and I became extremely worried. I already saw headlines in the papers. 'Hyena loose in the forest round Borås. Dangerous beast of prey who attacks humans if it cannot get food.'—and so on.

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Bill and I emerged on to a swamp. We were now far away from all civilization and I began to resign myself to the thought that I was in for a sticky time.

Suddenly I saw him. A grey, spotted, wet hyena covered with clay, who came bounding over the swamp towards me. He was obviously delighted that he had at last found Bill and me.

While I patted Jambo I realized how it had happened. When he was frightened by the bang of the falling plank he rushed off into the forest and hid, probably not very far from the house. But when later on he saw the dog and me going off, the hyena became alarmed and began to look for us. Thank goodness Jambo is a better bloodhound than our long-nosed Bill, who only runs after ladies! I felt tremendously relieved when, after about half an hour, we were all three safely at home again.

Chui loved to climb trees, as do all leopards. I think that he had climbed every birch tree in the grounds outside our house. It was wonderful how tame he had become. He crept up onto my knee and caressed me just as an ordinary cat does and he often lay at my feet as I wrote. It was only a pity that he, like Simba, was so fond of chewing mats.

It was strange that our little girl, Tittelina, was the first to receive friendly advances from Sitaki, the hunting leopard. Tittelina was only eighteen months old but she was quite used to all our other animals, and was not in the least impressed by Sitaki's growls. One day while Celestine sat talking to the leopard outside the net round Sitaki's enclosure, Tittelina stumped resolutely forward to the net and laid her little hand against it. The hunting leopard stopped growling and took some careful steps in her direction. My wife was sitting quite close and was prepared to snatch the child away if the leopard was at all aggressive. Sitaki approached the child carefully, and she continued to keep her hand against the net. When he was close up to it the leopard stopped and stood quite

still, then he slowly lifted up one of his front paws and laid it against Tittelina's hand. There they stood for a few moments, the child and the leopard with paw pressed against hand. Then Sitaki lay down at the child's feet and began to purr in a contented way, and Tittelina babbled away, quite overjoyed.

In this way the leopard showed plainly that he was not frightened of the little girl, and also that he was very anxious to get into contact with somebody. The holes in the net were not big enough for either the child or the animal to get hand or paw through them, but the leopard certainly did not wish the child any harm. Thus, Tittelina was able, within a few minutes, to break down more of the barrier of distrust than either my wife or I had managed to do in a month. Sitaki was still rather suspicious of adults, but we had now got to the stage when we were permitted to caress him.

I had, however, strictly forbidden Tittelina to go near Chui, the real leopard. There is a great difference between hunting leopards and ordinary leopards. Chui could not be depended on in the same way as Sitaki, although the former was very much tamer than the latter.

Many people consider that it is practically hopeless to tame a real leopard and that is possibly true. Often enough I have been tempted to agree with this and give up trying to tame Chui, but now, four months after I had returned to him, and although he had just about trebled his weight, I could caress him almost as much as I wished, and allowed him to follow me up into the kitchen and to my study.

The leopard and Bill have always got on splendidly together. They go out with me for walks in the forest round our house. It seemed as if Chui liked snow as much as Simba and I never have to take a chain or any sort of a rope with me when I am out with the leopard. He follows me just like the dog and both of them jump and play together until the snow whirls around us all. The worst is, however, that Chui is always very interested in examining an open

stove which is out in the yard, and after he has examined it he looks like a black panther. I am thankful to say that we can bath him.

Jambo liked to be everywhere and in everything. He would follow me down to the post box each morning, and if he happened to lag behind a little he would get up such a speed to catch me up that I could scarcely see his legs beneath him. If he had to pull up suddenly he did so by sliding along with his 'chin' to the ground for a few yards. I almost think that the hyena was quicker than our collie, and Bill was certainly not a slow mover.

Tittelina and Jambo became good friends almost at once. The child could pat the hyena and play with him without causing us the slightest anxiety. If some people think this strange, and we expose our children to great risks I would point out that, of course, in the beginning we were tremendously watchful, and even now we naturally do not allow the little girl to be out alone with any of the animals—with the exception of the chimpanzee. Frankly we were more nervous that our dog would snap at Tittelina than that the hyena would do so. The more notice we took of Bill the more he wished to be in the centre of things, and could not stand competition. The other animals enjoyed our companionship but they had not the same tendency to jealous feelings as the dog. This is, of course, due to the fact that dogs are more or less the product of constant companionship with human beings.

The chimpanzee, Pia, and Tittelina were practically inseparable. Their mid-day nap was quite a problem as they could not then be together. Both of them howled at the top of their voices, though in different tones of voice! The chimpanzee and the girl were just about the same height but Pia was very much stronger and had once or twice shown signs of wishing to act as Tittelina's protector. If strangers came on a visit or anything else caused the chimpanzee anxiety, she ran forward and threw her arms round the girl and cried aloud for help. As a matter of fact, it was quite amusing to see

Tittelina and Pia in the kitchen (Pia wears nappies when she is in the house). Both 'the children'—as we called them—find it equally difficult to leave things alone, and they taught each other all sorts of mischief. Sometimes warnings having failed, it ended in Mum or Dad catching the sinner in question and giving her a good slap on her behind. Whether it was the chimpanzee or the child that was slapped the result was always the same. With a howl the little delinquent would rush into the arms of the other and there they would sit with their arms round each other, both looking extremely hurt.

Our little monkey, Titti, fell violently in love with the young baboon, Chakula. The baboon was still so small that there was no great difference in size, but anyhow Titti's estimate of appearances was never particularly well developed. The chief fact was that they liked each other and Chakula seemed to enjoy Titti's petting and fussing enormously.

During the winter Pia was always dressed. Both Tittelina and Pia had the same sort of overalls, white, that zipped up in front. We had gloves for Pia's hands but it was much more difficult to get shoes that fitted Pia's feet, and it ended with the chimpanzee wearing gloves on her feet too.

As a final example of the peace that reigned between the various characters in our home I would mention that it often happened that Tittelina and Pia tobogganed together. Our big boys had a proper bob-sleigh that could be steered. The children were sometimes allowed to borrow it when the boys helped them to pull it along. It went at full speed down the little hill that led to the lions' recreation yard. Tittelina used to steer and Pia held on as best she could. On one side of the sleigh ran Bill and on the other Jambo. Thus the hyena also enjoyed playing with our little ones.

I have already said that Kifaru, our rhinoceros, became everybody's favourite. At first he greeted all who dared to come near him with strong and warning snorts. But after a few days we

My Animals at Home

realized that he did not wish us any harm and it was not long before both of our boys and Tittelina were able to pat him. We realized also that Kifaru's attacks were on the whole mostly pure show, for if we sat still the attack did not develop and finished with Kifaru lifting his head with a little whine to see if we had any bread or food to offer him.

I brought the animals back in September and as it was unusually mild Kifaru was allowed out several times a day for exercise. After a very short time he followed me without either a rope or a chain. He became so tame that he began to come after me into the kitchen. We had never meant to allow this, but it was not very easy to stop almost two hundred kilos of rhinoceros who had made up his mind to get into the kitchen! It naturally ended by Kifaru being given his food in there, and then, of course, he wanted to come in every day. So Kifaru became everybody's pet and Celestine quite altered her opinion about these thick-skinned animals of whom she was always so afraid in Africa (when we were there, of course, the rhinoceros had legitimate provocation to chase us away). Kifaru loved us to scratch him in the folds along his front and back legs. Then after a time he would lie down and roll over almost on to his back so that we could tickle his stomach also. He had a marvellous appetite and consumed masses of hay, carrots and other oil-containing vegetables.

If we hid ourselves Kifaru would begin to whimper, making such pitiable noises that it seemed incredible that it could come from such a large animal. It almost sounded like the whimperings of a small child.

We were all delighted and thankful that even a rhinoceros could become so tame and devoted to us here in Sweden. It therefore came as a great shock to us when, after a few months, sores broke out on Kifaru. It had actually began with a sore on his hind quarters which we thought had come from scraping himself against

My Animal Family

something, but then several other sores appeared. I called in a veterinary surgeon and he consulted other specialists in thick-skinned animals. But nothing could explain the sores that eventually appeared all over him. These openings in his skin were frightening, for they resembled those I had seen on other rhinos shot by poisoned arrows in Africa. I also remembered a report to the Game Department in Nairobi that arrow poisoning could remain just beneath the skin for a long time, and then, quite suddenly, for some reason or other, come into contact with the blood. After that anything could happen.

About two weeks after the time that the sores began to appear on his skin Kifaru died. Two weeks can be a very long time. Celestine and I watched over the rhinoceros practically night and day and Kifaru's last days was one of the most unhappy periods in our lives.

Many people wonder how these animals, which are considered typically tropical, can live in Sweden and even go out of doors in winter. I can only answer that from my own experience with African animals in Sweden, together with my work stretching over several years in equatorial Africa. My experience of 'tropical animals' in Sweden has been confined mostly—but not altogether—to the lion. For example, Simba, my lion is living through his third winter in Sweden, Fatma, my lioness through her second. All the documentary material I have obtained during these three winters in film, pictures and observation, point to the fact that a lion can not only be easily acclimatized to a colder climate, but even seems to thrive there and thoroughly enjoy it. Simba used to lie down on his back in the snow and throw snow over himself with his paws and if it were 10–15 degrees of frost he would rather be out than in. He was easily able to get from his recreation yard into his warm, dry 'bedroom' by means of a long passage, so that he could choose whether he would prefer to be in or out.

My Animals at Home

My experience with hyenas and leopards are at present comparatively new, but point quite clearly in the same direction.

It is probably true that many of the animals which we consider as typical of the tropics, are 'tropical animals' because there is no longer any room for them anywhere else. There were lions in Europe long ago and there are still tigers in Siberia. Not so many decades ago there were lions in North Africa and South Africa, and in the Atlas Mountains north of the Sahara it can be very cold at night, but now the North African Berber lion, as well as the South African cape lion (considered by some as the most splendid and beautiful of all the species) have been entirely destroyed. We humans can be pretty effective when our own interests are at stake and now there are only mixed descendants of these extinct types of lion left in some of the Reserves.

Leopards and several other animals have been seen very high up in the cold regions of the snowclad mountains, Mount Kenya and Kilimanjaro. Elephants have also been seen on heights where there are several degrees of frost.

As far as lions in equatorial Africa are concerned, it must be admitted that they are evidently plagued by the heat during the day. So they often sleep then and do not come to life until the cool of the evening. Lions moved to rather colder latitudes often change their habits immediately, become day animals, and sleep straight through the night. But as I have already said there is no life room for these wild animals anywhere except in and near the central parts of Africa.

With all this I naturally do not mean to say that Sweden is idyllic for the African fauna. It is not to prove this that I have brought my animals to Sweden with me. But with reference to what I have said before, I consider that it is no longer a mistake to create a refuge for a number of animals who, as far as my own charges are concerned, would have gone to a certain death or to something worse in the form of captivity.

My Animal Family

I am glad to have been able to help, up to a point, in ascertaining that several 'tropical animals' *can* live in a colder climate. (As a precaution against the destruction of certain species it might be possible to create a large 'African' Reserve somewhere in central Europe.)

Then it is, of course, obvious that we ourselves are intensely fond of our animals and they are fond of us. We and our animals together can help to get the human race to reconsider its attitude to 'wild' animals. No longer is it a case of saving ourselves from wild animals, but of caring for them—yes—even saving them from us.

PART THREE

Dark African View

The position of animals there. Verbal pictures of
an animal world on the verge of tragedy.

Rhino Hunt

THE Rupingazi River flowed slowly through the dense, virgin vegetation below our camp. My own tent was only five or six yards from the river. A tangled mass of feather-palms and branches from the undergrowth hung out over the river so that it wound its way along as if through a green tunnel. Some long-tailed monkeys expressed their annoyance at the chattering of my typewriter, and a little leopard cub lay at my feet, satisfied and happy after its morning meal. Behind my tent a couple of almost half-grown lion cubs were playing. This was the old Africa that I remembered from Martin Johnson's stories and Frank Buck's films. This was the Africa of freedom and adventure, but it was now overshadowed by the thought that we were here to save that part of the animal world that still remained.

About sixty per cent of the rhinos we had captured or had seen so far had been wounded by poisoned arrows. It was almost impossible to get any idea of how many have been actually killed, but it was quite a usual sight to see poor wounded animals dragging themselves along with crater-like sores filled with flies. Often the poison is too old to be effective or the arrow has not penetrated in the right way, so the animal does not die but the flesh round the poisoned arrowhead rots slowly away leaving large wounds. They are sometimes so deep that the intestines and tissues can be seen moving with every step the animal takes. If the poison is too old

the arrow point remains incapsulated in the flesh. We had seen rhinos with up to nine arrows sticking out all over the body. Often both calves and females were wounded—sometimes only the female rhinoceros, but that means as a rule that the mother's milk dwindles and the calf becomes so weakened through lack of nourishment that it can scarcely continue to live. The other day we 'captured' a calf that was so weak that it could hardly stand. The wounded mother got away only with difficulty.

In five years' time more than three-quarters of the animals in the district have been killed. Bones of buffalos and the skulls of rhinos give a depressing picture of the tragedy.

Anyhow, it was good to have left the Congo and political problems. Originally, I was going to try to film and eventually capture a couple of 'white' rhinos (which by the way are now extremely rare) in the border districts between the Sudan and the Congo, but the development in the Congo made this impossible.

At any rate we were now out after rhinos, but of the 'black' variety. Through the Game Department in Nairobi I had been put in touch with Ken Randall, who is capturing as many kinds of animals as possible and transporting them to where they still have some security from the poisoned arrows of the natives.

Our big Ford truck slowly nosed its way through the overgrown territory. Ken Randall was driving and Lois Webb and a Turkana boy stood behind him. I stood between Lois and the Turkana boy who each held bamboo spears about four yards long with a thick lasso rope fixed along the whole length of the spear so that the lasso loop hung down farthest out at the point of the bamboo. Behind the three of us we had a thick plank as a support for our backs reaching to our waists. Behind us again stood six of the other boys ready to fasten the lasso rope as soon as possible when we had got hold of a rhinoceros. For this object several very

strong posts with bolts had been brought and fixed along the side of the old army truck.

I had fastened a cushion from my Landrover on to the top of the driver's hut as a support for my film camera. Yesterday we had captured a half-grown rhinoceros and I had regretted bitterly that I had not tried to film the capture, but today I would try to use my camera instead of getting my hands sore with the rope.

One of our scouts had come in early this morning and had reported that he had seen tracks of a fully-grown rhinoceros, probably very large, so we decided to go out after him. All of us were swearing, each in his own language, at the difficult surface over which we were driving and at intervals someone would shout 'aragos' which means a particular large hole in the ground and a possible death trap.

Hour after hour we continued the search. We had lost all tracks of the rhinoceros, but he was somewhere in the neighbourhood. The truck growled its way along through dried-out river ravines and thorny brush, and it was not a question of ordinary thorny bushes. If we did not bend down low enough and in time, we could easily get our faces scratched to bits by great thorns for they grow like excrescences on a sort of round, black, hollow swelling on the branches of the bushes and each hollow 'fruit' is filled with small black ants. There were masses of 'fruits' on each bush, and many bushes with millions and again millions of virulent, biting ants.

The sun shone down and the dust from the desert-like landscape penetrated everywhere. Several Impala Antelopes fled in panic when our car tossed down bushes and acacias to get through. My whole body had grown dead tired trying to soften all the bumps and bangs we had to endure. Sometimes we would go on for as long as four days in a stretch, from early morning until late at night, without seeing a single animal. But today we knew there



was a fully-grown rhinoceros in the neighbourhood. The scouts could not have made a mistake over the fresh tracks.

'Kijaru' (rhinoceros), the Turkan shouted and the car leaped forward. We could see a grey colossus away there in the bush, and for a moment there was complete chaos as the car pushed through a tangle of thorny branches. We threw ourselves down on our knees while the branches and the ants rushed past above our backs. We were flung around, with only one thought in our heads—to find something to hold on to so that we did not break our necks.

Then we were out again on the open plain. I managed to stand up and get my film camera into position while the planks banged at my back as the truck raced forward over the rough ground. Ken had forced the rhinoceros out of the bush and we saw the animal properly for the first time. We could not have wished for a more splendid rhinoceros than this one. He weighed more than two tons. His front horn did not point straight forward as is so often seen, but was bent upwards in a splendid bow.

The rhinoceros galloped forward with lava dust whirling round him, but the truck slowly caught up on him. Some acacia bushes were heaved out of the way and for a few seconds the whole truck was up in the air. The rhinoceros quickly changed his direction and when Ken swung after him I only saved my camera with difficulty. We were now parallel with the animal who was panting violently, and Lois stretched out the bamboo rod in order to get the lasso round the animal's head, but missed. Then we were in the bush again. The camera kept me from bending down in time, and I got a slash on my left cheek. I could feel the blood running down my neck.

Now we were again out on the plain. The rhinoceros was beginning to tire and we quickly caught up on him. At the same time I was able to get the camera going again, and Lois made a new at-

tempt with the lasso rope. This time he succeeded.

With wild shouts and half in panic the boys began to fasten the rope onto the poles, while Ken carefully lessened the speed so as to act as a brake on the violently careering animal. As soon as the rhinoceros felt that he was caught he turned round and attacked us. He came straight at the car with his head down and snorting wildly. There followed a thunderous report as his horn hit the truck and he rushed away stretching the rope and then galloped round and round the car so that we were nearly cut in half by the stretched rope. Only at the last minute were we able to save ourselves behind the planks as the rope passed over us. The rhinoceros attacked again before we managed to get up and during all this violent shaking I wondered for a moment which was the most important, the camera or my ribs.

The Turkan rose up into a standing position when the animal attacked us again but I could not imagine how he succeeded in getting his lasso rope free from the other rope. But before the rhinoceros had had time to increase his speed for a new attack the Turkan had got the lasso round the animal's head. But that did not hinder the rhinoceros from attacking again. The three-ton heavy car was almost lifted from the ground when his front horn hit it under the left mudguard. For a moment everything was in chaos again, but then the rhinoceros stood still, for he was tired and needed to rest for a moment. That moment just gave us time to fasten the other rope also.

We began to breathe again when the rhinoceros suddenly tore himself backwards. One rope slid off him and he rushed round the car in a wide bow with the last rope stretched to the full. Then he attacked us again and one of the poles was split in two when he came up against the side of the car. A violent pull and the thick 30 mm. rope was dragged off and before we were able to regain our balance the car was away again, but the rhinoceros had an advan-

tage and set off down towards the river ravine. If he had reached it we should have lost him.

With a heavy groan from the over-strained car we managed to pass and force the animal onto open ground. The boys screamed like madmen and the tension rose as we struggled to get the lasso ropes in order again. Lois got his rope round the rhinoceros and then the same battle began. But it was easier to brake him now for he was tired. He had plenty of fight left in him. He rushed at us like a steam engine and the steering wheel was dragged out of Ken's hands when the beast hit the right front wheel. The noise from the exploding front tyre stopped the animal for a few seconds and in that moment the Turkan had time to slip his rope round the rhino's head. One last attack and he remained standing there with the ropes stretched and fastened to the two poles. We jumped off carefully and tried to rope his legs. I can scarcely describe what happened now. I could only hope that my film camera was functioning properly.

After almost an hour's fight, ropes were finally fastened round each leg of the rhinoceros and an hour later he was lying on the ground. Six hours after we had first seen him he lay carefully roped on a wooden sledge-like contraption.

The sun had gone down before we had dug a hole deep and wide enough for the back of the second lorry to be level with the ground when it was let down. Steel ropes and stakes were broken once or twice before we managed to get the monster on board, but three hours later we were at home and could begin the last part of the day's work. The lorry was backed down into a hole similar to the one we had dug earlier, and then the rhinoceros was dragged to the contraption we had already prepared of poles and tree trunks fastened together. The opening was securely barred and after that the dangerous work of liberating the animal began. At midnight he was at last free. The thick tree trunks in the enclosure almost

gave way when the two-ton rhinoceros did all that he could to get out. Then he gave up.

His mighty head could be glimpsed in the light from the petroleum lamps. He was standing completely still. I remained alone looking at the animal through a little chink in the poles. And while I stood there in the darkness I had a vision of a great, grey creature of antiquity—a living fossil captured in order to be saved. In a week the rhinoceros would be set free in a district which was still free from poisoned arrows and rifles. But how long would he be able to remain there? That we did not know. When I returned to my tent I heard the nightly concert of frogs and night birds, and in the distance the sound of hyenas.

A Gloomy Present — and Future?

KILIMANJARO rises above the shining port wing of my Dakota plane, and the snow-covered Kibo Peak gleamed eighteen thousand feet up over the rain-slashed East-African savannah. This is Africa in 1962, and I am again on my way home after a journey round most of this continent.

Up there on the top of Kilimanjaro, Tanganyika's Freedom Torch ought by now to be burning clearly and showing the way for peaceful co-existence between black, white and brown Africans. But Julius Nyerere has just resigned and insecurity has spread to the 'garden of peace' Dar-es-Salaam. The charming words about peaceful co-existence, said only a few weeks ago, have already lost their significance.

Poor old tortured Africa. I am now gazing over the fast-greening savannah, but which looks, in various directions, as if it had been ploughed over by a gigantic plough. The rain came after eighteen months of terrifying drought. It was not the violent rain that is usual in the tropics. No, it was violent cascades of water that came tumbling down in immense masses, so that where there had before been small dried up streams, rushing rivers were brought into being, which carried away with them roads and bridges. People were drowned, people were isolated, people were starved and given help from the air. Poor old tortured Africa.

to. Moses, David and I have believed in it all at one time, that was only seven short years ago, as we sat there exhausted after having filmed the Masai dancing after the circumcision ceremonies. Moses is a Masai, David an Englishman and I a Swede. We recorded on our tape recorders our ideas about tribal customs, and above all about water for cattle and wild animals. The Masai had speared a rhinoceros a few days before and David had just come across it. The spirit among us was wonderful. Moses and David, each from different worlds, were going to help to protect both cows and rhinos. But it has not turned out like that. It was not Moses' fault nor the fault of the Masai. There is something called politics which has its headquarters in Nairobi.

Nowadays, they build houses called skyscrapers in Nairobi. The Masai, who are the rightful owners of most of the ground in Kenya, build their houses of clay and cow dung. The Masai are no doubt happier in their huts than the Europeans are in their skyscrapers in the centre of Nairobi, and above all, very much better off than the Kikuyus who walk about below and at present cannot be happy either in skyscrapers or in huts. I am often very sorry for those people who come in between.

We did not think much about all this seven years ago, but now Mammon has come in between and it does not matter at all if Moses and David want to help to protect the animals. For now many wish to drive in fine large cars, and there are very few who think that the sun helps to create a pleasant existence as long as a man has no great pretensions, as long as he is content with what nature provides. When he is not content with what nature provides, he must raise his eyes upward to the skyscraper and be prepared to perspire freely while climbing upwards even perhaps falling and killing himself in the process. While climbing, especially if a man is conscious that he may fall and kill himself, he has very little time to think of others besides himself. *This is the situation today.*

A Gloomy Present—And Future?

We cannot expect the Africans to take over and carry out the care of wild animals when they can scarcely look after themselves.

In order to help these people who are climbing up to the skyscrapers from their clay huts, the International Congress for the Protection of Wild Animals in Arusha, Tanganyika, was called together. The political representatives of all African states that were independent, and of those about to be free, were invited to meet and discuss the question of whether the wild animals in Africa were 'to be or not to be'.

I will not go into details. The judgment regarding the value of the conference, as well as the ability to understand its value, lies surely in the hands of the historians. But that the conference was the sign of a real need is indisputable. It was just as indisputable that the future leaders, for example, in Kenya, simply did not attend the conference. They had other things to do.

My old friend Ken Randall who was so active in capturing rhinos and moving some of them to safer districts has been devoting himself to the thick-skinned animals in Uganda—elephants and rhinoceros.

In the West Nile Province in Uganda, there were in 1956 about 260 rhinos. Ken Randall could only find 27 in the same district in 1962.

