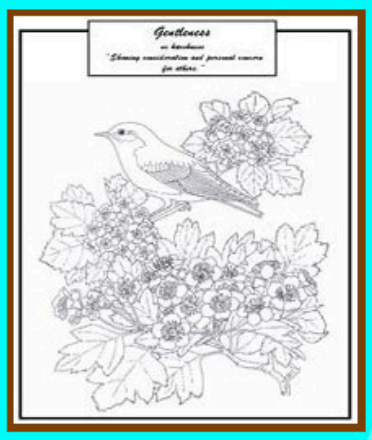

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"Massasoit - Chief of Peace"

The Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony ran for their muskets when 60 Wampanoag Indian braves climbed over the hilltop above their small settlement. There had been much distrust and hostility between Indians and the previous adventurers from Europe. Some of the white men from the big ships had actually pretended to trade with the Indians and instead kidnapped some of the braves to sell them into slavery. Some Indians had killed all the survivors of a capsized French ship, except for three men they kept as slaves.

But this visit was peaceful. In fact, the chief Massasoit spoke softly and kindly to the Pilgrims, declaring his intentions to make a peace treaty with them.

Did you spot the "I Wills"? The chief spoke softy and kindly.

Later, even though a party of Pilgrims looking for food during a time of starvation stole from the Indian stash of corn, he did not take revenge. In fact, members of his tribe taught the Pilgrims how to catch fish to use as fertilizer for the corn crop and, when food was scarce one winter, Massasoit sold food to the Pilgrims so they could survive.

Did you spot the "I Wills"? Massasoit was willing to put the Pilgrims' needs above his right for revenge (like letting them go first), not breaking their treaty, and avoiding annoying them.

Two years after the treaty, the Pilgrims were able to repay his kindness by ministering to him as he lay dying of an illness. Their care helped restore him to full health. Massasoit acted as a peacemaker for 40 years among his people and with the settlers. He showed real strength to remain gentle in the midst of the treachery and hostility of the tribes around him.

Concept by : Character First