



Written permission has been given by this grade eight student and/or parents to share this story with you.

This is historical fiction which uses the story patterns contest and circular journey.

Emily

“You know it’s impossible, sir.”

The General smiled. “Indeed, this entire revolution is ‘impossible’. Imagine declaring war against the empire of Great Britain! War is about taking *risks*, Major Hartley. We cannot confront Lord Rawdon alone and come out of it victorious—or even remotely dignified. This I know. That is why we send a message to Sumter.”

“Sir, you know as well as I that this area is *crawling* with British patriots. How will we ever successfully deliver a message? Any men you send to attempt the journey would be like an insects attempting to fly through a spider’s web. It cannot be done.”

The General ignored his major’s protests. “Contact all the spies in our network who are presently within a close radius of the camp. Time is of the essence. Once you find a spy willing to take on the mission, we can act.”

“But sir—”

“Major Hartley!” snapped the General. “Not another word. Do you think I became who I am by remaining on the defensive, scared of my own shadow? Good *night*, Major!”

Bowing, Hartley retreated out of the tent.

Orange streaks of dawn brushed against the horizon. Fields of grain swayed in the slight breeze, shimmering with the morning dew.

The pure peacefulness is deceiving.

Emily drew her hand away from the window, letting the pale white curtain fall back and hide the quiet scene of daybreak.

“NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION!” screamed newspapers across the continent as Britain passed act after act in an attempt to gain control of the rebellious colonies.

Tempers had flared during the Stamp Act, but they were boiling by the time of the Boston Tea Party in 1773. Americans were ready for war. Men massed to fight for the independence of a country that didn’t yet exist. Britain was not ready to stand by and let their power slip from its grasp. Within two years, the Thirteen Colonies were caught in the whirlwind of a full-scale revolution.

After three years of fighting, the United States of America took enough ground to declare their independence from Great Britain. But the war raged on. Within another two years, France joined with the Americans against their long-time enemy. Britain’s grasp began to waver, but it would be another five years before they were defeated.

Emily

Rap-rap.

Startled out of breakfast, the family looked up at the knock on the kitchen door.

“Maria!” the man sitting at the head of the table called gruffly.

The large maid waddled to the kitchen door, turning the handle to admit a young girl. Thin wisps of dark hair shadowed her quiet grey eyes, the rest of her auburn crown tucked away in a pale blue bonnet. In her arms rested an oversize basket, which she promptly offered to the maid.

“Sorry to call on you so early, Mrs. Johnson,” she said, turning to the woman seated beside her husband. “I just came to bring the eggs you asked for.”

“Ah yes,” the woman smiled, rising from her place. “Thank you, dear. How much do I owe you?”

“Father said he would settle the bill with you later.”

“That’s fine. You’ll stay for breakfast, won’t you?”

Emily hesitated, her eyes flickering between the gentle Tory hosts and the British officer sitting at the table.

“Yes, thank you,” she agreed, tugging at her bonnet and slipping into the offered chair.

The officer cleared his throat haughtily. “As I was saying before we were *interrupted*, Lord Rawdon has successfully carried out his plan for dividing General Greene’s troops. He is marching south towards Charleston as we speak. Charleston, as I’m sure you know, is a crucial strategic point; Britain no longer has control of any major southern ports. Therefore, there is little way for us to transport troops and resources to and from England in this area.”

“I doubt General Greene will be so easily defeated,” cautioned his host, breaking in suddenly as he reached for the sugar bowl. “Not meaning to be disrespectful of your great work, of course, sir,” he added hastily. “But Nathaniel Greene is well known around here to be unrivaled by any other general. If it is possible to find a way to recover his loss, be assured he will. In fact, I’ve heard a rumor that he plans to send a message to General Sumter and ask his assistance in attacking Lord Rawdon. Together the two camps can easily overcome the Brits.”

“Whose side are you on?” demanded the officer, taking a large bite of his cornmeal and chewing noisily. “Besides, it doesn’t matter. There is no human way Greene can send a message to Sumter; this area is heavily populated by Loyalists. Any spies who attempt the mission will be intercepted.”

Mr. Johnson frowned and nodded. “Yes, I see your point. Is there anything I can help you with before you leave for Charleston?”

Emily

“Yes. Dispatch a messenger to Rawdon and describe Greene’s position here. Rawdon hasn’t had any news of our situation here since he left a week ago. He might be getting worried.”

“It will be done.”

“Good. Now, I must excuse myself...thank-you, Mr. Johnson...Mrs. Johnson.” Nodding his head to both of his hosts, the officer rose from the table and sauntered out of the dining room.

Ignoring the large raindrops pelting her face and the wind tearing at her clothes, Emily raced home. There was no time to lose. What she had just learned could affect the outcome of the war.

At last the flickering lights of her father’s house approached. Out of breath, she flung open the door and tramped dripping inside.

“Is that you, Emmy?” called a voice.

“Yes, father. I—”

“I was getting worried. You said you were only going to drop off those eggs at the Johnson’s’.”

“I’m sorry...Mrs. Johnson invited me to stay for breakfast, and I couldn’t resist. A British officer is staying at their house.” Removing her soaked galoshes, Emily padded into the kitchen. Her father was sipping a cup of tea, his bad leg propped up on a chair.

“I suppose you’ll be wanting to go to Greene’s camp, now, won’t you?” he sighed, putting down his mug. “Emily, this is getting dangerous.”

“Father, *please*...” she pleaded. “Don’t expect me home for a few days. I’m going to Greene’s camp, and then maybe stay for a short time at Aunt Carole’s. With the new twins and all, she needs all the help she can get.”

“A few *days*? Emily, I’ll not be fooled by your excuses....your country is not worth your life.”

She laughed softly. “Tell that to all the soldiers who risk their lives—*are* risking their lives—for the freedom of their country every day. Just because I’m a girl, does that mean I should be spared the sacrifices of war?”

Before he could make another protest, she leaned down, kissed her father’s cheek, and quietly left the room.

The furious rain had not relented. Emily shivered, chilled at the knowledge of what she had to do.

The distance to General Greene’s camp was only a few short miles. Emily caught a ride for most of it, running the rest of the way. In her mind, she went over her plan. It should work. No one would expect a sixteen-year-old girl to be carrying a

Emily

dispatch that could determine the outcome of the war. The only problem would be convincing General Greene.

Sitting on his cot, the general stared into space. Time was running out. No spies within the area had agreed to take the message to Sumter, and already Lord Rawdon was closing in on Charleston. What to do, what to *do!* He stood up abruptly and began pacing.

Colleen...John... Jack...Charlie...Ben...*his best spies!* And they were all too afraid to attempt the mission! *Afraid!* They were *professionals!* What was he supposed to do, take the message *himself?*

A voice cut through his thoughts. "Sir?"

"Can't you see I'm *busy*, Hartley!"

"Yes, sir, I see that, but—"

"Spit it out, Major! Soldiers do not stutter."

"We have a *spy!*"

"*What?*"

"She's sixteen years old, has done some minor work for us before, and—"

"Bring her in."

A few minutes later, Emily Geiger stood in front of the legendary General Greene.

"My Major tells me you have offered to take a message to General Sumter," said Greene.

"Yes, I have," agreed Emily.

"How do I know I can trust you?"

Before she could open her mouth to speak, Hartley stepped in to her defense. "Her father is John Geiger, that Whig from a farm not far from here. He is well known for his war efforts. Emily here has done some spying of her own, reporting any news of British movements. She's the one who put a Tory face on Philip Lorrie."

"I see," murmured Greene, staring hard at the young girl before him. She caught his gaze and held it. He was the first to break away.

"General Sumter's camp is about one hundred miles away. It will take a good three-day journey to reach there on horse. I expect you are a good rider?"

"Yes."

"Good. We will supply you with a horse, then. Here is the message. I'll give you the letter, but you'll need to memorize it in case you need to destroy it." Unfolding a paper from his pocket, Greene began to read. "Lord Rawdon is marching towards Charleston. It is vital he be stopped. In order to attack him, I need the full support of your troops. Please join me here at my present location, fifty miles north of Columbia, as soon as possible. Send a return message with the bearer."

Emily

“Lord Rawdon is marching towards Charleston,” Emily repeated flawlessly. “It is vital he be stopped. In order to attack him, I need the full support of your troops. Please join me here at my present location, fifty miles north of Columbia, as soon as possible. Send a return message with the bearer.”

Greene smiled. “It seems you will have no trouble. Major Hartley will answer any questions, and your horse will be saddled in a few minutes. Godspeed.”

Emily curtsied and walked out of the tent. After a quick word to Greene, the major followed.

“Do you know the route?” asked Hartley as they waited for Emily’s horse to be saddled.

“Yes, well. We have family living close to Sumter’s camp.”

“Good. Now, in case you should be searched, say you were going to visit your relatives—”

“That’s my full intention.”

“—and destroy the note in a way that will leave no possible traces. Ripping it will *not* suffice.”

“It’s ready, sir,” interrupted the saddle boy, handing the reins to Emily as she effortlessly swung herself up on the horse.

“Good luck, and God be with you,” called Hartley as the girl and her horse thundered out of the camp.

Two eyes watched the young spy gallop off, taking quick note of her direction. He had to know the road she had chosen, for her location would be vital if he planned to overtake her. *What is this world coming to*, he muttered to himself. *Sending girls to places grown men dare not to go*. He quickly prayed she would cooperate and not put up a fuss when they detained her.

Leaving his hidden alcove in the trees, the man hopped on his horse and turned it in the direction of his employer’s house. Greene’s message would not reach Sumter if *he* had anything to do with it.

“What news, Bill?” asked Philip Lorrie casually, bringing a cigarette to his mouth. “You look pretty darn shook up.”

“General Greene is sending a message to Sumter so they can attack Lord Rawdon together.”

Emily

“*What?*”

“You heard me. If his dispatch succeeds, Rawdon will stand no chance. We *need* Charleston, Phil.”

“I *know* that!” winced Lorrie, spitting out his cigarette.

“The girl set out—”

“The *girl?*”

“Yeah, she’s around sixteen, I’d say. A brave little thing. John Geiger’s daughter, I believe—she’s the only one who’d agree to take the message. She left this afternoon. I saw her set out.”

Phil nodded distractedly. “Then we have time to intercept her....take Gustav, my best horse, and set out as soon as possible. You know what to do.”

“Sure do, Phil.”

“*Go!*”

Emily leaned down in her saddle, urging her horse forward. They would only be able to manage half a day of riding at most before it got dark, and she intended to make the most of it. Something told her she would be followed.

“Be careful,” her father had warned her, “the Tories have many eyes and ears. I doubt you’ll be savable if you get caught.”

Her mind wandered to where she would spend the night. Of course, she could always bed outdoors, but that wasn’t a very good idea in case somebody found her. A lone girl sleeping on the ground with her horse was too suspicious. But taking lodgings at a home—not knowing which loyalties her hosts held—could be fatal. It would also leave a trail for anyone pursuing her. *I’ll have to risk it. There’s no other way. And if I make it far enough, I can stay at Henry’s.*

Henry Ellwood was an old family friend who strongly favored the Rebel cause. She would be safe there; going a bit of a longer distance would be worth knowing her back was covered.

Suddenly, a house appeared out of a small clearing in the dense woods. A large British flag twisted in the wind, wrapping itself around the flagpole and back around again. Emily yanked on her reins, steering her horse in a full circle and disappearing into the thick underbrush. The last thing she needed was to be seen by an obvious British supporter. If she remembered her geography rightly, this was the beginning of Toryland—what the Whigs called the concentrated Tory settlement a few miles from Columbia.

Blueberry Path.

When they were younger, her and her friends had found a luscious patch of blueberries on a path that wound along the outskirts of Toryland. Besides costing her

Emily

over two hours, it would be the safest route, away from prying eyes. Turning her horse in the right direction, she dug in her heels and prepared for a long night's ride.

Clouds billowed over the horizon, lit up by a deep red in the last fading traces of sunlight. Biting winds ripped through the trees, passing through Emily's thin sweater to her shivering skin underneath. A sudden rustle made her look up; an owl sat perched on a swinging branch, its large yellow eyes fixed on hers.

All light of the sun was soon gone; no moon or stars remained to guide Emily on her path. She ignored the lump rising in her throat.

Fear is not a spy's weapon.

KA-BOOM!

Her horse screamed and reared, tossing Emily off her saddle. Rolling out of the way of the animal's flailing hooves, she jumped to her feet and re-mounted. Patting horse's beaded neck, she laughed at herself; it was only thunder.

With another great rumble, the heavens opened up. Bucket of rain poured down from the sky, drenching Emily in an instant. Silently screaming, she hopped back off her horse and began leading it down the muddy path.

Suddenly, the twinkling lights of a house on the Tory settlement shone through the thick downpour. Breathing a sigh of relief, she led her animal to the little gate and entered.

"Jane, who on earth could be knocking on our door at eight o'clock in the evening in the middle of a thunderstorm?"

The woman sitting across the room from him smiled, put down her sewing and strode to the door.

"Come in, come in!" she greeted the drenched girl standing in front of her. "Before you catch your death."

"Thank you!" Emily gasped, stepping through the doorway.

The woman helped her take off her shoes and sweater, ushering her into the kitchen. "Change into this," she said, offering the girl some new clothes. "I'll hang these up to dry and get you some hot cocoa."

"Thank you," repeated Emily, grateful for the Tory woman's kindness.

Emily was a good actress. She would play the part of a lost farm girl.

Emily

Bill raced through fields and across bridges, leaping over fallen logs and mud puddles. It had been a dreary, wet day, but that wasn't about to stop him. If his reckoning was right, he would be able to overtake the spy within a matter of an hour. She had the disadvantage of having to go around Toryland. *But if I know Emily*, he thought to himself, *she'll put on her best act and seek lodging somewhere close.*

"Yah!" he shouted, digging his spurred heels into his horse's belly and leaning forward in the saddle. The gap was closing.

Emily stared at the ceiling, her body protesting at her lack of sleep and her mind racing.

Must...not...close... eyes....

She wasn't about to be caught sleeping in enemy territory. So far her identity seemed hidden from the Tory couple, but one couldn't be too cautious.

Just... a....little....while....

Blurring together, her determined thoughts faded into a deep slumber.

Emily awoke to the sound of a dog barking. She climbed out of bed and walked to the window. It was still pitch black outside, but the rain had let up. Wandering to the source of the bark, her eyes caught a glimpse of a dark rider slipping off a horse and striding to the front porch of the house.

Ducking away from the window, her heart hammered in her chest. They had found her!

Get control of yourself! Think! She turned to get dressed and gather up her things. The identity of the rider was unquestionable.

Within a few short minutes, her belongings lay in her sack on the bed. Emily's ear was at the door, listening for any information which might hint at what she should do. Muffled voices reached her ear.

"I'm sorry to wake you up in the middle of the night," said the first voice, his manner gruff and coarse. *The rider*, Emily thought.

"I can't say barging in and scaring my wife to death is customary, but I know you well enough, Bill, to know you wouldn't do it unless it was necessity," replied a second voice with a trace of amusement. Her host.

The rider laughed softly. "To tell you the truth, I've been following a young spy all day. She set out from Greene's camp mid-morning carrying a crucial dispatch that could have serious consequences if it is delivered. I came to ask you if you can give me any information as to her whereabouts."

"She? Her?"

"Yeah. She's Geiger's daughter, about sixteen. Tall, brunette, blue eyes."

"I see," replied her host. Emily held her breath.

"You know something?"

Emily

“Sit down, Bill. I have something I need to tell you...” the man’s voice faded off to a murmur as Emily shrunk away from the door. She had heard enough.

Grabbing her sack and swinging it over her shoulder, she stepped out the window. Cautiously grabbing a hold of the trellis, Emily lowered herself down to the ground. Her animal was tied up at a horse shelter, still saddled but fed. Untying the rope, she swung herself up and spurred him forward.

Light streaked across the horizon, silhouetting dark trees as they reached upward into the starry infinite. A bird twittered, jumping from branch to branch to greet the coming dawn. Everywhere life stirred, oblivious of the night creatures that had dominated their sleepless hours and faded with the morning.

Emily urged her exhausted horse on, fighting the tiredness that was steadily overtaking her. If the rider had discovered she was gone, he would not be far behind. She had to at least make it to Henry Ellwood’s, if not further.

At last she entered the familiar valley that marked the end of Toryland. Realizing Ellwood’s farm was less than a mile away, she breathed a silent prayer of relief. Soon she could rest, knowing Henry would protect her...

Emily shook herself awake and brought her horse to a halt in front of a small farmhouse. Slipping off the animal’s back, she tied him up at the horse shelter and knocked on the kitchen door. Henry admitted her quietly.

“What brings you to these parts alone and without your father?” the old man asked, hanging up Emily’s coat. He knew the answer quite well but always feigned ignorance at her illegal activities.

“I’m carrying a dispatch to General Sumter from Greene.”

Ellwood raised his bushy eyebrows. “Oh, really? Has the General run out of men to do his dirty work for him?”

Emily glared at him and the old man laughed softly. “You’re a brave girl. Too brave, if possible.” He ran his hand through his graying hair. “Now, I expect you’re tired, so go wash up and lie down for awhile. When you wake up I’ll have some lunch ready. I’ll give you a fresh horse and a new address to spend the night at.”

“Thank you, Henry. Sorry to put you out. Did I tell you I’m being followed? So don’t forget to bar your doors.”

Ellwood groaned. He was getting too old to be hiding spies and chasing away Brits.

Emily

Within four hours, Emily was on her way again with a new horse and an address to a farmstead about twenty miles away. Henry supplied a letter of introduction.

She reached the farm in a matter of hours, where she was given a quick meal as well as a new horse. In the knowledge that she could reach Sumter's camp by noon the next day, she set out again.

The last traces of sunlight disappeared over the horizon, sealing the stuffy blackness that enveloped the night. Emily considered whether to stop for the night or continue on. If she pressed forward, she could reach the general way before dawn. It was a nice thought. Digging her heels in, she urged her horse forward.

Suddenly, a movement on the road up ahead caught her eye. Emily slowed her horse to walk and stared closely. Three figures walked slowly back and forth across the road, chatting amiably with each other. British soldiers!

Heart hammering in her chest, Emily forced back her anxiety and pieced together a story. In case the soldiers had already been warned about one Emily Geiger carrying a critical dispatch, she would claim the identity of her cousin, Marilee Bishop. She was on her way to visit her Aunt Carole and help with the baby.

"Whoa, hold on there, Miss," called one of the soldiers as she neared their post. Emily halted her horse and smiled genteelly.

"Can I help you, gentlemen?"

A man with a large brown beard—obviously the leader—stepped forward. "Good evening, Miss Geiger. How's your father doing?"

Emily feigned confusion. "You must have me confused with someone else," she replied. "My name is Marilee Bishop, and my father passed away five years ago. Please let me past, I'm in a hurry. My aunt just gave birth to twins and she is desperate for help."

The leader studied her closely. Tall, brunette, blue eyes, plain but pretty. That was the description of Emily Geiger. Of course, the horse was wrong, but she could have switched horses on the way...

"I'm afraid we can't, Miss *Bishop*. We are in the middle of a war, and you may have critical information on you that we can't simply let pass by."

"Sir, I *assure* you I have no idea what you're talking about. Since when do you have the right to detain young girls who are loyal to the British Empire?"

The man ignored her protests. "Off your horse, Miss Bishop. It will be a simple procedure, I assure you. If you are as innocent as you say, you should be on your way in the matter of a few hours."

Emily sat alone in a dark tent, her bottom already sore from resting on a poky mattress. She took the dispatch out of her frock and thought quickly. There was no

Emily

time to burn it, and the Major had warned her ripping it was not good enough. Taking a deep breath, she shoved it in her mouth and chewed steadily. It tasted awful and was difficult to swallow.

Suddenly, the soft footfalls of feet on grass reached her ears. Swallowing the rest of the paper, Emily lie down on the mattress and pretended to sulk.

The tent flap opened and a stern-faced woman entered. “Emily, is it your custom to do General Greene’s dirty work for him?”

Emily sat up indignantly, inside chilled by how similar what Henry Ellwood had said to her was. “I told you, my name is not Emily—I’m Marilee. And I don’t even know who this General Greene is.”

“Don’t play innocent with me, girl. Stand up. We’re going to search every inch of your body.”

Emily stood up and faced the woman while she patted her down, checking her seams for hidden pockets.

“Where do you live?” she snapped as she searched.

“About forty miles north of Columbia,” Emily replied calmly, realizing the woman was trying to test her knowledge of herself.

“On a farm?”

“Yes.”

“What is your father’s name?”

“He’s dead, but—James.”

“Your mother’s?”

“Lilian.”

“Any siblings?”

“Three.”

“Their names?”

“Isabella, Marshall, and David.”

“I see,” the woman frowned as she finished searching. “You’re clean. I’m sure you’ll be on your way in a few minutes. Sorry to have troubled you. You see, a girl matching your description is carrying a crucial dispatch. We can’t be too cautious.”

Emily nodded and smiled. “I understand.”

She was on her way within ten minutes, galloping harder and faster than ever. The close encounter had shaken her.

Lord Rawdon is marching towards Charleston. It is vital he be stopped. In order to attack him, I need the full support of your troops. Please join me here at my present location, fifty miles north of Columbia, as soon as possible. Send a return message with the bearer.

She still knew the message.

Emily

Emily arrived at the home of a well-known Whig by dark. Upon hearing her story, he offered her dinner and a place to spend the night. They were in the middle of the quick supper when a young man charged into the room, panting.

“Father! There was a horseman inquiring after our guest on the road down a ways. When I told him I had seen nothing of her, he started off in Lord Rawdon’s direction.”

Standing up, Emily’s host grabbed her coat and helped her into it. “You have no time to lose,” he said. “Jacob here will help you find your way through these woods, and then you won’t be far from Sumter’s encampment.”

Emily nodded, following Jacob outside to a fresh horse. Together they made their way through the thick inky black forest, stopping only briefly to water their horses. When they reached the end of the woods, Jacob wished her good luck and turned back into the rising sun. Fighting the sleepiness that was overtaking her, Emily pushed her horse to a gallop. She would reach Sumter’s camp within a few hours.

Suddenly, the clear pounding of hooves thundered behind her. Whirling in her saddle, Emily caught a glimpse of a tall man riding toward her at full speed. Her breath came in short gasps as she heeled her horse back into the dense forest.

Over bushes and around trees she fled, hoping her erratic trail would confuse her pursuer. The sound of hooves behind her became more and more faint until the underbrush had blocked it out altogether. At last she stumbled to a halt in the middle of a clearing. Together she and her horse panted for breath.

After having a drink, Emily turned to the problem at hand. She was lost in the middle of a forest she knew nothing about, and if she didn’t find her way out soon the Loyalists would almost certainly overtake her. If only she had a compass....

Emily stopped. Of course! The sun was still in the east. She would use its location to find her way out.

A few more hours of intense riding brought her to the edge of the army camp. She was soon standing before General Sumter.

“Lord Rawdon is marching towards Charleston. It is vital he be stopped. In order to attack him, I need the full support of your troops. Please join me here at my present location, fifty miles north of Columbia, as soon as possible. Send a return message with the bearer.”

Emily slept the sleep of the contented for fifteen hours. Her first mission fulfilled, she rode back to Columbia without trouble to inform General Greene that Sumter was on his way. Several days later she reached her worried father and volunteered for no more assignments at his wishes, rather satisfied with supplying the American army with food from their farm.

The following day, General Sumter joined General Greene riding out to victory in their stance against Lord Rawdon.