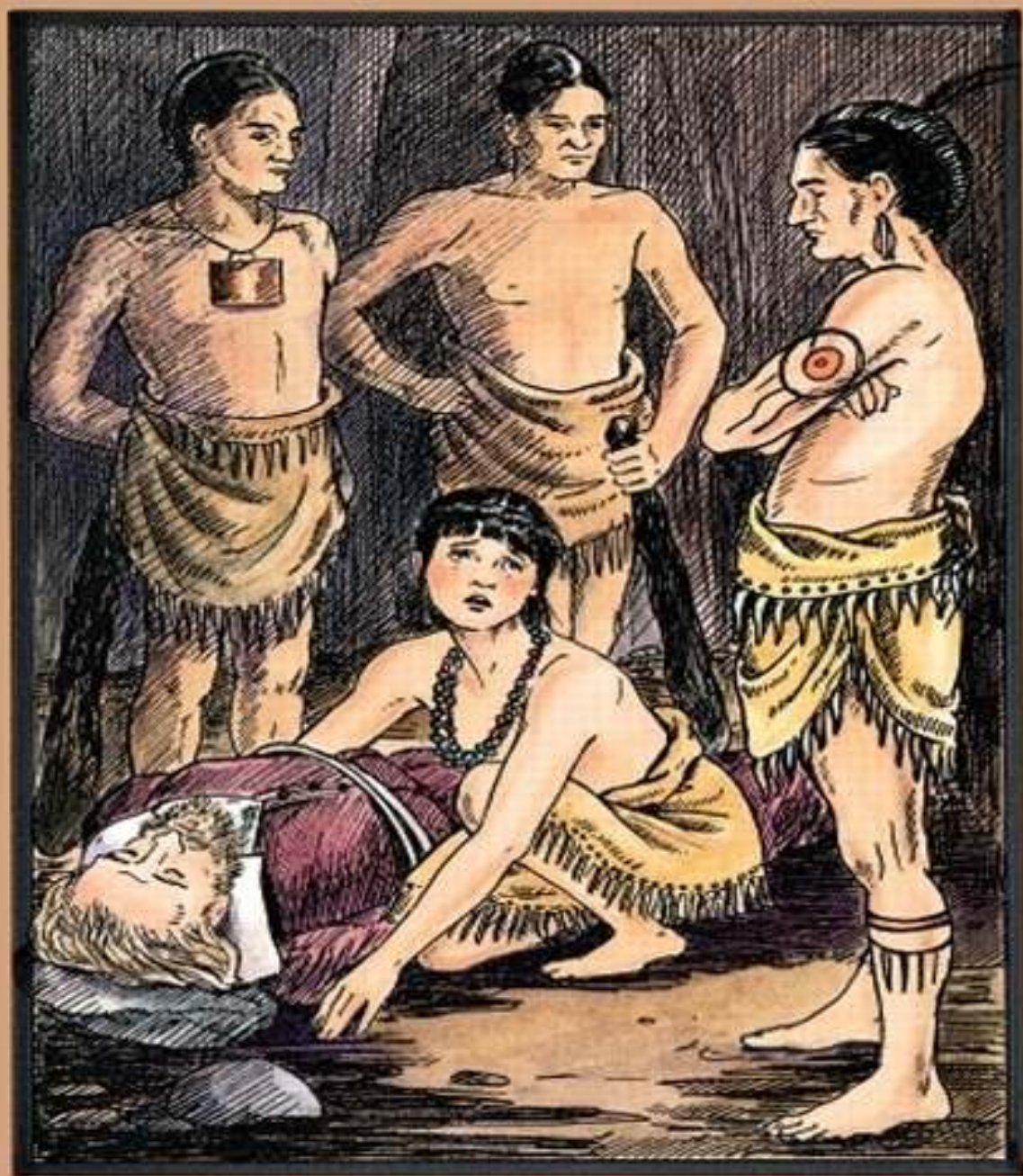


DOVER  
CHILDREN'S THRIFT CLASSICS

# THE STORY OF POCAHONTAS

• In Easy-to-Read Type •



Brian Doherty

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CHILDREN'S THRIFT CLASSICS

# **The Story of Pocahontas**

BRIAN DOHERTY

*Illustrated by Thea Kliros*

DOVER PUBLICATIONS, INC.  
New York

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# DOVER CHILDREN'S THRIFT CLASSICS

Copyright

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# Note

Although Pocahontas' is one of the most familiar names in American history, relatively little is known about her life apart from a few sparse details. Born around 1595 in the area now known as Jamestown, Pocahontas was the daughter of the powerful Indian leader Powhatan. The most famous event of her life was recorded in Captain John Smith's *Generall historie of Virginia*: captured by the Powhatan Indians, Smith was rescued by Pocahontas, who interceded with her father just as Smith was about to be executed. In 1613, Pocahontas was held hostage by the English in Jamestown until a temporary truce between the warring settlers and Indians could be arranged. A permanent peace (except for an outbreak in hostilities in 1622) was achieved in 1614 with the marriage of Pocahontas to John Rolfe. Pocahontas traveled to England in 1616 and died there of smallpox in 1617; she had one child, Thomas Rolfe, who was educated in England and later emigrated to Virginia.

Drawn from these facts, *The Story of Pocahontas* brings the Indian princess to life. Children will enjoy reading about her courage and heroism and her adventures during the early years of America's settlement.

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# Table of Contents

Title Page

DOVER CHILDREN'S THRIFT CLASSICS

Copyright Page

Note

Chapter 1 - The English Arrive in Virginia

Chapter 2 - Pocahontas and Her Family

Chapter 3 - Problems in the Colony

Chapter 4 - Signals and Shots

Chapter 5 - Captain Smith Protects Pocahontas

Chapter 6 - Smith Helps the Settlers

Chapter 7 - Smith Goes Exploring

Chapter 8 - Attack on Smith's Men

Chapter 9 - Smith Is Captured

Chapter 10 - Pocahontas Saves Captain Smith

Chapter 11 - Pocahontas Saves the Colony

Chapter 12 - Pocahontas Is Married

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# Chapter 1

## *The English Arrive in Virginia*

IN THE WINTER of 1606, three English ships, the *Susan Constant*, the *Godspeed* and the *Discovery*, started across the Atlantic under the command of Captain Christopher Newport. They carried 105 men, intending to settle at Roanoke Island, where an English colony had disappeared twenty years before, but they were driven further north by a storm. After many months at sea, they began hunting for a suitable place for settlement. They sailed into the broad opening of Chesapeake Bay and were still moving northward when they encountered a wide river that flowed into the bay from the mainland on the west. They turned the prows of their ships into this river, which they called the James, in honor of their king, and studied the shores for an inviting spot to land.

It was May, with mild skies and soft breezes that kept the craft sailing against the current. These men, standing on their decks, were sure they had never gazed upon anything so beautiful. The banks were filled with wild flowers, whose fragrance wafted across the smooth waters, while the hills and mountains in the distance were softened to delicate tints against the blue sky.

There were men and women in this land, descendants of those who had lived there for unknown ages. They were standing on the shore, watching the approaching vessels. One party, among whom several women could be seen, stood at least a hundred yards back from the stream as if afraid to come nearer. Another party gathered on the edge of the river, where there was a natural clearing of an acre or two. When the *Susan Constant*, which was a hundred yards ahead of the smaller boats, pulled up alongside this group, two of the warriors on the bank let their arrows fly.

The men on the decks smiled at these efforts. Captain Newport suggested they fire their guns into the party, as they had done days before when greeted with a shower of arrows.

“No, we should cultivate their good will. We will need their friendship, and must not use our guns as long as our lives can be saved without them.”

This remark was made by a man standing at the prow, spyglass in hand. He was of sturdy build, in well-to-do civilian’s clothing, with a full sandy beard and a huge mustache. His face was deeply tanned, he wore a sword at his side and his face was resolute and firm. He was not yet thirty years of age and no one could look at his figure without seeing he had unusual strength. Mentally and physically, he was stronger than the officers and crew around him. This man was Captain John Smith whose great services later earned him the name “Father of Virginia.” He was one of the bravest of men—unselfish, enterprising and far-seeing.

By the afternoon of the next day, the three vessels had already traveled eighty miles from the mouth of the James River. They were approaching a peninsula where they had decided to make camp, when everyone’s attention was turned upstream. Captain Smith lifted his telescope to his eyes. Around a bend in the river a canoe shot into sight.

Captain Newport, who also had a spyglass, stood near Smith and studied the small craft as well.

“Those two warriors have more courage than their friends,” Newport remarked.

“There is only one warrior in the canoe,” replied Smith, gazing through his telescope; “the other is a woman, and——”

Here Smith hesitated, but Newport spent another minute studying the canoe and said, “You are right—and the woman is not an old one.”

“She is not a woman, but a girl.”

Seated in the middle of the canoe was an Indian youth who was less than twenty years old. Propelling the boat, he faced the vessels downriver. He had long, black hair that dangled about his shoulders, and his face was stained with the juice of the *puccoon*, or blood-root. His chest was bare but his waist was clasped with a deerskin girdle, a skirt falling below his knees, with leggings that reached to his neatly fitted beaded moccasins. He was finely formed, fleet-footed and a strong warrior despite his youth.

The other occupant of the little craft was the youth’s sister. She was no more than twelve years old with features of almost classical beauty. She had thrown back her doeskin robe, lined with wood dove’s down. She wore coral bracelets on her wrists and ankles, and a white plume in her abundant hair.

Her leggings and skirt were similar to her brother’s, but the upper part of her body was clothed in a close-fitting doeskin jacket that covered her arms to the elbow. Her face was not treated with the red juice that her brother used. This girl was a natural athlete who could speed through the woods like a deer, shoot an arrow with the accuracy of a veteran warrior, swim like a fish and read nature’s faint signs the way we might read a book.

Nantaquas, as the young man was called, and his sister, Pocahontas, had left their home a long way up the river, paddling downstream, perhaps to call on some friends, when, rounding a bend in the river, they were startled by the sight of the three ships slowly coming up the river with their white sails spread. Nantaquas stopped paddling for a moment while both gazed at the sight. They had heard stories told by the tribes to the south of a people who lived far beyond the sea, with canoes like giant birds that were able to sail through storms in safety.

When Pocahontas had looked for several minutes in silent amazement at the European ships, watching the men on the decks, she asked:

“Why are they coming to the country of Powhatan?”

“I don’t know,” her brother replied, “maybe they intend to take away our hunting grounds.”

“How can that be,” the girl laughed, “when the warriors of Powhatan are like the leaves on the trees? There are only a handful of the white folk—we have nothing to fear from them. Let’s visit the big canoes.”

The youth increased the speed of his boat, drawing rapidly near the *Susan Constant*, whose passengers and crew watched his approach with keen curiosity. Nantaquas sped on downstream, however, doubting the wisdom of carrying out his sister’s wishes. She believed that any people who were treated kindly would give the same treatment to those that were good to them.

But Nantaquas recalled that the stories of the white men he had heard were not to their credit. Some of them had slain Indians as though they were wild animals; they had treated them with great cruelty



and repaid kindness with brutality. The tribes along the coasts further south told of the Spanish explorers who came looking for gold and a Fountain of Youth, bringing with them sickness and war. Many Indians had been killed or taken from their homelands as slaves. Closer to the land of Powhatan there had been other Englishmen, too. But their settlement on Roanoke Island and all the white people there had mysteriously disappeared almost twenty years ago, before Nantaquas was born. Whether they were killed by the Indians, or whether they had joined the friendly tribes who perhaps rescued them from starvation, Nantaquas was not sure. He realized, however, that too little was known about these new arrivals. They might be friendly, but they might just as likely try to carry off his sister or him as prisoners, or demand a high price for their ransom.

Nantaquas checked his boat a hundred yards from the largest vessel. Smith and the other passengers were at the rail of the *Susan Constant*, looking down at the visitors who hesitated to draw nearer.

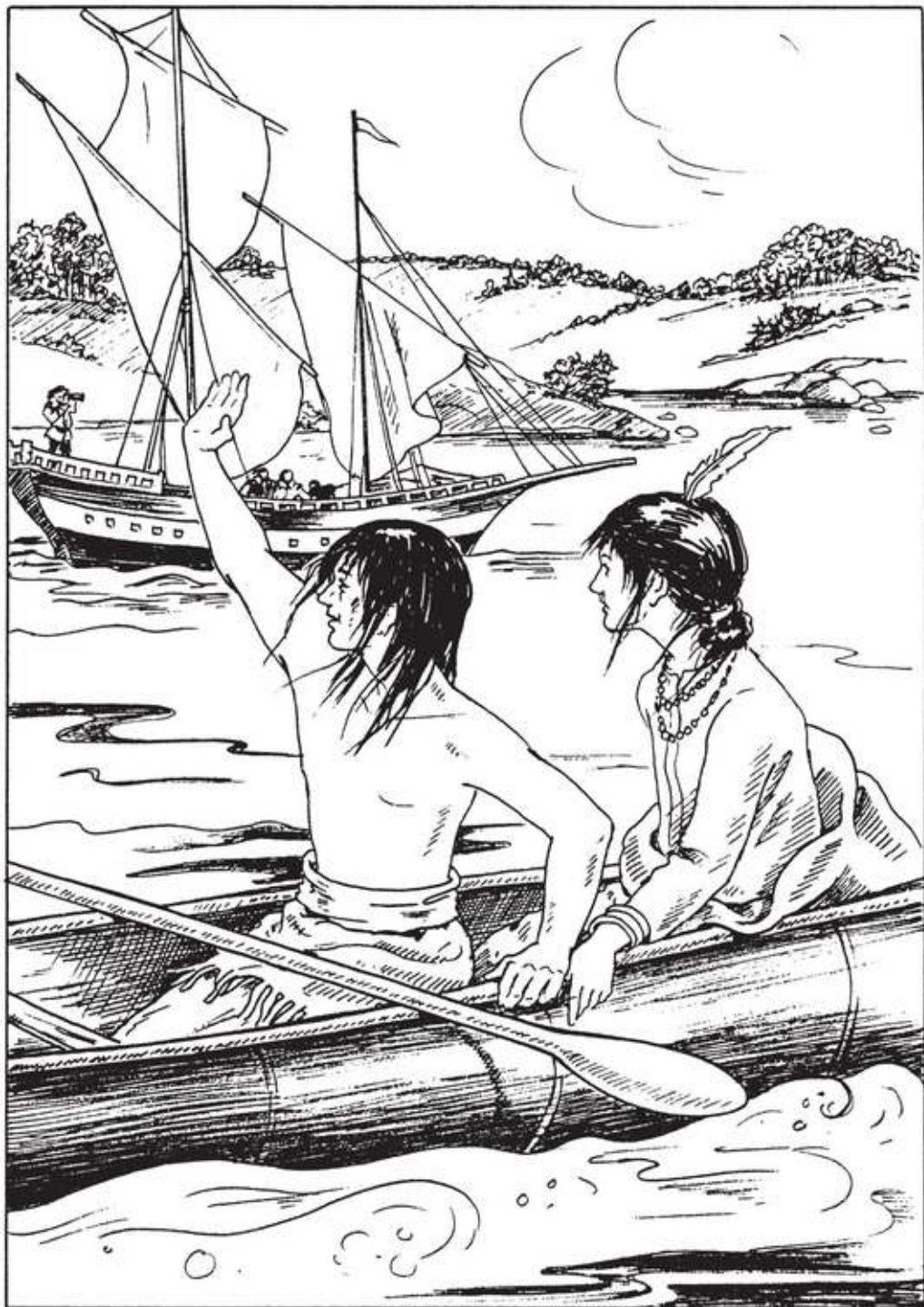
“Welcome! Welcome!” Smith called out, “Won’t you come aboard that we may shake hands and break bread with you?”

Although Nantaquas and his sister did not understand the words, the gestures of the men were clear.

“Why do you hesitate?” Pocahontas asked impatiently. “They want to greet us—don’t be ungrateful.”

But Nantaquas was decisive: “They are strangers—we have heard evil things of many of them. We shall go no closer.”

In answer to the Englishmen’s inviting gestures, Nantaquas raised one hand and waved it toward the ship. He meant it as a polite refusal to accept the invitation. Then he sent the canoe skimming upstream.



*Nantaquas raised one hand and waved it toward the ship.*

Smith noticed a strange thing at this point. Nothing seemed to escape his keen eyes. He saw a thin column of smoke filtering upward from among the trees on a wooded elevation, a little way inland. It had a wavy motion from side to side. The column of smoke was broken, showing two distinct gaps between the base and the top. There could be no question that it was a signal fire. He was certain that whatever the message might be, it had to do with the Englishmen who were sailing up the great river, searching for a spot upon which to found their settlement.

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# Chapter 2

## *Pocahontas and Her Family*

NANTAQUAS PADDLED like one who could never tire. He had come a long distance downstream on this day in May. His sister was displeased because of his refusal to take her aboard the big canoe and she meant him to know it. He understood her feeling, and wisely gave her time to get over it. Nevertheless, she was planning her revenge.

The canoe had not yet touched land when the girl leaped out as lightly as a fawn, not pausing to pick up her bow and quiver lying in the boat with her brother's. Turning around, she grasped the front of the craft with both hands, as if to draw it onto the bank.

Nantaquas rose to his feet, bending to pick up the bows and arrows. While he was doing so, the girl gave a lightning-fast sideways jerk to the boat, snapping it forward fully two feet. Thrown suddenly off balance, Nantaquas went backward over the side of the canoe and, as his heels kicked in the air, he dropped out of sight under the water.

Pocahontas screamed with delight. She had punished her brother as she planned. But her brother soon recovered and gave chase. She ran as fast as she could to get away, but ten to fifteen yards ahead stood an Indian, six feet tall, motionlessly surveying the couple with an inquiring expression. His long locks were sprinkled with gray, and his face was stern and lined with the passage of many stormy years. He was dressed like the younger warrior except that his face was unstained. In the belt around his waist were thrust a long knife and the handle of a tomahawk, but he carried no bow or quiver.

Hardly had the girl caught sight of him, when she ran forward and, throwing both arms around him, called out in panic: "Father, save me from Nantaquas! He wants to kill me!"

The father gazed at the young man and demanded: "What is the meaning of this?"

This was the famous chieftain, Powhatan. He ruled over numerous tribes, nearly all of whom he had conquered and brought under his sway. From Virginia to the far south he had no equal. Pocahontas, pretty and bright, was his favorite child and he permitted many liberties from her. Nantaquas was also a favorite, though Powhatan had other worthy sons.

"Let my child go home. Powhatan has something he would say to Nantaquas."

Pocahontas darted from sight and the chieftain continued: "The white men have come across the Deep Water to the hunting grounds of Powhatan and his people."

"Yes," the youth responded, "we met them on the river in their big canoes. They spoke words we did not understand, nor could they understand us. They have come to make their homes among us."

So Powhatan, from this and the signal fires he had read, knew of the coming of the Europeans while they were sailing up the James, several days before he saw any of them. Powhatan was deeply disturbed by the arrival of the English.

~~“They will come to land and build their wigwams. They will till the ground and hunt the game in the woods. By and by others will come and make their homes beside them; and they will keep on coming, until they are like the leaves on the trees. We have heard from the Indians of the south that they bring strange weapons that shoot fire and slay men who are beyond the reach of our arrows. They will kill our people or drive us into the sea, until none are left.”~~

“The words of Powhatan are wise,” said Nantaquas respectfully. “I am afraid of them and would not trust Pocahontas in their power.”

“My son did right. She is but a child; she must stay away from them.”

“And what shall be done with the white men?” asked Nantaquas. “Shall they be left alone when they go ashore, that their numbers may increase?—though I do not think they had any women with them.”

“When the serpent is small, a child may crush it under the heel of her moccasin, but, if left to grow, it will soon sting her to death.”

The meaning of these words was clear. Powhatan intended to destroy the colony before the white men could send for other friends to sail across the sea. Few though they were, this work would be hard and dangerous, when so little was known of their weapons; but no doubt, the thousands of warriors that Powhatan could summon to the task would do it well.

Powhatan, having made known his resolve, ordered his son to lead the way to where the canoe had been left. When they reached it, he stepped in and took his place at the bow.

By this time the afternoon was drawing to a close. The chieftain sat silent and erect, with no appearance of curiosity—but, nevertheless, with keen eyes. Passing back around the sweeping bend, the larger vessel and smaller ones came into view, lying at anchor close to the shore. It almost looked as though the white men were merely resting, waiting until the next day before going further upriver, except that smaller boats could be seen passing to and fro between the ships and the land.

Although it seemed little was to be feared from these unwelcome visitors at present, the life of Powhatan was too precious to permit any unnecessary risk to be run. He ordered his son to go a little nearer, holding himself ready to make instant flight when told to do so. Edging up, they were able to see three or four tents on a small peninsula jutting out from the northern shore. The white men had landed.

Nantaquas would have liked to visit the newcomers, now that his sister was not with him, but Powhatan would not allow it, and, at his command, the youth turned the head of the canoe upstream, before it had attracted notice, and quickly paddled away. As before, the chieftain did not speak, even after the boat had been run to land and drawn up on the beach. He stepped out, and with the majesty that was rarely absent, strode through the wilderness to his lodge, with his son walking silently in the rear. Once there, he held a long council with his chiefs and warriors. Plans for the destruction of the colony were drawn up; but before he slept that night, Pocahontas made him tell her all that had been agreed upon—and she did not rest until he had given his promise to postpone the dreadful work. He would not pledge himself to do more than postpone his designs, but this delay was of the greatest importance to the welfare of the little colony.

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# Chapter 3

## *Problems in the Colony*

THE LOW PENINSULA that the newcomers had landed on was not an ideal site for a settlement—it was half-covered with water at high tide. But it looked so pleasant to the men who had been tossed about on the ocean for so many months that it was chosen as their new home. Anchor was dropped and boats began taking the men and their belongings to shore, and there, on May 13, 1607, they founded Jamestown. Like the James River, the settlement was called after King James, in whose name these colonists had come to conquer the “New” World.

As the English went ashore they pitched their tents, but the season was so mild that they found it more agreeable to make homes for the time being under the green leaves of the trees while building their cabins. These were built on the neck of the peninsula, and before long the place had taken on the look of a community. As soon as the hurry of work was over, a church building was put up. It was of modest size, sixty feet long and twenty-four feet wide.

It would seem that the best of beginnings had been made—but there was a flaw in the characters of the men. Very few had any fitness for pioneer work. Even those men whom the King had chosen as the colony’s leaders were greedy and lazy, unwilling to do the work necessary to make the colony a success. Some of the other men thought themselves too good to perform any manual labor; back in England, they were “gentlemen,” unused to physical work like clearing fields and planting crops.

Rumors of gold in the New World had drawn them across the ocean. They thought it would only take a short time to load their ships with the yellow metal, return to England and live in luxury the rest of their days. Most of those who did work for a living back in England were jewelers and gold-refiners. John Smith saw all this with anger and disgust. However, he could do nothing about it now. On the voyage across the Atlantic, there had been a misunderstanding between him and some of the other leaders. They accused him of trying to gain control of the colony. While it was true that Smith could be boastful and overbearing at times, he was unselfish and always thought of the interests of those who were crossing the ocean with him to the New World. As yet Smith had not had an opportunity to defend himself at a trial, and he could not assume any sort of leadership role in Jamestown, even though he was the ablest of the men.

Shut out from the Council, he did not sulk, though he felt the injustice. “By and by they will ask for me,” he thought.

He impressed upon his friends the need to keep on good terms with the Indians. The season was far advanced, but the crops were planted with the certainty that they would ripen fast in that favorable climate and soil. But the food brought over from England would not last more than two or three months, and until the crops could be harvested, it would be necessary to obtain supplies from the Native Americans. If the Indians refused to trade with them, the Englishmen would suffer greatly.

Distrustful of Powhatan’s attitude toward them, Captain Smith and a party of men took the first

chance to sail up the river and pay a formal visit to the emperor of the country. The name of Powhatan's capital was also Powhatan, the chieftain being named after the town. This capital stood on a small hill, and numbered twelve houses, in front of which were three small islands in the river. The "palace" was a large structure of bark and skins, with a sort of bedstead on one side, on which Powhatan sat with his majestic mien, his robe of raccoon skins, and the feathers in his grizzled hair, as if a king upon his throne.

When Smith and two of his companions were brought into the presence of this emperor, the scene was striking. Along each wall of the dwelling stood two rows of young women at the rear and two rows of men in front of them. The faces of all the women were stained with the red juice of the *puccoon* and a number wore chains of white beads around their necks. Smith doffed his hat, made a sweeping bow and addressed Powhatan with as much outward respect as if the Indian chief had been the King of England.

One proof of John Smith's ability was that during his brief stay in Virginia he had been able to pick up enough knowledge of the Powhatan language to make himself fairly well understood with the help of gestures. There had been Indian visitors from the first at Jamestown, too. All were treated so well that several spent much of their time at the settlement, studying the white men and their ways. Smith took this opportunity to learn from these Indians, and was thus able to tell Powhatan that he and the other Englishmen had come across the Great Water with feelings only of love for him and his people. They had no wish to take away their hunting grounds, nor to kill their game, nor to do them harm in any way. He hinted that the whites might prove to be of great help to Powhatan, for they brought strange and deadly weapons with them, which they would be glad to use in helping him to conquer other Indian tribes.

Captain Smith was a man of rare tact, but he blundered when he made this offer to the old emperor. It implied that Powhatan was not able to conquer the rebellious tribes on his own. Powhatan was so self-confident that any hint that he might need help in carrying out his own will was an insult to him. Smith was quick to recognize his mistake, and did what he could to correct it, but he did not succeed. Powhatan was irritated and it was clear that he felt no good will toward those who dared to make their homes in his country. He pretended not to understand the broken sentences of his visitor until one of his warriors helped to interpret them. Unable to convince Powhatan of the settlers' peaceful intentions, Smith and his friends withdrew and set sail down the river for Jamestown.

During the interview both Smith and his companions asked about the youth and the girl who had met them when they first sailed up the James. But neither Nantaquas nor Pocahontas was present, a fact that proved they were absent from the town—no other reason would have kept them from the palace on so interesting an occasion.

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# Chapter 4

## *Signals and Shots*

WITH THE COMING of the hot, sultry southern summer all prudence seemed to leave the settlers. They drank the unwholesome water, and the mosquitos that bred in the swamps carried malaria. Many of the colonists contracted the disease, and those who remained healthy thought it too uncomfortable to work when the sun was overhead. Later, as night drew near, the day was too far gone to labor. They could not be roused early enough in the day to do anything worthwhile. The president of the colony, Edward Wingfield, set the example of indolence—and instead of eating moderately, acted as if there could never be an end to the nearly exhausted food supply.

While the future looked so dark, Smith was more disturbed by the present. He saw in the resentful manner of Powhatan something more than displeasure with the white men's presence. Holding as much power as he did, the chief was not likely to remain quiet for long. He surely knew of the growing weakness of the colonists—short of food, plagued by sickness and the certainty that they would soon be at the mercy of the Indians.

Smith wondered why an attack had not been made on the English long before. With the many warriors that Powhatan could summon, they would have been able to crush the little band of Europeans, despite their firearms. Smith had no idea that the postponement of such an assault was due to Pocahontas—nor did he learn the truth until years afterward.

As his boat was making the slow moonlit journey back to Jamestown from Powhatan's village, a peculiar flickering toward the northern shore caught Smith's eye—it was an Indian canoe, in which he made out one person handling the paddle, with a companion sitting quietly in the stern. The Captain recalled the sight that had greeted the ships when first coming up the James. There was the small craft driven in the same manner, with the same number of persons. Smith watched it closely and was soon certain that the two persons were Nantaquas and Pocahontas. He had learned their identity from the friendly Indians who came to Jamestown: the plume worn by the girl was a badge of royalty.

The canoe was passing the bow of the ship a hundred yards distant, making no attempt to come nearer. Wanting to talk, Smith called out:

“Nantaquas! Will you not come aboard?”

The youth seemed to exchange words with his sister, after which he headed his craft in the direction of the larger one. A few minutes would have brought him alongside, but he was brought up short by a startling interruption. Through the stillness a low, booming sound rolled upstream and echoed along the shore.

It was the sound of the small cannon on the *Susan Constant*, many miles downstream, and it meant danger to Jamestown. The single blast alarmed Captain Smith and his friends, for to them it could only have one meaning. It had been fired because of an attack by Indians on the settlement. The

detonation carried the same message to Powhatan's son and daughter, who had been drawing near the large boat in response to Smith's invitation. Nantaquas plied his paddle with renewed vigor, but instantly veered away. Indeed, the youth expected a volley from the boat, but nothing of the kind occurred to Smith, who did not interfere while the canoe and its occupants rapidly passed from sight.

Smith hurried to the stern, where the others had gathered around the steersman. "The settlement has been attacked," he said. "Listen!"

Naturally, the certainty that there was trouble at Jamestown increased Smith's and his friends' impatience to reach the place as soon as they could. But the fates were against them for the time. The wind had stopped and the rising tide began to carry them back to Powhatan's capital. The anchor dropped and the craft lay at rest, waiting for the tide to turn or the wind to rise. Two men were placed on guard and the others got what sleep they could.

The calm lasted through the night and when daylight came the surface of the James was as smooth as glass. The tide had turned, but moved so slowly that Captain Smith told his skipper to let the anchor remain dropped for a few hours. They ate sparingly of the coarse bread they had brought and the fowl that Smith had shot on the upward voyage.

Smith's next words caused astonishment. He intended to go to the southern shore with two of the men to discover the meaning of the signal fire he had seen the night before. He hoped to learn something of the trouble at Jamestown, but he also wanted to find a way to obtain grain, which his countrymen needed. He knew that a small Indian village was not far inland. There was reason to hope that through barter or, as a last resort, a display of force, the villagers could be persuaded to part with a good supply of food.

A number of trinkets, beads, ribbons and knives were bundled up and put in the boat, and the three men took their places. With the Captain at the stern, the two others began rowing. Smith studied the shore, hoping some of the warriors would show themselves, though none did.



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# Chapter 5

## *Captain Smith Protects Pocahontas*

WHEN THE BOAT touched land, the three stepped out and awaited Smith's orders. Each man had a knife, a cumbersome, heavy flintlock musket and ammunition. Feeling he could do better alone, Captain Smith told his friends to follow the course of the stream—never wandering so far into the woods that they could not easily make their way back to the water. If they met any Indians or made any important discoveries, they were to call at the top of their voices and he would run over and take charge of things. Smith then took a different path.

The only sign of the recent presence of others was the heap of ashes left by the signal fire, which had been kindled within a few feet of the stream. The two men, Jack Bertram and Dan Wood, moved upstream—in the direction of Powhatan's village. There was no reason to think they would find anything interesting by keeping to the river, so they went inland for some distance and then took a course parallel with the river.

The timber was dense and the undergrowth so matted it was hard to force a passage. Wood walked in front, making the work easier for Bertram, who kept close behind. When they had pushed their way a short distance, Wood stopped.

“What good can come of this? No one has been this way—so we can't catch up with anybody.”

“They might be coming from the other way,” said his companion, less discouraged because he had been doing less work.

“Little chance of that. I don't understand what Captain Smith hopes to learn or do by this groping through the woods. If we knew the way to the Indian village we could go there and if they would not give us food, take it from them! Ah! I wasn't looking for this!”

Turning to resume their passage through the forest, Wood had caught sight of a well-marked trail leading over the course they were following.

“It has been made by animals coming to the river to drink,” said Bertram. “It can be of no help to us, though it may also be used by people.”

Wood walked for a few paces, scanning the path, which soon turned to the left, leading farther inland. Suddenly he stood still. Glancing up, Bertram saw the reason for it, and was as much astonished as his companion.

Standing in the trail, staring at the two men, was the very girl they had seen when the ships were sailing up the James weeks before on their way to found the colony. She had the same rich robe around her shoulders and the same white plume curling over her long black hair. She carried her long bow in one hand, the top of a quiver of arrows peeping from behind her left shoulder.

She caught sight of the white men before they saw her. She must have been coming over the path

when she observed the figures and stopped in amazement.

“It is Pocahontas,” whispered Bertram. “We did not see her yesterday at the old chief’s lodge. I wonder what she can be doing here alone?”

“Her friends can’t be far off. But I say, Jack, this is a godsend.”

“What do you mean?”

“You’ll see.”

The girl did not hesitate once she realized that she had been observed by the strangers. She knew where these men had come from and she came smilingly forward. She had noticed the custom of the Englishmen of clasping their hands when they met. Without pausing, she reached out her hand to Wood, who was in front, and said to him in broken words:

“How do? How do? Me friend—you friend.”

Wood took her hand, warmly pressed it, and then gave way to Bertram, who did the same. Pocahontas tried to say something more, but she knew so little English that neither caught her meaning. She saw that too many of her words were spoken in her own tongue, so, laughing, she gave up the effort and stood looking inquiringly into the faces before her.

“Jack,” said Wood in a low voice, “the Indians have attacked Jamestown. We don’t know how many of our people they have killed. We need food. Let’s take this daughter of the old chief and hold her hostage. We’ll give him the choice of letting us have all the corn we want—or of having his pet daughter put to death.”

“I hardly know what to say to that. It might not work.”

“It has to. Powhatan loves her so much that he will do anything to keep her from coming to harm.”

Wood did not wait to argue further, but, taking a quick step toward the smiling girl, grasped her upper arm. In answer to her questioning look he said:

“Go with us. We take you to Jamestown. Won’t hurt.”

The smiles gave way to an expression of alarm. She held back.

“No, no, no! Me no go! Powhatan feel bad-much bad!”

“You must go!” said Wood, tightening his grip. “We not hurt you any.”

Bertram stood silent—he didn’t like the scheme that had been suddenly sprung upon him, but he thought it might turn out well, so he didn’t interfere.

And then Pocahontas began crying and striving to wrench her arm free. Had not Wood used all his strength, she would have gotten away. Impatient over her resistance, he tried to scare her into submission. Scowling at her, he said, in a brutal tone:

“Stop! Come with me or I will kill you!”

This was an idle threat. He thought nothing of the kind. But he probably would have struck her, for he was a quick-tempered man. Pocahontas struggled harder than ever, her moccasins sliding over the slippery leaves, tears streaming down her cheeks. She begged and prayed in her own language, not knowing the English words.

Captain Smith had only gone a little way down the stream when he decided that he had taken the

wrong course. He turned around and followed after his companions, coming upon them in the midst of the struggle between Wood and Powhatan's young daughter. He paused only an instant, when he angrily cried out:

“What is the meaning of this?”

Wood merely glanced around at his leader and kept on dragging the captive along the trail. It was Bertram who hastily said:

“She is the daughter of Powhatan. We are going to take her to Jamestown as a hostage and make the chieftain give us food——”

Without waiting for anything further, the Captain sprang forward, shouting wrathfully:

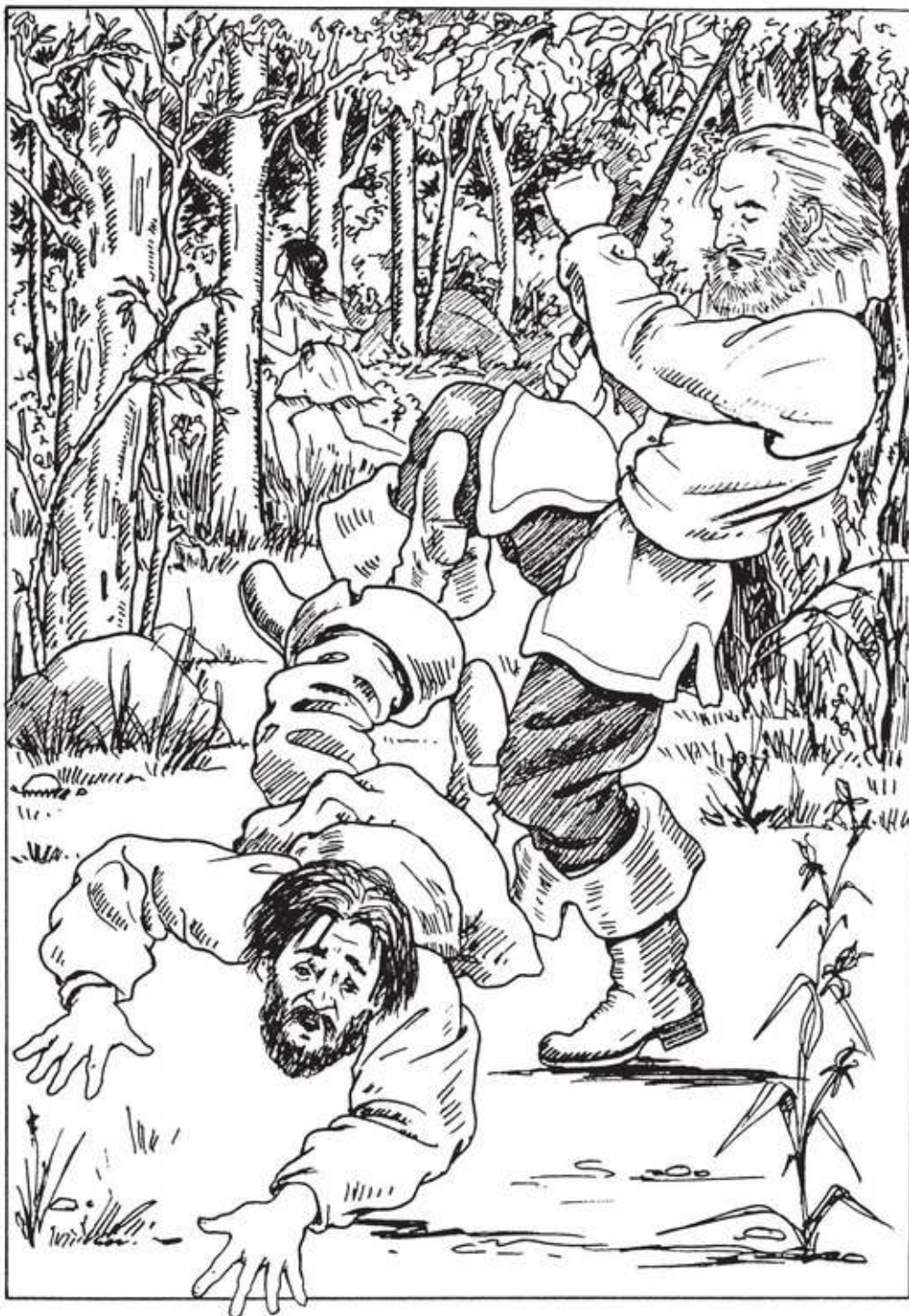
“Let her go! Release her!”

Before the amazed fellow could comply, he was grasped by the back of the collar. Captain Smith shifted his gun to his right hand, so as to leave the other free. The fingers were like those of a giant, and the frightened Englishman let go of his sobbing prisoner. As he did so the Captain gave a kick with his right foot that lifted Wood clear of the ground, sending him tumbling on his face, his peaked hat falling off and his gun flying several yards away.

“I would do right to kill you!” cried Smith, his face aflame as he glared down on the fellow, who began climbing to his feet. “There is not one so good a friend of the English among all the Indians as this little girl.”

As he spoke he pointed toward the spot where Pocahontas had stood only a minute before, but she was not there. She had instantly taken advantage of her release and had fled beyond sight.

Captain Smith's burst of anger was caused, in the first place, by the unpardonable violence shown to the young and gentle Pocahontas. In the sweetness of her nature she had shown perfect trust in the white men and all knew she had only friendship for the people who had made their homes in the country of her father, the great Powhatan. What a rude awakening for her! What harm would it bring to those who so badly needed the good will of the powerful tribes around them?



*The Captain gave a kick with his right foot that lifted Wood clear of the ground, sending him tumbling on his face.*

A second cause of the Captain's wrath was the fact that the outrage, apart from its wickedness, was the worst thing possible. If Wood had succeeded in taking Pocahontas hostage, Powhatan would not have been frightened into helping the Englishmen; the act would have added to his ill will.

Not only that, but the immediate results were sure to be disastrous. It was not to be supposed that Pocahontas was alone so far from her home. She certainly had friends near at hand—she was already fleeing with her story—she would reach them soon and they would hasten to punish her enemies.

These thoughts flashed through the mind of Captain Smith, while the victim of his anger was slowly climbing to his feet. He took a step toward Wood, meaning to strike him to the earth again, but the

man shrank away, with no word of protest. The Captain checked himself and said:

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“We must hasten to the boat before we are cut off. Come!”

The fellow picked up his hat and gun, and Captain Smith led the way at a rapid pace over the trail and through the underbrush, till they reached the edge of the stream, along which they hurried to the spot where the craft had been drawn up. Smith pushed it free and stepped inside. He took his place at the bow, facing the shore they were leaving, as did the two who sat down and hastily caught up the oars.

Neither of the men had spoken a word since Smith's rescue of Pocahontas, and they bent to their oars with the utmost energy. They knew they had done wrong, and nothing was left but to obey the command of their leader, which they did with the proper good will.

The three had reached a point fifty yards from land when a young Indian warrior dashed through the undergrowth into the open space on the beach. He was Nantaquas—at his side was Pocahontas. He held his bow and had drawn an arrow from his quiver. The girl pointed excitedly to Wood, who was nearer to them than the other two men.

“Look out!” warned the Captain. “He means to shoot you!”

The endangered fellow was so flustered that he broke the regular strokes of the oars, and Bertram strove hard to keep the boat on its course. Wood kept his eyes on the young warrior, who rigidly straightened his left arm, with the hand gripping the middle of the bow, while he drew the feathered arrow to its head and aimed at the alarmed man.

Captain Smith watched Nantaquas, not allowing any movement to escape him. Suddenly he called, “Down!”

Wood instantly flung himself forward on his face, so that he was hidden by the low side of the boat. Bertram dodged to one side. The Captain did not move. He knew *he* was in no danger.

At the same time that the oarsmen went down Nantaquas launched his arrow, which came with such swiftness that the eye could hardly follow. The missile streaked over the spot where Wood had just been sitting, fired with such accuracy that, but for his quickness, the arrow would have been buried in his chest.

So great was the power with which the missile was fired that it seemed to dart horizontally outward for nearly a hundred feet beyond the boat before it dipped enough for the point to drop into the water.

In the few seconds that had passed since Nantaquas fired, Wood partly regained his coolness. He raised his head, but instead of drawing on his oars, he reached for the musket at his feet. His companion kept toiling with all his strength.

“Drop that!” thundered Captain Smith. “It would serve you right if you were killed! Use your oars!”

At any moment the Captain could have shot Nantaquas, who stood out in clear view,—as could either of his companions—but the leader would not allow it. He sympathized with the Indian, and though he did not care to have Wood slain, he would not permit any harm to be done to Nantaquas.

The youth had fitted another arrow to his bow, and Captain Smith noted every movement. Nantaquas saw that if he fired again, and the man serving as his target dodged, the arrow was likely to hit Captain Smith, unless he was equally quick in eluding it. The distance was increasing and every second added to the difficulty of the shot. He knew which man had befriended Pocahontas, and eager as he was to slay the criminal, he would have to forgo that pleasure in order to spare the friend.

Holding the bow poised for a few seconds, he slowly lowered it, still keeping the notch of the arrow pressed against the string, as if expecting a new chance to present itself. If the boat would turn sideways toward him, as at first, he might still bring down his man—but the boat moved rapidly and soon passed beyond bowshot.



*Holding the bow poised for a few seconds, he slowly lowered it, still keeping the notch of the arrow pressed against the string.*

Nantaquas remained standing in full view on the shore, his sister beside him, both watching the receding craft until it came alongside the large one. The three men stepped aboard, leaving the small boat to be towed at the stern. Then brother and sister turned about and passed from sight into the forest.

A brisk breeze was blowing, and Captain Smith and his companions had hardly rejoined their friends when the anchor was hoisted, and they were carried at a good speed toward Jamestown, which they reached early that afternoon. There they learned that the settlement had just passed through a trying experience.

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# Chapter 6

## *Smith Helps the Settlers*

ALTHOUGH THE Englishmen had arrived at the site of Jamestown rather late in the season for planting, and although many of them were too lazy to work, others did what they could to make up for lost time. In the rich soil, which had been cleared of trees, corn that had been obtained from the Indians was planted, and quickly showed a vigor of growth that promised the best results.

On the day that Captain Smith sailed up the James to make his call of state upon Powhatan, more than twenty men were engaged in planting and cultivating the corn already put in the ground. Without any warning, from the woods nearby came confusing showers of arrows. Only occasional glimpses of the shouting Indians could be seen as they flitted from tree to tree, using the trunks as shields. The panic-stricken English dropped their tools and ran behind the stockades, which had been finished only a short time before. Those who glanced behind saw one man lying on his face, dead, pierced by so many arrows that he looked like a porcupine. Nearly all the others had been hit, some of them two or three times—when they ran through the open gate the arrows were still sticking in their bodies and clothing. Seventeen men had been wounded, most of them only slightly, though three or four looked as if they might die of their wounds. All, however, recovered.

Instead of leaving, the Indians kept their places in the woods, continually launching their arrows at the settlers. While these were harmless when directed against the stockades, some of the warriors curved them so that they dropped inside the defenses. It required careful watching on the part of the settlers to keep from being badly hurt—a sharp-pointed missile coming straight down from a height of more than a hundred feet could be fatal. The Englishmen could protect themselves, but were unable to drive off their attackers while they were so well shielded among the trees.

This is how things stood when the *Susan Constant* came on the scene. Dropping a little way downstream, so as to get clear range of the woods, she discharged two of her cannon that were loaded to the muzzle with slugs. It is not likely that any of the warriors were hurt, but when they saw large limbs splintered and falling about their heads, and heard the rattle among the leaves and twigs overhead and all about them, they were terrified and scurried off in panic.

Not another foe was seen during the day, though there could be no doubt that many pairs of eyes were peeping from the vegetation—wondering what kind of weapon could tear whole branches from trees. Some time after dark, the settlers heard sounds in the woods that showed that their enemies had returned. The *Susan Constant*, which had held her place after driving off the Indians earlier in the day, now fired another shot, and this ended all trouble of that sort for some time to follow. It was the booming of this cannon that had traveled up the James to the boat where Captain Smith sat meditatively smoking.

The first attack on Jamestown brought good results. It was clear to all that the settlement must have an industrious leader and that he must be a military man. Wingfield, lazy and greedy as he was, had r



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