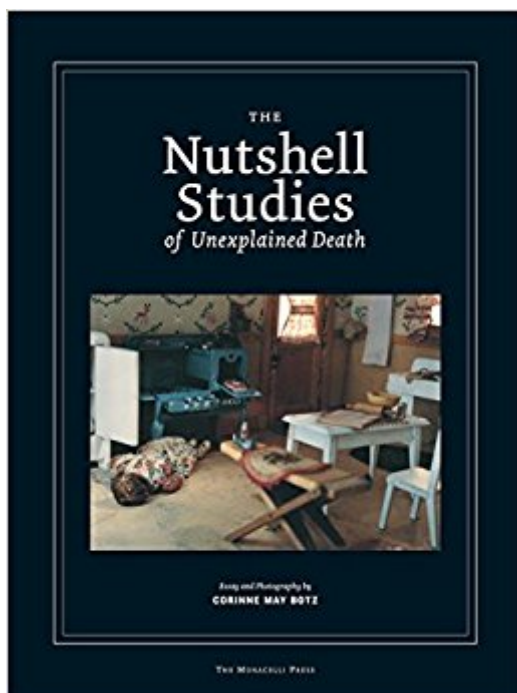


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# The Nutshell Studies Of Unexplained Death



## Synopsis

The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death offers readers an extraordinary glimpse into the mind of a master criminal investigator. Frances Glessner Lee, a wealthy grandmother, founded the Department of Legal Medicine at Harvard in 1936 and was later appointed captain in the New Hampshire police. In the 1940s and 1950s she built dollhouse crime scenes based on real cases in order to train detectives to assess visual evidence. Still used in forensic training today, the eighteen Nutshell dioramas, on a scale of 1:12, display an astounding level of detail: pencils write, window shades move, whistles blow, and clues to the crimes are revealed to those who study the scenes carefully. Corinne May Botz's lush color photographs lure viewers into every crevice of Frances Lee's models and breathe life into these deadly miniatures, which present the dark side of domestic life, unveiling tales of prostitution, alcoholism, and adultery. The accompanying line drawings, specially prepared for this volume, highlight the noteworthy forensic evidence in each case. Botz's introductory essay, which draws on archival research and interviews with Lee's family and police colleagues, presents a captivating portrait of Lee.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bizarre and utterly fascinating, The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death is a dark and disturbing photographic journey through criminal cases and the mind of Frances Glessner Lee--grandmother, dollhouse-maker, and master criminal investigator. Photographer Corinne May Botz stumbled across the "Nutshell Studies" while making a video about women who collect dollhouses. On the

suggestion of a collector, she visited the Baltimore Medical Examiner's Office, where Lee's miniature reconstructions of crime scenes were on display. The macabre dioramas fascinated and repulsed her: "I was entranced by the details: the porcelain doll with a broken arm in the attic, the grains of sugar on the kitchen floor...I was also riveted by the miniature corpses. Shot in bed, collapsed in the bathtub, hung in the attic and stabbed in the closet; all were eternally frozen in miniature rooms that had become their tombs." A remarkable woman, Frances Glessner Lee established the Department of Legal Medicine at Harvard in 1936. At the time, innumerable murders went undetected because evidence was mishandled, or ignored. To train investigators of sudden and violent deaths to better assess visual evidence, Lee created the Nutshell Studies--dollhouses that students could study from every angle, with minute crime scenes details taken from actual cases. Lee created 18 dioramas, using only the most mysterious cases (cases that could have been ruled as accidents, murders, or suicides) to train detectives and challenge their ability to read evidence. Botz reveals as much about the nature of obsession as she does about Frances Glessener Lee--each model is painstakingly photographed from multiple vantage points, allowing the reader to witness the astounding level of realism and precision in each case, as well as giving the reader unobstructed access to each eerie setting. All 18 studies include a brief synopsis of each case, as well as a key to each grisly floor plan. Perfect for amateur sleuths, aspiring medical examiners, and fans of CSI, *The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death* is grim and oh so bewitching. --Daphne Durham .com

Content Inside The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death Case: "Living Room" Case: "Three-Room Dwelling" Case: "Dark Bathroom"

"The Nutshell dioramas are compelling, a bit disturbing, and engagingly weirdâ "it never previously seemed possible to use the words 'forensic' and 'cute' in the same sentence. Corinne May Botz has done a grand job both in exposing them to a nonspecialist public and in photographing them with such fanatical verisimilitude." â "Luc Sante

I can't even begin to describe how much I love this book. If I could change one thing about it, I would like the photos to be a little less artsy. The charm in the dioramas is that they are so intricate and meticulous, and most of the photos have this blurry outline where I'd really just like to see the entire picture. But nonetheless, excellent purchase. I'm happy to add it to my library of conversation pieces. I had to wait over a month for it to be available but it was well worth the wait.

I deal with forensic science and have had this book since around April 2011 when I paid only \$15 for

the hardcover. A friend asked me to get the book for her, and couldn't believe the prices ppl are paying for this. What many do not know was that Frances's father was the founder/president of International Harvester and they had a home on thousands of acres. Her brother went on the Harvard University but her father didn't believe in higher education for females. She became fascinated with Forensic Science and the property she inherited was covered with walnut trees. She began to build detailed miniature crime scenes in the walnut shells - complete to the color/print of the clothing; hair color; eye color if their eyes were open postmortem. She married late in life; had children, then divorced. I first read about her in a quarterly issue of my Forensic Examiner journal, since I am a member of the American College of Forensic Examiners Institute. Book

Description Publication Date: September 28, 2004 The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death offers readers an extraordinary glimpse into the mind of a master criminal investigator. Frances Glessner Lee, a wealthy grandmother, founded the Department of Legal Medicine at Harvard in 1936 and was later appointed captain in the New Hampshire police. In the 1940s and 1950s she built dollhouse crime scenes based on real cases in order to train detectives to assess visual evidence. Still used in forensic training today, the eighteen Nutshell dioramas, on a scale of 1:12, display an astounding level of detail: pencils write, window shades move, whistles blow, and clues to the crimes are revealed to those who study the scenes carefully. Corinne May Botz's lush color photographs lure viewers into every crevice of Frances Lee's models and breathe life into these deadly miniatures, which present the dark side of domestic life, unveiling tales of prostitution, alcoholism, and adultery. The accompanying line drawings, specially prepared for this volume, highlight the noteworthy forensic evidence in each case. Botz's introductory essay, which draws on archival research and interviews with Lee's family and police colleagues, presents a captivating portrait of Lee.-----

This book is (unintentionally) hilarious, interesting and well photographed. If you are an armchair sleuth, you will love this. The detail of these crime scenes are so impressive.

how freakin' cool is this book. it's my number 1 coffee table book at the moment and it always sparks good conversation. If you watch crime dramas on TV or anything related to crime scene investigation then you'll love this book. I heard about this on a 99% invisible podcast (at least I think it was 99% invisible.. I listen to too many podcasts)

I was very excited to receive this book in the mail. As soon as I took it out of its packaging, I

immediately began to read through it. The intro text regarding Glessner's background was a great read, but I was expecting more text for the dioramas. I like that they outline details regarding this diorama, but I was hoping to hear more on theories people have speculated or something to that effect. More details would've been great!! Other than that, I thought the diagrams and photos included in the book were great and very intriguing. Overall, a fun, educational book that will be great to flip through every now and then.

This is a fantastic find. My husband purchased this for after I watched a documentary about the nutshell studies. The photographs are spectacular.

Corinne May Botz brought to life an amazing woman who was not about to accept the status quo in forensics. Frances Glessner Lee may have been brought up a proper middle-class lady, but she broke out of her shell and was counted among those who insisted that all ME's should have medical licenses. The nutshell studies are still used today to train new detectives. How amazing that a child's toy mostly associated with women is being used to help solve crimes. This book may seem macabre and gruesome, but there is a delicate beauty to this creation in the midst of so much destruction. I rate this as a highly readable, totally engaging book. Try it for yourself.

Fascinating book about an unusual woman who created 20 miniature room boxes which were used as forensic teaching tools. Well-written and photographed, it was actually fun (and a bit macabre) to pour over the scenes of death and try and find clues to the death scene. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in forensic science, miniatures and murder mysteries! I wish there were MORE photographs!

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