

The Footsteps of God

SYNOPSIS

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In late 1620, religious dissenters from England, fleeing persecution in their homeland, make landfall in North America and seek to build a new life in a new world filled with hope and free from turmoil. William Bradford is the newly appointed governor of the colony, after the death of the prior occupant – and, indeed, many other people besides. The Pilgrims have declined from one hundred in number to barely fifty, with starvation haunting their ranks. They are unable to make the soil prosper or tame the nearby wildlife – and, to make it worse, their every step is watched by local, supposedly threatening natives.

In good time, one of these natives makes himself known to the colonists. He comes from Massasoit, chief of the Pokanoket people, one of the mightiest leaders of the region, who wishes to learn more about the English. Encouraged, the reticent Bradford, along with compatriots Myles Standish and Edward Winslow, meet this mysterious king and his people. Desiring greater collaboration, Massasoit demonstrates his friendship by loaning the English colonists a most remarkable man – Squanto – a native who speaks English after previously having been abducted by English fishermen.

Before too long, Squanto becomes a staple of colony life – and, more than that, a savior. He teaches the colonists how to plant local corn, quelling the threat of starvation, and helps to arrange a treaty of peace with Massasoit. Deeper than that is the relationship that fast develops between Bradford, the lonely, reserved Englishman, and the cheeky, jaded Squanto – one a man of spirituality and faith and the other a man of practicality and “getting by.” In time, Squanto and Bradford recognize soul mates in each other – two lost people trying to build a new home, and hopefully finding one in each other’s company.

Just as peace is within reach, however, a serious accusation is made against Squanto, concerning alleged plots by him against Massasoit. Enraged, Massasoit demands Squanto be handed over for execution – a move seconded by Standish and Winslow, who distrust the native and fear losing Massasoit’s support – but Bradford, blinded by friendship – or faith? – refuses. An indelible rift rises between the English colonists and the Pokanoket, which, when a nasty Fall descends, threatens to destroy the English colony, now without allies.

At that moment, it is up for Bradford to decide – should he give up Squanto for the safety of the colony... and is Squanto, indeed, all that he appears?