

Novel Resource #7

Bottle Houses The Creative World of Grandma Prisbrey

Author: Melissa Eskridge Slaymaker

Copyright date: 2004

Publisher: Henry Holt and Company

About the Author:

1. Interesting facts: Melissa Eskridge Slaymaker was born in Oklahoma in 1958. Melissa grew up in Alexandria Virginia where she wrote stories at an early age on a typewriter given to her by her father. Melissa attended the University of Montevallo and studied history. Melissa earned a MA in communications and journalism from the University of Tennessee. She has been a writer and editor for Southern Living Magazine prior to writing her first children's book, Bottle Houses The Creative World of Grandma Prisbrey.
2. Author's webpage: not found
3. Author's email and address: Agent's address: c/o author Mail, Henry Holt and Co. 115 West 18th Street, New York, New York 10011
4. Picture: not found
5. Other facts: Melissa is interested in gardening, reading, camping, and visionary and vernacular arts. This is art done by those without formal training and reflects personal vision.
6. Other books written by author: none

Annotation: Bottle Houses The Creative World of Grandma Prisbrey

Color, shape and light take on a new form in Melissa Eskridge Slaymaker's story of Grandma Prisbrey and her Bottle Houses. Grandma collects very thing imaginable but mostly things that others discard as junk. "At the dump, Grandma Prisbrey found bottles of every size and shape and color. There were clear bottles too, of course, but she liked the colorful ones best." Grandma uses cement and many "treasures" to create a chapel, birdbath, wishing well and much more. As time marched on, more and more people began to visit Grandma and her bottle houses. They called her an artist. "... even though I can't draw a car that looks like one. But I guess there are different kinds of art."

What a wonderful story of a woman who gives new life to objects that have been cast away. And, best of all this tale is a true one! Although damaged in 1994 by an earthquake, you can see the buildings being restored in the state of California.

Book talk: Have you ever visited a trash dump? If you did, you might find that people throw away many things that will be here even hundreds of years from now. Grandma Prisbrey visited a dump near her home and was surprised at what others threw away. “I found a photograph of the queen of England, a statue of a saint, and a crystal chandelier. What some people throw away, I believe I could wear to church.” Grandma Prisbrey found she could build many things from colored bottles. Find out what she creates in this colorful picture book, Bottle Houses The Creative World of Grandma Prisbrey by Melissa Eskridge Slaymaker and illustrated by Julie Paschkis.

Characters: Grandma Prisbrey is an eccentric traveler, collector, and artist with a sense of humor. “But Grandma Prisbrey wasn’t a regular sort of person who did things in a regular sort of way.” She loved colored glass that was easy to find at a dump. Using cement and discarded objects, Grandma Prisbrey created houses, pyramids, and more. She later charged 25 cents for those who came to see her Bottle Houses.

Conflict and Conflict resolution: Grandma Prisbrey was independent and did mostly what pleased her in the later stages of her life. “The cactus reminds me of myself, she said, “It’s independent, prickly, and asks nothing from anybody. And it blooms in all colors.” Although her short biography demonstrates she had conflict in her life, the book does not address her arranged marriage at the age of 15, the seven children she had with this man, and her later divorce.

Genre: Biography

If you like: Bottle Houses The Creative World of Grandma Prisbrey, you will love:
Here Comes Grandma! By Janet Lord, Illustrated by Julie Paschkis
Grandma Moses by Alexandra Wallner
The Art Lesson by Tomie DePaola
Discovering Women Artist for Children by Jennifer Coyne
Action Jackson by Jan Greeburg
Into the Woods: John James Audubon lives his dream by Robert Burleigh

Interest level: grades 1-4

Reading level: 4.4

Setting: The setting is Grandma Prisbrey’s property in California. She fills the third of an acre with many items from a nearby dump.

Point of View: Omniscient

Theme: Inspiration. Grandma Prisbrey is inspirational in her independence and abilities to create something amazing out of things that have been discarded. The title, Bottle Houses The Creative World of Grandma Prisbrey, simply focuses on the main character and her gifts as an artist.

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About the Illustrator: Julie Paschkis

Interesting facts: Julie was born in 1957 in Pennsylvania. She attended Germantown Friends School, Rigerike Folkehogskole in Norway, Cornell University and School for American Craftsmen at RIT. Julie taught elementary art for eight years when she decided to work on her art full time.

Illustrator's webpage: <http://www.julie.paschkis.com>

Other email or addresses: Julie@juliepaschkis.com

Phone #: 206.525.5205



Picture:

Illustrator's connection to the book: Julie paints, illustrates, and does art work for children's books. She considers all three a form of storytelling.

Other books illustrated by: Julie Paschkis:

Twist by Janet S. Wong

The Talking Vegetables by Won-Idy Paye and Margaret H. Lippert

Fat Cat by Margaret McDonald

Yellow Elephant by Julie Larios

Art Medium used:

Students can understand how the art medium is created by: taking a field trip to The Creative Escape or similar store which will teach the process of making mosaics. Students may want to study pictures of Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Houses. See resources.

The medium was chosen to convey the meaning of the story because: Julie Paschkis used a mosaic motif after viewing recent and old pictures of the bottle houses. The illustrator's style mirrored that of Grandma Prisbrey's as she created her bottle houses.

Across the Curriculum connections:

Subject area: Art

Activity: Create mosaic garden stones. This is a whole class activity, but it may be completed as a pull-out project or in small groups. An alternative project is making a mosaic frame from paper. See resources.

Resources/supplies: garden stone kits from Michael's or other art store

Resources: Mosaic-Hands On Crafts for Kids-Show 303:

www.craftsforkids.com/projects/300/303.htm. This site gives ideas for paper made mosaic frames.

Creative Escape: See Jennifer for classes on mosaic making:

www.thecreativeescape.com/ Jennifer is owner of Creative Escape. She can give lessons and schedules of classes.

Subject area: Recycling

Activities: Visit a local trash dump. This field trip can be taken as a class or grade level. Classes can see what is thrown away by the general public and its lifespan.

Resources/supplies: buses, drivers, guide to local landfill or trash dump.

Resources: Best Way Disposal: www.bestway-disposal.com/

1-800-246-5992. Call for possible tour of facility.

Nonfiction books: Recycled Crafts Box by Laura Martin

Crafts from Junk by Violaine Lamerand

Earth Friendly Crafts for Kids: 50 Awesome Things to Make with

Recycled Stuff by Heather Smith

The above books will give ideas on reusing materials such as Grandma Prisbrey did.

A. Create Mosaic art

Link to Indiana Academic Standard: See starred standards

B. Discuss recycling and reusing products

Link to Indiana Academic Standard: See starred standards

Discussion Questions:

Before: What words describe Grandmas? Check back to see if these words describe Grandma Prisbrey.

During: What other materials could Grandma Prisbrey have used? What other structures could she have created? (Items are given throughout the book)

After: Do you consider Grandma Prisbrey an artist? Why or Why not?

Language:

Word list to be defined:

Kaleidoscope, p. 2: a colorful toy seen through like a telescope with changing colors.

Particular, p. 3: specific

Chandelier, p. 7: a large light fixture, usually made out of glass or crystal

Hauled, p. 9: carried

Rumpus room, p. 15: a place to dance or party

Rhinestones, p. 19: a pretend jewel made out of glass

Resounded, p. 19: filled with echoing sounds

Independent, p. 22: able to do for one's self

Cabana, p. 26: small beach house, place to get refreshments

Indiana Academic Standards met by book:

Art: Kindergarten: k.1.1, k.2.1, k.7.2, k.8.1, k.11.1

First Grade: 1.2.1, *1.7.2 Create artwork about self, family, and personal experiences, 1.8.1, *1.9.3 Identify and use media and processes to express ideas, experiences, and stories including: sculpture/architecture/jewelry or mixed media

Second Grade: *2.9.2 Identify and use media and processes to express ideas, experiences and stories including: sculpture/architecture/jewelry or mixed media

Third Grade: *3.7.2 Create artwork about self, family, and personal experiences, *3.9.2 2 Identify and use media and processes to express ideas, experiences and stories including: sculpture/architecture/jewelry or mixed media.

Science: Second Grade: *2.1.7 Recognize and describe ways that some material-such as recycled paper, cans, and plastic jugs-can be used over again.

Third Grade: *3.1.8 Describe how discarded products contribute to the problem of waste disposal and that recycling and help solve this problem.

Bibliography:

www.craftsforkids.com/projects/300/303.htm Mosaic Hands On Crafts for Kids

www.thecreativeescape.com Creative Escape, Pottery and Mosaics

www.carmelclaylibrary.com Carmel Clay Library

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/welcom.html> Indiana Standards

<http://www.julie.paschkis.com> Julie Paschkis, Illustrator

<http://www.answers.com/topic/> Answers.com

<http://echomatic.hom.mindspring.com/bv> Bottle Village

<http://users.adelphia.net/~echomatic/bv> Bottle Village

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