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Stealing Secrets: How A Few Daring Women Deceived Generals, Impacted Battles, And Altered The Course Of The Civil War



Synopsis

Clandestine missions. Clever, devious, daring. Passionately committed to a cause. During America's most divisive war, both the Union and Confederacy took advantage of brave and courageous women willing to adventurously support their causes. These female spies of the Civil War participated in the world's second-oldest profession-spying-a profession perilous in the extreme. The tales of female spies are filled with suspense, bravery, treachery, and trickery. They took enormous risks and achieved remarkable results-often in ways men could not do. As stated on the grave marker of Union spy Elizabeth Van Lew: "She risked everything that is dear to man-friends, fortune, comfort, health, life itself." Told with personality and pizzazz, author H. Donald Winkler uses primary Civil War sources such as memoirs, journals, letters, and newspaper articles, plus the latest in scholarly research, to make these incredible stories come alive.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Winkler's earlier 2008 book *Goats and Scapegoats* focused on the mistakes made during the Civil War by those who should have known better--the generals involved at the forefront of the conflict. In *Stealing Secrets*, Winkler goes behind the battle lines, and, in some cases, into the boudoir, in which men once more showed their vulnerability by trading their state secrets for the blissful, but tenuous, embrace of those who would betray their ill-placed trust. However, Winkler is keen to point out that he regards these tales of valor as just that. Underplaying the salacious and what many would consider to be the scandalous nature of the liaisons involved, he holds, rather, that the encounters that he describes were, in fact, a success story of the women involved, showing how

they were able to impact on the course of the Civil War through their heroic actions. Winkler includes accounts of women who also took an active role on the battle front as such, including Harriet Tubman and Loreta Velazquez. In the course of his narrative, he is able to debunk many of the myths and much of the misinformation surrounding the women concerned. The focus of *Stealing Secrets* is both on the women, in relation to their own households and their network of relations, as much as it is on how their work impacted on the progress of the war. The emotional commitment of the women to those whom they supported is revealed with great honesty and clarity. The excerpts included from memoirs, journals and private correspondence make this an intimate collection of tales. The account is a vivid one, made all the more so by the inclusion of several black-and-white photographs and reproductions of excerpts of newspaper reports of the day, that help to bring the stories to life.

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