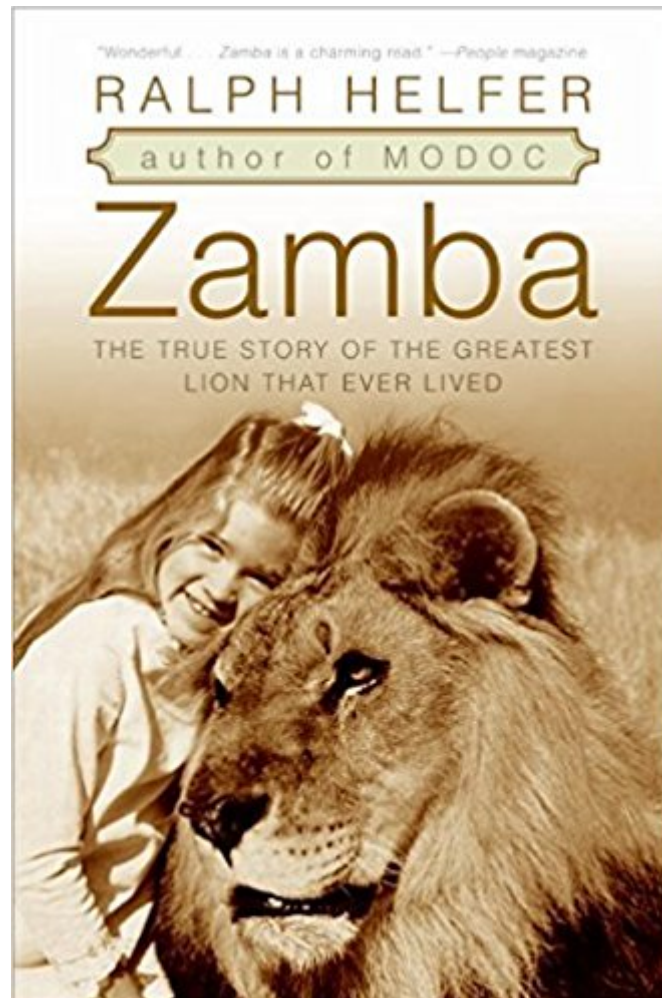




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# **Zamba: The True Story Of The Greatest Lion That Ever Lived**



## Synopsis

When Ralph Helfer, now one of Hollywood's top animal behaviorists, first began working, he was shocked by the cruelty that was accepted practice in the field. He firmly believed in "affection training" -- that love, not fear, should be the basis of any animal's development, even when dealing with the most dangerous of creatures. Then Zamba came into his life -- an adorable four-month-old lion cub that went on to prove Helfer's theories resoundingly correct. Over the next eighteen years, Zamba would thrive and grow, and go on to star in numerous motion pictures and television shows -- all the while developing a deep and powerful bond of love and affection with the man who raised him. By turns astonishing, hilarious, and poignant, Zamba is not only the unforgettable story of the relationship that Helfer would come to consider one of the most important in his life but also that of the amazing career and adventures of the greatest lion in the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Legendary Hollywood animal trainer and behaviorist Helfer captures an incredible story of love between man and lion that displays all the qualities that made his previous book, *Modoc: The True Story of the Greatest Elephant That Ever Lived*, so moving. Here Helfer is involved with the subject, which adds emotional depth to a lifelong adventure. Starting with his somewhat brutal childhood on Chicago's South Side, the author deftly develops his story of the spiritual harmony he finds in nature and the violence he sees in the film industry's use of animals. His unique bond with a lion cub he names Zamba grows into a lifetime relationship that includes countless guest stints in movies and

television shows, and leads to Helfer's development of a system of animal training "based on love, not fear," called "affection training." It "has revolutionized the way animals are trained and treated in the motion picture industry." The heart of the book is an account of Helfer's trip to Africa to assist Zamba with a starring role in *The Lion*, where the author's bond with his lion becomes a true spiritual connection that will touch the heart of any animal lover. 8 pages of b&w photos not seen by PW. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Adult/High School "From a young age, Helfer had a way with animals and an urge to work with them. After an inauspicious start as a teen helper in a Los Angeles pet store, he gradually acquired animals that movie studios used in their productions. He was the first Hollywood animal trainer to use affection rather than fear. He showed that his method worked better, and now, of course, it has become commonly accepted. He even turned an orphaned lion cub into a vegetarian for a brief period, to test a theory. Over the years, Zamba appeared in many movies and television commercials and shows, riding to jobs in the back of Helfer's station wagon, uncaged. The author reminds readers that wild animals are never thoroughly predictable and are not house pets; even Zamba surprised him occasionally, although never in a dangerous way. The special bond between these two mammals; Helfer's ideas about animal-human communication and understanding; and the many stories, both humorous and touching, make this a fascinating book." "Judy McAloon, Potomac Library, Prince William County, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

When I started this book I didn't think I would like it because Mr. Helfer spins a tale about how his lion Zamba came to be an orphan in Africa. It's a back story Mr. Helfer couldn't possibly know. The cub in question came running out of the bush and into the legs of a female visitor who happened to be a friend of Mr. Helfer who worked with animals back in America. He had always wanted a lion so his friend brought him the trusting, obviously orphaned cub who had bumped her knees in flight and then apparently crawled into her arms for safety. By the end of the book (actually - shortly after I began it) I gave the author credit for probably having theorized how the cub had become separated from its family, based on the author's own knowledge of how these things come to be. I no longer cared how the book began -- I had thoroughly fallen in love with the lion and the relationship he had with Ralph Helfer by then. It's a charming book with stories that range from humorous to insightful.

One of the most interesting things about this book to me is that it really seems authentic that he and this huge African lion truly were solid friends, regardless of everything we have been taught about people not being able to take the prey drive or wildness out of the undomesticated predator. I'm convinced Zamba was an unusual animal, a very special spirit in the beautiful body of a lion. I found the mentions of Samba's stares over the head of certain people (the witch doctor type, the blind girl who only wanted to 'see' him) to be very meaningful. All in all this was one of those books you can't put down if you love animals, lions in particular. You simply don't want it to end so you can spend more time with this magnificent creature. How lucky Ralph Helfer was.

This is a story about a friendship between a Lion and a Man. It is well written, but if you read it in hope of learning about the training methods that Ralph Helfer you will be dissatisfied. The book oozes of Ralph Helfer's love for Zamba, for what he tries to do for and with the animals, perhaps sometimes even for himself. I have left me with a feeling of being touched in my soul by Zamba. Because even though it is mostly described out of what Ralph Helfer thinks, you (I think) will feel the empathy and compassion Zamba shows his world. Perhaps you will appreciate your own animals even more and what they are capable of doing after you read this book and you should read it. So why did I not give this book 5 stars? Because it left me with some questions I think it should have been answered. I wanted to know more about how he trained Zamba? In the kindle version there are no pictures, why? I also wanted to know about the animals' cages, how big were they? What did the trainers do to enrich the animals' day? Why did he not start a short prologue explaining how the affection training is done?

Excellent book about exotic animal behavior and personalities in captivity. Interesting and enlightening information about animals used for television, movies, commercials, etc. It does matter how an animal is trained and treated when raised from birth. Those treated compassionately, without the use of fear to control them, can turn into loyal, loving companions, eager to please their owners. Those who suffer from cruel and abusive control tactics are fearful, angry, and may become very unpredictable in certain circumstances. Many animals are much smarter than we realize, and will respond quite favorably to kindness, rather than cruelty and fear-based training. Ralph Helfer proved during his time and life with Zamba, "the greatest lion that ever lived", that just as it should be between humans, living and working with exotic animals is all about relationships, mutual respect, and love. This wonderful book is certainly one I will never forget and will read again and again. Highly recommend!

I bought this book for my mother and she loves it.

Having just finished reading "Modoc" by the same author, I began reading "Zamba" with high expectations, and was not disappointed. The story of Zamba carries a purposeful message: kindness and love in dealing with all animals, especially when training them. The story of Zamba offers details from the beginnings of a baby lion's bonding with his human companion and this effective bonding carries them not only through several hair-raising adventures in Africa where they have an elongated stay while filming a movie, but through some tragic and destructive events where any possible "good" seems to be far beyond reach. As our freedoms to raise lions or other wild animals have disappeared with overpopulation and the ever-more stringent laws that humans write to "save themselves" this story gave delightful details about the author and his family living, sleeping, and playing with Zamba. I delighted in the special bed built for Zamba, to allow him to sleep with his human. The patience, loyalty, and serenity shown by Zamba throughout his life show the powerful effect of true love and the respect it brings, not only between the human and lion, in this case, but an important, written account to testify to the world. I do think there is a better world ahead, and this book gives a glimpse of it.

This is a really good book. It is not so much about a lion named Zamba as it is about how the author Ralph Helfer revolutionized the animal show business with his affection training. Ralph Helfer discusses how he always trained animals with love and respect and never with fear and injury like so many others did in that business. Of course a lion named Zamba was one of his greatest animal actors whom he trained and Ralph Helfer discusses his experiences with him at studios with other famous actors like Jerry Lewis and William Holden. The book goes into detail about how well an affection trained lion can behave—even around small children. The book is basically about Ralph Helfer's experiences at movie studios with Zamba his star pupil and the adventures they have together.

Another heart-warming true story from this animal lover.

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