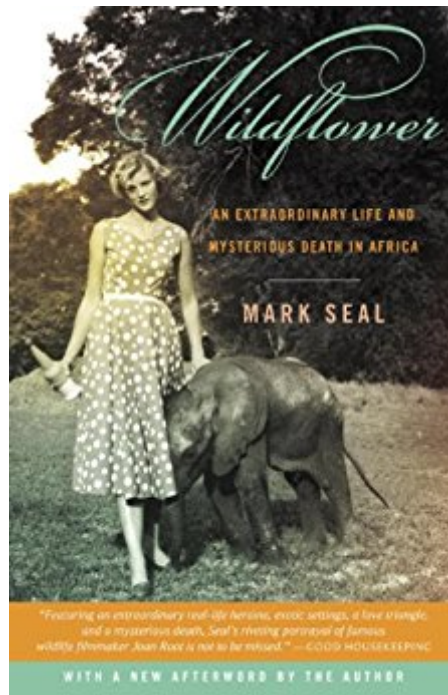




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# Wildflower: An Extraordinary Life And Untimely Death In Africa



## Synopsis

With compassion and an unswerving regard for the truth, veteran journalist Mark Seal lays bare the deeply moving, inspirational story of Joan Root, a dedicated environmentalist and Oscar-nominated wildlife filmmaker. He covers her early days in Kenya as a shy young woman with an almost uncanny ability to connect to animals; her whirlwind courtship with the dashing Alan Root, their marriage, and the twenty years of nonstop adventure and passionate romance that followed, both in Africa and around the world; the shattering disintegration of the marriage and partnership; and Joan's triumphant struggle to reinvent herself as the protector of her lakeshore community's fragile ecosystem—a struggle that would lead to her tragic death in January 2006. Joan Root dreamed of a bright future for Kenya, a country blessed with unmatched beauty but scarred by decades of colonization and a culture of corruption. She spent her life fighting to make that dream a reality. Her life ended too soon, but—thanks to Seal's meticulous re-creation, her extraordinary life lives on. • (People, four-star review)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

... to her storybook love affair, to her hard-fought crusade to save Kenya's beautiful Lake Naivasha, WILDFLOWER is naturalist, filmmaker and lifelong conservationist Joan Root's gripping life story - a stunning and moving love story featuring a remarkable modern-day heroine. After 20 years of spectacular, unparalleled wildlife filmmaking together Joan and Alan Root divorced and a fascinating woman found her own voice. Renowned journalist Mark Seal offers this breathtaking, culturally relevant portrait of a strong woman discovering herself and fighting for her beliefs before her mysterious and brutal murder. With a cast as wild, wondrous and unpredictable as Africa itself, WILDFLOWER is a real-life adventure tale set in the world's disappearing wilderness. Rife with personal revelation, intrigue, corruption and murder, readers will remember Joan Root's extraordinary journey long after they turn the last page of this utterly compelling book.

The book was a page turner even though I was acquainted with the story of the Roots from reading about them in various magazine articles. Joan Root's struggles to preserve her lake made me think quite a bit of *The Cherry Orchard* and the book raises questions, sometimes unanswerable, about the causes and solutions of African economic, political and ecological problems. While reading of the description of the crowded slums where the Kenyan flower workers lived it did make me question why a woman living alone needed 80 some acres, and some of her neighbors even more. Why proper sewage can't be provided to a community when so much money is coming in from the flower industry. Why a worker on one of the farms would never be able to afford a bouquet of roses. The author of the book in his description of the growth of the Kenyan flower industry and its effect on the ecology of the lake area where Mrs. Root lived describes a scene straight out of Dr. Seuss's book about the character who "spoke for the trees." It was possibly not the author's intention to raise these questions, and they are not popular issues. On the most recent list of countries in danger of becoming failed states Kenya has moved a little closer to the top of the list. The author of *Wildflowers* make you aware of the problems of sustainability and income raising industry. It would seem that some difficult and unpopular measures possibly need to be taken to reverse the slide into "failed state" danger. This book would be of interest to people who have an interest in adventure tales and to those who are just "green". I probably won't buy another rose from a florist and will just add them to the list of the diamonds that I can't afford, fast food hamburgers, veal, caged chickens, pork chops, bottled water etc. etc. etc.

This is a great book about the life of an amazing woman. She lived a life that I could only dream of

living. Her murder is very saddening and its hard to believe that this still goes on, even in the present day. She was strong and she knew that she had to do something to save the lake. It is sad because she was fighting for a cause that no one seemed to share but now, in 2010, the Lake is in big trouble and is drying up. It baffles me how it took this long to see what is going on, they write this article as if this is new news. I love the title "Flower Farms may be killing Kenya's lake Naivasha"...MAY BE????? Isn't that what Joan said years and years ago?[...]It is a shame that Joan was murdered and that her killers are still roaming this world and it is even worse that the cause she fought for and she died for is still not recognized as a major problem until it is too late. You would think in this day and age that something could be done to save this lake. Regardless, it is a great book and I highly recommend it. Julia Roberts is starring in the movie that is still in production but I look forward to seeing it...

This is a touching book of Africa and Joan Root, but weaved into the story are some vital items about Africa's history and a peek at the animals the movies are made about. One particularly interesting story is about the baby elephant pictured on the cover. Since other reviewers have outlined the story I will only add that the descriptions of the way Alan and Joan Root made the movies was a bonus to the book. The information in the latter half of the book about Joan's life along the lake gleaned from her letters was also fascinating. The details about her death are haunting. This is a book that will be read again in my household and I will also use the book as a guide to finding some of the movies made by the pair. I would have given the book five stars, but it did leave me with a feeling that I wanted to know more. I would have liked to have more quotes out of Joan's own writing to get more of a feel for her voice. Not that I was disappointed in the work the author did, but rather I felt the book could have been longer.

This is an interesting, though disturbing book. The first half of the book covering the adventures of Joan and Alan Root is the most readable. What they accomplished as film makers is amazing. I wish those films were available today. After Joan and Alan split up and she's living alone, I found the realities of life in Africa. Too many people and not enough resources and jobs to sustain them. It's a terrible situation.

A wonderfully written story of a most fascinating and wonderful woman who devoted herself to the preservation of wildlife and land. Without knowing this person, I grew to admire and respect her as I read of her life. How ironic for her life to end as it did as she worked tirelessly against poaching and

harming the wildlife she was so passionate about. The author succeeded in portraying to the reader the unique individual she truly was. She sought neither fame nor fortune, but simply the satisfaction she received in the causes she so passionately pursued. I highly recommended this book to any reader as it is simply too interesting to pass up.

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