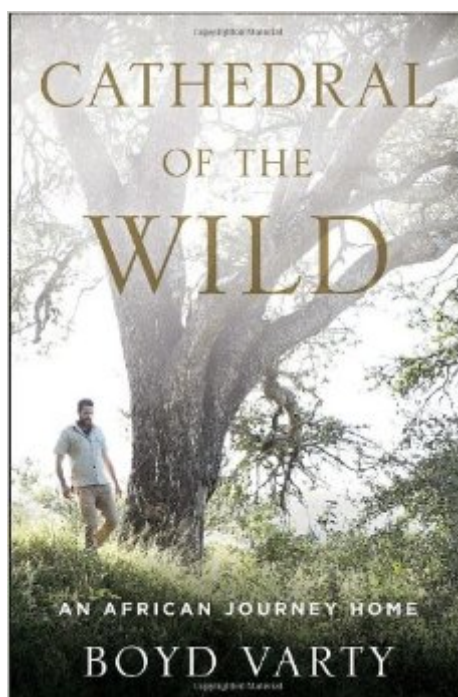


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# Cathedral Of The Wild: An African Journey Home



## Synopsis

Boyd Varty had an unconventional upbringing. He grew up on Londolozi Game Reserve in South Africa, a place where man and nature strive for balance, where perils exist alongside wonders. Founded more than eighty years ago as a hunting ground, Londolozi was transformed into a nature reserve beginning in 1973 by Varty's father and uncle, visionaries of the restoration movement. But it wasn't just a sanctuary for the animals; it was also a place for ravaged land to flourish again and for the human spirit to be restored. When Nelson Mandela was released after twenty-seven years of imprisonment, he came to the reserve to recover. *Cathedral of the Wild* is Varty's memoir of his life in this exquisite and vast refuge. At Londolozi, Varty gained the confidence that emerges from living in Africa. "We came out strong and largely unafraid of life," he writes, "with the full knowledge of its dangers." It was there that young Boyd and his equally adventurous sister learned to track animals, raised leopard and lion cubs, followed their larger-than-life uncle on his many adventures filming wildlife, and became one with the land. Varty survived a harrowing black mamba encounter, a debilitating bout with malaria, even a vicious crocodile attack, but his biggest challenge was a personal crisis of purpose. An intense spiritual quest takes him across the globe and back again "to reconnect with nature and rediscover the track." *Cathedral of the Wild* is a story of transformation that inspires a great appreciation for the beauty and order of the natural world. With conviction, hope, and humor, Varty makes a passionate claim for the power of the wild to restore the human spirit. *Praise for Cathedral of the Wild*

"Extremely touching . . . a book about growth and hope." *The New York Times*

"made me cry with its hard-won truths about human and animal nature. . . . Both funny and deeply moving, this book belongs on the shelf of everyone who seeks healing in wilderness." *BookPage*

"This is a gorgeous, lyrical, hilarious, important book. Boyd Varty is as brilliant a storyteller and as kind a companion as you'll ever meet. He describes a life that has been spent forging a new way of thinking and being, in harmony with both Nature writ large and the human nature that is you. Read this and you may find yourself instinctively beginning to heal old wounds: in yourself, in others, and just maybe in the cathedral of the wild that is our true home." *Martha Beck, author of Finding Your Own North Star*

"*Cathedral of the Wild* is the captivating story of the joyful, occasionally terrifying, but always interesting life of Boyd Varty. It is also a tale of healing, and of one family's passion to restore our broken connection to nature. Be prepared to fall in love with Varty, his sister, his parents, his uncle, the ideals they fiercely hold to protect the African bush, and the wild animals and people that surround them. With his campfire wit and poet's ear, Varty is a wonderful new voice in adventure writing." *Susan Casey, author of*

The Wave: In Pursuit of the Rogues, Freaks, and Giants of the Ocean  
From the first chapter of Cathedral of the Wild, Boyd Varty's South Africa grabs your heart, rather like the giant mamba he encountered as a boy. The deadly snake moved on, but Varty's stories stick. —Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods and The Nature Principle

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I guess I'm an ageist. As my age advances, my interest in young writers declines. They may have dazzling pyrotechnic writing styles - but I don't care about style, I care about content, and I want to spend my time with writers who understand things that I don't. Generally, that means writers with a range of experiences and insights that can only come from living. Believe me, I'm not saying I know it all. Most of the time I can't even say what it is. But there is something about a young person's writing that usually feels thin and unseasoned to me. Given my prejudice against tyro writers like Boyd Varty, I opened "Cathedral of the Wild" with skepticism that lasted about a page and a half. I love this book and found Varty's writing to be funny, profound, moving, witty, informative, fascinating, and inspiring, often all at once. This is a memoir of a remarkable childhood in a singular family. Varty comes of age on a game preserve in South Africa's wildlands, the bushveld. The family land was purchased by ancestors who liked to hunt big game, but over time the family's love of nature evolves and they become staunch, influential conservationists whose business is to bring tourists on photographic safaris and to make death-defying wildlife videos. The family is ambitious, passionate, risk-loving; heavy on vision and low on conformity. Varty's early years are punctuated

by brushes with death and exposure to the wonder of encounters with wild animals on their home turf. For those who feel connection to nature, this book will resonate in every chapter. Throughout, Varty provides wonderful anecdotes about the animals he encounters, and he also powerfully conveys the spirituality he experiences in the natural world.

In "Cathedral of the Wild: An African Journey Home" Boyd Varty, now in his late 20's and wise beyond his years, shares amazing stories about his extraordinary life working and living on South Africa's Londolozi Game Reserve. Although Londolozi was originally founded as a hunting ground by Boyd's ancestors in the 30s his father and uncle, both visionaries of the restoration movement, transformed Londolozi into a nature reserve in 1973. They not only restored the ravaged land but created a sanctuary for animals and people. Nelson Mandela came to the reserve to recover when he was released after twenty-seven years of imprisonment. "Cathedral of the Wild" is ultimately a spiritual journey of transformation. It's about the power of the wild to inspire wonder and to heal and restore the human spirit. Boyd observed, "Maybe that's why all the mystics went to nature. Maybe Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad wanted to hear the Creator speak through his creation." Boyd and his older sister learned to track wild animals, filmed wildlife with their Uncle John and raised leopards and lion cubs at Londolozi. Boyd shares his many adventures and misadventures - surviving a scary black mamba encounter, a life-threatening bout with malaria and a dangerous crocodile attack. However, Boyd and his family's greatest challenge came during a 10-year series of misfortune. These include the death of his paternal grandmother, lawsuits concerning CC Africa, the family company's loss of money and Boyd, his mother and sister being held at gun-point during a home invasion in Johannesburg. Boyd's crisis takes him on a spiritual quest around the world and back again. He laments, "The jungle of men does not have the same rules as the jungle of animals.

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