

Ride Across Time



By Susan Johnston Taylor
Illustrated by Joseph McDermott

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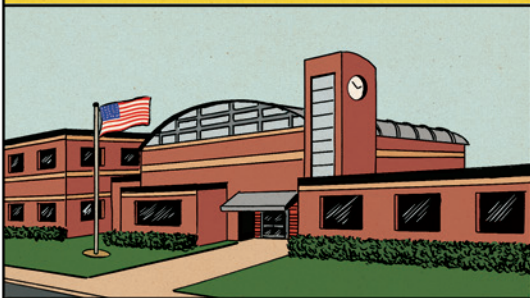
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CHAPTER ONE: BACK IN TIME

Confession: Class presentations on heroes of the American Revolution are tomorrow, and I haven't started mine. My classmates can't wait to share what they're learning.



George Washington is my hero. Did you know he loved dogs and had a Dalmatian named Madame Moose?



Mine is Ben Franklin. He was the first U.S. postmaster general and made a ton of inventions, like the lightning rod and the Franklin stove!



I'm dressing up as Alexander Hamilton for my presentation! He's on the 10 dollar bill.



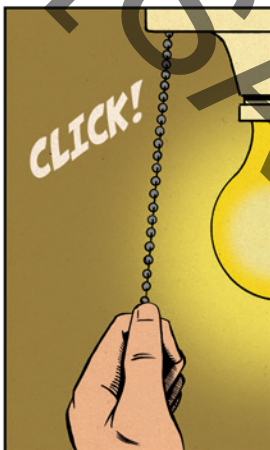
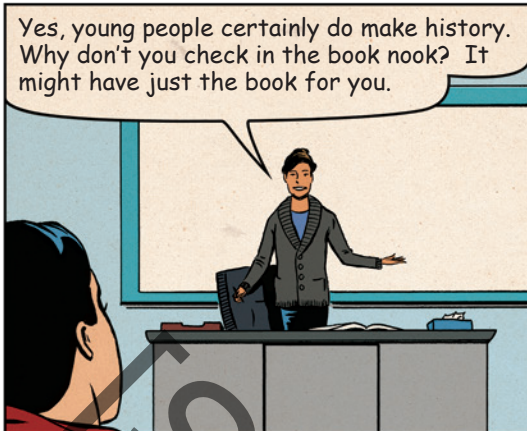
What about you, Jacob? Have you picked your hero yet?



Honestly, I'm stuck. All the good heroes are taken.

Ms. Garcia, how come we only learn about grown-ups? Don't kids ever make history too? Don't we matter?









The first thing I notice is the smell of manure, then the sounds of cows grazing a few feet away.



"Sybil Ludington was an ordinary 16-year-old living on her family farm. But all that changed one night in 1777."



Holy guacamole! Am I in 1777? Is that even possible?!



My men need to tend their farms—

But Colonel Ludington, the Tories could attack at any moment!

CHAPTER TWO:

FREDERICKSBURG, NEW YORK

Holy guacamole! I am in 1777! I force myself not to move a muscle.



But then, the wind picks up and tickles my nose. Hiding and allergies don't mix.



Ah-CHOO!!



'Tis someone hiding behind yonder tree. Methinks a redcoat spying.



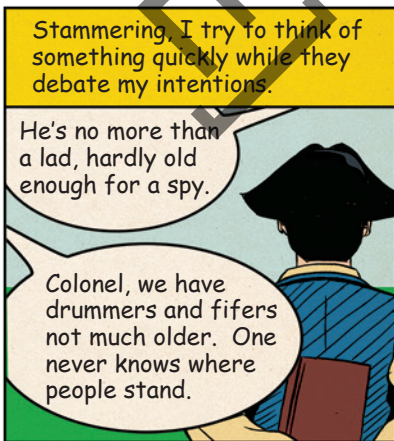
You there! Show thyself at once! What are you doing on my farm?

Me?



Snooping for General Howe, I wager.

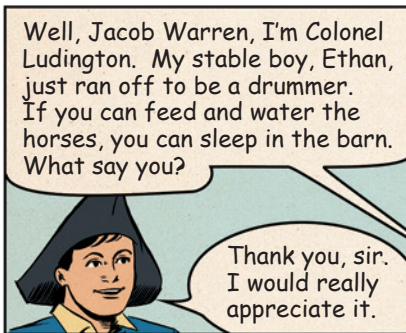
No, sir... I...



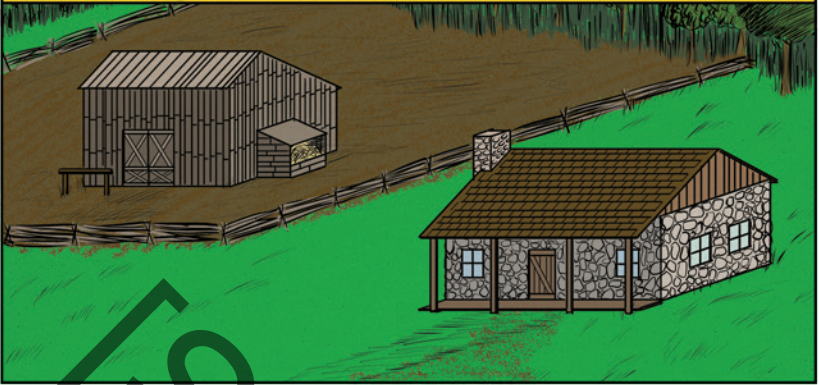
Stammering, I try to think of something quickly while they debate my intentions.

He's no more than a lad, hardly old enough for a spy.

Colonel, we have drummers and fifers not much older. One never knows where people stand.



The colonel leads me across the field toward the family farmhouse.



Abigail, this is Jacob. He will be staying in the barn and keeping the horses since Ethan left.

Good day, Jacob. Come meet the children.

Yes, ma'am.



Henry

Derick



Archibald

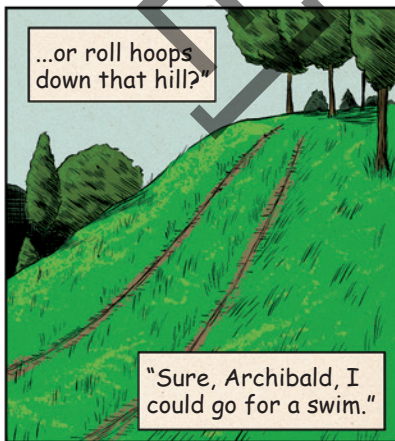
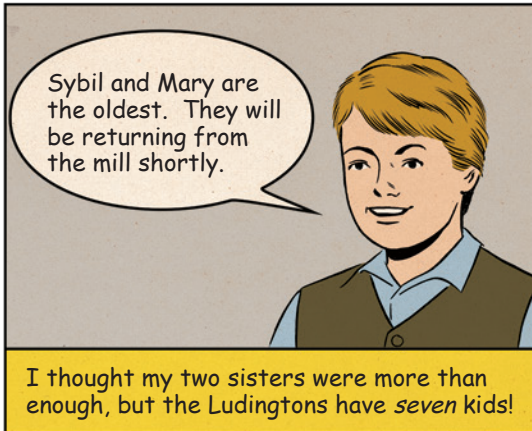


Tertullus



and little Abigail







Race you to that large oak tree by the creek!

Definitely not video games or laser tag, but I'll give it a try.



Before we can reach the tree, Archibald points to a horse and cart with two passengers.

It's my sisters!

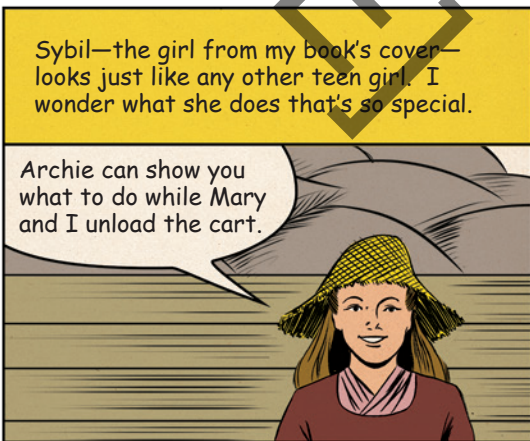


Sybil, Mary, come meet Jacob.

Father says Jacob will take Ethan's place in the barn.



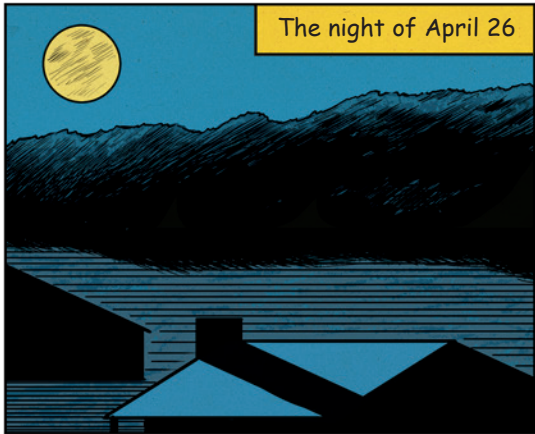
Is that so? Jacob, will you put away Star's harness and see that she gets water?

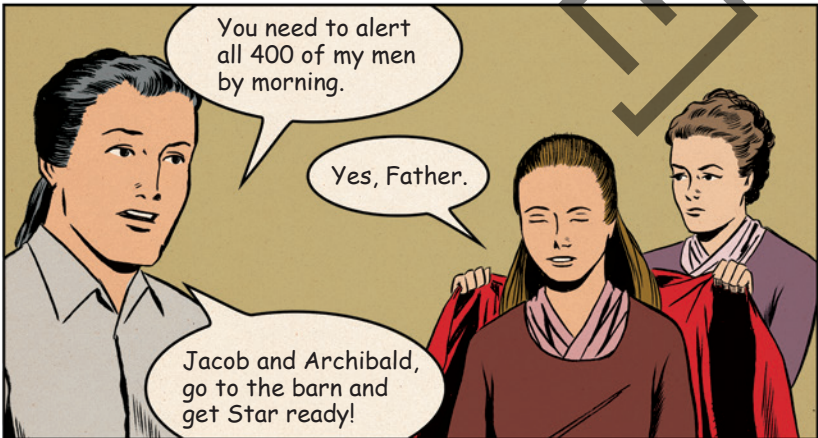
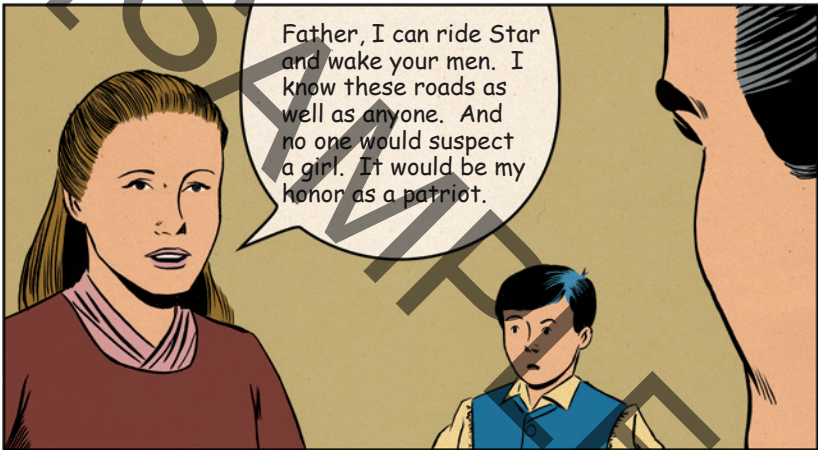


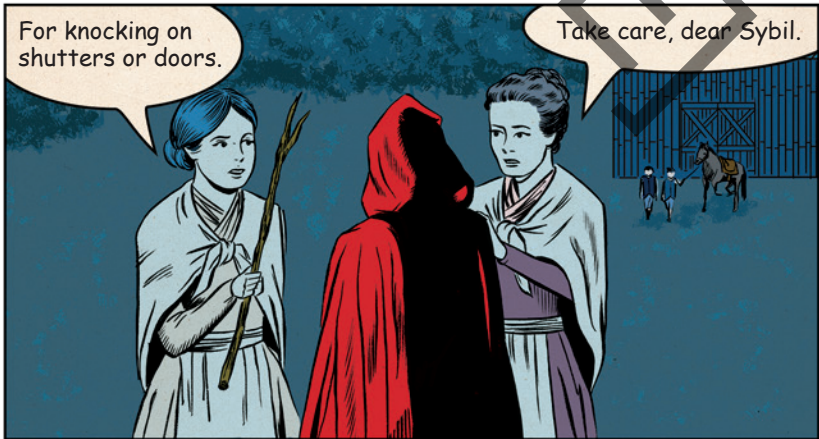
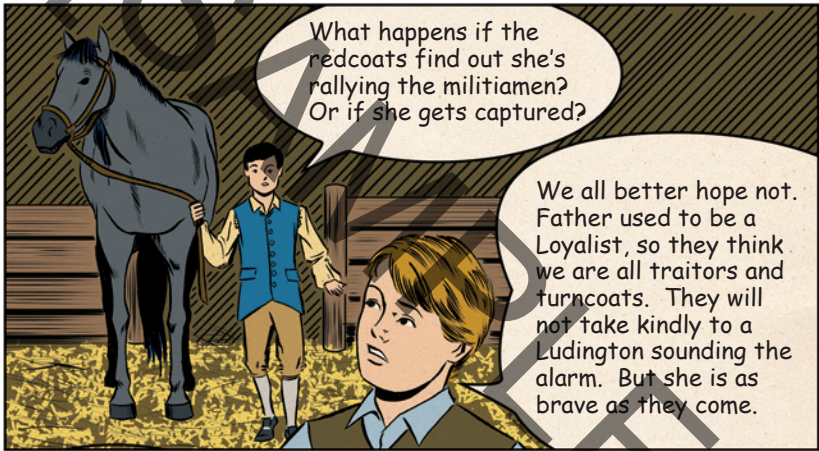
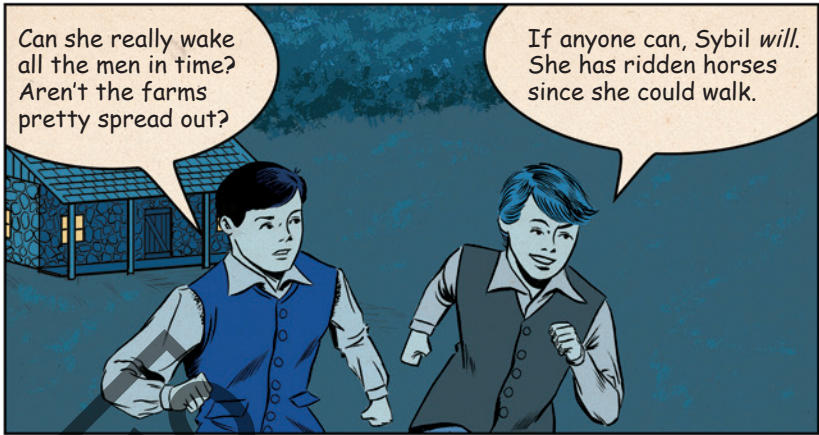
Sybil—the girl from my book's cover—looks just like any other teen girl. I wonder what she does that's so special.


Archie can show you what to do while Mary and I unload the cart.

**CHAPTER
THREE:
DANGER
IN
DANBURY**





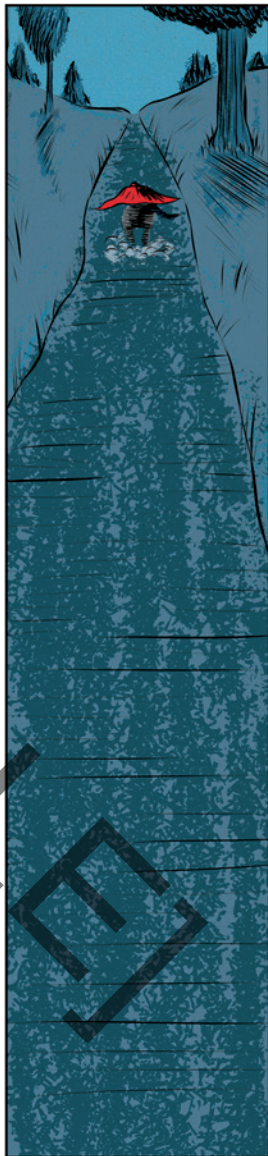


A woman with dark hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a vibrant red hooded cloak. The hood is pulled up over her head, framing her face. She has a slight smile and is looking towards the right. A large, semi-transparent watermark with the letters 'PAM' is overlaid across her face and the cloak. The background is solid black. Two speech bubbles are present: one in the upper left and one in the lower right.

Tell my men that we
march from the farm
at daybreak.

I will, Father. I shall
shout it to every
militiaman's door.

With her red cape billowing behind her as she rides away, Sybil reminds me of Little Red Riding Hood. I just hope she won't encounter any wolves (or British soldiers) on her route.



Sybil and Star get smaller and smaller, until they're nothing but a speck of red.

Now I must study
the maps and
prepare for battle.

Abigail, you and Mary
gather what you can
for breakfast.

Archibald and Jacob,
keep watch for any
spies. And tell my
men to assemble in
yonder field.



**CHAPTER
FOUR:
NIGHTTIME
ON THE
FARM**

By now it's nearly midnight,
so we talk to stay awake.

When you're grown, are
you going to be a colonel
like your father?

Perhaps. He also tends
the farm and runs the
mill, but we all help.



I am the oldest son, so someday I shall inherit the farm and mill. Does your family have a farm?

No, my father is a teacher and my mother manages a bakery.

I explained that a bakery is where you buy sweet things, like tarts or cookies. My mom makes the most amazing oatmeal cookies, with raisins and chocolate chips!



Man, I could eat one of those right now...

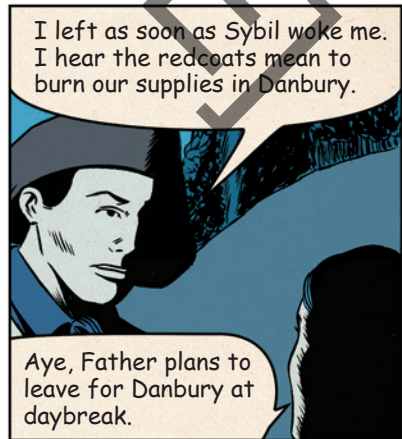
You are not from here, are you? I have never met anyone like you.

No...I'm not.




Shh, what's that? A British spy?

'Tis Mr. Thomas Goodman, our neighbor and one of father's men.



I left as soon as Sybil woke me. I hear the redcoats mean to burn our supplies in Danbury.

Aye, Father plans to leave for Danbury at daybreak.



Archibald and I keep watch for the rest of the night. Much to our relief, we don't see any British spies. The tree's thick leaves keep us mostly dry, and I try not to sneeze.

Hundreds of soldiers arrive to muster. They rub sleep out of their eyes as we point them to the field.



Mary and Abigail hand out bread, trailed by Henry and Derick.



Colonel Ludington talks strategy with his lieutenants.

As soon as the sun comes up,
we march east to Danbury.



Other militias will come from the
south, and we shall force General
Tryon's troops into retreat.

There is meat, rum,
and other supplies to
protect. Make haste!



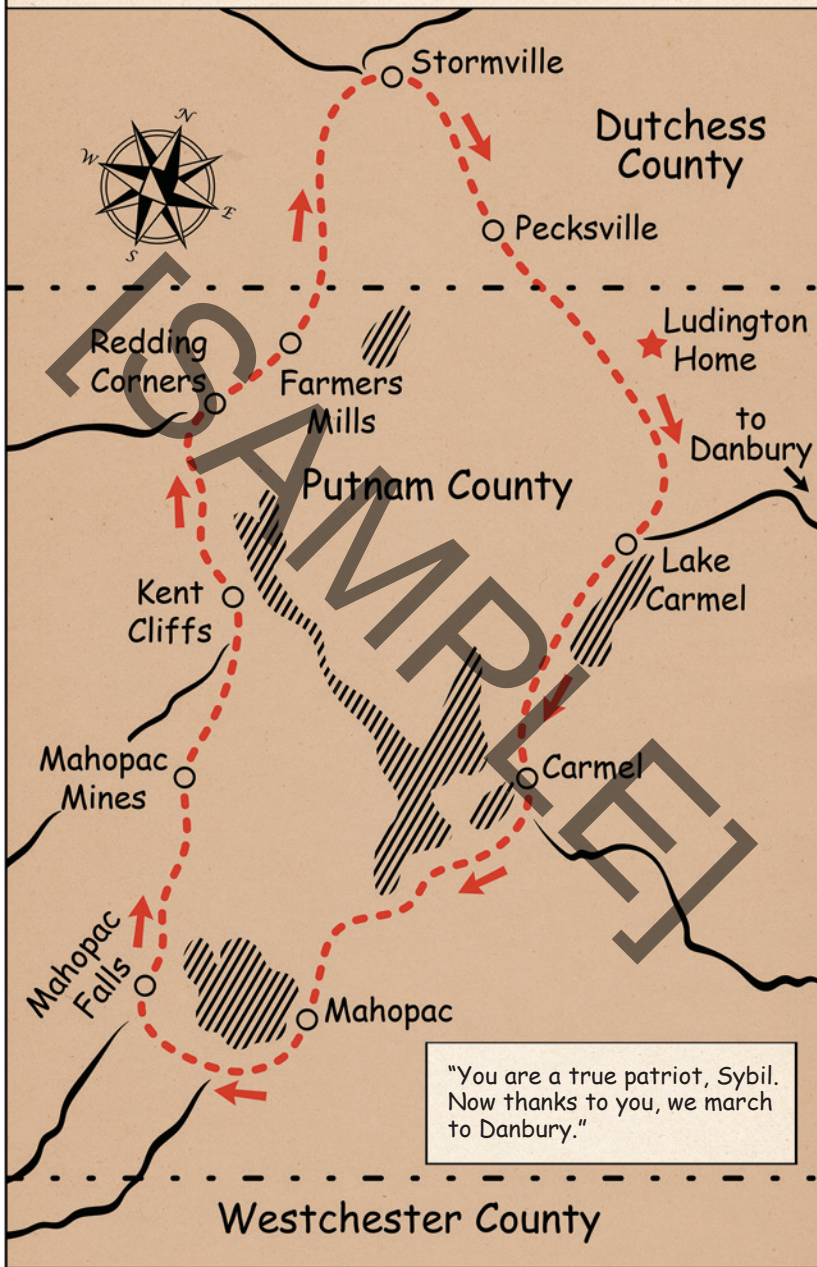
It's almost morning when we see a familiar red figure, looking tired
and wet but determined.

I guess your
sister really
is a hero.



I told you, she is
as brave as they
come. Father
will be proud.

"I did exactly what you said, Father! I rode all the way to Mahopac Falls and Redding Corners and Stormville, waking all your men!"



Sybil, come inside to warm yourself by the fire and eat something. You must be weary after such a long journey.

Archibald, will you and Jacob take Star to the barn? She needs water and rest.

Aye, sister. We shall take good care of her for you.



After that, Abigail tells us to get some rest. We've had a lot of excitement. Before I know it, I'm dreaming of home and Mom's oatmeal cookies.



**CHAPTER
FIVE:
CLASS
PRESENTATIONS**

When I awake, I'm sitting at my desk in Ms. Garcia's classroom.



RING! RING!

Jacob, your presentation will be first tomorrow.

Okay, Ms. Garcia. I found the person I was looking for!

I rush home to write my report.

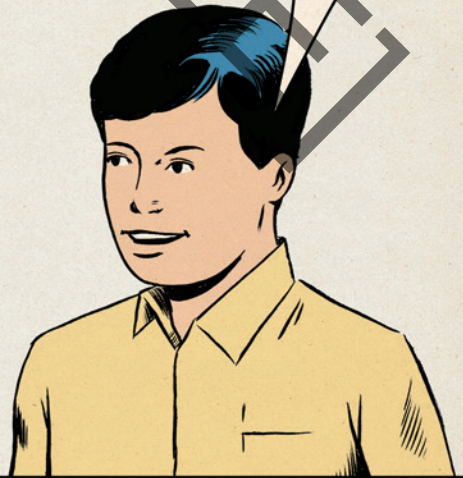


The next day, I was a little nervous...

I chose an American hero you may not know. Sybil Ludington isn't famous like Paul Revere. At age 16, she rode 40 miles in one night! That's a whole lot longer than his ride.



It was rainy and dangerous, but she stepped up to help the colonists. Sybil woke up local militiamen so they could keep the British from burning supplies in Danbury, Connecticut.



Wait! Why isn't she on a dollar bill? Or in a famous painting?



Good questions. Sybil does have a statue in Danbury. And at one time, she was on a postage stamp. But history doesn't remember every hero.



But what happened next? Did the colonists prevent the British army from burning everything?



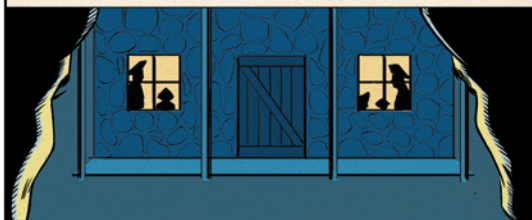
Sadly, no. Her father's militiamen marched 17 miles to Danbury the next morning, but they arrived too late to save the town. Instead, they joined other patriot troops and fought in the battle of Ridgefield.



Jacob, anything else you can tell us?

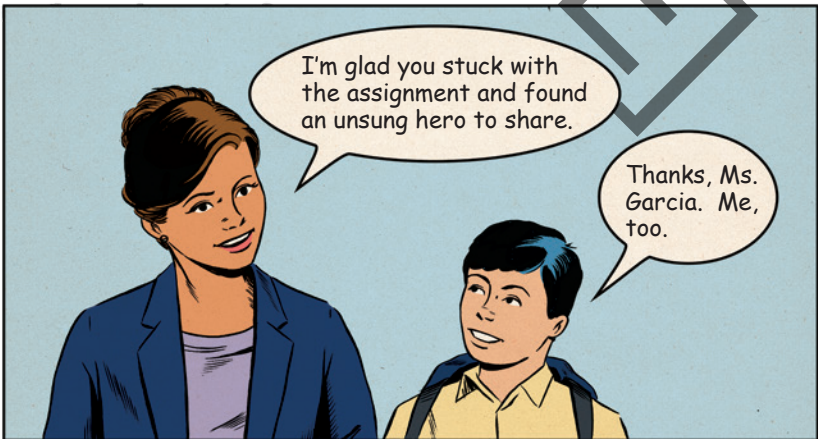


"One story claims Sybil and her siblings scared off British loyalists who came searching for her father. They lit candles and marched around the house to make it look like it was being guarded. Sybil was a true hero and patriot, just like her father."





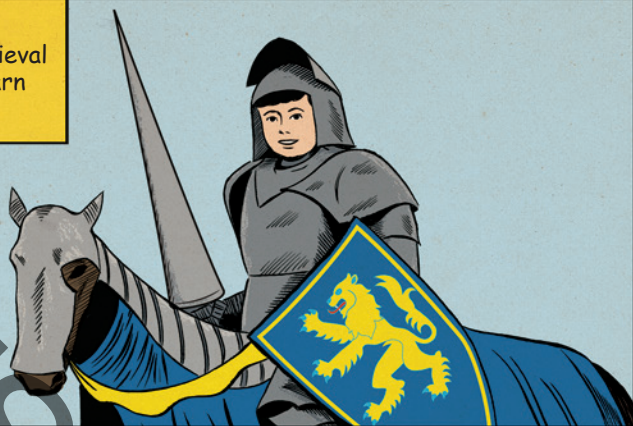
RRRIINNNG!



While Ms. Garcia scribbles notes in her grading book, I sneak a glance at the book nook, the place where this whole wacky adventure began. I still can't believe I went back in time to 1777 and met a hero from the American Revolution. I even saddled up her horse and ate dinner with her family! Hmmm...I wonder what other stories Ms. Garcia might have waiting in there?



Maybe I could train with medieval knights and learn how to joust...



Or meet a philosopher from ancient Greece and visit the Temple of Zeus or the Parthenon...



Or navigate the high seas aboard a real live pirate ship!

Ahoy there, matey!



Actually, maybe I should just go have lunch for right now.
Mom's oatmeal cookies aren't going to eat themselves!



About Us

The Author

Susan Johnston Taylor has always been fascinated by history. In fact, she and her younger brother dressed up as George and Martha Washington one Halloween, and she often went on family outings to historical places, including the Old North Bridge and Colonial Williamsburg. She's written for *Boys' Life Magazine*, *Dramatics Magazine*, *Relate Magazine*, and hundreds of other publications.

The Illustrator

Joseph McDermott remembers drawing the panels from his comic books and creating scenes featuring his favorite cartoon characters when he was a boy growing up in New Jersey. Now based in Philadelphia, he's doing the same thing as a career. He has trained in drawing, painting, sculpture, screen-printing, typography, and photography. He has a Scottish terrier named Monty and a large collection of vinyl albums. And he still loves comics.

Book Club Questions

1. Why does Jacob put off his class assignment?
2. What visual details does the illustrator use to develop the setting?
3. Explain why Jacob compares Sybil to Little Red Riding Hood.
4. Jacob misses his mom's oatmeal cookies. What is something from home you would miss if you were gone a long time?
5. Choose one page. Look at the words and pictures. How do they work together to tell this story?
6. How would the story *Ride Across Time* be different if written as a regular novel?

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