

Endangered

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In the book “Endangered” by Eliot Schrefer, a young teenager named Sophie, who is spending her summer with her mother in the Congo, comes across a man with a sickly bonobo. Sophie decides to buy it from him and names the young bonobo Otto. When she arrives to the sanctuary where her mom is, Sophie, her mom, and the others at the sanctuary try to help Otto by trying to feed and strengthen him. A few days later, the same trafficker who sold Sophie the bonobo she named Otto came back to her with more bonobos. Patrice, her mom, and the others kept telling her to avoid the trafficker and go inside the house, but Sophie decided to listen to what the trafficker wanted to say. However, Sophie’s mom began to threaten the trafficker about killing the bonobos. Soon after, the trafficker leaves, and Sophie’s mom blames her for reestablishing the selling of bonobos. Sophie’s mom later tells Sophie that she is leaving the Congo early and that the others at the sanctuary will take care of her until she leaves next week.

After Sophie’s mom leaves the Congo, a war having to do with the assassination of the president of the Congo begins. Due to this, Sophie feels like living in the Congo isn’t necessarily safe anymore. However, she eventually decides not to leave the Congo and instead hides in a large bonobo enclosure. However, Sophie feels that she and Otto must escape since it isn’t that safe due to the war going on, although this will mean leaving the other bonobos. Either way, she still decides to leave the enclosure with Otto. Sophie’s next plan is to make it to Kinshasa, but after realizing how much chaos is going on there, she decides to head north. However, later in the story, panic hits Sophie- Otto has been captured. Sophie looks for him everywhere until she finds Otto on a tree. However, he disappears again, but he is found again in a restaurant where a teenage boy is torturing him. Sophie encounters him later and manages to get Otto back and escape. After escaping, Sophie comes across a village, where, to her surprise, she finds her mother. Her mother tells her that she was infected with malaria, but she is feeling better. Both of them decide to head back to Kinshasa, where they find the sanctuary just fine. They also discover that many of the bonobos in Kinshasa are just fine as well. The story then fast-forwards to the future, when Sophie comes back to the Congo after graduating from college in the States to revisit Otto and the other bonobos.

There are a lot of things that I really liked about this book. One thing I liked about the book was how it involved many different events that affected the overall story, such as the war that occurred after Sophie’s mom’s departure. I also like how the book is based on a true story (based on the author’s experience in the Congo). However, the book had some violence, which is something that I don’t like about it. Due to the violence, the age group that this book would belong to would be 13+. I would definitely recommend this book to others.

Recommended Titles:

Facing the Lion: Growing Up Maasai on the African Savanna by Joseph Lemasolai Lekuton

Spliced (Spliced. #1) by Jon McGoran
Habibi by Naomi Shihab Nye