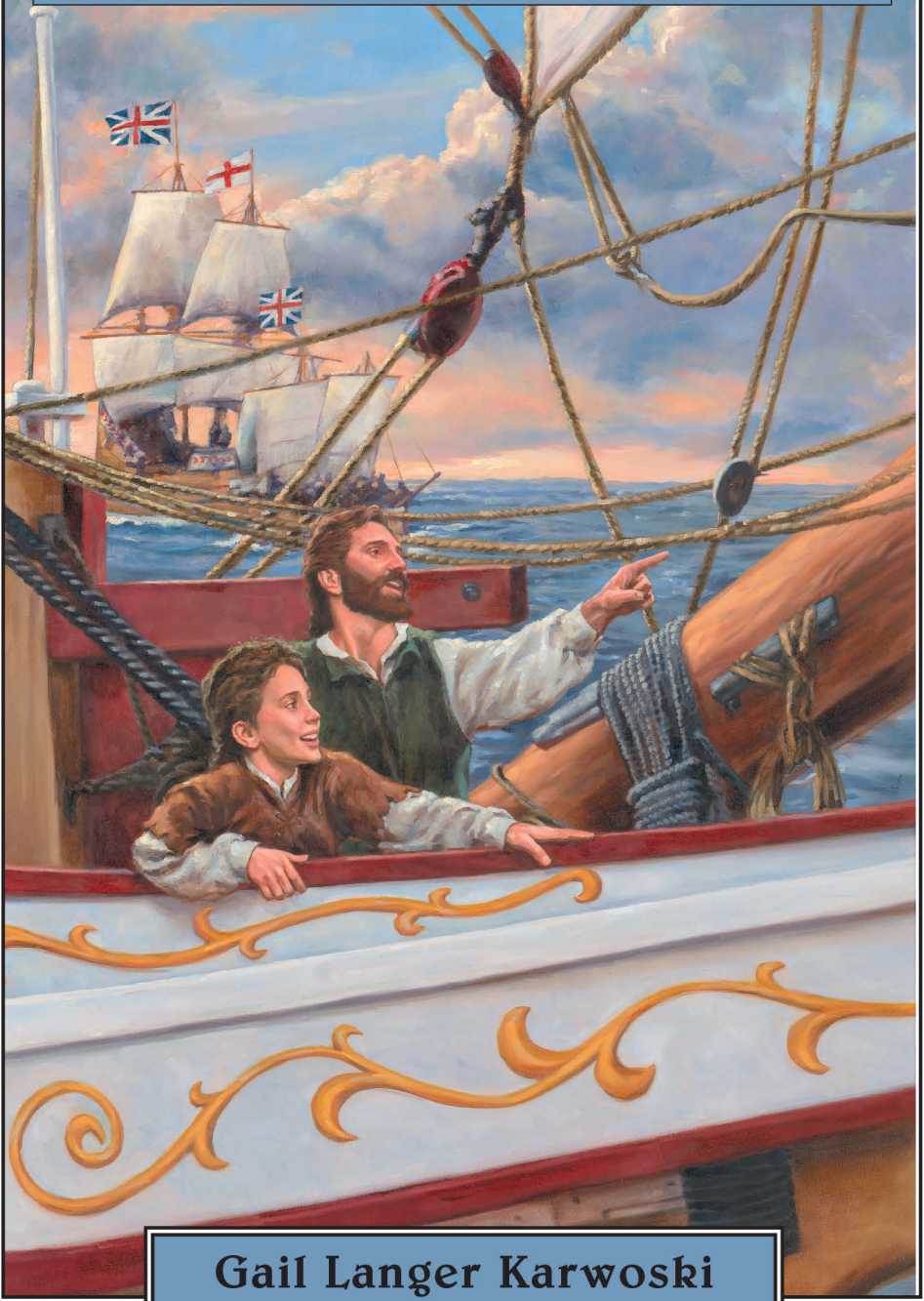


Surviving Jamestown

THE ADVENTURES OF YOUNG SAM COLLIER



Gail Langer Karwoski
Illustrated by Paul Casale

Surviving Jamestown

THE ADVENTURES OF
YOUNG SAM COLLIER

*To Joyce Henson, who embarks on so
many adventures with me.*

—GLK



Published by
PEACHTREE PUBLISHERS
1700 Chattahoochee Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30310-2112

www.peachtree-online.com

Text © 2001 by Gail Langer Karwoski
Illustrations © 2001 by Paul Casale

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Cover and book design by Loraine M. Joyner
Book composition by Melanie McMahan Ives

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Karwoski, Gail, 1949–

Surviving Jamestown : the adventures of young Sam Collier / Gail Langer Karwoski ; illustrated by Paul Casale.--1st ed.

p. cm.

Summary: Sam Collier, a twelve-year-old, serves as page to John Smith during the relentless hardship experienced by the founders at the first permanent English settlement in the New World.

ISBN 13: 978-1-56145-755-7 (ebook)

1. Jamestown (Va.)--Juvenile fiction. 2. Smith, John, 1580-1631.--Juvenile fiction. 3. Collier, Samuel, d. 1622.--Juvenile fiction. [1. Jamestown (Va.)--Fiction. 2. Smith, John, 1580-1631.--Fiction. 3. Collier, Samuel, d. 1622.--Fiction. 4. Explorers--Fiction. 5. Virginia--History--Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775--Fiction.] I. Casale, Paul, ill. II. Title.

PZ7.K153 Su 2001
[Fic]--dc21

00-054859

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ATLANTA

Acknowledgments

Lots of people helped me bring this story to the page. Any inaccuracies or misjudgments are mine, but I have many people to thank for contributions to this work.

My husband, Chester Karwoski, deserves my biggest thanks. Without his support and enthusiasm, I would not be a writer. His suggestions make my stories clearer and more lively.

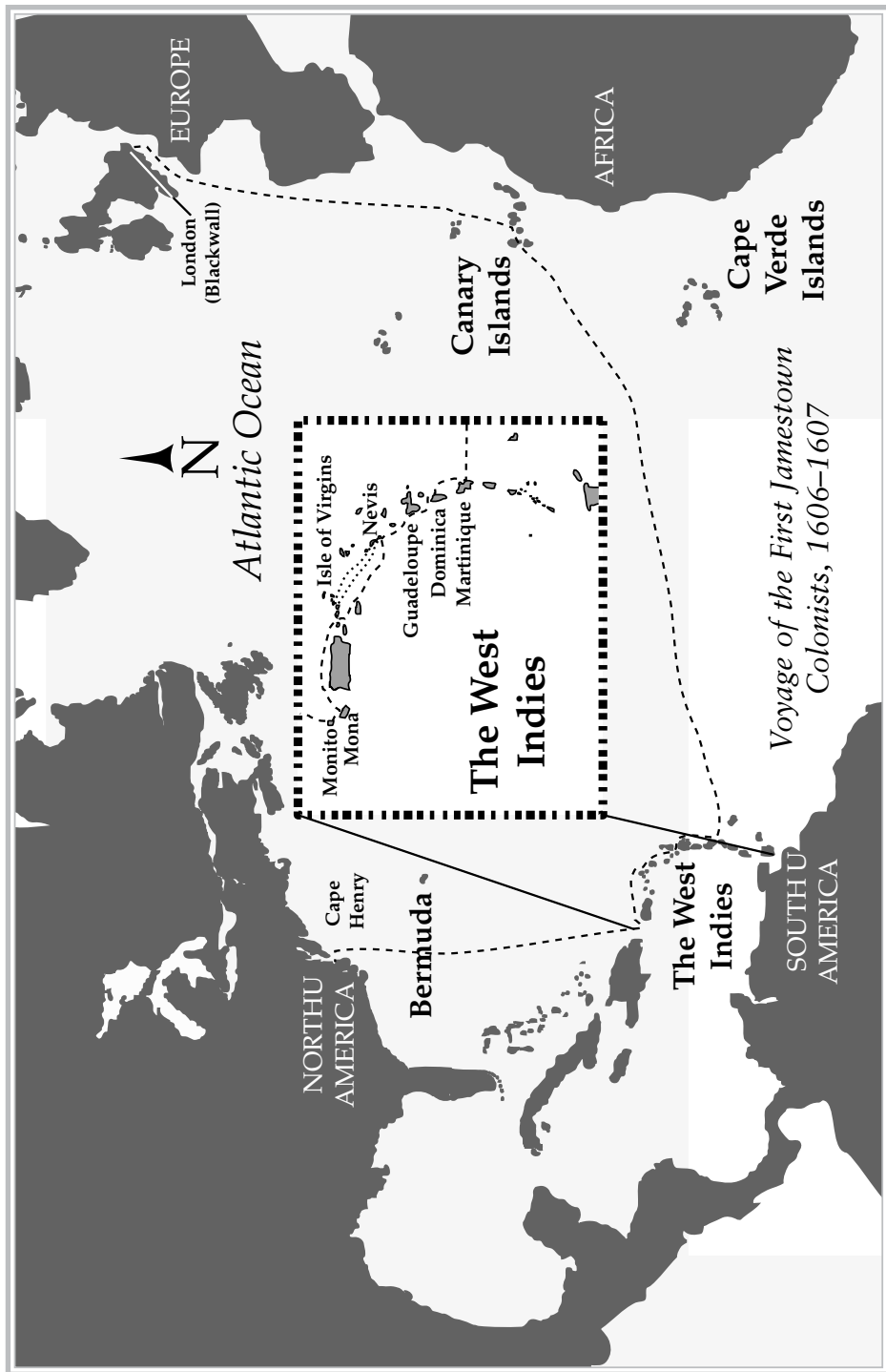
Many experts graciously reviewed the manuscript to help ensure its accuracy. Nancy Egloff, the historian at the Jamestown Settlement, reviewed multiple drafts and researched many period details at my request. Ruth Haas, also from the Jamestown Settlement, supplied numerous helpful suggestions, as did Diane Stallings and Lee Pelham Cotton from the Colonial National Historical Park and Judith A. Corello and Christa Mueller from the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. All have been very generous with their time and knowledge.

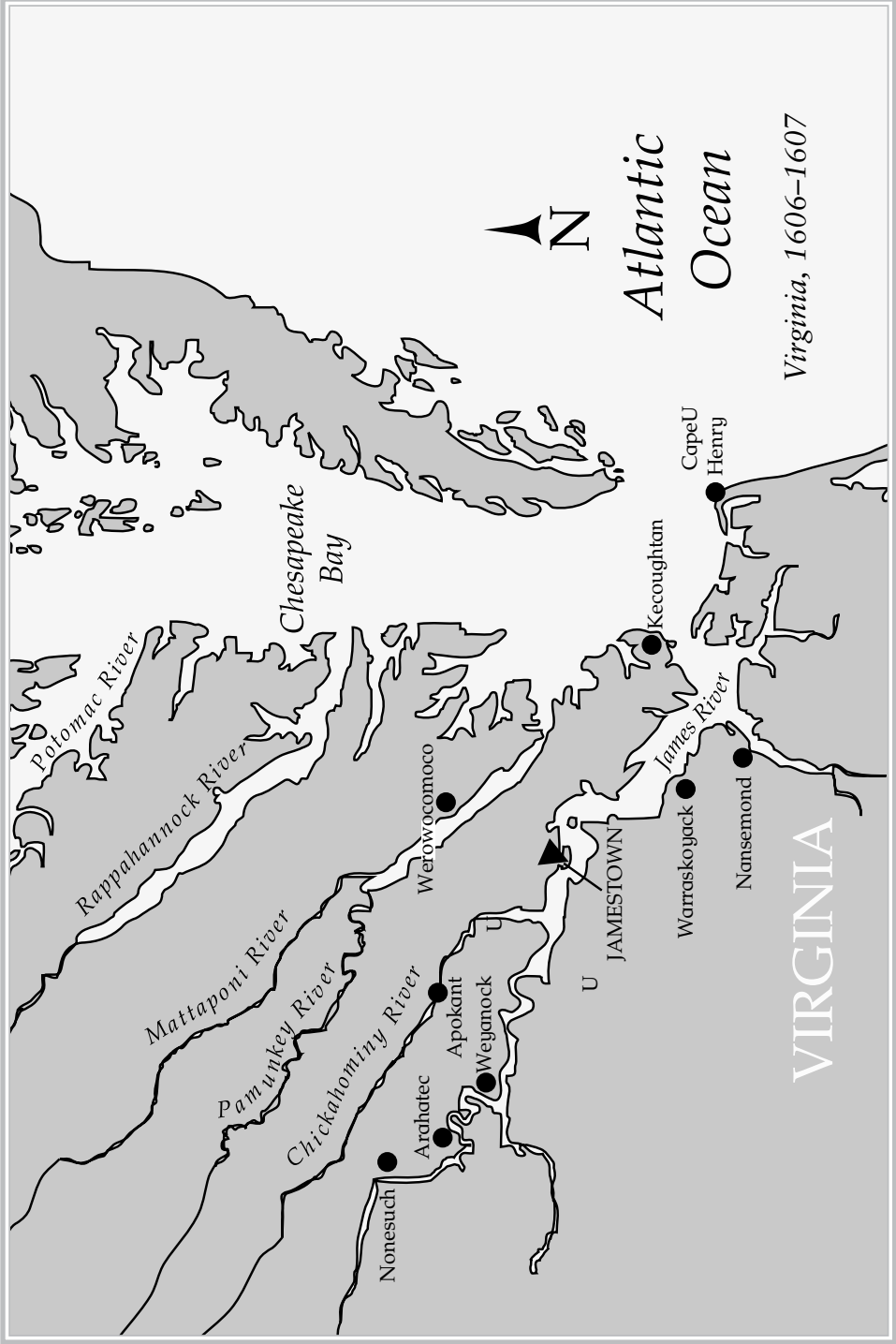
Dr. Stephen Lucas helped me with the medical moments in the story. Steve is an exceptional physician who cares not only for his patients, but also for his patient's characters!

I appreciate the expert advice of the PACE students of Joyce Henson and Cass Robinson at Malcom Bridge Elementary in Oconee County, Georgia, who helped me select the title for this book.

The members of my writers' "family" (the Four at Five: Bettye Stroud, Wanda Langley, and Lori Hammer) evaluated each chapter and listened sympathetically to tribulations along the way! Another Peachtree writer, Adrian Fogelin, also offered helpful suggestions. My daughters, Leslie and Geneva Karwoski, gave me my first lessons in children's literature many years ago; as grown-ups, they are still giving me valuable insights and invaluable encouragement. My parents, Farley and Charlotte Langer, are—as always—my greatest fans!

So many folks at my publishing "family," Peachtree Publishers, Ltd., have devoted time and support to this book! Associate Editor Vicky Holifield was wonderful, gentle, and brilliant in her copyediting, trimming, and proofing. Production Manager Melanie McMahan and Art Director Loraine Balcsik carefully crafted these pages and worked hard to make this a beautiful book. Most of all, I owe an enormous thanks to my editor, Sarah Helyar Smith. Sarah embraced this project. She's an awesome editor—tireless and talented—who cares deeply about producing high-quality books for young readers.





Atlantic
Ocean

Virginia, 1606-1607

Chesapeake
Bay

Potomac River

Rappahannock River

Mattaponi River

Pamunkey River

Chickahominy River

Nonesuch

Arahatec

Apokant

Weyanock

Werowocomoco

Warraskoyack

Nansemond

Kecoughtan

Cape
Henry



JAMESTOWN

VIRGINIA

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Preface

*E*nglish ships explored the coast of North America for more than a century before England successfully planted a colony in the New World.

After Columbus discovered the West Indies in 1492, and all through the 1500s, ships from England, Spain, and France made many voyages to the coast of North America. Pirates sailed the American waters, too.

England made its first attempts to establish a North American colony in the 1580s. In 1584, Sir Walter Raleigh founded a colony on Roanoke Island, off the coast of what is now North Carolina. Nobody knows what happened to this “lost colony.”

By the beginning of the 1600s, England, Spain, and France each claimed land in North America and tried to hold onto those claims by starting permanent settlements. In 1620, the Mayflower set sail to found the Plymouth Colony. But fourteen years earlier, in 1606, King James I had chartered the Virginia Company of London, and its first fleet set sail in December of the same year.

The fleet reached Chesapeake Bay in 1607. The settlement they established became Jamestown—England’s first permanent North American colony.

The Luckiest Boy in England

Sam Collier climbed onto the ship's broad railing and sat with his legs dangling. He stuck two fingers in his mouth—the way his new friend Nate Peacock had taught him—and let fly a screeching whistle. Grabbing a line to steady himself, he placed his feet on the wooden railing and slowly rose until he stood, teetering, on the side of the swaying ship. Grinning, he announced, “Samuel Collier, second son of Thomas and Anne Collier of Lincolnshire, is the luckiest boy in all of England!”

There was no response from the people on the wharf at Blackwall Port. With night coming on, and the sailors busy loading supplies, none of the men on the ship paid attention to Sam's announcement, either.

But a boy's voice behind him said, “Sam Collier will be none too lucky if he falls into the black water of the Thames River!”

Startled, Sam turned around.

Nate imitated the voice of a nagging parent. “How many times do I need to remind you, Samuel? A ship makes a slippery perch.” He wagged his index finger. “If you fall in wearing your heavy coat, you'll sink like a stone.” He glared at Sam for a few seconds, then burst out laughing.

Smiling, Sam leaped onto the muddy deck, his feet skidding on the slick wooden boards.

“Master Smith told me to fetch you,” Nate said.

Sam was John Smith's page. For the next few years, he would be expected to obey Master Smith the way a son obeys his father. As a page, Sam was Smith's servant who had to help with all kinds of errands and chores. But he was also Smith's apprentice, and he would have a chance to learn whatever his master was willing to teach. Sam knew that when a page became fifteen or sixteen years old and ready to strike out on his own, he sometimes followed in his master's footsteps. John Smith was an explorer and an adventurer, and Sam thought this life would suit him just fine.

Waving good-bye to the people on the wharf, Sam trotted after Nate. Nobody waved back, but Sam didn't notice.

The boys were a mismatched pair. Sam was twelve, nearly two years younger than Nate, and he stood at least a head shorter than his friend. Although he was lean, Sam's muscular body made him seem stocky compared with his skinny friend. Nate's long arms and legs stuck out of his coat sleeves and pants, ending in huge hands and clumsy feet. In his woolly waistcoat, Nate resembled a lanky, cheerful pup who had not yet grown bulky enough to fill up his own skin.

"Do you know any of those folks?" Nate asked, gesturing at the crowd on the wharf.

"Not a one," Sam replied. "I've never been to this port. For that matter, I'd never been on the Thames River or to the city of London until I came aboard this ship. And I don't care to return to any of these places, either."

Nate nodded in agreement. "Too crowded," he said. "I don't like seeing so many faces without a friendly look on any of them."

"I don't want to be friends with them," Sam said. "They live in the old world. If you ask me, even the great city of London is dirty and worn out. It's part of the past. You and me, we're



A boy's voice said, "Sam Collier will be none too lucky if he falls into the black water of the Thames River!"

headed for a new world—the future!” Sam clamped his hand on Nate’s shoulder, and the boys looked at each other and grinned.

They threaded their way along the railing of the crowded ship. The deck of the *Susan Constant* was smaller than the ground floor of the tidy farmhouse where Sam had grown up. But the ship was crowded with seventeen sailors shouting directions and loading cargo. And more than fifty passengers were living aboard this ship.

The boys had to clamber over coils of tarred rope and heaps of equipment. They jumped aside to avoid bumping into sailors, who were carrying heavy barrels on board and passing them down to their mates for storage in the hold. Some of the gentlemen passengers stood watching the bustle. Their overcoat collars were pulled up against the damp December chill.

As they squeezed between groups of onlookers, Sam and Nate nearly bumped into a small, white-faced boy.

“Nathaniel Peacock!” the boy shouted. “I’ve been searching high and low for you.” James Brumfield frowned. “Master Calthrop sent me to find you. He’s worried sick that you got off the ship and got lost here in Blackwall. I do think you should be more considerate. We’re not supposed to make trouble for the gentlemen, you know.”

Nate started to hurry off, but Sam grabbed his arm and winked. “Wait a minute, Nate. I hope you paid attention to James’s pretty speech.”

James hesitated. He considered Sam Collier a rude boy, so the compliment surprised him. He wasn’t sure whether he should tip his cap to acknowledge Sam’s fair words. Or whether Sam was being sarcastic and had insulted him.

Sam looked closely at James’s pale face. *It’s as white as a fish belly!* Sam thought. With a quick movement, Sam snatched James’s cap and tossed it to Nate. Then Sam grabbed the two

ends of James's blue scarf and tied them over the boy's mouth. "It's not considerate of you to go bareheaded in this damp, chilly weather, James Brumfield," Sam said, grinning. "Look, your lips are turning blue with cold! We're not supposed to make trouble for the gentlemen, you know."

Nate held James's cap above the boy's head. When James jumped to grab it, Nate tossed the cap on top of a tall stack of crates. Chuckling, Sam and Nate ran off in search of their masters.

Sam climbed down the wooden stairs to the 'tween deck, the middle deck where the passengers would live during the voyage. He found John Smith rearranging some crates. Smith's sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, and he'd taken off his waistcoat. Beads of sweat glistened on his broad forehead and dripped onto his short, brown beard.

"Make haste, lad," Smith said as he strained to move a heavy crate. "I want to be sure none of these guns or powder boxes will get wet."

Sam pulled off his cap and stuffed it into his pocket. His wavy brown hair was plastered to his head, and he ran his fingers through it. Loosening his coat, Sam reached for the stack of guns and ammunition. "Are we taking all these guns for hunting in Virginia?" he asked.

"Mostly for defense," Smith said. "We may run into pirates on the islands. Or Spanish ships."

Sam raised his eyebrows. "Do you think we'll have to fight off pirates? Or Spaniards?"

Smith shrugged. "Pirates would gladly steal our ship and all its cargo. As for the Spanish, they want to claim as much of North America as they can, so they'd be delighted to prevent us from reaching Virginia. Believe me, lad, I've met my share of dangers outside England. I know how crucial our weapons will be."

A sliver of fear slid into Sam's stomach, but he tried to ignore it. *This is my chance to see the world beyond my father's farm*, he reminded himself. Sam shifted the crates as Smith directed. Then Smith showed him how to lash them securely in place so they would not overturn when high seas rocked the ship.

"When do we set sail for Virginia, Master Smith?" Sam asked.

"Tonight, on the tide. The sailors have almost finished loading the hold. As soon as the tide shifts, our fleet will continue down the Thames. Then we set out across the Atlantic Ocean."

"Will we be in North America by Christmas?" Sam asked.

John Smith smiled. "The winds don't blow that fast, lad! It's already December 20. We'll be lucky to reach the Canary Islands—off the coast of Africa—by the beginning of the new year."

"Is it true, Master Smith, that North America is colder than England, and its winds are so fierce they can blow apart a ship in an instant?"

Before Smith had a chance to answer, Sam plunged ahead. "...and that naked men run over the land—men who have no fear of death and cannot speak any better than wolves?" Sam's eyes sparkled. "And that rivers of liquid gold flow through the countryside and shine in the rays of the sun?"

John Smith frowned. "Somebody's been filling your ears with fabulous tales! It's best not to swallow every word you're served aboard ship. When I lived among the Turks, I learned it was wiser to see a thing with my own eyes rather than believe the tales that men tell."

Smith stood and mopped sweat off his forehead. He was a short man, lean but muscular. Every inch of his small frame seemed necessary to support the man's actions, just as every word he spoke seemed to have a purpose. Smith looked at his page and continued. "There's a great deal of land across the sea,

Sam. Along the coast they call Newfoundland, they say winters are much colder than here in England. But our ships are headed south for Virginia,” Smith explained. “We plan to drop anchor near Roanoke Island, not far from where Sir Walter Raleigh’s ships landed. The climate is mild where we’re headed.”

“Have you also heard that naked men live there, Master Smith?” Sam persisted. “And that there are rivers of gold?”

Smith nodded. “Yes, Sam, I’ve heard the tales about naked men who live in North America. I was told these natives have mild, simple natures—as gentle as small children. If the tales are true, we can expect an easy welcome from them. And I’ve also heard the stories about fabulous deposits of gold.” Smith rubbed his neck. “We shall see for ourselves soon enough.”

Sam waited hopefully. Although he had known John Smith for only a few weeks, Sam had already discovered that when his master was in a talkative mood he could tell wonderful stories of shipwrecks and captures, of bold escapes and rich rewards. All of Smith’s stories were about his own experiences in faraway places. And every word of them was true!

When John Smith was fifteen, his father had apprenticed him to a rich merchant. But he found a merchant’s life too dull. So, when he turned seventeen, Smith left the merchant and went to fight in the Dutch war of independence. As soon as the war was over, Smith went to sea. His hunger for adventure still strong, he joined the Austrian army in a war against the Turks. Before long, he was in the thick of battle, beheading Turkish officers. Then he was wounded and captured. Forced into slavery, he made a daring escape and fled to Transylvania. He was rewarded handsomely for his courage and returned to England a prosperous man.

Smith looked at the crowd of passengers and sailors hurriedly stowing the last of the supplies, then turned to Sam. “If we find gold, Sam Collier, you’ll return to Lincolnshire a rich man.

You'll be richer than your older brother, in spite of the farm that he'll inherit."

Sam's father was a farmer. According to custom, their oldest son, Thomas Jr., would inherit the family farm. Sam had to make his own way in the world. All his parents could offer their second son was a brief education, a stock of warm clothing and leather shoes, and a position with a man like Smith.

"I'm never going to return to Lincolnshire!" Sam replied. "I'm going to be a man of Virginia and swim in rivers of gold. I think I'm the luckiest boy in England," Sam declared, "setting out on such an adventure before my thirteenth birthday!"

Smith nodded. "Perhaps you are, Sam. I believe you're a fine lad for this journey—bold and eager. When I was your age, I was the same sort of lad."



The *Susan Constant*, followed by her companion ships the *Godspeed* and the *Discovery*, made her way down the Thames River and into the English Channel. One hundred and five English passengers and forty sailors rode aboard the Virginia Company's fleet. The men were hoping to find profit as well as adventure in Virginia. Their goal was to establish a colony that would send goods and raw materials back to England for sale. Sea captains had been bringing back reports of vast forests and abundant game, and England needed timber and furs. Furthermore, the Virginia Company hoped the settlers would find deposits of gold and gemstones. And if they were able to find an easy route across the Americas to the Orient, then the Virginia colony might become a trading center for China's expensive silks and spices.

But when the ships reached the Channel, the winds blew hard from the south, and the fleet was stalled in sight of the English coast. Since the ships couldn't sail into the head winds,

the passengers were allowed on deck for a few hours each afternoon when the seas weren't too high.

Sam and Nate didn't mind the delay. There was so much to see on a sailing ship! When the sailors weren't busy, the boys pestered them with questions about how the *Susan Constant* worked. Most of the sailors ignored Sam and Nate, but a few of the older crew members enjoyed showing the boys how to maneuver the sails to catch the wind. Sometimes they let the boys climb on the ship's rigging to get a better view of the coast of England and the choppy waters that skidded toward shore.

When the weather turned foul, the passengers had to stay below, on the 'tween deck. With more than fifty people and all their possessions crammed into the tight space, the 'tween deck was very crowded. The hatches were closed to keep seawater from spilling in, and lanterns provided only dim light.

At night the gentlemen passengers and some of the sailors slept in hammocks hung from wooden posts. The boys and the laborers slept on straw pallets or blankets spread across the damp floorboards. The ship rocked constantly with the motion of the sea, and many passengers became seasick. The combination of dampness, sweat, and vomit gave the 'tween deck a terrible smell. Sam was used to strong farm odors like manure, but the passenger's living area smelled much worse than the filthiest barn.

For Sam, the worst part of life aboard ship was the noise. In addition to passengers talking and sick men moaning, the wooden ship groaned and creaked. When the wind shrieked through the rigging and waves crashed against the hull, Sam had to shout to make himself heard. Even in calm weather, Sam could still hear the constant slap, slap of water against the hull.

Besides Sam and Nate, James was the only other boy aboard the *Susan Constant*. Already puny, James lost weight in those

first weeks at sea. As soon as the sea grew rough, James's pale face turned greenish and he complained that he felt dizzy. When the ship rocked on big waves, James got sick. The motion of the gray, wintry waters churned up his insides and squeezed them empty of all comfort. His master, Edward Wingfield, scolded him when he fouled the sleeping quarters with his vomit.

Sometimes Sam and Nate were told to lead James on deck and hold him steady by the side of the railing. Sam dreaded that task. Whenever they went to fetch him, James pleaded with them to let him stay below. The boy's face took on a look of pure terror when he beheld the open sea. Although Sam felt ashamed for James's cowardice and thought it was disgusting to watch him throw up, Sam held the boy's arms as gently as he could. James was plainly embarrassed to seem such a weakling, but he could not force his guts to make peace with the water.

Seasickness wasn't the only ailment to trouble the passengers. Some of the men caught bad colds. The Reverend Robert Hunt developed such a terrible cough that Captain Newport wanted to take him back to England. But the minister kept refusing, saying he'd be well soon enough. One day, Hunt motioned to Sam as the boy trotted by. He told Sam to find John Smith.

Sam returned quickly with his master.

"John," rasped Hunt, "I ask your support. As a minister, I have a duty to fulfill for the Company. And I refuse—" A fit of coughing interrupted his words.

Smith pointed at a pitcher. Sam quickly filled the minister's cup with water and handed it to him.

Hunt nodded at Sam as he took the cup. He sipped, trying to regain control of his voice. At last, he handed Sam the empty cup, cleared his throat, and continued. "I won't hear of returning to England, John. More than a hundred Englishmen are aboard these ships setting out for a strange, wild shore. Who

knows what dangers and hardships these men will face? As a minister, I am the shepherd of this flock. Prayer offers a mighty comfort in times of stress and danger—” Again the racking coughs cut off Hunt’s words.

Without waiting to be told, Sam handed another cup of water to Hunt. The minister’s eyes glowed in his pale face like two embers embedded in ash. When he coughed, his thin cheeks flushed a bright red.

Smith sat beside Hunt and waited for the coughing to stop. “You have my full support,” Smith said to the clergyman. “If you choose to make the crossing, I promise no man will force you to turn back. But if you choose to return to England, no man shall criticize your decision in my presence.”

“I will not turn back,” Hunt declared.

Smith smiled and gently laid a hand on the minister’s thin shoulder. “I’m convinced you take your orders from a higher authority, Reverend. I’ll speak to our ship’s captain. I give you my word that there’ll be no more talk of sending you back to England.”

Sam was up early the next morning, glad to see that the sky was clear. He was on deck with Smith when Nate and his master, Stephen Calthrop, joined them. Sam and Nate grinned at each other.

Calthrop greeted Smith. “I understand you spoke with Captain Newport yesterday,” said Calthrop. He lowered his voice. “About Reverend Hunt’s desire to remain on board.”

Smith nodded. The two men edged closer together and positioned themselves downwind from the sailors so their conversation could not be heard, but Sam could still hear every word. “Yes, Reverend Hunt asked me to support him,” Smith said. “He believes he has a duty to remain on board. The colonists need his spiritual guidance.”

Calthrop eyed Smith carefully. “You made Captain Newport angry, John. He has told several of the gentlemen on board that you spoke too forcefully. That you’re quick to command, but reluctant to listen to your betters. If I may borrow the captain’s words, you ‘lack the manners of a peasant, but you’re as arrogant as an earl!” Calthrop laughed. “I think it’s fair to say that you left the captain as angry as a cat in a sack!”

Smith frowned. “After our meeting, the captain agreed to keep Reverend Hunt on board. The captain’s mood is of no importance to me. Furthermore,” Smith added stiffly, “I don’t care what he thinks of my social status or my manners.”

Calthrop raised his eyebrows. “Be careful, John. There are powerful men on these ships. Men who believe their opinions are law.” Calthrop paused, his brow wrinkled. “If Reverend Hunt were to die during the crossing, it would cast a shadow across the Virginia Company’s first venture. Some of the gentlemen might blame you for insisting that we keep such a sick man aboard ship.”

“That’s absurd, Stephen!” Smith sputtered. “I’m an explorer, not a doctor. And I’m not a fortuneteller, either. I sincerely hope Reverend Hunt recovers his health. But ailing or healthy, the man believes it’s his duty to look after the spiritual needs of our colony. I respect Hunt, so I stood up for him. I won’t beg forgiveness when I stand up for my friends.”

Calthrop smiled. “Hold your temper, man. I’m just telling you what’s afoot. I’m not agreeing with your critics.” Calthrop put an arm on Smith’s shoulder, and the two men stared out over the waves. “You know my thoughts, John. We have a new world to conquer. We need men like you—men with skill and daring. I just don’t want you to anger the captain or the gentlemen.”

Sam and Nate listened as their masters talked. Smith lacked Calthrop’s cultured manners, Sam noticed. It was as if Smith didn’t have the time to be polite. Unlike the highborn Calthrop,

Smith came from the merchant class of English society. Since he had not inherited power or wealth, he had learned to grab for any chance of success.

Nate had told Sam a lot about his master. Calthrop was only four years younger than Smith, but he was far younger in his experience of the world. His aristocratic family was related to Master Edward Wingfield, the most powerful gentleman aboard the *Susan Constant*. Calthrop was going to Virginia in search of adventure. As the third son in his family, he would never control his father's lands, so he hoped to find his own special future in the new world.

Sam and Nate leaned against the ship's rail. When it seemed like their masters would continue talking all afternoon, Sam challenged Nate to arm wrestle. Long-armed Nate, as usual, was winning the contest until Sam called out, "Look, a dolphin! Over there!"

Nate swung around, and Sam slammed down his arm.

"Hey, that's cheating!" Nate yelled.

"No, it's not," Sam said. "I was just using my brain along with my arm!"

Nate snatched Sam's cap and took off. Laughing, Sam chased after him. The two dodged between crates and ropes. Panting, they nearly collided with a sailor. Master Edward Wingfield had just climbed up to the deck when Nate slammed into him.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Wingfield. "Watch out where you're going!"

Ignoring Wingfield, Sam caught up to Nate and jumped on him, knocking them both onto the wooden planks. Frowning, Wingfield pulled them to their feet by their collars and called to Smith and Calthrop.

"Look here!" Wingfield shouted. "These boys were running wildly on deck. They nearly knocked me down. A ship is no place for such ill-mannered behavior." Wingfield pursed his

lips and pointed a finger at his cousin. “Stephen, I do not understand why you decided to bring along a servant. You are young enough to attend to your own needs without help. But if you must have these boys around, I insist you keep them under control.”

Smith opened his mouth to answer, but Calthrop jumped in. “Terribly sorry, Master Edward,” Calthrop said. “We will certainly have a talk with the lads about shipboard manners.” Calthrop gave the boys a stern look.

Wingfield cleared his throat and stomped off.

Calthrop turned to the boys and winked. “If you boys have to bump into a gentleman, please bump into somebody besides my kinsman, Master Edward. Bump into someone with a better sense of balance. Or at least a better sense of humor!” Calthrop grinned at his own joke.

“If there’s another complaint about the boys, I’ll speak to Master Wingfield,” Smith snapped. “I will tell him that these boys belong on this ship. We are going to build a colony in Virginia, and these boys are strong enough to work hard and young enough learn new skills. Indeed, what will a refined gentleman like Master Wingfield be able to contribute? If he cannot even keep his balance when a boy brushes past him, he will surely be of less use in the wilderness than a linen tablecloth!”

Calthrop laughed. “I do hope you don’t speak such thoughts to Master Edward, John. You’ll get yourself in serious trouble. Remember—he’s the only member of the Virginia Company on board.” Calthrop looked at the choppy waters. “We’ve been stalled here for almost five weeks. I think everyone is losing patience.”