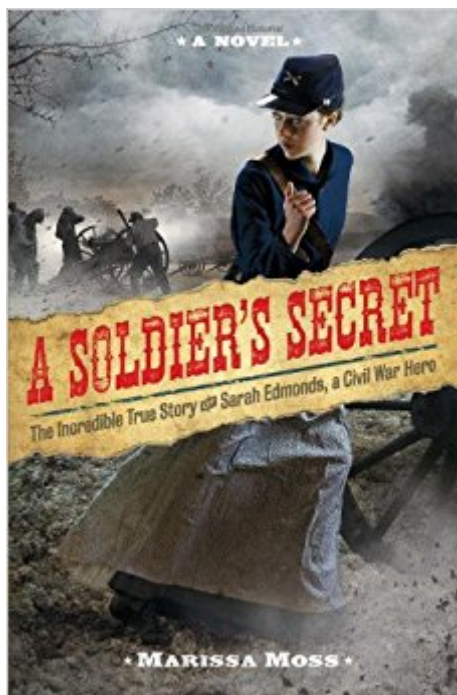




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# A Soldier's Secret: The Incredible True Story Of Sarah Edmonds, A Civil War Hero



## 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

Nineteen-year-old Sarah has been passing as a man for three years when the Civil War begins. Determined to be a part of history, she enlists in the Union army as Frank Thompson, serving, respectively, as a nurse, postmaster, spy, and orderly. Based on the true story of Sarah Emma Edmonds, who became the only woman to be recognized by acts of Congress as an honorably discharged soldier, Moss's novel offers a fascinating, first-person portrait of a woman who notes, "I can't figure out who I'm supposed to be . . . I'm doomed to be neither fish nor fowl." A keen observer, Sarah/Frank offers a vivid portrait of the horrors of war and the increasing difficulties of maintaining her masquerade when she falls in love with a male nurse. Nicely designed, the book is enhanced by the inclusion of numerous photographs from the Civil War period.

Appended material includes a time line, a bibliography, and thumbnail portraits of Civil War generals. Grades 7-12. --Michael Cart --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Marissa Moss has written and illustrated many books for children, including the popular Ameliaâ€™s Notebook series, the picture book Nurse, Soldier, Spy, and a middle-grade novel, The Pharaohâ€™s Secret. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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. When the Union loses the first Battle of Bull Run, Sarah/Frank no longer needs to wonder; she's running around helping the doctors amputate limbs, writing letters to loved ones, and carrying out the last wishes of dying soldiers, as the reader gets a close-up view of the primitive nature of medical care in the 19th century. But of course Sarah is a woman, and living in close proximity with so many eligible young men, the inevitable happens--she develops romantic feelings for a fellow soldier, fantasizing about him. Eventually her feelings are so strong, she asks for a reassignment, next serving as a postmaster delivering letters to the troops. Soon she is recruited as a Union spy, where

her skill at disguises comes in very handy. She even "disguises" herself as a woman for one of her assignments! While there are hundreds of documented cases of women disguising themselves as men to fight in the Civil War, Sarah was the only woman to be recognized by Congress as an honorably discharged soldier, with rights to back pay and pension, and the only woman allowed to join the association for Civil War veterans. At her death she was granted a military funeral and buried in a cemetery for Civil War veterans. Moss' well-researched novel is based in part on Sarah Edmonds' own memoir, as well as many other sources on women in the Civil War and the Civil War in general. Moss includes extensive back matter, including background on Sarah Edmonds, brief biographies of Union Army officers, a brief Civil War timeline, which includes annotations for battles in which Frank/Sarah participated, and selected bibliography. This is a terrific novel for middle schoolers or high schoolers, male or female. It offers great action, suspense, twists, and star-crossed romance that should intrigue even reluctant readers of historical fiction.

My wife enjoys reading about "petticoat soldiers" (women who posed as men to serve in the Civil War). Told in the first person, this book is historical fiction, in the genre of James Michener. The characters - including the main - are real, but the dialog and fine details of the story are fiction. Enjoy!

Wow! It has everything: mystery, murder, spies, and romance all cleverly intertwined into a great read. You cannot go wrong getting this book. In fact, I'm giving a copy as a gift.

Excitement, Intensity, Appropriate reading level for the Middle School/Jr. High School set who require a "history" novel bringing the past to light.

Students were asking about this person, now they can read all about her.

This is an amazing story. I love the fact that the story is based on a true story and that all the characters in the book are real people from the Civil War.

great buy

I loved this book. Couldn't put it down. I do like reading about the Civil War so that may be why I liked it so well.

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