ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

JUVENILE FICTION

A Colonial Adventure: Fitch Tavern Tales #1
Lea Ann Knight
Stone Croft Press
978-0-9828357-0-8
Three Stars (out of Five)

When ten-year-old Skip, whose family lives in the historic Fitch Tavern in Massachusetts, literally falls into an old picture hiding in her attic, she finds herself transported back to 1775, right at the onset of the American Revolution. With historical details interwoven into a fast-paced adventure, Lea Ann Knight's debut novel is an educational read for advanced elementary and middle grade readers, and could act as a lively complement to a traditional history lesson on the American Revolution.

Skip has arrived in the midst of political turmoil in Massachusetts. The Fitch family, who run the inn, mistake her for Ursaline, a relative, and so Skip is quickly immersed into a major hub of the Revolution. She learns that the Fitch's are part of a group planning a rebellion, and after hearing secret dialogue between two unknown British loyalists, realizes there is a traitor in their midst. Determined to help the Fitch family, Skip must show cleverness and courage, all while figuring out how exactly she'll get home.

Much of *A Colonial Adventure*'s conventions and qualities seem to have been purposely constructed for the intended age range. The dialogue, for example, is modernized so children aren't inundated and distracted by unfamiliar speaking patterns. Enough history is explained that the plot is comprehensible and engaging. Older and more advanced readers may find themselves looking for books with more depth overall, but Knight strikes a balance between some complex historical ideas, a quick-paced adventure, and brevity that will keep the attention of children between the ages of eight and ten.

With details such as using baking soda instead of modern toothpaste, Knight's strength is absolutely in the smaller elements that can make history much more real. Skip learns about everything from what "warming cabinets" are to the British officers' attempts to shut down a seditious newspaper. While not a stand-alone introduction into the American Revolution, teachers could easily integrate the book into curriculum in order to further engage students.

Skip carries back with her the importance of courage against injustice, and although the

gravity of the oppression and deeper meaning of the Revolution might need a bit of further exploring, readers will absolutely get a sense of the atmosphere during this important historical period. Knight clearly intends on developing further historical books with the Fitch Tavern as the setting, and further development of the series could make for a valuable set for teachers.

Alicia Sondhi