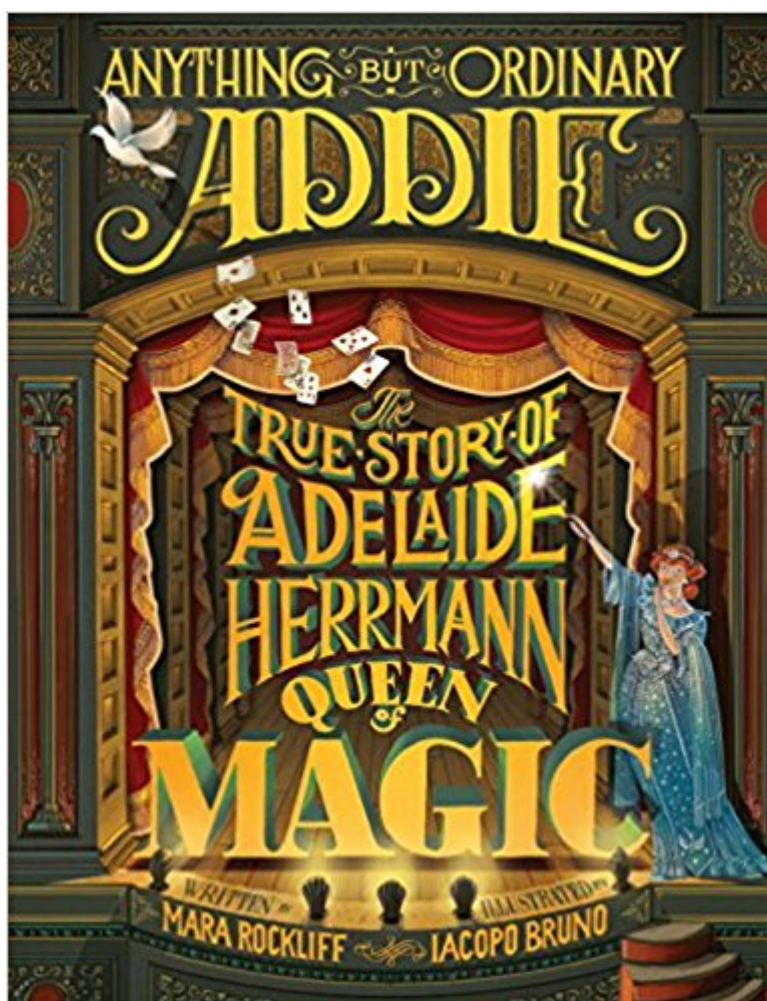


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# Anything But Ordinary Addie: The True Story Of Adelaide Herrmann, Queen Of Magic



## 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?)

Hardcover: 48 pages

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Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 9.5 x 0.4 x 12.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #519,095 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in [Books > Children's Books > Activities, Crafts & Games > Games > Magic](#) #105 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Performing Arts](#) #402 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Women](#)

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer Reviews

Gr 2 • From the team responsible for *Mesmerized: How Ben Franklin Solved a Mystery That Baffled All of France* (Candlewick, 2015) comes another excellent picture book biography, this time about someone less well known but truly intriguing. Adelaide Herrmann

(1853–1932) never wanted to be like other girls: she was determined to stand out and dazzle the world. She secretly joined a dancing troupe, scandalizing family and friends. When that got old, the young woman learned to ride a bicycle, which eventually led to her meeting and marrying Alexander Herrmann, aka Herrmann the Great, a famous magician. Addie began working as Alexander's assistant and took over the act when he died. Life was never ordinary again. Rockliff tells Addie's story with panache, the words bouncing across the page, with varying sizes and typefaces to highlight and emphasize important ideas. Bruno's pencil and digitally colored illustrations are a homage to another time, with individuals and scenes made to look like cutout paper dolls and layered onto backgrounds. A detailed author's note provides further details about Herrmann's life and story, which was lost to the world for a long time. VERDICT Picture book biographies about groundbreaking women are always welcome, and this one is sure to please readers, young and old. •Jody Kopple, Shady Hill School, Cambridge, MA

Velvet stage curtains, ship's rigging, fellow audience members—all overlap the featured artwork, lending excitement and immediacy to this little known tale. The rich colors and embellished fonts, meanwhile, create a grandiose effect fitting for Adelaide's life in the spotlight. Adelaide's independent spirit is inspiring, whether she's creating scandal by proposing to a man or donning risqué costumes...Pure magic. •Booklist (starred review) Rockliff tells Addie's story with panache, the words bouncing across the page, with varying sizes and typefaces to highlight and emphasize important ideas.

Bruno's pencil and digitally colored illustrations are a homage to another time...Picture book biographies about groundbreaking women are always welcome, and this one is sure to please readers, young and old. •School Library Journal (starred review) Rockliff and Bruno (Mesmerized) reunite for another spectacular book about the often illusory world of human showmanship. Standout illustrations lend a magical aura as they spotlight the life of female magician Adelaide Herrmann...This charming and visually dramatic read gives children a front-row seat for the story of an ahead-of-her-time entertainer. •Publishers Weekly (starred review) The art makes the piece much more than simply a humorous biography of a spunky woman artist; readers get a taste of elite and artistic lives during Addie's lifetime. Addie's willingness to perform the feared-and-revered bullet-catching trick to retain popularity after Alex's death is a perfect way to end the entertaining, true story. An out-of-the-ordinary biography. •Kirkus Reviews This is the true story of Adelaide Herrmann, born Adele Scarsez in London, 1853. Not much has been published about the woman who practiced magic for 65 years, yet her story comes

to life in this bold and brilliantly illustrated biography...The combination of illuminating text paired with magnificent illustrations ensures that this will be a popular book in every collection. •School Library Connection Playful borders •velvet curtains, circus tent flaps, ship rigging •frame each spread, and thick white outlines create the look of paper-doll cutouts. It's a memorable and, yes, I'll say it, magical picture-book biography that will captivate audiences, young and old. •Horn Book Rockliff's spare, but exuberant narrative and Bruno's lavish illustrations speed through the story of the girl who began as a ballerina, moved on to bicycle tricks, met and married world-famous magician Alexander Hermann and joined his magic act. •The Buffalo News A fascinating true story of the fearless magician, Adelaide Herrmann, this choice oozes with courage and determination. •Books to Borrow...Books to Buy (Kendal A. Rautzhan column)

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 Jacopo Bruno was absolutely delightful. Not only is the woman an interesting one but the presentation makes for a fun read-aloud 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.

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

The 8-year-old girl I bought this for just loved this book!!

While I think the book is very well written, gorgeous, an entertaining and engaging story, and I love this author's work .... I think it should bear a warning so that unsuspecting parents and teachers are aware. Spoiler alert: The key event is a bullet-catching trick in which soldiers shoot guns at her. She is scared to do it initially because others have died. So the reader learns it's dangerous. And of course we technically know it's a "trick." But it makes me wonder if young children might try to imitate it or otherwise consider using guns as "magic" or play. As a teacher and parent, I don't want to plant those ideas in children's heads and would not read it to a class. I doubt whether a school would approve of it being shared in the classroom. I know others might feel differently. Just be forewarned.

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.

Anything But Ordinary Addie: The True Story of Adelaide Herrmann Queen of Magic by Mara Rockliff, illustrated by Iacopo Bruno Candlewick Press, 2016 Picture Book Biography 44 pages Recommended for grades 2+ Stunning illustrations! The author explains how this book was born after she went looking for books on female stage magicians for her daughter to read, and discovered that none existed! From that sad fact comes a gorgeous tribute to one of the greatest female magicians of all time. Addie is an inspiration in more than her magic-she is a survivor, a woman that perseveres through hardship, coming out stronger on the other side. A biography to be

shared!

My 7-year-old daughter loves magic and she puts on little magic shows for us often so I knew this book would be a big hit for her. I was right but what I did not expect was that I would love it so much as well. Bruno's illustrations are amazing and beautiful and really add to the upbeat feeling of the story. We loved it from start to finish. I also enjoyed the author's notes at the end about the search for Adie. It actually made me tearful when I read it to my daughter. I am so glad we have Adelaide Herrmann to remember now. I am sure she would be pleased with this boisterously fun book!

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.

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