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About the Author

L. M. Elliott wrote for the *Washingtonian* magazine, in the nation's capital, for eighteen years before devoting her time to writing fiction for children and young adults. She is author of the WWII novel *Under a War-Torn Sky*, a Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies (NCSS/CBC). Her novel *Flying South*, set in 1968, won the Joan G. Sugarman Children's Book Award. Elliott is also author of the picture book *Hunter's Best Friend at School*, an IRA/CBC Children's Choice, illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. The book is part of a series about friendship, competition, popularity, and sibling rivalry. Elliott lives in Virginia with her family.

Reading Group Guide prepared by Susan Geye, Library Media Specialist, Crowley Ninth Grade Campus, Ft. Worth, Texas.

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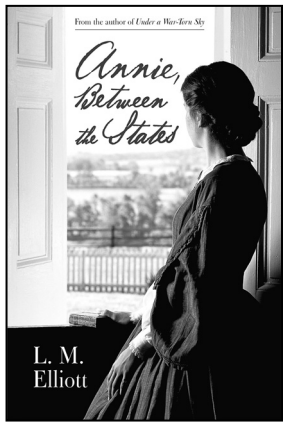

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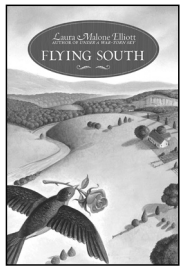

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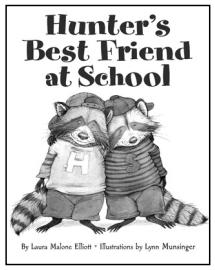

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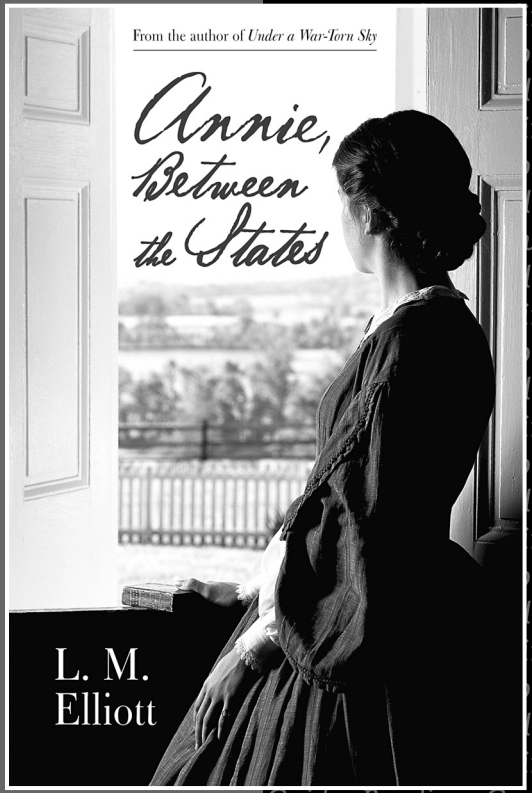

Annie, Between the States
By L. M. Elliott

About the Book

The Civil War was fought in the cornfields and front lawns of people's homes. *Annie, Between the States* explores what the war was like for civilians living in its battlefields—the loyalties, choices, and hardships forced on them. As the novel opens with the Battle of First Manassas in Virginia, Annie and her mother tend wounded soldiers as the fighting sweeps through their family's house. Some of Annie's relatives remain loyal to the Union, but her older brother, Laurence, rides with the Confederate cavalry under Jeb Stuart. Her rambunctious younger brother, Jamie, joins Ranger John Mosby, known as "the Gray Ghost." Caught up in the rising conflict, Annie is compelled into a riskier role to protect her family and farm from the Union troops, which arrest her neighbors and confiscate food, horses, and other livestock. She conceals Confederate soldiers and warns Southern commanders of Union traps. Yet Annie begins to question the values driving Virginia's involvement in the war, in part because of her growing friendship with a Union officer who was one of the wounded she tended. Eventually, because of her daring activities, Annie is arrested and imprisoned. To gain her freedom, she must confront the largest quandary of all: choosing her own course.

Discussion Questions

1. On pages 36 and 37 Annie and Lieutenant Walker discuss the major issues that led to war. What were they? How did those issues change as the war continued?

2. Cavalry General Jeb Stuart and Ranger John Mosby appear frequently in the novel in historically accurate ways. What did you learn about them? What kind of leaders were they?

3. Throughout the novel, characters refer to the fact that Union and Confederate officers had been friends before the war and remain glad to see one another, and that pickets standing guard visit across lines or sing together during times of rest between skirmishes. After a battle, civilians nurse enemy wounded as well as their own. What conclusions can you draw from this about the war?

4. When Annie discovers that Gabriel and Jacob have followed the Union army, she begins to question her belief that the family's slaves were happy simply because they were treated well (p. 128). What is her concern for Gabriel and Jacob? For Rachel? What does Annie's attitude show about her character?

5. Out of loyalty to Laurence, Sam follows him to battle while Aunt May lovingly cares for Miriam when she is sick. Even though he disapproves of secession, Laurence joins the Confederate cavalry, motivated by devotion to his home state of Viriginia. To protect her brothers, Annie hides soldiers and warns Southern leaders of Union traps. Discuss loyalty. When is it a good thing? When is it a bad thing?

6. Annie shows courage in many different ways. How?

7. Annie's friend Charlotte betrays her by gossiping with other girls. Why is Annie so hurt? How does this betrayal endanger Annie? What role does Eliza play?

8. Clearly Laurence and Charlotte are in love, so why does Laurence not want to marry Charlotte when he is sent home?

9. Mosby's hit-and-run tactics were similar to those used by our militiamen during the Revolutionary War, yet they were controversial. Union captors wanted to try Mosby's rangers as "highway robbers" instead of soldiers. What would you have done if you were judge?

10. Annie makes a huge sacrifice in giving Angel to Laurence. How is she repaid for that kindness?

11. When Laurence frees Hickory Heights' slaves, what is their reaction? Does this act change the relationship between Laurence and Sam? Between Annie and Rachel?

12. Annie reflects on her mother's words, "Remember that it doesn't matter where someone comes from, but where that person is going" (p. 455). How do these words help Annie decide to marry Thomas Walker? What does Annie have to sacrifice to marry him? Would her mother approve of their marriage?

13. Annie's outlook on the war changes drastically through the course of the novel. How and why?

14. What meanings does the title of the book, *Annie, Between the States*, have?