

## The Famous Ride of Paul Revere

Paul Revere loved his children and grandchildren. (He had at least 51 grandchildren!) He called them his "little lambs." Imagine that you are sitting with Paul Revere and some of those grandchildren, hearing about the famous ride of April 18, 1775. Listen!

*The British were going to march, our spies told us. Soon, they would cross the Charles River. From there they could capture Samuel Adams and John Hancock, who were in Lexington planning the fight against the British. Then they could march on to capture our patriot weapons, stored in Concord. Adams and Hancock had to be warned. The townspeople had to be warned, too, so that they could defend our weapons. The Regulars—the British soldiers—were coming, and people needed to know!*

*I had a plan already. First, I hurried to Christ Church, to give a warning to those waiting across the river. We had agreed on a code: one lantern would be lit in the church steeple window if the British were to leave Boston by land, two lanterns would be lit if they were to leave by the river. Light two lanterns, I told my friend who waited in the steeple.*

*Two friends were waiting to row me across the river to Charlestown. But in the excitement, I had forgotten my spurs! Then I noticed that my little dog had followed me. I wrote a quick note to your grandmother, tied it around the dog's neck, and sent the dog home. The dog returned shortly—carrying my spurs.*

*Again we were about to start, when we realized that we had not brought a cloth to muffle the squeak of the oars. One of the men had a sweetheart who lived nearby. He whistled at her window. I heard whispers and a rustle of clothing. Then the lady tossed down her petticoat! It was still warm as we wrapped it around the oars.*

*In Charlestown, my friends met me with a horse. I set off immediately. Once, two soldiers on horseback chased me. But they were no match for the fine horse I rode. In Medford, I woke up the captain of the militia, our patriot soldiers. Then I raised the alarm at every house from there to Lexington: "The Regulars are out! The Regulars are out!" I cried.*

*I arrived in Lexington around midnight. Sam Adams and John Hancock had been staying there with Hancock's relatives. I warned them that the British soldiers were coming. I had only a short time to rest my horse. Then I set off for Concord to alarm the people there. William Dawes, another Boston messenger, came with me. Soon we met up with Samuel Prescott, a local doctor.*

*We had gotten about halfway to Concord. Suddenly, I saw a group of officers ahead. In an instant, we were surrounded. The officers ordered us into a pasture. One of my companions jumped his horse over a stone wall. The other got away, too. But I was caught.*

*A British officer pointed a pistol at me and began to question me. I told him that I knew what they were after. "I have alarmed the country," I said. "There will be 500 Americans here soon!" I could see that my words surprised them.*

*The officers marched me back toward Lexington, all the while calling me a rebel. Just as we neared the town, we heard gunshots. "What was that for?" one of them asked. I answered that it was to alarm the town. Well, this worried them so much that they let me go—but not before taking that fine horse!*

*I trudged back to Lexington and found Sam Adams and John Hancock preparing to leave. Mr. Hancock asked me to fetch a trunk he had forgotten. That was what I was doing when I saw the British troops march in, all red coats and brass buttons! Not minutes later, I heard a shot, then two. Then there was a roar of gunfire. I had just heard the first shots of the American Revolution!*

*But that is a story for another time. Good night, my little lambs!*

According to Revere family legend, Paul Revere told the stories about his dog and the spurs and about the lady's petticoat to his children and grandchildren. No one knows if they are true. What do you think? Were they just bedtime stories? Or could they be true?

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