

Pilgrim Girl

A monologue

by

Jim Dalglish

Character

Woman / “May” - A millennial. Yep, she’s a millennial.

Setting

Place - Anywhere people will listen to her

Time - When it’s the most inconvenient

Originally performed as a portion of the play *Dark Tales Told on a Cold Autumn Eve*, by Jim Dalglish.

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WOMAN

Okay... so like... I'm going to tell the story of Dorothy Bradford. Kind of like because... Thanksgiving? National history? Cultural Heritage? You people like to hear that bullshit. Right? Because it makes you feel good about this country and what we've done? Makes you feel good about yourself? Right?

Whatever... I'm going to tell her story and I'm going to tell it my way. The way it really happened. Spoiler alert - you may not like it.

Dorothy Bradford.

Peeps called her *May*. Today, her squad prolly just call her Dot.

Bitch was a Pilgrim.

Okay, nutshell? Back in the old country, girlfriend boards a leaky bucket called the May-fucking-flower... It sets sail... Bye Felicia... It crosses the Atlantic... Parks in Provincetown... you know... on the tip of Cape Fucking Cod... Something about a Mayflower Compact? Yeah, so we're not here to talk about that bullshit. Sorry if that pisses you off and shit. This is about something more important. This is about our little Pilgrim girl May. Got it?

Okay... So our girl didn't make it all the way to Plymouth rock... which was never really even a thing. Did you all know that? The rock? Not a thing? May sorta took the easy way out back at the ranch on the tip of the Cape. Or so the story goes. But that's totes bullshit, because what you don't know is like May was like this total awesome bad-ass bae. Bible.

Yaaaaaaasssss. Bitch rocked. But she be trapped in the wayback. Like before her time. Like waaaaaaay back. Like 1620, okay? We all think of her as like this pilgrim... all Mayflower Society and shit... so you prolly think that she be like coasting... like taking total advantage of her white privilege.

But when you think about it, May was totes a victim of the patriarchy. Poisoned by an environment of toxic masculinity. We're talking real Me Too stuff here.

There she is... in P'town... before it was even a town, P or otherwise. Just a ranky skank hole. I'm not talking the t-shirt shops on Commercial Street or the 400-square-foot closets they sell in the East End for 2 Mill. I'm talking beyond the breakwater. Beyond. By the way, have you seen what goes on out there on Herring Cove Beach? What those gay boys get up to in the dunes? Yaaaaaaaah...

Soanyway... It was called Cape Cod Hook back then and that's where the rust bucket dropped anchor. Not Plymouth. Ptown. Right (Hooks her arm like it is Cape Cod and points to her index finger) there. Like under the fingernail?

The Pilgies send out a few men to reconnoiter. They find a fresh water spring in what one day would be called Truro. Which is just about the best thing that ever happened in that dump. Ever try to build a house in Truro? *You'll ruin the Hopper landscape!* Bunch of A-holes. Could be worse. Coulda found the spring in Wellfleet. Wait! Here's a riddle... Who is smarter than a New York therapist living in the Wellfleet Woods in August? No one. Just ask them. Ba dump bump.

Well-FLEE-shunnnnnnssss.

Soanyway... Back to May.... The 'rents made her marry a dude when she was like 16. Cray cray. Right? Totally unwoke. His name? William Bradford. Heard it before? Future Governor of the Plymouth Colony? Yeah, *that* dude. He had ambition, she was young and presh, and her parents were loaded. They all joined a cult. Sure, the Pilgies were a little nicer than the Puritans, but let's face it, people, it was a cult. Think the Amish are weird? See what this crew wore?

Back in England they were about to get their asses burned at the stake, so they took a shuttle to Holland because... religious freedom? They had to find a place more tolerant. And they get there and guess what? It's not good enough for the 'Grims because the Dutch are *too* tolerant. They'll let just anyone in.

I'm not making this shit up.

Soanyway... back on the Mayflower. Crossing sucked. Blown way off course. Three solid months of puking and eating crap and we end up in Nowheresville. The men go out, dig up some Indian graves, and steal their corn. Get this... the 'Grims leave the natives an IOU for the corn. Seriously. Indians must have seen them coming because they were like out of there... like the teakettle was still warm. Or maybe they were all dead. The pox? No one knows for sure, because not enough people care.

So back on the boat, it was up to the women to mop up the puke and... for the first time in three months... do the wash, which smelled like... like... like a pilgrim, okay?

Our girl May goes out there on the poop deck for the first time and looks around.

WTF?!

Are you effing kidding me?

She got on the boat thinking, *Jamestown*... you know... nice wooden stockade, vegetable gardens, well-stocked market, water sports on the river. She'd seen the promotional sketches. Civilization light. Maybe not granite countertops... more like frontier style... but with solid amenities.

Ever hear the expression Cape Light? *I'm an aspiring artist and I travel to the Cape for three weeks every summer to paint because of the light.*

She must have missed it, because as she stood there with a puke-stained mop in her hand and looked out, it wasn't the light she was seeing.

There was sky... and water... and sand... (points) sand... (points) sand. Oh, look... over there... some sea grass... yeah... a hint of green.... and a tree... a twisted shitty leafless wind-blown tree... and behind... a dune... and another dune... and another... and it's the 7th of December and she knows that even though it may be in the mid-40s that can't last much longer. This whole harbor will be an ice flow. We will sail across the bay, the crew will drop our sorry asses on the beach, we'll say goodbye to this bucket and then what? Where will we live? What the hell will we eat? We are just about out of hard-tack. Do you hear that coughing? Half the passengers can barely stand.

Let's just say that the men find a way to build a few shacks that will keep the snow out. That these city boys will figure out how to hunt or fish well enough to feed us. What are my chances of making it til spring? Anyone?

Why am I here? Why the fuck had we come to this god-forsaken place at the end of the world?

And that's when it hit her... like... like... like... let's just call it a brick, okay? This shit storm was all because of the fucked up way a handful of well-meaning people interpreted a few random sentences scribbled in a book that had been written more than a thousand years ago.

She leaned over the rail and stared at the water below. So cold... so calm... so clear. A tear fell from her eye. She looked into the ripples that spread out across the surface, and saw the thatched cottage in Cambridgeshire where she was born. Another tear and there were the blooms of the lilacs she planted by the gate. A third and there was little John, the son she left back in Holland with her parents.

More tears. More ripples of time and memory... of the things she loved and would never see again.

And somehow the water was no longer gray as slate. It radiated with the heat of her golden memories. From when she was warm and happy and content.

She stepped out of her shoes, threw her bonnet to the wind... let her hair fall to her shoulders. She untied her apron and tossed it aside... unbuttoned the lace around her neck and cuffs. Untied the sleeves from her wool bodice and drew it off her shoulders. Her skirt and petticoats fell into a heap.

Wearing just her shift, she stood there basking in her warm memories.

She reached up to untie the ribbon around her neck. The shift fell away.

Her memories began to swirl... faster and faster... a whirlpool.... They rose up.... Higher... And higher.... She stepped out... into the air... into her past... into the arms of those she loved.

(Pause as she remembers. She looks utterly lost. And then she returns to the present.)

All that washday-ice-on-the-deck-slip-and-drown bullshit?

Hell to the no, gurrrrrrlllll! Bitch jumped.

(She sighs deeply.)

(Trying to smile:) Dorothy May Bradford. Just one of the heartwarming stories about the birth of our wonderful nation. The versions we're afraid to tell. Because if we did... I mean... What would happen?

I need a fucking drink.