



## Beyond the Book: Extension Activities For CHARLOTTE SPIES FOR JUSTICE: A CIVIL WAR SURVIVAL STORY

By Nikki Shannon Smith



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Nikki Shannon Smith is a teacher, mother, wife, reader, and daydreamer. She is also the author of five books for children and young adults. She lives in California, where she sneaks off to the coast as often as possible.

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- 1. Research:** In *Charlotte Spies for Justice*, Union prisoners escape from Libby Prison and hide at Ms. Van Lew's house. This is based on a real event. Dig deeper into the real Libby Prison. How did the prisoners escape?
- 2. Connect:** Imagine you are a child living during the Civil War. Would you have joined Ms. Van Lew's spy ring like Charlotte did? Why or why not? Give reasons for your decision based on the book.
- 3. Create:** Ms. Van Lew used different kinds of secret codes and ciphers to pass messages during the war. Create your own code, and use it to write a message. Give the message to someone to see if they can decipher it.
- 4. Compare:** Read a different book in the **Girls Survive** series. Compare the two main characters using a Venn diagram. (Extend this activity by using your diagram to write a comparison essay!)
- 5. Identify:** Identify a theme in the story *Charlotte Spies for Justice*. Make a list of evidence from the text to prove this is a theme in the book. (Extend this activity by using your list to write an essay about theme.)
- 6. Reflect:** When most people hear the word "war," they think of battles and fighting. *Charlotte Spies for Justice* doesn't fit that mold. Think about the author's purpose in writing this book about the Civil War. Why do you think the author chose not to include any battles in this book? Explain your answer.
- 7. Analyze:** Why do you think Ms. Van Lew's spy ring was so successful? Give evidence to support your answers.