Where is the Lost Colony?

A six-chapter series celebrating the first English colony in the New World — 20 years before Jamestown was settled!

Chapter 1

Time to 'sleep' on it

by Sandy Semans, writer

Justin quickly shoveled the peas into his mouth so that his plate was empty. Usually he tried to hide them under a morsel of bread or slide them over to his sister Ashley's plate when no one was looking.

But tonight he didn't have time to see if he could outwit his mother. He had important things to do and wanted to finish dinner as quickly as possible.

"May I be excused from the table?" he asked his mother.

She responded by looking both puzzled and surprised. "You ate all your vegetables? They're not in your pocket again, are they?"

"No, ma'am. I ate everything on my plate, so may I please be excused now?" Justin asked for the second time.

Ashley — always a pain-in-the-neck-little-sister — piped in "I want to play, too! Let me play with you, Justin."

Rolling his eyes to illustrate his frustration, Justin said, "I'm not going to play. I'm going to bed."

That statement left Mom, Dad and Ashley speechless at first.

After silently staring at him for what seemed like forever, his mother asked if he were sick.

Before he could answer, his dad asked if he were in trouble at school.

And then Ashley asked if he had a new puppy hidden in his room.

"No, no and no!" Justin responded. "I just want to go to bed right now."

Somewhat begrudgingly, his mother told him he could leave the table. Silently, she vowed to check on Justin later to see if he had a fever.

Justin sprinted down the hallway to his room and quickly closed the door. He began to take his clothes off but then stopped. "I'd better shower and brush my teeth so they don't come in to remind me," he said to himself.

Finally, with the shower done, clean pajamas on and teeth brushed, he climbed under the covers. He could still see a bit of daylight coming in under the window shade.

He could now get down to the task at hand; he could begin to "sleep on it."

That is what Grandpa always told him to do when there was something to be resolved or a mystery to be solved - sleep on it.

Today, while they were fishing, Grandpa told him that he would take him to the Outer Banks this summer if Justin could solve the mystery of The Lost Colony. He had to be able to tell Grandpa where to find it!

"How can I do that?" asked Justin.

Grandpa grinned and replied, "You sleep on it!"

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made the difficult trip to the Outer Banks in August 1937 to witness the outdoor drama, The Lost Colony, during its first season.

And now Justin would "sleep on it" until he found the answer.

He tossed and turned and after a while, he drifted off into the land of dreams and other knowledge — the place where he could conjure up ghosts of centuries past to help him find the answers.

There in the distance stood a man in short pants, a feathered hat and a shiny sword. "Sir Raleigh!" someone shouted, "the Queen is awaiting your presence and isn't pleased with your tardiness."

Justin watched as Sir Raleigh rushed toward an open stone courtyard.

"He can help me," Justin thought as he flew across the distance to catch up with the man.

"Mister, mister...can you help me find the lost colony?" he said aloud.

Sir Raleigh turned toward Justin and, as words began to form on his lips, Justin was awakened by his mother's hand on his forehead, checking to see if he had a fever.

Now, he would have to try again to "sleep on it" and solve the mystery.

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Next week, Chapter 2, Hail to the Queen!

Activity:

Who are the characters introduced in this chapter? Who were members of Justin's family? Who did Justin see in his dream? Track how Justin's feelings change toward his family members over the course of the story.

Look for people in print and digital editions of the newspaper who remind you of the characters in the first chapter? What do the characters in the chapter have in common with real people whom you find in the news?