

Young Patriots



Chapter Three - by Kay Hively

With his work done at the livery stable, Ben raced home. As he rushed through the back door, the warm kitchen felt good. Although it was spring, it had been a cold day. Grandmother was setting the little table with three plates. Grandfather always sat in the big chair with arms. Grandmother sat across from him, and Ben had a small chair between his grandparents.

Since his parents died, Ben had lived with his grandparents. He missed his parents very much and thought about them every day. But his grandparents were good to him and watched after him. His grandmother was a good cook and she made all his clothes. His grandfather let him work at the livery stable. That was something he liked more than anything else in the world.

At the livery he met many people, earned money and was learning to work with horses. Ben hoped one day to have his own stable and blacksmith shop.

Ben loved his grandparents. The only thing he didn't like was when his grandmother talked about him going to school. Ben didn't think he needed to go to school. He wouldn't need to read or write to be a blacksmith.

Just as he always did when he came home each day, Ben brought in firewood for his grandmother. While he was washing his hands and face, Ben saw his grandfather coming up the front walk. It was time to eat.

When they finished supper, Ben and his grandfather rested from their long day at work. By the light of a candle, Grandfather began to read. Ben asked what he was reading. Grandfather said it was called "Common Sense." Then Grandfather told Ben that he should start learning to read.

Ben admitted that he would like to know what the papers said. He could see that people loved to read, but he did not want to go to school. Maybe, he thought, he could teach himself to read.

When it was very dark outside, Ben's grandfather said it was bedtime. Ben looked at the clock on the parlor wall. It was 8:15.

In his room under the stairs, Ben put his copper in a little bank, took off his shoes and crawled into bed fully dressed. Not long after he was under the covers, Ben heard his grandparents call good night to him as they started up the narrow steps to bed.

The house was quiet when Ben slipped out of bed, picked up his shoes and crept out the back door. It was only a short way to the old church.

Ben stayed in the dark alley as he made his way toward the meeting place. Only a barking dog and two howling cats broke the stillness. Ben could see almost nothing because clouds hid the moon.

Suddenly a tremendous crash rattled Ben's ears. As he turned to see what had happened, he heard hoof beats racing down the alley. In the dim light, he saw a man on horseback bearing down on him. Ben could not get out of the way - there was no place to hide.



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Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do -

- Why did Grandfather read by candlelight? Grandfather was reading "Common Sense." Find out what "Common Sense" was about.
- What time did Ben go to bed? What time do you go to bed? Should Ben have sneaked out of the house?

STANDARDS - SS1; G3:5; G4:3; G4:4

Next Week: Chapter Four - Locked In