

Out of Africa (1985)

The story begins in 1913 in Denmark, when Karen Dinesen (a wealthy but unmarried woman) asks her friend Baron Bror Blixen (Klaus Maria Brandauer) to enter into a marriage of convenience with her. Although Bror is a member of the aristocracy he is no longer financially secure, therefore agrees to the marriage and the two of them plan to move to Africa to begin a dairy farm.

Upon moving to British East Africa, Karen marries Bror in a brief ceremony, thus becoming Baroness Blixen. She meets and befriends various other colonial residents of the country, most of whom are British. She also meets Denys Finch Hatton (Robert Redford), a local big-game hunter with whom she develops a close friendship. However, things turn out differently for her than anticipated, since Bror has used her money to purchase a coffee plantation rather than a dairy farm. He also shows little inclination to put any real work into it, preferring instead to become a game hunter. Although theirs was a marriage of convenience, Karen does eventually develop feelings for Bror, but is distressed when she learns of his extramarital affairs. To make matters worse, Karen contracts syphilis from her philandering husband (at the time a very dangerous disease) and is forced to return to Denmark for a long and difficult period of treatment using the then-new medicine Salvarsan. Bror agrees to look after the plantation in her absence.

After she has recovered and returns to Africa, the First World War is drawing to an end. However, it becomes clear that her marriage to the womanizing Bror has not changed and she eventually asks him to move out of their house. Her friendship with Denys then develops further and the two eventually become lovers. However, despite many unsuccessful attempts to turn their affair into a lasting relationship, she realizes that Denys is as impossible to own or tame as Africa itself. Denys prefers the simple "African customs" of the free, nomadic life of the Maasai tribe on the open landscape, rather than the European customs of luxury, ownership, and titles. Although he moves into Karen's house, he criticizes her desire to "own" things; even people, refuses to commit to marriage or give up his free lifestyle and tells her that he will not love her more just because of a piece of paper. Karen grudgingly accepts the situation. No longer able to have children of her own due to the effects of the syphilis, she decides to open a school to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, and also some European customs to the African tribal children of the area. However, her coffee plantation runs into financial difficulties and she is forced to rely on bank loans to make ends meet. Although it has taken years to cultivate, the plantation finally yields a good harvest, but a devastating fire breaks out on the plantation and the crop and all of the factory equipment are destroyed.

Now broke, and with her relationship with Denys over, Karen prepares to leave Africa to return home to Denmark, just as British East Africa is becoming Kenya Colony. She arranges to sell everything that she owns and empties the house of all her luxurious items for a rummage sale. In the now empty house, Denys visits her that night and the two of them have one last dance. He promises to return in a few days, to fly her to Mombasa in his biplane to begin her journey home. However, Denys never returns and Karen is told that his plane has crashed and he has been killed. Her loss now complete, Karen attends his funeral in the Ngong Hills. With Denys gone, Karen's head servant, Farah, takes her to the station, for the train to Mombasa.

Karen later became an author and a storyteller, writing about her experiences and letters in Africa, though she never returned there.

Cast

Meryl Streep as Karen

Robert Redford as Denys

Klaus Maria Brandauer	as Bror
Michael Kitchen	as Berkeley
Malick Bowens	as Farah
Joseph Thiaka	as Kamante
Stephen Kinyanjui	as Kinanjui
Michael Gough	as Delamere
Suzanna Hamilton	as Felicity
Rachel Kempson	as Lady Belfield
Graham Crowden	as Lord Belfield
Leslie Phillips	as Sir Joseph
Shane Rimmer	as Belknap
Mike Bugara	as Juma
Job Seda	as Kanuthia

Memorable quotes (with notes on difficult vocabulary)

Karen Blixen: He even took the gramophone on safari. Three rifles, supplies for a month, and Mozart.
rifle = fucile; **supply** = provvista, scorta

Karen Blixen: If I know a song of Africa, of the giraffe and the African new moon lying on her back, of the plows in the fields and the sweaty faces of the coffee pickers, does Africa know a song of me? Will the air over the plain quiver with a color that I have had on, or the children invent a game in which my name is, or the full moon throw a shadow over the gravel of the drive that was like me, or will the eagles of the Ngong Hills look out for me?

plow = aratro; **coffee pickers** = raccoglitori di caffè; **to quiver** = tremare, tremolare; **gravel** = ghiaia; **to look out** = (scrutare per cercare qualcuno) cercare

Karen Blixen: [Voiceover] I had a farm in Africa at the foot of the Ngong Hills. The Equator runs across these highlands, a hundred miles to the north, and the farm lay at an altitude of over six thousand feet. In the day-time you felt that you had got high up; near to the sun, but the early mornings and evenings were limpid and restful, and the nights were cold.

farm = fattoria, azienda agricola; **highland** = altopiano; **restful** = riposante

Baron Bror Blixen: You could have asked, Denys.

Denys: I did. She said yes.

You could have asked. I did. She said yes = (gioco di parole sull'ambiguità del significato di *You could have asked*: 'avresti potuto chiedere', ma nel senso di 'avresti potuto chiedermi [il permesso]) Avresti potuto chiedere. L'ho fatto. Lei ha detto di sì.

[after placing a gramophone in a field near wild baboons]

Denys: Think of it: never a man-made sound... and then Mozart!

man-made sound = suono prodotto da essere umano

Karen Blixen: Perhaps he knew, as I did not, that the Earth was made round so that we would not see too far down the road.

to see far down the road = (qui: metaforico) vedere lontano lungo la strada (nel senso di 'prevedere gli eventi')

Denys: You've ruined it for me, you know.

Karen Blixen: Ruined what?

Denys: Being alone.

Being alone = solitudine

Karen Blixen: Oh! get away from there! Shoo Shoo!

Denys: Shoo?

Karen Blixen: Oh! That's all my crystal, my Limoges.

Shoo = sciò (per spaventare animali); crystal = (vasi di) cristallo

Karen Blixen: What's wrong with marriage anyway?

Denys: Have you ever seen one you admire?

Karen Blixen: Yes, I have, many. Belfield's, for one.

Denys: He sent her home for the rains in 1910. Didn't tell her they were over until 1913.

Belfield's, for one = Quello [il matrimonio] di Belfield, tanto per citarne uno; **the rains** = la stagione delle piogge; **Didn't tell her they were over until 1913** = non le disse che [le piogge] erano finite fino al 1913

Baron Bror Blixen: You're not going to fall in love are you?

Karen Blixen: Not with someone who's always leaving.

someone wh's always leaving = qualcuno che non fa altro che andarsene via

Baron Bror Blixen: That's a fine kiss goodbye.

Karen Blixen: I'm better at hello.

I'm better at hello = riesco molto meglio nei saluti a chi arriva (piuttosto che a chi parte)

Karen Blixen: When you go away... you don't always go on safari, do you? Just want to be away.

Denys: It's not meant to hurt you.

Karen Blixen: It does.

Denys: I'm with you because I choose to be with you. I don't want to live someone else's idea of how to live. Don't ask me to do that. I don't want to find out one day that I'm at the end of someone else's life.

find out one day I'm at the end of someone else's life = scoprire un giorno di essere arrivato alla fine di una vita che non era la mia

Denys: I'll mate for life. One day at a time.

I'll mate for life. One day at a time = mi accoppierò per la vita, un giorno alla volta.

Karen Blixen: It's an odd feeling, farewell. There is such envy in it. Men go off to be tested, for courage. And if we're tested at all, it's for patience, for doing without, for how well we can endure loneliness.

to endure = sopportare; **loneliness** = solitudine

Fonti:

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0089755/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Out_of_Africa_%28film%29