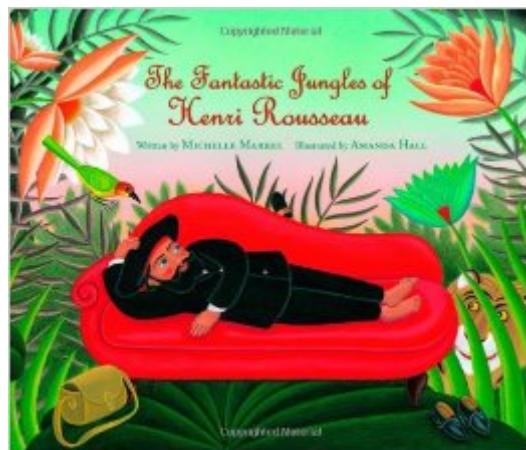


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# The Fantastic Jungles Of Henri Rousseau



## **Synopsis**

Henri Rousseau wanted to be an artist. But he had no formal training. Instead, he taught himself to paint. He painted until the jungles and animals and distant lands in his head came alive on the space of his canvases. Henri Rousseau endured the harsh critics of his day and created the brilliant paintings that now hang in museums around the world. Michelle Markel's vivid text, complemented by the vibrant illustrations of Amanda Hall, artfully introduces young readers to the beloved painter and encourages all readers to persevere despite all odds. Watch the trailer:

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 800L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 34 pages

Publisher: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers (June 11, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802853641

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Product Dimensions: 10 x 0.3 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars Â See all reviewsÂ (33 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #49,835 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art > Painting #16 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art > History #34 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Art

Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## **Customer Reviews**

I'm not ashamed to say it, though perhaps I should be. Still, it's true. Though I grew up in the middle class with a good education and a stint at a liberal arts college there are huge gaping gaps in my knowledge that have consistently been filled in over the years by children's books. I know that I am not alone in this. When I worked in NYPL's Central Children's Room we had any number of regular adult patrons that would come in seeking children's books on a variety of different topics so that they could learn about them in a non-threatening fashion. At its best a children's book takes a complex subject and synthesizes it down to its most essential parts. Simple enough. But if you're dealing with a picture book biography, it then has to turn a human life in a cohesive (child friendly) story. No mean feat. So when I saw this picture book bio of the artist Henri Rousseau I was

immediately arrested by its art. Then I sort of came to realize that when it came to the man himself, I knew nothing. Next to nothing. I may never win a Jeopardy round or a game of Trivial Pursuit but thanks to great books like this one I may someday attain the education of a seven-year-old. There are worse fates in the world. These days, seven-year-olds get all the good stuff. Your everyday average forty-year-old toll collector doesn't usually drop everything to become a painter, yet that's exactly what one did back in the 19th century. His name was Henri Rousseau and though he never took an art course in his life (art lessons aren't exactly available on a toll collector's budget) he does his research, looks at art, sits himself down, and begins to paint. He's incredibly excited after his first big exhibition but his reviews say mostly "mean things" about his art.

The life and art of French artist Henri Rousseau are vividly brought to life in a recent release by author Michelle Markel and illustrator Amanda Hall. Rousseau is best known for his post-impressionist paintings depicting jungle scenes, although he never left France. Rousseau, we learn from Markel's succinct yet poetic text, wants to be an artist, even though he is 40 years old, a toll collector, and has never had any art training. "Why? Because he loves nature. Because when he strolls through the parks of Paris, it's like the flowers open their hearts, the trees spread their arms, and the sun is a blushing ruby, all for him." With no money for art lessons, Rousseau studies the paintings at the Louvre, photographs, illustrations, animals at the zoo, and leaves, plants and flowers from the local botanical garden, where he is particularly enraptured by the tropical plants. Although his work is ridiculed by the art critics, Henri perseveres, spending all his money on art supplies and supplementing his income by giving music lessons. Although the art establishment continues to belittle his work, several younger artists, including the already well-known Picasso, eventually recognize his talent. Now, of course, his paintings are in museums world-wide, and he is recognized as an artistic genius. The illustrations by Amanda Hall pay tribute to Rousseau's "primitive" style, with its flattened shapes, vivid colors, detailed leaves and plants, and unusual perspective. Many of the illustrations draw directly on Rousseau's paintings for inspiration, and adults will recognize some of his most famous works such as "Sleeping Gypsy." Even the endpapers echo Rousseau's easily recognizable style, with its jungle leaves, flowers, and animals.

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