

my mind is elsewhere. I'm too excited. All I can think about is what's happening the very next night.

CLARA. What?

SHIRLEY. My acting debut in the Thanksgiving pageant! *(The Thanksgiving pageant unfolds on the stage of the school auditorium. Sounds are created by Mr. Hilton, who also prompts and directs during the show.)*

MR. HILTON. *(Whispers, urgently.)* Pilgrims! Go, go, go! *(Mr. Hilton ushers two tentative pilgrims onstage — Myles Standish [Jackie] and Priscilla Mullins [Evie] — who take their places before the red curtain of a proscenium within the proscenium.)*

SHIRLEY. That's Mr. Hilton, the drama teacher. He not only puts on these shows, he also writes them. And he's a perfectionist. *(Mr. Hilton makes Myles Standish spit out his gum. Miss Glacé is visible in the wings, seated at the piano.)* And that's Miss Glacé, the new music teacher, who came to us from the Bronx by way of Paris, France.

MYLES STANDISH. *(Rings a bell.)* Hear ye! Hear ye!

PRISCILLA MULLINS. Attention mothers and fathers and children large and small!

MYLES STANDISH. *(Bows.)* My name is Myles Standish of the good ship *Mayflower*.

PRISCILLA MULLINS. *(Curtseys.)* And I am the Puritan maiden Priscilla Mullins, his lady love. *(Action freezes.)*

CLARA. *(Stage whisper.)* Gramma, are you Priscilla?

SHIRLEY. No, dear.

CLARA. Who do you play?

SHIRLEY. You'll see. *(Action resumes.)*

MYLES STANDISH. We are here to tell the story of the very first Thanksgiving!

PRISCILLA MULLINS. Come with us, back in time, across the ocean ...

MYLES STANDISH. To merry old England in the year 1620! *(They pull open the curtain. A painted backdrop. A map of England. King James [Ira] is seated on his throne.)*

KING JAMES. I am King James! I hereby decree that every man, woman, and child must worship in the Church of England — or else! *(Ira ad-libs a throat-cutting gesture. Pilgrims grumble.)*

MYLES STANDISH. So people across the land prayed as they wished, in secret, but feared for their safety. *(Pilgrims warily look over their shoulders as they furtively pray.)*

PILGRIMS.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come ...

*(Their prayer gets softer.)*

PRISCILLA MULLINS. *(Overlap.)* Many citizens grew unhappy.

PILGRIM #1. No one can tell us where we can worship! Not even the king!

PILGRIMS. — Hear, hear! — Yeah! — That's right!

PILGRIM #1. There must be a better life somewhere!

PILGRIM #2. There is! Across the ocean! A new world called America!

PILGRIMS. Ahhh!

MYLES STANDISH. So we Pilgrims packed up our worldly possessions and hired a great big wooden ship —

MYLES and PRISCILLA. The *Mayflower*!

PRISCILLA MULLINS. And one sunny day, we set sail for America!

PILGRIMS. *(Singing a little Gilbert and Sullivan.)*

WE SAIL THE OCEAN BLUE,

AND OUR SAUCY SHIP'S A BEAUTY;

WE ARE SOBER MEN AND TRUE,

AND ATTENTIVE TO OUR DUTY.

MYLES STANDISH. But then... *(Thunder, lightning, howling wind, pouring rain — created by Mr. Hilton.)* The storms hit!

PRISCILLA MULLINS. The *Mayflower* was tossed about the ocean.

MYLES STANDISH. Children got sick. *(Pilgrims gag, cough, and "Ah choo!")*

PRISCILLA MULLINS. Men got grumpy. *(Sounds of grumpiness. Pilgrims grumble.)* Women thought this misery would never end.

PILGRIM WOMAN. Oh Lord, will this misery ever end?

MYLES STANDISH. 'Til finally, one day ...

PILGRIM #1. Land ho! Land ho! *(Pilgrims excitedly clamber on deck.)*

PRISCILLA MULLINS. Everyone hurried on deck for their very first look at their new home. *(A collective groan of disappointment.)*

PILGRIM #2. *(Disappointed.)* That's it?

MYLES STANDISH. *(To Pilgrims.)* I declare this place Plymouth Rock! *(The pilgrims sing the opening bars of "Anything Goes." Miss Glacé is an exuberant conductor.)*

PRISCILLA MULLINS. One by one, through the frigid winter, houses grew where there had only been fields.

MYLES STANDISH. Before long, spring arrived!

Needed:  
Myles Standish  
Priscilla Mullins  
Clara  
Shirley  
King James  
Pilgrim #1  
Pilgrim #2  
Squanto  
Statue of Liberty