

LEVELED BOOK • Y

Two Kettles



Two Kettles



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Ellinor's Surprise

Startled by the noise of sudden **musket** fire, Ellinor dropped her work and ran outside to the garden, eyes searching for the source. *BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!* The muskets discharged, their sound echoing throughout the village of Plymouth. Hundreds of frightened birds blanketed the sky. “Father, why is Captain Standish training soldiers in the forest so early?”



“He isn’t,” her father responded. “The men have gone **fowling**. The game they bring back will add to our feast!”

He knelt to pick up a ripe orange **pompion**, as Ellinor, who did not appreciate surprises, impatiently asked, “Father? What feast do you speak of?”

Before he could answer her, the new governor of the Plymouth colony, William Bradford, approached their garden fence. The governor enthusiastically remarked, “Our joyous feast will celebrate a fortunate harvest!”

Bouncing in front of her, Ellinor's little brother teased, "Sister, didn't you know?" and scampered off with the plump pompon. Their giggling little sister clung tightly to his **doublet**, struggling to keep up with him.



"Is this true, Father?" asked Ellinor, still bewildered by what they were saying. *What could we have to celebrate?*

Hardship had overshadowed their lives since they came to Massachusetts a year ago. Her family was part of a group of 102 English colonists who sailed from England on the *Mayflower* in the winter of 1620. They had quickly erected homes and storehouses on the site of an abandoned village and **christened** their new settlement Plymouth Plantation. They were unprepared for the cruel, cold winter that assaulted them, and half of their small population, including Ellinor's mother, had been lost to sickness and death.

"Yes, we will celebrate our good harvest, even though we have suffered greatly," her father said, sensing her distress.



After many failures, the colonists had been fortunate to meet a man named Tisquantum, whom they called *Squanto*. His tribe was native to this area, and he spoke English. Squanto translated during meetings between the colonists and his people. He lived in Plymouth and taught them better methods for planting and storing food. Ellinor felt certain that none of them would have survived without his help.

The governor's tone grew serious as he said, "Ellinor, there are few healthy women remaining to prepare the food. You are old enough, so you must join them."

Ellinor nodded without comment, knowing she would be needed. But her uncertain heart still ached with conflicting thoughts.

Little Deer's Worries

"Mother!" Little Deer called out as she pulled a piece of **sinew** (SIN-you), thread made from deer tendon, through her long, bone needle. Her pet skunk, Tiptoe, napped contentedly in her lap while she assembled a new pair of soft moccasins.

"Mother, I need more deerskin for this," she explained.

Tiptoe awoke and leaped off her lap. Little Deer ran outside of her house, their *wetu*, chasing after Tiptoe. Hundreds of birds were circling above, shrieking urgently and casting a shadow down over her.



Little Deer wondered what was happening as she saw her mother approaching.

"Many shots were fired in the English village," her mother said. "Our leader, Yellow Feather, has been meeting in the longhouse to discuss what this might mean."

Little Deer felt her stomach tighten with dread. Her tribe, the Pokanoket (POH-kah-no-kit), was one of sixty-seven Wampanoag (wam-pa-NO-ag) nations. Their tribal ancestors had lived and hunted here for thousands of years. A year ago, the English people had arrived here on a large ship and built their village without asking permission. They knew little about how to grow food, how to build good shelters, or how to wear appropriate clothing.

"We do not know what the shots mean. They may signal a preparation for war," Yellow Feather said. "We will ask our English neighbors if they need our help. Gather your weapons. We leave soon."

Recently, Yellow Feather had made a treaty, or agreement, with the English to help each other in time of war. He feared war, but he would not break his promise to them.

Little Deer's resentment gripped her heart. *Why should we help them?* The English had stolen land and brought disease. They had built their Plymouth settlement on the site of the old village of Patuxet. All of the people who had once lived in the village, including her very best friend, had died from the plague brought by the intruders. It seemed wrong for the English to be building there.

She feared what a war could do to her people, their homes, and their quiet life. Filled with worry, she ran down to the stream with Tiptoe, hoping the water would calm her mind.



A Feast of Celebration

"Look! The Indians are approaching!" someone shouted.

At those words, Ellinor saw a large group of Wampanoag men striding swiftly toward the village. In front was their leader, a man whom the English called Massasoit (ma-suh-SOH-it). Many of the men were wearing **finery** of deerskin or beaver pelts, and some wore shell decorations. Ellinor felt her discomfort increase. She knew they were peaceful people, but she did not understand Wampanoag ways. She certainly did not understand how they could wear animal skins for clothes. Ellinor felt certain she had nothing in common with any Wampanoag.

With Squanto translating for the two leaders, the governor welcomed Massasoit and his men and greeted them warmly.

"We heard many guns," Squanto translated for Massasoit. "Do you prepare for war?"

"No," the governor said. "There is no war. The men are hunting fowl for a feast. We will give thanks for what has been provided for us here."

Governor Bradford walked with Massasoit through the village, pointing out the preparations under way. The governor said, "This will be a hopeful celebration for us all. Please, would you and your people join us?"

Massasoit nodded, and Squanto said, "They will come. Men will hunt deer for the feast. Others will gather the women and children from the village. They will help you to prepare."

"We are pleased," smiled the governor. Turning to his aide he said, "Captain, tell everyone that King Massasoit and his people will celebrate with us."

Ellinor's heart dropped. More people! How would they feed them all?



A Joint Task

Ignoring everyone who watched, Little Deer walked closely behind her mother as they entered the English village. She held Tiptoe tightly and felt the eyes of the colonists staring at them. The English *sachem*, or leader, greeted the women and children warmly, but Little Deer secretly felt his smile was too large to trust.

The man was standing near an outside cooking **hearth** with Tisquantum and a fat Englishman. She looked at the buildings behind them and thought the hard, odd-looking square houses must be uncomfortable to live in. She then noticed a frowning, yellow-haired English girl, but the girl didn't look up at anyone.



“Welcome to Plymouth,” said the man with the too-large smile. “We thank you for joining us in our celebration, and for helping us prepare our feast,” he added. “Ellinor . . .”

The yellow-haired girl looked up, but she immediately seemed to shrink into her big, heavy dress.

“I want you to be in charge of preparing the **samp**, the corn porridge.”

Tisquantum spoke next, “Little Deer, you have learned well from your mother the way of making *Nasump*. You will assist this girl, El-linor.” Then, nodding toward Ellinor, he said, “Little Deer will help you.”

Little Deer shook her head and stepped back slightly, bumping her mother.

“We are guests here,” Little Deer’s mother whispered softly, nudging her forward. “You will do as you are asked.”

The fat man said, “You may grind the corn here,” pointing at a hollowed-out log. “Then you may choose what ingredients you wish to add.”

In silence, both Ellinor and Little Deer walked to their own log stations without looking at each other.

Making Nasump

Ellinor noisily deposited a cup of dried corn kernels into the hollowed-out log and began to grind them with a heavy stone **pestle**. Little Deer duplicated her actions. The only sound came from the scraping of the stone and corn and wood as neither girl spoke a word.

The little skunk sitting near Little Deer's feet made Ellinor nervous. It was too close and she was afraid it would make a terrible smell that would ruin all her hard work.



Both girls ground the hard corn into flour for many hours until their arms ached from strain. Two large, water-filled kettles hung over the open hearth. Once the water was boiling, Ellinor scooped up portions of the ground corn flour and added it slowly to one kettle. Little Deer added her corn mixture to the other kettle. Feeling ignored, Tiptoe crept around the fire and brushed against Ellinor's leg.

"AHHH! Get away!" Ellinor screamed.
"It isn't proper for a wild animal to be near the food!"

Little Deer scooped Tiptoe into her arms, nuzzling his soft fur. *Why is Ellinor afraid of little Tiptoe?* she wondered.

Ellinor turned away sharply, marching off toward a small shed where the preserved meat was kept. Inside, she selected a large piece of salted pork and chopped it roughly, cutting off small pieces to add to her kettle. Once she had finished, she began to place pork into the other pot as well, but Little Deer's hand stopped her. She shook her head and said, "*Quahogs.*"

Immediately gathering Tiptoe in her arms, Little Deer ran down the hill toward the ocean. "*Quahogs,*" she called again, over her shoulder.



Collecting Quahogs

Little Deer stopped first at the swift stream that flowed near the village. Tiptoe popped out of her arms and began exploring the tall reeds that lined the bank.

The stream felt cool on Little Deer's feet as she waded in the water. She hopped across several wet rocks with ease. Little Deer was kneeling in the grass searching for wild onions when she heard a rustling sound.

The yellow-haired girl was standing at the edge of the stream and gesturing for Little Deer to return to the village. Ignoring Ellinor, Little Deer continued pulling onions and garlic. No English girl could order her around!

In her hard-soled shoes, the English girl stepped out onto a rock to cross over the stream, but she lost her balance and—*whoosh!*—she flipped into the water with a splash.

Little Deer giggled to see the English girl slumped in the water, completely soaked.

The yellow-haired girl spoke a string of harsh English words as she started to squeeze the water out of her bulky garments. Little Deer did not understand the words, but she wondered why the girl wore so many layers of thick, heavy clothing.



But Little Deer's task wasn't finished. She was expected to make *Nasump*, and that's what she would do! Stuffing onions and garlic into her bag, she turned to walk downstream toward the ocean. She could hear the English girl sloshing behind her.

The shore was rocky, but it provided the right muddy ground for finding *quahogs*, the large, hard-shelled clams that she needed for her *Nasump*. Little Deer's eyes searched the mud closely, looking for the small air holes that revealed where the clams had buried themselves.

The English girl came up next to her and stood frowning, her fists firmly planted on her hips.

Little Deer pulled three *quahogs* out of the mud and stuffed them into her netted bag. Daylight was fading, so Little Deer motioned for the girl to help.

Still frowning, the English girl bent to look for air holes in the mud. She quickly pulled out several *quahogs* as if she had done it before. As they worked, a wave snuck up behind them, knocking them both over into the water. Little Deer almost smiled at the dunking, and she thought she saw the English girl smile, too.



Just then, a musket shot rang out nearby. The noise startled Tiptoe, who scooted up the face of a rocky cliff. Little Deer called his name, but the skunk climbed even higher.

Both girls dashed toward the cliff. Little Deer scaled the rock almost as fast as her little pet, her netted bag full of clams bouncing wildly on her back.

Little Deer had almost reached Tiptoe's hiding place when her foothold crumbled under her. There was nothing to grab onto! Her body scraped and bumped down the side of the cliff, rocks and dirt scattering and tumbling down with her. Little Deer fell hard into the water and sank out of sight.



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Ellinor hesitated for a moment and then ran to the edge of the water. "Little Deer! Grab my apron!"

Little Deer could feel the cold ocean water pulling her down. A blurry yellow shape splashed onto the water above her. Little Deer reached out to grab it and felt herself being pulled slowly toward safety.

Ellinor tugged as hard as she could, drawing Little Deer closer to the rocky shore. Little Deer saw the rocks and tried to pull herself up, but she jerked as pain shot through her arm.

"Are you badly injured?" Ellinor asked. Little Deer did not understand the words. She sat up weakly just as Tiptoe leaped into her arms and nuzzled her face worriedly. She looked up, and Ellinor smiled. The English girl had saved her life!

Ellinor pointed up the hill. "We should return." She gently gripped Little Deer's arm, and they stood up together.

Little Deer looked straight into the girl's blue eyes and grasped her hand. "El-li-nor."

The yellow-haired girl smiled. "You're welcome, Little Deer."

Little Deer turned back to the sea one last time. "Quahogs," she muttered sadly.

"I'm sorry you lost them," Ellinor said. "But we still have the salted pork."

But even being bruised didn't change Little Deer's solid determination to finish her task her own way. Tugging her hand, she led Ellinor back up the stream, where many late-ripening blueberry bushes grew, shaded by ash trees. They picked the plump berries until the sun began to set.



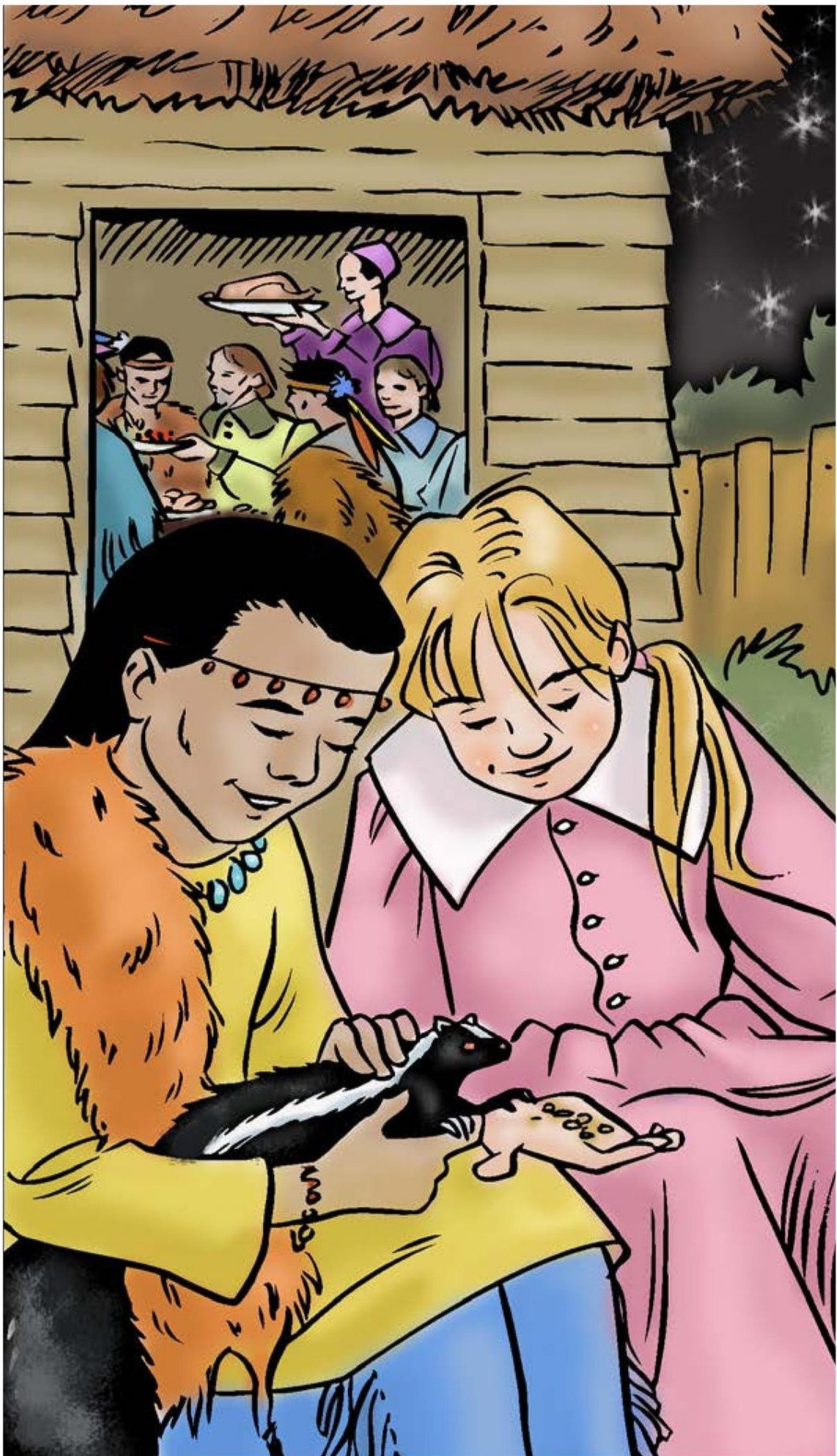
That night, the girls finished the *Nasump*, or samp, for the feast. They added the blueberries to Little Deer's kettle and the wild onion and garlic to Ellinor's. Each pot of corn porridge had a different taste, but both were praised as delicious.

Together, they served Governor Bradford and Massasoit at their tables inside the Plymouth meeting house. Later, the girls played games together in front of the huge fireplace. Each now realized that, although they were very different in how they dressed and spoke and in the kinds of houses they lived in, they shared similar feelings, fears, and experiences.

That night, Little Deer and Ellinor watched together as Captain Standish led his men in shooting exercises. Ellinor saw a silent tear fall from Little Deer's cheek.

"Friends," Ellinor said, gripping Little Deer's hand. She looked into her new friend's eyes and smiled.

Little Deer nodded, wiped her tear, and smiled back. They both knew the quiet peace between their people might not last for long, but the seeds of friendship they had planted would continue to grow.



Glossary

christened (<i>v.</i>)	named officially (p. 5)
doublet (<i>n.</i>)	an English waistcoat worn by men, women, older girls, and boys (p. 5)
finery (<i>n.</i>)	fancy clothes for special occasions (p. 10)
fowling (<i>n.</i>)	the hunting of birds for food (p. 4)
hearth (<i>n.</i>)	an outdoor or indoor fire used for cooking, light, and warmth (p. 12)
musket (<i>n.</i>)	a long-barreled firearm used by the English (p. 4)
Nasump (or samp) (<i>n.</i>)	thick porridge made with ground corn and cooked with meat, fruit, or vegetables (p. 13)
pestle (<i>n.</i>)	a tool for grinding food into powder or meal (p. 14)
pompion (<i>n.</i>)	a pumpkin (p. 4)
quahogs (<i>n.</i>)	hard-shelled clams (p. 15)
samp (<i>n.</i>)	(see Nasump) (p. 13)
sinew (<i>n.</i>)	animal tendon (traditionally used as thread) (p. 7)
wetu (<i>n.</i>)	a Wampanoag house built from saplings bent into an arch and covered with bark (p. 7)

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