



# Red Moon at Sharpsburg

*Rosemary Wells*

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## **Red Moon at Sharpsburg** Rosemary Wells

Award-winning author Rosemary Wells lays bare the senseless devastation of war in this stunning novel. As the Civil War breaks out, India, a young Southern girl, summons her sharp intelligence and the courage she didn't know she had to survive the war that threatens to destroy her family, her Virginia home, and the only life she has ever known. A timeless heroine of inspiring drive and bravery, India holds on to her dream of forging a career in science, unheard-of for a woman, in the face of battle, starvation, and tragic loss. Rarely has the Southern perspective on the war been told so even-handedly for young adults as in this meticulously researched, poignant, and riveting novel.

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## **Red Moon at Sharpsburg Details**

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Author : Rosemary Wells

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## **From Reader Review Red Moon at Sharpsburg for online ebook**

### **Becky Reynolds says**

I have loved Rosemary Wells' picture books. For a middle- grade book, this was very deep and well-written. I loved it.

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### **Allie Massaro says**

It was a good book, yeah, but definitely not on of my favorites. To sum up the book I can describe it in few words: outgoing girl gets her world ripped apart only to come back together almost perfectly. There, 14 words. Up until Antietam the book is slow, though it's very emotional. After Antietam it goes faster and lots of surprises to come. Finally India doesn't talk, she blurts out what she wants to say. India just interrupts someone and its completely wrong. Not only is it unladylike, but no boy would really do this either. This is the one thing that bugs me the most because it just doesn't fit with the times or even now because most parents will punish a child for interrupting, especially if their saying something important. 4.5 stars guys. So yes I do recommend this book to anyone who would like to read with a female protagonist or a Civil War times.

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### **Cayson B. says**

It was a little confusing but a good book. I recommend it to people that like wars.

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### **Sarah Bierle says**

Listened to un-abridged audio book.

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### **Kayla Davis says**

Set during the time of the Civil War, this book depicts the story of a headstrong girl named India, who is determined to go against the tides of what is appropriate for women. When the Civil War breaks out in the South school is cancelled, but after proving that she is prone to don boy's clothing and play war games in the street, India is sentenced to receive tutoring from a young man named Emory who is a friend of the family. However, it is not long before India has convinced Emory to ditch his teaching of scriptures and womanly ideals to teach her men's science and chemistry. It will be there time together that sparks love to grow and makes India more determined than ever to do something that was considered widely inappropriate for women at that time – attend college. But after her father is killed in the army and Emory goes missing during a battle, all while the South suffers devastating losses and damage at the hands of the North, India's path becomes daunted and hopeless. It will be the unlikely of swallowing her anger and caring for another soldier from the opposing side that ultimately reunites her with Emory and provides her the ticket to freedom so that

she can attend college. The book was very unique in that it gave an uncommon perspective of the Civil War – which was the perspective of the South from people other than slave owners. While the book does mention this perspective, the majority of the book is through the eyes of India, who is simply the daughter of a leather man. The Civil War is usually portrayed in a way that depicts the North as valiant and the South as cold hearted and cruel. While indeed it is true that the North was fighting for a great cause and the South was fighting in part to stay in their rigid ways, you often don't get to hear what it was like for those that were fighting simply because it was their duty to the South. I think one of the book's strongest assets is that it gave unique insight from the opposing side. While the book had strong plot description, plot development, and character development, there was one aspect that was extremely frustrating as a reader and that was trying to distinguish the race of the main character, India in the beginning of the book. Not until close to the end of the book does the reader find out if she is white or black – which is crucial knowledge considering the time period. Unfortunately, this lack of information was not to the reader's benefit as if the author left it untold to allow for critical evaluation and suspense. Rather it made it hard to really put things into context because you weren't able to develop a clear picture of the main character and her family. However, with this exception aside the book, was a strong piece of quality literature that was far from dull. The main themes in the book were love, the Civil War, and the equality between men and women. I would recommend this book for 6th-8th grade students. Be warned that there is powerful imagery that is evoked because of the gruesome details of war. This would be a great book to teach about the Civil War and the perspective of Southerners who were fighting the war. While the South was in the wrong, the book focuses on the shared humanity between those from both sides.

Wells, R. (2007). *Red Moon at Sharpsburg*. New York, NY: Penguin Books Ltd.

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### **Elizabeth Kysa Sedivy says**

*Red Moon At Sharpsburg* follows a young girl named India Moody, who lives in Shenandoah Valley which is located in Virginia. She is about twelve and during this time the Civil War is going on, the book describes her experiences living through it. India lives with her parents, along with her friend Julia and Julia's parents alongside to two black slaves that go by the names Micah and Ester Cooley. Total there are six of them living together. The twist is that the families made a promise with each other, to be more exact they made a total of three that were to be kept to themselves. The Timbles (Julias family) and the Moody's would live together. The next promise was that they would always free their slaves. The final promise is that the slaves that they freed they would help them in giving those deeds to land. To Ester and Micah Cooley they gave them 10 whole acres. This was a sensitive subject during the civil war since many people did not agree with the freeing of slaves still, and because of there were sometimes deadly outcomes for doing so. The original six members of the two family members then move to Oberlin, Ohio after the war breaks out. This is where India finds a love for science, she witnesses a battle for herself and is opposed to all the killing and bad conditions soldiers have to live through, with a high rate of preventable infections. Through it India wants a better life where they would be no blood shed, overall it depicted the Civil War in America very well and showed many of the more gruesome aspects of the war, and the emotional, physical, and over well-being of everyone involved.

Wells, R. (2007). *Red moon at Sharpsburg: A novel*. New York: Viking.

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## **Coy W says**

Young India Moody is being born on the Trimble's carpet (or somewhere close or something) then she's born. I don't know why I mentioned this but this was the beginning of the book. Then some stuff happens and her best friend (I forgot her name because she was such a minor part) moves away to Ohio and tells her to come to college later. Then India has to go to the Trimble's to get tutored then she learns about science and falls in love with Emory Trimble and all that stuff. The battle of Sharpsburg was in the title so you think it would be important right you thought wrong. It was 15 pages of wasted time of her trying to get medicine to her father. Then Emory has to go to war and same thing but India and her family moves to some town then she gets kicked out moves back then the Trimble's get kicked out of their house and everything goes wrong but then she moves in with Ester and Micha some weird random characters that were in the whole book apparently but I don't. Then they save someone and India gets back to Emory in prison and then the book ends and it is really weird.

### **Paragraph 2.**

A example of a Hyperbole (a huge exaggeration) is "It's worse than a hog killing, but it ain't hogs Page 192. He is relating the war to a hog killing even war is way worse.

An example of Imagery is when they use five senses to describe something. "The stench in the house is so shocking I believe no human being could stay inside for more than a minute." This could also count as a Hyperbole because she stays in there for much longer than a minute add two to the scoreboard. 3-5

An example of Personification is when "I hold Abby in my arms as if she was Eddie" Eddie is her brother and Abby is her doll.

A metaphor is when you say something that is kind of like of like what you are talking about "Amos birdsong was like a son to me. He had the sight of an eagle and the strength of a lion but as dumb as an ox.

Overall a decent book but it was really boring but besides that it was good

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## **Barbara Brien says**

When I first started this book, I was prepared to dislike it because it was about the war from the losing side's perspective, and I'm not really a fan of that. However, the book did a good job of showing the war and the attitudes of the South as the war progresses. I was pissed at the way the book ended though - it seemed like there was a lot of the story still left to be told.

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## **Mya Ogden says**

When the Civil War was introduced life in the South was changing. A young girl, named India Moody, gets sent off to do tutoring with a brilliant scientist. But, when the Union forces are traveling towards them her family's lives are in danger. Will India have enough courage to plunge herself into the war or stand back and watch the lives of her people suffer. This book is a really deep story I think it changes the mind-set of how people living in this time period think now. If you're into intense and heart breaking stories this sure is the one for you!

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## **Emma says**

Kind of confusing at the beginning.

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## **Reese says**

This book was an assignment my teacher gave me and a few other students while we study the civil war. It's extremely slow at first for my taste (I like the type of books like Divergent, The Hunger Games, Maze Runner, so forth.) but once she got to her Aunt Divines house I actually started to get interested in it because she put her foot down. I also was annoyed by the fact it says on the back, "she risks her life as she plunges into the most horrid battle." Like shit she did. She literally didn't risk anything and went to find her father in the war zone long after the war was over. But I also read 2 chapters in another book a student was assigned and it was a lot worse then this book. Then again I had no idea what was going on in the book.

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## **Mrs. Jones says**

I absolutely loved this book! I have not read about the civil war before and this book surely brought it to light. I have been to many of the battlefields and reading about the battles and how they were fought connected the two experiences for me. I loved the characters and India's need for education and learning beyond what was expected.

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## **Lia says**

Wells has obviously done a lot of research for this book. And it shows. Sometimes to good effect, but often to poor effect. Much of the book reads slowly, with each character obviously serving an illustrative purpose (this is the character who is the trouble-maker, this is the one who mothers the main character, this is the brilliant young scientist, etc.). The main character doesn't quite work. She gets away with just about anything and everything, and no one seems to be really concerned about it. And she never "says" anything through the first half of the book. No, instead she "blurts out" everything. It gets old in the dialogue.

"Blah, blah," he said,

"Blah! Blah," I blurted out.

"Blahblahblah, blah," he replied.

"Blahblah, blah, blah," I blurted out.

I think she was trying to characterize an impulsive nature, but it backfired.

Now, one thing that this book does very, very well is showing the horror and immorality of war. How easy it is to start a war and how impossible it is to end one. And how much people on both sides keep hurting each other in horrible ways because the war still hasn't ended.

But, honestly, I almost quit reading this book several times (but I'm in the middle of grading analysis papers and I needed a break, and I haven't been to the library for a bit . . . excuses, excuses; and maybe this means that I was in a bad mood and feeling very critical of language while I was reading . . . and maybe it is better than I'm giving it. But that was my experience. And now it is time to end this parenthetical and return to our regularly scheduled book review).

The End.

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### **Zaria Newbell says**

Terrible book hated every second of it

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### **Abby Johnson says**

When we first meet our main character, India Moody is 12 years old. She'd rather run with the boys and play their war games than sit inside with the girls. She likes school and is actually disappointed when the school is shut down because their teacher goes off to fight for the Confederates. With school shut down and the war picking up speed, India's best friend moves north to Oberlin, Ohio where there is a college that accepts women. India begins studying with Emory Trimble, a scientist who shares his theories about bacteria and chemistry. India develops the hope that she will one day attend Oberlin College and study science. A lot of stuff gets in her way, though. First of all, she's a woman. No woman is going to be able to make a career out of science. Second of all, she's in Virginia and has no money to get to Ohio. Also, there's a war on. And despite the South's hopes that the war would be over in three months, it just keeps going on.

This is a sprawling novel, continuing through much of the Civil War in just about 250 pages. I thought parts of it felt a little disjointed and I wished that I could have seen India's character grow and change a bit more gradually. But there's no denying Ms. Wells's beautiful turn of phrase.

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### **Yara says**

I couldn't decide between a four and a five. A beautiful book.

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### **Sherry Guice says**

This book is beautifully written, but takes quite a bit of teaching. Set during the Civil War, the main character is a girl who experiences the war, racism and the limits of being a girl during this time.

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### **Betsy says**

As 2007 went on I started to hear more and more people talking up, "Red Moon Over Sharpsburg", by Rosemary Wells. It was low buzz, but sometimes low buzz is exactly the flavor of buzz that turns into awards and prizes later on down the road. Maybe this book was going to turn out to be some kind of surprise dark horse hit later in the year! I couldn't take the chance of not reading it, so it was plucked from my library's shelves and devoured on a long plane ride. Sadly, it is not the buzz-worthy little nugget of gold I had hoped for. Using familiar tropes, the book is oddly unemotional. Characters display odd inconsistencies, the narrative jumps about like a skittish colt, and in the end you feel much as you did when you started the book. This is not a story that encourages fondness or violent dislike. It is merely a mild book for a mild readership.

India Moody isn't your average Shenandoah Valley southern belle. Where other girls are learning their scriptures and embroidery, India's lightning quick mind craves science and natural mysteries. It's the start of the Civil War and when India's schoolteacher is shot in one of the early battles, she finds herself tutored by her godmother's son, Emory Trimble. Emory encourages India's love of the practical sciences, and is himself in search of the answers to curing diseases. War soon enters into India's life, however, with devastating results. Her father goes into battle, her mother's mind shatters, and India is left to discover her own path through right and wrong during a particularly difficult age.

The idea of the headstrong young woman who is ahead of her time, wanting to be more than just a future wife and mother, is a familiar children's literary trope. There are always new takes on the idea (My Last Skirt: The Story of Jennie Rodgers, Union Soldier, by Lynda Durrant being one such example) but Wells takes a pretty standard route. India thinks things like, "Girls and women will live just a step up from a good hunting dog till the moon and sun change places in the sky," and about a corset, "It constructs the mind," without having been influenced by anyone or anything other than herself. It seems odd.

I enjoyed some individual sentence here and there in the book. Things like, "Winter comes in early in 1862, as if it wants to make all of life one big November." But at the same time the entire enterprise has the feel of a book written in pieces and then put together in chronological order. There's a jumpiness to the scenes. They leap from one moment to another without smooth transitions. There's also the fact that India's critique of her beloved South is inconsistent. One minute she will discuss with someone how the South could lose the war and the next she's biting off someone else's head for stating a similar opinion. More disturbing than this, however, is the book's general lack of emotion. At no point during this tale was I inclined to cry. Even when beloved characters die or disappear, the reader is not sucked into the emotions of the tale. Playful romantic scenes are also delivered in a kind of narrative monotone. At one point India's bare ankle is grabbed and she is pulled down from her horse, but we never get a sense of how she feels. Wells is not a fan of adverbs. She is a straightforward writer but not, I'm afraid, one given to adequately conveying sentiment or feeling. The result is a cold fish of a book.

For a better take on a young woman during the Civil War and her father's devastating decision to go fight, consider *Hearts of Stone* by Kathleen Ernst. Though Ms. Wells is as historically accurate as any reader could possibly hope for, her book is sadly sapped of emotions and the tone is off. She is a fine writer but "Sharpsburg" is not her strongest work. Consider it oddly forgettable for a book filled with death and decay.

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## **LFPL Teen Services says**

Imagine life as you know it changes forever as neighbor fights against neighbor, brother against brother, and troops of strange and menacing men take over your town, land and home. This is what happens to India Moody and her family and friends in their small Virginia community during the Civil War, the bloodiest war



in American history.

Just weeks before her birth, India's father, a modest blacksmith, help saves the life of rich, land-owning neighbor, Calvin Trimble. Calvin swears to help support the Moody family for the rest of his life. India becomes great friends with the family, especially their son Emory, a radical and intellectual medical student. Emory has some strange notions about bacteria, sterilization, and medicine. Emory agrees to tutor India when the schoolmaster goes off to fight for the Rebel cause.

India is not interested in the traditional "domestic" studies, which include the study of scripture. She wants to learn the "men's science" and has aspirations to go to college and become a nurse or doctor. Her own studies, as well as Emory's, are interrupted when he is drafted to work in an army medical hospital. India's father, Cyrus, is also drafted.

Life is thrown into chaos as the Trimble and Moody families wait to hear when their loved ones will return from war. India also begins to realize that all is not black and white when it comes to war, and in two paradoxical scenes finds herself harboring a Rebel renegade and nursing a Yankee soldier back to health.

Meticulously researched, *Red Moon at Sharpsburg* is historically accurate and authoritative. Anyone interested in the Civil War or historical fiction is sure to enjoy this thrilling, adventure filled tale.

--Peter

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## Chris says

I must have really liked this story of a southern girl during the Civil War because I stayed up late two nights in a row to finish it. India Moody is smart and tomboyish, two things not looked upon nicely in Virginia in 1861. The story develops two themes: India's desire to resist the whaleboned corsets and meek married life that seem to await her and instead go to Oberlin College and the horrors wrought on her family and town by the war. From an adult perspective, parts of the story may seem simplistic, but still it's well told. We see the good and bad on both sides and we feel sorry for the main characters. Despite the title, Sharpsburg (better known as the Battle of Antietam) takes up only a chapter or two of the book, although it's effect on India is profound. Highly recommended to young readers who like historical fiction.

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