



The Urban Circus (Bradt Travel Guides (Travel Literature))

Catriona Rainsford

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The story opens in Chihuahua, North Mexico, with a chance meeting with a group of itinerant Mexican street performers. Entranced by their stories and free-roaming lifestyle, author Catriona Rainsford decides to go with them on what becomes a two-year, hand-to-mouth journey across Mexico, learning to live off nothing more than a few performance skills, initiative and the kindness of strangers. Compelling, humorous, sometimes violent, and full of wonderful descriptions of life on the road, this is also a discussion of the morality of hand-to-mouth travel. Packed with stories of the characters she meets on the Mexican streets, the book offers an insight into the day-to-day experiences of Mexico's urban poor. Above all, it is a tale of the struggle of Mexico's youth to transcend the country's current climate of corruption and violence and create a new identity for themselves, inspired by aspects of Mexico's surviving indigenous cultures and the desire to make people smile in the most unprepossessing of places. 'They were travelling malabaristas – itinerant circus performers who wandered the streets of Mexico, hitchhiking from town to town and surviving by whatever means they could. They saw themselves as a modern take on the ancient tradition of the wandering entertainer, taking their art to the people, and taking whatever the people were prepared to give them to help them on their way.'

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