



## If You Were Me and Lived In... Colonial America

**Carole P. Roman**

**Sarah Wright, Illustrator**

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*Through open-ended questions, Roman invites children to examine the challenges of traveling across the ocean to a new life.*

*If You Were Me and Lived in ... Colonial America* by Carole P. Roman, illustrated by Sarah Wright, introduces young readers to the culture of the American colonies.

Following the pattern of the earlier books in the series, the story follows a family of early colonists from England, focusing on the child's perspective. The first ten pages or so offer insight into why people left their nations of origin in the first place and explain key historical concepts like the origin of Protestantism.

Next, the book covers the perils and difficulties of life in the new land, including having to build towns and homes from scratch in the forest and surviving brutally cold winters. The protagonist also encounters native people, always peacefully. True to the conventions of the series, the book focuses on common concepts like names, food, weather, clothes, and chores, allowing children to easily identify with characters whose experiences are unlike theirs.

Through open-ended questions, Roman invites children to examine the challenges of traveling across the ocean to a new life. She also suggests cultural and religious values through names, but invites readers to draw conclusions, rather than spelling it all out. This interaction, especially at the beginning of the book, is certain to draw in reluctant readers, and gives teachers and other adults tools to initiate inferential and imaginative dialogue based in the reading.

The art is simple and clear, though sometimes it feels a bit dark. The interior is filled with drawings, rather than the cover's visually jarring mix of illustration and photography. The images of people are familiar, even stereotypical portrayals: colonists have bonnets and hats with buckles, and native people have headdresses.

The glossary and biographical paragraphs of key people are a helpful addition to the text. The definitions will be helpful to independent readers, and the biographical paragraphs, though not directly linked to the story, serve as a jumping-off point for future lessons or a research prompt for students.

*If You Were Me and Lived in ... Colonial America* gives children a basic yet intriguing introduction to daily life in the American colonies.

MELISSA WUSKE (July 7, 2016)

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