**"Have You Got Any Beer?"**

(Excerpted from **"The Light & The Glory"** by Peter Marshall & David Manuel  
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The (Pilgrims) were gathered in the common house to conclude their conference on military instruction when the cry went up, "Indian coming!"  
  
Indian coming? Surely he meant Indians coming. Disgusted, Captain Standish shook his head as he went to look out the window - to see a tall, well-built Indian, wearing nothing but a leather loincloth, striding up their main street. He was headed straight for the common house, and the men inside hurried to the door, before he walked right in on them.

# "Welcome!" he suddenly boomed, in a deep, resonant voice. The Pilgrims were too startled to speak. At length they replied with as much gravity as they could muster: "Welcome." Their visitor fixed them with a piercing stare. "Have you got any beer?" he asked them in flawless English. If they were surprised before, they were astounded now. "Beer?" one of them managed. The Indian nodded. The Pilgrims looked at one another, then turned back to him. "Our beer is gone. Would you like ... some brandy?" Again the Indian nodded. They brought him some brandy, and a biscuit with butter and cheese, and then some pudding and a piece of roast duck. To their continuing amazement he ate with evident relish everything set before him. Where had he developed such an appetite for English food? For that matter, who was he, and what was he doing here? ... Finally the time for answering questions came. His name was Samoset. He was a sagamore (or chief) of the Algonquins... He had been visiting in these parts for the past eight months, having begged a ride down the coast with Captain Thomas Dermer, an English sea captain known to the Pilgrims by reputation... Apparently Samoset's sole motivation was a love of travel, and he had learned English from various fishing captains who had put into the Maine shore over the years. Now they asked the crucial questions: What could he tell them of the Indians hereabouts? And the story he told gave every one of them cause to thank God in their hearts. This area had always been the territory of the Patuxets - a large, hostile tribe who had barbarously murdered every white man who had landed on their shores. But four years prior to the Pilgrims' arrival, a mysterious plague had broken out among them, killing every man, woman and child. So complete was the devastation that the neighboring tribes had shunned the area ever since, convinced that some great supernatural spirit had destroyed the Patuxets. Hence the cleared land on which they had settled literally belonged to no one! ... By the time he was done with his tale-telling, it was nightfall. Samoset announced that he would sleep with them ... That was the last they saw of him until the following Thursday, when he returned accompanied by another who also spoke English, and was of all things, a Pautuxet! The second Indian was Squanto, and he was to be, according to Bradford's journals, "a special instrument sent of God for their good, beyond their expectations."... Indeed, in the ensuing months there was no doubt in any of their minds that Squanto was a Godsend. His story really began in 1605, when Squanto and four other Indians were taken captive by Captain George Weymouth... Squanto spent the next nine years in England, where he met Captain John Smith, who promised to take him back to his people on Cape Cod, as soon as he himself could get a command bound for there... (Squanto was captured again, sold into slavery, rescued by monks, finally embarked for New England in 1619...) When Squanto stepped ashore six months before the Pilgrims arrived, he received the most tragic blow of his life: not a man, woman or child of his tribe was left alive! Nothing but skulls and bones and ruined dwellings remained. Squanto wandered aimlessly... merely existed, having no reason for living. That is, this was his condition until Samoset brought news of a small colony of peaceful English families who were so hard pressed to stay alive, let alone plant a colony at Patuxet. They would surely die of starvation, since they had little food and nothing to plant but English wheat and barley. A light seemed to come back to Squanto's eye as he accompanied Samoset, when the latter came to Plymouth as Massasoit's interpreter. For the chief had come with sixty warriors, painted in startling fashion... Massasoit was probably the only other chief on the Northeast coast of America who would have welcomed the white man as a friend. And the Pilgrims took great care not to abuse his acceptance of them... When Massasoit and his entourage finally left, Squanto stayed. He had found his reason for living. These English were like little babes, so ignorant were they of the ways of the wild... The next day he went out and came back with all the eels he could hold in his hand, which the Pilgrims found to be "fat and sweet" and excellent eating... He took several young men with him and taught them how to squash the eels out of the mud with their bare feet, and then catch them with their hands. But the next thing he showed them was by far the most important, for it would save every one of their lives. Squanto showed the Pilgrims how to plant corn the Indian way... instructed the young men how to make the weirs they would need to catch fish... Squanto helped in a thousand similar ways, teaching them to stalk deer, plant pumpkins among the corn, refine maple syrup from maple trees, discern which herbs were good to eat and good for medicine, and find the best berries... The Pilgrims were brimming over with gratitude - not only to Squanto and the Wampanoags who had been so friendly, but to their God ... So, Governor Bradford declared a public day of Thanksgiving to be held in October. Massasoit was invited and unexpectedly arrived a day early - with ninety Indians! .... Massasoit had commanded his braves to hunt for the occasion, and they arrived with no less than five dressed deer and more than a dozen fat wild turkeys! And they helped with the preparations, teaching the Pilgrim women how to make (Johnny Cakes) and a tasty pudding out of cornmeal and maple syrup. Finally, they showed them an Indian delicacy: how to roast corn kernels in an earthen pot until they popped, fluffy and white - popcorn! ... Also, using some of their precious flour, they took summer fruits which the Indians had dried and introduced them to the likes of blueberry, apple and cherry pie. It was all washed down with sweet wine made from the wild grapes. A joyous occasion for all! Between meals, the pilgrims and Indians happily competed in shooting contests with gun and bow. The Indians were especially delighted that John Alden and some of the younger men of the plantation were eager to join them in foot races and wrestling. Things went so well that Thanksgiving Day was extended for three days. Manuel, David & Marshal, Peter. "History Lesson "Have You Got Any Beer?" The Paracast. http://www.theparacast.com/forum/threads/history-lesson-have-you-got-any-beer.3006/. 11-27-2008

Bottom of Form