

Myles Standish, Man of Mystery: A Play in Four Acts

Setting: Briefly Holland and then New England, 1620-1655

Staging: A sylvan background or wooden hut beyond a platform, dais or visible space will suffice

Characters: **Narrator** and player of small parts if necessary(e.g **John Billington, Edward Winslow**)

William Bradford, Pilgrim, becomes governor of New Plymouth, ages, dies 1657

Myles Standish, soldier, hero/antihero, captain and settler in New England, dies 1656

Costume: Seventeenth century English and/or colonial.

ACT ONE Delfshaven, Holland, July 1620

*Audience are seated in front of "stage". **William Bradford** is amongst them. He may, in role, have exchanged words with neighbours.*

NARRATOR in guise of George Frisbie Hoar (1890s American senator) enters DR and addresses audience.

Myles Standish eh? Well, where to start? There were few knew him well. What I know came from Governor Bradford's manuscript "of Plimouth Plantation" which I had the honour of bringing back from your Bishop of London's Library. Now that tells the story of Myles, or a part of it, or some ways of looking at him. Well, where to start? Try and see yourselves as roughly half of the Pilgrim Fathers, a pious, cussed, bunch of Separatists hell-bent on becoming refugees in a new continent. You hail from the Midlands and east of England, lived in Leiden in Holland for some ten years but presently you are stuck on the open deck of the *Speedwell* in Delfshaven harbour, Holland. Good fortune with that! (*narrator retires DR*)

Myles Standish strides on UR. He struts a little, surveys audience with a sceptical air

MYLES: Here is the barque. She answers to "*Speedwell*". It would be seemly if one of the elders were here to greet me. The seamen look knowing enough but the hopefuls gathered on deck strike me as a feckless lot. Ho there! Pastor John? Winslow? William Bradford? Any man of standing?

BRADFORD (*getting up from audience and mounting stage*) Good morrow Myles! We have waited some time on your coming. Your very wife Rose is aboard and attends by my Dorothy. Make haste for we desire to be underway, meet with our friends in the new ship presently in England and commence our great undertaking.

MYLES: I am part moved to take Rose and leave you to it. I have heard of Blackwell's pilgrims from Emden, over a hundred perished before they reached Virginia- bloody flux, thirst and fecklessness!

BRADFORD: Stay your tongue, good Myles...

MYLES: Aye, and your ship no bigger than a country inn and I see a doleful, grey if motley crowd before me. Pastor Robinson vouchsafed that you would all be of your Leiden congregation, mild folk with a wish to found a godly community in new lands. Yet what are you? Farmers who had to become weavers in Holland. bound for a land of whales and furs, the trade of which you have no knowledge. Fooled King James with talk of you living by fishing!

BRADFORD: We have stores and that which the land yields not, well, the Lord will surely lead us to it.

MYLES: Aye, you will beseech it so. But zounds- you have sold butter and other provisions to pay for your ships. And, mark, me well, Thomas Weston and those London men calling themselves Merchant Adventurers will want their pound of flesh in goods sent back to England.

BRADFORD: Come Myles. You must board. Pastor Robinson made a solemn contract with you. Look, see his watery cheeks and handsome tone as he commends us with fervent prayers to the Lord.

MYLES: Yes. You are in the right about the contract. You will not venture safely without a soldier and, God knows, I learned a martial trade with my father, keeping those vengeful Spaniards from many a Dutch town. I reckon being a nursemaid to this feeble lot will be a happier end than facing the Habsburg onslaught which all predict. Land, a new start, and I have a young wife for whom I need a home.

BRADFORD: Pray, then aboard with you and away! Ah but stay. Hast thou thy officer's commission with thee?

(Bradford steps on to stage, as it were up from ship's deck, a look of concern on his face.)

MYLES: 'Tis but a piece of paper and I fear it is left in my lodgings. It is no matter. Pastor Robinson chose me, you know my capabilities. And mark well, your elders took me over that braggart John Smith, naming himself a captain when verily he was no such thing. Books and maps about his journeyings and great deeds in Virginia- when some of us were in the fray with real enemies! He never saw the Spaniards bent on sacking a city, contempt for any Protestant heretic dog in their eyes and bloodlust in their throats. He ages too. I am in my prime and well primed too. *(indicates sword)*

BRADFORD: In truth, dear Myles, you were chosen because you were cheap, a lot cheaper than Captain Smith. Though, tis true he wanted to direct us in everything, whereas you have little interest in our worship or governance.

MYLES: Aye, truly you Separatists are a law to yourselves and I well understand that no man, be he bishop or nobleman, will stand between your assembly and God. No matter to me- when I think on these things, I am content as a true Englishman and a soul in the Church in England. I have no wish to have a window into my soul, and neither did stout Queen Bess, near a score years passed. Yet, on the other matter- If I had been formerly apprised of Smith's greed, I would have asked for gold in fellowship with the land and office you promise.

BRADFORD: Fairly spoken good Myles. You know some in Holland said you were a papist, like many of your countymen in the North. But we never dubbed you more than a straight bluff soldier. As for money, it will count for little on that new shore we seek. Organise our defences, should they be needed, help us build the common store and then you have your land and your future.

MYLES: You speak plain William and I like that in any fellow.

BRADFORD: Now, I shall hasten with you to the lodgings and arrest your commission. A lieutenant's office was it not?

MYLES: Indeed, and on good vellum with a noble seal. If needs must then we shall secure the deed and then tarry no longer. Go thee before me. Then, for better or worse, we go together to England, then to new lands overseas and new beginnings for both of us.

Bradford exits UR. Myles follows and then turns to audience.

MYLES: Fear not good people. We shall dig out that commission- or something like it- and return presently. See, Pastor Robinson continues to commend you with prayers and blessing. Methinks such love is indeed seldom found on this earth. Ah well, the die is cast. Time and tide will wait not much longer.

(Myles hastens off UR)

ACT TWO; SCENE One: New Plimoth, April 1621.

NARRATOR enters DR

Well, you know you good people made it to what we now call America. Events did not always follow your intended plan., did they? You Pilgrims took on Strangers in England, if only to make up numbers for the voyage. Then your leaking *Speedwell* turned back and some hundred, Pilgrims and Strangers, all told were crammed on the old *Mayflower*. What a voyage!. Over two months storm lashed, seasick, penned below by rough seamen. The contrary winds meant your landfall was not Virginia but Cape Cod, well to the north. Exploring the bay beyond, you decided to settle here. (*Looks around disparagingly*) If only you had explored northwards instead of to the south you could have been the founders of Boston!

On Christmas Day 1620, you commenced the common building. Nineteen families clinging to a God forsaken coast. Then your tribulation began in earnest. It was barren, cold and wet. Scurvy and pneumonia afflicted you. Half your number died in that first winter. You were spied upon by the native people, not surprisingly as you had taken some buried stores of food which could only be theirs. Oh, you had your Compact and all agreeing to follow the common laws you made. But in April 1621 your first elected governor, John Carver, died. You chose the reluctant William Bradford to replace him- for there were few suitable. What next? (*Hoar exits DR*), *shaking his head*.

BRADFORD (*entering UR*) and taking up a chair centre stage, addresses audience-

I little pretended that I should be governor over those fifty of you who remain. I can but trust it is the Lord's will that I should take up this burden. He led me from my village in Yorkshire to Scrooby where I first felt welcome to worship in fellowship with several here. We were moulded in Leiden but knew we needed to seek a separate place of our own, and on a deserted place beyond reach of king or prelate, if we were to make a truly godly community in the sight of God. We have suffered much but we can survive. We shall pray to the Hand that always guides us but we know we need to take practical steps too. I have asked our captain, Myles Standish to speak to us and believe we have little option but to listen to his counsel.

MYLES (*entering DR, strutting somewhat, eyeing audience with determined eye. He is about to speak when interrupted*)

JOHN BILLINGTON (*from audience*) : You look like a silly boy!

MYLES: (*visibly annoyed and threatening*) Which foolish knave challenges me now? Ah, John Billington!

BILLINGTON: I do. You do look foolish. An alleged captain but with such a short stature and that fancy Italian rapier. You had to sever some six inches from it or it would drag on the ground as you walk!

MYLES: I may be short on height but I am tall in a fight and long in memory of an insult. You forget who has succoured you through the terrors of this place.

BILLINGTON: Ha! You found this deserted, disease- ridden river mouth. You also unthinkingly and irreverently broke open the local people's grave sites to steal food. You order us about like the stiffest general. I say you are held in utter contempt by our people.

MYLES: You forget our situation Billington. Our people were content to find this forsaken but sufficient place. They were content to share whatever stores we could find. We were too late to plant our own food!

BILLINGTON: Even so Standish. You are not sufficient to order us.

MYLES: Governor Bradford, for now you are so, I demand that this knave be put in irons or put beyond our houses. It is such perverse talk that will dent your purpose.

BRADFORD: I shall take counsel and decide in due course. For now, John Billington, reflect that our captain was one of the few who brought food, changed bed linen, washed clothes and fostered our spirits when nearly all were aid low by wretched disease..

MYLES: Aye, tis thus. There were two or three dying each day. I had dead men propped by trees with muskets to ward off those watching native folk we sighted. I arranged for the dead, including my own good wife Rose, to be buried in hidden graves, so the watchers would not know our numbers. I charged Master Jones to bring ashore the ship's guns before the *Mayflower* set sail for England. I built the common house almost single-handed. And, you forget, your meeting confirmed me as captain, just this two months ago. And your captain I shall be!

BILLINGTON: And you shall be whether we need you or not. We have met with Samoset, the tall native who knows England and then Squanto and the chief Massasoit have sat peacefully with us this last month. There were some 60 here. They partook of our kettle of peas and Squanto brought toothsome eels. It was truly peaceful. It may be that we have no need of you Standish!

MYLES: You forget yourself. I well remember your tremors when we sighted those first dozen folk. Our tools were stolen. Fears ran high. It was I who went out beyond Town Brook, laid down my musket and sought parley. I too that went out to welcome Massasoit in military manner and brought him with honour to sit with us.

BRADFORD: That is so, is it not?

MYLES: And there is more you should consider. Massasoit, advised by Squanto, thinks we might be good allies but only because he can see that we are armed and prepared to stand strong before him. Moreover, he has powerful enemies. He is of the Pokanoket but the Narragansetts beyond are more numerous and may well attack us for befriending their enemy the Pokanoket. We need to make further preparations.

BRADFORD: I have spoken with Squanto and he attests to the truth of this. At times you seem headstrong to me Myles, but I judge that we should ask you what further measures it is meet we should take.

MYLES: We should leave no-one in doubt as to our strength. I shall organise us into companies in order to give every man his turn at guard or to be in an expeditionary band. We need a stockade around the houses, which I have tried to arrange in defensible pattern as the Dutch do. We must drill, keep muskets and swords bedside us, even at your worship. Yonder hill should be the place for a fort in case we have need of it. I shall take some of our people to survey it. (*Myles exits UR*)

BRADFORD: Such a course would seem the wisest. The Lord has brought us through a terrible winter. We will give thanks rightly when we come to our first harvest of corn and have learned to fish more readily. But we also must attend to Captain Standish's words. He can be brusque and quick to feel hurt but he has done much to aid us and I believe we should heed him. Let us move forward peacefully but also be prepared.

How say you, brothers and sisters?..... (*Bradford rises, approaches audience, invites comment, listens, wanders off DR in thoughtful mode. The company of players and audience may choose to discuss Myles' deeds to date.*)

ACT TWO, Scene Two. New Plimoth, summer 1623

NARRATOR (*entering DR and addressing audience as Pilgrims, one Edward Winslow amongst them*); Well, you are still here this third year and swelled a little by new folk from England, some welcome, some not to welcome. I see you are somewhat apprehensive. You await news of Captain Standish and his small band, gone to deal with three sachems (that is, chiefs) of the Massachusetts, native Americans who threaten both you and a sorry settlement of n'ere-do-wells at Wessagusset, a few miles to the north. They are a late come band, English but hardly Pilgrims! Here Governor Bradford comes to hear what befalls you. (*exits DR*)

Bradford enters UR. Moves chair to DR, turns it towards DL and stares into distance

BRADFORD: See Captain Standish and the shallop boat land! How many come to us? Ah, there is the captain. His gait and weapons mark him out though he is but of short stature. He is encumbered by a cloth bag. I see five, six, no seven of our people with him and the good friend Hobbamock too. All safely return to us. The Lord be praised!

Myles marches in DL, bag in hand

MYLES: Well, William, a good day to you.

BRADFORD: I greet you with joy and much relief Standish. Now we await your account. Did you find those sorry fellow countrymen at Wessagusset? What of Pecksuot and Witumamat and sachem Obtakiest, who that warlike pair caused to plot to drive us into the sea?

MYLES: (*raising bag slightly*) More of Wituwamat presently. Firstly, I report that we found a few English folk at Wessagusset by their boat "The Swan". They were few, seemed senseless in their own misery and reported that several of their fellows had gone to live with the native peoples. Hunger had driven them there. I gave them some corn and told them to sail north to Maine.

BRADFORD: A wise course I avow. But what sign of those natives sworn against us? I know our friends the Pokanoket well, even though our interpreter Squanto passed last year. Yet the Neponset and the rest of the Massachusetts people fill me with no confidence.

MYLES: I was resolved to employ your orders directly- namely to deal forcibly with Witumamat and any others who would put us from this land. Moreover I was soon given extra cause to take sword in hand.

BRADFORD: How so?

MYLES: Through the rain and wind, came a band with Pecksuot in their midst. Hobbamock had told me that Pecksuot had boasted " Let him (that is me, Myles Standish) begin what he dare. He shall not find us unaware!"

BRADFORD: A palpable threat but not seeming murderous.

MYLES: That is so. But now Pecksuot, a towering tall man who moved to glower over me, uttered scornfully, "You are a great captain but yet you are a little man. Though I am not yet a sachem, yet I am of great strength and courage". And Wituwamat flourished a fearsome knife, claiming he had another at home that had killed both French and Englishmen. Their hostility towards us and this settlement was clear.

BRADFORD: An uncomfortable turn of events. How did you resolve to act?

MYLES (*making a proud narrative*) I stayed calm and unmoved by threats. In fact I invited these men for a meal at their village the next day. I had pork and other goodly provision with us and I sensed they would come in peace.

BRADFORD: And did they?

(The company may choose to illustrate the subsequent events in the tent with "volunteers" from the audience.)

MYLES: Oh yes. Pecksuot and Wituwamat, plus his brother, a friend and some women. And as soon as they were seated and the door shut, I sprang up, grabbed Pecksuot's own knife- for we were at close quarters- and stabbed him in the neck until he fell. The three Plimoth men with me slew Wituwamat and his friend. We hung Wituwamat's brother outside. I told our band to apprehend and slay any others. I found only one and killed him. Our band dispatched two more. The rest of our would-be foes fled.

BRADFORD: Did you not come upon the sachem, Obtakiest, whom the two leaders you slew, turned against us?

MYLES: Yes indeed. We spied him and a band moving to high ground nearby. However, we sped there first as Hobbamock chased them off. They fired arrows at us in most tiresome fashion. Presently I broke the arm of one of them with a well placed musket shot. That was enough. I challenged Obtakiest to fight man to man but he spurned the opportunity and they skulked off into the woods. Thus we return unharmed with our duty done.

WINSLOW: *(from the audience)* It is meet you are safely returned but it should much grieve us to shed the blood of our neighbours, those whose good we ever intended.

MYLES: There was no better course Winslow: You heard the news from Virginia last year of our countrymen being wantonly killed. Next our own community, Massasoit of the Pokanoket is your friend. You healed him of disease. He told you of Wituwamet's plot against us. In fact he told us to slay the leaders in a single day if we could. Phineas Pratt, who fled Wessagusset, told us of the plot too. Our governor, *(he indicates Bradford)* gave me orders to make an example of that bloody and bold Wituwamet. He knew that if we neglect to show our strength we shall last no more than this three years in the new land.

BRADFORD: The captain speaks true. I have ordered many courses which I never thought possible. Verily, I never even contemplated becoming governor. But it is a burden I must bear and it would not serve to show aught but strength before our numerous and various neighbours.

WINSLOW: Our neighbours will certainly fear us! Even the Pokanoket may desert their land, live in swamps and unwholesome places. Furs and corn may be hard to trade. We shall have to fish in more competence!

MYLES: Maybe so. And some already call us cutthroats. But Wituwamat snubbed me last year and this- but he will do so no longer. Others too will know we are not to be moved from here.

BRADFORD: *(sighing)* I suppose it is needful. I think to trouble the peoples no more but send word to Obtakiest that if he follow the course that the plotters did, I will never suffer him to rest in peace. That should suffice.

One last thing, Captain. What do you carry in that cloth?

MYLES: Oh this. It is the head of Wituwamat. *(He exits DL, leaving bag. Bradford looks shocked. Then picks up the bag and exits sorrowfully UR)*

(The company may choose to make this more dramatic.)

NARRATOR *(entering DR):* It was indeed Wituwamat's head. Despite his misgivings, Governor Bradford allowed the head to be displayed on a pike as a salutary warning to other potential enemies. Indeed the bloodied cloth that had borne it was flown as a first kind of flag on the fort upon the hill. Winslow spoke of misgivings about Myles Standish's actions but wrote a positive account of the first years of the Pilgrims. However criticism of Myles' actions soon arose, most significantly from the Pilgrims' pastor. John Robinson who had stayed behind in Leiden.

Today Myles Standish has a monument at Duxbury Massachusetts but is also seen as the initiator of a sort of ethnic cleansing against native Americans. You have heard something of his defence in the previous scene. There may be much to discuss in our short interval or later.

(Again, the company could choose to lead a short discussion of Myles' deeds)

ACT THREE: Myles Standish's Farm, Duxbury, Plimoth Colony, 7 March 1655.

NARRATOR (*entering DR*): The godly community of Pilgrims, plus others, did survive in New Plimoth. Soon many other English settlers arrived and built up what became Massachusetts State and New England. The first great fight against native Americans took place in 1637 and a full scale war in 1675, after which many native American prisoners were sent to slavery in the West Indies.

Myles Standish had no part in any of this. After Wessagusset he led no expeditions against native Americans. In 1632, he left the Plimoth settlement and established his own farm at nearby Duxbury. He raised a large family and was to live until around seventy years of age. Here we find him in 1655, a year before his death. He has been writing his will.

MYLES (*entering UR and moving uneasily to a couch where he lies uncomfortable, contemplating a paper in his hand*): I warrant all men find this a trial. How to dispose of all in the house and land. How to call it to memory! How to be just to all. I have a wife and six surviving children. Well Barbara shall have a third, the four sons £40 each. But what if I don't have that? Ah...equal shares in whatever there is, be it more or less. (*Myles pauses and raises his head at the sound of someone entering the house. William Bradford eventually enters DR*)

BRADFORD: Good day to you Myles. I had to venture to the north of the settlements this day and thought I would call upon you. I heard that you were not abroad much and see you laid on a couch- a sight those of your long acquaintance do not expect of such a man of active deeds.

MYLES: Good day and welcome William. Truly, I detest this condition but can barely move about my affairs with this lumping pain in my side. I fear stones at my kidneys, or possibly something larger. At all events, it is a sore discomfort. I have my three score years and ten and fear I near my allotted span. See, I have thought to make my will. (*he passes the paper to Bradford.*)

BRADFORD (*reading*): It is truly a dismal opening Myles." Deseased in my body and knowing the frail estate of man in his best estate....."

MYLES: I borrowed it from other wills at the courthouse William. Yet it speaks plain and true to our condition.

BRADFORD: That may be so in times to come Myles but I can still perceive the man who bore our colony on his sturdy shoulder more times than memory can grasp- Our captain in those early dark days when we few who were spared daily called on the Lord to grant us the peace we sought. Then your part guarantee to the Merchant Adventurers which helped free us of debt. You were the only one with the energy to be surveyor of highways and all trusted you sufficient to have you treasurer of the colony for five whole years.

MYLES: Aye- and run a farm and sire a large family. A great many events have filled my life William but I oftentimes think of those early trials on the edge of the great ocean.

BRADFORD: Indeed our lives ran together. I was new Governor to your not so new Captain. At times it seemed just you and I fetched wood and water, cleaned the sick and buried our dead. You may be of short stature but you made up with strength. I confess I sometimes thought you too easily heated, prone to attack rumoured enemies before they committed any actual harm against us.

MYLES: Hah! You should have been with me in Holland fighting the overweening wrath of the Spanish overlord. They gave no quarter and I speedily learned to smash any enemy before he could move. Oh, indeed I was rashly driven against Wituwamat at Wessagusset but he would have done the same to me- and all of you- given the opportunity. Remember too, William, it was you and the Court who ordered me to proceed against him forcefully.

BRADFORD: Truly spoken Myles but (*laughing gently*) remember it was you who argued forcefully in Court for such a robust course to be taken.

MYLES: It was so. Yet I had good friends amongst our neighbours, brought back wounded natives after our very first clash, with Corbitant at Nemasket. Hobbamock, you know, was my particular friend and I learned much of the tongue from him. He lies buried by here this thirteen years. And I could be as hard on our own people.

BRADFORD: T'was so. Thomas Morton spoke and wrote ill of you but that was because you brought him for trial. He was a Lord of Misrule at that infamous version of Hades at Merrymount.

MYLES: Spent their time drinking, dancing around maypoles and befriending the native peoples by selling them guns! It was little wonder he dubbed me savage. Called me "Captain Shrimp" I hear!!....Those French at Penobscot would have felt my violence too if that fool of a ship's captain had not fired off all his powder before we could land. But that was another part of my life. I have been a farmer at Duxbury near thirty years.

BRADFORD: Yes and I always wish you were not. When the law allowed separate land division, you and so many other good men left our township at Plimoth and made your new homes. Plimoth itself lost a great deal. When we first came there against all the perils of our crossing I thought we would stay together as a godly community, all worshipping the Lord in the way we knew to be right. But Plimoth was diluted when you left. Other men came, some godly but many Strangers and some with idleness or evil. And think of all the new colonies building around us. At times I fervently wish this were a smaller, simpler, more spiritual place.

MYLES: Be of good cheer William. You did whatever you could. You never sought to be governor and engaged with the burden as your first wife perished of the disease, just as my Rose did. I was different. I always thought I should be captain and a good one at that. I never let any man think counter to that! Now I am happy with my farm, my loving wife Barbara and family in Duxbury. Yet I fear it is time I make provision for them. Cast a glance at the rest of the will.

BRADFORD (*perusing*) It appears handsomely done Myles. You will pay your debts first of all, you provide for all, you give Alexander your eldest a double share of land to keep a decent sized farm, your daughter and daughter-in-law are here, and a few shillings for your servant. There are two goodly supervisors of the will and you rightly call on them to use the office of Christian love should your wife and children meet hard times. But what is this last, ninth, clause Myles? You make some large claims therein.

MYLES: Ah, you refer to my lost lands in the Old Country.

BRADFORD: Indeed. Of course I remember our old secretary Nathaniel Morton always said you were descended from a gentle family in Lancashire and heir to a large estate. I have not seen it written like this. (*He reads*).....all my lands as heir apparent by lawful decent in Ormistic, Bursconge, Wrightington, Maudsley, Newburrow, Crawston and the Ile of man....." That is a lot of land Myles!

MYLES: Aye and all in Lancashire townships. When I was in London, you remember, some five years after our first voyage, I was told of my father's family name in a published pedigree, by the College of Arms no less. There were written Standish names and I believe Ormistic held their main estate.

BRADFORD: You continue," Given to me as right heire by lawful decent but Surruptuously Detained from mee....." That is a large claim but ill fortune if true.

MYLES: Certain, it will be true. My father did not have his land, else why did I find myself emired with him, a child in a military camp in Holland? They say a big lawyer and government official, one Stopford, bought the lands listed and my father could do naught to stay it.

BRADFORD: You explain"my great grandafather being a second or younger brother from the house of Standish of Standish"....

MYLES: That would be so. There are some six Standish families I have heard tell of but my father always related that we descended from the earliest and main branch- (*very proudly*) I am a Standish of Standish. My eldest son Alexander, well eldest after Charles died young, bears a common used Christian name of theirs.

BRADFORD: So do the Standishes of Standish not have lands, like the Standishes of Ormskirk you write of earlier?

MYLES: Very like but I have not seen those lands listed. At any rate, the Ormistic, or Ormskirk as you say it, lands could well be mine.... or the Standish...

BRADFORD: Hmm. I note you called this place we now sit "Duxbury". Did you have good reason for that?

MYLES: Well, yes. I heard in London that the Standishes had family at Duxbury in Lancashire and that the people there had built a fine manor house just some two years before. They built it close to their barn by their great fields. In fact they held some six thousand acres across the south and east of Chorley, itself a struggling marketplace of no great consequence.

BRADFORD: If I may venture to say.....you do claim to be heir to a good many Standishes and three possible sets of estates at least.

MYLES: Well it may well benefit my son Alexander to cast the net widely, so to speak. I was always told I am a Standish of Standish, true born and must be heir to lands held by one of the families. Father was somewhat vague before he was killed or fled the camp or whatever...and I was a stripling, a mere drummer boy at the offing. So, whichever land is mine, I am a Standish true. Oh I see the doubt cloud your face William. But I am one for going forward, taking on the challenge, winning through, grasping my ambitions.

BRADFORD: True enough Myles. You know you never did find that lieutenant's commission we spoke of, all those years ago as the *Speedwell* set to sail from Delfshaven. Yet you did become a captain and served right well- if in your own perverse manner at many times.

MYLES: Aye. I just wish my side did not trouble me so. I know you keep an account of the Plimoth Plantation Governor. Write fairly of me when you pass it to others.

NARRATOR (*enters DR as Bradford and Myles bow their heads and then hold their poses*) Well, William Bradford did write fairly of Myles Standish. Indeed he wrote very fair of himself and the whole record of the early Pilgrims. At the same time he was prepared to admit doubts and owned that Plimoth and certainly the other settlements around soon became less worthy than the aspirations that drove him, his brothers and sisters in God to that new land.

So, what think you of Myles?- who was he really? Where were his roots? On balance did he serve the Pilgrims well? Does his one heinous attack upon native Americans in 1623 cloud all else?