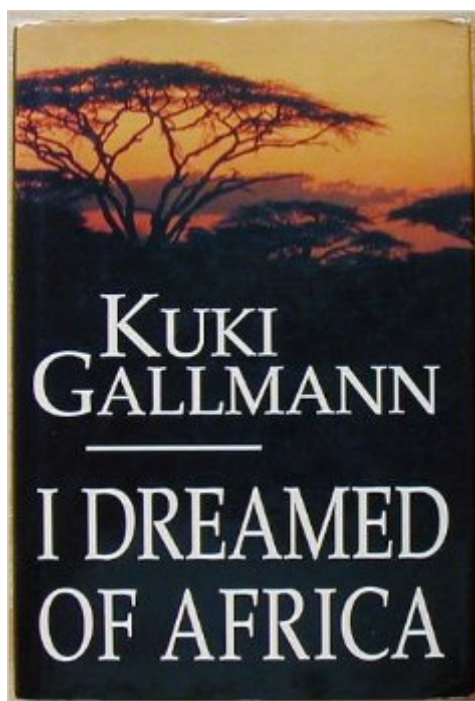


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# I Dreamed Of Africa



## Synopsis

At the age of 25, divorced, crippled by an accident, Kuki Gallmann left to convalesce in Kenya with her friend Paolo Gallmann, who was soon to become her husband. So begins a journey that takes her to the extremities of human experience. In Kenya she and Paolo explore lakes, desert and tropical coastline before buying a vast ranch on the Laikipia plateau. The years bring a succession of discoveries and delights, but increasingly these are interspersed with dangers and premonitions. When her life with Paolo ends as violently as it had started, Kuki is left with her 14-year-old son Emanuele, an unborn baby and 90,000 acres of Africa to look after. There follow years of recovery and hope: the birth of Paolo's golden-haired daughter Sveva; the emergence of Emmanuele from a boy fond of hunting and fishing into a youth with a love for motorbikes and girls. But Emanuele has one passion that proves fatal - snakes. The last chapters epitomize the victory of friendship, courage and imagination over the cruellest tragedies. Through her dedication to the hills, gorges, elephant herds and tribespeople of Laikipia, the devotion of her friends and the love of her daughter, the author has forged a new life for herself and founded the Gallmann Foundation - a living memorial to her husband and son, dedicated to exploring new ways of combining development and conservation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is the type of rare work that draws its readers into a whole other world by making them see and feel everything that the storyteller does. We become almost a part of the life of this extraordinary woman and her passion not only for Kenya and Africa but simply for life and living.

Each one of us dreams of some place or ideal as we grow, but few of us are fortunate or determined enough to turn those dreams into realities and go on to live them. Kuki Gallman along with her husband and children shows us what it is like to achieve and live our dreams and at what cost our dreams sometimes come. "I Dreamed of Africa" is a lyrical, magical account of one woman, her family, and the people and customs of the last continent in our world that truly has a soul. The message of this book and Kuki's continuing mission to preserve that world will stay with all who read it and they will be better for it.

I have little to add to the other positive reviews of this book; but half the reviewers seem to be criticising the author, rather than the book. While I do not deny it has faults (the fact that English is not the author's first language sometimes weakens the expression of her clearly genuine feelings) I am astonished at the resentment expressed in many reviews. Specifically, over the fact that the author happens to be a white and presumably wealthy European - as though this fact automatically makes her a hypocrite and her views and experiences less worthy... and furthermore, that this a fault of the book itself! Judge the book on its own worth, instead of making moralistic judgments about the author. Ms Gallman doesn't claim this is the ultimate African story - it is the personal story of her life, her deep love of Africa and of her friends and family, and in my opinion of her remarkably brave journey. Many reviewers seem to criticise this book for failing to be what it was never intended to be in the first place. Oh, and all the spiteful comments about the "rich white Europeans" owning airplanes!!! For God's sake, we are not talking about private luxury jets here! Clearly reviewers have completely disregarded that this is AFRICA, where people have immense properties, where it takes hours and hours to drive on dusty and dangerous roads to your nearest neighbours. How some people have gained the impression they were simply flitting about in style for their own pleasure is quite beyond me. About the only way of practical transport to most places was by plane, and it would seem these were small and often rundown planes, where people took their life in their hands each time they flew them. So please, get over the fact that most people had planes!!

This book is an autobiographical account of Kuki Gallman's life on a farm in the highlands of Kenya. On the rich backdrop of the African bush, Kuki tells of her life of adventure, including the colourful characters that became her family and friends. Most memorable in the book are her heartbreaking experiences of losing her husband and her son, these events being vividly portrayed at length. Her valiant struggle to live through these tragedies and carry on with her life lends to us a sense of hope in the face of great adversity. It would not be fair to compare this book to 'Out of Africa' and other

classic African tales, since it is more a personal account of a life rather than a literary effort. The best part of the book is clearly the chapters on the death of her son, which are terribly moving, and at times chilling in their attention to detail and their realism. A little bit of criticism: sometimes her habit of packing a lot of adjectives into her sentences can make the book a bit tiring to read, and makes her style at times a bit mannered. Overall the book is the account of a remarkable life. It is well worth reading, especially for Africa-philes.

An article in Architectural Digest led me to this incredible autobiography which in turn led me to Kuki Gallman and her magical Africa. I found the book captivating and a tribute to the human spirit. Visiting Kuki at her resort was one of the most memorable experiences of my life. Her book is truly what she represents. I still dream of Africa and its intoxicating scents, the magical wild animals that inhabit her world, the starry nights so close you feel you can reach up and touch them. My hope is to return to Lakipia and recapture the beauty of Africa. There is truly no place on earth like it.

When I first began this book, I could not put it down. However, I had to continually refer back to try to figure out what had made Paulo & Kuki go to Africa in the first place - namely what was their occupation. I also was confused to where they lived. Was it Nairobi or Ol Ari Nyiro? From what I ascertained, their lives were very privileged. The number of white friends with airplanes, and obviously nothing better to do than "tea," was amazing. I also got weary of Kuki's ramblings of "Emanuele being like Paulo in this, that, this, that way...." We got the point! What was truly amazing was the fact that she did not foresee Emanuele's death even though he had a snake factory in their home. Not just a hobby of interesting snakes, but deadly ones. I know that each of us wants to allow our close ones to attain their dreams, etc., this one is totally unnecessary in an unsupervised or occupational atmosphere. When she related that she became two people in dealing with Paulo and Emanuele's death, I felt like she used that as an excuse. She had a role to play with her "close" friends, and she succeeded. I think most weird is that she details two loves of her life after Paulo, but they just disappear in the monologues. What split them up? Also disappointing is the end not knowing what has happened to either Kuki or Sveva, just a note at the end about her beginning her diary, etc. What began as something I could not put down became something that I could not wait until it ended and it was only 311 pages.

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