



My America: The Starving Time: Elizabeth's Jamestown Colony Diary, Book Two

By Patricia Hermes

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In Pat Hermes' sequel to *Our Strange New Land*, Elizabeth faces harsher times as she records the colony's daily struggle for survival. The *My America* series will be relaunched with new covers.

The story of the feisty, determined Lizzie of Pat Hermes' *Our Strange New Land* continues in this installment with the departure of both Captain John Smith and Lizzie's dear friend, Jessie. Facing new challenges, Lizzie records in her new diary all of the challenges that face the struggling colony. As a result of starvation and disease, Lizzie watches hopelessly as many of the settlers die. She records all of this, but even more, she records the intimate lives of the children who remain there, along with that of her new baby sister.

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Editorial Review

Review

Nine-year-old Elizabeth lives with her family in the Jamestown settlement. In this, her second diary, she describes her family's struggle to survive during the winter. Food is scarce and the settlers are wary of venturing outside the fort for fear of being attacked by Indians. Things become more desperate when sickness sweeps through the fort. In a last-ditch effort to save her family, Elizabeth ventures out to seek help from her friend Pocahontas in a nearby Indian village. The historical details are woven so intricately into the plot that they become an integral part of the story. While there is not much action, the sense of difficulty and harshness the settlers faced is apparent. Elizabeth is a mature and responsible figure who seems to act beyond her years. A "Historical Note" describes the situation at the real Jamestown settlement and shows black-and-white drawings of the fort and its inhabitants.

---School Library Journal, June 2001

About the Author

Patricia Hermes was born in 1936 in Brooklyn, New York. An avid reader, she had time to practice both reading and writing when she came down with rheumatic fever, which left her stuck in bed for months. Hermes majored in speech and English at St. John's University, and taught junior high school English and social studies before taking time off to raise her five children. Returning to teaching after a number of years, she found it less satisfying than she'd remembered, and decided to try her hand at writing for publication. She took a class in writing nonfiction for adults; the teacher, Russell Freedman, would go on to win the Newbery Medal.

After publishing some articles, Hermes found the niche she'd been looking for: her first novel for young readers, *What If They Knew?*, was published in 1980. Hermes gave the main character in the book epilepsy, a problem she had dealt with herself as a child. Readers responded well to the believable situation, and over the years Hermes has continued to write stories featuring youngsters in difficult situations, so that readers can turn to her books knowing they are not alone. She has written more than 20 books for children and young adults.

Patricia Hermes lives in Connecticut, where she spends four hours of the day writing and the rest editing her work and answering letters. When she is not writing, she enjoys reading, running, music, traveling, horseback riding, and playing the piano.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jennifer Oaks:

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