

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT—Readers' Theatre



- | | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1. William Brewster, a Separatist leader | 9. Francis Billington, a teen Stranger |
| 2. Mary Brewster, his wife | 10. Desire Minier, a teen Separatist |
| 3. Patience Brewster, 12, their daughter | 11. Stranger |
| 4. Jonathan Brewster, 14, their son | 12. John Carver, a Separatist leader |
| 5. Ship captain | 13. Squanto, a Patuxet (pah-TUCK-et) Indian |
| 6. William Bradford, a Separatist leader | 14. Narrators A–E |
| 7. Thomas Weston, a London businessman | |
| 8. Separatist men | |

SCENE 1

NARRATOR A: It is a moonless night in the fall of 1608, on a lonely English shoreline on the North Sea. Dozens of Separatist families stand on the dock.

WILLIAM BREWSTER: Jonathan, put these tools in my bag.

MARY BREWSTER: Be careful, Jon. They're heavy.

NARRATOR A: The Brewsters and other families are waiting for a ship that will take them to Amsterdam, the largest city in Holland.

PATIENCE BREWSTER: It's so dark, Father. I'm scared.

BREWSTER: The ship will be here soon.

NARRATOR A: A thick fog covers the sea.

JONATHAN BREWSTER: I think I see a light.

PATIENCE: At last, the ship is here!

JONATHAN: Quiet, Patience. If the King hears us, we'll all be hanged.

PATIENCE: Is that true, Mother?

MARY: Jonathan has a big imagination. But we must be careful. If any of the men are caught, King James will have them imprisoned.

SHIP CAPTAIN: Come aboard, everyone!

NARRATOR A: English soldiers approach on horseback. The King has sent them to stop the Separatists from escaping.

BREWSTER: Jonathan, hand me my musket [gun]!

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT—Readers' Theatre

NARRATOR A: Mrs. Brewster turns to her husband.

MARY: The soldiers have found us! We Saints will all be killed!

NARRATOR A: The Separatists call themselves Saints. In their eyes, they are God's chosen people.

BREWSTER: Be strong, Mary. The ship is here.

SHIP CAPTAIN: Lift the anchor, men! We're off.

NARRATOR A: Wind fills the sails, and the ship leaves the dock. The Brewsters are safely on board.

PATIENCE: Now the King's men can't hurt us anymore!

BREWSTER: Soon we will be free to practice our own religion, as pure and simple as we like. All men are free in Holland.

NARRATOR A: A cold wind blows across the deck, and rain begins to fall.

SCENE 2

NARRATOR B: After a stormy voyage, the ship arrives in Amsterdam.

PATIENCE: The canals are so pretty here, and I love the clatter of wooden shoes!

NARRATOR B: But because of a conflict with other English settlers, the Separatists decide to move to Leyden [LY-dun], a small town in Holland.

JONATHAN: Look at all of these windmills!

BREWSTER: The most important thing is that we can worship God in peace.

PATIENCE: Yes, Father, and I've made new Dutch friends.

JONATHAN: We can even speak Dutch! Goede morgen.

PATIENCE: That means, "Good morning."

NARRATOR B: Mr. and Mrs. Brewster look at each other. Later, they talk quietly.

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT—Readers' Theatre

MARY: If we stay in Holland, our children will forget the English language and all of our customs.

BREWSTER: Yes, and it is difficult to make a living here.

NARRATOR B: Most of the Separatists grew up on farms. In Leyden, they must work in the cloth mills.

NARRATOR B: A dozen years pass. The Separatist group now numbers almost 600.

BREWSTER: William Bradford is on his way over.

NARRATOR B: Bradford, a young man, has become a leader of the group.

MARY: I hear him at the door.

BREWSTER: Welcome, Mr. Bradford.

WILLIAM BRADFORD: Good evening, sir. We have important business to discuss. As you know, life here is difficult. Some of us think it is best to leave Leyden.

MARY: Where can we go?

BRADFORD: Let us try our luck in the New World.

NARRATOR B: The Separatists negotiate with businessmen in London for financial support for their journey. Patience and Jonathan, now grown up, decide to stay in Holland.

SCENE 3

NARRATOR C: The Separatists need a large ship and enough supplies to make the long voyage.

THOMAS WESTON: I'll give you a ship and supplies -- under one condition: For the first seven years, you must send me everything you earn.

BRADFORD: Seven years! We'll have nothing to show for our work.

SEPARATIST MEN: Forget it. We're staying here.

NARRATOR C: Most Separatists decide not to make the journey.

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT—Readers' Theatre

WESTON: Why should I finance your trip if so few of you are going? I'll find others to accompany you.

BRADFORD: We Saints can't travel with strangers. What if they're bad people?

WESTON: You heard my condition. Either you travel with the others or you stay here.

NARRATOR C: Like the Saints, most of the people they call "Strangers" are seeking a better life in the New World.

SCENE 4

NARRATOR D: After many delays, the Pilgrims depart on their ship, the *Mayflower*, from Plymouth, England, in September 1620. The group plans to settle in English territory controlled by the Virginia Company.

BRADFORD: God bless this journey.

NARRATOR D: Only 37 Saints from the Leyden community are aboard. Of the more than 100 passengers, about 30 are children. Below deck...

FRANCIS BILLINGTON: It stinks in here!

Desire Minter: You stink, Francis!

NARRATOR D: Mice scurry at their feet.

FRANCIS: I'm gonna puke.

DESIRE: Don't puke on me!

NARRATOR D: Storms rock the *Mayflower*, and many passengers get seasick.

FRANCIS: This lousy biscuit chipped my tooth! It's as hard as a rock.

DESIRE: Stop your complaining. My biscuit was filled with bugs.

NARRATOR D: The Strangers and the Saints try to get along, but tensions run high during the 65-day voyage.

STRANGER: We're almost there. Soon we can abandon these so-called Saints.

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT—Readers' Theatre

BRADFORD: Watch what you say. We must work together in the New World.

NARRATOR D: During the journey, the *Mayflower* is blown off course. In November, the weary passengers find themselves off the coast of Cape Cod.

BRADFORD: Winter is approaching, and we're almost out of food. Why don't we stay here?

BREWSTER: All right, but we had better establish some laws. Don't forget, we're on our own. Who knows how much we can trust these Strangers?

NARRATOR D: The leaders of both groups come to an agreement.

JOHN CARVER (reading): "In the presence of God, and one another, we combine ourselves together into a civil body politic [organized group], for our better ordering and preservation (safety and survival)."

NARRATOR D: Forty-one men sign the Mayflower Compact. They elect Carver as their first Governor.

BRADFORD: We are all in this together.

SCENE 5

NARRATOR E: In December, the Pilgrims find a hilly stretch on the mainland, near present-day Boston, where they build Plymouth Colony.

DESIRE: Winters here are miserable!

FRANCIS: I'll say. I miss London.

NARRATOR E: For weeks, there is nothing but rain, sleet, or snow.

BRADFORD: At least we've built a meeting room and a few small houses.

NARRATOR E: The men work quickly. Some of the children help.

FRANCIS: Carrying all those logs has made me tired and thirsty.

DESIRE: Too bad the well water froze.

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT—Readers' Theatre

NARRATOR E: During the first winter, more than half of the Pilgrims die, many from starvation.

BREWSTER: If we don't get help soon, we will lose all of our people.

BRADFORD: We must continue to pray.

NARRATOR E: In March, an Indian named Samoset arrives at the colony.

FRANCIS: Imagine, a real, live Indian!

DESIRE: The men were afraid Indians would attack us. But he's friendly.

NARRATOR E: Samoset doesn't speak much English. He promises to send his friend, Squanto, to help the Pilgrims.

BRADFORD: At last, Squanto is here!

SQUANTO: Greetings. I have known other Englishmen before you. They taught me your language.

BRADFORD: We are glad to see you. Our people are suffering greatly.

NARRATOR E: Squanto shows the Pilgrims how to plant corn in a new way. In each row, he buries small fish.

DESIRE: Will the corn smell bad?

SQUANTO: Not at all. The fish will help the corn grow. It's a fertilizer.

NARRATOR E: Thanks to Squanto, many crops grow -- corn, beans, and squash. He also builds a bear trap.

BRADFORD: We owe you a huge debt. Bring your people here for a feast.

NARRATOR E: The Pilgrims and the Indians play games together at their harvest celebration. They eat corn, deer, fish, and goose.

SQUANTO: First, the white men must talk to the Great Spirit. Then we can eat.

CARVER: Yes, let us all give thanks.

THE END