THE BRITISH ARE COMING!

Paul Revere’s Ride (1775)

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Jane Harrison: Sarah Revere’s friend
Sarah Revere: Paul Revere’s daughter
Rachel Revere: Paul Revere’s wife
Paul Revere: Boston silversmith
Dr. Joseph Warren: Patriot and a friend of Paul Revere
John Larkin: Patriot sympathizer
American Sentry
Sam Adams • John Hancock
William Dawes • Dr. Samuel Prescott
British Soldiers 1–5
ACT 1

THE REVERE HOUSE IN BOSTON, APRIL 1, 1775

JANE HARRISON: I know what your father does.

SARAH REVERE: Everybody in Boston knows what he does. He’s a silversmith. He makes beautiful things out of silver.

JANE HARRISON: He’s a spy.

SARAH REVERE: What!?

JANE HARRISON: He spies on the British soldiers and then he tells Sam Adams and the Sons of Liberty what the soldiers are doing.

SARAH REVERE: Sam Adams is my father’s friend. They talk about all kinds of things.

JANE HARRISON: My father says your father rode to New York and Philadelphia to tell everybody about the Boston Tea Party.

SARAH REVERE: The Boston Tea Party wasn’t a secret. He could tell anybody about it if he wanted to.

JANE HARRISON: My father says your father rides around the colonies and spreads trouble. My father’s a Loyalist. He’s loyal to King George and to England. He says men like Sam Adams and John Hancock and your father are wrong to talk against the king.

SARAH REVERE: My father says a king should understand who and what he rules. King George has never visited America. He doesn’t understand our problems here.

JANE HARRISON: So you think it’s okay if your father talks against the king and England?

SARAH REVERE: He’s not talking against the king. He wants the king to listen to what the colonists have to say.

JANE HARRISON: My father says men like your father are going to get us all in trouble . . . maybe we shouldn’t be friends anymore.

SARAH REVERE: Maybe we shouldn’t.

ACT 2

SCENE 1: THE REVERE HOUSE, APRIL 18, 1775

RACHEL REVERE: Sarah and Jane Harrison still aren’t speaking to each other.

PAUL REVERE: Jane’s father still hasn’t gotten over the tea party. He lost almost 50 chests of tea. That was a lot of money.
RACHEL REVERE: I’ve told all the children that they may lose more friends. I haven’t told them that we may be at war with England soon. Maybe it won’t come to that.

PAUL REVERE: I hope it doesn’t, but we’ve got plenty of guns and powder stored in Concord—just in case.

RACHEL REVERE: Do you think Sam and John are safe in Lexington? If the British find them, will they really be sent to England to stand trial?

PAUL REVERE: King George wants to show everybody he’s in charge here.

RACHEL REVERE: I’ve started buying extra food and knitting more socks for everybody—

(There is a knock on the door. Dr. Joseph Warren enters.)

DR. JOSEPH WARREN: Sorry to bother you, but it’s important.

RACHEL REVERE: Come in. Would you like some coffee?

DR. JOSEPH WARREN: No time. The British are about to march to Lexington to grab Sam and John. We think they’ve found out about the weapons in Concord, too. We need you to ride to Lexington and Concord and warn everybody.

PAUL REVERE: Are the British marching out Boston Neck, or are they going to row across the Charles River?

DR. JOSEPH WARREN: We don’t know yet.

PAUL REVERE: If it’s by Boston Neck, hang one lantern in Christ Church tower. If it’s by the river, hang two lanterns.

RACHEL REVERE: Be careful, Paul. The British know who you are.

ACT 3

SCENE 1: ACROSS THE CHARLES RIVER IN CHARLESTOWN, A FEW HOURS LATER

JOHN LARKIN: There are two lanterns hanging in the tower, Paul. The British are rowing across the Charles River. They won’t be too far behind you.

PAUL REVERE: I hope this is a fast horse.

JOHN LARKIN: It’s the only horse I’ve got, but he’s fast enough. Good luck to you.

(Revere hops on the horse and rides away.)

JOHN LARKIN (shouting after Revere): Bring my horse back, if you can!

(Revere rides through the countryside.)

PAUL REVERE: The British are coming! The British are coming! Get ready!
SCENE 2: NEAR LEXINGTON, A FEW MINUTES LATER

PAUL REVERE: Arm yourselves! The British are coming!

AMERICAN SENTRY: Stop making all that noise!

PAUL REVERE: Noise! You’ll have more noise than this before long. The British are coming!

AMERICAN SENTRY: Well, why didn’t you say so? (shouting) The British are coming! Arm yourselves! The British are coming!

(Sam Adams and John Hancock rush out.)

SAM ADAMS: So they’re coming at last?

PAUL REVERE: Yes, and they’re coming for you and John. You’ve got to get out of here—fast!

JOHN HANCOCK: Don’t worry—we’re ready to go. What about you? The British will be after you, too.

(William Dawes comes riding in.)

WILLIAM DAWES: The British are coming!

REVERE, ADAMS, HANCOCK (all together): We know, Dawes.

WILLIAM DAWES: Well, don’t just stand there. Get a move on!

(The four men shake hands. Sam and John leave.)

WILLIAM DAWES: I came a different way, in case you didn’t make it. I’m glad to see you did.

PAUL REVERE: The British know about the guns at Concord. Somebody’s got to warn the Americans there.

WILLIAM DAWES: Let’s go then!

(Revere and Dawes ride off. They are soon joined by Dr. Samuel Prescott on horseback.)

DR. SAMUEL PRESCOTT: The British are everywhere! They know that John and Sam left Lexington!

WILLIAM DAWES: We’ve still got a head start. We’ll make it to Concord.

PAUL REVERE: If we run into the British, we should try to split up. That way, at least one of us should be able to make it to Concord.

(Four British soldiers step out and surround Revere, Dawes, and Prescott.)

BRITISH SOLDIER 1: And just where do you think you’re going?
BRITISH SOLDIER 2: Hey!

(Dr. Prescott manages to ride away.)

PAUL REVERE: He’s a doctor. Someone had a bad accident. We rode to get him.

WILLIAM DAWES (shouting at the top of his lungs): The Americans are coming!

BRITISH SOLDIER 3: Where! Where are they!

(The British soldiers look around in surprise. William Dawes rides away.)

BRITISH SOLDIER 4: It’s a trick! Hang on to that one!

BRITISH SOLDIER 1: He’s not going anywhere—not on this horse anyway. I need a new horse. And it looks like I got one.

BRITISH SOLDIER 2: Take him back to Lexington. Let’s find out what he knows.

SCENE 3: LEXINGTON, A FEW MINUTES LATER

BRITISH SOLDIER 3: You know who this is? It’s Paul Revere, that’s who.

BRITISH SOLDIER 4: It’s a little late to be delivering a silver teapot, isn’t it, Revere?

PAUL REVERE: I couldn’t sleep. I thought I’d take a little ride.

BRITISH SOLDIER 1: You thought you’d take a little ride to warn your pals, Sam Adams and John Hancock, that we’re after them.

PAUL REVERE: I heard they were in Philadelphia.

BRITISH SOLDIER 2: Philadelphia! That’s a good one! You were just here in Lexington to warn them.

BRITISH SOLDIER 3: We know you’re an express rider for the Massachusetts colony. We know you carry messages to New York and Philadelphia.

PAUL REVERE: I like to travel.

BRITISH SOLDIER 4: You like to travel, do you? How’d you like to travel to England to stand trial for treason?

PAUL REVERE: I haven’t done anything wrong.

(Another British soldier runs in.)

BRITISH SOLDIER 5: What are you doing? Get to Concord—now! The Americans are attacking us!

(The British soldiers run out and leave Revere behind.)

PAUL REVERE: So it’s started. The fight has started.