

The Last Dance Saving India's Dancing Bears

India has a rich cultural history deeply intertwined with dance forms that have been practiced for centuries. While certain dance forms like Bharatanatyam and Kathak have gained global fame, there is another dance form, hidden within the shadows, that has a heartbreaking story: the dancing bears of India.

The Cruelty Behind the Tradition

For centuries, dancing bears were a common sight at festivals and other social gatherings in India. These bears, often cubs captured from the wild, underwent a brutal process called "dancing bear training." They were forcefully muzzled and pierced with a hot iron rod through their noses, leaving them in excruciating pain. This cruel practice was intended to make them submissive and force them to perform for entertainment.

India's dancing bears, mainly sloth bears who have a natural knack for balancing on two legs, were subjected to a life of exploitation. They were strapped with a rope connected to a hot poker, causing them immense pain whenever they tried to escape or resist performing. The bears were kept in tiny cages, deprived of their natural habitat, and fed poorly. They were forced to dance, day in and day out, undernourished and exhausted. It was a miserable existence.



The Last Dance: Saving India's Dancing Bears

by Michael I. Luger (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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The Efforts to Save the Dancing Bears

In the early 2000s, several organizations and animal rights groups initiated a concerted effort to rescue and rehabilitate these dancing bears. One such organization, Wildlife SOS, played a pivotal role in putting an end to this cruel tradition.

Wildlife SOS, based in India, started a campaign called "The Last Dance," with the aim of eradicating dancing bear practices and providing a sustainable future for the bears. The organization worked closely with local communities to raise awareness about the cruelty involved and the need for reform. They also collaborated with governmental agencies to enforce bans on the use of dancing bears.

As part of their rescue efforts, Wildlife SOS set up sanctuaries to provide a safe haven for the rescued bears. These sanctuaries, nestled in the tranquil forests of India, not only offered a natural environment for the bears but also provided them with necessary medical care and proper nutrition. The bears were slowly reintroduced to their wild instincts, allowing them to live freely and happily once again.

A Brighter Future for Bears

Thanks to the combined efforts of Wildlife SOS and other organizations, the tradition of dancing bears in India has significantly declined. Local communities,

with the help of proper education and awareness programs, have turned away from this cruel practice. Government regulations have been strengthened to ensure a strict ban on dancing bears.

The rescued bears now have the chance to experience a life they never thought possible. They can roam freely, forage for food, climb trees, and live in harmony with their natural surroundings. Some bears have even started forming their own social groups, exhibiting behaviors that had been suppressed for years.

The Fight Continues

Although significant progress has been made, the fight to save India's dancing bears is not over. There are still instances where bears are illegally captured and trained for entertainment purposes. Animal welfare organizations are working tirelessly to ensure such practices are eradicated completely and that the rescued bears continue to thrive in their sanctuaries.

By supporting these organizations and their efforts, individuals can contribute to the cause and make a difference. Through donations, volunteer work, and spreading awareness, we can all help ensure that the last dance for India's dancing bears has truly happened, and they can now enjoy a life of freedom.

The Last Dance Saving India's Dancing Bears highlights the resilience and dedication of organizations like Wildlife SOS in putting an end to inhumane practices. Through their tireless efforts, dancing bears are no longer abused for entertainment, but instead given the chance to live a life of dignity and freedom. Let us continue supporting these initiatives and work towards creating a world where no animal is subject to cruelty for our amusement.

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The Last Dance looks at how the barbaric practice of dancing bears worked and how a coalition of animal charities set about bringing it to an end and rescuing every bear off the streets of India. The book exposes the terrible suffering the bears endured to make them dance. Compelling photos show bears being surrendered and the ropes being cut to set them free. The book describes the process of negotiation with the Kalandar gypsies and explains how they were persuaded to give up their bears and accept alternative livelihood training. The three groups share the belief that animal welfare and human welfare go hand in hand and so wanted to ensure that the people's needs were also met. No bears were bought – their lives were traded in exchange for training the Kalandar gypsies in another profession. Royalties from the sale of this book will go towards the IAR charity based at Uckfield, West Sussex, who need funds to help care for the 600 surviving bears safely cared for in three sanctuaries across India.



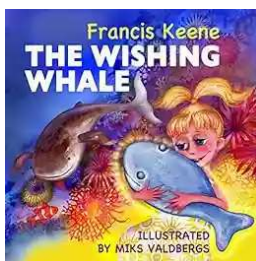
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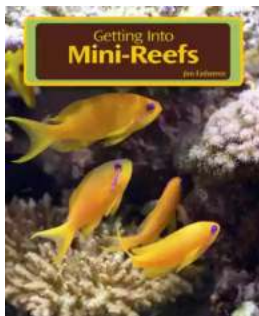
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