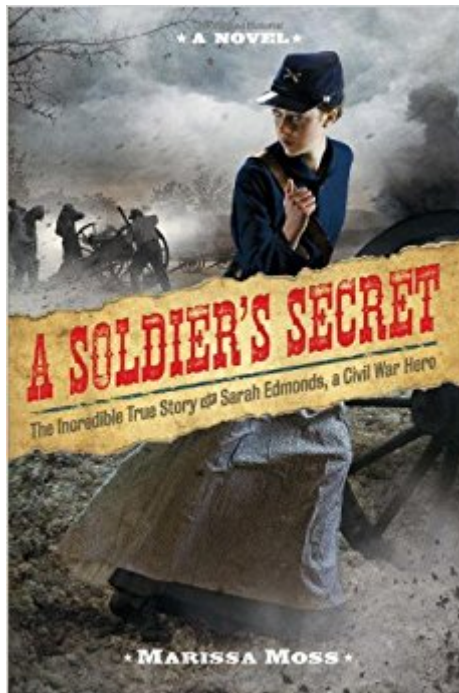


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A Soldier's Secret: The Incredible True Story Of Sarah Edmonds, A Civil War Hero



Synopsis

Historical fiction at its best, this novel by bestselling author Marissa Moss tells the story of Sarah Emma Edmonds, who masqueraded as a man named Frank Thompson during the Civil War. Her adventures include serving as a nurse on the battlefield and spying for the Union Army, and being captured by (and escaping from) the Confederates. The novel is narrated by Sarah, offering readers an in-depth look not only at the Civil War but also at her journey to self-discovery as she grapples with living a lie and falling in love with one of her fellow soldiers. Using historical materials to build the foundation of the story, Moss has crafted a captivating novel for the YA audience. The book includes a Civil War timeline, archival photos, a glossary of names, a detailed note on sources, and a new readers guide.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Laurie Halse Anderson once wrote in her blog that she preferred to call her historical books "historical thrillers" rather than "historical fiction," given that many kids and teens associate historical fiction with BORING. However, it's not every historical fiction title that can be justly called a "thriller." With *A Soldier's Secret*, Marissa Moss definitely joins the club of historical thriller writers for teens. Based on the true story of Civil War hero Sarah Edmonds, who enlisted in the Union Army as Frank Thompson, this is one story so full of incredible twists and turns that readers will be compelled have to finish it just to find out what happens. In this novel, Moss returns to explore in greater depth Sarah Edmonds' life, which she portrayed in the lively 2011 picture book biography *Nurse, Soldier, Spy*. When we meet Sarah at the opening of this novel, it's the spring of 1861, and she has been living as

Frank Thompson, a traveling book salesman, for more than three years. Writing in the first person, Sarah fills the reader in on her back story growing up on a farm in New Brunswick, Canada, with a cruel and abusive father; when her father is about to force her into an unwanted marriage, Sarah cuts her hair, dresses as a boy, and runs away, ending up in the United States. But when the war breaks out, the teenaged Sarah wants to be a part of history, and enlists in the Union Army as Private Frank Thompson, Army nurse. An accomplished shot and rider, she is especially skilled at hiding her female parts when she "does her business," and no one questions her sex or her ability as a soldier. Moss does an excellent job portraying the tedium and occasional terror of a soldier's existence through Sarah's eyes, as she wonders if she will be able to measure up in battle.

~This review is of an ARC received from NetGalley~I picked this one up on a whim from NetGalley, because I really do adore historical fiction. Typically I don't read Civil War stuff, and I thought it would be a good change. It struck me as something akin to those "Dear America" books I read as a child, so why not, right? However, straight from the get go, I could see problems with this book emerging. The narrator comes off as stiff and emotionless. The First Battle of Bull Run is also steamrolled right through-as is everything else until about the second half of the book. I was further annoyed because The First Battle of Bull Run was so flippantly run through, and then *small spoiler alert!* we get a whole long chapter about how Sarah/Frank was falling head over heels with Jerome to the point where she tells him he can't ask his sweetheart at home to marry him. This was also the chapter we MET Jerome. I wasn't even 70 pages in. The highlights of this book, though, were in the history. Moss does a spectacular job describing what it's like to be a soldier in battle, seeing what you see and doing what you do. Both her descriptions of the physical scene and the descriptions of the effects of that it had on Sarah/Frank were beautifully done. The great thing about Sarah/Frank is that she really was EVERYWHERE. She signs up right at the beginning of the war, right before the First Battle of Bull Run. She works as a nurse, a postmaster general, a spy and a general's orderly. The descriptions of seeing someone leg amputated, receiving gifts from families whom she had informed has lost their son/husband/father, inside the Confederate camps and inside the general's tent were fantastic.

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