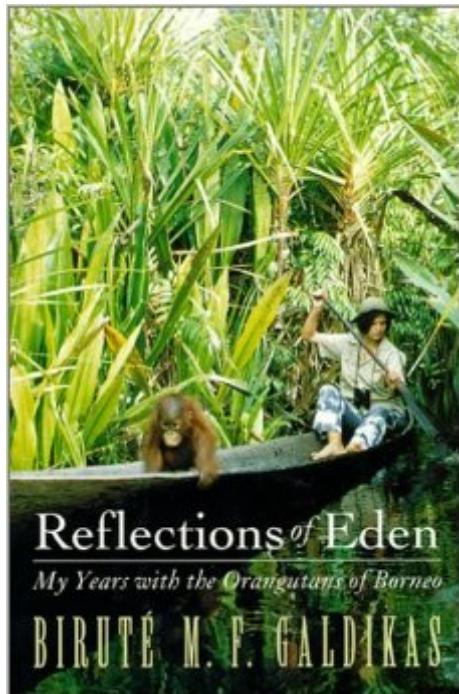


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# Reflections Of Eden: My Years With The Orangutans Of Borneo



## **Synopsis**

An anthropologist chronicles more than two decades of fieldwork in the endangered rainforest habitats of the orangutans, presenting strong arguments for conservationism and noting the striking similarities between animal and human social behavior. 50,000 first printing. Tour.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I was lucky enough to be one of Galdikas' undergraduate students in her Primate Behaviour course here in Simon Fraser University, Canada. She is very inspirational and I have great admiration for her life-long commitment to the orangutans. This book reflects this commitment and love plus adds lots of interesting facts on orangutan behaviour. I enjoyed her engaging writing style and found this book to be a quick read. Definitely a book that I would recommend to not only inspiring biologists, but to the general public as well.

The other two "angels" on their mission of Great Ape rescue were of course Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey who studied respectively Chimpanzee's and Mountain Gorillas.(Fossey we know died for her cause). Birute Galdikas started later than the others (1971) and her Great Ape - Orangutans - were also less known and in some respects, less regarded than the others. Does Galdikas' work in Borneo and her story in REFLECTIONS OF EDEN remedy this oversight? Only somewhat as this book is as much an autobiography as it is a natural history of the "men of the forest". Galdikas' affection for her mentor Louis Leakey is obvious as is her fondness for her fellow primatologists.

"Dian, Jane Goodall, and I were family. Louis Leakey had recognized us as kindred souls and become our spiritual father." This connectedness she felt extended to the mystical. When Fossey was murdered in Rwanda in 1985 Galdikas tells us "even before I learned of her death, I knew Dian would be killed, I knew this was her destiny." It should not be a surprise to read here that a scientist that feels this way will express a high degree of passion about her subjects. All three of these primatologists at different times have talked about "my apes" and this attachment is certainly reciprocated by the Orangutans. Galdikas tells about Sugito an orphaned young male "who selected me as his one and only, his mother". Orangs are the most arboreal and reclusive of the Great Apes and this naturally provides a challenge to studying them. Galdikas has nevertheless learned more about their social behavior than any other researcher. She mixes these insights in with her own life in the jungle at "Camp Leakey" and with life in Indonesia as a whole. In this context Galdikas even recognizes that for a Third World country like Indonesia, conserving and rehabilitating the Orangutans is yet just another priority that they must effectively juggle with. With this book she continues to encourage both them and us to care.

Unlike the two other primate researchers Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey I had never heard of Galdikas when I found this book a few days ago in the bookshop. Galdikas describes in this book more than 20 years of her life with the Orang Oetans in a nature reserve in Kalimantan, Indonesia. The story is an very enyoable read and tells a lot about the way Orang Oetans live. Instead of viewing all Orang Oetans as similar she describes a lot of different individuals. She's not only studying the Orang Oetans but also tries to free captivated Orang Oetans and tries to relocate them in the reserve. The story is very well written and also very well translated in Dutch. I'm looking forward to read the books by Fossey and Goodall.

Louis Leaky hand-picked three women to conduct studies of primates in their natural habitats. Jane Goodall was sent to study chimps in Gombe, Dianne Fossy: Gorillas in Zaire, and finally Birute Galdikas was sent to Borneo to study orangutans. Having read the work of all three remarkable women, *Reflections of Eden* stands out as one of the more well-written and engrossing books. Whether or not you are interested in primates, I would recommend this book as a story of one woman's determination and personal development in the face of daunting challenges.

I bought this book on sale from online and enjoyed reading it. B. Galdikas provides powerful insight into the study of orangutans in the forests of Borneo. Although I felt that she over stressed the

important metaphors she used to explain experienced conflicts and personal desires, I cherished the real life feel of this autobiography. Birute and her twin soulmates, Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey, have something I think truly important to say about primates, environmental activism and humankind.

Birute Galdikas is perhaps not as well known as Jane Goodall (who studied chimpanzees) or Dian Fossey (who studied gorillas) but she followed a similar path at the behest of Louis Leakey in studying orangutan so in Indonesia. Her book is perhaps the best of the books by the three. I have read most and recommend it for those interested in animal societies and their behavior.

FABULOUS! Just wonderful. I thought the book would be more like a textbook but it was a reader-friendly and beautifully told story written by an AMAZING and selfless woman who has given her life to saving the incredible orangutan. Please read her story; you won't be sorry!

What Jane Goodall is to the chimpanzee and Dian Fossey was to the gorilla, Birute Galdikas is to the orangutan. I would venture to say a lot fewer people have heard of Dr. Galdikas than of the other two scientists, even though they were all sent off on their various studies by Dr. Louis Leakey and all work with great apes. However, orangutans are mostly solitary creatures who live their lives in the trees of Indonesia, rather than social land-based animals who lend themselves to photo opportunities. As Dr. Galdikas mentioned (paraphrased), "being able to observe an orangutan without it dropping branches on her (or attempting to uproot a dead tree to fall in her direction) was their sign of accepting her." The book, "Reflections of Eden", is not so much a tale of orangutans as it is Dr. Galdikas' autobiography. Of course, considering how much of her life consisted of researching orangutans, and rescuing / rehabilitating captive ones, the book may just have well be about orangutans "once the author made it to Indonesia, there was no separating the two." In addition to the inspiring tale of her life, and of the orangutans of Borneo, the book has some particularly interesting glimpses into the lives of Dr. & Mrs. Louis Leakey, Jane Goodall, and the late Dian Fossey "all of whom played an important role in Dr. Galdikas' life." At 400+ pages, this is not one of those light, ghost-written autobiographies typical of celluloid, music, and sports stars. However, it is a great investment of time to read from beginning to end. RATING: 5 stars..

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