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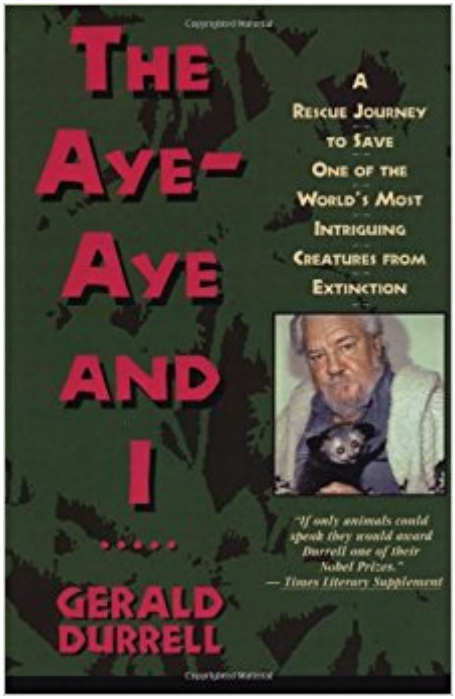
The Aye-Aye And I: A Rescue Journey To Save One Of The World's Most Intriguing Creatures From Extinction



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Synopsis

Here is the riveting tale of Gerald Durrell's adventures and misadventures in the enchanted forests of Madagascar, in search of the elusive Aye-aye. Once thought to be extinct, the Aye-aye, the beast with the magic finger, still lurks, though in fast dwindling numbers, in the forests of Madagascar. Durrell's mission to help save this strange creature turns into a madcap journey in which you will meet not only the enigmatic Aye-aye, but the catlike Fosa, the Flat-tailed tortoise, the Gentle lemurs of Lac Alaotra, and the Malagasy chameleons, among others. Truly nothing escapes Durrell's sharp eye, whether he is describing the great zoma (market), the village dances, the treacherous bridges and river crossings, the strange foods and stranger music, or the vagaries of local officialdom. As the San Francisco Chronicle noted, "It is impossible for Gerald Durrell to write anything that is less than exuberant, eccentric, and amusing." And in his account of this "rescue mission", Durrell is, quite simply, at his superb best.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Touchstone (July 12, 1994)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0671884395

ISBN-13: 978-0671884390

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #658,151 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Field Guides > Mammals #554 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Mammals #1987 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Environment > Environmentalism

Customer Reviews

Age cannot wither nor custom stale the boundless enthusiasm of Durrell (The Ark's Anniversary) in his efforts to rescue endangered species. Here he is in Madagascar--with his wife, Lee, and a BBC crew--to film and to capture for breeding the rare aye-aye, a nocturnal lemur of Africa's east coast rain forests. As his party travels through the countryside over impossible roads and rickety bridges, Durrell gives marvelous descriptions of inns and markets. Once settled in camp, he is able to find an aye-aye captive at the Biosphere Reserve, but the wild ones remain elusive. After the film crew

departs, Durrell and his scouts come upon six aye-ayes for his Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, plus a mate for the captive aye-aye. Adventure, humor and a serious scientific mission add up to first-rate entertainment. Photos. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

What do you do when you are an avid naturalist, founder and head of the noted Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, and you have a spiritual experience with a little-known, extremely rare primate called an aye-aye? If you are the author, you muster an expedition to film and capture the creature to preserve it for future generation. Like its predecessors (e.g., The Ark's Anniversary , LJ 8/91), Durrell's 24th book is an often humorous romp to a faraway place--this time, the island of Madagascar off the southeast coast of Africa. Readers will be entertained by Durrell's descriptions of events that occurred during the expedition to capture a breeding population of aye-aye. Durrell also gives readers a feel for the difficulties encountered in dealing with the politics and inconveniences of Third World countries, but never in a derogatory or sarcastic manner. The Aye-Aye and I is rich in description yet never bogs down in scientific detail. For popular natural history collections.- Edell Marie Schaefer, Brookfield P.L., Wis.Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I came to this book ignorant to the stellar reputation of author Gerald Durrell and his equally stellar rescue efforts for endangered species across the world. All I cared about was learning more about the elusive and, according to some, mystical lemuroid known as the Aye Aye. The Creature with the Magic Finger.In this, the late Gerald Durrell chronicled his departure from Jersey in order to investigate Madagascar for not only the mythical Aye Aye, but also mouse lemurs of Lac Alaotra, the Fosa, golden brown river snakes and flat tailed tortoises. The problem I had with the book that knocked the book down to three wasn't an issue with the author's penchant for verbose language that sometimes veers into the hazardous territory of becoming bloviating. He was English, after all, and at least he was fortunate enough to suffer a vast vocabulary. No, my only significant trial with the book was waiting for the damned Aye Aye to show up, not at all unlike Gerald and his traveling band of biologists, zoologists and hunters.Want to hazard a guess as to how long it takes for the Aye Aye to finally take center stage? If you guessed one hundred and thirty pages, you'd be correct. This is a problem considering the book, at least in paperback, is a mere one hundred and sixty seven pages. So, it's one of those tales that's more about the journey than the destination. I did feel that Durrell could have truncated some of his experiences in the villages and areas of

Antanambaobe and Tamatave in order to establish a clearer path to the animal whose namesake graces the front cover.Still, this is not a story for the express sake of telling a story. There is much wisdom in these pages that were meant as a call to arms to do something about the beautiful animals being ravaged and disappearing due to deforestation and illegal poaching. Durrell made animals his life's work. He was lucky enough to be able to write about that work. Bless him wherever the next journey carried him.

Read this based on the delightful My Family and other Animals. The story of Durrell's childhood in Corfu, populated by the characters in his family and others, was a captivating tale wonderfully fold. The tale of the aye aye, while interesting and well told, just didn't do it do me.

Long time favorite author. There is no one like Gerald Durrell for those who love nature. One of the all time best authors about those animals that we seldom read about. His books may have been written some time ago and mostly out of print, but never out of date. I am glad he wrote so many, so that there is always one more to read.

Great book, classic. in ok condition

Had never gotten hold of a copy before, so was all new to me. Well acquainted with the author and his life story. Loved it--nice low-cost reading copy, all pages intact. Excellent addition to my home library, delightful story.

Moderately entertaining account of the late Gerald Durrell's journey to the wilds of Madagascar in search of a few aye-ayes (an endangered species) to begin a breeding programme...not to mention 'gentle' lemurs ("anything but, as my and my keepers' scars will testify"); giant jumping rats and flat-tailed tortoises. Although I felt dubious about this to begin with, many of the animals were actually purchased from locals who would have killed or eaten them otherwise.In the process, we learn something of the land and witness various amusing adventures. As the author says:"Those of you who visit zoos and watch all sorts of exotic animals bouncing about their cages, spare a thought for the complexities that brought them there."Not in the same league as 'My Family and Other Animals', but a pleasant-enough light read.

Gerald Durrell has written many books on nature including "The Overloaded Ark", "My Family and

Other Animals", and "A Zoo in My Luggage". I've greatly enjoyed reading some of these and have found his writing entertaining, informative and very humorous. This book seemed to be a step down compared to his previous writings, not to say this is a bad book, but it's not quite as funny or engaging as his others.Most of this book is an account of an expedition to collect some of the rare lemurs of the island of Madagascar including the rare and fabled Aye-Aye a creature with a strangely elongated finger used for hunting its insect prey. Durrell and crew travel across the country and relate both a travel journey and a biological description of the land. The Jersey Wildlife Perservation Trust is the organization behind this effort and Durrell shows us the difficulties and almost insurmountable obstacles that must be overcome to collect these rare animals and bring them back to the facilities in England where they can be breed , studied and kept safe until reintroduction into their home habitat once that is protected. Also included is a short section on the Islands of Mauritius and projects there.Although this may not be as entertaining as his previous books it is still and important read for those that care about the fate of threatened species and the people that work so hard for their protection.

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