

LORGNETTE

Quarterly Review of Children's and Young Adults' Books

Author

Monsef, Kiyash

Illustrator

Reviewer

Barrington, Susannah

Pages

406p

Price

\$18.99

ISBN

978-1-6659-2850-2

Publisher & Date

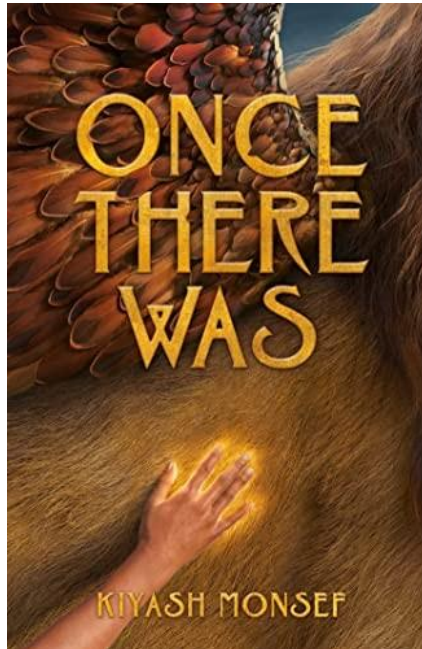
Simon & Schuster, 2023

Classification

Fiction

Grade Level

7 and up



Book Review: ONCE THERE WAS

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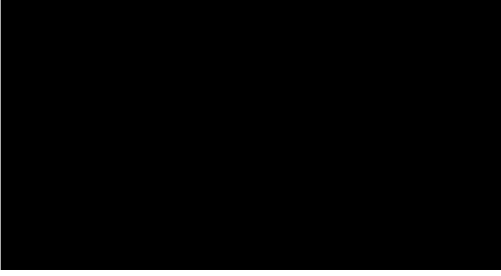
“Once was, once wasn’t” is the phrase used to begin each fairy tale lovingly and carefully placed at appropriate points in Kiyash Monsef’s award-winning book, *ONCE THERE WAS*. The tale of Marjan, a 15-year-old girl who discovers a hidden world of magical creatures after the death of her father, is woven with the fairy tales that give depth to the adventure. Marjan is dealing with the aftermath of her father’s mysterious death when she is abruptly introduced to a facet of his veterinary business that she could have never imagined: a sick griffon. Secret societies, unexplained abilities, and new (magical?) friends, however, can’t distract from her inner sense that *something* is missing.

ONCE THERE WAS is more than just a coming-of-age adventure story, although it succeeds quite well as one. In the way of the best fairy tales, it has many layers of meaning with much room for discussion and thought. Touching on topics such as control, grief, friendship, honesty, revenge, purpose, and more, Monsef creates a world of depth and meaning, inviting



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the reader to return again and again. An immersive, fresh, and thought-provoking story, ONCE THERE WAS is highly recommended for public and academic libraries as well as for middle school and high school libraries.



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