

# THE LOST COLONY OF ROANOKE

CHARACTERS – (Some students can play more than one character if necessary.)			
Narrators 1, 2, 3	Queen Elizabeth I	man	woman
John White	Sir Walter Raleigh	Sailor/Native	daughter

*Scene 1: Narrators are sitting in a line, stage right. Queen Elizabeth I is sitting center stage on her throne as Sir Walter Raleigh is bowing down in front of her. Queen Elizabeth's face shows that she is pleased. Both are frozen while the Narrators are speaking. Lights are dim.*

**Narrator 1:** In the late 1400s, a “New World” had recently been discovered on a previously unknown continent, North America.

**Narrator 2:** The European countries Spain and England were in a race to colonize this New World hoping to find new resources and riches such as gold.

**Narrator 3:** One Englishman decided to ask the queen for permission, or a charter, to create a colony. His name was Sir Walter Raleigh.

*[As the stage lights get brighter, the queen and Raleigh begin to “unfreeze”.]*

**Raleigh:** *[rising from his bow]* Your Majesty, the exploration crew has returned from the New World with great news! The natural resources are plenty, and the natives are friendly. I believe this will be the ideal spot for starting our first colony.

**Queen:** *[nodding]* I have full confidence in your plan, Sir Walter Raleigh. I will grant you the charter to start this colony, but I will not allow you to go.

**Raleigh:** *[shocked]* But, my queen...

**Queen:** Those are my orders. Begin gathering the supplies and finding men and women who are looking to start a new life in the New World. I will provide you with the ships and crew.

**Raleigh:** *[visibly disappointed that he can't go]* Yes, Your Majesty. *[bowing again]* Thank You for your blessing. *[He walks off stage]*

*Scene 2: Colonists are stepping on land for the first time in the New World. Two men are silently moving their supply boxes onto the stage, one man is on the look-out for natives with his musket, one lady is cowering behind him looking nervous.*

**Narrator 1:** Raleigh found 115 women and men who were ready to start their adventure in the New World.

**Narrator 2:** One man was named John White. He brought with him his daughter and her husband. She was due to have her first child in just a few months.

**Narrator 3:** The colonists arrived in the year 1587 at a different location than Raleigh had told them to settle. They decided to stay in the area that would later be called North Carolina.

**Man:** I know this is not the land called Virginia, but we have been traveling for two months on this ship. Let's settle here, and make the best of it.

**Woman:** *[looking around in a worried manner]* I just hope the natives are friendly. *[She sees the emerging Native American, and hides behind the English man in fear]* Oh my goodness!!

**Narrator 1:** A Native American slowly emerges from behind a tree. He walks carefully up to the man and presents the man with a basket of corn showing he means no harm to them.

**Man:** *[places his hand on his own chest]* We...are...from...England. ENGLAND.

**Native:** *[places his hand on his own chest]* Roanoke.

**Man:** *[turns to the woman]* In honor of this Native tribe's hospitality towards our arrival, we shall call this colony...Roanoke.

**Woman:** What a wonderful Idea! Do you think they have more food that they can give us?

**Man:** I hope so...

*Scene 3: Some colonists are standing. Some are sitting. They all look weak, sick, or hungry. John White's daughter is holding her new baby girl.*

**Narrator 2:** Several months have gone by. John White's granddaughter was born, and they named her Virginia Dare.

**Narrator 3:** She will always be known as the first English child to be born in the New World.

**Narrator 1:** Unfortunately, the colonists have run out of supplies, and the Roanoke tribe has stopped giving them food. They are in a bad situation.

**Woman:** What shall we do? If we don't get new supplies soon, we surely will all die!

**Man:** I hear John White has decided to go back to England to get supplies.

**Narrator 2:** The day has come for John White to board the ship back to England.

**Narrator 3:** The trip will take up to two months to get back to England, about a month to get the supplies, and another two months to return.

**John White:** I will return in five months with the supplies that we need. If things get unbearable, I want the colony to move to the Croatoan village. They are friendly and will help. Carve their name on the gatepost if this is the decision that you make, so that I may know where you are when I return.

Daughter: Yes, Father. God speed and return safely. We will miss you.

[White hugs his daughter and shakes the hand of his son-in-law. He leaves the stage.]

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*Scene 4: White is standing center stage checking his supply list from a piece of parchment paper.*

**White:** flour, pigs, chickens, nails...

**Sailor:** [interrupting White] Did you hear? England and Spain have started war with each other! England will need all available ships to fight this war.

**White:** What? But I must return to my colony. They are in dire need of supplies. When will I be able to return to the New World?

**Sailor:** Don't know, but I don't expect it to be anytime soon.

**Narrator 1:** White had to wait 3 agonizing years while the war continued.

**Narrator 2:** Finally, in 1590, he was able to get a ship back to his colony and his family.

**Narrator 3:** He just hoped he wasn't too late.

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*Scene 5: White quickly enters the stage. Sailors follow more slowly behind him with muskets. He seems to be in a panic as he looks around at the empty stage.*

**White:** What has happened? Where are the people? Where are the buildings? Where is my family?

**Narrator 1:** Everything was gone.

**Narrator 2:** Everything.

**Narrator 3:** Everything, but a gatepost...a gatepost that had CROATOAN carved into it.

**White:** [rushing to the post] Croatoan! That must be it! They moved to the village of the Croatoans. [He turns to a sailor.] We must go to the Croatoan village. It shouldn't take more than a day or two if we leave now.

**Sailor:** [looking up at the sky] That's not an option, Mr. White. There's a bad storm coming, and we can't risk getting caught in the middle of it. We must head back to England as soon as possible.

**White:** [appears to be desperate] But my family...I must find---

**Sailor:** [cutting off White's sentence] I'm sorry, sir. We must go now!

[The sailors leave the stage in a hurry. White squats down to take one last look at the carved gatepost. He looks around the stage, then slowly starts to exit. He stops, turns, takes one last look, then exits the stage with his head down.]

**Narrator 1:** John White spent the rest of his days in England wondering what had happened to his family and his colony.

**Narrator 2:** To this day, experts still don't exactly know what happened to the Lost Colony of Roanoke.

**Narrator 3:** Some speculate that the colony was attacked by Natives or the Spanish.

**Narrator 1:** Some believe due to the carved post, they moved to the Croatoan village.

**Narrator 2:** And some believe that nature may have destroyed the colony and its people.

**Narrator 3:** Do you have a theory that would explain the disappearance of England's first colony?

- 1.) At the beginning of the play, according to the stage directions, the lights are dim, and begin to slowly get brighter as the characters begin to speak. What effect does this have on the audience?
  - a. It infers that the climax of the story is happening.
  - b. It indicates that the story is starting.
  - c. It indicates that the sun is rising.
  - d. It shows the audience that the conclusion is coming.
- 2.) What does the word, charter mean?
  - a. paper
  - b. denial
  - c. permission
  - d. charts
- 3.) Why does Sir Walter Raleigh look shocked in Scene I?
  - a. He was used to getting his way.
  - b. He was surprised to see the queen.
  - c. He couldn't believe she denied his charter.
  - d. He thought she would let him go to the New World.
- 4.) What does the gift of corn represent in Scene 2?
  - a. Offering of peace
  - b. The Roanoke tribe has extra food to spare.
  - c. Both A & B
  - d. None of the above
- 5.) In Scene 3, Narrator 1 reports that the Roanoke tribe has stopped giving the colonists food. What's the most likely reason they stopped giving them food?
  - a. They realized the colonists were relying on them for food, and would never stop asking for more.
  - b. They ran out of food completely.
  - c. They began eating English food instead of their Native foods.
  - d. They realized they could make money if they sold them the food.
- 6.) Agonizing comes from the word agony. Which definition best fits how agonizing is used in Scene 4. See the definition of the root word, agony, below.

**ag·o·ny** [ag-uh-nee]  
**noun, plural ag·o·nies.**

  1. extreme and generally prolonged pain; intense physical or mental suffering.
  2. a display or outburst of intense mental or emotional excitement: *an agony of joy.*
  3. the struggle preceding natural death: *mortal agony.*
  4. a violent struggle.
- 7.) What caused John White's delay in returning to Roanoke for three years?
  - a. He couldn't get the supplies he needed, and had to wait.
  - b. Spain and England broke into war, and England needed all the ships.
  - c. He was not delayed, because he returned when he said he would.
  - d. Queen Elizabeth would not allow him to go back to the New World.