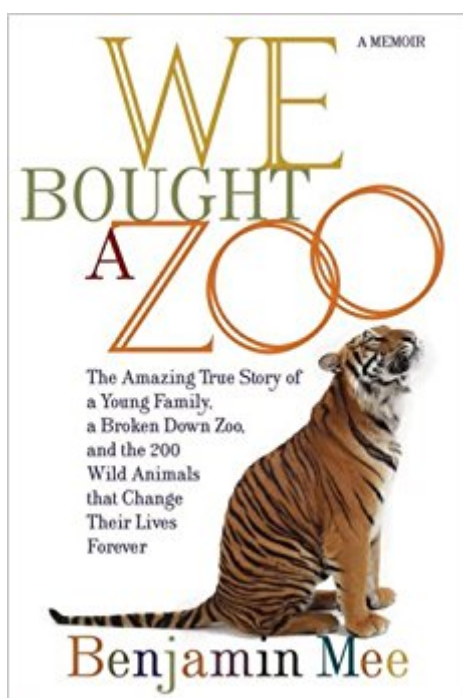


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We Bought A Zoo: The Amazing True Story Of A Young Family, A Broken Down Zoo, And The 200 Wild Animals That Change Their Lives Forever



Synopsis

In the tradition of "Marley & Me" comes an unforgettable memoir about the mysteries of the animal kingdom, the power of family, and the triumph of hope over tragedy in this chronicle of the Mee family's purchase of the Dartmoor Wildlife Park, a dilapidated zoo in the English countryside. Weinstein Books

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Between his wife Katherine's diagnosis of glioblastoma and her quiet death less than three years later, Mee (The Call of DIY), his siblings and his mother bought a bedraggled zoo, complete with decaying buildings, a ragtag group of animals, an eclectic staff and a reputation that had been quickly going to the wolves. In this occasionally charming (to his children: Quiet. Daddy's trying to buy a zoo) but overly wordy book, Mee writes about caring for his dying wife and their two young children, dealing with Code Red emergencies (when a dangerous animal escapes its confines), hiring staff, learning about his new two- and four-footed charges and setting his sights on refurbishing his zoo into a sanctuary for breeding and raising endangered animals. Mee tends to meander with too-long explanations for one-sentence points, and the awe he feels about each individual animal is repetitive. Coupled with Britishisms that are never explained and a curious lack of varied wild animal stories, this book that was obviously meant to make animal lovers roar with pleasure will only make them whine with frustration. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

When writer Mee's father died, his mother needed to sell the house and move to a smaller place so the entire family decided to buy a zoo. Mee's sister had seen an advertisement for the sale of the Dartmoor Wildlife Park, a small zoo in Devonshire in the southwest of England. After a long series of negotiations, licensing snafus, and the inevitable family conflicts, the author, his mother, and his brother moved into the park's rundown house and started running a zoo. Though they owned the grounds and its 200 animals outright, they still had to pay 20 staff members, feed the animals, and upgrade the grounds. During the first week, a jaguar escaped, and the author and his brother began to realize what they'd gotten themselves into. Through eradicating the plague of rats, clearing out years of rubbish to reveal usable buildings, and battling with banks for operating expenses, the author and his staff gradually pulled the zoo back from the brink of closure. The emotional appeal of the zoo's rescue is wonderfully limned in Mee's practical, good-humored prose. --Nancy Bent

I enjoyed this detailed account of one man's family's acquisition of a failing zoo. It is considerably different from the movie: the family doesn't stumble upon the zoo (it's planned); it takes place in the UK, not the US, and there's no big romance. Also, the kids of the family have a far lesser role in the book than the movie. That being said, it's still a good read. Detailed are the specific struggles financially and with government authorities to make the zoo a viable working operation. Also, we see countless examples of Benjamin Mee learning the animal/zoo business through actual trials he and the zoo had to face. Moreover, he relays to the reader the human element of his wife's illness and the variety of characters who comprised the zoo personnel. Enjoy it.

Loved the movie! Loved the book! Truly inspiring book about the real story of a family dealing with tragedy and overcoming to find joy again.

I've always loved inspiring true stories. If you're looking for an inspiring, but also gripping and educational story, "We Bought a Zoo" is the story for you. It is inspiring because it helps you see the bright side of the things; it is gripping because you want to find out how Benjamin will finally overcome all the difficulties, the harshest being his wife's death; it is educational as it hints at a few controversial topics about zoos. But above all, Benjamin gives a huge example of respect and consistency to his family and collaborators, and to readers.

3-1/2 stars: I jumped between reading this on kindle and listening to the audiobook. The reader was really good on the audiobook. The story was interesting with lots of funny anecdotes about getting a zoo ready for business. There were some slow parts with details I could have done without (for example, the in-depth description of the various dental work done on several animals), but most of the detailed anecdotes I found quite interesting. There were some very sad parts dealing with the illness of Benjamin's wife Katherine. Overall, it was an enjoyable read and I am looking forward to watching the movie they made based on it.

I thought the book was dull and boring. I usually like the book better than the movie. I was disappointed in the book. The characters were not developed. You learned nothing about any of them.

If you're looking to read this book based on the movie, you could be disappointed. Now, I 'Liked' the story because it was an entertaining read and the characters, and there are quite a few, makes the story more complete. It has the chapters that will make you laugh, perhaps cry, and certainly make you wonder how they did it.

Excellent story of what sounds like a dream for most but totally real for the ones that live it. The book will consume you whole it lasts

I found this story touching yet very vivid in the writing as each animal became a challenge or a friend, the barn and the places made and remade for the animals, his constant love and caring for his wife as she slowly died, it showed that if your dream is big enough you can achieve anything with peace, love and sharing. M from MI.

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