

## The Incredible Nellie Bly: Journalist, Investigator, Feminist, and Philanthropist

**Luciana Cimino**

**Sergio Algozzino, Illustrator**

**Laura Garofalo, Translator**

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Recovering from pneumonia, Nellie Bly accepts an intrepid journalism student's requests to meet and discuss her career in Luciana Cimino's graphic biography *The Incredible Nellie Bly*.

In 1921, to celebrate the Columbia University School of Journalism's ten-year anniversary, a call for articles went out for student writers to submit work for the college paper. Miriam, a student of the college, intended to write about Nellie Bly's undercover investigation at a women's mental institution thirty years prior, the first of its kind by a woman journalist. Though Nellie was not receiving guests, Miriam's persistence paid off, and Nellie agreed to see her. The aspiring journalist peppered the veteran with questions about her life and journalistic work.

With Miriam's conversations with Nellie as a framing device, the book allows Nellie to tell her own story. Though contrived, Miriam's imagined questions create a connection to Nellie that brings forward her personality. The introduction gives a more comprehensive account of her life than the book proper does, but the highlights shared within the story are still a complete portrait of the influential journalist.

Sergio Algozzino's full-color art complements and expands the story by illustrating specific aspects of it while filling in background information. The book's full-page renderings of articles written by and about Nellie Bly are well drawn, if confusing when dialogue boxes are superimposed on them. Double-page spreads highlight Bly's major accomplishments, as well as some moments she kept to herself, including the beginning of her trip around the world à la Phileas Fogg, and her assignment on the Serbian front in World War I.

This graphic biography combines its artwork with an able narrative to show what made Nellie Bly so incredible.

DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (March / April 2021)

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