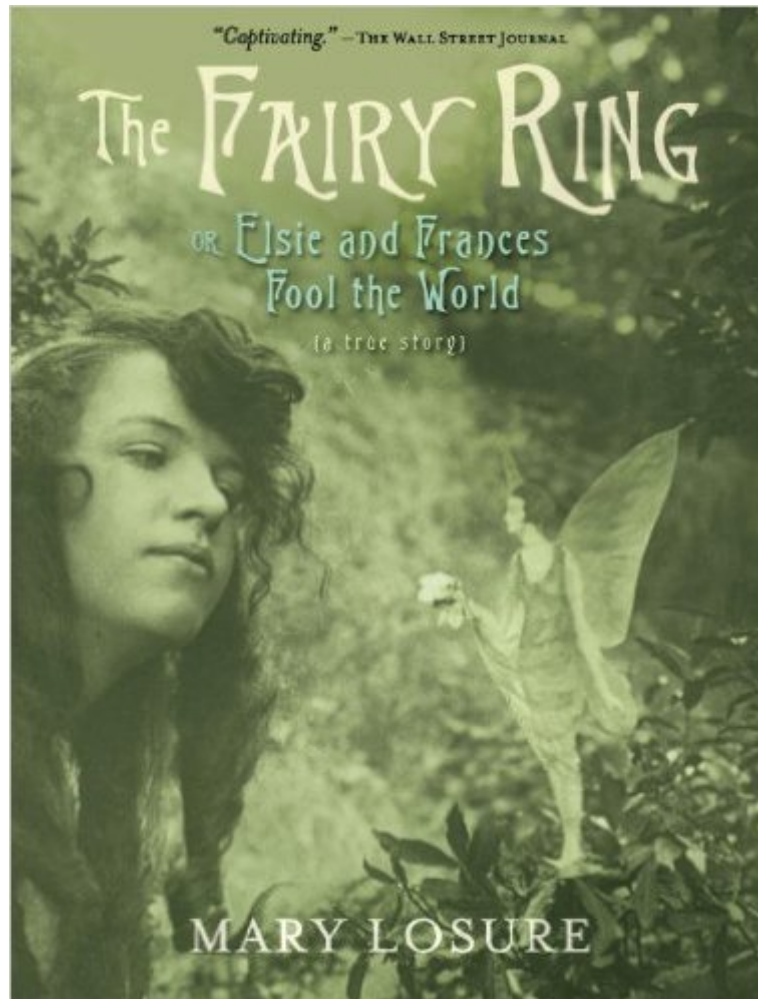


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# The Fairy Ring: Or Elsie And Frances Fool The World



## Synopsis

The enchanting true story of a girl who saw fairies, and another with a gift for art, who concocted a story to stay out of trouble and ended up fooling the world. Frances was nine when she first saw the fairies. They were tiny men, dressed all in green. Nobody but Frances saw them, so her cousin Elsie painted paper fairies and took photographs of them "dancing" around Frances to make the grown-ups stop teasing. The girls promised each other they would never, ever tell that the photos weren't real. But how were Frances and Elsie supposed to know that their photographs would fall into the hands of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle? And who would have dreamed that the man who created the famous detective Sherlock Holmes believed ardently in fairies and wanted very much to see one? Mary Losure presents this enthralling true story as a fanciful narrative featuring the original Cottingley fairy photos and previously unpublished drawings and images from the family's archives. A delight for everyone with a fondness for fairies, and for anyone who has ever started something that spun out of control.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

The Fairy Ring: Elsie and Frances Fool the World by Mary Losure is the incredible true story of two girls and their encounters with fairies. The story is set in rural England during WWI. Elsie and Frances set out to prove to their family fairies are real. With painted cutouts and a couple of photos

their Fairy pictures take the country by storm. Prominent people take an interest in the pictures and request more. Will Elsie and Frances tell the truth or make more "Fairy" pictures? I absolutely loved this story. I had never heard about Frances or Elsie but I had seen one of the pictures before. It was a pleasure to view all of the photos. I had never thought about the story behind the pictures. It was a joy for me to experience how the pictures come to be through the girls own words and corresponding with the key players in getting the photos published. I like both Elsie and Frances and connected well with them. I feel that Frances truly saw fairies while Elsie was just going along. If it was left to Frances I don't think there would have ever been more than one fairy picture. I do respect that the girls were well into adulthood before they disclosed the true nature of the pictures.

The Fairy Ring is a well written examination of a fascinating hoax. The author uses a very readable narrative style to describe the lives of Frances and Elsie, two young girls who were caught up in a machine of publicity, turning an innocent attempt to save face within their family into a world wide sensation. The author effectively uses photographs, including the famous fairy photos, to help move the story along, and provides thorough characterizations of both young girls. Kids who read the story of the Cottingley Fairy Photos will be amazed that they were ever believed, and that they were able to fool even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The author includes information about both girls as they grow up, as they resolutely stick with their stories, almost until the end, when finally all is revealed. This is a well told, carefully observed story that is sure to find many fans both for its historical value and sometimes whimsical nature. The author includes an index, source notes and bibliography to guide anyone interested in learning more about these two fascinating girls and the amazingly simple way they fooled the world.

This is the full story of the Cottingley fairies, the photos of fairies that came to light in England in the early twenties. You have probably seen these photos at one time or another, but when they first appeared, experts in photography at the time indicated that the plates the photos were real. The photographic plates had not been tampered with. Several influential people of the time, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (author of Sherlock Holmes) were sure that fairies were real and latched onto these photos as proof. The interesting thing about this story is why the girls who took the photos grew to be old ladies before the truth of the photos came out. Perhaps people's beliefs that there are fairies made them more inclined to believe that these young girls were innocent of any scam. They were innocent in that they never intended the photos to become public and particularly not in the vast way that happened. The story is told by Mary Losure very simply making it suitable reading

for young readers, however I think that a child would need to be interested in the story behind the photos to stick with it. I did and I think that Lore probably told the story in as interesting a way as possible, given that it's the true story as revealed by letters from the time and the woman's later autobiographies.

Reason for Reading: I've read Joe Cooper's "The Case of the Cottingley Fairies" and have since been fascinated with this story and with Doyle's involvement. This book for juveniles sounded like it would present the story from the girls' point of view and I was eager to read it. This is a wonderful little biography, complete with all the "fairy" photographs and others of Frances and Elsie at the time, which tells the story of how the cousins came to be together in England at Cottingly, Yorkshire. When they first saw fairies and how the pictures came to be and how ultimately their worldwide sensation came around. The story focuses mostly on the girls themselves and the story of how they came across the fairies and decided to take pictures to "prove" themselves, is incredibly interesting and takes up a good portion of the book. We get a real feel for the girls and their innocence, even though they created one of the biggest hoaxes of the early twentieth century that fooled such eminent figures as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. One gets a sense for a lonely Frances, moved from bustling South Africa to dreary England to wait while her father volunteers to fight in the Great War. Did she really see fairies and gnomes or was it just the daydreams of a lonely little girl? One also senses Elsie's otherwise mundane life as a young school-leaver, working in a factory, trying to protect her young cousin and coming up with what at first seems an innocent ploy to stop the grown-ups pestering them. Little did they know the world they lived in was chock full of spiritualism and the existence of fairies and other little people were on the minds of many such spiritualists of the day. Once their pictures are seen outside the family, a flood of interest descends upon them which they cannot stop. The two girls, turn into women and their frolic with fairies will forever haunt them. I'd love to read Frances' autobiography in which she does continue to affirm that she did see some fairies in the beck behind her cousin's house but it is unfortunately not in print at this time. The story is very compelling to me though, that I've decided to go a step further and have purchased the Kindle edition of Doyle's 1922 study entitled "The Coming of the Fairies".

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