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Mahale: A Photographic Encounter with Chimpanzees

Angelika Hoffer, Michael Huffman, Gunter Ziesler

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They are our closest relatives--and this large-scale, eye-opening book, with a preface by the world's most esteemed expert on the subject, opens a window onto the endlessly engrossing, sometimes dangerous, and often entertaining world of chimpanzees. This particular group lives in the forests and rolling hills of Mahale, a protected national park, accessible only by air or ferry, that runs 100 miles along the shore of Lake Tanganyika. For more than 15 years, Dr. Michael Huffman has devoted his life to studying this community, watching the families' interaction with each other and charting a range of fascinating behaviors never seen before in other chimps, from a grooming hand clasp to licking pebbles on the beach. He now guides a top photographer and biologist on a safari through this territory, where they-and we-can encounter chimps first-hand. The three combine to produce a remarkable "chimp portrait" that's an unprecedented mixture of science, art, and poetry. Aided by haikus, magnificent photographs, and charcoal drawings, Dr. Huffman chronicles the intricacies of chimp life and relationships, and the mortal danger they face from poachers. Among the cast of unforgettable characters you'll meet: Masudi, a low-ranking male who stays safely near humans during tense moments in the chimp tribe; his mother, Wantendle; and the protective, caring female Gwekulo among them. Here they are, staring out with their intelligent gazes; hugging each other, tending lovingly to their babies; snuggling into branches heavy with fruit; and swinging playfully from tree to tree. Our affinity for these mammals was celebrated in Dian Fossey's best seller, *Gorillas in the Mist*; *Mahale* will ensure they will stay forever in our mind--and spur us to help preserve the species for generations to come. *"In this wonderful traveller's journal...Angelika Hofer's expressive narration even enables us to hear the sounds of the jungle and Günter Ziesler's splendid photographs let us sense the mysterious light of the African jungle by Lake Tanganyika even from afar...Dr. Michael A. Huffman...describes isolated details from the lives of the chimpanzees. This all combines to produce a rousing adventure and a better understanding of our nearest relatives. This book should also encourage the reader to participate in the effort to ensure the survival of our severely threatened cousins."--Dr. Jane Goodall.*

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