

THE SUMMER
READING ISSUE
home|school|life

FOR FAMILIES WHO LEARN TOGETHER

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2016



Hero or villain? Time Travel Tales kicks off with the story of Charlotte Corday, whose actions illuminate the complicated political and ethical landscape of the French Revolution.

THE CURRICULUM JUNKIE
IN SEARCH OF THE NEXT GREAT
HOMESCHOOL RESOURCE



It's About Time

With a 21st century combination of text and technology, Time Traveler Tales bring history—in all its complexity and controversy—to life in your homeschool classroom. **Rebecca Pickens** takes a journey in time with this curriculum for middle school and older students.

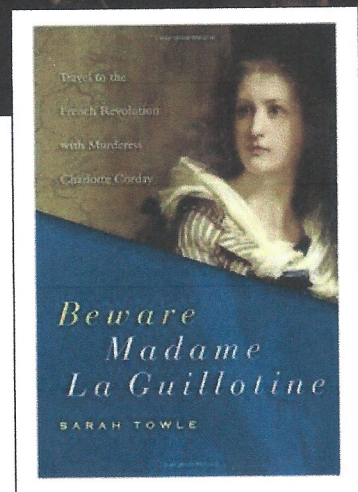
IF YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR engaging resources that will help your kids fall in love with history, I have a treasure for you. A talented team of authors, educators and app developers have joined Time Traveler Tales founder and writer Sarah Towle. Together they are creating a series of interactive history books, curriculum handbooks, and story apps that will ignite your child's curiosity.

Beware Madame La Guillotine is the first book in this emerging history series. A curriculum handbook and an award-winning app based on the same story are available from this publisher as well.

Twenty-four-year-old Charlotte Corday is the book's compelling young narrator. Her harrowing true story

unfolds on the streets of Paris in the midst of the French Revolution. When we meet Corday she is preparing to go to the guillotine for the murder of radical leader Jean-Paul Marat. Indicating no feelings of remorse, Corday defends her act, insisting that she was avenging the death of her king and of the peaceful revolution. Until her own death she remained steadfast in her conviction that this one act of murder saved the lives of countless innocents.

As Corday tells readers her story, a picture of revolutionary France comes into focus. Corday identifies the root causes of the revolution as she also introduces the central figures who are at the heart of her nation's strug-



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Towle writes beautifully. Her straightforward prose never condescends nor needlessly complicates historical details. In choosing Corday, Towle has selected a fascinating and complex figure to narrate this story.

The 102-page book is divided into seven slim sections, which are further separated into twenty-four chapters. Some of these chapters are broad in scope, examining overarching aspects of the revolution and its leaders. Others chapters are more intimate and pertain specifically to Charlotte's own dire predicament. Archival art and iconic photographs depicting scenes from Corday's story are sprinkled throughout the book. These well-placed images can be used to inspire further discussion with your child.

Text boxes that appear in each chapter shine light on complex concepts without oversimplifying them in the process. Short quizzes follow each section to help students cement important details.

Curriculum developer Marcie Colleen has written an engaging handbook to accompany *Beware Madame La Guillotine*. Chock full of inventive lesson ideas, Colleen's curriculum teaches across the disciplines of history, social studies, English, and dramatic arts using a flexible format that will resonate with many homeschooling families. Each of the ten session plans opens with a concise list of learning objectives and required materials. Activities in each section are varied and will appeal to children with a wide range of learning styles. A portrait study has students guessing details of Corday's life. A creative writing activity asks students to imagine themselves as a Corday family

member and write a diary entry reflecting upon Charlotte's situation. In other lessons, Colleen conjures up ideas for dramatic play and set design.

Older students might appreciate the opportunity to do additional research on aspects of the revolution that interest them most. Suggestions for internet-based research projects appear throughout the handbook. Colleen's curriculum cultivates deep thinking and critical thought. Although this handbook seems designed primarily for classroom use, with very little modification it could easily be enjoyed in a home-based educational setting. This hands-on, multidisciplinary approach will appeal to students with a wide range of ages and abilities making it perfect for use in a homeschooling co-op.

Aware that all of us learn best when we engage with a subject playfully, *Time Traveler Tales* has combined artful storytelling with innovative technology to create an interactive story app.

Whether from the comfort of your favorite reading chair or while traveling through the city streets of Paris, you'll likely find this app entertaining and informative. Featuring interactive games, dramatic narration, and compelling music, this app takes users through the very places Corday walked just weeks before her execution. Featured maps lead to such sites as Marat's printing press, the royal gardens, and Charlotte's dismal prison cell. As an added bonus, language students will appreciate the option of choosing between French or English narration and text.

Please note that at the time this review was written, this app was in the process of being revised. An up-

dated version will soon be available. Check the *Time Traveler Tales* website for more information.

Each of the reviewed resources are beautifully assembled. However, some pages contain small fonts that could discourage reluctant readers or those who are visually impaired.

Time Traveler Tales are best suited for children 12+. Be warned—the Revolution was a bloody, messy time in history, and Towle doesn't shy away from the details. If your child is particularly sensitive, some of the content contained in these resources might be disturbing.

Towle and her talented staff are just getting started. In the months ahead, author Mary Hoffman will release a new *Time Traveler Tale*, *In the Footsteps of Giants*, which is a look at 16th century Florence.

Other works in progress include books about Revolutionary Boston, Pompeii, New York at the turn of the 20th century, Cold War Berlin, and Amsterdam during the era of tulip speculation.

Throughout history our world has been rich with real-life stories as exciting and thought-provoking as the very best in fiction writing. Sarah Towle and her team recognize this fact, and they are providing kids with an outstanding portal into wondrous stories of the past. I can't wait to see what this team comes up with next!

All of these resources can be found and purchased at timetravelertours.com.

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Rebecca Pickens is home|school|life magazine's curriculum columnist. Her writing also appears in various national publications and on the blog steam-poweredclassroom.com.