

LORGNETTE

Quarterly Review of Children's and Young Adults' Books

Author

Ray, Mary Lyn

Illustrator

Illustrated by Giselle Potter

Reviewer

Bustos, Charlene

Pages

Unpaged

Price

\$18.99

ISBN

978-1-4814-7982-0

Publisher & Date

Beach Lane Books, 2023

Classification

Nonfiction (979.4 or biography)

Grade Level

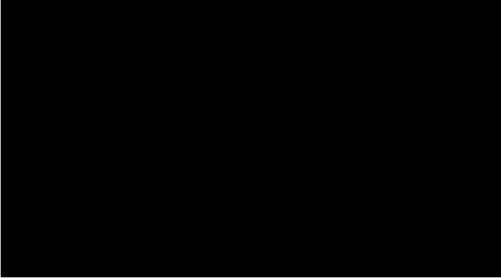
45294

Book Review: ONCE UPON A FAIRY TALE HOUSE: THE TRUE STORY OF FOUR SISTERS AND THE MAGIC THEY BUILT

Do you like fairy tales? What about the houses in the fairy tales? Would you like to live in one? Four sisters, Mildred, Harriett, Brenda, and Wilma, dream of that. Growing up in the 1930s during the Depression era, they love fairy tales and love creating their own stories at night before bedtime. They imagine fairy-tale houses and pretend they live in them. As they grow older, each goes into her own career at a time when most women don't work outside the home. Mildred is an artist, Harriet is an architect, Brenda is a banker, and Wilma is in business. After years as a successful artist and decorator, Mildred's style doesn't suit those who want "modern," so she goes back home where her sisters live. They decide that Mildred needs her own space to paint, so Harriett sketches a studio and hires a contractor to build it. The sisters decide it should have the makings of the fairy-tale houses they dreamed of as children. That is the beginning of the Moody Cottages in Montecito, California--small 1- or 2-bedroom cottages with little windows, a storybook door, and fireplaces. They are filled with furniture from estate sales that fit into the historic timeframe. The sisters all follow suit with Harriett designing and Mildred decorating up to 30 similarly sized cottages. Brenda and Wilma keep track of the business and records. The cottages sell, families move in, and the fairy tale continues.

An excellent Author's Note at the back gives more of the details including the history and facts about the Moody sisters, who were all spinsters. Illustrations by Giselle Potter are brightly displayed watercolor with realistic





images of the sisters from childhood to adulthood. There are many double-page spreads with few white spaces. This is a neat opportunity for students to do research! One can find more information online about the Moody Sisters' cottages, how they've been modernized, and how they are still providing "magical homes" for the current day.

