**from *Of Plymouth Plantation* by William Bradford**

001Background: *By the time the Pilgrims landed at Cape Cod, the local Native American* 002*tribes had had 100 years of contact and conflict with European explorers. Squanto,* 003*who became the Pilgrims’ interpreter, had learned English when he was kidnapped* 004*by an English expedition in 1605. The Nauset Indians, who attacked the Pilgrims* 005*shortly after their arrival, had survived years of skirmishes with English explorers,* 006*including a 1609 battle with John Smith of Jamestown fame. Keep these events in* 007*mind as you read Bradford’s account.*

008Their Safe Arrival at Cape Cod

009 But to omit other things (that I may be brief) after long beating at sea they1 fell 010with that land which is called Cape Cod; the which being made and certainly known 011to be it, they were not a little joyful. . . .

012 Being thus arrived in a good harbor, and brought safe to land, they fell upon their 013knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the vast and 014furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to 015set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. . . .

016 But here I cannot but stay and make a pause, and stand half amazed at this poor 017people’s present condition; and so I think will the reader, too, when he well considers 018the same. Being thus passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their 019preparation (as may be remembered by that which went before), they had now no 020friends to welcome them nor inns to entertain or refresh their weatherbeaten bodies; 021no houses or much less towns to repair to, to seek for succor.2 It is recorded in 022Scripture as a mercy to the Apostle and his shipwrecked company, that the 023barbarians showed them no small kindness in refreshing them,3 but these savage 024barbarians, when they met with them (as after will appear) were readier to fill their 025sides full of arrows than otherwise. And for the season it was winter, and they that 026know the winters of that country know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to 027cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search 028an unknown coast. Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate 029wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men—and what multitudes there might be of 030them they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah4 to 031view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes; for which way 032soever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little 033solace5 or content in respect of any outward objects. For summer being done, all 034things stand upon them with a weatherbeaten face, and the whole country, full of 035woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue. If they looked behind them, 036there was the mighty ocean which they had passed and was now as a main bar and 037gulf to separate them from all the civil parts of the world. . . .

038The First Encounter

039 Being thus arrived at Cape Cod on 11th of November, and necessity calling them 040to look out a place for habitation (as well as the master’s and mariners’ importunity); 041they having brought a large shallop6 with them out of England, stowed in quarters in 042the ship, they now got her out and set their carpenters to work to trim her up; but 043being much bruised and shattered in the ship with foul weather, they saw she would 044be long in mending. Whereupon a few of them tendered7 themselves to go by land 045and discover those nearest places, whilst the shallop was in mending; . . .

046 After this, the shallop being got ready, they set out again for the better discovery 047of this place, and the master of the ship desired to go himself. So there went some 048thirty men but found it to be no harbor for ships buy only for boats. There was also 049found two of their [the Indians’] houses covered with mats, and sundry of their 050implements in them, but the people were run away and could not be seen. Also 051there was found more of their corn and of their beans of various colors; the corn and 052beans they [the English] brought away, purposing to give them [the Indians] full 053satisfaction when they should meet with any of them as, about some six month 054afterward they did, to their good content.8

055 And here is to be noted a special providence9 of God, and a great mercy to this 056poor people, that here they got seed to plant them corn the next year, or else they 057might have starved, for they had non nor any likelihood to get any till the season had 058been past, as the sequel did manifest.10 Neither is it likely they had had this, if the 059first voyage had not been made, for the ground was now all covered with snow and 060hard frozen; but the Lord is never wanting unto His in their greatest needs; let His 061holy name have all the praise.

062 The month of November being spent in these affairs, and much foul weather 063falling in, the 6th of December they sent out their shallop again with then of their 064principal men and some seamen, upon further discovery, intending to circulate that 065deep bay of Cape Cod. The weather was very cold and it froze so hard as the spray 066of the sea lightning on their coats, they were as if they had been glazed. . . . [The 067next night they landed and] made them a barricado11 as usually they did every night, 068with logs, stakes, and thick pine boughs, the height of a man, leaving it open to 069leeward,12 partly to shelter them from the cold and wind (making their fire in the 070middle and lying round about it) and partly to defend them from any sudden assaults 071of the savages, if they should surround them; so being very weary, they betook 072them to rest. But about midnight they heard a hideous and great cry, and their 073sentinel called “Arm! arm!” So they bestirred them and stood in their arms and shot 074off a couple of muskets, and then the noise ceased. They concluded it was a 075company of wolves or such like wild beasts, for one of the seamen told them he had 076often heard such a noise in Newfoundland.

077 So they rested till about five of the clock in the morning; for the tide, and their 078purpose to go from thence, made them be stirring betimes. So after prayer they 079prepared for breakfast, and it being day dawning it was thought best to be carrying 080things down to the boat. But some said it was not best to carry the arms down, 081others said they would be the readier, for they had lapped them up in their coats 082from the dew; but some three or four would not carry their till they went themselves. 083Yet as it fell out, the water being not high enough, they laid them down on the bank 084side and came up to breakfast.

085 But presently, all on the sudden, they heard a great and strange cry, which they 086knew to be the same voices they hear in the night, though they varied their notes; 087and one of their company being abroad came running in and cried, “Men, Indians! 088Indians!” And withal, their arrows came flying amongst them. Their men ran with all 089speed to recover their arms, as by the good providence of God they did. In the 090meantime, of those that were there ready, two muskets were discharged at them, 091and two more stood ready in the entrance of their rendezvous13 but were 092commanded not to shoot till they could take full aim at them. And the other two 093charged again with all speed, for there were only four had arms there, and defended 094the barricade, which was first assaulted. The cry of the Indians was dreadful, 095especially when they [the Indians] saw their men [the English] run out of the 096rendezvous toward the shallop to recover their arms, the Indians wheeling about 097upon them. But some running out with coats of mail on, and cutlasses in their 098hands, they [the English] soon got their arms and let fly amongst them [the Indians] 099and quickly stopped their violence. . . .

100 Thus it pleased God to vanquish their enemies and give them deliverance; and 101by His special providence so to dispose that not any one of them were either hurt or 102hit, though their arrows came close by them and on every side [of] them; and sundry 103of their coats, which hung up in the barricade, were shot through and through. 104Afterwards they gave God solemn thanks and praise for their deliverance, and 105gathered up a bundle of their arrows and sent them into England afterward by the 106master of the ship, and called that place the First Encounter. . . .

107The Starving Time

108 But that which was most sad and lamentable was, that in two or three months’ 109time half of their company died, especially in January and February, being the depth 110of winter, and wanting houses and other comforts; being infected with the scurvy14 111and other diseases which this long voyage and their inaccomodate condition had 112brought upon them. So as there died some times two or three of a day in the 113foresaid time, that of 100 and odd persons, scarce fifty remained. And of these, in 114the time of most distress, there was but six or seven sound persons who to their 115great commendations, be it spoken, spared no pains night nor day, but with 116abundance of toil and hazard of their own health fetched them wood, made them 117fires, dressed them meat, made their beds, washed their loathsome clothes, clothed 118and unclothed them. . . . In a word, did all the homely and necessary offices for 119them which dainty and queasy stomachs cannot endure to hear named; and all this 120willingly and cheerfully, without any grudging in the least, showing herein their love 121unto their friends and brethren; a rare example and worthy to be remembered. Two 122of these seven were Mr. William Brewster, their reverend Elder, and Myles Standish, 123their Captain and military commander, unto whom myself and many others were 124much beholden in our low and sick condition. And yet the Lord so upheld these 125persons as in this general calamity they were not at all infected either with sickness 126or lameness. . . .

127Indian Relations

128 All this while the Indians came skulking about them, and would sometimes show 129themselves aloof off, but when any approached near them, they would run away; 130and once they [the Indians] stole away their [the colonists’] tools where they had 131been at work and were gone to dinner. But about the 16th of March, a certain Indian 132came boldly amongst them and spoke to them in broken English, which they could 133well understand but marveled at it. At length they understood by discourse with him, 134that he was not of these parts, but belonged to the eastern parts where some 135English ships came to fish, with whom he was acquainted and could name sundry of 136them by their names, amongst whom he had got his language. He became 137profitable to them in acquainting them with many things concerning the state of the 138country in the east parts where he lived, which was afterwards profitable unto them; 139as also of the people here, of their names, number and strength, of their situation 140and distance from this place, and who was chief amongst them. His name was 141Samoset. He told them also of another Indian whose name was Squanto, a native 142of this place, who had been in England and could speak better English than himself.

143 Being, after some time of entertainment and gifts dismissed, a while after he 144came again, and five more with him, and they brought again all the tools that were 145stolen away before, and made way for the coming of their great Sachem,15 called 146Massasoit. Who, about four or five days after, came with the chief of his friends and 147other attendance, with the aforesaid Squanto. With whom, after friendly 148entertainment and some gifts given to him, they made a peace with him (which hath 149now continued this 24 years) in these terms:

150 1. That neither he nor any of his should injure or do hurt to any of their

151 people.

152 2. That if any of his did hurt to any of theirs, he should send the offender, that 153 they might punish him.

154 3. That if anything were taken away from any of theirs, he should cause it to 155 be restored; and they should do the like to his.

156 4. If any did unjustly war against him, they would aid him; if any did war

157 against them, he should aid them.

158 5. He should send to his neighbors confederates to certify them of this, that 159 they might not wrong them, but might be likewise compromised in the

160 conditions of peace.16

161 6. That when their men came to them, they should leave their bows and

162 arrows behind them.

163 After these things he returned to his place called Sowams,17 some 40 miles from 164this place, but Squanto continued with them and was their interpreter and was a 165special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation. He directed 166them how to set their corn, where to take fish, and to procure18 other commodities, 167and was also their pilot to bring them to unknown places for their profit, and never 168left them till he died.

169First Thanksgiving

170 They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their 171houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength 172and had all things in good plenty. For as some were thus employed in affairs 173abroad, others were exercised in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of 174which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer 175there was no want; and now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, 176of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by 177degrees). And besides waterfowl there was great store of wild turkeys, of which 178they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides they had about a peck a meal a 179week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to that proportion. Which made 180many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, 181which were not feigned19 but true reports.

1. **they:** Bradford refers to the Pilgrims in the third person, even though he is one of them.

2. **to seek for succor:** to look for help or relief.

3. **it is . . . refreshing them:** a reference to the Biblical account of the courteous reception given to Paul (“the Apostle”) and his companions by the inhabitants of

 Malta (Acts 27:41 – 28:2).

4. **Pisgah:** the mountain from whose peak Moses saw the Promised Lang (Deuteronomy 34:1-4).

5. **solace** *n.* comfort in sorrow or distress.

6. **shallop:** an open boat usually used in shallow waters.

7. **tender** *v.* to offer formally

8. **purposing . . . content:** intending to repay the Nauset Indians for the corn and

 beans they took, as they in fact did, to the Indians’ satisfaction, six months later.

9. **providence** *n.* an instance of divine care.

10. **as the sequel did manifest:** as the events that followed proved to be the case.

11. **barricade:** a barrier for defense.

12. **to leeward:** on the side sheltered from the wind.

13. **rendezvous** *n.* a gathering place.

14. **scurvy:** a disease caused by lack of vitamin C.

15. **Sachem:** chief.

16. **He should send . . . peace:** Massasoit was to send representatives to other

 tribes to let them know about the treaty with the Pilgrims.

17. **Sowams:** near the side of the present-day Barrington, Rhode Island.

18. **procure** *v.* to get by special effort; to obtain.

19. **feigned** *adj.* not real; pretend.

Directions: *Answer the following questions in complete sentences utilizing text evidence to support your answers (following the RACE strategy [Restate the question, Answer the question, Cite text evidence, Explain how your text evidence proves your answer to be correct]).*

01.) Reread lines 012-015 and describe what this paragraph reveals about the way the Puritans viewed God. How does this related back to Calvinism?

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02.) Reread lines 023-037 and discuss what sorts of challenges the colonists were confronted with when they arrived at Cape Cod?

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03.) Reread lines 055-061 and discuss what belief helps William Bradford justify stealing the corn. Can we view this as a “fair” transaction?

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04.) Reread lines 107-126 and discuss what values are demonstrated by the seven colonists’ response to their ailing companions? What risks were these individuals taking?

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05.) Reread lines 131-149 and discuss what events led to the treaty with Massasoit.

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06.) How might one describe the language used in this text? What effect does the type of language used have on our modern interpretation of it?

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07.) Which of the following most contributed to the colonists’ willingness to face hardships together?

 A.) Puritan Values

 B.) Landscape and Climate

 C.) Fears of Native American Attack

 D.) The Events of “The Starving Time”

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