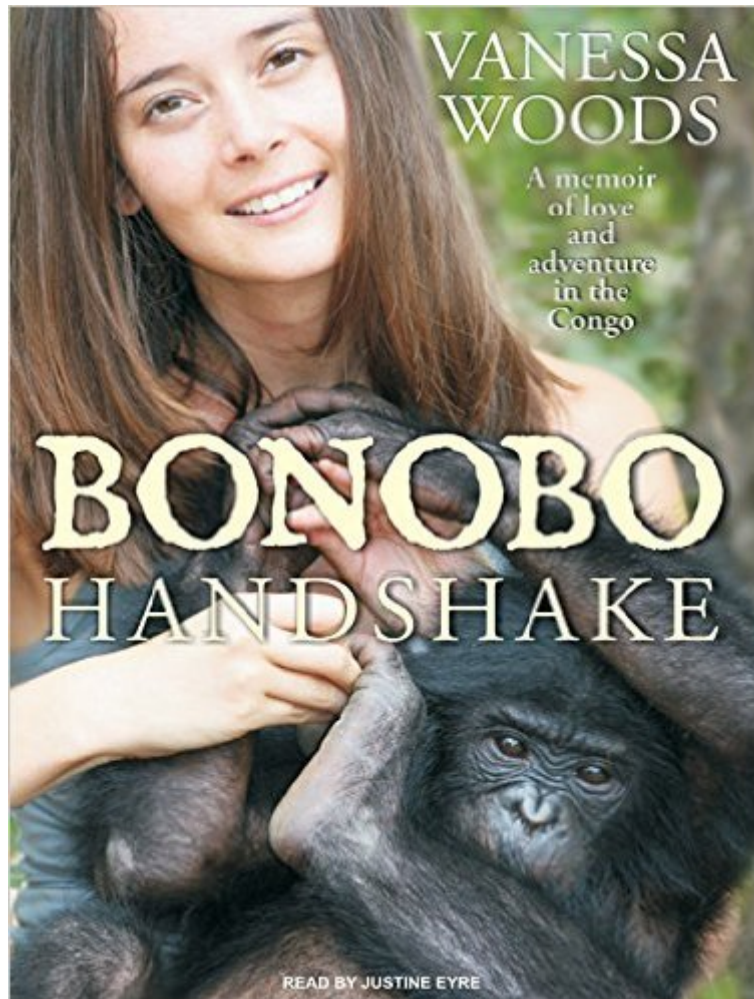


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# Bonobo Handshake: A Memoir Of Love And Adventure In The Congo



## Synopsis

In 2005, Vanessa Woods accepted a marriage proposal from a man she barely knew and agreed to join him on a research trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country reeling from a brutal decade-long war that had claimed the lives of millions. Settling in at a bonobo sanctuary in Congo's capital, Vanessa and her fiance entered the world of a rare ape with whom we share 98.7 percent of our DNA. She soon discovered that many of the inhabitants of the sanctuary-ape and human alike-are refugees from unspeakable violence, yet bonobos live in a peaceful society in which females are in charge, war is nonexistent, and sex is as common and friendly as a handshake. A fascinating memoir of hope and adventure, *Bonobo Handshake* traces Woods's self-discovery as she finds herself falling deeply in love with her husband, the apes, and her new surroundings while probing life's greatest question: What ultimately makes us human? Courageous and extraordinary, this true story of revelation and transformation in a fragile corner of Africa is about looking past the differences between animals and ourselves, and finding in them the same extraordinary courage and will to survive. For Vanessa, it is about finding her own path as a writer and scientist, falling in love, and finding a home.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I just finished reading *Bonobo Handshake* by Vanessa Woods. A triple story of her love life, bonobos lives, and the political situations in DRC. The research her husband conducted explained some of the nature of bonobos and their tolerance for each other and their sexual communications.

The difficult part of the book concerned the politics of DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda. I thought I was getting the picture about who was fighting whom but as the rebel groups increased I lost track of the reasons for the fighting and became horrified by what the assailants did to the villagers. I've known about such acts but this author tried to explain how the rebel groups formed and then how some turn against their own people. Even the author couldn't keep it straight. It is truly difficult to imagine humans acting so brutally. But the author also said that when you live among people who have jobs and a purpose she described the people as intelligent and caring. Do I think that our nature is any different than the rebels---I don't think so. But when you don't have food, shelter, water, education, and hope, we could all become brutal. The research pointed out the combative nature of chimps vs the tolerant nature of bonobos. That was the most interesting part of the book. Chimps see others as "them" and bonobos see others as "us". I'm afraid humans still see others as "them" although we can learn to accept others as "us". Bonobos truly seem to have a natural tolerance of strangers. I didn't realize that there are so few bonobos in the world and they live basically in a small area. I looked up the website: [...] and saw the pictures of the people and bonobos in the book.

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