

the beginning of

THE NEW LAND (from FUNNY AS A CRUTCH)

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

Time: December 11, 1620

Place: The shore of Massachusetts

Characters: MILES STANDISH, captain of the Mayflower
URIAH, his First Mate
QUINCY, a settler
REBECCA, his wife
and ONE OTHER POWERFUL CHARACTER

As the scene begins, MILES STANDISH, the rugged and confident captain of the Mayflower, and URIAH, his loyal First Mate, survey the land in front of them.

MILES

Look around you, Uriah. The new land.
Art this not paradise?

URIAH

Aye, Captain. 'Tis a land worth the long
and arduous voyage.

MILES

They be six mighty difficult weeks, even
for able-bodied men like you and me.

URIAH

All on the Mayflower suffered grave hardships.

MILES

Forced to subsist on dried ox-tongue,
bug-infested oatmeal and rotting turnips.

URIAH

Except on Saturdays, when we had leftovers.

MILES

But all of that lieth behind us now. On this
historic day in the year of our Lord 1620,
I nameth this colony Plymouth, Virginia.

URIAH

Sir, according to thy map, I doubteth
we landed in Virginia.

MILES

I nameth this colony Plymouth, *North* Virginia.

URIAH

We veered significantly off-course.

MILES

Plymouth, North Virginia Heights.

URIAH

If that be the name you wanteth, Captain.

MILES

And what wouldest thou suggesteth?

URIAH

Methinks you might want to give it
a name with a more spiritual resonance.

MILES

Such as?

URIAH

Plymouth, Mass-of-Jesuits.

From off-stage, we hear:

REBECCA (o.s.)

I see-eth a path.

QUINCY (o.s.)

Let us go forth.

MILES

Uriah, listeneth. I heareth voices.

URIAH

They must be Injuns.

Miles and Uriah hide, as QUINCY and REBECCA enter. They both have visible disabilities. At least one uses a wheelchair.

QUINCY

Look around, Rebecca. Art this not
a great new land?

REBECCA

Indeed she is, Quincy.

QUINCY

'Tis a land worth our most difficult voyage.

REBECCA

Day after day of constant hardships.

QUINCY

Trying to keep balance when
the ship rocked back and forth.

REBECCA

Making sure our chairs faced
downwind when we got seasick.*

(or "your chair" or "my chair", and "you" or "I", as fits the actors.)

QUINCY

But we hath arrived. On this historic day in the
year of our Lord 1620, I nameth this colony –

Miles and Uriah enter.

MILES

Whoa, there! Who art thou?

QUINCY

My friends call me Quincy, and this be my wife Rebecca.

MILES

From where hath thou come?

QUINCY

Our ship arriveth this morning.

URIAH

We saweth no ship.

REBECCA

We saweth yours. You grabbeth
the best landing spot.

URIAH

What kind of ship would alloweth
passengers like you?

QUINCY

A ship filled with people like us wanting
to find a land without prejudice.

URIAH

We gotteth here first, so beateth it.

REBECCA

I told you we shouldeth gone to Florida.

QUINCY

(to Miles:)

Sir, we ask for naught but the same opportunities
you desire. Canst we not live together in harmony?

MILES

Please. We art Puritans, not liberals.

QUINCY

But, sir –

URIAH

The Captain saideth –

MILES

Ignoreth them, Uriah. Eventually they shalt
getteth the message and go-eth away-eth.

URIAH

Goodeth idea, Captain.

MILES

Look at this land, Uriah. Today it art but trees
and stones, but we shalt createth a mighty nation,
with great buildings and towering cathedrals.

REBECCA

(to Quincy:)

I see-eth ramps, lots of ramps.

QUINCY

And outhouses with *wide* entrances.

URIAH

Oh, thou art disgusting.

REBECCA

Thou art no piece of cake.

MILES

Go-eth now, and leaveth us in peace.

REBECCA

We art here. Getteth used to us!

MILES

Oh, what shalt we do-eth with
these godforsaken people?

We see lightning and hear thunder.

GOD (v.o.)

Did somebody just use my name in vain?!

URIAH

Jeepers.

GOD (v.o.)

I'm coming down... Hey, Pete, open the gate.

We hear the sound of a gate opening. It's a bit creaky.

GOD (v.o.)

Thanks.

The gate closes. We hear heavy footsteps descend from Heaven,
ending up off-stage.

GOD enters. God is in a wheelchair.

GOD

I am the Lord thy God, and is my back killing me.

MILES

Art *thou* the Lord?

GOD

You were expecting Mel Gibson?

URIAH

But how canst thou be the Lord?
The Lord art perfect.

GOD

(pointing to her/his side:)
And you're giving feeling a perfect pain,
right here.

MILES

I art sorry, Lord, if I hath caused thou any distress. My people have traveled a great distance to found a new land in your name.

GOD

Okay. First of all, the land is already in my name. Second, if you really want to do something in my name, stop acting like assholes.

(to the audience:)

I know the golden rule sounds nicer, but trust me – same concept.

MILES

I doth not understandeth thou, Lord.

GOD

Let me put it in plain English –
(to the audience:)
which I hope catches on someday.