



I Shall Be Near to You

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An extraordinary novel about a strong-willed woman who disguises herself as a man in order to fight beside her husband in the Civil War, inspired by a real female soldier's letters home

Rosetta doesn't want her new husband Jeremiah to enlist, but he joins up, hoping to make enough money that they'll be able to afford their own farm someday. Though she's always worked by her father's side as the son he never had, now that Rosetta is a wife she's told her place is inside with the other women. But Rosetta decides her true place is with Jeremiah, no matter what that means, and to be with him she cuts off her hair, hems an old pair of his pants, and signs up as a Union soldier.

Rosetta drills with the men, prepares herself for battle, and faces the tension as her husband comes to grips with having a fighting wife. Fearing discovery of her secret, Rosetta's strong will clashes with Jeremiah's as their marriage is tested by war. Inspired by over two hundred and fifty documented accounts of the women who fought in the Civil War while disguised as men, *I Shall Be Near To You* is the intimate story, in Rosetta's powerful and gorgeous voice, of the drama of marriage, one woman's amazing exploits, and the tender love story that can unfold when two partners face life's challenges side by side.

I Shall Be Near to You Details

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From Reader Review I Shall Be Near to You for online ebook

Kara says

It has taken me weeks to try to write this review, simply because I'm not a good enough writer to put into words how strongly this book affected me. This is one of THOSE books: the kind you can't get anything else done until you finish it; the kind that makes you convinced that Jeremiah and Rosetta are a part of your life; the kind of book you sneak away at work to take "bathroom breaks" because you just can't stop reading; the kind that leaves you at an absolute loss as to what to do with yourself when it's over.

It's hard to pinpoint exactly why this book moved me so much, and in some respects the why is irrelevant. It just does.

Rosetta is extremely relatable and likeable. She's also the perfect feminist. While she's not mannish, she doesn't understand why it's such a big deal that she prefers farmwork to knitting and cooking. She doesn't begrudge her sister's love of ribbons and petticoats, she just doesn't share that fascination.

Yet from the beginning, she has been head over heels for Jeremiah, her neighbor/childhood friend/boyfriend/husband. Their interactions are painfully sweet because it's clear that not only does he get her, he never tries to force her to change. He loves her and is not threatened by her, which is remarkable on its own, but especially given the time period. Yet he's by no means soft or whipped; he maintains an aura of alpha-maleness while giving in to her whims and tantrums that is hard to pull off, but one of the many things McCabe succeeds at.

Their relationship is drawn out so well so early on that when Jeremiah leaves for their version of training camp, just days after their wedding, I felt Rosetta's oppression; stuck with her in-laws and forced to do all the domestic tasks she despises, yet without the one person who understands her and could keep her sane. Even though I knew what was coming since it's on the back of the jacket, her choice to run off after Jeremiah did not seem foolhardy, but simply a natural choice - in fact the only choice. The Rosetta we came to know in the first couple of chapters would never have done anything but go be with her man.

Which isn't to say she is a perfect character. She's impulsive and stubborn, only considering the consequences of her actions later. Nor is Jeremiah all sweet understanding - he's got a bit of a mean streak that made me kind of hate him for a page or two. But that made me love the book all the more, because it was realistic. Not all this syrupy sweet perfection from the main characters. Yet they love each other, so they learn to be together while she is pretending to be a dude. They find a system that works because as reckless as it is, the idea of separating is unthinkable.

Meanwhile they grow as individuals, as they are forced to reconcile their fantasies with the reality of war. Jeremiah thought he would walk around the woods for a few months and collect an army pension sufficient to buy him and Rosetta a farm. Not so. Rosetta gave no thought to what she would do if she had to see dead bodies or to actually try and kill someone. These things take their toll on them, and on the reader as well, because even though I've already sat through 4th grade social studies and I know how the civil war turned out, I kept hoping that these two kids would get their wish and just be able to ride off into the sunset without being traumatized by the war.

I'll admit, there were a couple of places that I felt the book lagged. But not in a "please hurry this up I have things to do" way, more in a "I know I'm going to cry over something eventually, let's just get on with it"

kind of way (that's not a spoiler, it's a book about the civil war; expect tears). And I wish we'd been able to get to know their friends - and even Jeremiah - a little better; not because the story doesn't work the way it's told, but because it works so well it made me want more of everything.

At the end of the day, what I was left with was two people that will stay with me a really long time. And a book that made me weep (the ugly cry y'all) not just for the story itself, but for all of the nameless faceless victims of the civil war whose stories will never been known. This is one of those books that you carry with you for a long long time.

And this whole review is just a really long way of saying read this book. Like, now.

I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for my honest, unbiased review .

Terri says

Original review found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>

I received an ARC of this novel from the publisher via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review. the expected publication date is January 28th 2014.

I literally just finished this read and all I can say is wow. I was so moved by this story that I do not even know how I can begin to put any of my thoughts together. I shall try however I fear that there is nothing I can write that will do any type of justice to how this story has moved me.

This is the story of Rosetta who disguises herself as a male so that she can enlist in the army to be with her husband. The character of Rosetta was strong willed and stubborn and you couldn't help but like her instantly. McCabe did a great job of having her speak like they would have in that time. I felt it made Rosetta's character more real. Although her stubbornness was at times annoying I think that at the end of the day it lent more strength and believability to her character. Her love for Jeremiah was heartbreakingly pure and unyielding. I could not even imagine putting myself in the situation she did.

I am not going to detail the stories plot. I will say that this was a heartbreaking read and that it did provoke some tears. It has been a long time since I have been able to cry in the pages of a novel and in my opinion it is a sign of a very well written and compelling story. I am beyond thankful that I had the opportunity to read this book as it will remain with me for quite some time to come.

Lastly, worth a read is the author's notes at the end. Although this was a fictional story McCabe explains that there was in fact a Rosetta who fought in the civil war and her letters home were the inspiration for this story. She also mentions more than 200 women enlisted during this time. The historical insight that she provides is a great addition to this read and allows us the reader to see the historical significance of these women.

Thank you for the tears. It was worth every one shed

Connie says

Jeremiah Wakefield had a dream of buying a farm in Nebraska. When the call went up in his upper New York town to join the Union army, he enlisted to earn the money needed. His newlywed wife Rosetta was a strong girl who had grown up helping her father on their farm since he had no sons to work the fields. She loved working outdoors, preferring it to traditional women's work. A few days after Jeremiah left for training, she decided to disguise herself as a man and join him as a Union soldier. The book is both a Civil war story, and a story about the deep love between Jeremiah and Rosetta.

There were over 250 women pretending to be men that fought in both the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. Rosetta's character was based on the real Sarah Rosetta Wakeman who served in the 153rd New York State Volunteers from 1862-1864. Women also acted as spies for both sides. When she is on guard duty in the Old Capitol Prison, Rosetta encounters the incarcerated "Rebel Rose" Greenhow, the colorful Confederate spy, sending Morse Code messages using a candle. Women also served as nurses and laundresses for the troops. They worked hard on the home front running the family farms and businesses while the men were away at war.

The horrors of war, especially at Bull Run and Antietam, are intensely visible. After they bury the dead, including another disguised woman soldier, Rosetta falls out of formation as they pass a creek and immerses herself in the water. "I can't keep on with all this death on me....I ain't going one more step until I've got my fingernails clean, at least....I ain't going to my death unclean like this!"

There was quite a bit of detailed historical information woven into the book. Rosetta and Jeremiah were compelling characters with an emotionally touching story.

Cher says

4 stars - It was great. I loved it.

Based on historical facts and letters surrounding at least 250 women that disguised themselves as men to fight and serve in the Civil war, Erin McCabe has created a memorable story about a woman who follows her husband into war (quite against his wishes). The heroine, Rosetta, is based loosely on the real lifestory of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, who inspired the feisty and strong-willed framework upon which the fictional character is built.

The novel was very atmospheric and made for a quick read. There are times that the main characters (husband and wife) have very heated arguments, and the author captured those emotions and wrote the dialogue in a very believable and lifelike way....not an easy feat. I listened to the audiobook version, and felt the narrator, Allyson Ryan, did a wonderful job.

If looking for a heartfelt novel that doesn't sugar coat the atrocities of war, for a noteworthy love story with a very original plot, or if you are just tired of reading about weak heroines, then I recommend picking this one up.

Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, aka Prvt Lyons Wakeman

Favorite Quote: And that is what I would give to you. I would give you my Love. I would give you Our Dream. Even if I am only watching from the Other side, I would give you these things.

First Sentence: All of us are clean for once, hair slicked back, our new kepis on, our trousers still creased, standing in the dim shop, a blue curtain draped across the wall behind us.

Lori says

Loved Rosetta, and i was fascinated to learn that this novel was based loosely on a real Rosetta's experiences as a woman disguised as a man fighting in the Civil War!!! Enjoyed!!!

Sandi *~The Pirate Wench~* says

Setting: Civil War-Era America
Steam Factor: mild

When Rosetta Wakefield's husband Jeremiah, enlists with the Union Army there is no way she is going to be left behind. So disguising herself as a man and renaming herself "Ross Stone" she joins alongside Jeremiah and his buddies. Of course their marriage and their abilities are then strongly tested as the couple moves from training drills to the full-fledged battles as the War that everyone expected to be over rages on. There are many fictional and true stories of women disguising themselves as a man to fight in some war or another, and I was wondering just how this would work as a "husband-wife/man" team together in this situation. The author certainly seemed to do her research as her story was inspired by more than 250 documented accounts of women joining the War effort by enlisting as men. Using a female soldier's point of view for the narration of the story made it refreshingly unique, and I found it to be a beautifully written and emotionally charged story with fascinating historical detail. Recommended for readers who are Civil War buffs, as well as women who disguise themselves as men to take up the cause.

Laura says

This book had such promise, but it just fell flat. There were a lot of potentially interesting characters and supporting characters, but nobody was really fleshed out enough to connect with.

Also, there were attitudes that just didn't fit into a mid-1800's mindset. I get turned off by authors who can't separate their own ideology from the setting they've created and instead try to foist modern ideas and perspectives.

Finally, too many F bombs--which really didn't feel right in the dialogue. Turns out I was right. Did a little research and, according to Jesse Sheidlower (who is the American editor of the Oxford English Dictionary and wrote the book *The F-Word*), says that most of the nonsexual uses of it—as an intensifier, for example—didn't come about until around World War I." In other words, the F-word dates from WAY back, but it was only used literally (in reference to copulation)...so it makes me think this author got her research of

swear words from the TV show Deadwood, rather than reality.

Mary says

"His arms pull me tight against his chest and I bury my face in his shoulder. He shakes and it is dark enough I can still say I ain't ever seen him cry. My heart goes to cracking wide open, but at least I am alive to feel it. I am a different kind of woman now, a wife who knows what this war really is. At least I am part of this war, part of the things Jeremiah's done here, things that will always be hiding somewhere in his heart."

New York, 1862. Rosetta marries her childhood sweetheart just before he leaves to enlist with the Union Army. Jeremiah is naive and optimistic about the war, thinking he'll be gone a short while and return with money enough for them to buy their own farm. Even so, Rosetta doesn't want him to go. Without Jeremiah, she has to play the role of wife, cooking, mending, making soap, when she'd rather be outside tending the animals or helping with the harvest. Rosetta is stubborn and spirited, and it isn't long before she hacks off her braid, dresses in Jeremiah's old clothes and follows her husband to war.

I wish I could put into words how much this book moved me. I can count on one hand the number of books that have affected me so strongly, provoked an actual physical response and halted my other reading plans. I had to pause and absorb this story, and I know its characters will never leave me. Rosetta is a force, a fighting wife, a woman brave enough to follow her husband into hell. Their love is both fierce and tender, and their connection to one another endures long stretches of boredom, constant hunger, and short bursts of battle-born terror. Neither of them truly understood what war would be, and the author, with well-placed poetic imagery and necessary grit, conveys the realities of a soldier's life.

"I aim careful in the dying light and fire two rounds...the first don't hit a thing, but the second shot makes a space in the line advancing. Something heavy settles in my belly when the stain blooms on that soldier's chest, the hole in the line, the tear in the fabric of some other family."

Rosetta's voice is strong and straightforward; her struggles and fears are authentic and entirely relatable. The supporting characters are well-drawn, compelling, easy to get attached to. There is just the right amount of historic detail to capture the essence of the time period without inundating the reader with "research." The way the story is told, the structure and pacing, seems effortless (though I am sure it wasn't), and thankfully, there is no epilogue to stitch up every last detail. In short, this is as close to perfect as it can get. (And, my God, it's a debut novel! I'm not sure whether to hug the author or slap her!)

I Shall Be Near To You is heart-wrenching and unforgettable. I hope this book will get the recognition it deserves.

Interesting links:

The title was inspired by a real letter from Union soldier Sullivan Ballou to his wife Sarah. [Read it here.](#)

The author's playlist. Music can strike an emotional chord with me, and I love that the author included the songs she listened to while writing. These echo the mood of the book so well. Make sure you listen to "My Father's Father" when you have finished the book. So, so moving.

An interview with the author. I love hearing about the process of getting this book revised and published. It was obviously a labor of love.

The original photo from the cover. Were you, like me, curious about the soldier pictured on the front of the novel? I wanted to see his whole face, and I was surprised to discover that he was actually a Confederate.

A Savage Day in American History. A little more information about the Battle of Antietam.

Wendy says

The concept of this book is a really cool one--a girl following her husband and joining up with the Union Army during the Civil War? Potentially awesome. However, I feel that this book failed to live up to its potential in every possible way.

First off, this isn't a new idea--people have known for quite some time now that during the American Civil War (or the War Between the States, if you prefer, or perhaps the Uncivil War), many women disguised themselves as men and fought for their chosen side. Books have been written on the subject previous to this--both fiction and nonfiction. In fact, when I was much younger, I read a 'for kids' fictionalization of a true account. I can't recall the title anymore, but I remember being thoroughly enthralled by the book, and the whole idea.

What I'm saying is that, since it's not the first book to explore the concept, it ought to have brought something new to the table. Well, most of the fiction books on the subject that I've read had the women characters as widows, so I suppose the fact that Rosetta's husband, Jeremiah, is still alive (view spoiler) is the 'something new' the author was trying to bring. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough for me, because everything else felt like a dull retread. I felt it was tragically boring and predictable.

Everything that you would expect to happen, happens. She's found out by a fellow woman, but that woman promises to keep her secret and becomes her confidant--her husband is angry with her for coming, but still sleeps with her anyway--(view spoiler) I didn't feel there were any surprises at all. I guessed who would be killed, I guessed who wouldn't be. I guessed who would find out about Rosetta's true nature, and I guessed who the secretly gay kid was. I even guessed the climax and eventual ending ahead of time. It felt like a waste of time, since I knew everything that was going to happen before it happened. It was like reading a book over again that I'd already read--and it didn't make me feel smart and superior for guessing, it made me disappointed that the book wasn't challenging me more. Not that every moment needed to keep me on my toes, but at least *one* surprise would've been nice.

Speaking of the gay boy, though--the shoehorned-in message from him and Mrs Chalmers about tolerance and equality and freedom would have been lovely, if it hadn't been quite so clumsy. Rosetta isn't a very introspective character who thinks deep, profound thoughts, so it was rather jarring when she suddenly started thinking about feminism and gay rights and freedom for all. Particularly since the Civil War was

fought to end slavery, not for either of those things, so it just came off...awkward, to me at least.

The biggest problem with the whole thing, though, was that I didn't like Rosetta at all. I spent most of the book wanting to shake her. She's supposed to come off as this tough, strong-willed, independent female who can keep up with the men--but she spends the whole book seeking approval from the men around her. She essentially joins the army because she can't bear to be without her husband, and because she needs protection from her rapey neighbor. She didn't do it because she believed that strongly in the Union cause, or because she wanted to help Jeremiah in any way she could. She did it because her mother-in-law doesn't *like* her, and she's so *bored and lonely*, and she doesn't *want* to do the mending, waaaaaaaaaaaaah! Well, and because of the rapey neighbor, as previously mentioned, but if I'm supposed to believe that she's tough enough to be a soldier, then I should think she could fight him off if she had to. Wow, that sounds really judgmental, but I promise, it won't sound so bad in a minute. She gets like five minutes from home and starts being so *tired* and it's so *far* and she hitches a ride from this farmer guy, and thinks to herself how she'll *never* be able to march that many miles in a day! And she gets to rifle practice and thinks how she'll *never* be able to shoot as well as the *boys* do! A little self-doubt is okay, but Rosetta is *constantly whining* about how she can't do this and she can't do that. While in the next breath saying that she can do anything that needs done. Whatever.

Back to the 'seeking approval from men' thing. She is *constantly* looking to Jeremiah for approval and for husband-y looks and actions, which *really* comes off stupid when they're supposed to be hiding the fact that she's a woman. How's he supposed to 'act like a husband' to you when you're supposed to be his very male cousin? Are you *trying* to get found out?! Then there's her father. She's such a tomboy because her father was extremely unhappy that all the sons he and his wife ever had were either stillborn, or died shortly after birth, leaving them with only two daughters. So she decides to pick up the slack and become an honorary son, basically. One of her motivating issues throughout the book is that her father will never love her as much as he would have if she was a boy. Yeah, that's rough. I'm sorry to hear that. But it means that the secondary motivation for all her actions in the book is to make her father proud of her in the way he would be proud of a boy--by taking up arms and going to war. So motivation one is her husband, and motivation two is her father. Her own beliefs do not factor in anywhere, that I could tell, because her only belief is that she has to be with Jeremiah at all times or one or both of them will die and they'll never get their farm. I don't care about your farm, lady. I stopped caring when you wouldn't quit whining about it. She also seems to look up to the captain of her regiment for approval--another man. So that was annoying.

I also hated the ending. It felt calculated and contrived. And *speaking* of calculated, contrived things...(view spoiler)

Okay, that was all the stuff I felt was genuinely wrong with the book and why I feel it deserves the rating I gave it. From here on out is nitpicks that are more specific to me.

I'm tired of ambiguous endings. Sometimes ambiguous endings are awesome, particularly when it's a theme of the book or movie or TV series that life has no endings until you die, that every day you have to pick up and keep moving forward. Despite the fact that it made me kind of depressed for a while, this worked really well at the end of the British TV show *Case Histories*--sometimes you can get closure and sometimes you can't, but you still have to find a way to move forward was kind of one of the themes of the show, so when it ended with a big old question mark for the main character's future, I was sad but understood the artistic decision behind it. In *Gone With the Wind*, everyone in the whole universe knows that it ends with Scarlett at Tara, saying tomorrow's another day--a recurring theme throughout the movie. Every time something happens, Scarlett recovers and moves forward, so it's pretty fitting that the end is her looking to the future after another setback. This book didn't have any themes like that, so I didn't really understand why the ending was so uncertain. Instead of feeling like the above two examples, like it was a natural conclusion to what

they'd been telling you all along, it just felt like the author was bored and decided to quit writing, so she threw 'the end' down and sent it to the publisher. I list this as a nitpick of mine because it might not have bothered anyone else, but it did bother me, and contributed to my dislike.

What is with this fascination with writing books in the present tense? Nearly every book I pick up these days is written in present tense. I find it intensely irritating and distracting. I know the current thinking is (at least in part) that it will make the reader feel more 'in the moment' because you're subconsciously telling them that the story is happening right now, but I don't think it works. As I said, I find it distracting, because I'm used to reading things in past tense, so all the present tense conjugations draw my mind toward the *mechanics* of what's been written and away from the actual story itself--which *is* what you want your readers to focus on, isn't it? And I find it irritating because the story *isn't* happening right now. I *know* it's not happening right now. You're not going to convince me, conscious or unconsciously, that it is. And it doesn't make me feel like the character is talking to me, relating what's happened to her, because she would tell the story in the past tense then--and it doesn't make me feel like I'm right beside her, either, experiencing everything with her. It takes very skilled writing to accomplish that, not a change of tense. It's a conceit that immediately gives me an attitude toward the book, and not a positive one. You've struck me as pretentious from the get-go, so you now have to work harder to regain my good will, and therefore the benefit of the doubt. It was especially grating in this particular book because it was an historical fiction, set in the Civil War, so the present tense seemed like a very, very strange choice.

And one other thing--why were characters from rural New York written like they talk like Tennessee mountain hillbillies? We have no way of knowing how poor farmers of any area back then talked, since we don't have recordings of their dialogue, but it was a very jarring dialect choice. I was thrown off by every odd turn of phrase, and since this was in first person, it permeated every line. It was especially apparent when the author was trying to put in poetic descriptions of the scenery, through the lens of this character she'd already established talked and thought in bare-bones 'hick' style. Very odd, and it didn't work for me at all. Probably it didn't bother other people, but it was just one more sliver of annoyance that contributed to my overall dislike of the book.

That's all I can think of. I just found it irritating and a waste of time in so many ways. I'm sure I had a few other things that annoyed me while I was reading it, but I forgot them. Anyway, I strongly disliked it, and I can't recommend it in good conscience to anyone I know. It's got a lot of good ratings here on Goodreads, so I know I'm pretty alone in feeling this way, but I just didn't like it. But, to be fair, you can't please everyone, so perhaps I'm just not part of the target audience.

Lisa Wolf says

From my recent post at Bookshelf Fantasies:

Five Reasons Why You Should Read *I Shall Be Near To You...* ASAP!

Here are my top five reasons why this may be the book for you:

1) **Strong female character:** Simply put, Rosetta Wakefield is one awesome woman. A young bride who decides that she will not sit home while the man she loves marches off to war, Rosetta takes her future into her own hands. Ignoring family disapproval and potential shame, not waiting for her husband's agreement, Rosetta sets a course for herself and doesn't look back. She joins the Union army, drills with the troops,

pushes past overwhelming fear, and marches into battle — and simply won't take no for an answer. Sure, there are fictional fantasy characters who use fancy martial arts, or stakes, or bows and arrows to face down bad guys. But Rosetta is a real-world heroine, based on historical records, who arms herself with her mind and her will to fight, steels herself with her love for her husband, and dares everything in order to achieve her own ends.

2) **Bringing history to life:** If you're like me, you learned about the Civil War, about the battles of Bull Run and Antietam, in history class during middle school or high school. Maybe you had to learn the details, or write an essay on the strategic importance of certain battles. Maybe you had to memorize the dates or the names of the generals. Boring, right? Put all that aside, and read *I Shall Be Near To You*. I don't think I've read another book that brings the battlefield's sights, sounds, and smells to life quite so viscerally. As seen through Rosetta's eyes, war truly is hell. It's bloody and confusing and terrifying, consisting of little more than marching into almost certain death because that's what the troops have been ordered to do. There's no place to hide, no refuge, and no rhyme or reason to the chaos and horror.

3) **An intense, passionate love story:** Rosetta and Jeremiah are childhood sweethearts whose love is sincere, deep, and committed. Rosetta can't be anywhere but by Jeremiah's side, and despite his worries about what's proper and safe for his wife, Jeremiah loves Rosetta too much to send her away. Their stolen moments are deeply emotional, deeply sexual, and absolutely pure in their mutual love and devotion.

4) **Nitty-gritty, nuts-and-bolts details:** What would enlisted troops eat in between battles? Where did the food come from? Or more essential questions: How could a woman hide in plain sight among an army of men? What about bathroom needs and other bodily functions? Ever notice how some of those "sweeping", "epic" romances or historical novels gloss over the less-pleasant realities of day-to-day life? It's all gowns and swords and drama... but not here. In *I Shall Be Near To You*, Rosetta's adventure is believable because it is so deeply grounded in real life. Yes, there are obstacles. Yes, there are all sorts of things that Rosetta has to figure out in order to manage in a male environment without detection. The author gives us enough to make us feel just how much Rosetta has to overcome in order to achieve her goals — and just how much she has to sacrifice and put up with in order to stay by Jeremiah's side.

5) **Writing that's just right:** Rosetta is a young woman with some education but not a lot, raised on a farm and taught the essentials, but she's never been a fine, sophisticated lady — and her speech is pitch-perfect in reflecting just who she is. Speaking plainly but not without her own sense of poetry, Rosetta is forthright to the point of almost impropriety, speaking out when nice young girls should demur to their men or their mothers-in-law or to practically anyone else. Rosetta speaks in colloquialisms, but it's not overdone or cloying. Instead, her narration tells us just who she is simply by the words she uses and how she describes her life, her dreams, and the man she loves. It's not fancy, but it consistently rings true, and Rosetta conveys such a depth of emotions in her plain words that it's like being hit by a lightning bolt at times.

That's five. Need more?

At just over 300 pages, *I Shall Be Near To You* tells a tightly crafted tale that wastes no energy and never goes astray. I walked away from this book with a greater understanding of love and loss, the terrors of warfare, and the simple joys of being with the right person and sharing a dream.

It's beautiful. It's powerful. Read this book.

Diane S ? says

3.5 Based on actual letters and reports from the more than 250 woman who fought disguised as men on both sides, during the Civil War.

Rosetta is a memorable character, she comes from a poor but hardworking family and Jeremiah is her one true love. They have hopes of moving to Nebraska and buying their own farm. The \$150.00 sign up fee for joining is his motivation for joining up. For Rosetta there are many other reasons.

In this novel we gain the female perspective on going to war, the hardships of war and we see Rosetta, now called Ross, becoming a much more capable and independent woman.

We read about the hardtack and porkbelly, and then less and less provisions as the war continues. The marching and the drills and the closeness of the men, we see the blood and feel the terror, the horror of battle.

This is a first novel that is very well done and of course it is always a big plus when a novel is written from actual historic events and sources.

Look forward to more from this talented author.

ARC from NetGalley.

Jennifer says

What a wonderful historical fiction piece. The author's note at the end will tell you that this is loosely based on a REAL Rosetta plus the stories of 200 other women who donned either the blue or the gray and fought for their homeland in the Civil War.

Rosetta's character is wonderfully rounded out to include her reasons for leaving home (deeper than simply being so in love with her husband that she couldn't stand to be parted). This book felt so very real and vivid. Rosetta's voice speaks very clearly, excellent use of dialect yet still completely readable. I read this in several marathon sittings....hard to put down!

I felt like I was THERE.

Thanks NetGalley, I want the world to know you shared this with me for an honest review.

Britany says

New York during the Civil War. Our narrator- Rosetta Stone-- helps her family out on their farm, she is brutally honest, headstrong, and independent. When her new husband enlists, her heart breaks open. She feels alone and disconnected. She decides to chop off her hair, put on some slacks, and heads for Utica to enlist alongside her husband.

As the war goes on, "Ross Stone" goes through deaths, sickness, gore, shooting, and surprises. At times, this novel pulled on my emotions, but ultimately, didn't take me as far as I would've liked. The story was a powerful one, and a brilliant look at the women who served in the Civil War.

Barb says

I liked Rosetta Wakefield, she immediately pulled me into the past of her life and held me there until the last page. Erin Lindsay McCabe has created a moving tribute to the women who passed as men and fought alongside their husbands, fathers and brothers in the Civil War. The author's note is fascinating, her fictional story is based on fact, over two hundred women are known to have fought in the Civil War, one fought at the battle of Antietam during the second trimester of her pregnancy.

I found the reasons for Rosetta's enlistment realistic and plausible. She doesn't fit in at home, she has never wanted to do what women do, the sewing, the laundry, the candle making. She wants to be outside mowing hay or tapping the maple trees for sap. She doesn't fit in with the girls or the women, she's a disappointment to her own mother and her new mother-in-law isn't any more understanding.

Her husband Jeremiah is her best friend, he accepts her and loves her for the person she is. He'd like her to stay at home and wait for him to return from the war, he'd like her to stay where she's safe. But he understands her feelings that her place is beside him, wherever he is. This is a story about Rosetta's choice to follow her husband into war, the way that decision changes the course of their lives and what that path was like for her.

There were a few places where Rosetta seemed to refer to something the reader was unaware of, I suspect there were editing issues there, but those few instances didn't detract from my enjoyment. I found the story fascinating and well done, I've read quite a few books this year (97) and this one ranks among the favorites. I thought the characterizations were well done, the dialogue was believable and the relationships were realistic.

I love when an author takes an interesting bit of history and turns it into compelling fiction. I know I should want to read the non-fiction version of events but I don't. I want the fictionalization and I want to sink into it and feel like I was there. This book did just that for me.

The book reviewed was an uncorrected proof offered by Crown Publishers through the Amazon Vine program in exchange for an honest review.

Carol says

It's **1862** and Jeremiah Wakefield is off to fight for the Union leaving his newlywed bride behind without a proper parting goodbye. Distressed by his absence, and unwilling to succumb to menial "womanly" chores delegated by her nit-picking mother-in-law; after only two days, the proud and strong-willed Rosetta proceeds to cut off her hair, disguise herself in manly clothes and join-up to be with her man.

Inspired by real people and events, McCabe does a great job of drawing a convincing picture of **1862** farm life, women in war and the battlefields of Manassas and Antietam, the bloodiest battle of the Civil War.

This is one of those tender love stories (*not overdone*) that touched my heart making me feel like I knew how Rosetta and Jeremiah were feeling during their time together fighting for the Union **and** their personal cause of saving for their life after war.

Having lived in Centreville, Virginia not far from Manassas made my reading experience all the better. Am so hoping to be one of the lucky winners of an author-signed copy of **I SHALL BE NEAR TO YOU**. Great debut!
