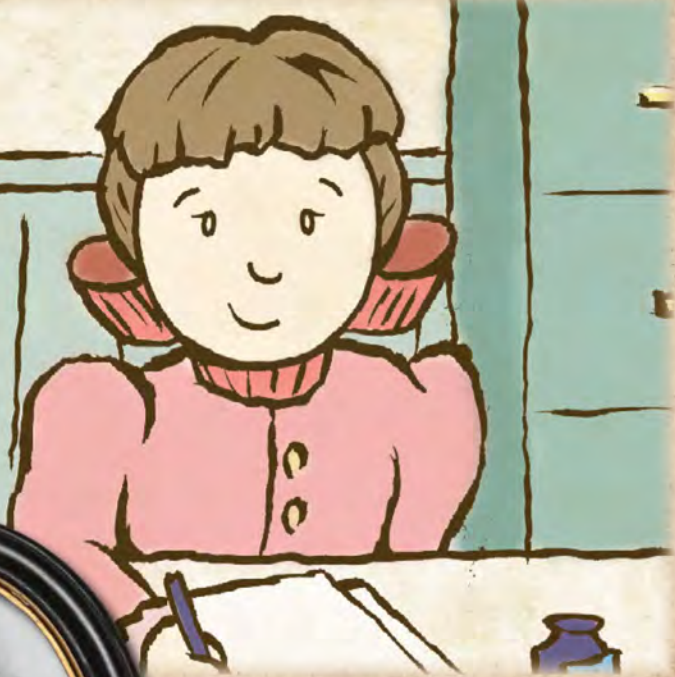


Before They Were Famous

Nellie Bly



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Illustrated by Bobbie Houser



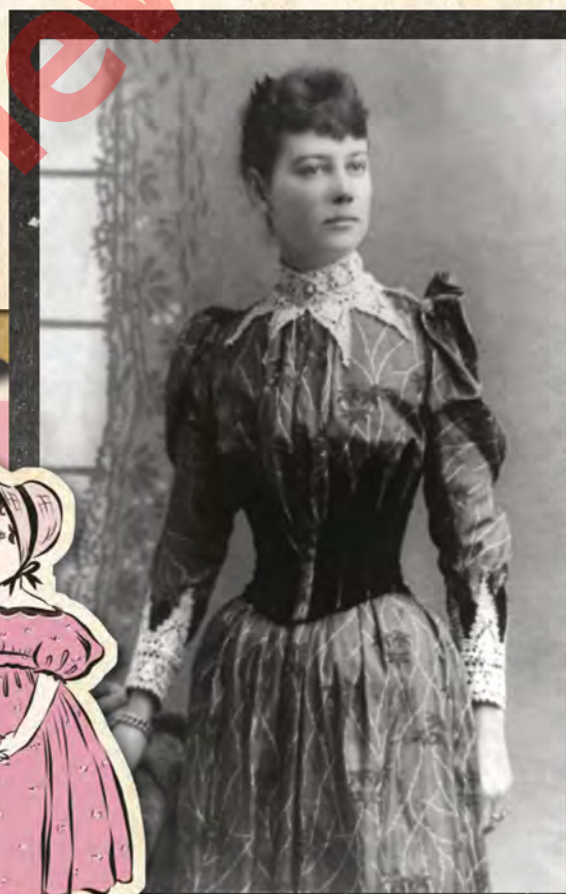
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A Nervous Beginning

Elizabeth Cochran was nervous.

She was 20 years old, and she had never finished high school. Over the last four years, Pink, as her mother called her, had worked at one **dead-end** job after another.



Fun Facts

Nellie was known as Pink because when she was little, her mother always dressed her in pink dresses.



And yet here she was speaking with George Madden, the editor of the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



The newspaper had been running articles making fun of women for wanting to have careers.

Many believed women should stay home and cook and clean.



Fun Facts

Although Nellie called herself Lonely Orphan Girl, she wasn't an orphan. Her father had died, but her mother was alive and well.

That kind of thinking had made Pink mad. So she had written a letter to the *Dispatch* telling them exactly what was wrong with their **old-fashioned** ideas. She had signed it, *Lonely Orphan Girl*.



Surprisingly, Mr. Madden liked her letter so much that he had wanted to meet her. And now that they were talking, he wanted to hire her to write an article about women in the business world.

Pink was surprised and delighted.



News



Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania during the late 1800s

Fun Facts

The *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, a leading newspaper in Pittsburgh, had been founded in 1846.



Moving On

When Nellie got back, she wasn't sure if Pittsburgh had gotten smaller or she had gotten bigger. Either way, she didn't want to stay. There were bigger issues to cover and bigger places to cover them.

It was time for Nellie Bly to uncover them for herself.



Fun Facts

Nellie arrived in New York City in 1886. It took her a few months before she found work as a reporter.



Nellie Bly was one of the first people, male or female, to go undercover to investigate wrongdoings and then write about them. She moved to New York after her time in Pittsburgh and got a job reporting for the New York World. Her most famous articles were written about the terrible conditions that existed in a local institution for women with mental illnesses. To expose these conditions, Nellie pretended to be struggling with her mental health, and then she lived in the institution for ten days. In a different kind of adventure, she later traveled around the world in 72 days, the fastest time ever up to that point.

Nellie retired from reporting in 1895 and died at the age of 56 in 1922.

