

PLANTING SEED OF COMPASSION THROUGH

PICTURE BOOK

Ellie



Meeet Nicole Godwin, avocado tragic, dark chocolate lover, and novice yogi who has mastered child pose. Nicole is also the author of a children's picture book being launched in August that tells the story of a baby elephant being used in the tourism industry.

Nicole and British artist and illustrator,

Demelsa Haughton, have created *Ella*, a captivating book that children adore. The book also just happens to plant seeds of compassion for animals and raise awareness of conservation. *Ella* tells the story of a baby elephant who was taken from her mum to work in the tourist industry. Little readers follow Ella's grand escape in search of her mum.

"Our aim was always to create a picture book that children want to read again and again. Children fall in love with baby Ella from page one and don't leave her side until they finish the story and also read an extra page of elephant facts." says Nicole.

Long time vegan and writer, Nicole was inspired to tell the story of elephants used in tourism after a trip to Thailand where she visited Elephant Nature Park, an elephant rescue and rehabilitation center in Northern Thailand. She later returned to Thailand to volunteer at Boon Lott's Elephant Sanctuary, a home for rescued and retired elephants.



Photo Credit: Michelle Doherty



I know you're out there somewhere,' she whispers every night.
 'I feel you deep within my heart. You give me strength and light.'



*E*lla works without complaint, but has a secret quest.
 To find her dearest mother so her heart can finally rest.

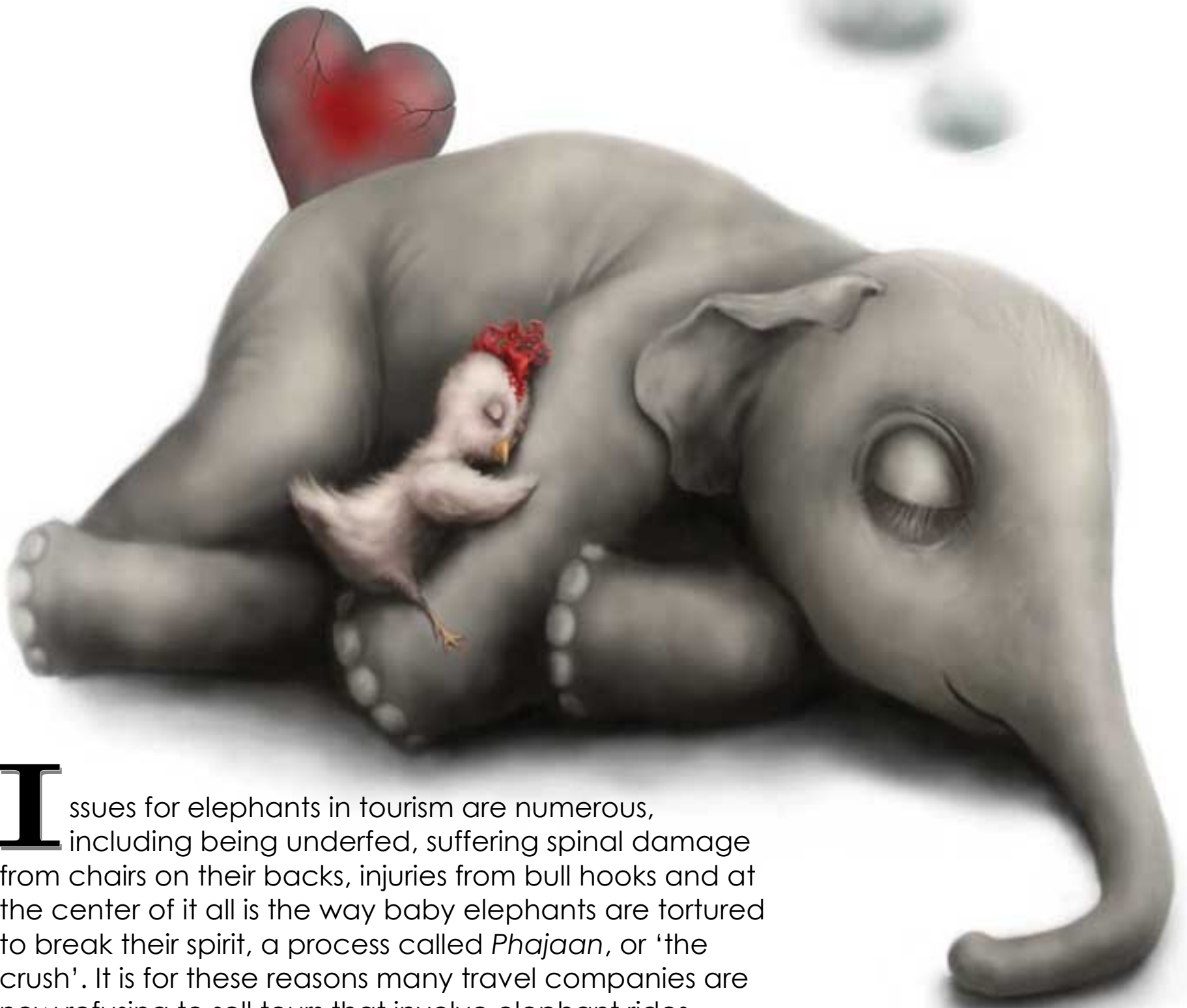


*S*he often dreams of running off to try and find her mum.
 She doesn't think she's brave enough, but hopes the day may come.

*T*hen she hears a trumpet call and heads towards the sound.
 She won't give up her secret quest until her mother's found.



*S*he charges down the dim lit street, her ears flap in delight.
 She thinks she sees her mother but she finds a different sight.



Issues for elephants in tourism are numerous, including being underfed, suffering spinal damage from chairs on their backs, injuries from bull hooks and at the center of it all is the way baby elephants are tortured to break their spirit, a process called *Phajaan*, or 'the crush'. It is for these reasons many travel companies are now refusing to sell tours that involve elephant rides.

"It's easy to tell if you are at a place that is genuinely caring for elephants and putting them first. The clues are clear—if there are people riding the elephants, if bull hooks are being used, if they are chained up, or if elephants are doing something unnatural like painting a picture of playing soccer, then this is not a sanctuary. The reality is that these elephants have suffered horrific pain and suffering in order to do these unnatural things," says Nicole.

Nicole has set up a publishing company called Tusk Books to not only produce *Ella*, but also other picture books featuring different animals. While the books will be a staple for vegan families, Nicole wants to make sure that all children have access to the books. "If we plant enough seeds of animal compassion with the next generation, then great things will happen. We need to make sure a child's natural love for animals is retained

and not conditioned out of them," says Nicole.

Like many start-up businesses, Nicole turned to crowd funding to help with initial book production costs. "The experience was nerve wracking but incredibly rewarding," says Nicole.

"The support from the vegan community was wonderful. Not only were people pre-ordering books and sharing information on social media, but vegans from different parts of the world were making contact to offer editing services, or help with distribution."

Copies of **Ella** can still be pre-ordered through Indiegogo (just search for 'Ella'), and from August they will also be available on the Tusk Books website — www.tuskbooks.com and through a range of stock lists, also listed on the Tusk Books website.

Ella



Nicole Godwin and Demelsa Haughton