



The Notorious Mrs. Winston

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With the nation on the verge of civil war, Claire Winston becomes a crusading abolitionist. But she takes an even greater risk when she finds herself in love with John Taylor, her husband's nephew. As much as John loves her, his devotion is to the Confederacy - and to the rebellious fighters known as Morgan's Raiders.

Separated from him by the war, Claire boldly travels across the war-torn country in search of her lover. Disguised as a male soldier, she suddenly finds herself drafted by none other than General Morgan himself, swept up in the greatest guerilla raid in American history - and caught between her loyalty to the Union and her love for John.

The Notorious Mrs. Winston Details

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From Reader Review The Notorious Mrs. Winston for online ebook

Tara Chevestt says

I loved this story! Truly one of the best Civil War novels I have read. The heroine, Claire marries a man named Henry just before the Civil War begins. Henry proves to be an awful husband and she falls in love with his nephew, John. Unfortunately, Henry proves to be rather adamant that she remain his wife and refuses to grant her a divorce, which is very difficult to attain in that day and age to begin with. Henry actually deceives Claire with lies and manipulations before abandoning her but by then, John is fighting in a war. Despite the fact that she is a staunch Union supporter and abolitionist, Claire loves, frets over, and desperately misses John, who is on the Confederate side. Unable to consult with him by normal means, she does all she can think to do. She dons a Confederate uniform and joins the infamous "Morgan's Raiders" to find her lover. Find him she does, as well as adventure, prison time, and battlefield drama. She also attempts to warn the north when the south is approaching. Terrific novel full of adventure and historical details. Not to mention, an amazing, unforgettable heroine.

Jill says

I picked up this book in the bargain bin of the bookstore and I didn't have any expectations beyond the interesting premise of a married woman who had an affair and fought in battle during the civil war. While I appreciate the historical research that the author did about the characters in *The Notorious Mrs. Winston*, it seems that the book had an identity problem. On one hand the author seemed to want to go the direction of being a historical romance. On the other she wanted to produce a historically accurate novel about the Civil War. I suppose that these two things do not have to be mutually exclusive, but the end result was that the author never fully committed to either. There seemed to be much build up with the premise of the main character's exploits but something was missing that left the reader unfulfilled. However, it was refreshing to see the Civil War from a different perspective of a woman who herself legally had no rights as much as the slaves she tried to help.

My biggest complaint with the author is her use of the word y'all. It is quite clear to most southerners that y'all is to be used to refer to a group of two or more people. It is never to be used in the singular. The author persisted in this incorrect usage throughout the book and it made for a distraction while attempting to read it.

Kathy says

The story line seemed a bit absurd (female posing as male soldier to find lover, fighting as a confederate but in reality an abolitionist); yet as a romance the relationship between Clair and John kept me turning the pages ... a feisty female who will go to the ends of the earth to be with the love of her life. As an historical fiction, seeing the civil war, it's battles and impact on families, through the eyes of Clair was insightful.

Karen says

A proper married, Boston woman (who happens to be a strong abolitionist) falls in love with a Rebel soldier. At first glance this seems improbable, but it tells the story of how the country was torn apart and even families and loved ones were impacted. Mrs. Winston does some things that are considered very un-ladylike for this time period which explains why she is “notorious”.

This were many historical Civil War battle details, which is not something I usually enjoy; however this book really brought the tragedy of this war to life.

Elizabeth says

The Notorious Mrs Winston is a cute story about a young woman, Claire, who marries an older man to save her family from fiscal ruin, unaware that her new husband, Henry, is an abusive, pedophilic photographer, as well as an rich, attractive industrialist.

Her husband's nephew, John, (who is closer to Claire's age than Henry is) comes to visit his uncle and he and Claire fall in love, which Claire-- one of the most sensible heroines written in the past ten years-- finds slightly awkward. After her husband flies into a rage at the thought of his wife sleeping with his nephew (or, in fact, anyone, even Henry himself) and nearly kills Claire, she rethinks her I-must-not-leave-my-husband policy and runs off with John.*

Long story short, Henry tricks her into coming back to him; several weeks later Claire has a miscarriage and whilst talking to the doctor learns that she cannot now have her marriage annulled on grounds of non-consummation, which had apparently never occurred to her before, because to do that she would need to be examined by medical professionals and declared a virgin. (Yay for Victorian Era sexual double standards and willful ignorance of female anatomy, since the chances of a woman who spent her childhood so tomboyishly still having an intact hymen are pretty small!)

Things are obviously pretty sucky for Claire, but then the American Civil War gets into full swing and Claire, despite being a clandestine abolitionist, dresses up like a boy and joins the Confederate army to be with John. Women dressed as boys really look more like woman dressed as boys than like boys, and Claire's managing to pass as a kid named Zeke would be completely unbelievable, except that so many historical woman actually did become crossdressing soldiers during the Civil War.**

John, like Claire, is also not really into slavery, but he is still a Southerner and will fight for their Cause, even if he does not believe in it. Personally, I found myself disappointed that this issue was not more fully addressed, and wished that Claire, an obviously intelligent narrator, would also talk more about the intricate politics and conflicting social passions of the time.

The story ends happily, of course, with a Confederate episode of *Prison Break* and Henry meeting a very *Suddenly, Last Summer* end.

*At this point we realize that *The Notorious Mrs Winston* confirms to one of the strangest rules of Romancelandia, the Law of the First Husband's Wang.

**Possibly this is apocryphal, but legend says that one woman attained a very high rank in the army and was only outed as a woman when she went into labor. History does not record to reactions of her men, when they

realized that their major was a chick, and that she had successfully masqueraded as a man even when she was nine months pregnant.

Karrie says

I absolutely loved this book! I had planned on returning it to the library unread b/c I was having a hard time getting around to reading, but picked it up one night and was finished with it the next. And in the Battle of Buffington Island, I was amazed to read towns names in which I am familiar with! Growing up in southern Ohio, it makes the Civil War much more alive to know that Morgan's Raiders were through the very area I live. I have known this fact from history books, but it made it much more real to me to see it in a novel. Absolutely recommend to anyone who loves historical novels.

Emily says

Gave up 150 pages in, too much silliness.

Jenni says

Love this book! This is the first book that I have read by Mary Mackey and I was blown away! She had me hooked from the first paragraph. I kept wishing there was such a woman as Claire Winston. The heroine, Claire marries a man she thinks she could love, a Mr. Henry Winston just before the Civil War begins. He proves to be a horrid husband and she falls in love with his nephew, John Taylor. Unfortunately, Henry proves to be rather adamant that she remain his wife and refuses to grant her a divorce. He deceives Claire with lies and manipulation and tears her from the man she loves. Meanwhile, John is fighting in a war with the North. Despite the fact that she is a staunch Union supporter and abolitionist, Claire, disguised as a male soldier, travels boldly and fearlessly into war torn country. What happens next will have you glued to your chair and unable to put down this book.

Kris Irvin says

The story sounds AWESOME.

It was executed so poorly it was like an actual execution.

I don't know what possessed Mary Mackey to write this story in present tense, but it was a horrible, horrible decision. Stories like this should not be told in present tense. It was jarring and distracting every time I had to read "Claire looks down and realizes there is horse crap on her shoe. John glances over and sees that Claire is contemplating her shoe and it fills him with burning desires."

If not for the tenses thing, I probably would have liked this book much more. But I did seriously consider quitting it about halfway through because it was so irritating. After I made it halfway through I decided to stick with it, just to see if the story ever got any better. Nope.

Big ol' love story, heavy on the love, not so much on the historical butt-kickin' warrior part. Did get pretty graphic (sexual) in several parts.

Overall, not really something I would ever read again. I thought this would be a book about a woman going to fight for her country and kicking butt at it - instead, it's about a woman so in loooove with her sekret lover that she pretends to be a boy so she can get closer to him. Blech.

Barbara says

The historical research done for this historical fiction novel set during the Civil war was good, and some readers might really enjoy this book. My reasons for not ranking it higher are personal opinion: The language, at times, was bad, and there were some scenes that were a little more detailed sexually than I would like, so for those reasons I did not enjoy it like I might have. The storyline and historical details were fine.

Tiffany says

I LOVED every bit of this book! The characters were described in such detail and with varying degrees of depth that you easily loved or disliked them. The history was also fascinating (although much was fudged for the purposes of the story) but then again I'm crazy about anything relating to the U.S. Civil War. If you enjoy a good historical novel set in that time frame with detailed descriptions of everything and everyone and also a good bit of romantic flair then I highly suggest this as your next read!

Joan Horkey says

Superb, accurate story of the civil war.

Gaile says

I liked The Widow's War better than this one. Still it was another page turner and kept me reading. The heroine is married but falls in love with her husband's cousin. After learning her husband plans to commit her to a mental institution, she runs away, disguised herself as a boy and joins Morgan's Raiders. She joins with her lover as a scout and they fight side by side. Read it to learn how it ends!

Wisteria Leigh says

Claire thought she was in love with her new husband Henry, but soon after they were married his obsession with photographing her became a source of discomfort and revulsion. He wouldn't touch her, in fact the marriage was never consummated. Claire is not even allowed to touch him when they lay in bed at night. The

mysterious green album sends shudders through Claire s veins as it contains indiscreet photos of her, oddly provocative and perverse, a secret fetish of her husband s. He worships her beauty in an artistic way, but for Claire, the camera lens becomes a dreaded focal point to her marriage. [return][return]When she meets John Taylor, Henry s nephew, their mutual attraction is explosive. This event will alter her destiny as The Notorious Mrs. Winston takes on the persona of Zeke, a young boy eager to join the infamous Morgan Raiders so that she can be with her beloved. [return][return]Historiographically, General Morgan and his company of about seventeen hundred men did exist and their presence in the Ohio River area of southern Indiana was intended to cause havoc for the Union men. The fictional Claire, although she claimed allegiance to the Union cause, fought with Morgan s men to be with John. She is clever, and devoted to him with an unstoppable tenacious willful spirit of adventure. [return][return]While it is hard to accept that Claire was able to pull off the disguise of a rebel soldier, when her beauty was evidently striking, I enjoyed her character. Her loyalty and dedication to the Underground Railroad is evident early on, yet she must somehow work with the enemy in order to save herself and a future with the man she loves. Somewhat dramatic in a soap opera way, this still is an enjoyable read. Mackey has since written *The Widow s War*, set in the Civil War period which in my opinion is superb. Those looking for an adventurous book for the Civil War Challenge should consider this one. [return][return][return] [return]

Beth says

THE NOTORIOUS MRS WINSTON is a glorious read! I stayed up all night to finish it. A thrilling love story set against the backdrop of the Civil War, it will be placed on my “women soldiers of the Civil War” bookshelf.

Mackey’s novel’s strength is the well written character studies. Claire, the heroine, Henry, her cruel husband, John, her lover as well as a treasure trove of many fascinating Characters populate the story.

Five stars!!!!
