



# Painted Trillium: A Novel of the Civil War

*Robert Brandt*

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## **Painted Trillium: A Novel of the Civil War** Robert Brandt

*Painted Trillium* is an absorbing story of relationships, survival, and rebirth in the Civil War, told through the lives of a twenty-one-year old Tennessee woman and a young Union officer with a fiancée back in Ohio.

The war snuffs out life as Carrie Blaylock knows it, taking her father, her brother, and the man she planned to marry. The war does something else. It pulls back the curtain of convention and lays bare Carrie's deepest desire: a life beyond the confines of domesticity. She vows to make her own way and never be dependent on any man.

To Captain John Lockridge, the war is more of an interruption. He'll return to Columbus, marry his fiancée, and resume his nascent law practice. But first, he'll have to make it home alive.

Through a chance encounter in early 1863 while the Union army is based at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Carrie and John become friends. Their acquaintance promises to be brief. President Lincoln expects the Army of the Cumberland to launch its next push south with the advent of spring.

The dutiful and studious Carrie takes a step toward independence by signing on to teach at a school that will open after the Union army marches away. She begins meeting regularly with the headmaster, Morton Walling, a widower with a young daughter. When Morton's interest in Carrie broadens beyond teaching, Carrie is flattered. She starts to rethink her vow to live independently.

Much to President Lincoln's frustration, the army stays put as the bright hues of Middle Tennessee's spring turn into the deep greens of summer. Fueled by their mutual love of literature and nature, the friendship between Carrie Blaylock and Captain John Lockridge deepens, and ultimately takes Carrie in a direction she neither intended nor could have imagined.

Travel and outdoor writer Robert Brandt has drawn on his storehouse of knowledge about his native state, as well as dozens of diaries, letters, and reminiscences, to produce a compelling story of the equivocal and complicated relationships that evolved between citizens of this deeply divided state and Union soldiers. The story explores war's impact on women in particular and the ways it altered their lives forever.

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