

Emily Geiger's Dangerous Mission



by Dyana Stan
illustrated by Matthew Archambault

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

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BOSTON

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Emily Geiger

Introduction

It was the summer of 1781. The American colonies were in the middle of a terrible war. American colonial rebels, or *Patriots*, wanted independence from British rule. *Tories*, or colonists loyal to Great Britain, were helping the British army.

 In South Carolina, General Greene and General Sumter led two parts of the American army. General Greene wanted to send General Sumter a message so they could meet and join forces, but the British army controlled the land between the two American camps. There seemed to be no way to deliver a message safely. No way, that is, until one brave girl volunteered to be the messenger. This is the story of Emily Geiger, a cool-headed 18-year-old heroine.

A Problem and a Volunteer

Emily Geiger knew that the British had forced General Greene into a **retreat**. Now, the Americans badly needed a victory.

General Greene was looking for someone to deliver his important message to General Sumter. Emily knew the route well. She often traveled it to visit her uncle's family. If she were stopped, she could say that she was going for a visit. Also, the British would be less likely to suspect a woman. Emily bravely decided that it was her duty to volunteer.

 General Greene's camp was near Emily's farm. When Emily went to talk to General Greene, he said the journey would be too dangerous for her. It would take days, and there would be Tories everywhere. Emily tried to convince General Greene that she was the only one who could safely deliver the message.

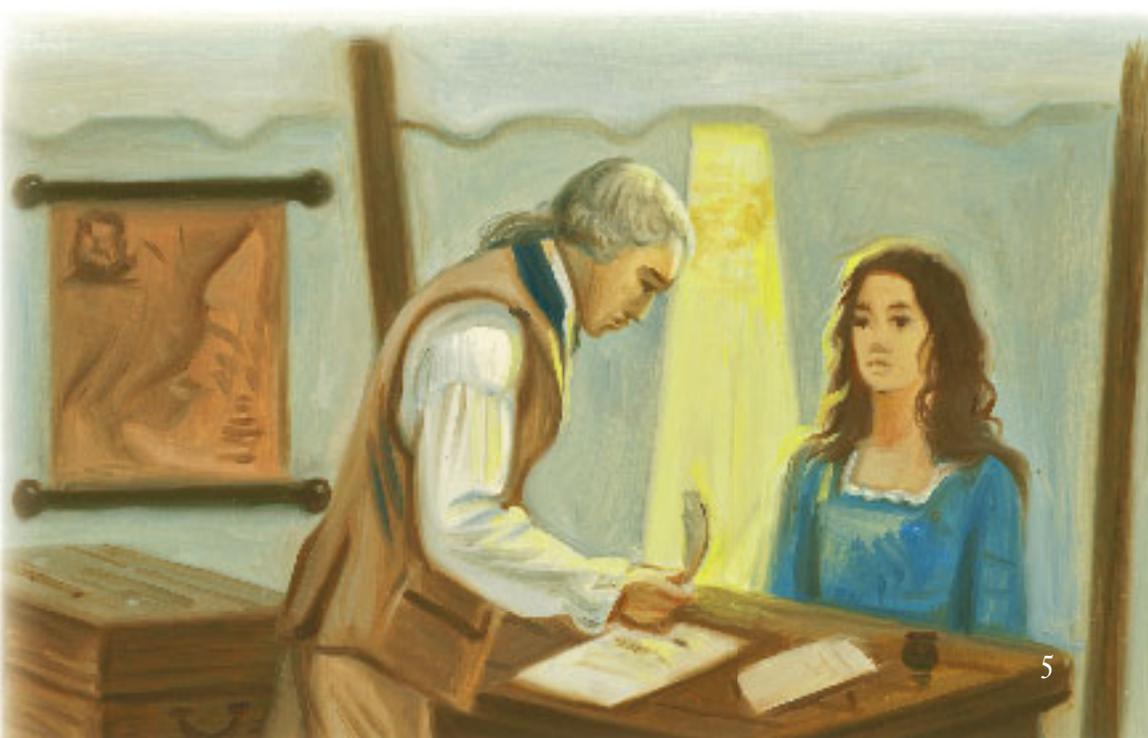
Emily Geiger's Journey



🔊 At last, General Greene agreed. He took out a sheet of paper and wrote a message to General Sumter explaining his plan. He told General Sumter to bring his army to a meeting place where they could join forces against the British.

🔊 General Greene had Emily read the message. He told her to destroy it if she were caught. Emily hid the message in her riding clothes, got onto her horse, and began her journey. She rode beside the Broad River. The water was shimmering brightly.

🔊 General Greene gives Emily the message.





Emily realizes that her hosts are Tories.

A Close Call

Emily rode all day. She went through cool woods. She drank water from clear springs. She did her best to stay hidden from sight.

When evening came, she found a farmhouse. The husband and wife who lived there invited her to stay the night. They asked her where she was going. She told them she was going to visit her uncle and his family.

At supper, the couple told Emily to be careful. They told her to beware of General Greene's men who were in the woods. That's when Emily knew that her hosts were Tories. They were her foes!

Emily could not get up and leave right away. If she did, they would know she was a Patriot. So she ate her supper, thanked her hosts, and went to bed.

In the middle of the night, Emily woke up to the sound of voices. A man was talking to the husband and wife. The man had heard rumors of a young woman riding through the woods, and he wanted to know who she was.

Emily held her breath. Were her hosts suspicious of her? Would they give her away to this Tory spy? After a while, Emily heard the Tory leave. She didn't want to take any chances, though. Long before dawn, she sneaked out of the farmhouse and galloped away.



Emily leaves before dawn.

Caught!

The second day began like the first. Emily tried to stay hidden as she rode. She thought about the war. The Patriots did not have fancy uniforms like the British. Nor did they follow **formal** rules of battle. Instead of marching in huge lines like the British did, the Patriots hid in swamps and woods. They attacked quickly. Then they disappeared again. Emily thought they were clever and brave.

 Emily crossed the Saluda River and headed toward the Congaree River. Suddenly, she heard the sound of horses. Three Tory soldiers rode towards her. They stopped her and asked why she was riding alone. Emily said she was going to visit relatives.

The soldiers didn't believe Emily. They said that she must be on a secret mission.

 The soldiers suspected that Emily was a Patriot carrying a secret message. The Tories told her that she must be searched. They thought it was more proper for a woman to search her, so they took her to a nearby farmhouse. The British had taken over the farmhouse and named it Fort Granby.



 Emily is captured.

🔊 At Fort Granby, the soldiers locked Emily in a room alone. Then they sent for a Tory woman to search her. Emily looked around the room. There was no place to hide the message, so she would have to destroy it.

🔊 Emily took out the message and memorized it. Then she ripped it into pieces. She knew she had to do something with the pieces. If she didn't, the British would know they had been right. She might be hanged as a spy or traitor!



Emily made a decision. She would eat the message. One by one, she stuffed the dry pieces of paper into her mouth. One by one, Emily chewed them up and swallowed them. The paper almost choked her, but by the time the Tory woman came, the message was gone.

Emily eats the message.



The Message Delivered

The Tory woman finally arrived and searched Emily. She found nothing. The soldiers told Emily that they were sorry for suspecting her and sent her on her way. Emily rode straight to her uncle's home, but she did not stay very long. She had a message to deliver.

 Emily set off for General Sumter's camp. She didn't take a main route. She was worried she might be stopped again. Instead, she followed an old Indian trail. She crossed the Congaree River by ferry. Then she rode beside the Wateree River. At last, she saw the tents of General Sumter's camp.

 Emily arrives at General Sumter's camp.





 Emily is met by a guard.

 Emily asked a Patriot guarding the camp to take her to General Sumter. She told the guard that she had a message from General Greene.

 General Sumter was surprised to see a young woman with such an important message. She had made a long journey and faced danger bravely. Emily was tired but proud. Word for word, she repeated the message from General Greene.

 General Sumter listened to Emily and acted on her message. In a short while, his army packed up and marched to the meeting place to join forces with General Greene's army. His army arrived just in time. Together, the two American armies forced the British into retreat.

Emily Geiger had saved the day.

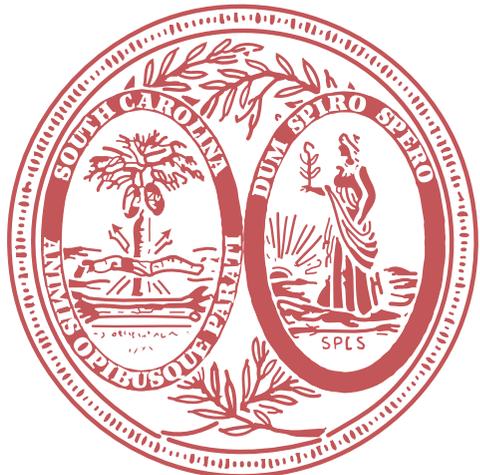
A **Legendary Heroine**

There are many legends and stories about Emily Geiger. Some of them are about what happened later. One story says that General Greene gave jewels to Emily as a wedding present. Another says that she danced at a ball with General Lafayette, an important Frenchman and friend of the Patriots.

 When the state of South Carolina created a state seal, they put a picture of a young woman on it. The picture is of Emily Geiger.

 Today, there are still Geigers living in the area where Emily lived. Since Emily's time, they have honored her with a family tradition. If you go there today, you will find that many Geigers have named their daughters "Emily."

 The woman on the state seal of South Carolina represents Emily Geiger.

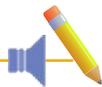
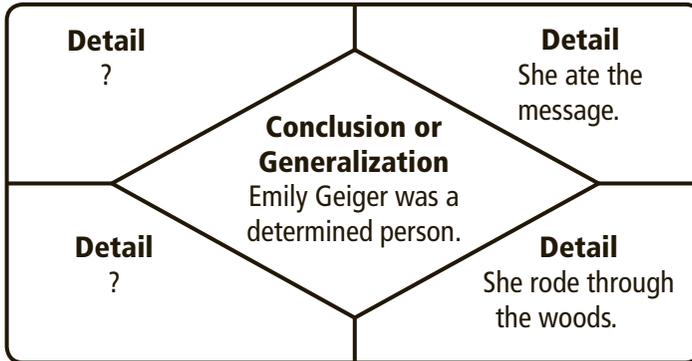


Responding



TARGET SKILL **Conclusions and**

Generalizations Emily Geiger was a determined person. What details in the story help readers draw this conclusion? Copy and complete the chart below.



Write About It

Text to Text Think of another story you have read in which one character gives instructions to another character. Write a paragraph explaining what the instructions were.



TARGET VOCABULARY

foes

formal

gushed

legendary

magnificent

plunged

retreat

revolution

shimmering

strategy



TARGET SKILL **Conclusions and Generalizations**

Use details to explain ideas that aren't stated or are generally true.



TARGET STRATEGY **Analyze/Evaluate** Think carefully

about the text and form an opinion about it.



GENRE Narrative Nonfiction gives factual information by telling a true story.

Level: T

DRA: 44

Genre:

Narrative Nonfiction

Strategy:

Analyze/Evaluate

Skill:

Conclusions and Generalizations

Word Count: 1,273

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