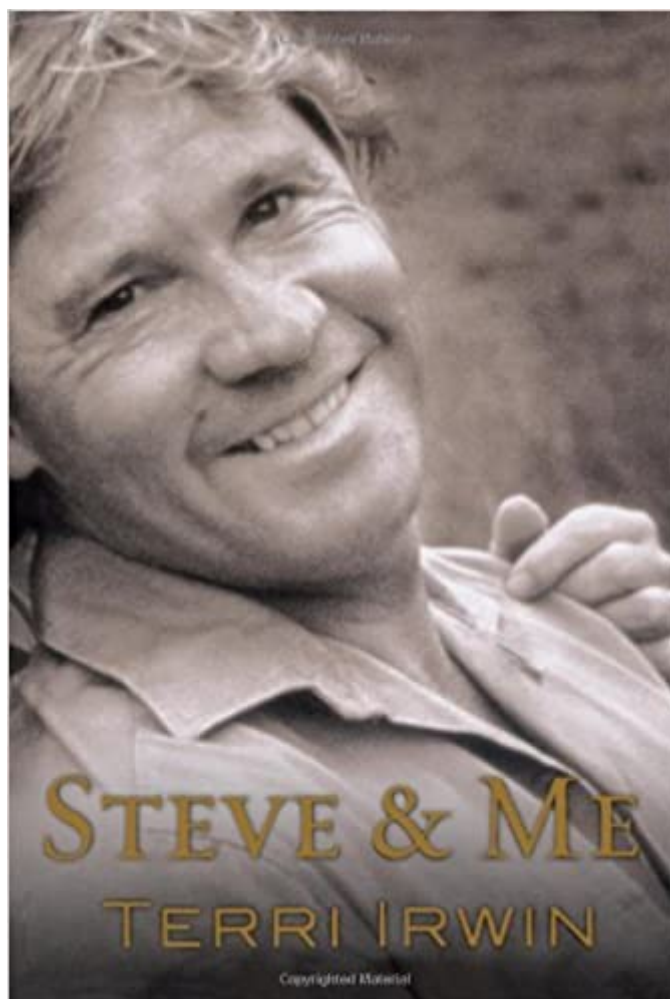


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Steve And Me: Life With The Crocodile Hunter



Synopsis

Few celebrities touched the world as Steve Irwin did. Beloved by people from all walks of life, his vast efforts at conservation continue to make a difference all over the globe. His wife Terri's commitment to carrying on his legacy is not only admirable, but inspirational to so many others who can benefit from her strength and conviction. Their story is not just one of taking a noble cause to new heights of success and recognition, it is also a fairytale love affair. When Terri, an American tourist in Australia, first laid eyes on Steve, she saw a real-life action hero. When she tried to get a date, she was disappointed to learn that his heart already belonged to another. Steve offered to introduce her to his girlfriend, whistled, and presented his best gal: a Staffordshire Bull Terrier named Sui. Later, he took Terri on the kind of date every girl dreams of--a canoe ride through the swamp at night. Terri describes the luminescent eyes of the crocodiles flashing in the beam of her flashlight in the otherwise total darkness. When Steve then confidently climbed out of the boat and into the water, she knew she would never feel unsafe again. The two married in June 1992, in Eugene, Oregon. The footage of their crocodile-trapping honeymoon became the first episode of *The Crocodile Hunter*. The two of them went on to change the world. Their hit show was broadcast in over 137 countries, reaching 500 million people, and they founded the Australia Zoo in 1992, as well as the conservation foundation *Wildlife Warriors Worldwide Ltd.* in 2002. On September 4, 2006, Steve Irwin was fatally pierced in the chest by a stingray spine while snorkeling at the Great Barrier Reef, at Batt Reef, which is located off the coast of Port Douglas in Queensland. Irwin was at the time filming his own documentary, *Ocean's Deadliest*.

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Customer Reviews

Terri Irwin is the owner of Australia Zoo at Beerwah, Queensland, Australia. She costarred with her husband on The Crocodile Hunter, as well as their spin-off series The Crocodile Hunter Diaries and Croc Files. She lives in Australia with their two children, Bindi and Robert.

CHAPTER ONE
First Encounter
The name of the zoo was the Queensland Reptile and Fauna Park. As I crossed the parking area, I prepared myself for disappointment. I am going to see a collection of snakes, lizards, and miserable creatures in jars, feel terribly sorry for them, and leave. It was October 1991. I was Terri Raines, a twenty-seven-year-old Oregon girl in Australia on an unlikely quest to find homes for rescued American cougars. A reptile park wasn't going to be interested in a big cat. I headed through the pleasant spring heat toward the park thinking pessimistic thoughts. This is going to be a big waste of time. But the prospect of seeing new species of wildlife drew me in. I walked through the modest entrance with some friends, only to be shocked at what I found on the other side: the most beautiful, immaculately kept gardens I had ever encountered. Peacocks strutted around, kangaroos and wallabies roamed freely, and palm trees lined all the walkways. It was like a little piece of Eden. After I paid my admission fee, I saw that the reptile enclosures were kept perfectly clean -- the snakes glistened. I kept rescued animals myself at home. I knew zoos, and I knew the variety of nightmares they can fall into. But I saw not a sign of external parasites on these animals, no old food rotting in the cages, no feces or shed skin left unattended. So I enjoyed myself. I toured around, learned about the snakes, and fed the kangaroos. It was a brilliant, sunlit day. "There will be a show at the crocodile enclosures in five minutes," a voice announced on the PA system. "Five minutes." That sounded good to me. I noticed the crocodiles before I noticed the man. There was a whole line of crocodilians: alligators, freshwater crocodiles, and one big saltie. Amazing, modern-day dinosaurs. I didn't know much about them, but I knew that they had existed unchanged for millions of years. They were a message from our past, from the dawn of time, among the most ancient creatures on the planet. Then I saw the man. A tall, solid twentysomething (he appeared younger than he was, and had actually turned twenty-nine that February), dressed in a khaki shirt and shorts, barefoot, with blond flyaway hair underneath a big Akubra hat and a black-banded wristwatch on his left wrist. Even though he was big and muscular, there was something kind and approachable about him too. I stood among the fifteen or twenty other park visitors and listened to him talk. "They can live as long as or even longer than us," he said, walking

casually past the big saltwater croc's pond. "They can hold their breath underwater for hours." He approached the water's edge with a piece of meat. The crocodile lunged out of the water and snapped the meat from his hand. "This male croc is territorial," he explained, "and females become really aggressive when they lay eggs in a nest." He knelt beside the croc that had just tried to nail him. "Crocodiles are such good mothers." Every inch of this man, every movement and word exuded his passion for the crocodilians he passed among. I couldn't help but notice that he never tried to big-note himself. He was there to make sure his audience admired the crocs, not himself. I recognized his passion, because I felt some of it myself. I spoke the same way about cougars as this Australian zookeeper spoke about crocs. When I heard there would be a special guided tour of the Crocodile Environmental Park, I was first in line for a ticket. I had to hear more. This man was on fire with enthusiasm, and I felt I really connected with him, like I was meeting a kindred spirit. What was the young zookeeper's name? Irwin. Steve Irwin. Some of the topics Steve talked about that day were wonderful and new. I learned about the romantic life of crocodiles. There are courting rituals between males and females, and the male crocodiles are very gentle as they nudge up and down alongside the female, waiting until she is receptive. I'd never imagined that these dinosaur-like creatures could be loving, but he explained that they were quite passionate lovers and seemed to develop real affection for each other. Affection for each other, sure, but not for Steve. I watched the still, dark, murky water erupt with an enormous ton of saltwater crocodile. The croc nearly snapped the buttons off of Steve's shirt as he neatly deposited a piece of meat into its mouth. The reverberation of the jaws coming back together sounded like a rifle report. From where I stood on the other side of the fence, I could barely breathe. I didn't know how he did it. Other topics were more familiar. "Sometimes just seeing a croc in the wild can scare the daylights out of people," he said, passing among the rows of subadult crocodiles. "But if you know to follow some simple rules, these little tackers pose no threat at all to human life." It was a situation that I'd encountered many times in the United States with predatory animals. People would frequent a boat ramp, for example. They'd come in with their catch and fillet it right at the dock, tossing the fish bones and scraps into the water. In the States, this might attract black bears, posing a potential problem for tourists. In Australia, the same practice brought the crocs into contact with humans. "If we get a report about a particularly naughty little crocodile bothering people," Steve explained, "I go out with my dog, Sui, in a dinghy. We'll capture the croc so it won't get shot." Then he described what he meant by "capture." As he told the story I was totally captivated, and so were the other zoo visitors. Maybe it was because Steve was detailing the most astonishing set of actions any of us had ever heard about, accomplished by a man who'd lived to tell the tale. "If the croc is young, six feet long or smaller," he

said, "I'll catch it by hand." By hand. I'd had to capture all kinds of wildlife in Oregon, but never anything as dangerous as a six-foot-long saltwater crocodile...in the water...in the dark...by hand. "We go out at night with a million-candlepower spotlight, shining bright across the water," he said. "That way, I can pick up the eye-shine of the crocodile. Their eyes glow bright red, right at the surface of the water. The croc thinks he's camouflaged by the darkness. He doesn't understand that my spotlight is revealing his location." Idling the dinghy, bringing it quietly in closer and closer to the croc, Steve would finally make his move. He'd creep to the front of the boat and hold the spotlight until the last moment. Then he would leap into the water. Grabbing the crocodile around the scruff of the neck, he would secure its tail between his legs and wrap his body around the thrashing creature. Crocodiles are amazingly strong in the water. Even a six-foot-long subadult would easily take Steve to the bottom of the river, rolling and fighting, trying to dislodge him by scraping against the rocks and snags at the bottom of the river. But Steve would hang on. He knew he could push off the bottom, reach the surface for air, flip the crocodile into his dinghy, and pin the snapping animal down. "Piece of cake," he said. That was the most incredible story I had ever heard. And Steve was the most incredible man I had ever seen -- catching crocodiles by hand to save their lives? This was just unreal. I had an overwhelming sensation. I wanted to build a big campfire, sit down with Steve next to it, and hear his stories all night long. I didn't want them to ever end. But eventually the tour was over, and I felt I just had to talk to this man. Steve had a broad, easy smile and the biggest hands I had ever seen. I could tell by his stature and stride that he was accustomed to hard work. I saw a series of small scars on the sides of his face and down his arms. He came up and, with a broad Australian accent, said, "G'day, mate." Uh-oh, I thought. I'm in trouble. I'd never, ever believed in love at first sight. But I had the strangest, most overwhelming feeling that it was destiny that took me into that little wildlife park that day. Steve started talking to me as if we'd known each other all our lives. I interrupted only to have my friend Lori take a picture of us, and the moment I first met Steve was forever captured. I told him about my wildlife rescue work with cougars in Oregon. He told me about his work with crocodiles. The tour was long over, and the zoo was about to close, but we kept talking. Finally I could hear Lori honking her horn in the car park. "I have to go," I said to Steve, managing a grim smile. I felt a connection as I never had before, and I was about to leave, never to see him again. "Why do you love cougars so much?" he asked, walking me toward the park's front gate. I had to think for a beat. There were many reasons. "I think it's how they can actually kill with their mouths," I finally said. "They can conquer an animal several times their size, grab it in their jaws, and kill it instantly by snapping its neck." Steve grinned. I hadn't realized how similar we really were. "That's what I love about crocodiles," he said. "They are the most powerful

apex predators."Apex predators. Meaning both cougars and crocs were at the top of the food chain. On opposite sides of the world, this man and I had somehow formed the same interest, the same passion. At the zoo entrance I could see Lori and her friends in the car, anxious to get going back to Brisbane."Call the zoo if you're ever here again," Steve said. "I'd really like to see you again." Could it be that he felt the same way I did? As we drove back to Brisbane, I was quiet, contemplative. I had no idea how I would accomplish it, but I was determined to figure out a way to see him. The next weekend, Lori was going diving with a friend, and I took a chance and called Steve."What do you reckon, could I come back for the weekend?" I asked."Absolutely. I'll take care of everything," came Steve's reply. My heart was pounding as I drove up the coast again a few days later. There was the familiar little sign, the modest entrance. And here h... --This text refers to the Digital edition.

I WAS A HUGE STEVE IRWIN FAN and cried for weeks after his death. For Terri, Bindi, Bob and Baby Bob. Wes and the gang too. Terri tells a beautiful love story, but her focus isn't simply about their lives together. NO SPOILERS, BUT...You will be truly amazed at some of Steve's other "hobbies" (Think, letting off steam). This charming, sensitive man...a man who wasn't afraid to cry, was most definitely ALL MAN! His absolute devotion to animals and conservation made him, literally, a WORLD ASSET! His death was too soon, but he somehow always knew it. He lived life to the fullest. Loved his wife, and children like no other and even almost 8 years later, my heart still breaks for Terri. My ONLY consolation is, he died a quick, probably painless death. What angered me where the massive killings of Stingrays afterwards in his "honor" THE LAST THING HE'D HAVE WANTED! This is a book I will definitely read several times, which is something I just don't do. However, Terri and I are not only the same age, we grew up less than 100 miles apart and share a love of wildlife to no end. Should Steve ever decide to come back as a ghost (No, I don't believe in them, this is tongue in cheek), it will probably be the day Bindi starts dating. The world lost a wonderful man that terrible day, but Terri is doing everything humanly possible to keep the work going, thus keeping him alive. Bindi too. CLICHE' ALERT: THIS IS A MUST READ!

Steve Irwin is my wild life hero he inspires me to be the wild life warrior I want to become in the next few years his passing still gets me every time I am with animals I always think what would Steve do I help animals every day no matter if I just feed them or play with my dog this book makes sense it's the best book take it from someone who never reads I have now read it every day since I got it two weeks ago I have not been able to stop reading I have read it probably 100 times since I got it highly recommend this book to any fan of his the only thing this book has about it is the end will make it

clear that how everyone lost the great Steve Irwin it paints a picture of what happened to him at the end it will make you emotional if just like finding out what happened did nine years ago

My daughter (5) loves Steve Irwin, and one night she was watching the movie "Crocodile Hunter" like she did every weekend. I was on my computer while she was watching it and she was so in love with everything Steve did that I thought I would try and find her some DVD's so she could watch this amazing man and the work he did. I got on and searched for the Irwin's work when I came across this book. I looked into the preview of the book on and within the first few chapters I was crying. I decided that I had to read the whole book, and bought it on the spot. When I got the book, I read it back to front within the week and as I predicted I cried. I found the story to be a beautiful love story and a great way for Terri to remember and honor her late husband Steve. This book is so wonderful I would recommend anyone to read this book. I read a few bad reviews about this book and most wanted more insight in the life of Steve and Terri, I think that this book was just right. It isn't any of our business to know every little detail, and I think she was brave to write the book after her loss. Great and wonderful book, please read!

Thank You Terri for writing this treasure of a book! As your reader I am honored and privileged to share in your and Steve's remarkable life journeys as you take your readers along on your adventures, passion and commitment to each other, your family and all of humanity by focusing on the Light of God's splendor in nature and all living creatures. My three children have grown up watching you and Steve share your knowledge and love of animals through your shows, "The Crocodile Hunter" and "Croc Files" on Animal Planet. You and Steve have inspired people all over the world, our children and generations to come, to protect and appreciate even what were once the most feared predators on earth because of your genuine ability to ignite within us the fire of desire to know and preserve more of the world around us. Thank you for sharing so many intimate details of your private lives that ordinary people can relate to from your whirlwind romance, the births of your children, how you've worked together to overcome adversity, surviving tragedy and living to the purpose of your lives to improve our world through bringing global awareness of the importance of conservation of our environment and all living creatures. It is always evident that you and Steve are motivated by love. You and Steve and your family and mates are real, everyday people teaching by example that "The Power of Love Can Change The World." You are true heroes. People all over the world share in the sadness of the physical loss of Steve Irwin AKA "The Crocodile Hunter", one of the Greatest Teachers of Our Time. Through your writing of "Steve & Me" you are helping to heal a

grieving humanity while keeping your focus on Steve's Life Mission - Conservation. Many Continued Blessings, Peace Be With You Always!

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