**Did Pocahontas Save Jamestown?**

**Many people believe that she did. But much about her remains a mystery. More than 400 years have passed since the founding of Jamestown, Virginia, and there is still a lot we don't know about this Indian girl.**

**CAST OF CHARACTERS (13)**

* Narrator 1
* Narrator 2
* Captain John Smith, a leader of Jamestown
* Powhatan (pow-uh-TAN), chief of the area's Native American tribes
* Pocahontas (poh-kuh-HAHN-tis), a daughter of Powhatan
* Tatacoope, a son of Powhatan
* Opechancanough (oh-puh-KAHN-kuh-noo), Powhatan's war chief
* Captain Matthew Scrivener, a Jamestown settler
* Captain John Ratcliffe, a leader of Jamestown
* Reverend Alexander Whittaker, a minister and Jamestown settler
* Uttamatomakin (oo-tah-mah-toh-MAHK-un), a relative to Powhatan
* Royal official
* King James 1 of England

**----------------------------------SCENE 1----------------------------------**

**Narrator 1:**

When the English arrive, Powhatan, the most powerful chief in the area, meets with his people.

**Powhatan:**

Europeans have come here before. Why worry about this group?

**Tatacoope:**

There are more of the coat-wearers now. They have even built a community with wooden walls.

**Opechancanough:**

They can't grow food themselves, so they try to trade for corn with our people. Or they shoot their weapons and take the corn. We should get rid of them!

**Powhatan:**

Have patience. Let's see what they want, and what we can get from them. Then we'll make sure they move on.

**Narrator 2:**

Jamestown almost does not survive through its first summer. More than half of the original 105 colonists die of disease and starvation.

**----------------------------------SCENE 2----------------------------------**

**Narrator 1:**

To get food, Captain John Smith goes on trading expeditions. When he gets close to Powhatan's village, he is captured and taken to the chief.

**Powhatan:**

What brings you to our land? How long do you plan to stay?

**John Smith (hiding the truth):**

We were fighting our enemy, the Spanish. Our ships were leaking, so we took refuge here.

**Narrator 2:**

Smith doesn't want Powhatan to know that the English plan to stay. But Powhatan is not fooled.

**Narrator 1:**

Years later, Smith will write these details of what happened next.

**Smith:**

Two great stones were brought before Powhatan, They laid hands on me and dragged me to the stones. They were ready to attack me with their clubs.

**Pocahontas:**

Stop! Father, spare his life.

**Narrator 2:**

Pocahontas, the chief's dearest daughter, throws her body over Smith's to save him. Smith is shocked when Powhatan grants her wish. Two days later, Powhatan and Smith meet again.

**Powhatan:**

I can see that you are a leader. I invite you to bring your people here to live. Give us your tools of metal and I will give you corn. Forever, I will see you as my son.

**Smith:**

I am honored by your offer and will call you Father.

**Narrator 1:**

Smith returns to Jamestown, having built a special relationship with Powhatan.

**Narrator 2:**

But did Pocahontas really save Smith's life? Some historians believe that Smith didn't understand Powhatan's actions. They say his life was never in danger. Others think that Smith made the event up. We will never know for sure.

**----------------------------------SCENE 3 ----------------------------------**

**Narrator 1:**

Powhatan sends regular shipments of corn to the fort. Pocahontas visits the fort during each shipment.

**Narrator 2:**

Pocahontas and Smith teach each other words from their languages.

**Smith:**

"I am very hungry." Say that.

**Pocahontas:**

I am very hungry (in her language). "What shall I eat?" Say that.

**Narrator 1:**

Smith repeats the words in the Algonquian [al-GAHN-kwun] language. Then Pocahontas has a new question for him.

**Pocahontas:**

Will more English ships come?

**Smith:**

Did your father have you ask that? Don't lie.

**Pocahontas:**

I do not lie.

**Narrator 2:**

Quickly, Pocahontas becomes a part of life at the fort.

**Captain Matthew Scrivener:**

Look at her, Smith. Out there doing cartwheels with the boys. They are amazed by her.

**Smith:**

She is so strong and athletic.

**Captain John Ratcliffe:**

I am worried about her influence on our children. She is a heathen, after all.

**Smith:**

The Indians are as advanced in their way as we are. Besides, without her, we could not live here.

**Narrator 1:**

Soon, the peaceful relationship between Jamestown and Powhatan changes. The English don't want to live under Powhatan's rule.

**Narrator 2:**

By December 1608, when Smith again visits Powhatan, they are both angry.

**Powhatan:**

You come to our villages and take food. You set our villages on fire and kill our people. Why?

**Smith:**

Your people steal tools and guns from us. You shoot us with arrows when we go outside the fort.

**Powhatan:**

We act only in self-defense. It is clear that you do not want to live here in peace with us. But let me warn you. If you continue to take food from us, we will desert our villages. Then we will flee into the woods. Without our corn, you and your people will starve to death.

**Narrator 1:**

According to Smith's account, Pocahontas appears at his camp that night in tears.

**Pocahontas (crying):**

You must leave right away. My father plans to kill you all.

**Smith (sad):**

You have risked much to come here. I will not forget you.

**----------------------------------SCENE 4 ----------------------------------**

**Narrator 2:**

For more than four years, Pocahontas disappears from our story. New colonists come, but Jamestown almost disappears as well.

**Narrator 1:**

Two accounts tell different views about how Jamestown survived.

**Reverend Alexander Whittaker:**

John Smith returned to England in September 1609. That winter, hundreds of us died in what we called the Starving Time. Luckily, additional colonists arrived the following summer with food. Then, in April 1613, we found Pocahontas again.

**Uttamatomakin:**

Actually, the English discovered Pocahontas visiting family in Patawomeck country—and kidnapped her.

**Whittaker:**

Though unhappy at first, Pocahontas got used to life with us. We told her that John Smith had died. In time, I converted her to Christianity, and we renamed her Rebecca. In 1614, Rebecca married John Rolfe, a colonist. Powhatan even gave his blessing!

**Uttamatomakin:**

Pocahontas wished to keep the peace in her father's land. Often, a princess of our people will marry a foreign prince to keep peace. We saw that the English simply took what they wanted.

**----------------------------------SCENE 5---------------------------------**

**Narrator 2:**

Pocahontas becomes famous in England. She is invited to visit London, where she meets the King.

**Royal official:**

Your Majesty, may I present Lady Rebecca of Virginia.

**King James I:**

Oh, the famous savage maiden. You must be pleased to be with civilized people.

**Narrator 1:**

What did Pocahontas really think of the English? Some of her feelings came out when she had a surprise visitor.

**Smith:**

Forgive me for taking so long to call on you.

**Pocahontas (upset):**

They told me that you were dead. Your people are always lying!

**Smith:**

I thought you would be glad to see me.

**Pocahontas (angry):**

Glad? Look what you English have done to my father's land! You were a stranger in our land, and we helped you. But you caused fear in all my father's people.

**Narrator 2:**

There is too much emotion in the room for Smith. He leaves. Pocahontas and Smith never see each other again.

**EPILOGUE**

**Narrator 1:**

Pocahontas was already very ill, probably from consumption. She died in 1617 and was buried in England. Jamestown grew, mainly from tobacco crops. Powhatan's kingdom passed into history. One by one, the other native tribes of the Americas would also be pushed aside by the Europeans.

Source: *Scholastic Action,* November 12–26, 2007.