THE SIX FOOT RATS

Written and Illustrated by
Rebecca Gibbs
The six foot tall rats are our heroes.  
They are the reason we're here. 
Spending our days being tested upon, 
(and trying to hide our fear)

I think of those six foot rats often, 
while I'm lingering in this lab. 
I test beauty products and medicine, 
to help make their lives really fab.

I get plenty of food and water, 
and I have lots of friends with me too. 
And though it's a painful and testing life, 
it's worth it, the work that we do.
Wait. You’re kidding? It’s for them?
Humans are nothing like rodents, or they weren’t, the last time I saw. They do not have fur or whiskers; they do not have tails or claws. Look at how different our species are. It really is quite insane, to think our two bodies would ever respond to medicines in the same way.
You’re telling me that they test stuff on us, to see if it’s safe for them? How many times is that accurate? Really? One time out of ten?

But wait, I hear it’s actually worse. They test on more animals too. Horses and rabbits, pigs and dogs. Even birds – practically a whole zoo.
After all, it’s not crazy to understand
(and this I will loudly proclaim)
Although we’re both mammals with feelings
Our bodies are just not the same.

For as you are not a six foot tall rat
(and it’s clear you will never be)
we’ll always react in quite different ways,
so there’s no point testing on me!
The Real Story of Archie and Monty

The first part of Archie and Monty’s lives remain a mystery to us. We have no idea where they were born or what conditions they lived in. We also don’t know what experiments they had to endure. All we can do is assume by their odd behavior, that they didn’t have the best experiences with humans in their earlier life.

Archie and Monty were rescued from a research facility in the North Island of New Zealand and taken to the Black Sheep Animal Sanctuary in Otaki. They were rescued with several of their siblings. We assumed that they were from the same litter of rats.

Once Archie and Monty arrived at the Black Sheep Animal Sanctuary, their entire lives changed. They were now free from painful and uncomfortable experiments. Instead they experienced kindness, love and compassion from volunteers who worked at the sanctuary.

Once NZAVS heard about the rescue, we immediately got in touch with the sanctuary so we could give these rats a much needed forever home.

It was at that moment that Archie and Monty were picked to come and live with the NZAVS team and become ambassadors for their friends, relatives and non relatives who were, and still are, trapped in labs today.

Archie and Monty travelled from Otaki via bus. They crossed Cook Strait on the ferry and were dropped right to the door of NZAVS. Quite a big journey for two small rats!
Have you heard about the Six Foot Rats?

What happens when a hard-working lab rat has his world turned upside down?

The Six-Foot Rats, with its delightful illustrations, introduces children to the important issue of animal testing without giving them nightmares.

I highly recommend this imaginative and informative book.

— Dr. Jane Goodall

About the Illustrator

Rebecca Gibbs is a Teacher, Illustrator and Designer. You can see more of her work at www.rebeccagibbsillustration.com