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Tidewater: A Novel



Synopsis

A clash of desire and hatred, of friendship and fear, of stark ambition and desperate survival. In 1607, three ships arrive on the coast of Virginia to establish Jamestown Colony. Their only hope of survival lies with the Powhatan tribe. John Smith knows this. He knows, too, that the Powhatans would rather see the English starve to death than yield their homeland to invaders. In the midst of this struggle, Pocahontas, the daughter of the great chief, forges an unlikely friendship with Smith. Their bond preserves a wary peaceâbut as each seeks to fulfill their own ambitions, their delicate truce begins to crack. Soon the colonists and Powhatans are locked in battle, and Pocahontas must choose between power and servitudeâbetween self and sacrificeâfor the sake of her people and her land.

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Customer Reviews

So this is a rough book, and I have been sitting here trying to decide whether to give it all five stars, because it did what it set out to do flawlessly, or to hold one back because as much as I liked it, I... don't think I can bear to read it again. You would have to be ignorant of history not to know that this story is going to be a tragedy; the only question then is just how tragic it's going to be. And Hawker

doesn't pull any punches. She does a magnificent job, but... she does a -magnificent job-. You finish the book and you are cored out by your sense of loss, and the book echoes in your head like a bell, and leaves no room for anything else for a while. So why read this book, if it's sad? Because it really was well done. I appreciated the complexity of the portrayals of both cultures and the individuals in them. At no point did I ever feel that someone had been caricatured as Evil or Noble or Good or Thoughtless. I loved the details of Pocahontas's birth culture, and the language use, and the deep sense of the land and its rhythms and complicated political realities. I liked seeing the contrast between it and the English. I liked watching the misunderstandings and the few moments of amity, and the weight they had, the feel that finding common ground between such unlike societies is hard work, luck, and often wholly dependent on personalities willing to be the bridge. And as horrible as it was, there was something fascinating about watching two cultures that could not co-exist slowly slide toward one another and collide. We watch one be subsumed by the other. We sense the inevitability of it. We are witnesses, and we know what we lose, and we know, because of how far down the historical timeline we're living, what we gained. For a while, I was there. And I was glad.

Tidewater, Libbie Hawker Review from jeannie zelos book reviews Everyone knows of the Disney version, prettied up, saccharined and glossed over and without the harsh realities that was life then. This book tells it as it was. It's a fictional account but Libbie Hawker has done careful research and included many excerpts of reports of the time that could have happened. John Smith was real, and he wrote many sensationalized accounts of his time there, so it's difficult to assess what's genuine and what has been "soured up" rather like the media celebrity reports and biographies today! It's a wonderful story, where we meet Pocahontas and the Real People while she is still a young child. She's curious when the first English boats land, and acts as a link between them and the others of her family. She's got a talent for languages, and quickly becomes able to come and go as she pleases, taking back to her father reports of what is happening. Naturally they are cautious of the English plans, and how they will affect them. They know little of the English and don't know how many more may come. There are disputes within the People on how best to deal with the problem. From a tentative start things quickly go downhill through misunderstandings, pride on both sides, an unwillingness to learn from the People and source food among the gentry that comprise most of the first people there. They see the People as uneducated savages, and won't acknowledge they could learn from them. John Smith knows they need to learn from the Natives about surviving in this harsh land, but most of the others see manual work as demeaning to their station and are content to do the minimum to get by, waiting for supplies from England. They

won't take notice of Smith, seeing him as just a Commoner so uneducated.

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