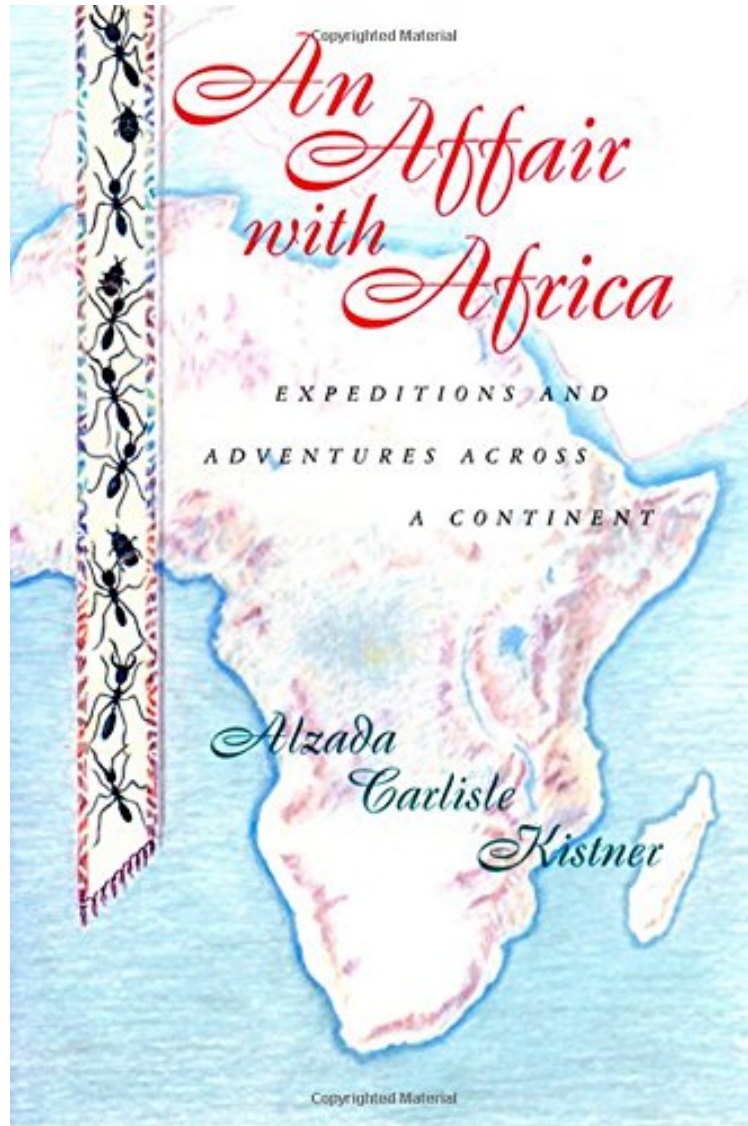


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An Affair with Africa: Expeditions And Adventures Across A Continent

Alzada Carlisle Kistner

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Alzada Carlisle Kistner : An Affair with Africa: Expeditions And Adventures Across A Continent before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Affair with Africa: Expeditions And Adventures Across A Continent:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. For the bug enthusiast
By Linda B. Lindquist
If you like entomology, you will like this book. I learned what a mymecophile is. The period of upheaval in Congo was historically interesting

too. Science, travel, history in a very well written tome!!!!1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy TomExcellent!1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. but certainly this work covers a time period of great interest in African history (early 60's to mid 70's ...By Mungo__ParkAdmittedly some parts of these recollections of travels throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa by the author and her scientist husband are a bit repetitive and sometimes dull, but certainly this work covers a time period of great interest in African history (early 60's to mid 70's while many countries were gaining independence) and there were certainly enough adventures and interesting stories to hold my interest. recommended

In June 1960, a young faculty wife named Alzada Kistner and her husband David, a promising entomologist, left their 18-month old daughter in the care of relatives and began what was to be a four month scientific expedition in the Belgian Congo. Three weeks after their arrival, the country was gripped by a violent revolution trapping the Kistners in its midst. Despite having to find their way out of numerous life-threatening situations, the Kistners were not to be dissuaded. An emergency airlift by the United States Air Force brought them to safety in Kenya where they continued their field work. Thus began three decades of adventures in science. In "An Affair with Africa," Alzada Kistner describes her family's African experience -- the five expeditions they took beginning with the trip to the Belgian Congo in 1960 and ending in 1972-73 with a nine-month excursion across southern Africa. From hunching over columns of ants for hours on end while seven months pregnant to eating dinner next to Idi Amin, Kistner provides a lively and humor-filled account of the human side of scientific discovery. Her wonderfully detailed stories clearly show why, despite hardship and danger -- and contrary to all of society's expectations -- she could not forsake accompanying her husband on his expeditions, and, to this day, continues to find the world "endlessly beckoning, a lively bubbling cauldron of questions and intrigue." In the spirit of Beryl Markham's "West with the Night" and Isak Dinesen's "Out of Africa," "An Affair with Africa" shares with readers the thoughts and experiences of a remarkable woman, one whose unquenchable thirst for adventure led her into a series of almost unimaginable situations. Readers -- from armchair travelers fascinated by stories of Africa to scientists familiar with the Kistners's work but unaware of the lengths to which they went to gather their data -- will find "An Affair with Africa" a rare treasure.

From Publishers WeeklyA self-declared reluctant writer and amateur scientist, Kistner sets out to record her hair-raising experiences in Africa between 1960 and 1973 as the wife and assistant of entomologist David Kistner. She dwells too much on hours spent over anthillsAher husband eventually uncovers more than 500 new species of beetlesAbut the wealth of this narrative is its many fascinating anecdotes in a land where danger is a constant companion. In 1960, the couple is airlifted out of the Belgian Congo as that country descends into chaos. They watch unrest develop in Angola and make a hasty exit from a restaurant in Uganda where an entourage led by future leader Idi AminAthen a military generalAcreates an intimidating scene. Kistner is swarmed by ants, stalked by a poisonous mamba and held at gunpoint by drunken soldiers. Most valuable, however, are her descriptions of European and African characters at the twilight of the continent's colonial era. The couple meets with prominent researchers of their dayALouis Leakey among themAbut also with a European crocodile poacher who keeps peace with various tribes in his hunting grounds by marrying their women and fathering dozens of children in scattered villages. Kistner's storytelling lacks pizzazz and authorityAEdmond O'Hanlon or Lyall Watson, for instance, describe science and travel in Africa with more entertaining resultsAbut her astounding encounters with a world now receded into history make this an involving personal memoir. Photos. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalAssociate editor of the journal Sociobiology, Kistner relates her experiences living in the Belgian Congo while she and her husband researched a species of beetles that live with army ants. The result is a humorous tale detailing her five African expeditions from 1960 to 1973?a tumultuous time in African history. From images of her "hunching over ant columns while seven months pregnant" to the surprised feeling of waking up next to a slumbering lion, Kistner captivates readers with her anecdotes and descriptions of Africa. The book also provides an excellent account of the politics of the country at the time. Both history buffs and armchair travelers will enjoy this story. Recommended for all public libraries.?Stephanie Papa, Baltimore Cty. Circuit Court Law Lib., Towson, MDCopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Kirkus sThe adventures of a family spanning more than a decade of scientific expeditions to Africa in search of some of the tiniest of that continent's wildlife. Kistner, associate editor of the journal Sociobiology, is the gamely devoted wife of entomologist David Kistner, the world's foremost expert on myrmecophiles, beetles that live among ant colonies. Beginning in 1960, the young couple began an often harrowing but productive series of expeditions to Africa at a time when many Americans and Europeans were headed the other way to escape the instability of the end of the colonial era. In search of their small quarry, the Kistners, eventually with both of their young daughters in tow, spend long, dusty hours on all fours sucking up insectssometimes thousands in one sessionthrough an aspirator. But what readers will find more memorable in this unflinchingly cheery narrative are the family's frequent life-threatening encounters with both nature and man, from poisonous snakes and charging elephants (not to mention biting ants) to bandits and terrorists. They also experienced the last gasp of the European and especially British colonial period with its dinner parties, sumptuous houses, and colorful old Africa hands and colonial

administrators. Then, too, the family by happenstance ran into some of the famous and infamous men who took their places, such as presidents Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, and in a brief but scary restaurant encounter, Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. Kistner tiptoes around the issue of apartheid in then Rhodesia and South Africa, only vaguely muttering her dissatisfaction with the policy and with white attitudes toward black Africans, but politics is only tangential to this account, which is really a rather remarkable family saga. While readers might get tired of stooping to examine ant nests with the Kistners, the portrait of Africa from nearly four decades back makes for an unusual tale. (maps, figures, photos, not seen) -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.