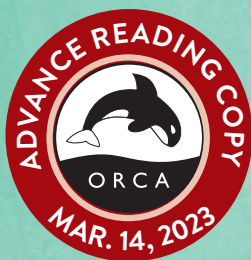


The Audacious Life of Artist
Rosa Bonheur

No Horses in the House!



Mireille Messier

Illustrated by
Anna Bron

I will draw!

ROSA BONHEUR LOVED TO DRAW ANIMALS. She was good at it too! Unfortunately, in nineteenth-century France, girls were not allowed to be artists. But Rosa didn't let that stop her. In this fictionalized account of her early life in Paris, Rosa studies art at home, bringing a menagerie of animals into the apartment to study up close. When she is kicked out of the horse market for sneaking in wearing boys' clothing, Rosa must think creatively to challenge the rules in pursuit of her dream of becoming a world-class realist painter and artist.

Based on the incredible life of the pioneering, feminist and queer artist Rosa Bonheur, this charming story depicts Rosa's early years and her drive to fight for her dreams.

Mireille Messier is a Montreal-born, Ottawa-raised and now Toronto-based award-winning children's writer with a background in broadcasting and theater. Mireille has published over thirty books, some in French, others in English, for children of all ages, including the nonfiction picture book *Sergeant Billy: The True Story of the Goat Who Went to War*. Her picture book *The Branch* was nominated for Shining Willow and Blue Spruce Awards and the Governor General's Literary Award. Before becoming an author, Mireille worked as a television and radio host, a scriptwriter, a book reviewer and a voice actress. Sometimes she still does those things. Mireille lives in Toronto with five cats, two birds and over one hundred goldfish (but no horses!).

Anna Bron was born in Russia and immigrated to Canada when she was nine years old. She was lucky enough to have parents who nurtured and encouraged a career in art. She attended art school in her teens, and then went on to study traditional hand-drawn animation at Sheridan College. Not long after graduating she became a freelance illustrator and animator, working on a broad range of projects, from illustrating children's books and magazines to animating, designing and directing commercials and short films. She lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

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No Horses in the House! The Audacious Life of Artist Rosa Bonheur

Author: Mireille Messier

Illustrator: Anna Bron

March 14, 2023

A delightful picture book based on the true story of Rosa Bonheur, the nineteenth-century French artist who defied gender expectations and changed the art world with her realistic animal paintings.

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8.75 x 10.75"

32 pages

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KEY SELLING POINTS

- Many kids enjoy drawing animals, just like Rosa! She became famous for her oversized, realistic animal paintings and was able to make a career from it at a time when society did not accept women as artists.
- 2022 marked the 200th anniversary of Rosa Bonheur's birth.
- Depicts a strong female role model who chose to live her life the way she wanted, despite gender expectations.
- Playful, vibrant illustrations bring a youthful take to this fictionalized biography.
- Also available in French as *Pas de chevaux dans la maison!*

PHOTO CREDIT: IAN PARTRIDGE



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mireille Messier is a Montreal-born, Ottawa-raised and now Toronto-based award-winning children's writer with a background in broadcasting and theater. Mireille has published over thirty books, some in French, others in English, for children of all ages, including the nonfiction picture book *Sergeant Billy: The True Story of the Goat Who Went to War*. Her picture book *The Branch* was nominated for Shining Willow and Blue Spruce Awards and the Governor General's Literary Award. Before becoming an author, Mireille worked as a television and radio host, a scriptwriter, a book reviewer and a voice actress. Sometimes she still does those things. Mireille lives in Toronto with five cats, two birds and over one hundred goldfish (but no horses!).

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDREW WHYTE



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Anna Bron was born in Russia and immigrated to Canada when she was nine years old. She was lucky enough to have parents who nurtured and encouraged a career in art. She attended art school in her teens, and then went on to study traditional hand-drawn animation at Sheridan College. Not long after graduating she became a freelance illustrator and animator, working on a broad range of projects, from illustrating children's books and magazines to animating, designing and directing commercials and short films. She lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

PROMOTIONAL PLANS INCLUDE

- Print and online advertising campaigns
- Promotion at national and regional school, library and trade conferences
- Extensive ARC distribution, including NetGalley
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- Outreach in Orca newsletters

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No Horses in the House!

*The Audacious Life of
Artist Rosa Bonheur*

Mireille Messier

Illustrated by
Anna Bron

ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS

France, 1829

Once there was a girl named Rosa who loved to draw animals.





Every morning she put on her bloomers, petticoat and dress and headed outside to draw. She drew cats and dogs, goats and cows, rabbits and ducks. But what she most loved to draw was horses. Rosa could draw horses all day long.



“You must learn to read!” said her mother.

“But Maman, I just want to draw!”

So her mother devised a clever game. Rosa would learn to read by drawing an animal for each letter of the alphabet. It worked.



As Rosa grew older, she kept on drawing.

“You must learn to sew!” said her father.

“No, Papa, I just want to draw.”

Many teachers tried to show Rosa how to sew, embroider, cook and garden—the things other girls her age did. This did not go well.



Eventually her father agreed to teach Rosa how to draw, paint and sculpt at home, like her brothers. This went much better!





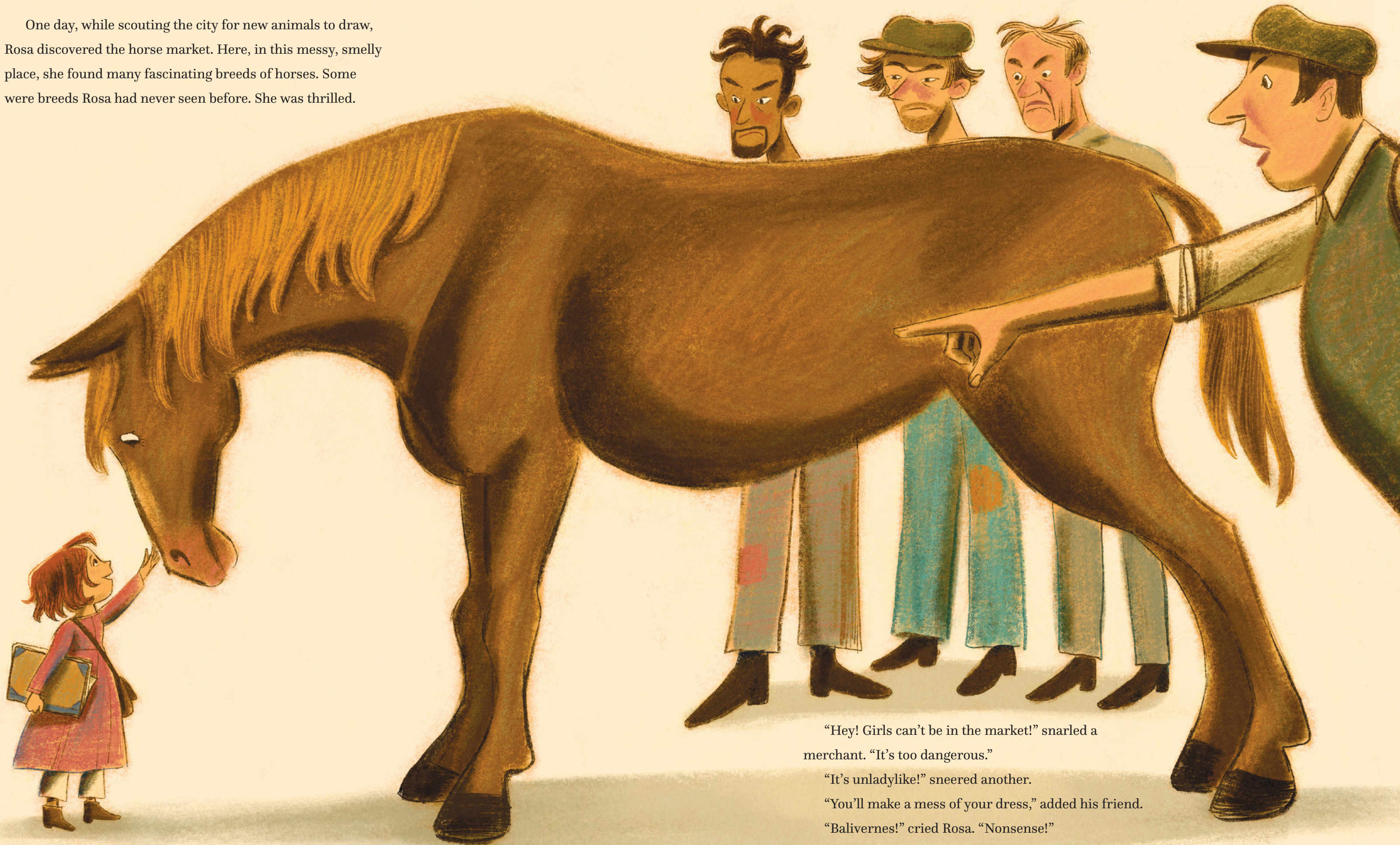
But the family's neighbors and friends didn't approve of how Rosa was spending her days. They frowned and said, "You can't be an artist!" "Why not?" Rosa asked. "Because you are a girl."

Rosa did not agree—she would be an artist.
The first girl to be an artist on her street...in her
arrondissement...in all of Paris even. And she would be
the best one they had ever seen.

Rosa studied animals, drawing them day and night.
Their eyes. Their fur. Their muscles. Their feathers.
Every pen and paintbrush stroke took her work closer
to perfection.



One day, while scouting the city for new animals to draw, Rosa discovered the horse market. Here, in this messy, smelly place, she found many fascinating breeds of horses. Some were breeds Rosa had never seen before. She was thrilled.



“Hey! Girls can’t be in the market!” snarled a merchant. “It’s too dangerous.”

“It’s unladylike!” sneered another.

“You’ll make a mess of your dress,” added his friend.

“Balivernes!” cried Rosa. “Nonsense!”



Despite her protests, the merchants
dragged her away, warning her not to return.

Rosa stayed home, but she missed the horses. Without them, how could she paint eyes that looked like real eyes? And a mane that flowed like a real mane? She needed to sketch from life.

So she made do with other, smaller animals. Bit by bit, Rosa filled her family's apartment with dogs...cats...birds...rabbits...ducks. One day she even brought home a goat.



But what Rosa really wanted was a horse.
“No horses in the house!” warned her father.

“YOU AGAIN? Girls CANNOT dress like boys!” said the policeman.
“This is against the law! Out!”



“If the horses can’t come to me, then I will go to the horses!” Rosa hissed.
She dressed in her brother’s clothing, grabbed her paintbrushes and slipped off
to the market.

Nobody noticed the young “boy” quietly sketching in a shadowy corner.
Until...



“What about them?” Rosa pointed. “Why can these men dress like women?”

“They have a special permission from the police.”

“Then I will get a special permission too!”

The policeman laughed. “Such a permit has never been given to a girl,” he said.

“Balivernes!”



It wasn't easy, but Rosa petitioned and pleaded and pressed. A few weeks later she returned to the horse market with her paintbrushes in her hand...and a special permit allowing her to dress any way she wanted. Now no one could stop her.

When Rosa exhibited her paintings for the first time at the prestigious Salon de Paris, people rushed to see the work of this peculiar pant-wearing, animal-loving, rule-defying young lady.

“They are so lifelike!”

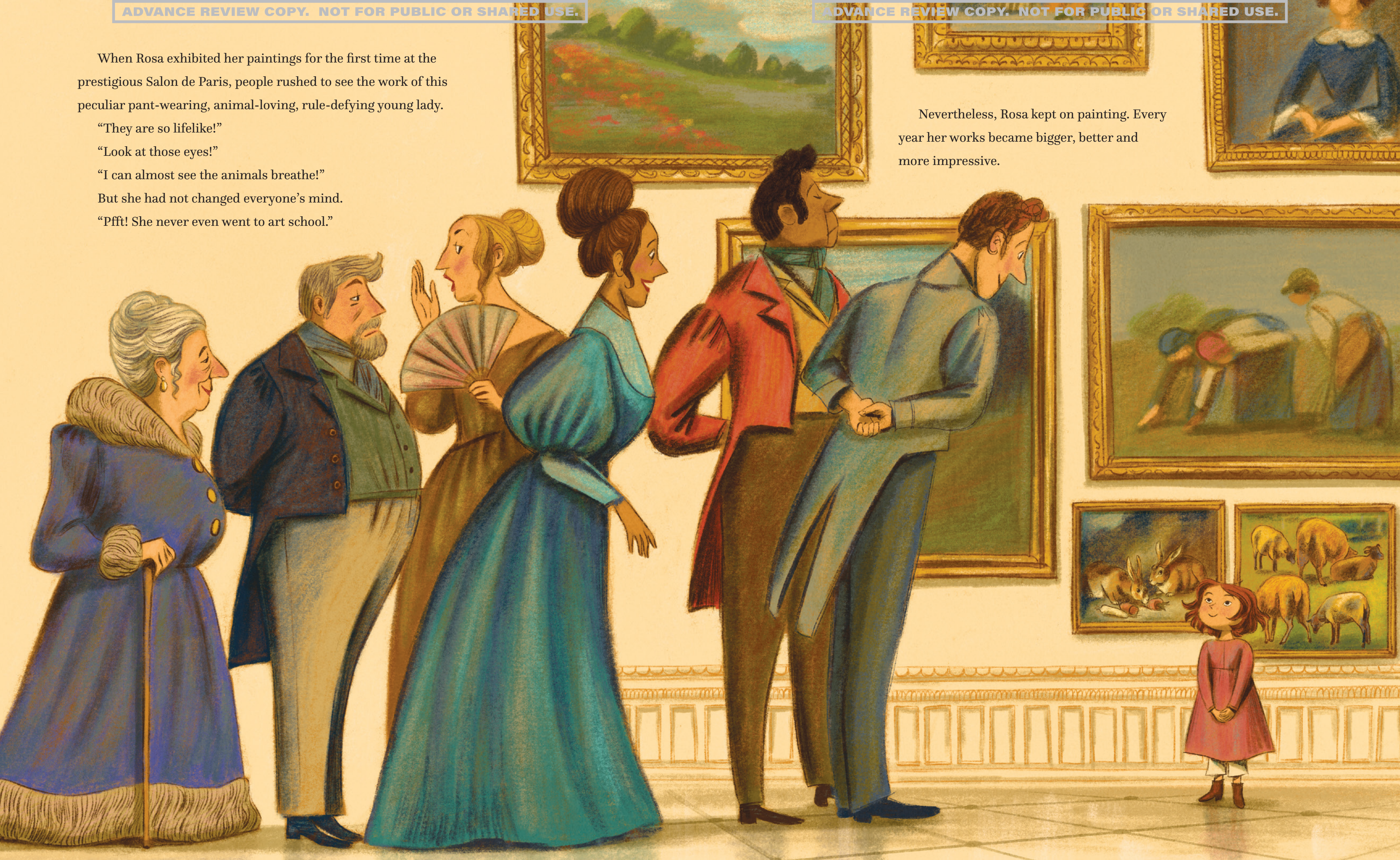
“Look at those eyes!”

“I can almost see the animals breathe!”

But she had not changed everyone’s mind.

“Pfft! She never even went to art school.”

Nevertheless, Rosa kept on painting. Every year her works became bigger, better and more impressive.



Then, one year, her newest painting was so beautiful
that kings and queens came from faraway lands to see it.

“Introducing *The Horse Fair*, by Rosa Bonheur!”

Art lovers were in awe.

“Magnifique!”

“Stunning!”

“Splendid!”

And the girl who loved to draw animals became
one of the most famous artists in France.





Author's Note

Rosa Bonheur's life was far from picture perfect. She was a girl who loved and created art at a time when her gender dictated that she could not be an artist.

Luckily, Rosa Bonheur was also stubborn as a mule!

Because she was a girl, she was denied a formal art education, and she wasn't allowed to go where she wanted or dress how she pleased. And when her paintings were exhibited, other artists belittled her work. Yet she remained determined and lived her life on her own terms.

After many twists and turns, Rosa became the most famous female artist of her day!

Sadly, Rosa Bonheur's art style, realism, fell out of fashion after she died, and Rosa's legacy was largely forgotten.

Rosa's masterpieces are still in museums across the world today, just waiting to inspire a new generation of rule-defying artists!

Rosa Bonheur Milestones



For my mother, Jeanne, who took me to the Louvre and taught me to love art.

—M.M.

For Nancy Crawford, Julia Bennett and Peter Sarganis,
the most brilliant art teachers.

—A.B.

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