

The background of the entire page is a gradient from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. Overlaid on this is a complex network of white circular nodes of varying sizes, connected by thin, light purple lines. Some nodes are larger and act as hubs, with many lines radiating from them. The overall effect is that of a digital or neural network.

# The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets

Written by Sarah Miller

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Published by sangstrading

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# The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets

By Sarah Miller

## The Miracle And Tragedy Of The Dionne Quintuplets

When they were born on May 28, 1934, weighing a grand total of just over 13 pounds, no one expected them to live so much as an hour. Overnight, Yvonne, Annette, Cécile, Angèle, and Marie Dionne captivated the world, defying medical history with every breath they took.

## The Miracle And The Sleeper

In an effort to protect them from hucksters and showmen, the Ontario government took custody of the five identical babies, sequestering them in a private, custom-built hospital across the road from their family — and then, in a stunning act of hypocrisy, proceeded to exploit them for the next nine years. The Dionne Quintuplets became a more popular attraction than Niagara Falls, ogled through one-way screens by sightseers as they splashed in their wading pool at the center of a tourist hotspot known as Quintland. Their faces sold everything from Baby Ruth candy bars to Colgate toothpaste.

## The Miracle And The Sleeper Meaning

In this masterful work of narrative nonfiction, Sarah Miller examines the lives of five identical sisters forced to endure the most publicized childhood in history — and how they survived their turbulent teenage years to forge identities of their own. Impeccably researched, with photos of the Dionnes from birth through adulthood, this is an enthralling, heartbreaking portrait of a unique sisterhood, imbued with the astonishing resilience of the human spirit.

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This is a fascinating and tragic story about five girls who basically ended up becoming a sideshow attraction as the wards of the Canadian government. The Dionne Quintuplets, as they came to be known, were five girls born to some low-income French-Canadians. They were two months premature and collectively weighed around 13 pounds. Nobody believed they would survive, at least, not all of them, but due to collective efforts from doctors and

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Therein lies the rub-- their survival was part of what made them so famous, because healthcare back then was not great, especially for women's health and natal care. Quintuplets didn't survive. The girls were "kidnapped" (their words, and their parents') from their family and raised in the public view, raised up Lion King style for the paying public's admiration, or else kept in an enclosed play area while (also paying) onlookers observed, Truman Show style.

Eventually, the girls were given back to their family, parents Oliva and Elzire, but their parents were exhausted and resentful of the ordeal, and later, the girls claimed they weren't treated well. Elzire, their mother, allegedly looked for reasons to be short with them and occasionally used physical corrective methods. Oliva, on the other hand, they claimed sexually abused them, and made them terrified to be

## The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets

alone with them. A statement that the Dionnes' other children mostly denied, although it seems at least one of them had observed enough suspicious behavior to be slightly credulous.

Reading this book was quite the rollercoaster. At first, I felt sorry for the parents, for the way they were mocked and made fun of by unsympathetic newspapers. Later on in the book, I read the girls' accusations against their parents with a shock that was like being splashed with cold water. I felt sorry for the girls, whose childhoods were essentially taken away from them; fame is a heavy burden for a child, especially when the guardians are the ones lining their pockets from the gains. Later in life, they also suffered-- not just from the abuse which may have taken place, but also from corrupt guardianship that resulted in their trustfund being leached by the government, their parents, the doctor who "saved" them and then took all the credit, and basically anyone else who had access to it and saw the girls' money as an easy write-off. They never got a break, and that is truly awful.

I had heard references to the Dionne Quintuplets and seen some of the ephemera associated with them without actually recognizing what it was. There's also a Simpsons episode that appears to mock the financial straits of the parents and greediness of their guardians, which I believe is called 'Eight Misbehavin''. Reading this book gave me context for that. I think if you're interested in biographies and the effects of fame on children, you would be interested in this book, too. It's definitely not an easy read, emotionally, but I was too fascinated to put it down. Also, there are two sections of pictures, which I always enjoy in a nonfiction book about history. I had an ARC, so they were not super high quality (printed on thin paper), but I imagine they're going to look great in the finished copies, as even in this format, they were interesting to look at and looked fairly high quality.

Thanks to the publisher for sending me a copy in exchange for an honest review!Â

3.5 to 4 stars ...more

## The Miracle And The Sleeper Lyrics

I received a complimentary copy of this novel in exchange for an honest review. I only knew a bit about the Dionne Quintuplets before reading this book by Sarah Miller. I was vaguely interested in the subject matter but adored Miller's earlier book "Caroline" a novelized version of the life of Caroline Ingalls, Laura Ingalls Wilder's mother. I was obsessed with the story of the Dionne quintuplets from the first page. The story itself is unbelievably compelling but the author's ability to craft t I received a complimentary copy of this novel in exchange for an honest review. I only knew a bit about the Dionne Quintuplets before reading this book by Sarah Miller. I was vaguely interested in the subject matter but adored Miller's earlier book "Caroline" a novelized version of the life of Caroline Ingalls, Laura Ingalls Wilder's mother. I was obsessed with the story of the Dionne quintuplets from the first page. The story itself is unbelievably compelling but the author's ability to craft the story made it hard for me to step away from reading this book. If you know nothing about these quints they were born in the 1930s to a poor family who already had five children they could barely afford. The mother, Elzire was still in her early 20s. The odds are these children would not live as they were super tiny and no quintuplets had all survived previously. The fact that the world jumped into action to keep these babies alive by offering milk, incubators, and medical supplies. That is probably the only nice thing that happened to those five baby girls. From there the government became involved to keep them from being taken advantage of and in the process the government teamed up with the doctor who delivered them to take advantage of those girls. They went so far as to keep those girls locked up in a hospital where they were viewed twice a day by thousands of visitors. This seriously read like they were just animals in a cage at the zoo. I don't want to go further into details and honestly you can find most of this story out there online if you dig for it but Sarah Miller did an extraordinarily fine job of researching and writing this book. I couldn't read this fast enough. After reading this one I immediately bought "We Were Five" an out of print book written with the living sisters decades after the events in this book and I purchased Sarah Miller's book about Anastasia Romanov. I want more on the Dionnes and more books by this author. ...more

Olivia and his wife Elzire were not aware that this latest pregnancy would change their lives forever. Elzire gives birth to quintuplets. Yvonne, Annette, Cicile, Emilie, and Marie. Each born in that order. They were born early and not expected to live. These babies would forever be known as the Dionne Quintuplets.

Not only were multiple live births of this degree unheard of, they were also all still alive and that was extraordinary.

What starts out as a paramount effort to keep the babies alive Olivia and his wife Elzire were not aware that this latest pregnancy would change their lives forever. Elzire gives birth to quintuplets. Yvonne, Annette, Cicile, Emilie, and Marie. Each born in that order. They were born early and not expected to live. These babies would forever be known as the Dionne Quintuplets.

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What starts out as a paramount effort to keep the babies alive, in later years is a disaster. No expense was spared to keep the babies alive. Milk was brought in, along as an incubator that worked with hot

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The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets

water. Indoor plumbing, electricity and such did not exist in the Dionne home. The wood stove was kept hot at all times for heating water and keeping the house warm. Eventually a hospital was built across the street for the babies. This is where the division of the home started. The quints from their parents and their other siblings. The Quints would stay in that sterile environment for the next nine years. Strangers were allowed to view the girls. Their parents, only if specific rules were followed. The siblings weren't allowed around their sisters for fear of contagion.

The girls depended on themselves and the nurses that served them. There is no familial bond between their parents and siblings.

When the young girls leave home. They are not ready for the real world. They have led such a sheltered life.

Since the girls were born during the depression, they were a way of people forgetting their problems when they could focus their attention on this miracle of five duplicate babies. The children were exploited for tourism, movies, miscellaneous items that conveyed their likeness. Thousands of people travelled from around the world to see the famous quints. Some of the money did go into a trust for the girls. However, years later it would be found that thousands of dollars were "lost".

This is an extraordinary story of five extraordinary babies that grew up to be extraordinary women. Through their struggles they were able to have a life afterwards.

Wonderfully written! Excellent! ...more

## The Miracle And Morality Of The Market

1.5 STARS

SPOILERS if you don't know the story.

I've read about and saw documentaries on the Dionne Quintuplets since I was a young girl fascinated by the first surviving identical quintuplets. THE MIRACLE AND TRAGEDY OF THE DIONNE QUINTUPLETS by Sarah Miller covers some new territory, goes deeper into the sexual abuse the girls suffered at the hands of their father and confirms the suicide of one quint.

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The story focuses less on the quints and more on the commercialization of the girls from the time they were babies, which was of no interest to me since I already knew those details. I wish Miller had used a more narrative approach to the story, showing instead of telling and giving more of a feel for the quints as individuals. Miller does explore some of the different trajectories the Dionne quintuplets' lives took as adult, though never to the level of giving the story heart and soul.

Watching a documentary will be more interesting than reading THE MIRACLE AND TRAGEDY OF THE DIONNE QUINTUPLETS. I enjoyed the photos at the end of the book, they were well formatted for my kindle which isn't always the case. ...more

E ARC provided by Edelweiss Plus

My father was just an infant when the Dionne quintuplets defied odds by surviving their birth in 1934. Their parents, Oliva and Elzire Dionne, were farmers who were doing just a little better than their neighbors, despite their six children. Elzire's pregnancy had been difficult, and even though it was expensive, she had consulted Dr. Dafoe, the local GP. When she went into labor two months early, the midwives consulted him yet again. When five babies, all very sm

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My father was just an infant when the Dionne quintuplets defied odds by surviving their birth in 1934. Their parents, Oliva and Elzire Dionne, were farmers who were doing just a little better than their neighbors, despite their six children. Elzire's pregnancy had been difficult, and even though it was expensive, she had consulted Dr. Dafoe, the local GP. When she went into labor two months early, the midwives consulted him yet again. When five babies, all very small, were born, he advised keeping them warm and handling them as little as possible, feeding them minute amounts of improvised formula and a little rum if they took a turn! Despite this, they survived, and their care was debated and mismanaged from the beginning. Because of an ill-advised contract with an American company to show them at the World's Fair, custody was given to the government. This helped with the massive amount of care that they needed, and a nursery building was built across the road. Unfortunately, the parents were denied access, at first under the guise that the children were medically fragile, and then just as a matter of course. This was an issue that was constantly fought, but Dafoe managed to triumph. Sadly, the girls were kept separate not only from their family, but from other children, and when they were finally returned to their family at the age of nine, it was difficult for them. Their father arranged for them to be educated by nuns with a few select children, and even their college education was very sheltered. This led to problems in their later lives, and the girls never did feel at home with their family, which is not surprising, especially considering that their father was abusive. This book is a terrific overview of everything Dionne!

**Strengths:** The average twelve year old has NO idea about the Dionne's and how impossibly famous they were at the time! This is a fascinating topic, and Miller covers it beautifully, from caring for the tiny babies to the swirl of tourism that surrounded them... until it didn't. Very complete, well researched, and engaging to read. I can't wait to have this on hand for my students who love nonfiction, and also for those who are up for something different!

**Weaknesses:** I was expecting a novelization, similar to this author's *Miss Spitfire*, and I was envisioning a story told from the perspective of one of the quintes (I was hoping for Marie!). It's hard to be disappointed when so much good factual information is laid out, but I think my expectation made it harder for me to process some of the nitty gritty details about custody and other legal issues. Still a great resource!

**What I really think:** Definitely purchasing! I think that Ms. Miller should retell the story of Karen Killilea for modern middle grade readers. I don't know why that kept popping into my mind as I read this book, but I remember being enthralled with the book *Karen* when I was in middle school, but it is very long and detailed. It is interesting to see how people who were different were treated in the past! ...more

## The Miracle And Mystery Plays

1. I have read in other reviews that this is like an expose of what really happened with the Dionne Quints. I have to disagree vehemently. What I just read is more like tabloid fodder than a nonfiction biography of sisters who never knew normal. It is shocking and appalling and I am horrified that both an editor and a publisher is letting this be "given to the masses" as truth. This just reeks of profit and greediness and more exploitation of a family that has known nothing but that in their who 1. I have read in other reviews that this is like an expose of what really happened with the Dionne Quints. I have to disagree vehemently. What I just read is more like tabloid fodder than a nonfiction biography of sisters who never knew normal. It is shocking and appalling and I am horrified that both an editor and a publisher is letting this be "given to the masses" as truth. This just reeks of profit and greediness and more exploitation of a family that has known nothing but that in their whole lives. Shame on this publisher and shame on the writer.

2. This is not a YA book. It is a book of nonfiction [and I use that term loosely, but we will get to that] that absolutely could be read by anyone. There is NOTHING in this book to indicate that it is specifically for the age group of YA and is misleading. Very few YA readers would find this intriguing - it is in many chapters, a dry read and also is very, very, repetitive. You have no doubt, by the end of the book, who you are supposed to feel sorry for [shocker, it is NOT the quints] because it is hammered at you over and over again [see #4].

3. WHERE. ARE. THE. FOOTNOTES? Where is the source material sited? She lists the books she uses and she does have somewhat of a note section [but without footnotes and a bibliography, HOW do you even follow this?]. The author tries to absolve herself of this in a "note on the dialogue" and assures the reader that "she has not invented any of the dialogue in this book. Everything rendered in quotation marks can be traced to diaries, correspondence, books, newspapers, magazines, newsreels, or film documentaries". Well, that is ALL well in good to state that, but without full source material and footnotes, how can we check that? We cannot. We have to rely on the word of the author [many of the conversations that appear in this book seem as if the author herself was talking with the Quints or their family or the nurses etc, which would be impossible in MANY cases, and is very misleading]. She also states that a note of caution must be used [and this is the HUGE red flag for me and what makes me think this is much more for sensationalism and monetary gain than anything else] in regards to the conversations she has "re-created". Uh, yeah. No kidding. When you abridge conversations or, in my opinion, INVENT conversations, to further your book along, you are no longer writing a nonfiction book and have moved into the fiction world.

4. This is a book of great bias. There seems to be no attempt to be unbiased and in my opinion, the author almost delights in her bias. It is only towards the end of the book, after the parent's have died, that the bias leaves and she truly focuses in on the Quints themselves and what they truly may have suffered. While both sides are culpable and the Ontario government DID overstep their bounds tremendously, the parent's [mostly because of the father's doing] ALSO capitalized on their daughters

[and ultimately, even the mother was guilty of using her daughters to get the response she wanted from the people] and all of the blame cannot be laid at the Ontario governments feet. The fact that the girls, when they were moved as babies, were literally across the street [400 yards] from where they were born and that the parent's had FULL access to them [something they chose not to utilize due to the strictness of the nurses - uh, they were QUINTS. In 1934. It is a miracle they lived to begin with. The nurses and the schedule and the avoidance of germs and illness was wise {in the beginning. It DID get out of control as they got older} and I think the parent's chose ignorance so they could garner sympathy rather than listen to the Drs and educate themselves on just WHY the girls needed round-the-clock care] and chose to basically ignore them speaks volumes to me. The fact that the author does nothing to hide the fact that she sides with the parent's is disturbing and again, in my opinion, unprofessional as an author of nonfiction.

5. I will be looking for other books on the Dionne Quints. Hopefully one that has more source material and footnotes. I think this might have worked better as a book of historical fiction as it seems more like that than a book of nonfiction.

Thank you to NetGalley and to Random House Children's/Schwartz and Wade for providing this ARC in exchange for an honest review. ...more

Featured in "History Books for Young Readers" on Intellectual Recreation.

On May 28, 1934, five identical baby girls were born to a French Canadian family in Ontario. Their survival was both miraculous and the result of the tireless work of the doctor, midwives, and nurses who delivered the girls and worked round-the-clock in their infancy. Controversy and celebrity followed the girls, who were separated from their family and raised by the state until the age of nine in a hospital built especial

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Everything about this true story is mind-blowing. The title is apt in every way. That Yvonne, Annette, Cécile, Émilie, and Marie all lived was truly amazing. The exploitation, experimentation, and trauma they experienced as a result of their celebrity was horribly tragic.

Sarah Miller's narrative is gripping and filled with quotations from primary sources and interviews with the surviving quintuplets. Miller does a fantastic job navigating the nuances of these events. None of the figures involved are cast as wholly villainous or wholly angelic. Once so famous, the story of the Dionne Quintuplets has been out of the spotlight for decades, but it's not a story that will easily be forgotten.

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The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets

Review copy from NetGalley. [...more](#)

## The Miracle And The Sleeper Tab

3.5/5 This was a fascinating story about the Dionne Quintuplets. I didn't know much them but while reading, I did remember hearing something about them in the past. So sad that they were put on display at such a young age. I was surprised to learn that as of 2018 there are two surviving sisters. It would have been nice to have included pictures of the quintuplets in the book. Maybe they weren't included in the digital ARC I read. Having the internet readily available, though, it was quite easy to view pictures of them there. What beautiful children! Overall, this was a very interesting and enjoyable read.

Thank you to the publisher and NetGalley for the review copy. ...more

The strange story of the Dionne Quintupletsâ€”sisters, medical miracles, and Canada's most successful tourist attractionâ€”captivates and devastates in equal measure. A great bit of fast-paced narrative nonfiction. ...more

## The Miracle And Morality Plays

This seems to be the summer of the Dionnes, between Quintland and this book. During the SLJ Teen Live event the author mentioned that most YA readers won't have heard about them, which is true... unless they've heard Sondheim's "I'm Still Here" and looked them up. There's also been some coverage of them as the original "kidfluencers" but that may be escaping teen notice.

This is NF and pretty well done. Because the Dionne family hasn't been all that forthcoming there's a lot of unknowns about the This seems to be the summer of the Dionnes, between Quintland and this book. During the SLJ Teen Live event the author mentioned that most YA readers won't have heard about them, which is true... unless they've heard Sondheim's "I'm Still Here" and looked them up. There's also been some coverage of them as the original "kidfluencers" but that may be escaping teen notice.

This is NF and pretty well done. Because the Dionne family hasn't been all that forthcoming there's a lot of unknowns about their lives, especially life once the girls moved home and what their siblings thought/think. Their exploitation by everyone, from their doctor to their neighbors, is truly tragic. Equally tragic are the statements made later by several of the nurses in charge of their care as they realize the effects of their treatment on the family and the girls.

eARC provided by publisher. ...more

The Dionne quintuplets is not something I was really familiar with when I started this, I had heard them brought up when talking about how reality TV effects kids but beyond that I knew nothing. These girls where signed over to the Canadian government to get out of a contract to be a side show in Chicago and what was supposed to be just two years turned into 9.5 years. Initially the goal of signing offer the girls to the government was to stop them from being exploited to the public however this The Dionne quintuplets is not something I was really familiar with when I started this, I had heard them brought up when talking about how reality TV effects kids but beyond that I knew nothing. These girls where signed over to the Canadian government to get out of a contract to be a side show in Chicago and what was supposed to be just two years turned into 9.5 years. Initially the goal of signing offer the girls to the government was to stop them from being exploited to the public however this happened anyway.

This was a very easy to read book that I had a hard time putting down. With television and YouTube stars are putting more of their families out there for people to watch this is a way to see into the future of how this will effect the children in the long term. I felt this was a well researched book but wish there had been new interviews with the two still living quintuplets rather than having everything come from past interviews and books. She did an excellent job of showing both sides in the argument for keeping the girls separated from the rest of their family. It is simply heartbreaking that even after being reunited they were unable to fade into the background and have normal lives. ...more

## The Andes Miracle

3.5/5

I found the lives of the Dionne Quintuplets shocking and I couldn't stop reading. It's true that their lives were both a miracle and a tragedy. I felt terrible for them, my heart ached.

With that being said, this book seems like it should be an adult book, I am surprised this is for a 12+ audience.

I did appreciate how the author seemed to take a somewhat neutral stance to narrating the Quint's early childhood. You felt terrible for the parents but you could also see the importance of keep

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I did appreciate how the author seemed to take a somewhat neutral stance to narrating the Quint's early childhood. You felt terrible for the parents but you could also see the importance of keeping the children safe when they were first born. I really felt for the parents but as the book progressed I started to dislike them immensely while also still feeling bad for them at times. It takes a lot of talent to present information in such a way to have the reader continually going back and forth between sympathy and extreme dislike for the people they're reading about.

I'm glad this book is being published, more people need to know about the Dionne Quintuplets.  
...more

In 1934 the world witnesses a medical miracle: the birth of a set of identical quintuplets who survive. The Dionne family welcome their daughters but soon learn the girls will be claimed by many people far from the small Canadian town they call home. Author Sarah Miller offers extensive research and sources for her chronicle of this fascinating, yet heartbreaking story in *The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets*.

Having birthed several children before May of 1934, Elzire Dionne is no stranger to the aches and pains associated with having a baby. She thinks her most recent pregnancy will proceed like the others, yet it

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Having birthed several children before May of 1934, Elzire Dionne is no stranger to the aches and pains associated with having a baby. She thinks her most recent pregnancy will proceed like the others, yet it

doesn't. When she goes into labor two months early, no one can predict that the early onset of symptoms means the coming of an incident unlike anything she has seen: she gives birth to quintuplets.

From the start, the Quints, as they come to be known, fight defy all expectations by living beyond the first hours and days of birth. No one, least of all their doctor, Dr. Dafoe, expects them to survive. Still, he and the nurses assigned to the care of Yvonne, Annette, Cecile, Emilie, and Marie fulfill their obligation to do what they can to keep the babies alive—and to the astonishment of everyone involved in their care, the girls live.

Word spreads fast about the birth of the Quints, and newspaper readers across Canada and into the United States become fixated on the wellbeing of the girls. During the Depression years, most people struggle to find hope in their own lives. The survival of the quintuplets represents to them a wondrous occurrence: even in the bleakness of the world, an underdog has a chance.

Woefully unprepared for the immediate doubling of their household, the Dionne family do their best to help the new babies. Dr. Dafoe enlists the help of the media, and resources, including breast milk, diapers, and incubators, arrive in droves. So do the people who travel for hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles to see the Quints.

Dr. Dafoe worries that someone will try to profit from the unusual birth and eventually convinces Elzire and her husband, Oliva, to allow the Canadian government to take custody of the babies. Despite deep misgivings, the parents agree. For the next nine years, the Quints live in a special hospital built just for them across the street from their birth home. There they receive the exclusive attention of Dr. Dafoe and the nurses who care for them, play with them, and discipline them. They also receive the attention of the thousands of tourists who come to see the girls riding their tricycles in their playground.

Oliva and Elzire object many times to the arrangement, but their voices are ignored for almost a decade. Through the years, the tussle between the Dionne family and the government continues as people near and far profit from Quint newspaper ads, product endorsements, and media opportunities. While Oliva and Elzire eventually win the right to bring the girls home, the discomfort continues. The quintuplets have only known life with the doctor, their nurses, and in the hospital. The relationships they attempt with their parents and other siblings in the following years are strained at best, but one thing that doesn't change is their bond with one another.

Author Sarah Miller lays out the story of the quintuplets in a chronological format that is easy to follow. Young adult readers as well as adult readers will find themselves fascinated and horrified by turns at everything the Quints endured, including exploitation, abuse, and theft from the significant trust fund set up in their name when they were babies. Miller's recounting of the experiences of Yvonne, Annette, Cecile, Emilie, and Marie circle around one main theme: the tight bond the girls formed and their deep-seated desire to live as individuals in a world that saw them as one person.

Miller takes care to document her sources. If the book can be faulted anywhere, it's in quoting the

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The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets

sisters as one. Ironically, the one thing the quintuplets wished for more than anything else—“individuality”—gets subverted by this collective quoting. Putting that aside, however, the book offers an intriguing look into a time and decade when a medical marvel captivated people and nations.

I recommend readers Bookmark The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets. ...more

## A Miracle And Healing

I remember reading about the Dionne Quintuplets in, of all places, an "Uncle John's Bathroom Reader" book years ago. Their story struck me as fascinating, yet tragic... and so to come across an actual book about them seemed like a good opportunity to learn more. And boy, was "The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets" an eye-opener. It tells a miraculous yet heartbreaking story about how these five girls managed to survive incredible odds, only to be exploited by doctors, hucksters, the Canadian government, and even their own family.

When the five Dionne girls were born to a poor farming family in Ontario, Canada, no one expected them to survive. But somehow these five little girls managed to defy the odds and survive, and soon the entire world took notice and flocked to see them. In an effort to protect them from those who would exploit them as a sideshow attraction, the Ontario government stepped in and took them in as wards... only, in an act of incredible hypocrisy, to turn around and exhibit them for the public like animals in a specially designed hospital. As the Dionne parents fought to regain custody of their daughters and the world indulged in "quint-mania" over these adorable miracles, the girls themselves became pawns and symbols in a heartbreaking game involving exploitation, dehumanization, and even accusations of sexual assault... and yet, as teenagers and young women, also fought for recognition beyond being simple curiosities.

Sarah Miller does her best to tell the story of the quintuplets in an even-handed manner, showing the mistakes made on all sides as well as the good intentions of those involved. As a consequence, however, everyone but the quintuplets themselves comes off as rather skeezy, including the girls' own parents (who weren't shy about selling merchandise and dipping into funds intended for the girls themselves). And despite the author doing her best to insist each girl has their own personality, she shoots her own argument in the foot by attributing quotes to all five girls instead of differentiating between their voices. This could be a case of not being sure which Dionne girl said what due to a faulty source, but it's still notable.

All that said... this really is a heartbreaking story, and shows just what can go wrong when people try to interfere in a matter with the best of intentions. If the story comes across as a little melodramatic at times, well, the girls did go through dramatic times, and Miller cites plenty of sources and does her best to portray the facts without overly sensationalizing them. This makes for an informative and often fascinating, if heart-wrenching, read.

The book includes plenty of photographs as well from all stages of the girls' lives, which I appreciated.

And most of the key players are well-represented in said photos.

This book can be difficult to read and is often heartbreaking, but is still a fascinating glimpse at a unique group of siblings and their place in history, for better or for worse. And it stands as a warning for those who would exploit children -- their own or others -- for their own gain. ...more

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This book is BANANAS and proves the maxim that sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. Children kept in captivity, raised with no sense of independence or reality, ogled at by thousands like animals in a zoo, and exploited for millions of dollars?? WHAT?

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I read this book in less than 24 hours and couldnâ€™t stop talking about it. Quick, short chapters keep the chronological plot moving. Readers will be fascinated by the strange circumstances of the Dionne familyâ€™s situation and the way that good intentions fail in the face of greed. Miller strives to give the five sisters independence and distinction that they lacked in press and publications for most of their life by including individual quotes from each of the sisters as much as possible and emphasizing their differences. Includes black and white images, references, extensive notes and an index.

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The Miracle and Tragedy of the Dionne Quintuplets

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