



My America: Our Strange New Land: Elizabeth's Jamestown Colony Diary, Book One

By Patricia Hermes

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Award-winning author Pat Hermes tells the story of Elizabeth Barker, whose family sails from Plymouth, England, to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1609. This book helps to relaunch the My America series.

In May 1607, 3 ships sailed up the James River in Virginia. In the riverbank marshes, they made land and hung the flag--England's flag--establishing the first permanent English colony in Jamestown, Virginia. In 1609, the first ship carrying women and children arrived.

After 71 days at sea, nine-year-old Elizabeth Barker is thrilled to be on dry land. Lizzie keeps a journal for Caleb, her twin brother who stayed in England because of his weak lungs. In her buoyant entries, Lizzie tells of the abundant forests, trading with and learning from the Indians, and adventures with her new friends.

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Editorial Review

Review

School Library Journal--August, 2,000

"Nine-year-old Elizabeth records her experiences as she, her family, and other colonists adjust to the harsh weather conditions, illness, endless hard work, and nascent social strata in the new land. In the course of three months, Elizabeth meets Captain John Smith, Pocahontas, Gabriel Archer, and George Percy. This is a quick, easy read. Hermes has created a sensitive main character and readers will empathize with her fears and emotions as she adjusts to her new life."

--Shawn Brommer, Souther Tier Library System, Painted Post, NY

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

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Thelma Burke:

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Juan Gilbert:

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