
The Red Lion Dancer

Mala really loves lion dancing. She's overjoyed for her first day at the lion dance studio. However, it turns out the training isn't as easy as she thought. Will she ever be good enough to do a lion dance?





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Let's Read



The Asia Foundation



With a little trot, Mala excitedly entered the lion dance practice studio.

It was Mala's first day. "Let's start with some physical exercises," Coach said.



Mala had watched a lot of lion dance performances. The performers

were so agile. Mala didn't think that the training would be so hard. But she had to repeatedly do push ups and jumps and run around the field.



Mala was still enthusiastic, but her moves were getting slower. She was

sweating profusely, and her legs began to tremble. "Get some rest," Coach suggested.



“Just the beginner’s training is so exhausting,” Mala thought. “When

can I do the red lion dance like them?"



The next part of training was about the stance. Coach said that lion

dance performers needed strong and agile legs. The secret was in the basic stance



Mala also learned the rectangle and triangle techniques. Then, there

was also a spinning move shaped like the letter Z. The names were different, but Mala couldn't tell them apart.



“Mala, don't rush your moves. Move slowly!” Coach reminded Mala.



Oh no, Mala's stance was still too high. A stance that wasn't low enough

would make the lion less agile when dancing.



Again, Mala's moves were wrong. "Pay attention to your feet! Your

steps were incorrect!” Coach ordered. This wasn’t supposed to happen. A lion dance team had to move according to the beat and count.



Next was training in pairs. Mala was appointed to lift up Yosi. Would

Mala be able to do it?



“Hi-yah!” Mala lifted Yosi with all her might, but ... Crash! Ouch!



“You must have forgotten to spread your legs!” exclaimed Yosi. Mala

grimaced and apologized. Yosi just scowled.



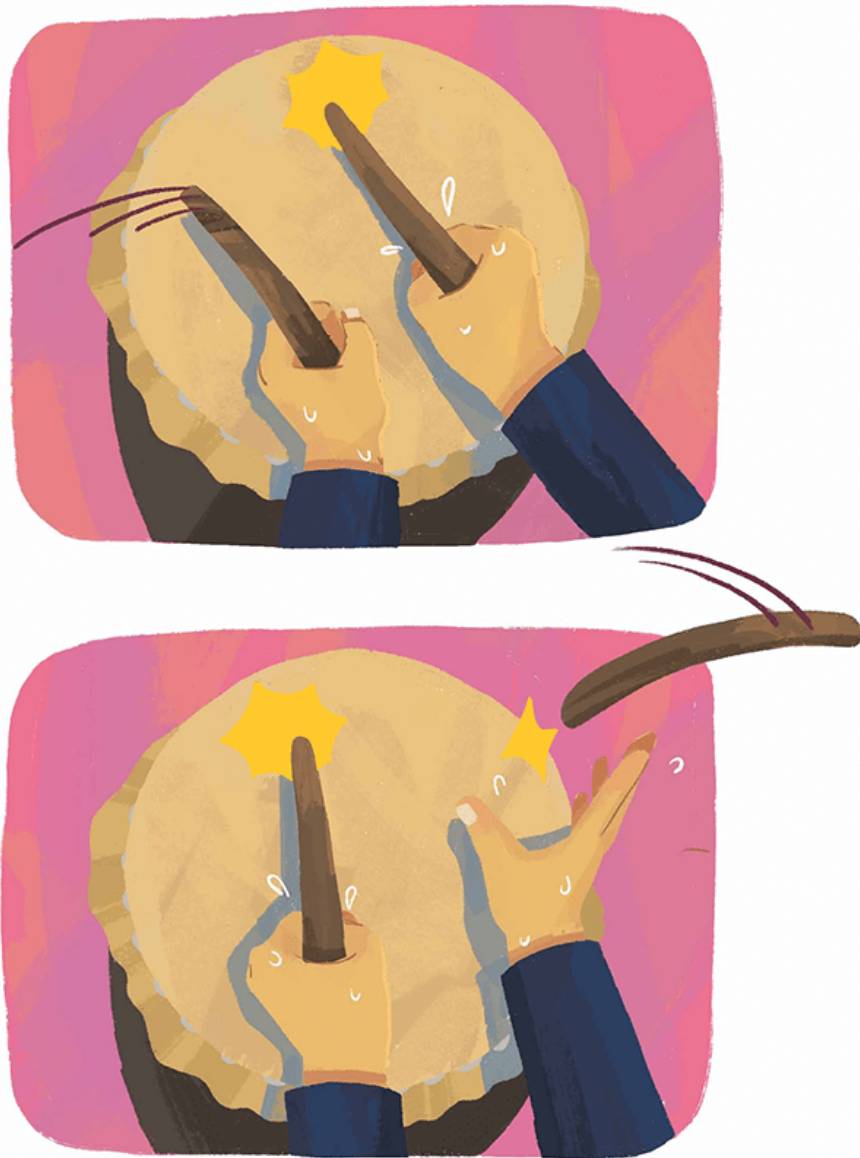
Next, Mala practiced the drums. The drums couldn't be hit carelessly.

The standing position had to be sturdy. Mala was starting to get it. The basic stance was very important.



On the other side of the field, the lion dance team was practicing. Their

dance was absolutely beautiful. Mala kept looking toward them, mesmerized. Her drumming became sloppy!



Mala's hands were sweating. The drumstick kept slipping out of her

grasp.



The other musicians were getting annoyed. "Mala! Hit the drums

harder. We couldn't hear them!" they complained. Apparently, Mala wasn't lifting her hands high enough.



During break time, Mala fantasized about dancing the lion dance. Was

the head of the lion dance costume heavy? The size was similar to this drum. Mala tried lifting it up. Ow, it was so heavy!



Meanwhile, the lion dance performers were able to easily lift the red

lion's head. Their feet moved in rhythm with the drum team. The red lion looked alive and agile because the musicians were skilled musicians.



Training started again. Mala was determined to concentrate more when

playing the drum. Mala now knew how important a drum player was to a lion dance performance.



Mala tried to hit the drum according to the beat. Tack ... tack ... dong ...

dong! Soon Mala's beat was in tune. The sound of the drums was getting louder.



After several training sessions, Mala started to memorize the beat and

the count. If the drum player played correctly, the cymbal and kenong players could follow the rhythm well. Mala was relieved.



Mala's stance was getting stronger, and her moves were becoming

more agile.



Mala was so glad she had kept trying after her first day. She knew one

day she would dance the red lion.



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creation workshop in Indonesia involving mostly female writers, illustrators, editors, and art directors to produce stories featuring mighty girls and women. The workshop was a collaboration between Litara Foundation and The Asia Foundation and supported by Estée Lauder Companies Charitable Foundation. The workshop and professional development, along with the editing and design of this book, was conducted by Litara Foundation. Litara Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that develops children's literacy through children's literature.

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Original Story The Red Lion Dancer . Author: Jessica Valentina.

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Published by The Asia Foundation - Let's Read, <https://letsreadasia.org>

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