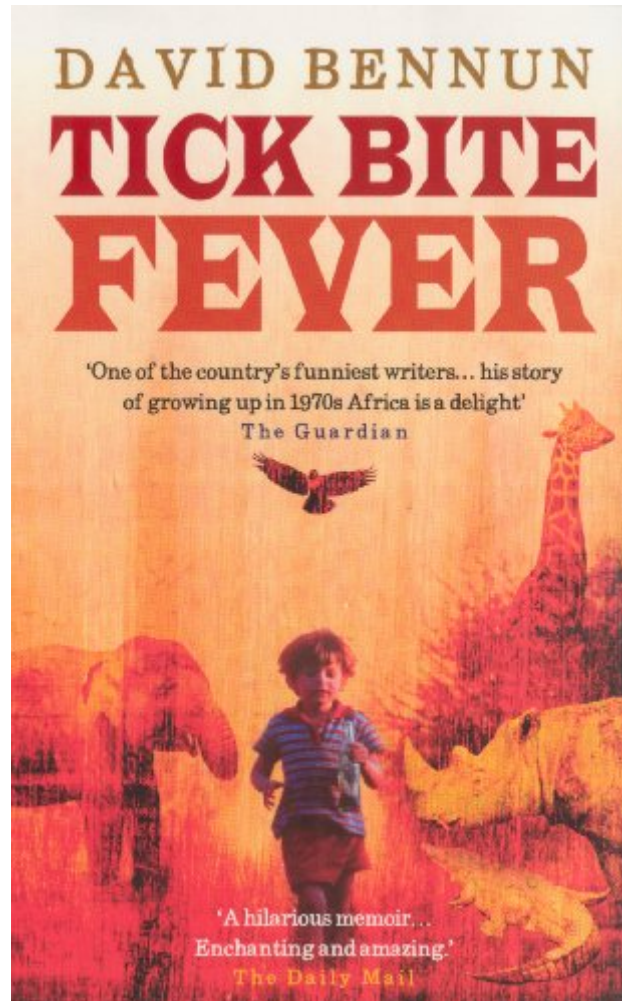




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# Tick Bite Fever



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## Synopsis

Tick Bite Fever is the unconventional memoir of a very unconventional childhood. In the early Seventies, Dave Bennun's family transplanted themselves from Swindon to the wilds of Kenya. His father, who was a doctor, had lived in Africa before (but had felt it expedient to leave when the South African government realised he was carting explosives around in the boot of his car for the ANC). For Dave, Kenya was bemusingly new. It would be his home for the next 16 years. In Kenya, the childhood memoir takes on a rather surreal tone! On the way home from school, closed because a pair of lions are padding around the playground, Dave is mugged by baboons. Meet Dave's favourite pet Achilles, the almost indestructible dog! Find out about 'Nairobi snow' - and the national radio station that only has three records. And read about Dave and his Dad spending happy Sunday afternoons being chased by a herd of elephants. Enchantingly funny, Tick Bite Fever is a tale of the fading innocence of childhood, miles ahead of the competition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a memoir of a childhood spent in several countries, but mostly in Kenya. I'm drawn to the

memoirs of people who lived in Africa because it helps me to relive an important part of my life, now left behind and for which I have frequent bouts of homesickness. I was especially drawn to this book because the author lived [briefly] in Zambia and he had suffered from "Tick Bite Fever," both of which stirred memories for me. He didn't stay long in Zambia but his reminiscences of Kenya still resonated for me and I found it a good read, highly entertaining and evocative. His sense of humor made the book all the more enjoyable and on several occasions caused me to laugh out loud, which is not something I do all that often when reading. On the other hand, at times his frequent resort to hyperbole fell flat and was over-stretched: "... khaki-clad figures sneaking out of the school gate at a rate to rival Albanian asylum seekers making a dash for the Chunnel," being one example. He also at times became somewhat bogged down in cataloguing every last detail of events that didn't really warrant such attention and left me flipping pages to skip to the next part of the story. Nonetheless it was a good read. Surviving Africa is no mean achievement even if it is only due to random good luck. It is probably best survived by those who can find humor in the trials and tribulations that seem never ending ... at least in retrospect. One of his final comments, "I don't think I could go back now," definitely struck a chord. I found it very difficult to leave, I frequently feel a need to reconnect, and yet I agree that I don't think I could go ever really go back again.

I really wanted to enjoy this book, especially as I lived in Kenya for twenty years and looked forward to taking a trip down memory lane. The first part I did find amusing. David was the kid from hell, always getting into trouble. The family's camping trips were also a good read, and I loved his doctor father's enthusiasm for playing around with old vehicles and his ability to get the family out of some of the predicaments into which he got them. However, I felt that the tone of the book changed dramatically after the divorce of his parents, and from then on it rather lost its zing and the writing became less witty and less interesting. There are still occasional sparks of humour and a wry look at life in East Africa, but I found it finished on a flat note and was not as funny as I had expected it to be. *Speak Swahili Dammit*, by James Penhaligon is in my opinion a far better book about an East African childhood.

being an ex-Kenyan it had a huge appeal. I associated with many of David's experiences. It is very funny and witty. I love his writing style. I didn't want it to end.

It brought back so many memories from Africa! As a child raised in Africa, I could understand what the narrator and his family went through.

Laughing aloud while reading is not a commonality for this reader, but this book accomplished it time and time again. The author perfectly captures life at the end of an era in Africa and the obscurities associated with living in Nairobi during a booming time of post-colonialism. Despite his own ethnicity, the author really focuses more on how the worldviews of the West clash with their host country, rather than critiquing the strangeness of the country in which they live. The book is full of laughs at the expense of the mishaps and obscurities that Africa is famous for, with the occasional commentary on events and happenings in the author's home life. Highly recommended for anyone who has lived in Eastern Africa, but especially for anyone who lived there prior to the year 2000.

No oxymoron that. Not in David Bennun's hands. A Brit whose family left England for Colonial Africa in his boyhood, Bennun's nature evidently never expatriated the stiff upper lip, the sharp eye for the contagiously absurd, or---and this may be *Fever's* greatest selling point, for it makes all the rest so possible---the palate for language as only the bellwether British wield it. Far from a pythonesque humor; you know: with simple silliness the Wont that you often wish Wouldn't? Bennun is drop-dead funny. And I don't laugh-out-loud easily. More than once, my chest having long since rounded the corner into some soundless seismic convulsing, I dropped the book on my faintly blue-feeling face from asphyxiating in bed. (The story of his Jack Russell terrier alone is worth humor's All Time list.) And I ask you: How often do any of us ever delve along a literary skill that wastes not a single sentence? You can count those masters of concise thoroughness on half the one hand you use to hold up a favorite book (or in my case, not). Bennun is as aerodynamic an author, in his own milieu, as the greatest I've ever seen: and if that makes him the Nabakov of Satire? then Vladimir--not David--it is. Damn near every utterance morphs into a garrulous gem, no sentence dispensable, most quip-laden and quotable, all culminating in chapters memorable to a one about the real Africa in David's openly unreal vantage, his own foibles always foremost, from a self-deprecating wit-in-progress. Myself?.....Never one to let the complete absense of company dampen a conversation, I'd often read things in the book over again immediately--aloud--just to share them with somebody---Anybody---me usually the handiest, splitting my own sides with disemboweling dependability. But, like the boy in the book, I too have a hard time learning my lessons. Why even now, from time to time, foolishly undeterred by my bedtime injuries I read on, headless, only to wind up again the very picture of casualty: a free arm broken over my eyes, elbow high, while alone beneath it my open mouth, wide as the search for affordable dentists, palsies off in porcine snorts,

gaped like a gash so they tell me, the very wound of the proverbial Death From Laughing. So: don't say you haven't been warned.....Needless to say, David Bennun's book ends way too soon, which is to say, it ended at all, and, Endorphin-addiction being what it is, sent me hunting the world wide web for the guy when all else failed. Now I DID locate a superb skill-set-exemplary article he penned about ITN's anchor-siren Daljit Dhaliwal meeting her prime american fan David Letterman, on air, that may still be available on-line, but other than that for now, alas---rein plus. Nevertheless, Bennun here is a fever worth catching, but only if you can stand the symptoms. Happy breathing.....

I laughed and laughed, David Bennun really brings Africa back. He just knows people and the world you live in when you are there. I love Zambia and Kenya, and he just made it alive again. Thanks for the great read, and I won't sell mine!

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