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Anything But Ordinary Addie: The True Story Of Adelaide Herrmann, Queen Of Magic



Synopsis

Be astonished and dazzled by the true story of Adelaide Herrmann, the Queen of Magic! Some girls are perfectly happy never doing anything out of the ordinary. But Addie was anything but ordinary. She longed for thrills and excitement! At a time when a young lady appearing onstage was considered most unusual, Addie defied convention and became a dancer. And when she married the world-famous magician Herrmann the Great, she knew she had to be part of his show. Addie wanted to shock and dazzle! She would do anything to draw the crowds, even agree to be shot out of a cannon. But when Herrmann the Great died, Addie couldn't disappoint her loyal fans — the show had to go on. What could she do? She would perform the show all by herself! From the creators of Mesmerized, this rollicking romp tells the true story of one fearless magician's rise to glory, featuring exquisitely lavish illustrations by Jacopo Bruno. Extensive back matter, including instructions for performing one of Addie's original tricks, makes this a dazzling celebration of one of the first female conjurers in show business.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 510 (What's this?)

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #480,269 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #41 in Books > Children's Books > Activities, Crafts & Games > Games > Magic #104 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Performing Arts #338 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Women

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

Customer Reviews

I've developed a great admiration for authors and illustrators who take on biographies in the picture book format. Decisions about what to include and what not to in a format that does not encourage long-windedness. Creating an accurate picture of a real person in such a short amount of space

makes for a real balancing act. But this one, by Mara Rockliff and Iacopo Bruno was absolutely delightful. Not only is the woman an interesting one but the presentation makes for a fun read-a-loud and I adored the gorgeous illustrations. Addie proved herself an adventurous woman from the time she was a young child. She wanted to "astonish, shock, and dazzle." And she spent her life doing exactly that. Even before she married a world famous magician, Addie loved to put on a show whether it was dancing, riding a bike or anything else she could come up with. She loved doing magic with her husband, except for that dangerous bullet-catching trick. But when her husband unexpectedly dies, Addie steps forward to help the troupe survive. But who would come see a woman magician? Unless that woman magician were to perform the bullet-catching trick. Bruno's gorgeous illustrations are as luminous as the woman he depicts. Her fiery nature shows in her red hair and lively face. The secondary characters are outlined in white creating the feeling of being on a stage. The bright colors and exciting word choices make this book a great example of a picture book biography that shines.

Summary: Adele Scarsez never wanted to be ordinary. As a young woman she tried dancing and acrobatics, but they didn't quite satisfy her desire to entertain and thrill audiences. Traveling to America, she met a young magician named Alexander Herrmann and asked him to marry her. He agreed, and Addie found her true calling as Adelaide Herrmann, magician. She performed as his assistant for many years. When he died, she knew she needed a way to keep the show going. Addie decided to learn the bullet-catching trick, a bit of magic so dangerous that magicians had been killed performing it. However, Addie succeeded, and her magic show continued for many years. An author's note at the end tells a bit more about Addie, as well as how Mara Rockliff uncovered her story. 48 pages; grades 1-4. Pros: The team that produced last year's *Mesmerized* returns with another tour de force. The story is fascinating, and the illustrations and overall design of the book, with text in a variety of fonts woven in among the pictures, makes this a visual feast. Cons: I would have liked to have understood the bullet-catching trick while reading the story instead of having to go to the website given on the last page to get a description of what it was.

I think this is pretty much a flawless picture book biography. Wonderful word choices, suspense and pacing, a deeper meaning that isn't hammered over the reader's head, fantastic art, and an engaging subject. Even better than *Mesmerized*--which I also loved.

A magical story for children of all ages - as Addie weaves the story keeping you on the edge of your seat.

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