

I

Pocahontas

Maiden of Peace

by Jennaya Dunlap

1607, Weromocomoco, Virginia

The crowds inside the longhouse pressed close together, whispering with great excitement. The heat in the dark room grew stifling from the mass of people, but Pocahontas was used to it—such was always the case during occasions of great significance.

She stood straight and poised by her mother's side, her pale deerskin dress decorated with painted shells and a blue fringe across the front. Her father, Powhatan, the great chief of the Algonquin tribe of the same name, was stretched out in regal repose on a seat of furs, his uplifted gaze roaming the room. His numerous wives were gathered around him, his favorites seated close by, while the others were clustered farther away.

“Bring the prisoner in,” Powhatan commanded, raising one arm toward the wide doorway. Immediately the crowds stepped back toward the walls, clearing a path across the room.

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A group of young braves near Pocahontas whooped, keeping up a steady drumbeat. Two strong men, experienced in war and armed with tomahawks, appeared in the doorway with a man such as Pocahontas had never seen before grasped between them. His skin was white, like her frock, and his eyes, lighted by the sun outside, were as blue as the waters of the Great River. His hair was pale too and he was covered in heavy-looking garments.

At his entrance a wild, warlike shout went up through the room. The white man was led toward Powhatan's throne of furs. His step was calm, but when he passed Pocahontas his eyes met hers for a moment and she saw fear in them. And for good reason. She shuddered, knowing all too well what would probably happen tonight.

Powhatan's favorite wife presented the prisoner with a bowl of water and a bunch of feathers to wash and dry his hands. Powhatan motioned for him to sit down, and all around him the men sat cross-legged on the bare ground. The women brought in food—turkey and smoked deer meat with vegetables.

The men ate in silence, their portions no bigger than those of the white man. When the meal was finished, the braves pulled the prisoner to his feet and turned him to face Powhatan. The village spirit men crowded around him, their faces painted black and menacing.

An older man, an advisor from a nearby tribe, stepped forward, his eyes narrowed at the prisoner. "This man was trespassing on our land, taking our food without our permission. And when we tried to capture him, he shot two of our men with a magic bow."

The spirit men let out blood-curdling whoops. "Let him die!"

The white man stepped forward, his gaze meeting Powhatan's. "It is true that I killed two of his men. But they killed two or three of my companions and tried to kill me, so the loss is equal on both sides. Please, good sir, spare my life—I have no wish to cause harm to your people."

The spirit men and advisors bent over Powhatan and spoke to him in

low tones. Pocahontas held her breath, tension building inside her. When the men stepped aside, she scanned her father's face. With a sinking heart she could see what his decision was even before he spoke.

"The white man must die," he commanded, raising his eyes just once to look at the prisoner. The spirit men led out an eerie cry of triumph, while the drumming of the braves grew loud and ominous. Several strong men rolled in two big boulders, laying them to rest at the foot of Powhatan's throne.

Suddenly Pocahontas couldn't stand it any longer. She pushed her way through the crowd toward Powhatan. The other women stepped aside to make room for her to pass. Surely my father will listen to me, his favorite daughter!

She felt the glares of the spirit men as she came to his side, but she spoke in a clear voice. "Please, father—don't shed any more blood. This man came to our land because he was hungry, and he promises not to do any more harm."

A combination of amusement and hesitation showed on Powhatan's face, but before he could answer, one of the spirit men leapt forward with a shrill, angry shout.

"The War God demands the sacrifice of this man's life. If he is spared, the spirits will bring evil on us and demand more sacrifices from among our people." The sound of his voice sent shivers down Pocahontas' back.

Powhatan lifted his chin and raised his arm toward the braves in a gesture for them to continue. In a rush, they grabbed the white man and forced his head against one of the boulders. Pocahontas fell back, not wanting to see what would follow and yet unable to turn away. Her heart leapt with adrenaline, and she shivered with tension.

The braves raised their clubs, ready to strike his head. "No!" With a cry, Pocahontas sprang forward and threw herself across the white man, covering his head with her own. She closed her eyes, waiting for the death that must surely come—listening to the shocked gasps of the women.

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But nothing happened. The room settled into silence, and she heard her father's voice. "Rise up, my daughter. The white man will live."

Her heart still pounding, Pocahontas pulled herself to her feet. Trembling, she looked at her father, but his eyes held the amusement she had seen earlier, not the anger she was afraid of.

"My daughter has chosen for you to live," Powhatan announced, rising to his feet. "Go in peace." When Pocahontas turned toward the white man, he was smiling.

The next day, as she walked with him among the oval-shaped houses of Werowocomoco, she learned that his name was Captain John Smith. He was one of the leaders of a village up the river, a place called Jamestown.

"It was a brave thing that you did," he continued. "Today your father is willing for our peoples to live together in peace. He has asked for gifts from Jamestown, and in return he has promised me my safety."

Pocahontas nodded, remembering the talk she had had with her father the night before, pleading with him not to harm the white men. This morning he had called John Smith to a council in the longhouse and made the arrangements he had just mentioned.

He was lucky, she knew, for her father didn't often heed her requests for mercy. When he was angry, his punishments were great and vindictive. Those who fell out of his favor often were beaten severely or put to death, in the way John Smith had nearly experienced.

John Smith had told her much of his life and the ways of the white men who had landed on the shores of the Great Sea. He had led a rebellious life, running away from home at the age of 16 to fight in Henry IV's war against the Spaniards and later, against the Ottoman Empire. In 1602, he was captured and sold as a slave to the Turks, but later escaped.

Two years later, he joined the voyage to the New World to colonize

Virginia. "I made trouble on the voyage," he admitted, looking out across the river. "In fact, Captain Newport was going to have me executed upon our arrival, but they discovered my name in the sealed list of the new leaders, and my life was spared."

"So last night was the second time," Pocahontas turned to him with curiosity.

"Aye, the second time," John Smith still had a faraway look in his eyes. "And now I must get back to my men before they think I really am dead."

January, 1608

A few weeks later, Captain John Smith returned to Jamestown, rested and loaded with provisions. Powhatan sent several braves with him to collect the gifts he had promised, along with Pocahontas and one of her older brothers. Even before they reached the hastily-built wall of high wooden slabs that surrounded the town, several men, pale-skinned and well-dressed like John Smith, emerged from the gate and rushed toward them.

Pocahontas could see from their faces that something was wrong. They shouted to John Smith as they approached, gesturing in agitated excitement. Pocahontas couldn't understand the language they spoke, but John Smith's guide translated many of their words into her native Algonquin tongue.

"Come quick—most of the men are leaving!" One of them pointed toward a ship looming at the water's edge. It was huge, unlike the simple canoes of Pocahontas' people, with numerous sails of pale canvas flapping in the wind. Men were carrying crates and bundles on board.

"Where? Back to England?" John Smith stood still, his brow knit with a heavy frown. "But it's the middle of winter!"

"They say they'd rather endure the voyage than continue to die of starvation here," another man replied. "They won't listen to reason—the council has tried everything." John Smith turned toward the coast, his steps

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hurried, and the others followed him.

“Five more died while you were away,” said a heavy-set man with graying hair who had joined them. He had an air of authority about him. “Only thirty-eight are left of the original one hundred and five settlers, and our provisions are running out.”

Pausing on the swampy ground that led down to the waters, John Smith took aside the man who had just spoken and they conferred in low tones. The ship had just begun to pull away from the shore when he straightened up and turned to give his command.

“William, get the men together and point one of the cannons toward the ship. Send someone out to give the mutineers this warning—if they don’t turn back, the *Discovery* will be blown out of the water.”

For several tense moments, Pocahontas was sure a battle would ensue, especially when she saw the angry glares of some of the men toward John Smith. But the three men on the boat he had sent to give the warning returned with the news that they had decided to stay.

When the crisis was over, John Smith led the way toward the fort. “And now to show you the power of the big guns,” he announced. Turning to one of the cannons facing outward from the walls, he ordered his men to load it and fire it at an old tree that was stiff and frozen with thick icicles.

Pocahontas braced for the sound of the cannon, but when it came, it was far louder than she had imagined. The braves fell to the ground, but she had been leaning against the wall and she only jumped.

“My father will be well-pleased,” she told John Smith when she stopped shaking.

But when they surrounded the cannon to move it to their boats, they discovered it wouldn’t budge. After several efforts, they had to give up, though Pocahontas knew her father would be unhappy. Instead, they filled the boat with the other gifts John Smith offered.

As Pocahontas returned to the fort, she heard angry voices once again. She reached the gates in time to see John Smith dragged between two men, toward one of the thatch-roofed wooden huts inside. A swarm of others gathered around, shouting in accusing tones.

“What is happening?” Pocahontas begged of the guide..

“He is being tried by the council—they accuse him of causing the deaths of the men who went with him on the expedition,” the interpreter told her before hurrying to talk to some of the bystanders.

Pocahontas and her brothers pressed close, watching closely for further signs of what was happening. John Smith was no longer in sight—he had been brought inside the house and the door shut behind him. After what Pocahontas guessed by the sun’s position was an hour, the interpreter reappeared with a grave look.

“They have sentenced him to be executed,” he said simply. The door opened behind him and John Smith was led out amid the chaos of the gathered men. Before Pocahontas could speak, he had passed, with little more than a desperate look in her direction.

A feeling of helpless horror passed over her. This was the third time he faced death—and this time she couldn’t save him. She turned away as two men lowered a rope from the building, the noose ready.

Then a shout went up through the street, followed by the call of a horn. Pocahontas followed the colonists to the gate. She gasped in surprise—another great ship stood next to the one the colonists had tried to escape in. Painted on the black side were the words John and Francis.

Perhaps forty men disembarked, and one of them was greeted with the respect of a leader. Pocahontas overheard them calling him “Captain Newport.” As he approached the fort, John Smith hurried out to meet him, unharmed. Desperate to know what was going on, Pocahontas looked for the interpreter.

“Captain Newport has brought fresh men and many supplies,” he

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explained when she found him.

“But what of John Smith? What will they do with him?” Pocahontas asked.

“He is saved—Captain Newport overturned the order to execute him,” the interpreter answered.

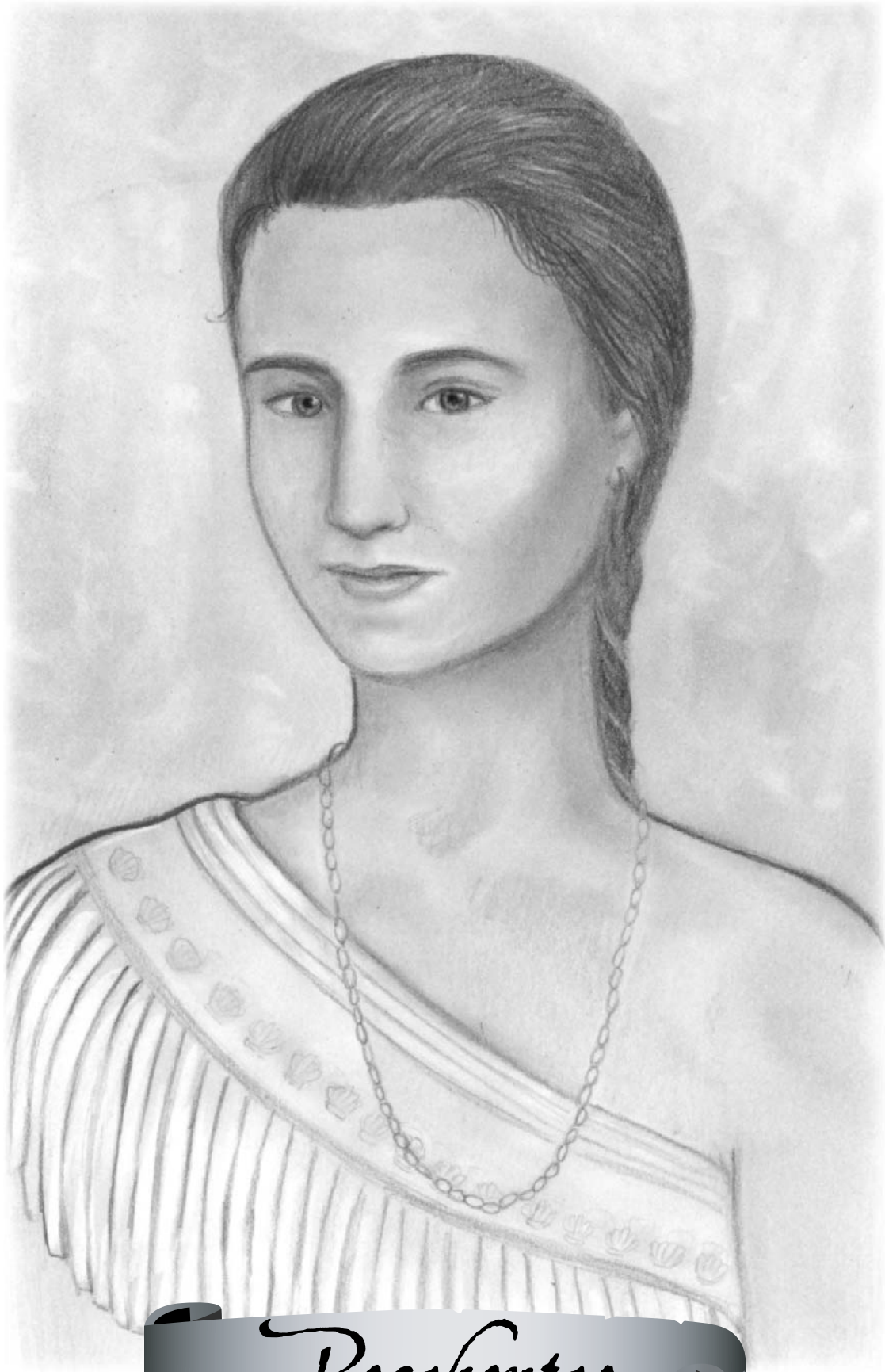
That evening, a celebration was held onboard the *John and Francis*, and Pocahontas found that she and the other Indians who had come with her were guests of honor. The next day, she and the others returned home with their canoes well-loaded.

Because of the swampy ground and the colonists’ disinterest in hard work and lack of farming knowledge, their crops had failed, leaving them with little for the long, freezing winter that had taken hold. Knowing her new friends would starve without help, Pocahontas convinced her father to allow her and a group of women to bring food—corn, meat, and other supplies—to Jamestown every week or so.

She was shocked by her first trip back, for she found most of the settlement in a blackened, smoking rubble. Flames had burst out in the night a few weeks earlier, getting out of control before the colonists could stop the fire. Now even the remaining supplies from Captain Newport’s ship were gone.

She found Captain Smith giving instructions to some of the men, his face grave. But when he saw Pocahontas and the food she had brought, he reacted with joy. The Jamestown colonists gave her royal treatment, urging her to stay overnight at the fort. The next day, she spent the afternoon playing with the English boys outside the fort walls. They ran and jumped, and Pocahontas showed them how to turn cartwheels on their hands.

In February that year, Captain Newport and Captain John Smith arrived on the shores beside Werowocomoco, their boats laden with valuable merchandise from England to trade in return for furs and food. Pocahontas



Pocahontas

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and the other villagers watched in awe as the colonists carried an English bed—complete with blankets and what John Smith called a “mattress”— to the longhouse for Powhatan.

Powhatan refused it, reminding them that it wouldn’t fit through the doorway of his hut. “We want guns and swords in exchange for our corn, not the strange luxuries of the white men.”

John Smith and Captain Newport put their heads together, talking rapidly in anxious tones. Pocahontas knew they were worried that Powhatan would use the weapons on the colony. Stepping forward, John Smith settled the matter by convincing Powhatan of the rarity and value of the shiny, blue beads he had brought. After negotiations, her father agreed to the trade.

Thomas, one of the boys Pocahontas had met on her last trip to Jamestown, was with them this time. When Powhatan was introduced to him, he sat up on his throne of furs and called John Smith forward to make a proposal.

“Let this son of your people, Thomas, stay among us and learn the ways of my tribe,” he suggested, his chin raised in an imperial manner. “In return, Namontack, the son of my favorite wife, shall go to live in Jamestown and learn your language. Thus the two would know the ways of both peoples, and help to interpret better between us.”

Pocahontas turned to glance at John Smith’s face—she could see that he liked the plan. He bowed in respect and signaled his approval. When the colonists’ ship left for Jamestown, Pocahontas’ half-brother stood on the deck, waving to her and her siblings. Behind her, Thomas stood on the shore, ready to take his place among her people.

Thomas and Namontack learned quickly, opening the way to bring mutual respect and good communication between the two peoples. But both sides had their own greed—the colonists for land and wealth, and Powhatan for power and weapons to control his enemies. The short-sighted goals of each

group brought many clashes.

As summer approached, Powhatan, still angry that John Smith hadn't delivered the promised cannons and guns, sent seven braves to sneak into Jamestown by night and seize as many English swords as they could find. But they were spotted by the watchman and an alarm was raised. Within days, Namontack arrived in Werowocomoco to report that the men had been taken prisoner and were in the Jamestown guardhouse.

Pocahontas was surprised when her brother came to fetch her, telling her Powhatan wanted to speak with her. After much consideration, he had decided to send her to Jamestown to negotiate for the men's release.

When she arrived at the fort, her friends greeted her warmly, as usual, but this time she went straight to John Smith to carry out her mission. She found him in one of the storehouses, directing some other men. He stepped outside with her, telling her he had just been elected the president of the Jamestown council.

Pocahontas was relieved to hear it—her job would be much easier with him in charge. After a long talk and some hesitation on John Smith's part, he finally agreed to release the prisoners, on the condition that they would promise to stay away from Jamestown.

The next day, Pocahontas was on her way home with the freed warriors. Her people greeted her with cheers, carrying her to the longhouse on their shoulders.

In part because of Pocahontas' influence, relations between the Virginia tribes and the colonists remained on good footing for a while. But, slowly, more and more white people arrived and began to build settlements. The bang of their shotguns in the woods where they hunted became a common sound. Land the Indians felt they had a right to was taken without payment.

Pocahontas sensed that her people were losing patience. She could feel

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their silent hostility growing, and she saw the darkening of her father's brow as he listened to reports of the colonists' success. But she could only wait and watch, continuing to live her life between two cultures, with deep ties to both.

As autumn came, with the rich gold and red hues of the trees, and the energetic preparations of the animals for the chill of winter, things had gotten worse. Pocahontas had heard her father and other chiefs talk of going on the warpath, so she was surprised when she discovered that Powhatan had invited the white men up the river to camp near Werowocomoco for a few days. Something didn't seem right.

Leaving the night's meal of deer and fish to cook under the watchful eye of Alawa, one of her half-sisters, Pocahontas sprinted toward the longhouse. In the distance she could hear the voices of John Smith's men as they set up a shelter by the river. She paused outside the dark doorway, her heart pounding. Before she entered, however, she heard her father's voice, low and ominous.

"We'll wait until they've gone to sleep and are unguarded," Powhatan was saying. "Then you and several other warriors can sneak in and kill them."

"What if they suspect something?" It was the voice of her oldest half-brother.

"We must act friendly until the moment of the ambush," Powhatan replied. "Perhaps we can send Pocahontas and some other women to their camp with food."

Chills ran down Pocahontas' back, and she turned to run, trembling. So her father's plan was to kill them while they were most vulnerable. The sudden realization came that John Smith and her other friends would die tonight unless she did something to save them. But how? Certainly her father wouldn't change his mind. She thought quickly and decided what she must do.

When Alawa came with Powhatan's order for them to prepare the food for the visitors, she took her aside and gave her quick instructions. Before long, they were on their way to the finished wooden and canvas shelter where John

Smith and his men were seated around a fire.

Pocahontas could see that her presence had the effect Powhatan was hoping for—the men let down their guard, assuming all was well. Alawa did as she had requested, taking the other women with her to leave her alone with John Smith. Knowing she had only a few moments, she blurted out her warning, urging him to set up sentries to keep watch through the night.

It took a while to convince him, but when she did, John Smith responded with emotion, pouring out words of gratitude. “You have saved my life a second time. How can I repay you? If you stay, I can reward your kindness with gifts from the treasure we brought with us.”

Pocahontas shook her head. “I cannot stay—my father will be angry enough as it is.” She slipped away, tiptoeing in the darkness until she reached her tent, where she burrowed under the bearskin blanket beside Alawa. The danger was not over yet—she could feel tension in the air.

She woke the next morning to the whispered sound of Alawa’s voice beside her. In the half-light she could barely see the outline of her face, bent over her. “Are they—are the men safe?” Pocahontas held her breath, waiting for the answer.

“They kept their watch all night, and the warriors didn’t dare to attack,” Alawa replied softly. “But oh, Matoaka, our father suspects who did it, and his anger is great against you.” Indeed, from that day on, Powhatan was cold and distant toward her, hardly speaking to her.

1609

Pocahontas stood still on the shore of the river with one of her small half-brothers, barely older than a papoose, in her arms. The colonists’ boat was back, and already the messengers from Jamestown were on the shore. Her brothers hurried to meet them, their moccasin-covered feet making little noise

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in the leaves.

The messengers stopped to talk to them, and even from a distance Pocahontas could see her brothers' faces darken. With a sinking heart, Pocahontas handed the boy-child to one of the other women and ran toward them.

"What has happened?" she begged of her brothers as they passed her on trail, on their way back to the longhouse.

"The white captain, John Smith, was killed by one of their big guns," one of her brothers turned to speak to her while the other hurried on. She could see in his eyes that he understood the fear and horror she felt at the news.

"No—it couldn't be," Pocahontas' heart was heavy in her chest as she turned to the white men. "Is it really true?"

The men shuffled their feet, their guns hanging limply at their sides. They nodded, and a bearded man she had met once before at Jamestown stepped forward. "It was an accident with gunpowder. Terrible—we only heard of it last night."

Shaken with horror and disbelief, Pocahontas turned and fled, past the gathered colonists and past the people of her village. The trees passed like blurs of brown and green, and the river to one side seemed to roar with a warning of trouble. She ran until the village was far behind, sinking to her knees beneath an old chestnut that hung over the rushing waters.

Today she couldn't even see her reflection in the angry waters. She leaned back against the tree's trunk, staring at the sky. Her heart ached, for she knew what would happen without John Smith to solve the quarrels and disputes between their people. War could not be long in coming—more bloodshed on both sides.

And she was right. Captain Ratcliffe, who replaced John Smith in the leadership of Jamestown, didn't make the same efforts to keep good relations

between the colonists and the Powhatan Indians. Constant fighting broke out between them, with unreasonable demands and much violence from both sides.

Later that year, Captain Ratcliffe sailed upriver to Werowocomoco, as John Smith had done before, and found himself in an ambush. He was captured and tortured to death, and the last vestiges of the fragile peace were broken.

Pocahontas grew weary of the wailing war cries and nightly drumming of the braves and the spirit men, and the scalping and bloodshed nearly every day. Fear pounded inside her when she lay inside her tent with her sisters, hearing the bangs of the colonists' guns and the taking of prisoners. She was pained, too, by her father's unwillingness to communicate with her, and by his cold distance because of her friendship with the white people.

When he called her to the longhouse and sent her to travel with some others to a nearby tribe further up the Great Potomac River, she was relieved to go and leave the horrors of war behind for a time. They would be trading furs, corn, and tools made of copper.

Japazeus, the chief of the tribe, and Kanti, his beautiful young wife, welcomed Pocahontas into their home, happy to extend hospitality to the favorite daughter of the great Powhatan Chief. When they asked her to stay with them awhile, Pocahontas accepted gladly, because she was not eager to return to the scene of so much violence.

She was now about eighteen years old. As things grew worse between her people and the growing numbers of colonists settling in Virginia, she worried about her own family as well as those she had come to know and love in Jamestown. Reports from Jamestown were grave. The winter of 1609 had brought disease and starvation, leaving only 60 survivors. They were on the point of abandoning the fort when supply ships arrived from England, along with a new governor.

One day, in spring of 1613, a great ship appeared on the shore of the Potomac tribe, with the huge banner of England waving in the wind. Japazeus

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greeted the white man who disembarked like a brother, and introduced him as his good friend, Captain Argall. There was something in his eyes that Pocahontas didn't like, though he seemed friendly enough.

With Japazeus to translate, she showered him with questions about her people and about her friends at Jamestown.

"Things are bad, very bad," the captain furrowed his brows as he spoke. "Neither side is willing to make peace." Then he looked at Pocahontas with a frown and asked some rapid questions to Japazeus in English. In the conversation that followed between them, she heard her own name used several times.

She gave Japazeus a puzzled look. "What is he saying about me?"

"He's just surprised to find you here," was all he would say, and quickly he led the captain to his spacious wigwam, where Kanti was preparing a meal of fish and corn.

A few days later, Pocahontas was seated cross-legged in her favorite low tree branch outside the wigwam, stringing shells she had gathered into a delicate necklace. Kanti told her Captain Argall was leaving and asked her to go with Japazeus and her to see him off at his ship.

Pocahontas slipped down from her perch and followed, glad to make her friend happy. When they reached the river, where the ship loomed tall and strong, she stopped to stare at the sails as big as the whales her people used to hunt, fascinated. Kanti asked to go aboard, telling Pocahontas she was eager to see the inside of the ship.

"I'll wait here—I've already seen inside some of the ships at Jamestown," Pocahontas told her with a smile.

"If you don't come, then I can't go either," Kanti protested with a glance at Japazeus. "I would be uncomfortable without another woman with me." Pocahontas hesitated, uneasy this time.

“Please come with us—for Kanti’s sake,” Japazeus begged.

Pocahontas didn’t want to disappoint Kanti, so at last she assented to go aboard. Captain Argall looked relieved, and quickly ushered his guests onto the great ship. He led them into a long room, where a table was set with dishes that shined like silver.

“Be seated—I have a feast prepared for you,” he beamed, pulling out chairs for them. Pocahontas couldn’t help wondering how he had gotten the food ready so soon—and how he had known to have the table already set with four places. But she placed those thoughts behind her and enjoyed the deer meat, fruit and vegetables, and the bread made of corn.

By the time the meal was over, they had agreed to spend the night on Captain Argall’s ship and return to shore in the morning. The captain led Pocahontas through a narrow hall to a wide room lined with windows, where guns and cannons were lined up facing outward. He assured her that Japazeus and Kanti would be along soon—they only wanted to talk to him privately for a few minutes.

Pocahontas hunched in a corner and tried to stay awake, but she fell asleep before Japazeus and Kanti came. When she awoke, the gunroom was dark except for the bluish glow of dawn, and strangely silent. Something felt wrong—Pocahontas sat up in a sudden panic. A quick glance around the room told her Japazeus and Kanti weren’t there.

Holding back the fear that swelled in her throat, she slipped out of the gunroom, and ran without a sound through the hall. Hearing voices on the deck, she opened the door leading there, and stood still, unnoticed by Captain Argall and her two friends. They were near the railing, and even in the predawn darkness she could see the silvery glint of a copper kettle the captain passed to Japazeus.

Pocahontas strained to hear what he said, and realized with surprise that he was speaking in her own tongue. “Thank you for help,” he told Japazeus and

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Kanti.

Anxious to leave the ship, Pocahontas made her presence known and rushed toward her friends. “I want to leave—right away. Please, take me back to the shore.” The startled expression on Japazeus’ face turned to a guilty look, alarming her even more. Pocahontas turned to Kanti and saw that her arms were full of gifts of copper and other metals.

“My adopted brother, Japazeus, and his wife may leave the ship, but you must stay,” Captain Argall stood behind her, blocking her from fleeing.

“Why? Where are you taking me?” Pocahontas turned frantically to call for Japazeus, but he and Kanti had disappeared. With a rush of fear and agony, she realized it had all been a plot—her friends had betrayed her!

“The other leaders and I have decided to keep you as a hostage, in hopes of convincing Powhatan to hand over the men he has taken prisoner.” Captain Argall was leading her away from the deck. “Don’t worry—I won’t hurt you. You’ll be released as soon as your father fulfills our demands.”

In moments, she found herself back in the gunroom. She fell to the ground, weeping, as the ship began to move. The shore grew distant, and the trees became only specks at the river’s edge. How could this be happening? Pocahontas watched from the window, her eyes blinded with tears.

When her first grief was over, she decided to make the best of her situation. If her capture would help to make peace between her people and the colonists, she told herself, then it would be worth it. Still, she couldn’t help wondering how her father would react when he heard the news.

Her keen knowledge of the river helped her to get her bearings, and soon she realized they were on their way to Jamestown. The ship docked there, and Captain Argall sent a messenger to Werowocomoco with the news of her capture, along with his demand that Powhatan give up the prisoners and stolen goods.

Pocahontas waited anxiously for her father's response, but it was three months before he replied. Perhaps he didn't worry about what the colonists would do to her, she reasoned to herself, but it still hurt. He agreed to give up some of the goods, but not all, and none of the prisoners.

Captain Argall replied that Pocahontas would be kept hostage until the rest of his demands were fulfilled. The wait this time stretched into months, then nearly a year. In the meantime, Pocahontas was brought to Henrico, a new settlement further down the river from Jamestown.

There, it would have been easy for her to escape, but she was happy in the home of an English minister, Alexander Whitaker, and his wife, who treated her with kindness and hospitality. Her mind was quick, and her memory good, so she picked up the English language quickly, learning to read and write as well.

Mr. Whitaker read to her from the Bible and taught her about Christianity. She learned eagerly, and soon she wanted to become a Christian. When she was baptized, Mr. Whitaker asked her to choose a new name, and she asked to be called Rebecca, after the wife of Isaac in the Bible.

A young man named John Rolfe often visited her at the Whitaker house. He had lost his young wife and child when his ship sunk near Bermuda, and now he owned a tobacco plantation near Henrico. He became fond of Pocahontas, and wrote to Sir Thomas Dale, the governor of the Virginia colonies, to ask his permission to possibly marry her.

In March of 1614, Sir Thomas Dale took her back onboard Captain Argall's ship, and she was taken to the shore of the Pamunkey River, near her homeland. But the ship was not alone—several other ships had sailed with hers, along with 150 armed men.

Pocahontas wept when she heard the news of Thomas Dale's plan. He had sent a message to her tribe, telling them to either surrender the rest of the goods and prisoners or fight for her. Pocahontas knew it would result in only one thing—violence and terrible bloodshed.

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And she was right. The Indians responded by attacking with bows and arrows, and the English soldiers raced ashore to retaliate, burning forty villages and killing many of the Powhatan people. After days of war, two of Pocahontas' brothers asked to see her. They were brought onboard, and she greeted them joyously with embraces. Her hope returned when they promised to urge Powhatan to make peace and obtain her freedom.

John Rolf and another man went ashore to negotiate with Powhatan, but found him absent. His brother, Apachamo, greeted them instead, and they found him wary of the endless war. He, too, agreed to push for a truce, and the ships returned to Henrico.

A month after the standoff, when she had been taken back to Henrico, John Rolf asked for her hand in marriage. She accepted, and word of their engagement spread quickly. Her father, whom she hadn't seen for almost two years, sent word of his consent through an old uncle of hers, Opachisco. On April 5, 1614, her wedding day, her two brothers arrived in Henrico, bearing gifts for the wedding.

The small Henrico church was decorated with bouquets of spring wildflowers, fresh from the fields. A crowd of her friends, both colonists and Indians, gathered for the celebration, seated together peacefully after so much war. Looking resplendent in her white gown, Pocahontas entered on Opachisco's arm.

Cheers erupted in the church as she took the hand of her husband. Their marriage, a Native American Algonquin maiden to a white colonist from England, brought a new bond of peace between the two peoples and cultures she loved.

Epilogue

After their wedding, Pocahontas and John Rolf lived at Varina Farms,

John's plantation across the river from Henrico. In 1615, their son, Thomas, was born, and baptized with both English and Algonquin names.

A year later, the men in charge of the Virginia Colony asked Pocahontas and her husband to travel to England, in hopes of attracting more colonists with her now-famous story. To Pocahontas, it would be her chance to see the land across the ocean that she had heard so much about.

When Powhatan heard the news of their upcoming trip, he sent eleven men from the tribe to accompany the couple and their small child, along with some of Pocahontas' women friends. Tomocomo, the head spirit man, was among them, at Powhatan's command carrying a stick on which to make notches to count the people of England.

The party arrived in the port of Plymouth, England in June, 1616. Tomocomo started his task of census taking, but soon gave up after he encountered London's busy streets. He then set about to fulfill another of Powhatan's orders—to find John Smith, in spite of the colonists' claim that he was dead. To Pocahontas' shock, she discovered that indeed he was alive, and living in London.

He did not offer to see her, but he sent a letter to Queen Anne, urging that she be shown respect and given royal treatment, lest the natives in the New World should turn against the colonists if they heard a bad report. On January 5, 1617, she and Tomocomo were presented to King James at a banquet in Whitehall palace.

Pocahontas enjoyed the sights of London, going to plays and meeting English leaders, but the pollution and smoke-filled air made her sick, and she had to move to the suburb of Brantford. It was there that John Smith paid her and Rolf a visit, at a social gathering.

In March of the same year, she and John Rolf, along with their son, embarked on the voyage back to Virginia. Before they had gotten further than Gravesend, along the River Thames, Pocahontas became severely ill with

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pneumonia, induced by London's bad air, and she had to leave the ship. Even with a doctor's care, however, she soon succumbed and, in her weakened state, died. She was buried in Gravesend, England, far from her native land. John Rolfe returned to Virginia with the sad news, arriving sometime in 1617.

In later years, John Rolfe lost his good reputation due to involvement in corruption, but Pocahontas never lived to see his fall from honor. Thomas Rolfe, who also was sickly, was left in London in the care of Sir Lewis Stuckley, where he remained until the age of 20. When he arrived in Virginia in 1635, he discovered that his father and his Grandfather Powhatan were dead. However, he had not been forgotten, for both had left him large tracts of land and great wealth. The peace Pocahontas had helped establish lasted years after her death, and became the legacy for which her short but fruitful life was remembered.

About the author:

Jennaya Rose Dunlap wrote this story at the age of 17. Jennaya is homeschooled and the editor of a magazine for homeschooled girls, ages 8 to 18, *Roses In God's Garden*, published by LightHome Ministries, www.lighthouse.net. She is also the author of *Against All Odds*, a historical novel set in World War II Poland under Nazi occupation, published as a serial story in her magazine. Jennaya enjoys writing and researching, drawing, singing and horseback riding. She enjoys spending time with her family on their acre beside a meadow with a mountain view, in California. She graduated from high school this year and plans to continue writing to publish.

