



Nim Chimpsky: The Chimp Who Would Be Human

Elizabeth Hess

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Now Elizabeth Hess's unforgettable biography is the inspiration for *Project Nim*, a riveting new documentary directed by James Marsh and produced by Simon Chinn, the Oscar-winning team known for *Man on Wire*. Hess, a consultant on the film, says, "Getting a call from James Marsh and Simon Chinn is an author's dream. *Project Nim* is nothing short of amazing."

An adorable baby chimp, a loving family, and an experiment that changed the lives of all it touched . . .

Project Nim, the brainchild of a Columbia University psychologist, was designed to refute Noam Chomsky's claim that language is an exclusively human trait. Nim Chimpsky, the chimpanzee chosen to realize this potentially groundbreaking experiment, was raised like a human child and taught American Sign Language while living with his "adoptive family" in their elegant Manhattan town house. But when funding for the study ended, Nim's problems began. Over the next two decades he was exiled from the people he loved, put in a cage, and moved from one facility to another, including, most ominously, a medical research lab. But wherever he went, Nim's humanlike qualities and his ability to communicate with humans saved him. A creature of extraordinary charm and charisma, Nim ultimately triumphed over a dramatic series of reversals and obstacles. His story, both moving and entertaining, also raises the most profound questions of what it means to be human—and about what we owe to the animals who enrich our lives.

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