

Pocahontas: An American Heroine

Long ago when the forest was home to man and animal alike, a young maiden princess lived with her people. She had hair of raven black and eyes that reflected the starlight. Her people called her Pocahontas.

Pocahontas was a brave and adventurous child. Her father, the great Chief Powhatan, loved her dearly and, though he was a stern and solemn man, it was with Pocahontas that his heart sang. When the women of the tribe were fast at work, mending their clothes and shucking the maize, Pocahontas could be seen skipping rocks at the river side or running through the fields of corn. The people didn't mind, really, for although she did not always walk the ways of her tribe, her ringing voice lifted their spirits and her laughter reminded them of the light of the stars. Pocahontas was beloved, though often she found herself alone in her play, following her heart to places where none of her tribe would follow.

One day, as Pocahontas was standing at the water's edge breathing in the salt air and laughing at the dolphins at play on the horizon, she saw a most curious sight. Not one to turn away from all things new, Pocahontas ran to the top of the cliffs that overlooked the ocean to get a better look.

There, afloat on the sea was the largest canoe she had ever seen! What's more, it was being propelled by billowing clouds tied to a post! It seemed to Pocahontas as if Brother Wind himself was carrying this vessel to greet her. Pocahontas turned quickly and quietly as a fawn sprang down to the water's edge, her heart pounding in her chest.

As the vessel drew near Pocahontas was struck again by the people who walked about it. They did not look like any creature she had ever seen and their loud voices frightened her a little. Their skin was pale, like the corn cob after it had been stripped of its fruit. This thought made her laugh and her fear left her. "After all," she thought, "maize is a gift from the Earth Mother, how can I fear her children? A raccoon must look frightful to a deer," she reasoned. With that she heard the call of her people and rushed home to tell them of the new visitors.

Chief Powhatan was amused when Pocahontas told him of her adventure. "Little one," he said, "You paint colorful stories." "No father," she insisted, "I speak the truth. Come. Come and see." Powhatan looked into his daughter's deep eyes and saw the truth of her words. He took her hand as she led him silently through the woods to the place where these strange men now made their homes on the shoreline.

And so it was that Pocahontas and the great Chief Powhatan met with the men from across the sea. Though both Powhatan and the leader of these new men were fearful and uncertain of one another, Pocahontas's laughter softened their hearts and showed them how to trust one another. Chief Powhatan agreed to let Pocahontas whisper the secrets of the maize to the men of the sea and they returned his kindness with treasures from far away. Many moons passed and though they suffered hardships and sometimes found it hard to understand each other's ways, Pocahontas showed them how friendship can endure. "For if the raccoon and the deer can find comfort in one another," she said patiently, "So must we. The same air flows through our lungs as they.

Many years later, songs are still sung of the raven haired princess, her gentle laughter, and of her heart that was wide as the sky - wide enough to embrace all who knew her. Even now.
