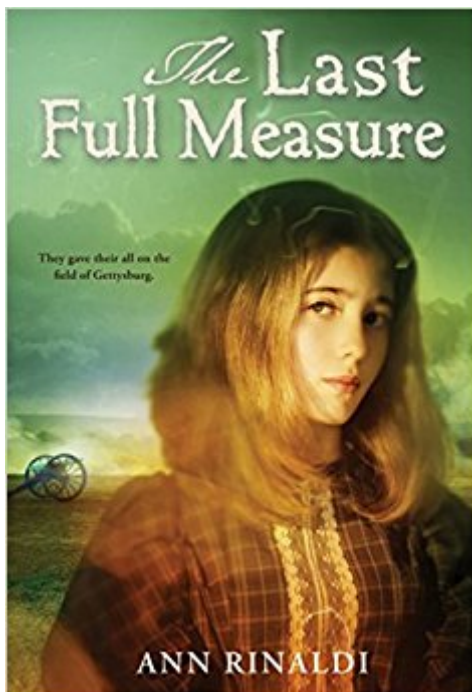


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# The Last Full Measure



## Synopsis

As Confederate and Union soldiers take over their town, the local residents can do little more than hunker down in their homes while cannon and gunfire explode around them. But the battles are not only fought between soldiers. At home, fourteen-year-old Tacy and her disabled brother lock horns as David struggles with his desire to go to war. He has strong principles, and it tortures him to allow others to fight while he does nothing. In the aftermath of this great and terrible battle, in which so many soldiers sacrifice their lives for their beliefs, David gives his last full measure and leaves Tacy struggling to make sense out of it all.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 650L (What's this?)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 6-8 In the summer of 1863, Tacy Stryker and the other residents of Gettysburg prepare for the Confederate Army's offensive. While her two oldest brothers and her father are serving in the Union Army, the 14-year-old and her mother have been left in the care of her 21-year-old brother. David resents the leg injury that caused the militia to reject him and takes out much of his bitterness on his younger sister. As the Rebels begin to occupy Gettysburg, Tacy's friend Marvelous, daughter of free Negroes, whose family is one of at least 400 "darkies" living there, comes to stay with the Strykers. When a Confederate soldier threatens to sell Marvelous into slavery, only the

kindness of the commanding officer prevents her from being taken. Pa comes home from the front soon after with news of the terrible battle and the bodies waiting to be buried. When he is too ill to return to the field hospital, David and Tacy go in his place to help with the identification and burial. What seemed to be a safe way of assisting turns deadly when the brother of one of the buried turns up to claim him and David will not allow the man to illegally dig up the corpse. Unlike Lisa Klein's *Two Girls of Gettysburg* (Bloomsbury, 2008), which focuses more on the months leading up to the event, the attention here is on the battle and its aftermath. Despite stilted dialogue, Rinaldi's extensive research brings a piece of history to life, and her fans will not be disappointed. —Kim Dare, Fairfax County Public Schools, VA. (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Tacy lives in Gettysburg, and her pa and two older brothers are serving on the Union side of the Civil War. Another brother, David, cannot enlist because of a crippled leg, leaving him distant and bitter. With the Rebs moving closer, Tacy fears not only for her family but for her dear friend Marvelous, an African American girl. Taking place over a few weeks in 1863, *The Last Full Measure* captures the Battle of Gettysburg and its immediate aftermath through the eyes of a 14-year-old girl on the cusp of womanhood. Rather than a political statement or a gory battle, this lyrical novel personalizes the war, showing the risks of friendship with free blacks, terrifying nights of shelling, and the grief and pain of loss. A beautiful blend of hope and tragedy, with a heroine reminiscent of Fanny in Rinaldi's *The Coffin Quilt* (1999), this novel once again shows the author's skill at giving historical events flesh and heart. Grades 6-9. —Melissa Moore

Ann Rinaldi is one of my favorite authors, but most her recent books can't compare to her early ones. They are not as intent and do not offer as much historical info as the earlier novels. This book can't compare to *Wolf by the Ears* or *The Coffin Quilt*! I grew up near Gettysburg and had learned about Jenny Wade in school, so I did enjoy that aspect, but that was it! I should have waited until the book came out in paperback; it wasn't worth the price!

The book arrived in excellent condition. We love reading Ann Rinaldi's books. She always captures the heart of whatever she is writing about.

This was my first time reading Ann Rinaldi and I had no idea what to expect. I really enjoyed this book! I see that she has written forty novels---it looks like I've found a new author. Most of her work

is historical fiction, which is right up my alley. I have not read anything on Gettysburg before and I appreciated the research Rinaldi did to write *The Last Full Measure*. I even read the author's note at the end of the book, something I very rarely do. The bibliography was impressive---I like reading a book where I know that the author completed extensive research in order to write the book. Now, on to the story. Tacy is 14 years old and her father and older brothers are serving in the Union army. She is left at home with her mother and older brother, David, who cannot fight due to a crippled leg. They live in Gettysburg during the battle and invasion of the city by rebel forces. David struggles with frustration over not being able to fight like his brothers. The result is a very controlling unforgiving personality. David grows some throughout the book and reestablishes his relationship with Tacy. I also enjoyed David's love story. Just when I thought that this book would end a certain way, Rinaldi dropped a huge "DREAMS SHATTERED" on the reader and went in a different direction with the books' ending. I do think David's decision in the end was in keeping with his character. I also like how the book ends not with the conclusion of the war, but with the natural ending of Tacy and David's stories. If you like historical fiction, or if you like reading about familial relationships, I would recommend *The Last Full Measure*. It is a quick read that is definitely worth your time. Just One Gripe: Tacy is so stubborn and willful! The Best Thing About This Book: Learning another perspective on the Civil War.

I should preface this review by stating I am an adult so I may be a little harsher on this book than a child would be. But the civil War is my favorite subject, so I had to read it to see what it was about. I remember the first historical fiction book I read at about the age for which this book is intended, 13 or 14: *Johnny Tremain*. I remembered being enthralled by the historical content - the American Revolution - as well as the storyline, perhaps instilling in me my life long passion for American history. *The Last Full Measure*, while not comparable to *Johnny Tremain*, does address an important event in our nation's history. I think the author is right to limit herself to just those few days in July 1863 in the small town of Gettysburg and a young girl's family's experience of those days. However, what could have made for a very interesting story turns into a fairly blatant injection of historical facts that interrupt the flow of the story. Educating young people on their history through fiction is a wonderful tool, I just wish the history had been introduced more seamlessly than it was. Additionally, the story is rather depressing, and the ending, while somewhat better, is not happy enough to repair the residual effects of overwhelming sadness. If that was the author's intent, then she achieved it. I'm just not sure a child would find it as interesting. I'm not certain what the point of the story was, other than to tell us about Gettysburg, something a child could obtain more easily by

Googling the subject matter. Even the author admits in the author's note that she isn't sure what the point is, saying that her main character, Tacy Stryker, has made no great strides. Her conclusion is that the Strykers, like others, simply got through it. Not a particularly compelling theme. I'm not sure if there are other children's books out there on the Civil War, I assume there are, but if so, I'd do some searching for a more interesting story.

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