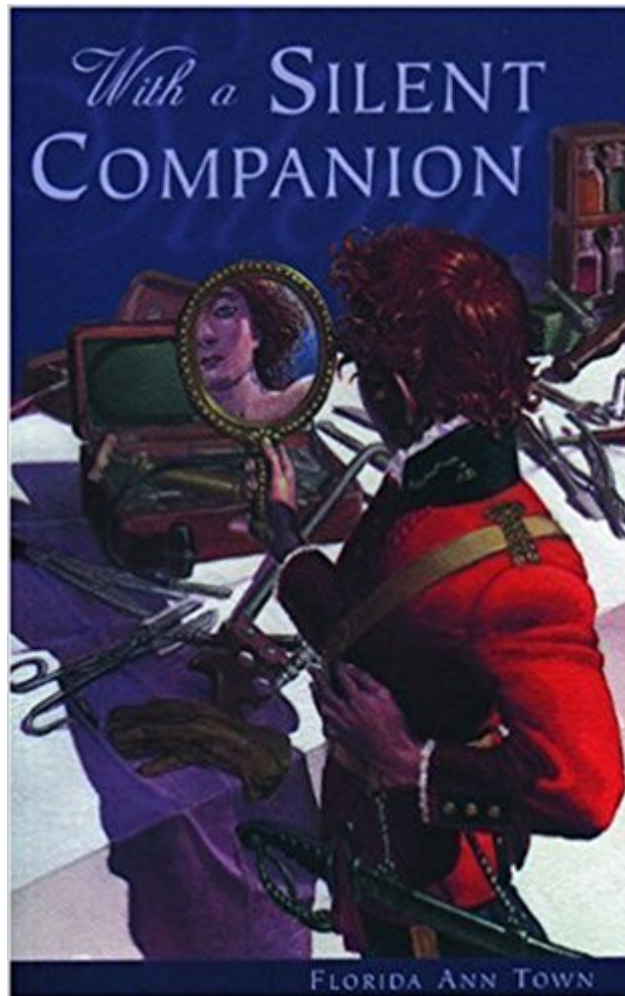




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With A Silent Companion (Northern Lights Young Novels)



Synopsis

James Barry had a brilliant career as a doctor, and served with the British Army. Barry had incredible success rates and was far ahead of the medical profession of the day, in preventing infection and performing successful operations. But the real surprise came after Barry died. It was then that 'he' was revealed to be 'she'. Yes, in the early 1800s, Barry managed to enroll in medical school in Edinburgh, Scotland, graduated in 1806 and joined the British Army, serving for almost 50 years. It was a magnificent deception.

Book Information

Series: Northern Lights Young Novels

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Red Deer Press; 1 edition (September 11, 2002)

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Average Customer Review: 3.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

I loved writing this book. Research took me to the archives in London, in Dublin, in Edinburgh, Halifax and Ottawa, and prowling through the archives and their ancient papers, provided glimpses into a life that was hard to imagine.

I have been a news reporter, both in print and radio, and always thought current events were far more exciting than history. How wrong I was! Researching James Barry's story revealed incidents and events about the times, that were hard to believe- but were documented facts.

In *With A Silent Companion*, novelist Florida Ann Town recounts the remarkable journey of Margaret

Anne Bulkley, a young woman born in nineteenth-century Ireland. Margaret's heart is broken by the constant threat of poverty, but her spirit is awakened by the challenge of two gentlemen. She enrolls in medicine at Edinburgh University and, after years of dedicated study, becomes a surgeon. Margaret's struggle and triumph is made all the more exceptional because she does it disguised as a man. *With A Silent Companion* is inspired by a true story uncovered by years of meticulous research into the life of Margaret Anne Bulkley (a.k.a. Dr. James Barry). This is an intriguing, fascinating, historical novel of gender, poverty, determination, and accomplishment. This is the stuff of which movies and mini-series are made. Highly recommended.

Margaret Bulkley is an interesting subject, definitely worthy of a book. However, she is not in capable hands with Ms. Towne. This novel reads more like a biography and a dry one at that. I was sufficiently interested in Margaret/James's story to complete the novel, but I highly doubt that this novel would hold the attention of even a very keen young adult reader (the intended audience). Margaret is apparently assisted and encouraged in her disguise by two prominent British men, but the author doesn't really make their motivation clear. We are told that they are both supporters of the emancipation of women, but their personal interest in Margaret is not at all convincingly portrayed. Margaret Bulkley is worthy of a better book than this.

I found the book very interesting and informative. Ms Town has portrayed Margaret Bulkley as a very tanacious person. As each chapter commenced I eagerly read on wondering if the masquerade would be exposed. The book provides educational information as to the struggles of an ordinary person in a difficult situation. All of us can learn from her adventure. Hats off to Ms Town for an enlightening and entertaining book.

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