

and children staring to behold him, the soldiers first all in file performed the form of a *bissom*^o so well as could be, and on each flank, officers as sergeants to see them keep their orders. A good time they continued this exercise and then cast themselves in a ring, dancing in such several postures and singing and yelling out such hellish notes and screeches; being strangely painted, every one [had] his quiver of arrows and at his back a club, on his arm a fox or an otter's skin or some such matter for his *vambrace*^o; their heads and shoulders [were] painted red with oil and *pocones*^o mingled together, which scarlet-like color made an exceeding handsome show; [each had] his bow in his hand and the skin of a bird with her wings [spread] abroad, dried, tied on his head, [with] a piece of copper, a white shell, a long feather with a small rattle growing at the tails of their snakes tied to it, or some such like toy.

At last they brought him to Werowocomoco, where was Powhatan, their Emperor. Here more than two hundred of those grim courtiers stood wondering at him, as [if] he had been a monster, till Powhatan and his train had put themselves in their greatest *braveries*^o. Before a fire, upon a seat like a bedstead, he sat covered with a great robe made of raccoon skins and all the tails hanging by. On either hand did sit a young wench of sixteen or eighteen years and along on each side [of] the house, two rows of men and behind them as many women, with all their heads and shoulders painted red, many of their heads bedecked with the white down of birds, but every one with something, and a great chain of white beads about their necks.

At his entrance before the King, all the people gave a great shout. The Queen of Appomattoc was appointed to bring him water to wash his hands, and another brought him a bunch of feathers, instead of a towel, to dry them. Having feasted him after their best barbarous manner they could, a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was, two great stones were brought before Powhatan; then as many as could laid hands on him [Smith], dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs to beat out his brains, Pocahontas, the King's dearest daughter, when no entreaty could prevail, got his head in her arms and laid her own upon his to save him from death, whereat the Emperor was contented he should live

bissom: snakelike formation

vambrace: plate armor for the arm

pocones: puccoons, plants yielding a red pigment

braveries: splendors, finery

to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads, and copper, for they thought him as well [capable] of all occupations as themselves. For the King himself will make his own robes, shoes, bows, arrows, pots; plant; hunt; or do anything so well as the rest.

They say he bore a pleasant show,
But sure his heart was sad.
For who can pleasant be, and rest,
That lives in fear and dread:
And having life suspected, doth
It still suspected lead.

Two days after, Powhatan, having disguised himself in the most fearful manner he could, caused Captain Smith to be brought forth to a great house in the woods and there upon a mat by the fire to be left alone. Not long after, from behind a mat that divided the house, was made the most doleful noise he ever heard; then Powhatan, more like a devil than a man, with some two hundred more as black as himself, came unto him and told him now they were friends, and presently he should go to Jamestown to send him two great guns and a grindstone for which he would give him the country of Capahowasic and forever esteem him as his son Nantaquond.

So to Jamestown with twelve guides Powhatan sent him. That night they quartered in the woods, he still expecting (as he had done all this long time of his imprisonment) every hour to be put to one death or other, for all their feasting. But almighty God (by His divine providence) had mollified the hearts of those stern barbarians with compassion. The next morning *betimes*^o they came to the fort, where Smith having used the savages with what kindness he could, he showed Rawhunt, Powhatan's trusty servant, two *demiculverins*^o and a millstone to carry [to] Powhatan; they found them somewhat too heavy, but when they did see him discharge them, being loaded with stones, among the boughs of a great tree loaded with icicles, the ice and branches came so tumbling down that the poor savages ran away half dead with fear. But at last we regained some conference with them and gave them such *toys*^o and sent to Powhatan, his women, and children such presents as gave them in general full content.

betimes: in good time, early

demiculverins: cannon

toys: trifles, things of little value

Powhatan's Discourse of Peace and War

Captain Smith, you may understand that I having seen the death of all my people thrice, and not anyone [is] living of those three generations but myself; I know the difference of peace and war better than any in my country. But now I am old and ere long must die; my brethren, namely Opitchapam, Opechancanough, and Kecoughtan, my two sisters, and their two daughters, are distinctly each other's successors. I wish their experience [with you to be] no less than mine, and your love to them no less than mine to you. But this bruit^o from Nandsamund, that you are come to destroy my country, so much affrighteth all my people as they dare not visit you. What will it avail you to take that by force [which] you may quickly have by love, or to destroy them that provide you [with] food? What can you get by war, when we can hide our provisions and fly to the woods whereby you must famish^o by wronging us your friends? And why are you thus jealous^o of our love, seeing us unarmed, and [we] both do and are willing still to feed you with that [which] you cannot get but by our labors? Think you I am so simple [as] not to know it is better to eat good meat, lie well and sleep quietly with my women and children, laugh and be merry with you, have copper, hatchets, or what I want, being your friend, than be forced to fly from all, to lie cold in the woods, feed upon acorns, roots, and such trash, and be so hunted by you that I can neither rest, eat, nor sleep, but my tired men must watch, and if a twig but break, everyone cryeth, here commeth Captain Smith. Then I must fly I know not whither and thus, with miserable fear, end my miserable life, leaving my pleasures to such youths as you [are], who through your rash unadvisedness may quickly as miserably end [your own life] for lack of that [grain and meat] which you never know where to find. Let this therefore assure you of our love, and every year our friendly trade shall furnish you with corn, and [I would give you corn] now also, if you would come in [a] friendly manner to see us, and not [come] thus with your guns and swords as [if you intended] to invade your foes.

[1624]

bruit: rumor, report*famish*: go hungry, starve*jealous*: suspicious**Read**

1. What images and language does Smith use to describe the condition of the men in Jamestown colony?
2. Why do you think Smith refers to himself in the third person?
3. What is the significance of the dance the tribe performs for Smith?
4. What does Smith mean by his "comedies" and "tragedies" (para. 11)?

Write

1. Describe how you think hunger shaped the events of Smith's narrative.
2. How does Smith feel about his fellow settlers? Find a few passages to explain your response.
3. How does Powhatan's "Discourse of Peace and War" create a dialogue with Smith's account of his adventure? Write a paragraph that reflects on the interaction of the two.
4. Do you think Smith makes himself the hero of his own story? Find some moments in the narrative, in its descriptions or reflections, to help you frame your response.



Complete
Additional
Exercises
on Smith's
Journal
at Your
Pearson
MyLab

Connect

1. Consider journals or diaries you might have kept in the past or read. How is this journal like or unlike others you know about?
2. How does this account seem similar or unlike what you may have heard or seen in movies about the Pocahontas/John Smith tale?