

A SOLDIER'S SECRET: Questions for Discussion

Photos of the period show arms and legs piled up in field hospitals. Why were there so many amputations during the Civil War? What was medicine like at that time?

Frank describes how supportive the Southerners were to their soldiers, how unfriendly they were to the Northern troops. What difference would it have made for the Union Army during the Virginia campaign if those battles had been fought in northern cities?

How much did sickness weaken the Union Army? Did more men die from battle or disease?

What was the Emancipation Proclamation? What difference did it make?

Why were escaped slaves called “contraband?”

What was the system of “parole” during the Civil War?

When Frank originally tried to enlist into the Union Army, the term of service was only three months. The second time, when she successfully enlisted, the term had been extended to three years. Why?

What was the role of a battlefield nurse during the Civil War? How did it differ from a doctor's role?

Why did Frank want to be a spy?

More than 400 women disguised themselves as men to fight in the Civil War. What is unique about Frank's story?

What were the main motives for men enlisting in the Union Army? For those enlisting in the Southern?

Were all Southerners for slavery? Can you think of examples of important Southern figures who weren't?

Were all Northerners against slavery? What episode in A Soldier's Story talks about this?

Which of Frank's commanding officers do you find admirable? Why and why not?

Frank stays loyal to General McClellan even after President Lincoln removes him from command. Was Lincoln right to get rid of McClellan? Why or why not?

Frank's relationship with Flag is very important. What did Frank mean to her? Has an animal ever mattered that much to you?

What kind of cause do you think is worth fighting for?

Have you ever pretended to be someone or something you aren't? If you have, how hard was it?