

The Wauchula Woods Accord: Toward a New Understanding of Animals

Charles Siebert



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The Wauchula Woods Accord: Toward a New Understanding of Animals Charles Siebert An award-winning journalist's all-night vigil with a retired chimp performer named Roger blossoms into a whole new way to regard our fellow creatures as well as ourselves.

While researching a recent "New York Times Magazine" cover story about chimpanzees, Charles Siebert visited a retirement home for former ape movie stars and circus entertainers in Wauchula, Florida known as the Center for Great Apes. There Siebert encountered Roger, a twenty-eight-year-old former Ringling Brothers star who seemed convinced he knew the author from some other time and place. Haunted by Roger's response, Siebert takes up residence at the Center for Great Apes and, in the course of one late-night visit to a sleepless Roger's quarters, gets to the bottom of this mysterious connection between himself and his simian counterpart.

The result is "The Wauchula Woods Accord," a strikingly written, wide-ranging physical and metaphysical foray into the increasingly fraught frontier between humans and other animals; a journey that encompasses many of the author's encounters with chimpanzees and other animals, as well as the latest scientific discoveries that underscore our intimate biological bonds not only with our nearest kin, but with far more remote-seeming life-forms. By journey's end, the reader arrives at a deeper understanding both of Roger and of our numerous other animal selves, a recognition--an accord-- that carries a new sense of responsibility for how we view and treat all animals, including ourselves.

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