The Play

Our teacher told us that our class was going to put on a play. The play would be performed in the auditorium, a month from now, but we would be rehearsing together in the classroom. Once a week we would practice for an hour after school. Each student in the class would be responsible for practicing his or her own lines at home.

The play would be a story of how the some Pilgrims came to this country. It would show how they worked hard to make homes for their families. It would also show how some American Indians living nearby helped the Pilgrims survive the long winter, and how they could grow their own food. Because part of the audience for the show would be little kids, the 'realities' of disease, land theft, violence, and warfare during the time period would be left out.

Our parents would be helping out by making the costumes, and the Art teacher would have her students paint the sets. Little by little, things came together. The student actors were becoming fluent in delivering their lines. The sets began to make the scenes

more realistic with backgrounds of forests, cabins, and Native American villages. Students were also taught how to operate the stage lights and the spotlights so the audience could feel like the action was taking place at different times of day or night, in different places, and long ago.

The night of the play arrived and all the seats were filled.

Some people were even standing in the back. The house lights dimmed and the curtain went up. The first scene showed a group of Pilgrim settlers rowing a small wooden boat to shore. The next showed Pilgrims building their houses as fake snow was sprinkled from above by students on ladders backstage.

Things continued to go well until one of the actors bumped into a cardboard tree which caused a domino effect of trees falling across the stage. Everyone pitched in to get things back in order and the play continued. The actors remembered almost all of their lines. The sets were changed each time the curtain closed between scenes. The ending of the play brought a standing ovation from the audience, and a curtain call from the cast.