



*The Adventures of Conrad:
American Revolution*

*Gypsy
Shadow
Publishing* 

by Denise Bartlett

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Dedication

To my mom, Winnie Spitz, and my dad, Gilbert Bartlett, who taught me to value history and family life. Thanks! Denise



Chapter One—Up and At 'Em

"Conrad!" The bright voice of his mother rang through the house. "You're daydreaming again. *And* missing breakfast."

"Yes, Ma'am. I'm coming." Flying low under the canyon's overhanging cliffs, the *sand'asho* bird's chest almost touched the purple-veined rock. Its rider fearlessly pushed it to greater speed, around and around like the motorcycle daredevils in the circus sideshow. As they reached the highest point, the circle had to tighten for the overhang. It was a tense moment. The rider molded his shape to that of the bird's back, holding his breath, urging the exertion. Then they were free, and went spinning into the air, righted themselves, slowed gradually, the miles whipping past.

"Conrad!" The teenager broke off the daydream, picked up the stack of schoolbooks from his desk; stopped to glance at himself in the mirror on the bathroom door. Squinting around the colorful stickers, he mentally examined his appearance. Tilted cap. *Not in the house*. In one motion, he tucked it under his arm. Neck chain, shirt, favorite jacket, jeans, belt and running shoes. He would not be laughed at for forgetting the shirt today.

His mother's laughter . . . it was sweet and high and sure knew how to hurt a guy. Taking the stairs three at a time, he swung into the kitchen and dropped his books and hat on the counter.

"Good morning, O Lady of the Sunrise." He gave his mom a big smack on the cheek and sat down in his chair. Breakfast. One of the few times they tried always to spend together.

She cooked a great breakfast, all his friends agreed and they had learned to show up early if they wanted her to fix them some. This morning she sat alone, poring over a CAD drawing she'd made for a fashion magazine. Her laptop computer contained her livelihood.

Breakfast: a stack of blueberry pancakes in the center of the table warming in a biscuit warmer, orange juice in its pitcher, coffee in the pot on the counter. She had already eaten, her coffee cup was beside her and he automatically refilled it for her, and then got milk for himself out of the refrigerator. Sitting down to eat beside her, he looked at the picture on her screen. The young businessman looked hauntingly familiar. Conrad looked from the sketchpad to her face.

"Mom," he complained. "What magazine is this for?"

"For the *Fashion Quarterly*. Don't worry, your friends will never know what you would look like in a three-piece business suit. Your reputation is safe, even if you do look great this way." She tapped the picture with her stylus, and then clicked to turn to the next page.

The young man was the same one, but the costume was outrageous.

"All right!" He felt like yelling. The three piece suit had been replaced with one of his designs—a futuristic rogue pilot's uniform.

"This one is for George Lotori," she said. "I hoped you'd like it. It's the one you showed me last week. I've named it after your rebel pilot, Blast Femus." She giggled, "I'm sure they'll love it. I would rather see you in a suit."

"You think they'll buy the idea? Can I have the first one?"

She smiled lovingly, "I really don't see why not." She envisioned the half-finished jacket in her sewing room. He would be pleased. "Now eat. You've got to be to school in 20 minutes and I've got a plane to catch."

He wolfed down the breakfast, excited now about his mother's work, especially the fact that she had used his idea.



Chapter Two—Journey into the Past

Mr. Phantom's history class was BORING. To listen to him made one think all the people who used to live on the earth died not of disease and warfare, but of sheer boredom. Surely it must have been exciting to live during the American Revolution.

The picture on page 124 showed an old tavern where men of the time met to discuss treasonous ideas. The smells alone would have been interesting. Sweat, tobacco, ale, charred wood and smoke; the occupational smells of farmers, tanners, trappers and fishermen.

"Hey, kid."

Conrad's ears perked up. The voice was very quiet, almost located inside his head.

"Come on in, I'll show you around." The tavern door was open now, and a man stood in the doorway. Conrad looked carefully around the classroom. No one else seemed aware of what was happening.

Okay, he thought, but how.

"Like this." The man suddenly stood beside him; the classroom gone, the tavern reality, the stench verified that. The man ushered him into a small room off to the side of the bar. "Name's Jake. Change into these."

Conrad slipped off his clothes and dressed in the ones the man handed him. They were an exact fit.

"What's your name, kid?"

"Conrad."

"It'll do." The man put Conrad's clothes into a huge wooden wardrobe and they reentered the tavern.

The man bellied up to the bar, and Conrad followed his lead. "Two pints, Johnny."

"Who's the new man?"

Conrad stood a little taller at the word 'man.' *Well, why not? He was maturing quickly.*

"His name is Conrad. Conrad, Johnny serves the best ale in town."

Conrad nodded, and picked up the mug. It was heavy, pewter hammered into a rugged shape. The taste was something like muddy roots soaked in old beer. He swallowed deeply, and smiled at Johnny. "I believe you were right, Jake. The finest I ever tasted." He felt a drip on his chin, and reached up to wipe his face with his sleeve, as he'd seen the other men do. His *mustache* seemed to be wet. What a change!

"Did you hear about what happened over in Lexington last night?"

"How could I avoid it? Everybody seems to be talking about it. They say the Minutemen ran into some of the British militia. Quite a bit of fighting." The speaker looked around grimly and continued, "Mark my word, the war for our

independence from those red devils has begun. The world will not soon forget April 19, 1775."

About the Author



Denise Bartlett began writing short stories when she was nine. Pen and paper gave way to word processors and typing, printing, reading and perfecting. A dreamer, she has always searched for deeper meaning and more vivid experiences in her everyday life. From hypnosis, training with mystics and spiritual people of many walks of life, to tax preparation and gardening, her interests vary widely. The thread that runs through her life is imagination.

Denise has written a variety of poetry, short stories and novelettes, as well as columns and articles on gardening and income taxes. Her website is <http://www.silvervalkyre.com> and her email is Denise@silvervalkyre.com/. She'd love to hear from you.