

Blood on the River Study Guide

Blood on the River by Elisa Carbone

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Blood on the River Study Guide..... | 1 |
| Contents..... | 2 |
| Plot Summary..... | 3 |
| Chapters 1 - 2..... | 4 |
| Chapters 3 - 4..... | 7 |
| Chapters 5 - 6..... | 10 |
| Chapters 7 - 8..... | 14 |
| Chapters 9 - 10..... | 17 |
| Chapters 11 - 12..... | 21 |
| Chapters 13 - 14..... | 24 |
| Chapters 15 - 16..... | 27 |
| Chapters 17 - 18..... | 30 |
| Chapters 19 - 20..... | 33 |
| Chapters 21 - 22..... | 37 |
| Chapters 23 - 24..... | 41 |
| Chapters 25 - 26..... | 44 |
| Chapter 27 and Afterword..... | 46 |
| Characters..... | 49 |
| Symbols and Symbolism..... | 55 |
| Settings..... | 58 |
| Themes and Motifs..... | 60 |
| Styles..... | 67 |
| Quotes..... | 68 |



Plot Summary

Blood on the River: James Town 1607, by Elisa Carbone, is a historical novel about the early years and settlement of the English colony of James Town in Virginia between the years of 1607-1610. This fictional account of true life events and people is told through the eyes of Samuel Collier, age 11, who travels from London, England as a servant to Captain John Smith to James Town. It begins with his experiences prior to boarding ship, explores the difficulties of ocean travel, and the trials and tribulations of settlement in Virginia.

Samuel begins as an orphan on the streets of London where he is arrested for theft. He is lucky enough to be sent to an orphanage instead of being hanged, and is then chosen to go to the new colony as a servant. Captain Smith proves to be a good master, who attempts to teach Samuel how to survive in the New World.

When the colonists arrive in Virginia, they are met by the Powhatans, who see them as the negative fulfillment of a prophecy that may bring destruction to the Powhatan empire. They suffer starvation, battles, misunderstandings, and sickness. Political differences between Capt. Smith and the gentlemen leaders of the colony lead to problems within the colony and with the Indians. The expectations of the Virginia Company, which funds the operation, also makes the survival of the colony difficult by demanding they concentrate on profit-making.

As the colonists come into closer contact with the Powhatan people, Samuel learns from Capt. Smith about good leadership, how to get along with the Indians, and how to become a man. He watches the developments of the colony, the various leaders and their poor choices. When he goes to live a season in a friendly Indian village, Samuel learns many new skills he can bring back to help the colony. He also learns that the English ways are not necessarily the best ways to live in the New World.

Capt. Smith's efforts to lead the colony are thwarted by the gentlemen, who feel his leadership is a threat to their power over James Town. He is arrested repeatedly for various crimes, only to be saved by circumstance or allies. When the Virginia Company decides to crown Chief Powhatan an English prince rather than honoring his rank as an emperor to his people, it leads to a major rift between the two cultures. It is only through the efforts of Capt. Smith and Pocahontas that they are saved.

The colony thrives or starves depending on whether or not there are good relations with the local tribes, and many of the colonists die during the bad times. Their numbers are replenished by new arrivals, eventually including women and children. However, after Capt. Smith is badly injured and returns to England and Samuel is apprenticed to John Laydon and moves to Point Comfort, the colony suffers through the Starving Time, in which hundreds of the colonists at James Town die. Samuel goes on to become a leader in Virginia.



Chapters 1 - 2

Summary

Blood on the River: James Town 1607 is a historical novel written for children by Elisa Carbone. The story is told from the point of view of 11-year-old Samuel Collier as he travels to and settles in the new Virginia Company colony James Town. The action in the story takes place from 1606 when the reader first meets Samuel Collier in London, England, travels over the Atlantic Ocean with the boy to James Town in 1607, and tells the story of early colonial life in Virginia until the winter of 1609-1610.

Chapter 1 begins with a poetic transcription of the true-life prophecy delivered to Chief Powhatan by his religious authorities before the first colonists arrived in 1607. It predicts the coming of a group of people from Chesapeake Bay who will move onto Powhatan's tribal lands. It prophesied three battles, the first two of which would end in victory for Chief Powhatan, but that the last would destroy his empire.

The story begins in London, England in October 1606. The narrator, a young boy, steals his mother's locket from a pawn shop, narrowly escaping being caught by the shopkeeper. He remembers how the locket was taken from him in the poorhouse, where he and his widowed mother had gone after being evicted from their farm due to non-payment of rent. He is now orphaned: his mother died in the poorhouse and his father drank himself to death. He finds his favorite spot under London Bridge, and goes to sleep, wearing the locket around his neck. He is wakened by the shopkeeper and his son. They beat him and take him to jail.

In Chapter 2, the reader learns the narrator's name: Samuel Collier, who is 11 years old. It is two months later, in December 1606. Samuel has escaped hanging for his theft because a merciful magistrate took him to an orphanage instead. Reverend Hunt, who runs the orphanage, shows patience and compassion to Samuel, and attempts to teach him that he must make decisions out of love rather than anger. He tells Samuel that stealing the locket was wrong. Samuel defends himself by saying that he stole it because he loved his mother, but realizes internally that he did it because he was angry. Samuel gets into fights at the orphanage, especially with Richard, another orphan. Reverend Hunt chooses two boys to go with him to the New World, Richard and Samuel. Richard will be Reverend Hunt's servant, and Samuel will work for Captain John Smith.

The other boys at the orphanage think that they will all die in the New World, but Reverend Hunt explains that their quest is important and will help King James. They will explore for riches, look for a sea passage to the Orient, and log the forests for export. Their primary purpose is to make profits for the investors of the Virginia Company. Rev. Hunt has two other goals: to bring Christianity to the Native Americans and to look for survivors of the Roanoke colony. Samuel looks forward to finding gold, which according to rumor is so plentiful it washes up on shore with each tide.



Rev. Hunt takes the boys to the harbor for their journey. The colonists will travel on three ships: the Susan Constant, the Godspeed, and the Discovery. Samuel worries that he will not do well as a page boy, because he has never before been teachable and won't tolerate abuse. They meet Captain Smith, who complains that too many of the colonists are noble gentlemen who don't know how to work. Smith has taken on Samuel as his page because he has a fighting nature, and believes this energy can be turned to positive work. Smith goes to complain about the gentlemen to the ships' commander, Captain Newport, and Rev. Hunt points out the various gentlemen to the boys, warning them they must be respectful to them. When Rev. Hunt goes to find out which ship they will be traveling on, Richard and Samuel stand quietly; they are not friends. They find they will be on the Susan Constant, and they board the ship for the New World.

Analysis

The reader finds that each chapter begins with a real-life quotation from a text contemporary to the historical time of the novel, each foreshadowing the action that is to come. Chapter 1's prophecy foreshadows the entire novel: Chief Powhatan and his people are a powerful empire, and a religious prophecy has predicted the coming of the English settlers, who will suffer through two defeats before subduing the Indians. The reader can expect the prophecy to come true, because the general defeat of the Native Americans by the colonists is a well-known story.

The author has taken a near mythic tale: that of Captain John Smith and his travels to James Town, and put it into the eyes of a boy close to him, Samuel Collier. This choice fleshes out the mythic and brings in humanity. Samuel is an angry orphan boy who can trust no one, including his peers. Being orphaned by a drunken father and the unfairness of tenant farming that first bankrupted and then slowly killed his mother makes his rage justified. He has suffered, and the one memento of his love for his mother has been taken from him. Trying to get it back nearly gets him killed. It is only the kindness of the magistrate that saves him.

Reverend Hunt has also been kind to him, but it remains to be found whether or not taking him to the New World is likewise a kindness. The reader can only trust in Captain Smith's judgment: Samuel's angry energy might save him in the harshness of colonial life. But Rev. Hunt also is wise in seeing that Samuel needs to work out how to find love in his heart, and make decisions from that place, rather than wallowing in his well-earned rage. Rev. Hunt is Samuel's first guide in exploring the theme of Love versus Fear. He helps Samuel realize that he stole the locket not because he loved his mother, but because he was angry and fearful of losing her.

Samuel shows some self-awareness when he worries that being a servant won't suit him: will he be able to learn from Capt. Smith? It was commonly accepted at the time that servants could expect physical abuse as a fact of life. Samuel is not the sort to accept this, and he rightly worries that he won't respond well to this sort of mastery. The reader must wait to find out what sort of master Capt. Smith will be to Samuel. The



author puts forward Capt. Smith and the other gentleman leaders as contrasts in the theme of Good Leadership.

Two important historical details foreshadow the struggles to come: the Virginia Company is not sending these colonists to the New World out of kindness, but rather for profit. They are looking for riches, exports and a way to make their country and king richer. They are not going on this journey, as many children might assume, only to find adventure and escape from the oppression of English life. Most readers will know that the dream of finding gold washing up on the beach is a foolish one.

The reader might be inclined to explore what happened historically to the Roanoke Colony, survivors of which Rev. Hunt seeks to find. The fact that they utterly disappeared adds an element of mystery and danger on top of the usual attached to going to a new place via an ocean voyage.

Capt. Smith's concerns about the fact that too many noble gentlemen are to go on the journey foreshadow troubles to come. Men who don't know how to work will clearly be a burden on the new colony. Here the author sets up the theme of Class Conflict and Power. Samuel is told by Rev. Hunt that he must behave respectfully to the gentlemen because of his own status, regardless of what he thinks of them privately. Capt. Smith's logical concerns about the nobles' ability to serve the well-being of the colony will be discussed extensively in the chapters to come.

Discussion Question 1

What is the advice Reverend Hunt gives to Samuel about how to make decisions in his life?

Discussion Question 2

What are the goals of the Virginia Company in sending colonists to the New World? What are Reverend Hunt's goals?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Captain Smith concerned about many of the colonists?

Vocabulary

pawnshop, venture, poorhouse, blight, widow, severed, traitor, magistrate, gallows, orphanage, peasants, wattle, daub, satchel, investors, commotion, hawkers, hulls, hoards, yeoman, page, apprentice, stocky, doublet, diminish



Chapters 3 - 4

Summary

On the ocean journey, Samuel and the other passengers are confined to the 'tween deck, except to empty slop buckets or get food. Everyone is seasick and bored, and it smells very bad. The ships have been stalled near England due to unfavorable winds and storms. The gentlemen complain constantly and want to go back home. Capt. Smith reminds them that they have signed seven-year contracts and may not quit.

Samuel is required to share a bed with Richard and another servant boy named James. James and Richard are now friends, but Samuel stays apart from them. Samuel has resolved to trust no one, a habit that he believes has served him well in the past. Rev. Hunt is very sick. Capt. Smith has not physically abused Samuel yet, but Samuel thinks this might be because he hasn't been expected to do much on board ship.

Master Wingfield, one of the noble gentlemen, announces that he wishes to return to England, demanding support from the other gentlemen. Capt. Smith reminds them to honor their agreement. Wingfield accuses Smith of forgetting his place. There is nearly a physical fight, but Rev. Hunt calms everyone by talking about God's will. Samuel is certain that Wingfield will strike back with his rank and power at a future time.

In Chapter 2, the colonists have been on the ships for two months, and it is now February 1607. Samuel has suffered and nearly died of a severe fever that lasted for weeks, but Rev. Hunt prayed over him and he recovered. The ships are finally moving southward. The ship's captain believes that their fevers were caused by the damp and cold weather of England, and that they will now feel better as they move to a warmer climate. Samuel craves fresh air, so in his weakened post-illness state, he volunteers to take up the slop bucket. The sailors are surprised to see him, thinking he'd died. They laugh about the stench below decks. Samuel is surprised by the color of the ocean, which is now a warmer blue. As he returns below decks, he is followed by Captain Newport.

Newport has come to arrest Capt. Smith for plotting to overthrow the colonial government. Wingfield has organized this, and announces that Smith will be hanged when they land at the West Indies. Smith barely restrains himself from physically attacking Wingfield. He surprises Newport by asking if he believes the charges. Smith accuses Wingfield of being a traitor to their cause, and not honoring his contract. Wingfield counters that Smith, as a commoner, may not accuse a gentleman. Smith insults Wingfield's bloodline, and Wingfield comes at Smith with a knife. Rev. Hunt intervenes. Smith is chained to a wall. Samuel worries that Wingfield will attack Smith again, but thinks that Wingfield is not capable of murder. He also worries that one of the other gentlemen will kill Smith in the night.



Analysis

The details of the unpleasantness and claustrophobic nature of sea travel for passengers in the 17th century becomes apparent in these chapters. The fact that the passengers, regardless of class status, were forced to remain below decks almost the entire time will probably come as a surprise to many readers, who may have envisioned sea travel in fine weather as a pleasant experience. While Samuel and his fellow servants suffer through the stink and close quarters quietly, it is the gentlemen who cause the most trouble with their constant complaining and interest in aborting the mission just as soon as things become difficult. It has quickly become apparent that Capt. Smith's concerns about these supposed gentlemen—who flout honor, behave arrogantly and even treacherously—are going to be as difficult as Capt. Smith predicted.

Samuel's insistence on holding himself separately from his fellow servant boys illustrates the tension explored in the theme of Love versus Fear. He cannot be their friend yet, because he is too afraid to do so.

The false accusations against and arrest of Capt. Smith serves to prove to Samuel the unfairness of the world around him. Capt. Wingfield and his powerful allies could stop the journey almost as soon as it's begun, and the loss of Capt. Smith certainly could lead to a drastic and probably difficult change in the journey for Samuel. Samuel does witness the way Capt. Smith controls his temper and channels it into defending himself, seeing that Capt. Newport's actions could influence what happens. If Capt. Smith had simply lashed out physically, his fate would have been sealed, but instead he controls himself and works what power he has, even if he is a commoner. However, Samuel has not yet in his life seen commoners win in a political fight with the noble elite. At the end of Chapter 4, the outlook for their journey is bleak. Through these details, the author further fleshes out and sets up the theme of Class Conflict and Power.

Capt. Smith's conflict between the gentlemen also furthers the theme of Good Leadership. The gentlemen don't behave as leaders should, by encouraging others. Rather, they foment dissent. Capt. Smith behaves shrewdly and his restraint from physical violence demonstrate more or less positive leadership, as well as his use of his allies to protect himself.

There is a gap of time between Chapters 3 and 4 to illustrate the blank of time during the weeks Samuel is sick from fever. The precarious nature of life in this time period, depending only on the grace of God to save him, is made apparent. There is no doctor to care for him, only Rev. Hunt.

Discussion Question 1

What are some possible reasons the passengers are not permitted on deck except to empty slop buckets and get food?



Discussion Question 2

What causes the argument between Master Wingfield and Captain Smith in Chapter 3?
How does Wingfield retaliate?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Smith restrain himself from punching Wingfield in Chapter 4?

Vocabulary

jostle, slothfulness, decipher, monotonous, cringe, wield, livid, axiom, scuttle, burly, unshackled, lye



Chapters 5 - 6

Summary

No harm comes to Capt. Smith, and the ships stop at the Canary Islands for water. They head out for the West Indies. Capt. Smith is now chained only by his ankles, and writes an account of the journey. He asks Samuel about how he learned to read, and Samuel shares how his mother taught him, and that she herself was taught by the son of their landlord. This noble's son gave her the locket when she turned thirteen years old. He was sent away when their relationship was discovered.

When Samuel wonders how Capt. Smith can remain so calm in the face of his imprisonment and write, Smith tells him that he is imitating what Julius Caesar did when he was in prison. Because he has retained his dignity, he has gained the respect of the other passengers, who now question Wingfield's accusations.

Richard shares some rumors he has heard about the dress and appearance of the New World natives. He has also heard that the Carib Indians are cannibals, which scares James. Samuel doesn't believe any of what Richard says, and informs the other boys that the sailors are lying to them for fun. When "Land Ho!" is heard, Samuel sneaks up on deck to see the first Caribbean islands with some of the other passengers, who are soon shooed back below deck. They are hoping to be allowed off the ship and looking forward to fresh food and water.

Soon, they hear shouts of fear about Native people coming to the ship. Samuel again sneaks up to see, and finds that they are, indeed, as described—naked and painted and tattooed. Capt. Smith is released to talk to them. Unlike the others, he is unafraid. He speaks and signs to them, telling them they come in peace, and want to trade for food. Trade goes on all afternoon, from canoe to ships, and Samuel tastes a pineapple for the first time, as well as other new fruits and vegetables.

When Samuel attends to Capt. Smith's injured ankles, he asks how he knew the Indians' language, and Smith tells him that he only used signs and spoke the Algonquian language, which is what the natives of Virginia speak. He wants others to think he is needed as a translator. When Samuel asks Smith whether the Caribs were really cannibals, Smith jokes instead of answering directly.

As they travel from island to island in the Caribbean, Samuel sneaks up on deck often to see, and is often beaten as a result. The weather is quite hot, and the passengers have shed their formal clothing. Once, when the ship is anchored and some men go ashore, Samuel and Capt. Smith see a whale being chased by a thresher shark and a swordfish. The two fish kill the whale. Smith comments that now that they are away from England, lowlier creatures can bring down the bigger ones, and Samuel understands that he is speaking of Wingfield. Their conversation is overheard by Master Clovell.



Soon they land at another island, and all 105 men and boys in their company plus the sailors are all to disembark. They expect to see Carib Indians, but plan to trade with them.

On the beach, Richard and James play in the water. Samuel is surprised they haven't mocked him for being wrong about how the Caribs looked. They invite him to play in the water as well, and when he hesitates, Richard teases him. Samuel splashes him, not entirely in fun. The other boys wish to stay on the island forever, but Samuel is still thinking of the riches he will find in Virginia. Eventually, Rev. Hunt calls them out to protect themselves from the hot sun and to get to work scrubbing pots. The bigger servants are going to cut a path demanded by the gentlemen through the forest to a bathing area. Samuel attempts to join the path clearing crew, but Henry hits him and sends him back. Samuel is unhappy with the hot and difficult work, until he hears screams in the woods.

At first everyone thinks they're being attacked by Indians, and everyone including Samuel, armed with a sword he grabbed, goes to battle. However, they find the men hopping around in pain from an unknown source. Capt. Smith informs them that one of them has chopped a poisonous tree. Samuel is impressed with Smith's knowledge. Smith blames Capt. Ratcliffe for insisting on clearing a path for the gentlemen. Instead of heeding Smith, Ratcliffe insists a new crew continue clearing the path.

When Smith sees that Samuel has borrowed a rusty sword, he shows him how to clean it. Samuel worries that he will do it wrong, and Smith will beat him. When he cuts his hand, Smith encourages him. He cleans it successfully and returns the sword. Later, Samuel finds that despite all the ways Capt. Smith has proved his usefulness, a gallows is still being built to hang him.

Analysis

In Chapter 5, the reader learns a bit more of Samuel's backstory, and the source of the locket he stole from the pawnshop back in Chapter 1. Without his mother's ill-fated relationship with the landlord's son, Samuel would not have had the opportunity to learn to read. The class difference between his mother and the noble's son is enough to end their relationship.

The themes of Class Conflict and Power and Working Together are further emphasized with Smith's comments about the whale who is killed by the shark and the swordfish. A seemingly impossible event is used to illustrate that by working together, those of lower class can defeat one more powerful than them. But the foolhardy nature of the gentlemen is further illustrated when, instead of tromping through the forest like the others, they insist on making the lower class people clear the way for them. It shows the absurd lengths the gentlemen will go to for comfort. This results in literal pain for the workers, and Smith doesn't hold back his criticism, which would have been heard and agreed to by any of the commoners. With these carefully chosen acts, he proves his



worth to those most likely to support him. But Ratcliffe ignores him; he would never listen to a commoner, no matter the logic.

Samuel sees another expression of Smith's wisdom and experience in the encounter with the friendly Caribs. Instead of being afraid, Smith goes so far as to speak the wrong language to them, in order to show the colonists how much he is needed. In this way the author further illustrates and contrasts the theme of Good Leadership.

Samuel is surprised by the way Smith treats him. He finds that instead of abusing him for mistakes, he is encouraged in learning to do things correctly. He is also surprised to find that Richard and James don't mistreat him for his mistaken assumptions about the Caribs. These are both evidently new experiences for Samuel.

The theme of Culture Clash is explored in this chapter for the first time. When Richard shares the rumors about the Natives' appearance, the reader sees through Samuel's eyes just how strange these descriptions would have been to a boy of his time period. There is a glimpse of the shock an English boy would have experienced in seeing them for the first time. The fact that they are friendly, despite the rumor that they are cannibals, illustrates the tension between the need for food and the fear the colonists experienced. A modern reader sees that a fruit we now see as relatively ordinary, a pineapple, is exotic and different to these people.

The theme of Coming of Age is addressed when Samuel wishes to work with the men and is rebuffed. He is not ready for a man's work, and lucky for him, since they end up dealing with a poisonous tree. Likewise, Samuel sees that learning new things and failing might not only lead to punishment, but rather that if he accepts teaching he may learn new skills.

Discussion Question 1

What are some of the things Smith does to gain the respect of the colonists?

Discussion Question 2

Explain how the incident with the whale shows what less powerful people can do, now that they are away from England.

Discussion Question 3

What are some of the ways Samuel is proven wrong in his beliefs about other people?

Vocabulary

retching, quill, commoner, gullible, translucent, lush, plantains, tallow, murky, thresher, perseverance, taunting, prig, delousing, cuffs, converge, writhing, tarnished



Chapters 7 - 8

Summary

The hanging of Capt. Smith seems to be inevitable, but Smith doesn't seem worried. He tells the boys tales about previous dangerous situations he has survived, and they see how brave he is. Rev. Hunt leads a long church service in which he attempts to show the gentlemen how wrongly they are behaving without telling them directly. Later, Hunt succeeds in gaining Smith's release by persuading the gentlemen that they will all die without Smith to deal with the Natives. He asks Smith to pretend to have respect for the gentlemen for his own good. Smith agrees to this, but Samuel doubts he can do it. The gallows are taken apart and burned in a fire.

The colonists spend six days on the island, Nevis, recovering from the long sea journey. Then they move on. They stop at another island and the gentlemen go hunting. Because they don't dress for the weather or take enough water with them, one gentleman dies. Smith is careful that his complaints about their stupidity aren't overheard. They bury the man on the island and leave him behind. Samuel has a nightmare about cannibals digging up the body to eat, but reassures himself when he awakens that even a cannibal wouldn't do such a thing.

In Chapter 8, the ships move up the coast without stopping in Florida, because the land belongs to the Spanish. A bad storm blows up, and the passengers have to shut themselves below deck again, which smells badly. The gentlemen begin to complain again, worrying they are off course. The boys worry about dying. Samuel makes fun of James for crying, and Richard defends him by calling Samuel names. There is a fight. Smith drags Samuel away and punishes him by making him stand on one foot. Because of the rocking of the ship, Samuel can't do it. Smith tells him that this is lesson for him on how they need to stand together to survive. He chains Samuel to the wall, saying that if he can't teach the gentlemen this lesson, he can at least teach his page.

After the storm, land is spotted. Samuel is still chained to the wall but is too stubborn to call for help. Hunt brings Richard over to apologize for their fight, which he does. Samuel is still too proud to ask for a slop bucket, and Smith mocks him. Finally, Samuel begs for a bucket, which Richard provides. Smith then unchains Samuel, telling him that he needs to learn how to channel his anger. Samuel realizes this is what Smith is doing by writing his own account of their journey, telling his side of the story.

The passengers are finally allowed up on deck to view the shore. When a group of thirty men prepares to go ashore, Wingfield insists they bring picks and shovels to dig for gold. Smith tells them this is foolish, but Wingfield informs everyone that turning a profit as soon as possible is their top priority. The passengers left onboard discuss what they will do when they finally are allowed onshore, most of them thinking about how they will get rich. Rev. Hunt is the only one to have different plans, saying again that he wants to bring Christianity to the natives and look for Roanoke survivors.



Dinner is prepared, and just as the explorers return, they are attacked by natives. By the time the muskets are ready to shoot back, the Indians retreat. One gentleman and a sailor are shot by arrows. Samuel sees that the land is occupied and that bows and arrows can be better weapons than muskets in some situations.

Analysis

Capt. Smith's courage and wisdom continue to be on display in these chapters. Despite the fact that a gallows is ready, Smith is calm and seems unaffected by his impending execution. He tells the boys about some of his past adventures, and they see that bravery is nothing new for him. He has escaped similar situations before. Rev. Hunt is the one who saves him by first attempting to show the gentlemen that their behavior is un-Christian, but then by appealing to practicalities. He persuades them that they will die without Smith's talents for communicating with the Indians. Instead of screaming his rage at Wingfield and the unfairness of what is happening, he quietly writes his own side of the story. He has the wisdom to see that there will be value in doing so. In this way the author further illustrates and explores the theme of Good Leadership.

The gentlemen continue to demonstrate their foolish arrogance in the face of changed circumstances. When they go hunting in the heat of the Caribbean, they insist on behaving just as they would back home in England. This causes the senseless death of one of the gentlemen. Later, when they land in Virginia, Wingfield insists that their first priority is to be finding gold, rather than thinking about practical things like where they will build the settlement and how things are where they have landed. This leads to them being unprepared when they are attacked by the natives, and two more settlers are injured. Not only are they exhibited as failures regarding the theme of Good Leadership, their inability to adapt to different weather and circumstances lead to death. When the Natives attack the colonists, Samuel is faced with the reality that the land is not empty, further setting up the theme of Culture Clash. The colonists make assumptions, and the result is violence.

Samuel treats the other servant boys badly and fails to control his anger, which leads to his first real punishment at the hands of Capt. Smith. But instead of being beaten like he expects, Samuel is given the silly but illustrative task of standing on one foot during the storm. In this way, we see that Capt. Smith is careful to make any punishment do some good, making it easier for Samuel to understand the consequences of his actions. He cannot stand in the storm, and so must realize that they all must stand together. He must not be cruel to the other boys, because he will need them in the future for his survival. When he still holds himself apart, too proud to ask for a slop bucket when he has to urinate, he again gets the lesson reinforced. Without his fellow servant boys, he will suffer. Here the author explicitly addresses the theme of Working Together.

Discussion Question 1

Who succeeds in getting Capt. Smith released from his chains? How?



Discussion Question 2

How does Capt. Smith punish Samuel for fighting with his fellow servant boys? What is he expected to learn, and why is it important?

Discussion Question 3

What are ways the gentlemen demonstrate an inability to change to new ways of thinking? What are the consequences?

Vocabulary

factions, shucked, exalted, teeming, expedition, massacred, rigging, torrents, ill-fated, punctuated, frantic, whimper, flailing, glowering, ruckus, gloating, channeling, savages, desolate, disdainful, disembark, muskets, prime



Chapters 9 - 10

Summary

The servant boys are worried that they have traveled across the ocean just to be killed. They didn't expect the Natives to want to kill them. Samuel asks Capt. Smith how they will build a settlement if they have to win a war first. Smith responds that they have brought many items to trade, and all they need to do is find a place the Natives don't want. He says it's important that there isn't a war since they are so vastly outnumbered. However, Samuel still worries that the boys at the orphanage were right, and that they would all die.

The settlers open the box containing the names of their appointed leaders and instructions from the Virginia Company. The council will be made up of several gentlemen, but also Capt. Smith. The gentlemen object, saying he is a criminal. So this instruction is disallowed. Smith accepts their decision, telling Samuel that they will look to him for advice soon enough. They have also been instructed to pick the town site carefully, so as to protect themselves from the Spanish. They are to trade with the Native Americans and be careful not to offend them. A final rule is that they are not allowed to write anything bad about the New World in letters home, because the company doesn't want to discourage other settlers.

A group of gentlemen go to find a townsite and meet many friendly Natives. They find a place they call Point Comfort, and call their first landing place Cape Henry. They find no Roanoke survivors. Seventeen days after landing, the council chooses a settlement location along the river, a place that is good for mooring the ships, has plenty of wild food and isn't near any native villages. They name the river the James River and the settlement James Town, after the king. Master Wingfield is to be their first president. The settlers spend their last night aboard the ships on May 13, 1607.

The servants are set to clearing land, and Samuel reluctantly attempts to work with the other boys. However, they are suspicious of him because of his prior behavior, and so he ends up working alone. Several days are spent unloading, setting up tents, planting, and gathering food and water. They also get to work logging and gathering sassafras for export. All of this is exhausting, but the gentlemen do not join in the difficult labor.

One day Samuel is working in the garden and looks up to see two Native men. The guards prepare to shoot them, but Samuel hears them call out a greeting and sees they have baskets of trade goods. He sees that the physical descriptions he has heard and dismissed are true. Capt. Smith joins the group and talks to them, and the settlers trade glass beads and copper for the Indian bread and berries. After this, there is trade almost every day. Samuel is puzzled about the high value the Natives place on glass beads, but realizes that since they don't have the means to make them, they are like jewels.



Capt. Smith tells the others that the Natives are actually spies and plotting an attack. He tries to persuade the settlers that they ought to build a palisade to protect themselves, but Wingfield disagrees. The settlers are divided in their opinions. Some begin to carry their weapons and wear armor all the time. The servant boys debate what they will do if they are attacked, wondering if a mattress would protect them from arrows. James says he will run to the ships. Samuel doesn't tell him he thinks this is a bad idea, because Rev. Hunt has chastised him for being unkind to the boys.

As Chapter 10 begins, several gentlemen and sailors go exploring for precious metals, taking along Capt. Smith as interpreter. They don't take along much food because they expect to be welcomed in Native villages along the way.

Back in James Town, the others build a chapel for Rev. Hunt, who decides that they will hold common prayer twice every day and two sermons on Sunday. The crops are not growing well due to lack of rain and they are being watered by too-salty water. Samuel wonders how he can repair his poor relationships with Richard and James, who stay clear of him.

Samuel goes out to the woods to relieve himself and thinks he hears and sees someone hiding out there. He calls and no one responds. Later, when most of the settlers are asleep, the attack comes. Samuel tries to stop James from running out of the tent in effort to get to the ships, but fails and he escapes. Richard and Samuel hide under their straw mattress as arrows hit all around them. A cannon is fired from one of the ships and the Indians retreat. The man servant Abram has been wounded by an arrow just outside their tent. In total, seventeen men are wounded, and James has been killed.

Analysis

The author does a good job depicting the uncertainties and confusion that mark the clash of these two vastly different cultures; these descriptions further explore the theme of Culture Clash. There is no real answer to why they have been attacked, and so all they can do is depend upon the experiences and language skills of Capt. Smith, who says that their success will be dependent upon trade.

The instructions of the distant entity, the Virginia Company, will be readily understood as both oddly disconnected from the realities of the colonists. On the one hand, their instructions to be cautious and defensive make sense, but these instructions pertain to the Spanish, which the settlers have not seen a bit of. They are to be careful not to offend the Natives, but since there has been no education about what those offenses might be, everything seems dangerous. The instruction not to write bad things about the New World will be seen by most readers as deeply unfair and restrictive. These settlers are not, after all, free people, but employees of the Virginia Company.

Again, Smith's restraint is emphasized: he doesn't object when the gentlemen refuse to allow him onto the council, knowing they will need him nonetheless. In this way he



demonstrates the theme of Good Leadership. A good leader doesn't need to argue his value; it is evident.

The hard work of building a settlement gets a lot of attention in this chapter, and the precariousness of their situation. They plant seeds right away, but they don't grow well when the rain doesn't come. What will they do if they have no food? The fact that the gentlemen again stick to the old ways and their rank is most stark again, when everyone else is lending a hand to the difficult work at hand. The theme of Class Conflict and Power therefore is again illustrated. Why do the gentlemen get to avoid doing hard work, when it is necessary for their survival?

Samuel's first face-to-face meeting with the Indians is mixed. He is naturally afraid and sees that the descriptions of their clothing and hair styles are as he has been told and not believed. But he hears a greeting he understands, and knows they won't hurt him, and that they, in fact, bring delicious food. The cultural clash is stark: both cultures trade away things they have in plenty. The Natives have plenty of food. The settlers have plenty of copper pots and glass beads. These things are worth a great deal to those who receive them. It is only when Samuel reflects on how rare glass would be to the Natives that he understands their value. These encounters illustrate the theme of Cultural Clash.

The tension is high. When everyone who has armor and weaponry start to carry them all the time, the reader can imagine how it would feel to be a servant boy or commoner who does not have these items. Debating whether a mattress will save your life seems absurd, and so James' idea of running toward the ship doesn't seem so bad. It is only after the battle that Samuel realizes that if they'd talked more about possible scenarios, James' life might have been saved. In other words, if they'd been better friends, James might have lived. Not working together like a team can lead to death. In this way, the author addresses the theme of Working Together.

Discussion Question 1

What are some possible reasons the Virginia Company kept the box with their instructions sealed until they arrived in Virginia? What were the instructions? Do you anticipate any possible problems in following them?

Discussion Question 2

What are some major differences of opinion between the council and Captain Smith?

Discussion Question 3

How does the lack of good friendship between the servant boys lead to tragedy?

Vocabulary

offend, moor, mussels, peninsula, bluffs, inclination, saplings, sassafras, lulling, palisade, fortification, merits, yoke, interaction, despised, pews, wilting, sermons, bolt, heave



Chapters 11 - 12

Summary

Samuel feels deeply responsible for James' death. Rev. Hunt counsels him that forgiveness is for oneself as well as for others. The settlers work to repair the camp. Samuel wonders if Richard will forgive him. The explorers return early because their Indian guide behaved strangely and then abandoned them, and it led them to become worried about what was happening back in James Town.

The explorers share important information with the council about how the Powhatan tribes are organized into an empire, with Chief Powhatan as their leader. They hear of the prophesied threat to the empire that predicts that the Powhatans believe will come from where they have located their town. They hear that the Indian tribe that lived on Chesapeake Bay before their arrival was exterminated as a result of this prophecy.

The settlement was attacked by 400 warriors, and without the cannons, the settlement would have been easily wiped out. Wingfield decides they must have 24-hour guards and a fort. Samuel is glad there are still sailors and other working men to help, however, since many of the gentlemen are still reluctant to dirty themselves with serious work. Anyone who goes too far from the fort is attacked by Indians, including their animals. Master Clovell is killed while out hunting, as well as another man and a dog.

After Master Clovell's death, Samuel inherits his sword and armor, and Capt. Smith trains him to use it. Smith tells Samuel he will receive another important tool, which Samuel anticipates will be a musket. Instead of a gun, however, Smith brings him an Algonquian vocabulary book, which Smith says will protect him.

The charges against Capt. Smith are dropped and he is admitted to the council. On June 22, two of the ships leave for England, carrying lumber, sassafras root, and rocks that might contain gold. They also take a lot of the settlement's food, leaving them only 14 weeks' worth of wheat and barley. Their return is expected in October.

Many settlers fall ill and die. They are too sick to look for food or tend the crops. The settlers debate what is causing the illness. Capt. Wingfield is one of the few who are not sick. Samuel overhears Henry and Abram, and learns that Wingfield is secretly hoarding food. Henry realizes he has heard, and makes Samuel swear to God that he will not tell.

Half the men die. Samuel asks Rev. Hunt's advice about his oath, but doesn't tell him the secret or who made him swear to keep it. Rev. Hunt tells him that he must follow his heart and choose love over fear. Samuel tells Capt. Smith what he knows.



Analysis

In the aftermath of James' death, Samuel must learn to forgive himself and also figure out how to heal his relationship with Richard. He has learned an important lesson about working together—further addressing the theme—with his fellow settlers, and how important that mandate is. When it turns out that President Wingfield is hoarding food, it doesn't take him long to realize that an oath to God that was forced upon him doesn't fit within the idea of working for the common good, out of love rather than fear. For the good of everyone, he must break his oath, furthering the explicit theme of Love versus Fear.

The information about the Powhatan empire is important, and furthers the theme of Culture Clash. It brings home the idea that the Powhatans are not simply "savages" without organization or communication with one another, but, rather, a sophisticated society that must be dealt with politically and diplomatically. Not only did the places have names before the settlers arrived, but there were people there as well, who were likewise wiped out for posing a possible threat to the Powhatans. It has only been the power of the cannons that saved them this time, but it won't be enough to save them from dying. Being confined to a small space, inside the fort, will mean bad news.

Again illness as a way to die rears its head. Half the colony succumbs not to violent death but to a mysterious illness. Its causes might be anything as unlikely as a curse, poison or simply lack of proper nutrition. The insecurity of life in this New World, how easily one might die, is emphasized.

The theme of Coming of Age is addressed in the situation with the sword and armor. Samuel is welcomed prematurely into manhood by being granted a sword and armor, but when he expects a musket as well, he is told that learning Algonquian is a far better and protective tool. Samuel understands this pretty quickly—with only Capt. Smith having a grasp on the language, what would happen if Smith were to die in this unsafe place? Samuel enjoys learning the language and sees its usefulness not only for pleasure's sake, but also because he recognizes it may help him gain status within the colony. It is apparent that this skill is far more important than learning to shoot a musket.

Discussion Question 1

What happened to the Chesapeake tribe that lived where James Town is now? Why is this information important to the settlers?

Discussion Question 2

How might learning the Algonquian language be more useful than a musket?



Discussion Question 3

What do you think is the most likely cause of the illness that is killing so many of the settlers?

Vocabulary

dismayed, empire, trench, apprentice, sheath, lunge, impaled, terrapin, interceded, nauseated, communal, theories, fare, spite, dwindling, lean, foul, capable



Chapters 13 - 14

Summary

President Wingfield is deposed as president and arrested. He is jailed on board the Discovery and his food hoard is shared with everyone. His defense is that he was saving it in case the settlement ran out of food. Capt. Ratcliffe becomes president.

People begin to recover from the mysterious illness. It has rained and the river no longer is salty.

Capt. Smith has taken full responsibility for having found Wingfield's illegal stash of food, so Henry is not aware of Samuel's role in Wingfield's arrest. Samuel and Richard become friends. With all the deaths, Samuel finds some extra adult armor that is altered to fit Richard. Capt. Smith trains all the remaining settlers in musketry. Samuel wonders why the Natives haven't attacked them, since now there are only fifty settlers. He thinks it's possible they are simply waiting for them to starve to death. There is plenty of food outside the fort, but people are too afraid to leave the fort to gather it. They leave the fort only to bury the dead.

One day, a group of Natives come with food to trade. They tell the settlers that some of the tribes are friendly while others are their enemies. The enemy tribes are the ones who live nearby. The friendly tribes will attempt to negotiate a truce, and tell the settlers to cut down the long grasses near the fort, which is where their enemies hide. Capt. Smith trades with them, and the settlers get good food to eat.

Capt. Newport doesn't return with fresh supplies in October as expected, but the settlers are now eating well, since the truce appears to be working. Hunting and fishing go on without danger. The gardens don't yield well, but there is a lot of good trade between the settlement and the Indians. Smith is in charge of trade and managing the building of houses for everyone before winter sets in. Nearly everyone helps, including some of the gentlemen. By the time it is cold, everyone has a house to live in.

Smith and nine men set off up a river to find a water passage to the Pacific Ocean. Smith explains how it will make the trade with China and India less expensive than going through the Ottoman Empire. However, once the expedition sets off, many of the settlers stop working so hard, leaving the work to the younger servants.

When the explorers return, Capt. Smith is not with them. The river got too narrow, so Smith and two others went in search of a canoe and guide and never returned. Then one of the waiting group was kidnapped by hostile Indians, so the rest escaped back to James Town. Samuel worries about Smith's possible fate as well as his own. His only solace is that he has Rev. Hunt as an ally, and he and Richard are now friends.

Eventually, a letter arrives from Capt. Smith, delivered by Indian messengers. He writes that they should intimidate the Indians a bit with their weaponry and give them some



glass beads, copper and hatchets. He reveals that he is staying with the Pamunkeys, a friendly tribe.

One day after New Year's in 1608, Richard and Samuel realize that all their food and the gentlemen are missing.

Analysis

Once again, the theme of Class Conflict and Power is addressed, and the contrast between the attitudes of at least some of the gentlemen and the commoners comes into stark relief. Wingfield remains healthy by keeping food for himself and letting the other settlers starve. In this chapter, the themes of Good Leadership and Working Together are also exemplified. Here in the New World, it isn't only gentlemen who may defend themselves with weapons and armor, but now everyone must do so. There are only fifty remaining settlers, and changes will have to happen if they are to survive. When Smith takes over some of the leadership in building houses for everyone, it is only accomplished because most everyone helps, instead of letting the servants do all the work.

However, it isn't the resolution of Wingfield's treachery that saves them, but friendly Natives, who share important political skill and information with the settlers. The truce and renewed trade are what save them from starving when the ship doesn't return.

The priorities of the Virginia Company lead to the colony splitting up for exploration's sake. While it might be good for the Virginia Company to find a water route to Asia, it certainly doesn't do a thing to help the colonists survive, and in fact leads to the deaths of two more men and Capt. Smith's long absence. This absence leads to a return to an old status quo, where the younger servants without status are the ones left with the work. And eventually, the gentlemen again ignore their contracts and honor and leave the commoners to starve.

The theme of Class Conflict and Power is exemplified with this tension between the Old World and the New World. How these Englishmen shall live is a major issue in the book: if the colonists are to survive, they must discard the ways of lords versus serfs and the Old World caste system.

Discussion Question 1

What event saves the settlers from starvation?

Discussion Question 2

How is it that everyone gets a house to live in by wintertime?



Discussion Question 3

For what purpose do a group of settlers go exploring? What happens to them?

Vocabulary

allowance, dole, stash, warily, cringe, ignite, intercede, negotiate, thatch, pitiful, exhorting, tuppence, shirk, embers, eaves, cassock, hominy, hoar



Chapters 15 - 16

Summary

Ten to twelve gentlemen have loaded up the Discovery and prepared to abandon James Town for England, leaving the 25 commoners to starve. The commoners debate whether to shoot at them, because it might be better to die fighting than of lack of food. However, there is no wind, and Rev. Hunt decides to pray for a resolution. Capt. Smith returns in the company of a dozen Native men. He takes command and they aim the cannons at the ship, and demand the gentlemen return or be sunk. The gentlemen question what happened to the two other settlers Capt. Smith was with, and when he tells them they are dead, they leave the ship with the provisions. Samuel worries about how easily they capitulated. Smith offers the cannons to the Indians, knowing they will be far too heavy to transport. Instead, they accept beads, trinkets and a copper pot.

The commoners gather to hear what happened to Smith in the past months, and the gentlemen again disappear somewhere. He tells the settlers he was taken prisoner and paraded from village to village. Eventually he was taken to Wahunsonacock, the Great Powhatan. They posed him for execution by having his head bashed in by clubs, and he couldn't escape. A little girl of nine or ten years old saved him by laying her head over his.

President Ratcliffe and the other gentlemen come back and arrest Capt. Smith for the deaths of his two fellow travelers. They declare he will be executed for his crimes. Smith objects, saying there is no English law that would make him responsible for their deaths, but they drag him away. As they do, Samuel throws a rock that hits Master Archer in the head. He then runs at Master Archer, intending to attack him.

Samuel trips and fails in his attack. Archer tries to have him arrested, but Rev. Hunt intervenes. Hunt privately tells Samuel he must pray for humility, since if Smith is executed he will likely become the servant of one of the other gentlemen. When Samuel asks why Hunt doesn't do anything to save Smith, Hunt tells him he has no authority. Samuel thinks that because Hunt speaks for God, he should be respected for it.

After the boys and Hunt pray together, they return to the communal fire to find that the laborers and servants are discussing the merits of killing and overthrowing the gentlemen. Hunt tells them that it will mean the end of the colony, but they ignore him. Samuel and Richard go to the river and worry together about what will happen. Now Samuel understands how the Roanoke Colony could just disappear without a trace. They see a ship in the distance, coming up the river. When they see it is flying an English flag and Captain Newport is aboard, they go tell everyone.



Analysis

The rift between the gentlemen and the commoners hits a head in these chapters. The entire population of gentlemen is willing to let the commoners starve to death. When Capt. Smith arrives, the commoners celebrate his return, but the gentlemen find an excuse to arrest him yet again on the trumped up charge that he was somehow responsible for the deaths of the men he left the expedition with. The fact that no evidence has been given about what happened tells the rest of the settlers just how determined they are to get rid of the man, whose only crime appears to be is that he's a commoner not given to subservience. Again, the theme of Class Conflict is addressed.

Capt. Smith's retelling of his experience with the Great Powhatan will be familiar to most readers. This is the mythical tale of Capt. Smith being saved by Pocahontas. The question of whether or not this was a true near-death experience or a ritual death is left open to interpretation, a concept that might be new to readers. Was Capt. Smith's life in danger, or was it a way to give him a rebirth and adoption into the Native community? In this incident, the reader finds the theme of Culture Clash further expanded upon.

It is only the arrival of Captain Newport, a closer representative of the Virginia Company, that will save Capt. Smith, or at least that is Samuel and Richard's hope. Captain Newport is the only authority who can stand between them, and it is only by sheer luck that he arrives just in time to save the day.

The unrest in the colony further addresses the themes of Class Conflict and Working Together. The impulse to revolution is strong, but Hunt and the boys can see that this impulse might very well be how Roanoke fell apart and disappeared. There are less than fifty men who remain of what was a hundred. Those losses were due to violence, starvation and disease. If they then go to war with each other, more will die. Who then will be left to maintain the colony?

Discussion Question 1

What persuades the gentlemen to come off the ship and return to the colony? What do you think they hope to accomplish by arresting Capt. Smith?

Discussion Question 2

Do you think that Capt. Smith's experience with Powhatan was a ritual or did Pocahontas save him from being killed? Why?

Discussion Question 3

How might the Roanoke Colony have disappeared, based on the experiences of the James Town colonists?

Vocabulary

clamoring, disembark, oration, seething, pummel, depose, humility, nudge, horizon



Chapters 17 - 18

Summary

Capt. Newport's arrival brings many changes. Capt. Smith is freed and Master Archer is removed from the council. Most importantly, there are 60 new colonists, as well as many new domestic animals and much food. There is also a new servant boy named Thomas Savage. There is no more talk of leaving, since everyone is eating well and there is peace between the gentlemen and commoners.

A group of Indians come with gifts of food, led by Chief Powhatan's daughter. Samuel admires her because of her great courage. He uses the Algonquian language he has learned to speak to her and translate for Richard as they show her around. Samuel is surprised that she is nothing like he imagines a princess to be. She is curious about everything, especially the objects belonging to Capt. Smith. She is also very playful and mischievous. She races the boys and teaches them to do cartwheels.

The rocks the colonists sent to England have proved to be worthless, so another group of prospectors is sent out to look for gold. After they leave, a fire breaks out and burns down the fort and most of the houses. Most of their belongings and their stored food are burnt up.

Once again, the settlers are saved by the kindness of the Indians (and especially their relationship with Pocahontas). The Powhatans bring them warm furs and skins and food. Samuel also sees that in this crisis, he has changed, and learned to depend upon others.

The settlers have to return to living in tents, and some men die in the cold. But they rebuild the fort, bigger than before. Thomas Savage is sent to the Powhatan village and an Indian boy named Namontack comes to live with the settlers, staying with the other servant boys in their tent. Rev. Hunt sees an opportunity to teach Namontack English and, therefore, about Christianity. Namontack also teaches Samuel more Algonquian words. Namontack tells Samuel that the Indian houses are warmer than those the settlers are building. Samuel hopes he will get an opportunity to visit an Indian village soon.

Namontack also tells Samuel he doesn't understand why Powhatan has allowed James Town to join the Powhatan empire, since they have no women or children. Samuel is shocked at the idea that they are considered to be part of Powhatan's empire, and learns that Capt. Smith's adoption by Powhatan as his son means they are all one people. This is why they were cared for after the fire. Samuel also understands clearly that Pocahontas's supposed rescue of Capt. Smith was actually a ritual in which he died and was reborn.



Samuel is concerned that the gentlemen will find out about the political reality of their relationship to the Powhatans, and that they are now considered by Chief Powhatan to be his subjects and Capt. Smith to be their chief.

When spring arrives, Newport's ship returns to England with more rocks that might contain gold, and Wingfield and Archer are sent back to England in disgrace. Namontack goes with them as well to collect information on Chief Powhatan's behalf.

The summer of 1608 goes better than the previous summer, since they now have a well, houses, and peaceful trade with the Natives. The serious illness that killed so many the previous summer returns as well, however, and it weakens many colonists. Rev. Hunt thinks that the illness is brought by the mosquitoes.

When Capt. Smith is absent from the colony, President Ratcliffe attempts to force all the working men to build him a fancy house. When Capt. Smith returns, the men complain. After some discussion Ratcliffe is removed as president, and is to be sent back to England as soon as possible. The colonists elect Capt. Smith as president.

Analysis

The arrival of 60 more colonists and the return of Capt. Newport brings peace and comfort to the colony. When Samuel meets Pocahontas, the "Indian princess," he is surprised at how differently her culture induces her to behave, which further expands on the theme of Culture Clash. She treats people well and without arrogance. She is unaffected by nudity, and has no problem beating the boys at races. Samuel rides with these cultural differences instead of being put off by them. He has no trouble enjoying himself now without self-consciousness. He also has learned to be a good friend.

The theme of Working Together is addressed in the near-tragedy of the fire, which points to the precariousness of the colony's position in the New World, and once again reinforces their dependence upon the now-allied Native Americans. Without their help, it is obvious that the colony would have died that winter. Instead, there is true cultural exchange, including a trade of individuals who teach each other about their respective cultures. This exchange explicitly addresses the Culture Clash theme. It is through this exchange that Samuel learns just how differently the Powhatan people and the English see their world. While the colonists see themselves as subjects of King James still (despite the fact that he lives far away and appears to care little for their well-being), the Powhatans have accepted the English colonists into what they see as their powerful empire. The reader will see this as a perspective shift: it is not "silly" of the Powhatans to have this belief. After all, who has all the food they need? Who is prospering? Who has no women and children? Who is made weak through sickness every summer? Who is torn apart by internal class conflict?

It is only the arrogance of the gentlemen who make this knowledge worrisome for Samuel. He knows that Smith is a practical and smart man who can navigate his way



through the two cultures safely, which further exemplifies the theme of Good Leadership.

The theme of Class Conflict and Power returns again in this chapter. In Capt. Smith's absence, an arrogant gentleman attempts to use his class status to force workers to do something absurd: build him a better house than the others. On the one hand, it might be natural for the President of James Town colony to have a house befitting his status. But in the unsteady world they live, this sort of affectation is truly silly. A waste of time. This conflict ends naturally in conflict and complaint—the workers are no longer afraid to speak their minds. When Ratcliffe is deposed and Capt. Smith is elected president, it is like sanity has finally come to James Town. Its natural leader, the leader the Powhatan people recognize, is now in charge. In this way, the theme of Good Leadership again appears.

Discussion Question 1

How is Pocahontas different from an English princess?

Discussion Question 2

How do you think the Powhatan people view the James Town colonists? How is this different from how the James Town colonists see themselves?

Discussion Question 3

How does Ratcliffe lose the presidency of the colony?

Vocabulary

smoldering, buffer, nimble, jostles, mischievous, shucking, mantle, quell, virtually, topple, drafty, subjects, vying, pinnacles, conjectures, idle



Chapters 19 - 20

Summary

Capt. Smith is sworn in as president on September 10, 1608. He declares that those who do not work will not eat. Because he divides rations fairly and works hard, he is a popular president. Though there are still some gentlemen who don't like Smith, they are outnumbered by those who respect him. Samuel wishes his mother could see that he is now the page of a commoner who is also a ruler of men.

Richard and Samuel plant beans and corn together the way Namontack taught them. Another ship arrives with 70 more colonists, including the first two women to come to James Town. Because there are no other women, they are the center of attention, especially Ann Burras, the unmarried servant.

Namontack also returns, speaking English fairly well. Rev. Hunt sees this as an opportunity to convert Namontack to Christianity. However, Namontack sees this as another cultural exchange, sharing information about the gods he believes in. This disappoints Rev. Hunt.

The rocks the colonists sent to England were yet again worthless. Since the search for precious metals hasn't worked, the Virginia Company has decided the colony is to make glass, pitch, tar and soap ashes for export. The company also has sent orders that the colonists are to crown Powhatan as an English prince so that his people will become English subjects. Samuel knows this will be a problem, since Powhatan believes that James Town is under his rule rather than England's. Samuel can see there will be conflict, since the gentlemen are not going to accept Powhatan's rule, and Powhatan and his people will not accept subjection to England either. This is especially so since Namontack has brought back a negative opinion of King James, seeing him as small, weak and smelly compared to Chief Powhatan. Samuel knows this opinion is true, since he has heard the King has been advised that bathing causes plague. The Natives, on the other hand, bathe regularly no matter the weather.

Capt. Smith is very angry about this plan to crown Powhatan, knowing that a man who sees himself as an emperor is unlikely to see being crowned a prince as an honor. Smith and Samuel and three others plan to travel to Werowocomoco, Powhatan's village, to invite Powhatan to James Town. They have to do what the Virginia Company tells them to.

The single men are competing for the attention of Ann Burras, who is fourteen years old and thus old enough to marry. The servant boys talk to her at the river. Samuel is concerned because it appears that her mistress is overworking her and possibly not feeding her enough. She tells them she has no time for romance, because she has to work so hard. Despite the rule that everyone must work, no one has seen Mrs. Forrest



do her fair share. After Ann leaves them, the boys speculate about which of the men she will marry.

Namontack and Samuel are excited to visit the Powhatan village. Namontack has brought gifts from England, all of which he says are not as good or useful as comparable objects in his village. Capt. Smith insists that Samuel bring along his sword and armor. Just before leaving, Samuel sees that John Laydon is making a beautiful box for Ann Burras.

When they leave, Samuel sees that Smith is fully armed, and this fact makes him very worried. When they arrive at Chief Powhatan's village, they find he is away. Mats are laid in a field and the colonists are joined by some of the tribe while a fire is built. Samuel is concerned when no food is brought, but everyone looks like they are waiting for something. Soon they hear what they think are battle cries in the forest, and Smith and Samuel prepare to defend themselves. Smith holds a sword to the throat of an old man. Pocahontas comes and stands between the two groups, promising no harm will come to them. Smith releases the old man, and translates what's happening to the soldiers and everyone disarms.

Pocahontas sits with Samuel and tells him he will enjoy what is about to happen. Painted women wearing skins and horns come and dance a warrior's dance for them. Afterward, Samuel uses an Algonquian word he has learned, "Wow!" This is the first masquerade he has ever seen, and he thinks that back in England only nobles would get such a performance. They go to one of the Powhatan houses for a feast. Namontack then hosts Samuel for the night in his home.

Before falling asleep, Samuel thinks to himself that indeed Namontack's village is better in many ways than James Town. He wishes he could move there because he could learn a lot and help the colony. He wonders if making a decision like this is what it means to make decisions out of love. The fact that he used to hate the Natives and wished them death seems strange to him now, because he now has Indian friends and they have saved his life and those of the colonists. He sees that the New World is a good place to be, as long as the peace continues. He wonders how long the peace will last.

Analysis

Things work well in the colony with Capt. Smith's new way of thinking. Everyone must contribute or they will not eat. This is in contrast with the old and unfair idea that simply because one has noble blood, one may do nothing. This fairness of purpose makes everything run smoothly at last, and the colonists finally get along for the most part. This portion of the book addresses the themes of Class Conflict and Good Leadership.

In addition, Indian customs of planting crops influence the colonists in a way that will likely help. The Natives ways of doing things have value, and if the colonists imitate them, they just might survive.



The fact that for years the colony has had no women has been repeated in the novel, a fact that many readers may not have known previously. This makes the arrival of the first women a big event, and a big change in the men's behavior. Ann's wishes are somewhat disregarded because, as a woman and a servant, she has no status. The custom is that she must choose a husband, and so she will. The only question is which one.

The Culture Clash theme is continued here. The Virginia Company's decision to "honor" Powhatan as an English prince will obviously bring the cultural differences between the Powhatans and the English to a head, a continued foreshadowing from previous chapters. Again, the reader sees England a bit through Namontack's eyes: King James is weak and doesn't bathe and, therefore, bears none of the characteristics valued by the Powhatans, for whom a leader must be a great and wise warrior chief. The Powhatans have no concept of hereditary leadership—they choose the best man for the job. In this, the election of Capt. Smith to the presidency of James Town reflects the value of this idea. Smith is the best leader for the job, regardless of his status as a commoner. He doesn't get his job because of who his father is or his noble blood. The theme of Good Leadership versus bad is therefore also exemplified.

A misunderstanding between cultures again almost leads to bloodshed, but again Pocahontas intervenes and reassures the visitors that they need to relax and enjoy themselves. Tension and fear are always just beneath the surface.

In the end of Chapter 20, Samuel foreshadows the future with his worries about how long the peace will last. In furtherance of the theme of Love versus Fear, he spends most of his thoughts wondering how to help not only himself by moving to the Powhatan village, but also the other colonists. He sees that if he acts out of love and not of fear, he could have happiness.

Discussion Question 1

What is the new rule that Capt. Smith institutes in the colony? How does this make the colonists get along better?

Discussion Question 2

Why are Samuel and Capt. Smith worried about the plan to Powhatan as an English prince? What are the differences between King James and Chief Powhatan?

Discussion Question 3

What are some of the ways Samuel finds life in the Powhatan village better than James Town?



Vocabulary

industrious, loiterers, rations, coif, petticoats, indigo, saffron, jostling, exalted, disdain, beau, dawdling, pewter, cassock, strutting, bandoleers, rushes, cicadas, expectant, wary, spellbound, masquerade, impish, coronation



Chapters 21 - 22

Summary

The next morning, Samuel sees Wahunsonacock, the Great Powhatan, for the first time. He is wearing a lot of copper and glass beads, which Samuel recognizes is a sign of his wealth and power. Capt. Smith invites Powhatan to James Town to receive gifts from King James. Samuel sees immediately that it is insulting to invite an emperor to another place to accept gifts. Powhatan refuses and says he will wait eight days for these gifts to be brought to him. He also says that Capt. Newport must come.

On the way back to James Town, Capt. Smith vents his anger, saying that the bad decisions of the Virginia Company owners will get them all killed.

Smith delivers Powhatan's message, and though Capt. Newport isn't happy about it, he resolves to go to Powhatan's village. He must obey the orders given him by the Virginia Company. They have many heavy gifts to bring, including a bed, furniture, a copper pot, wash basin and pitcher, a red cloak, shoes and the crown. When they come back a week later, Samuel hears how the coronation went.

He hears that when they tried to make Chief Powhatan kneel, he refused. The men pushed him on the shoulders which made him fall forward a bit, and this stumble gave the colonists the opportunity to put the crown on his head. Newport reports that the Chief was happy with his new position because Powhatan gave him his mantle. However, the soldiers disagree and also say that Powhatan gave Newport a stinky old pair of moccasins, which was an expression of his true attitude. Smith tells Samuel that this event will bring trouble.

Ann Burras and John Laydon get married. Samuel is pleased with the match. Rev. Hunt is very ill. Samuel helps the care for him. Hunt predicts that Samuel will someday rise above being just a servant, though Samuel doesn't believe it. Hunt tells him to learn from Smith about proper leadership. Samuel is sad that Hunt is dying, since Hunt is the first person he opened up to. On his deathbed, Samuel thanks Hunt for treating him well. Rev. Hunt dies.

The colony is not producing enough food to survive the winter because there is too much manpower devoted to mining and other profit oriented activities. Capt. Newport takes a lot of their food with him when he sails back to England. To Samuel's relief he also takes Captain Ratcliffe.

When the colonists attempt to trade with the Indians, they find that Chief Powhatan has instructed all the tribes not to trade with James Town. Smith tells Samuel that Powhatan is showing off his power. The settlers begin to starve on very small rations. Then two natives come to tell them Chief Powhatan wishes for a trade that includes weapons and workers to build an English-style house. Smith promises to give him anything he wants,



but adds in English that he won't give them the weapons. Smith and Samuel and some traders take the Discovery plus two barges loaded with gifts to Werowocomoco.

On the journey's first night, the colonists stop at a Warraskoyack village and are treated well. The chief of the village warns Smith not to trust Chief Powhatan. Smith has anticipated this possibility, and leaves Samuel at the village. Smith will send a message, and if he dies, Samuel will take the news back to James Town. Samuel doesn't like the plan, but holds his tongue. When they leave the next morning, Samuel wonders if it's the last time he will see Smith.

The Warraskoyack chief's son, Kainta, takes Samuel under his wing. He teaches him to make a bow and arrows. Later, they eat from the communal pot. Samuel realizes there are no set meal times, and that people just come and eat when they are hungry. He sees this as extreme wealth, since they don't have to ration their food. He learns a lot about native life in the village, along with manly skills. Namontack comes with a message from Smith that Samuel should stay in the Warraskoyack village for the rest of the winter. He is told that the James Town men successfully traded with Powhatan for corn, and though Pocahontas warned them of an impending attack, they were prepared and the attackers didn't have an opportunity. They returned to James Town without incident.

Samuel adopts many Indian ways. He learns to hunt successfully with a bow and arrow, gets his hair cut in the Indian style and begins to dress in native clothing and use local bug repellent, which colors his skin red.

When a group of Englishmen including Richard, Nathaniel, Henry and Abram come to find food, they don't recognize Samuel. Rats have eaten James Town's food stores, and Smith has sent the colonists to various places to find food. Samuel can't wait to share the skills he's learned, knowing it will help the colony feed itself.

Analysis

The theme of Culture Clash continues when Samuel sees Chief Powhatan, and he understands why it is insulting for the colonists to demand his visit to James Town to receive gifts. An emperor has gifts brought to him; he doesn't go anywhere to get them. When the gifts are brought, many of them would be viewed by the Powhatans as a novelty, but not necessarily all that useful. As the reader has learned from Namontack, a red cloak is nice for color, but isn't as warm as a fur mantle. English shoes are no good for forest travel.

The sense of awkwardness and even comedy in Newport's effort to crown Chief Powhatan, even in the second hand cause will cause the reader to feel both humor and shame. It is shameful that Newport's men have to trick Powhatan to receive the crown, but one can imagine how funny it must have been to see Newport mime kneeling repeatedly so the others think he looks like a marionette on strings. The fact that Powhatan gives Newport a smelly old pair of moccasins is both funny and worrisome. It



is foreshadowing a great change in the peace between the English colony and the people who up until now have ensured their survival.

Again, the wishes of the Virginia Company cause problems for the colony's survival, demanding too much time for profit making activities instead of the important problem of feeding themselves. Chief Powhatan shows them how dependent they are on him when he refuses to allow any trade. This allows him to ask more when they must have food or die. Smith gambles again that he can get away with sending a lot of trade goods without giving them weapons.

The theme of Coming of Age is exemplified in this chapter as new positive life is coming in the marriage of Ann Burras and John Laydon; but life ends too, and Samuel loses his mentor Reverend Hunt. Samuel is growing up; instead of holding in his emotions until it is too late, he says his goodbyes to Hunt and Hunt makes predictions about Samuel's future.

In the Warraskoyack village, Samuel continues his journey to manhood, learning Indian survival skills he is eager to bring back to the colony. Smith's decision to make him stay outside the colony is to Samuel's benefit in many ways. Not only is he saved from possible conflict with Powhatan, he learn skills and doesn't suffer the difficulties of living in the colony. Smith is acting in a fatherly way, almost, protecting him and giving him the opportunity to grow. Samuel fully embraces his new role, and dives right in to Indian ways of life and dress.

The abrupt contrast he is living from the lives of those in James Town is emphasized when the group of colonists, starving, come to the village to save themselves. Once again, the colonists can't survive without Indian kindness. And Samuel sees that the new skills he has learned could save them.

Discussion Question 1

How do Capt. Newport's men get Chief Powhatan to accept his crown? How do Capt. Newport interpret his reactions differently?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think Smith makes Samuel stay in the Warraskoyack village for the winter? What skills does Samuel learn, and how does he change?

Discussion Question 3

Name three ways life in the Indian village is different from that in James Town.



Vocabulary

marionette, smoldering, vigil, wielding, diminished, grindstone, helm, wily, plaited, frigid, puccoon, wan



Chapters 23 - 24

Summary

It is now the middle of the summer in 1609. Capt. Smith summons the men and boys back to James Town, because a ship has arrived with supplies and new colonists, including families with women and children. Samuel wonders why the company has done this, and Richard thinks they have come because no one is allowed to write anything negative in their letters home. Samuel is worried that the children will die in the winter.

Samuel finds returning to English ways and dress difficult, but he does so. He does wear the buckskin knife pouch he made. He dreams often of life back there in the Warraskoyack village. Ann Burras is now pregnant.

Samuel hears rumors that the reason they are sending families with children is that too many die off, and they want the colony to survive. Now there are nearly 500 colonists, and the settlement is overcrowded. Captain Archer and Captain Ratcliffe have also returned, and don't hide their hatred for Capt. Smith.

They are informed that a new charter has been written by the Virginia Company, and they are to have a governor to rule, instead of a president and a council. The governor will be Sir Thomas Gates, who is on his way to James Town with the charter. Ratcliffe tries to get Smith to step down, but in the absence of the new charter, Smith refuses. The new colonists don't respect Smith, because they know about the new charter. They scoff at his warnings about the Indians.

With the influx of new colonists, violence goes on between the colonists and the Indians. A group of colonists burn native houses, steal from them and violently attacked the natives. The natives defend themselves and retaliate. Samuel and Smith are very angry. Smith shouts at the renegade colonists about how their actions will start a war. Instead of punishing the violent colonists physically, Smith devises a plan to save them.

Smith tells them he will go and talk to the tribes and try to make peace. Most of the people who go with him are long-standing colonists, but two new gentlemen settlers ask to come along. At first Samuel thinks the two gentlemen just want to go exploring, but then he worries they might be plotting to attack Capt. Smith.

On the trip, Capt. Smith is badly burned when his powder bag explodes. He is brought back to James Town in severe pain and suffering from infection. Samuel learns that before he was injured, Capt. Smith was able to make peace with the village the renegade colonists attacked. However, the peace is unlikely to last. He calls Samuel and Richard to him, and he tells them that his power has been taken from him, that he can not use his hands and voice to help the colony, and so he will return to England. He will take Richard with him. He frees Samuel from his servitude, and tells him to stay and



help the colony. He will be John Laydon's carpenter's apprentice. Samuel is surprised at his freedom, and sad that they are leaving him.

It is important to prepare food for winter, but because Capt. Smith is ill, the settlers don't work as hard as they should. The gentlemen meet together to make lists of accusations against Capt. Smith. Samuel worries about the future.

Ann Laydon births the first English baby in James Town, a girl they name Virginia.

Analysis

The influx of so many new colonists bring vast changes. For the first time there are women and children, and many colonists who don't respect Capt. Smith's leadership and experience. The rule that the colonists aren't allowed to write letters telling the truth about their negative experiences has meant that newcomers have no real knowledge about the situation regarding food or the delicacy of maintaining good relations with the Native Americans. They don't know how dependent the colony has been on the kindness of the local tribes.

Samuel essentially returns from his idyllic life in the Indian village to a place full of violence and political conflict. Things are out of control, and even Capt. Smith cannot contain the situation. The absence of Capt. Smith's enemies was only temporary, and they have obviously spent their time in England gaining support for the status quo: the noblemen have essentially won the day, when it comes to political power. Capt. Smith's injuries—possibly caused by treachery—are the final nail in his political coffin. He can't win without his physical strength, and so he retreats. The one success he has managed is to stave off war with the Indians temporarily.

The themes of both Class Conflict/Power and Good Leadership reach their conclusion in these chapters. The fact that Capt. Smith, as a commoner, has to fight so hard to keep his power is a sort of foreshadowing of the struggle the English colonists fight in the American Revolution, far into the future. This macro view of American history will help readers to understand how long and difficult the struggle for freedom really was.

When Capt. Smith frees Samuel from his servitude, he is fulfilling part of Rev. Hunt's prediction for his future. As a carpenter's apprentice, he still has to serve, but it is in the interest of becoming his own man, rather than continuing as Henry and Abram have, passed from gentleman to gentleman as servants. This is a real act of mentorship by Smith, and completes in some ways the theme of Coming of Age.

Like in the death of Hunt versus the marriage of Ann and John Laydon, the waning of Capt. Smith's political and physical power serve as a contrast to the birth of the first English baby born in James Town. While one hope dims, another brightens.



Discussion Question 1

How has life changed in James Town since the arrival of the new colonists? How will the political leadership change?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Capt. Smith decide to return to England?

Discussion Question 3

What does Capt. Smith do for Samuel? How will this change his life?

Vocabulary

famish, charter, scoff, gloating, escapades, badger, relents, delirium, ransacked, apprentice, shirk, extinction, fiasco, midwife, lusty, incredulous



Chapters 25 - 26

Summary

Samuel helps Capt. Smith prepare to leave the colony. Smith gives Samuel two strands of blue glass beads to trade for food in the coming winter. Up until now Samuel has never touched the trade beads. He puts them in his buckskin pouch.

Smith instructs Samuel to channel his anger into strength to make things better. Samuel feels he's learned a lot from Smith. Smith tells Samuel he will return, and shakes his hand like an equal. Many of the settlers bid him a sad farewell. Samuel says goodbye to Richard as well. They joke about the unpleasantness of ship travel. Samuel tells him goodbye in the Indian custom.

James Town will not have enough food for winter, and Chief Powhatan has sent word that he is willing to trade. Captain Ratcliffe decides to take fifty men and trade goods to Powhatan's village. The new settlers are confident, but Samuel is concerned about the overcrowding and danger of unfriendly natives. He does find hope in a proposal to build a fort at Point Comfort, which is 30 miles from James Town. The idea is to protect James Town from Spanish invasion. John Laydon and Samuel plan to go to Point Comfort to help build the fort. Samuel knows their small group will do fine and is happy they will be close to the Warraskoyack village. The only problem is that Ann Laydon refuses to join them, preferring to stay where there are women and the protection of the palisade. Samuel tries to persuade John to force her to come where she will be safer, but it isn't in John's nature to do such a thing. Her stubbornness and ignorance angers Samuel, but he remembers Capt. Smith's lessons in channeling his rage. He resolves to steal baby Virginia.

The next morning, Samuel steals baby Virginia in his canoe, and tells girls near the river he is going to Point Comfort, imagining that it will force Ann to follow. When he arrives safely in Point Comfort, Nathaniel threatens to report him, but Samuel promises him his meat ration for a month if he doesn't, and Nathaniel agrees to stay quiet.

Samuel is arrested when Ann and John arrive. He tries to explain his reasoning, but to no avail. He worries that he may be hanged for his crime.

Word comes from James Town that Chief Powhatan's trade offer was a trap, and most of the men were killed. Captain Ratcliffe was tortured to death. Samuel is taken out of the brig, thinking he will face sentencing and punishment.

Analysis

The theme of Coming of Age is brought to the fore in this chapter. When Capt. Smith passes the blue glass trade beads to Samuel, he is in effect passing on his status as intermediary between the settlers and the Indians to Samuel. Samuel is too young to be



recognized this way by the new settlers, but it is a power Samuel can put away in his buckskin pouch for use when it becomes necessary.

The hope of escape from the problems of James Town are granted by the expansion of the colony to Point Comfort. It is to help protect James Town from the supposed threat from the Spanish, but it offers a new start to those who see the problems of James Town only getting worse. The only problem is Ann Burras. On the one hand, her stubbornness could be justified: Point Comfort is far away from the protection of a fort, and she would be returning to the status of solitary woman in the wilderness. Samuel's rash plan to kidnap baby Virginia could be either a wise move or the move of a silly young man who doesn't really know what he's doing. The reader should notice the tension in the decision: Is Samuel acting out of love or fear? Is he acting like a child or a man?

When he is arrested and jailed, with the potential of death as a consequence, it seems he's made a terrible mistake. When the angry Ann arrives with her husband, the reader can feel he's made a stupid decision—that he's made a child's decision. Even though it turns out his fears were somewhat justified—there is now the risk of danger to James Town both through starvation and war—he may suffer for his choice.

Discussion Question 1

What does Capt. Smith give to Samuel before he leaves for England? What are its uses and where does he keep it?

Discussion Question 2

What is the possible significance of the way Smith tells Samuel goodbye? What about the way Samuel and Richard say goodbye?

Discussion Question 3

What do you think of Samuel's decision to steal baby Virginia? What are some other possible choices he could have made?

Vocabulary

assures, calloused, naïve, makeshift, brig, despair



Chapter 27 and Afterword

Summary

It is February, 1610, at Point Comfort. After hearing of Capt. Ratcliffe's fate, Ann and John got the charges against Samuel dropped. He would have suffered 20 lashes had they not. They told everyone that Samuel had done the right thing. Samuel is now living happily in a cabin with Ann, John and baby Virginia.

The settlers are warm and comfortable at Point Comfort. Samuel thinks he might smell smoke, and worries about the settlers in James Town. But he knows there is no sense in worrying, because he has his duties in Point Comfort.

The Afterword switches to a third-person historical account of what happened to the colonists.

In the winter of 1609-1610, the settlers at Point Comfort did well. However, there was no travel between the two settlements, because of ice on the river. In spring, the Point Comfort settlers found out what happened to the settlers at James Town.

Chief Powhatan ordered there be no trade with James Town. The natives also killed all the settlement's hogs. They killed any settler found outside the fort. The settlers starved, resorting to eating even leather shoes. Some settlers dug up dead bodies and ate them. One group of men stole food from a native village and took a ship back to England. Those who remained suffered disease and starvation and war with the Indians. Out of 500 who began the winter, only 60 survived, and only barely. This winter became known as "The Starving Time." This was the second time Chief Powhatan tried to wipe out the settlers, referencing the prophecy.

In the spring, Sir Thomas Gates, the new governor, arrived. He had been shipwrecked on Bermuda for nine months. When he saw what had happened, he loaded everyone up on a ship back to England. However, while they were on their way down the river, they were met by a messenger saying that a new Lord Governor was on his way with three ships and 150 more colonists and food. They were ordered to go back to James Town. The new leaders took revenge on the Indians, no matter whether they had been friendly or not. There was much warfare. In 1613, Pocahontas was kidnapped by the settlers and held hostage. They demanded that English prisoners be freed, English weapons to be returned and a large amount of corn. Chief Powhatan gave in to some demands, holding out for the return of his daughter. She remained a prisoner.

John Rolfe, a new settler, began growing tobacco, which became a profitable crop. He met Pocahontas when she was a prisoner, and they were married in 1614, with her father's blessing. Then there was peace for a time. (Some historians call it the Peace of Pocahontas.) She and her husband and their son were taken to England to promote James Town. She got sick and died in 1617, and was buried in England.



In 1619, the first Africans arrived in Virginia, though it's unknown if they were indentured servants or slaves.

Samuel became a town leader. Capt. Smith never returned to James Town.

In 1622, after Chief Powhatan had died, the empire was still strong and being run by his brother. Feeling pressure from the ever-increasing population of the English settlers, he decided to attack them and attempt to wipe them out. One-third of the Virginians were killed. War went on for years. Eventually, the Indian leader was captured and killed and the Powhatan empire collapsed. This is considered the fulfillment of the Powhatan's prophecy about the tribe from Chesapeake Bay. Within a hundred years, over 90 percent of the native population was killed, though native people still survive on some lands in Virginia.

Analysis

The resolution of Samuel's charges and the fact that he escapes the terrible "Starving Time" back at James Town is a relief for the reader. He was acting rightly after all, acting out of love just as Rev. Hunt taught him. He did what had to be done to save baby Virginia and Ann, no matter the consequences. The theme of Love versus Fear is thus tied up. The whiff of smoke gives only a small hint of what the reader learns really happened at James Town.

The reader is spared the day-to-day terror and suffering of the characters by the escape to Point Comfort. The tales of starvation are removed to the third-person as a sort of mercy. The reader will remember that Samuel's fears about the cannibals back in the Caribbean who might dig up a dead body and eat it have come true, but it is the settlers who become the cannibals. The unthinkable becomes possible when the settlers have no other choice. It is the settlers who become the "savages" in so many ways.

Also, the fact that Governor Gates was not permitted to take the survivors back to England shows the callousness of the Virginia Company—how removed they remain from the suffering of their employees.

The true story of Pocahontas and her marriage to John Rolfe again serves a contrast to the myth that most readers will be familiar with. There is no romance between her and Capt. Smith like the Disney film. She is a prisoner who ends up married to a colonist, only to be trotted out to promote the Virginia Company and ends with her death far away. There is no happy ending for her, and it foreshadows the ultimate defeat of Powhatan's empire.

The framing of the prophecy and how it comes to its resolution in the end is the framework of the entire novel. Two conflicts and then a final defeat. However, the author makes certain to include the fact that the Native Americans of Virginia were not wiped out, but rather still exist on some lands to this day.



Discussion Question 1

What happens at James Town while Samuel and the Laydons are at Point Comfort?

Discussion Question 2

How does Chief Powhatan's prophecy come true?

Discussion Question 3

What happens to Pocahontas?

Vocabulary

pang, starved, ravaged, quantity, indentured



Characters

Samuel Collier

Samuel Collier is an 11-year-old orphan boy from England. Before he leaves for James Town, he is always hungry, and has chosen to live on the streets instead of the poorhouse where his mother died. He is caught stealing a locket and imprisoned. He escapes being hanged because the the magistrate pities him and takes him to an orphanage. At the orphanage he is taken under the wing of Reverend Hunt, who brings Samuel and another boy to the James Town colony.

Samuel serves as the page for Captain John Smith, from whom he learns much about leadership and the ways a commoner can overcome adversity in a world run by noblemen. As a commoner but also a leader, Capt. Smith works with Samuel on how to properly use his intellect and leadership skills to grow up to be the sort of man the New World needs. No longer will there be commoners and nobles, but rather a New World where these skills and intellect truly matter and bloodlines will not.

It is through Samuel's eyes that the reader sees what happens to the first English colonists at James Town and their encounters with the Native Americans. Samuel's emotional growth as he learns to trust and love others are a central theme in the novel. He learns that the Native Americans are people with different but equally valid values, and that English ways are not necessarily well-suited to prosperity and survival in this new place.

Samuel learns to trust and gains true friendships with several people, first with his mentor Reverend Hunt and then with Capt. Smith. He also becomes friends with boys his own age: servant boy Richard and Powhatan Indian Namontack. He spends a season in an Indian village where he spends a lot of time with a young man named Kainta, who takes Samuel under his wing. These encounters all teach Samuel that he can, after all, trust others. In the end, he finds himself a family in apprenticeship to John Laydon.

Through all these experiences, Samuel moves from being an orphaned bully who mistrusts human relationships to a young man who can use his skills to help those he loves survive in a place full of dangers and difficulties. As the colony only barely manages to survive with the constant addition of new colonists from England, Samuel's tough background and the molding applied to his character bring him to a young manhood with a hopeful future.

Captain John Smith

Captain John Smith is a soldier and officer in the English military. He is a commoner, unlike the rest of the leaders of James Town colony, and is the only one to have been to the New World before. He is tall, but stocky and strong, with curly red hair and beard.



He begins the journey from England unhappy with the large number of noblemen who are traveling, concerned that they will not be up to the hard work that will be required for the colony's survival. His refusal to back down about his superior knowledge and experience bring him into constant conflict with the gentlemen leaders of the colony.

Capt. Smith demonstrates himself to be the wisest of the colony's leaders, but his opinions are often ignored. It is when the other colonists ignore his experience that they suffer great tragedies and difficulty. The colony runs the most smoothly when they follow his leadership. When they don't trust him, relations with the Indians go awry and colonists die terrible deaths.

To the Powhatans, Capt. Smith is the natural leader of the colonists who demonstrates his merit frequently. His encounters with Powhatan and Pocahontas are a tale often told in America's founders' mythology. However, the author attempts to bring this mythology down to earth as much as young adult literature might allow, making him into a man who is vulnerable and also brave in his efforts to make the New World a safe place for European colonists.

He is the colony's primary liaison and trader with the Native Americans, who respect him. He is often accused of being a criminal by the gentlemen of the colony, but his political skills and luck save him. He returns to England after being badly burned and wounded.

Capt. Smith's relationship with Samuel is one of master to servant, but develops into a mentorship. He has chosen Samuel as his page because he is the toughest fighter in the orphanage, but he seeks to mold that toughness into something far more useful. He wants to make Samuel into a new sort of man: one born in the lowest ditch of society who has more than enough skills to be a good and useful colonist.

Samuel learns a lot from him, especially how to be a good leader and how to channel his anger into positive action. Smith also does his best to further Samuel's useful education in the colony, making sure he learns to use a sword and to speak Algonquian. He is the one who makes Samuel stay in an Indian village for a season to learn Indian ways of life.

Capt. Smith's struggles with the gentlemen who are constantly seeking to undermine and destroy him symbolize the illogical nature of the old British way of life in the New World. He is the new kind of leader, one who gains respect via wit and wisdom rather than through noble blood. He is therefore a precursor to the leadership that will make America great.

Reverend Hunt

Reverend Hunt is described as a tall and quiet man with broad shoulders. He takes Samuel under his wing when the boy is brought to his orphanage. He sees the best in Samuel despite his fighting nature, and tries to teach him to follow the path of love



rather than that of fear. He brings two of his orphan charges to James Town, Richard and Samuel.

Rev. Hunt's goals in going to James Town are to bring Christianity to the Native Americans in Virginia and to find the Roanoke survivors. As such, he is apparently the only colonist who doesn't seek riches in the New World. He serves as a powerful but relatively neutral party when it comes to dealing with the bad decisions and aggression by the gentlemen against Capt. Smith in particular and the commoners in general. As the only religious leader in the colony, he does his best to maintain peace and remind the colonists what good and Christian behavior looks like. He is the only person to surmise the colonists' summer fevers as a sickness caused by mosquitoes, and he proves to be a wise and careful leader to those who are willing to listen to him.

Rev. Hunt does his best to teach Samuel about how to follow his better nature. Back in England he showed Samuel that his impulses to steal his mother's locket were out of anger rather than love for her, and he continues to focus on this lesson with Samuel throughout the novel. When Samuel goes to him about Wingfield's secret hoarding of colony food, Rev. Hunt doesn't press him for details, but rather encourages him to act out of love, which leads Samuel to tell Capt. Smith the truth. He also helps Samuel deal with his guilt over James' death.

Rev. Hunt doesn't succeed in either of his primary missions. He never finds any sign of the Roanoke survivors, and when he gets his first and only opportunity to convert the Powhatan Namontack after his return from England, he fails utterly. His faith leads him to miscalculate the appeal of Christianity to the Native Americans, who prove to have their own religious beliefs and values. These failures sadden and appear to weaken his ability to survive, and he ends up dying in James Town.

On his deathbed, Rev. Hunt predicts that Samuel will be a leader of men. Later, Samuel takes to heart all that he has learned from Rev. Hunt and saves baby Virginia and Ann Laydon by acting out of love rather than fear. As a result, the Laydons do not suffer the terrible Starving Time in James Town.

Richard

Richard is a dark-eyed orphan boy who is brought to James Town along with Samuel Collier to be a servant. He is a year younger than Samuel, a bit shorter and broader. His master is Reverend Hunt. He and Samuel do not get along, and have gotten into physical fights as a result. It is only after the death of James that Richard and Samuel learn that they must trust one another if they are to survive. They become great friends. Richard returns to London with Capt. Smith before the winter of 1609-1610.

Sir Edward Maria Wingfield

Master Wingfield is a leading member of the Virginia Company and a noble gentleman. He is very arrogant and very quickly gets into conflict with Capt. Smith because of their



class differences. He accuses Smith of plotting to overthrow the colonial government. He becomes the first president of the colony. When he refuses to listen to Capt. Smith's advice, James Town is defenseless against Indian attack. When he is found to be hoarding food as the colonists are starving, he is arrested and sent back to England.

Captain John Ratcliffe

Capt. Ratcliffe is the captain of the Discovery. He has beady eyes and a long nose. He greatly dislikes Capt. Smith for acting above his station. When Capt. Smith is with the Native Americans for a time, he tries to make the colonists build him a presidential house. The colonists refuse to follow him, and so he is sent back to England. He returns with a large group of colonists and attempts to get Capt. Smith to step down as president with the new charter. After Capt. Smith's injury and return to England he attempts to trade with Chief Powhatan and is tortured to death by the Indians.

Master Archer

Master Archer is one of the gentleman supporters of Wingfield and Ratcliffe. He arrests Capt. Smith after his return from Indian captivity. When Capt. Newport returns with the ship, he is removed from the council and sent back to England.

Captain Christopher Newport

Capt. Newport is the captain of the Susan Constant, and leader of the expedition by sea. He lost an arm in battle with the Spanish, and often serves as a calm and experienced leader when the gentlemen get out of control in their efforts to arrest or kill Capt. Smith.

James

James is a 9-year-old boy, servant to one of the gentlemen. He is a fearful boy, and as a result, Samuel often mistreats him. When the Indians attack the settlement, he attempts to run to the ship and is killed. Samuel feels responsible for his death.

Nathaniel

Nathaniel is a servant boy, aged thirteen or fourteen. He travels on another ship from the other three youngest servants. When Samuel kidnaps baby Virginia, Nathaniel helps Samuel keep his crime a secret.



Henry and Abram

Henry and Abram are Master Wingfield's grown manservants. Henry is broad and fleshy and likes to smack the young boys around. Abram has carrot-colored hair and one wandering eye. When Samuel discovers that their Master is hoarding food, Henry forces Samuel to swear to God that he will not tell. Abram is wounded when Indians attack James Town.

Master Clovell

Master Clovell is one of the gentlemen. He is small, and when he is killed by Indians, Samuel inherits his sword and armor.

Thomas Savage

Thomas Savage is a servant boy who arrives at James Town with the second group of settlers. He is traded to the Powhatans for a time for a young man named Namontack.

Pocahontas/Amonute

Pocahontas, Chief Powhatan's daughter, saves Capt. Smith from execution by her father's men and comes to James Town with gifts of food soon after the arrival of the second wave of colonists. She is about 10 years old at the time the colonists first meet her. Pocahontas, her nickname, means "playful one." She is kind to the colonists and intercedes to help maintain peace.

Namontack

Namontack is a young Powhatan man, aged 14, who comes to live in the colony for a time. He gives Samuel the Native American perspective on the colony and their lifestyle. He travels to England as Chief Powhatan's spy and meets King James. He returns speaking English and unimpressed with the English way of life and leaders.

Wahunsonacock, the Great Powhatan

Chief Powhatan is the emperor of the Powhatan Empire, and very secure in his power and leadership. He has received a prophecy that says the end of his empire will come from the Chesapeake Bay, and therefore has great interest in limiting the power and threat of the James Town colony. He reluctantly welcomes James Town into his empire, but when he is insulted by the colonists, he withdraws his assistance in time of need. The colonists repeatedly assault his people, and eventually there is war between his people and the colony. After his death, the prophecy about his empire's end comes true.



Chief Sasenticum

Chief Sasenticum is the Warroskoyack tribal chief. He warns Capt. Smith not to trust Chief Powhatan. He hosts Samuel in his village for a season, and helps the colonists when they starve.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Forrest

The Forrests are wealthy people who arrive in a later wave of James Town settlement. Mrs. Forrest is one of the two first women to settle in James Town.

Ann Burras

Ann Burras is 14 years old, and a servant girl to Mrs. Forrest. She is one of the first two women in James Town. She marries carpenter John Laydon and gives birth to the first English child born in James Town.

John Laydon

John Laydon is a carpenter in James Town. He woos Ann Burras by making her a beautiful box. He is a quiet, sturdy, kind man. When Samuel leaves service, he becomes Laydon's apprentice.

Kainta

Kainta is Chief Sasenticum's son. He teaches Samuel many Indian survival skills and their way of life.



Symbols and Symbolism

Locket

Samuel's mother was given a locket by her landlord's son as a token of love when she turned 13 years old. After she died, the locket was taken from Samuel and pawned. He steals it back from the pawnshop and is arrested. He would have been hanged for the theft, but a sympathetic magistrate brings him to an orphanage instead. With Rev. Hunt's help, he realizes that he didn't steal the locket because he missed and loved his mother, but rather because he was angry. The locket symbolizes Samuel's love and longing for his dead mother, and is the only valuable thing he has ever owned.

Ships

The colonists travel on three ships to the New World, the Discovery, the Susan Constant and the Godspeed. They are painted nicely when they leave London, but look battered by the time they arrive at James Town. The ships represent safety, though traveling upon them is extremely unpleasant for the passengers. When the Indians attack, the ships are the only place they can retreat to. They are the only means of escape back to England, and are also where prisoners are kept. New ships arrive with groups of new colonists, and bring food. However, when they leave, they also take most of the food the colonists have put together.

Pineapple

Samuel tastes a pineapple for the first time when the settlers arrive and trade with the Carib Indians. It is the most luxurious tasting fruit he has ever had, food he imagines to be fit for a king. This now-common fruit represents the strangeness and luxuriousness of this New World for those who live in it.

Hatchet

Hatchets are a symbol of manhood. When the settlers stop on a Caribbean island for a time, Samuel is sent to clean pots instead of use a hatchet to clear a path for the gentlemen who wish to bathe in the forest. He would prefer the hatchet work, because he would be working with the older men instead of doing what he considers to be women's work. He later uses a hatchet to make his first bow and arrow.

Mattress

When the colony is attacked by the Indians, the boys use their straw mattress to protect themselves. This strategy proves to save their lives, even if they didn't have weapons.



Sword

Samuel learns to clean a sword from Capt. Smith, and this is the first time Samuel learns that Smith won't hit him if he makes mistakes. After Master Clovell is killed by Indians, Samuel inherits his sword, and is taught to use it by Capt. Smith.

Vocabulary Book

Instead of giving Samuel a musket, Capt. Smith gives him Roanoke settler Thomas Harriot's Algonquian vocabulary book. Smith tells him that it will be a very important tool for his future safety. Samuel takes Smith's idea to heart, and studies the book well, learning to speak Algonquian. The literacy Samuel inherited from his mother ends up saving the colony and himself many times over. This education is how a servant like Samuel can rise up to be a leader of men, rather than only a warrior.

Glass beads

Glass beads and copper are prized by the Powhatan people. Samuel doesn't understand their value until he realizes that the Indians don't have any way to make them. They are a sign of wealth. When Capt. Smith leaves James Town for the final time, he gives Samuel two strands of valuable blue beads, which Samuel keeps as a way to trade for food when the colony is hungry.

Stick

Namontack takes a stick with him to England. He is supposed to make a notch every time he sees a person, so he can tell Powhatan how many Englishmen there are. Samuel knows this act will be futile, and Namontack ends up throwing the stick into the Thames, because there are too many Englishmen to count.

Velvet cassock

Namontack brings back gifts when he returns from England. The velvet cassock is not as good or useful as the fur mantles the Powhatans use. It is a symbol of the ways value is in the eyes of the beholder, and how what is useful or luxurious in England is not so in the New World.

Cherrywood Box

When John Laydon decides to woo Ann Burras, instead of making a fool of himself and trying to impress her, he makes her a fine cherrywood box. Their marriage leads to the birth of the first English child in Virginia.



Buckskin pouch

After Samuel returns from his winter in the Indian village, he sheds his Indian style clothing, but keeps the buckskin pouch he made himself. In it he keeps his knife and later the blue trading beads Capt. Smith gives him.



Settings

London

The first few chapters take place in London, where Samuel has been in the poorhouse, on the streets and finally in an orphanage. He is cared for by the operator of the orphanage, Reverend Hunt, who takes Samuel and Richard from the orphanage to James Town colony. London is the seat of English government and power, and where all the James Town settlers embark from. It is dirty, full of people and full of dangers for those who fall afoul of its laws.

The Susan Constant

Samuel, Richard, James, Capt. Smith, Rev. Hunt and several gentlemen travel to James Town aboard the Susan Constant. They are never permitted on deck except when emptying slop pails or getting food buckets. They are confined to the "tween deck," which is stinky, hot and unpleasant during their journey. Samuel suffers a fever and nearly dies there. It is also where Capt. Smith is first chained to a wall after he insults Master Wingfield.

Nevis

Nevis is the island paradise where the settlers stay for six days. Samuel and the other servant boys enjoy swimming in the ocean and eating fresh fruit. Richard and James never want to leave because it is so pleasant there. Wingfield and the other gentlemen try to hang Capt. Smith there, but change their minds after persuasion by Rev. Hunt.

James Town

James Town, named for King James, is the first settlement in Virginia by the Virginia Company. It is located near Chesapeake Bay, on the James River. (The Natives call it the Powhatan River.) It begins as a bunch of tents and then houses. After an attack by the Indians, it is enclosed by a palisade. After a fire, the fort is enlarged. When there is fighting with the Indians, the settlers stay within its walls for protection, only going out to bury the dead.

Werowocomoco

Werowocomoco is Chief Powhatan's village. Pocahontas and Namontack also live there. It has 20 houses made of woven rushes, and is located about 12 miles overland from James Town. It is where the Chief receives all visitors and where he was unwillingly crowned an English prince.

Kekoughtan

Kekoughtan is a friendly Warraskoyack village across the river from Point Comfort. Samuel spends a winter there learning the Algonquian language and the Indian way of life.

Point Comfort

Several James Town settlers, including Samuel and the Laydons, move to build a fort at Point Comfort to protect James Town from the Spanish. By doing so, they avoid the terrible Starving Time when the vast majority of James Town settlers starved to death.



Themes and Motifs

Working Together

The theme of working together toward a common goal is a persistent one in the novel. Captain Smith takes special pains to teach Samuel this lesson for his own good and to set an example for the rest of the colony.

In the first few chapters of the novel, Samuel is clearly not willing to work together with anyone. He neither trusts nor sees the purpose in alliances.

Then, in Chapter 5, Samuel and Capt. Smith see a thresher shark and swordfish attack a whale and kill it. Smith draws the analogy clearly: smaller entities can take down a bigger entity if they are willing to work together. In this way, he sees the commoners able to hold their own against the power of the gentlemen.

In Chapter 8, Samuel gets into a fight with Richard on board ship on the way to James Town. Instead of punishing him by hitting him, as Samuel expects, Smith makes Samuel try to stand on one foot on the rocking ship. Smith is familiar already with all that will be expected of Samuel in the New World, and feels responsible for making sure he understands how important working together will be. It's a simple lesson: he cannot stand on one foot in a storm, and must depend on other feet (or people) to hold him up. It is a simple allegory for what life will be like in the colony.

In Chapter 9, Samuel fails to work together and doesn't give James the benefit of discussing the merits of his escape plan in event of Indian attack, and James dies tragically. Though it isn't really Samuel's fault and he shouldn't blame himself, he knows that if he and James were close, the younger boy might have been willing to listen to him about whether running for the ship instead of taking cover was a feasible plan.

In Chapter 13, Samuel finally learns to be friends with Richard and helps him find armor. They experience plenty because the Natives bring them food and help them understand the nature of their conflict. Everyone helps to build the houses, and everyone thus gets a place to live before winter sets in.

On a larger scale, the conflict between the gentlemen and the commoners leads to much trouble for the colony, and essentially leads to its near-failure many times. From the beginning chapters, the gentlemen hold themselves apart, refusing to work like the rest toward what ought to be their common goal. They refuse to listen to experience and wisdom. In Chapters 15-16, they even decide to abandon the commoners to starvation and steal all the food. Wingfield himself, as president of the colony, hoards food while people around him are starving.

The Virginia Company, a distant corporate entity that seems uncaring about its employees—the colonists—often seem bent on acting in their own interest rather than



that of the colonists working their project. Instead of asking for advice from experienced people like Smith, they force political clashes that lead to death for many people.

The mysterious disappearance of Roanoke Colony is something Samuel finally understands in Chapter 16, when he sees the rifts between the colonists, how their refusal to work in the common interest could lead to complete destruction of James Town. It is only the continual replenishment of new colonists that keeps the colony going.

In contrast, the Native Americans have a cultural expectation of "community first" as a group benefit. Like in Chapter 19, when the servant boys imitate the Indians and plant beans and corn together, the Natives know that working together is essential. Everyone contributes what they can, and everyone eats. Even their crops are used to benefit one another: beans and corn are planted together because they help each other to grow and keep the soil healthy. When the colony is considered part of the Powhatan empire, the Indians share food and shelter when the colony is nearly destroyed by fire. This is how people survive in the wilderness.

Coming of Age

The novel covers nearly four years in Samuel's life, starting when he is 11 and ending when he is about 14. While today 14 is considered nowhere near manhood, the wilderness and the era have a different timetable. So by the end of the book, Samuel is on his way to becoming a man.

In Chapter 6, the company stops on the island and Samuel attempts to choose hatchet work clearing a path through the jungle—he wants to work with the adult men. He is sent back with a blow by one of the older servants. He must do "women's work" instead—scrubbing pots. It turns out that this is lucky for him. The men actually suffer terrible pain because they followed the gentlemen's orders from the poisonous tree. In effect, Samuel is saved at the time from the pain of manhood. He isn't ready, and that's good luck for him.

In Chapter 12, after one of the smaller men is killed, Samuel finally gets to inherit a sword and armor. With this, he is equipped as a man would be. This, too, is premature, but necessary. Anyone remotely able must now take up arms in defense. When he expects a musket as well, he finds that more education (learning Algonquian) will be more useful than learning to use a slow-acting gun. He will be armored with cultural knowledge instead.

By Chapter 21, Samuel is well on his way to behaving as a man should. He listens to Rev. Hunt on his deathbed, and instead of shrinking from his advice and deathbed communications, he braves them well.

In the next chapter, when Samuel spends the winter in the Indian village he is given the full education necessary to his environment. He learns to walk quietly in the forest. He learns to make a bow and arrow, and how to hunt for game. He learns to make useful



items with the materials available out here in the wilderness. In this way, he is ready to return as a fully useful young man and contribute well to the community that needs these skills.

By Chapter 25, just as Smith frees Samuel from his servitude, he frees him from his childhood. Samuel will be an apprentice carpenter on his way to fulfill his colonial destiny, as a leader of men. Smith passes on his trading beads to him to help the colony. He shakes hands with him like an equal.

When Samuel steals baby Virginia in order to force Ann Burras to leave James Town, there is some question about whether his actions are those of a man or those of a petulant child who isn't getting his way. In the last chapter, the reader finds that indeed his choice was the correct one.

Class Conflict and Power

The novel is threaded throughout with class conflict between the English noble gentlemen and the commoners. The gentlemen, who earned their status through blood inheritance, are accustomed to being served and not having to work. The commoners, on the other hand, are accustomed to working hard, though they come from a place where they are not allowed to use weaponry or even learn to read.

This these is set up right off the bat in Chapter 2, when Capt. Smith expresses his concerns about the fact that so many noble gentlemen are to be colonists. By Chapter 4, Smith is arrested on a false charge of plotting to overthrow a government that hasn't even been instituted yet, and because he insists the noble gentlemen have an obligation to stick to their contracts. Even so, Capt. Smith has no real power against their charges. As a commoner, he has to right accuse a gentleman of anything.

In Chapter 5, the class consciousness of the era is emphasized in Samuel's memory of how his mother got her locket. The son of their landlord teaches her to read and gives it to her. As a consequence of his crossing class lines, he is essentially exiled. Capt. Smith also uses the observation of the whale versus the thresher shark and swordfish as a way that weaker creatures can work together to bring down those with more power.

In Chapter 6, there is foreshadowing of what is to come when the gentlemen force the commoner servants to cut a path for them through a jungle just so that they can go bathe in a spring. As a result, the men suffer actual physical pain when they come into contact with a poisonous tree. When they reach their destination, all the work continues to be left to the servant class.

When the gentlemen refuse to allow Smith onto the council in Chapter 9-10, and eventually even decide to take all the food and leave the commoners to starve, they nearly cause a revolt. They arrest the commoner Smith repeatedly, basically for insubordination. This comes to its absurd conclusion when President Ratcliffe attempts to force the colonists to build him a mansion in the woods in Chapter 18. This act finally leads to a temporary democracy, when Capt. Smith is elected as leader. He institutes



true fairness, where everyone is expected to work. When Capt. Smith leaves the colony after being wounded in Chapter 23, the colony descends into chaos.

The James Town colony is a new environment in which these class differences must fall away or there will be great suffering. In this environment, it is the most strong and the most wise who must be the leaders, not the sickly and weak like King James or even just the arrogant non-workers like the gentlemen of the colony. However, their power will not be easily removed, and James Town is just the precursor to how that battle will play out, right down to the Revolutionary War and beyond. While sometimes a wise commoner gains leadership as Capt. Smith does, the powerful do not yield so easily, and will come back to take what they consider theirs by right.

Just as the United States to become great must throw off the shackles of Great Britain, so too must the colonists throw off the misguided leadership of the Virginia Company if they are to survive. How this plays out eventually in James Town is not a part of this novel, but the repeated disasters make it clear that something must change, or the colony will disappear.

Culture Clash

The cultural clash between the New World and the Old World are in bright contrast in this novel.

In Chapter 5, the boys discuss the rumors they have heard about what the Natives look like. Samuel finds these descriptions so alien he can't even conceive that they are true. Their color and dress and unimaginable to a simple boy from London. By Chapter 9, Samuel is still immersed in the shock of these differences.

In Chapter 7, the English gentlemen are not willing to shed their too-hot clothing or deal properly with the weather, and therefore, before they even get to James Town, they die unnecessarily.

It is natural to fear what is unknown to you, but Samuel sees that so much of how the local Natives have adapted to their surroundings makes better sense to him than how the English fight against nature, each other and the Natives. The English build English houses, and suffer the cold, while the local Natives build their homes out of woven grasses and are warm. They use mocassins instead of shoes, because that's how you hunt successfully. Velvet cloaks are nowhere near as warm as fur-lined mantles. Over and over again, Samuel sees the illogic of the English way in a foreign place.

During trade, like in Chapter 9, Samuel must adapt to the idea that glass beads and food have value depending on how much they are desired—that the values placed on these items at home are different in a new environment.

In Chapter 11, the English are surprised to find that Powhatan's empire is vast and organized, and the Indians are not just wild animals. When Samuel hears of Capt. Smith's capture and release and his encounter with Pocahontas, it is clear that there are



two ways to interpret the events. To the Indians, it was a ritual, but to the English, she saved Smith's life from her fellow savages. When Pocahontas visits James Town in Chapter 17, her behavior is completely unexpected as a "princess." As children, the boys more or less accept her difference with delight, but surely the adult Englishmen would have found her behavior amusing for different reasons.

But it is not only the mundane lifestyle problems that come into the fore, but the insistence of the English that their way is the only way. Rev. Hunt can't understand that his sharing of Christianity is a cultural exchange, rather than a conversion. When Namontack returns from England in Chapter 18, Rev. Hunt expects that his refusal to adopt Christianity is a simple misunderstanding. He is almost terminally disappointed to find otherwise. The Natives have their own ways, and have no interest in adopting the foreign unnecessarily. The English will come to a foreign land and claim it, rather than adopting the rule of those who already live there. Had the English accepted Powhatan's rule, what might have happened then?

So much of the conflict that occurs are simply misunderstandings and fear, but also the refusal of the English to see the Natives as their equals in any way. Chief Powhatan is a chief not by blood inheritance, but by earned right. His daughter Pocahontas would not have inherited Powhatan's kingdom, not because she was a girl, but because Powhatans were elected by right. But the English cannot see her as anything but a princess who doesn't know how to dress or act properly.

By conversation with Namontack upon his return from England in Chapter 19, Samuel can see more clearly through Namontack's eyes how differently their cultures see the same things. It had never occurred to Samuel before that King James could be considered weak in comparison to Powhatan. In the end, it is this cultural clash that repeatedly leads to death and destruction for the colonists. They don't respect the Indians, and therefore create unnecessary war in an environment where all energies must be devoted to survival.

Good Leadership

The qualities that make a good leader are often referred to in the novel. Captain Smith would be the natural leader, with his experience and skills, but because the gentlemen are unwilling to accept a commoner as a leader, the colony suffers ineptitude and arrogance that sometimes even leads to death. It is only after one leader is caught hoarding food and another tries to force everyone to build him a relative mansion that Smith gains leadership. Only then, when everyone is expected to do his fair share, do things go relatively smoothly for a while.

In Chapter 3-4, Master Wingfield and the other gentlemen complain and foment dissent in contrast to Capt. Smith's restraint and insistence on honor. In Chapter 5, Smith consciously imitates Julius Caesar, writing his account of events. He gains the respect of the other passengers as a result. He proves his worth as a translator. In Chapter 7, he proves to the colonists that he is needed. He doesn't have to force them to accept



his leadership; then need him for the good of their survival. When the gentlemen won't accept him on the council in Chapter 9, he lets them have their way without a fight. As a good leader, he knows that it isn't about a title or rank, but whether or not his advice is sought or useful. When the colonists don't listen to his advice, they are attacked and death results.

Samuel learns leadership skills from Capt. Smith. He learns that flying off the handle and embracing his anger is not a good way to operate. That the best and most politic way to get somewhere is to gain allies by doing the right thing, by avoiding outright violent conflict, and by being fair-minded in word and deed.

In contrast, Master Wingfield's hoarding of food in Chapter 12 and President Ratcliffe's attempt to have everyone build him a mansion in Chapter 18 bring home what a bad leader looks like. When Capt. Smith is in charge, he trains everyone in defense regardless of class, and expects everyone to work. In Chapter 19, everything works most smoothly when Capt. Smith demonstrates a good leader's behavior. In the end, when Smith goes back to England, Ratcliffe's return leads to disaster and more death.

In addition, there is the contrast between the Great Powhatan leader and King James. While King James is admittedly small, weak and smelly, he is the King of a great empire. In his environment, hereditary leadership enables such a man to continue to rule. In the Native American world, however, the natural leader is a great warrior. In some ways, this contrast exhibits the difference between the decadent Old World way of life and the New World way of life, in which one cannot have such extravagance as a leader who can't pull his own weight.

Love versus Fear

From the beginning, Samuel takes to heart Reverend Hunt's advice that he must learn to favor love over fear (and anger). In Chapter 2, Samuel tries to persuade himself that he stole his mother's locket from the pawnshop because he loves her. However, he has to admit that he did it because he was full of rage at those who had stolen his mother's life and his only inheritance.

He must learn to trust and love his fellow colonists, and when he doesn't there is death, like in Chapter 9. In Chapter 12, when Henry forces Samuel to swear secrecy about Wingfield's food hoard, he is afraid to tell. He consults Rev. Hunt and finds the strength to act out of love despite his fear. As a result, proper leadership begins to take hold.

In Chapters 10 and 20, when Samuel crosses over from distrust and fear into love and friendship for the Indians who help the colony and befriend him personally, he gains much in the way of knowledge and peace. By letting go of his fear, he learns many skills that lead to manhood and enable him to help his fellow colonists.

Finally, when he steals baby Virginia in Chapter 26, in order to force Ann to come to Point Comfort for safety, there is the final question of whether he has acted in love or is

just reacting in fear. In the end, it turns out that he has acted out of love, having learned this lesson from Rev. Hunt, and it saves lives.



Styles

Point of View

Blood on the River is told entirely from the first person point of view of Samuel Collier, age eleven. His voice is that of a child encountering an adventure and sometimes frightening encounters with entirely new and dangerous situations. However, he also speaks from the wisdom of an orphan of the streets, possessing survival skills in any environment. He is alternately naive and willing to sink himself into new experiences without hesitation. The only exception in this point of view is the Afterword, which switches to third-person in an effort to tell what happens to the real life characters and colony outside the view of the main character.

Language and Meaning

The book's intended audience is children, and thus the language is fairly simple, and the author takes pains to explain complex issues in an easily accessible and understandable manner. The horrors and difficulties are not glossed over, but rather treated in the matter-of-fact way a child of the era would see them. Death from disease or starvation were a fact of life, and the author does not attempt to obscure that reality for her audience. She takes pains to address cultural differences with fairness and clear explanations. Because the narrator is a child, much can be explained simply and effectively.

Structure

The novel is divided into 27 chapters with a detailed historical Afterword that explains what happened to the James Town colony. The Afterword spares the child reader from a first-hand account of the most horrific chapter in James Town's life, but instead tells it in a removed third-person narrative that gives information without the gory details. Each chapter is begun with a real-life quotation from contemporary accounts written about the journey and experiences in James Town. These real-life quotes foreshadow events that will arise within each respective chapter.



Quotes

Some would say I am lucky. Others would say I'm doomed.
-- Samuel Collier (Chapter 2 paragraph 1)

Importance: Samuel is chosen by Reverend Hunt to accompany him to the New World and become Captain John Smith's servant. He is chosen for adventure, and perhaps to find riches in James Town. This makes him lucky. However, the other orphan boys have been clear that they think he will be killed in James Town. This is a real risk, and he therefore might be doomed. In fact, he nearly dies of fever on the boat. He encounters many violent attacks in which he could be killed. Throughout the novel, it left to be seen whether he is lucky or doomed.

But I know there is no peace inside Master Wingfield. I know it is only a matter of time before he strikes. It will not be with his fists, as we commoners do. It will be with his power, and it will be worse than fists.
-- Samuel (Chapter 3 paragraph 20)

Importance: Samuel worries that Wingfield's revenge against Capt. Smith will come through his power, and he is right. Repeatedly, Capt. Smith is arrested and nearly executed for acting "above his station."

You might have been born the biggest fish in the sea, but the skill and perseverance of those lower born can take you down and destroy you.
-- Capt. Smith (Chapter 6 paragraph 11)

Importance: Capt. Smith and Samuel witness a whale being killed by a shark and a swordfish who work together to bring it down. This is a symbolic occurrence to Capt. Smith, representing how the commoners can organize and work together to defeat the powerful.

The wilderness is like a ship in a storm. We will need one another to survive.
-- Capt. Smith (Chapter 8 paragraph 23)

Importance: Captain Smith teaches Samuel a lesson about fighting by making him stand on one foot, which he cannot do because of the rocking of the ship. He cannot teach this lesson to the gentlemen, but he can teach it to his page, Samuel. He must learn to work together with his peers, or he or others might die in the wilderness.

I'm going to the ships!
-- James (Chapter 10 paragraph 17)

Importance: When the servant boys discuss what they will do in the event of an Indian attack, Richard and Samuel plan to hide under their straw mattress, which proves to be adequate to save their lives. James, on the other hand, decides to flee to the ships.



Because Samuel and he aren't friendly, Samuel doesn't feel he can tell James this is a stupid idea. When the attack comes, James runs to the ships, and is killed.

The bay we first entered on our way here they call the Chesapeake Bay. There used to be a tribe, the Chesapeakes, living on its shores.

-- Master Percy (Chapter 11 paragraph 11)

Importance: Master Percy returns with the other explorers after the Indian attack and informs the council about the prophecy Chief Powhatan has received about a threat to his empire. The tribe that used to exist where James Town now is was wiped out by Powhatan because of this prophecy. The English have arrived from the same bay, and are therefore seen as possibly a fulfillment of the prophecy.

Choose the path of love and not of fear. The choice you make out of love will always be the right one.

-- Reverend Hunt (Chapter 12 paragraph 48)

Importance: As Reverend Hunt has taken Samuel under his wing, he has tried to teach him always to follow the path of love rather than fear or anger. In this case, Samuel must decide whether or not to tell about Wingfield's food hoarding or not, risking Henry's wrath. He chooses to tell, and saves people from starvation as well as getting Wingfield removed from power.

We are standing on many legs now, together with the Powhatans.

-- Samuel (Chapter 18 paragraph 9)

Importance: After the fire burns their homes down and destroys their food stores, the colony must rely on the kindness of the Powhatans, who have accepted the colony into their empire. The Powhatans consider them part of their people now, and so save them from starvation and the cold weather. It is only this way that the colony survives. This quote also references the earlier lesson by Smith on board ship when he punished Samuel for fighting by forcing him to stand on one leg.

He that will not work, shall not eat.

-- Capt. Smith (Chapter 19 paragraph 1)

Importance: When Capt. Smith finally becomes president of the colony, he institutes this rule, finally bringing true fairness to the workload of the colony. There is no room for shirking, and it brings resentment. Though there are still some who break the rule, this law brings a time of relative peace and justice to James Town.

Your king is a short, weak man. Our chief is tall and very strong.

-- Namontack (Chapter 19 paragraph 32)

Importance: Namontack returns from England after having met King James and is shocked and disgusted at the difference between the English King and Chief Powhatan. In the New World, a strong leader is necessary to gain respect from the tribe. In



England, hereditary power has changed this demand, and King James doesn't meet the standards of a "savage" like Namontack.

I wonder if this is what Reverend Hunt means about making decisions out of love—love for our newfound Indian friends, love for our fragile New World colony.

-- Samuel (Chapter 20 paragraph 40)

Importance: Samuel resolves to learn the Algonquian language and Indian ways to help the colony of James Town and the Indians get along. He puts himself forth as a future leader in this way, acting as Reverend Hunt has taught him.

They know nothing of the reality of what is here, and they're going to get us killed.

-- Capt. Smith (Chapter 21 paragraph 4)

Importance: Captain Smith and the other colonists have approached Chief Powhatan with an insulting invitation to come to James Town to receive gifts and to be crowned an English prince. This mandate by the Virginia Company puts the colonists at great risk from afar, and they have no idea or care how their desire will affect their colony. In fact, it leads to war with Chief Powhatan and the colony's near-decimation.

What will it avail you to take that by force you may quickly have by love?

-- Chief Powhatan (Chapter 23 paragraph 1)

Importance: This is a real-life quote from the account quoted in the beginning of Chapter 23 by William Symonds. It echoes Reverend Hunt's lessons to Samuel, and emphasizes that the bloodshed and starvation experienced by James Town was completely unnecessary and caused by the greed and arrogance of the English colonists and the Virginia Company. The Powhatan people were willing to share the bounty of the New World with the colonists, but their actions and cruelty made this impossible.

They have cut off my hands and cut out my tongue.

-- Capt. Smith (Chapter 24 paragraph 7)

Importance: On his final expedition to make peace with the Powhatan people on behalf of James Town, Capt. Smith is badly burned and injured, possibly through treachery on the part of the noblemen who dislike him. This strips him of his ability to be a good leader and leads him to retreat to England. In his absence the colony suffers war and starvation.

I feel as though there is a noose closing in around James Town, ready to strangle all of us here.

-- Samuel (Chapter 24 paragraph 25)

Importance: As Captain Smith prepares to leave for England, Samuel worries about the growing conflict with the Powhatans and the faulty leadership of James Town.



Channel it—let it give you strength for what you can do to change things, to make things better.

-- Capt. Smith (Chapter 25 paragraph 5)

Importance: Along with being freed from servitude and being made a carpenter's apprentice, Capt. Smith leaves Samuel with leadership advice that serves him well the rest of his life. He must not succumb to rage, but channel it as all good leaders - including Smith - do into useful action. It is this advice that in part leads Samuel to kidnap baby Virginia and force Ann Burras to safety in Point Comfort.