



# The Wordy Shipmates

*Sarah Vowell*

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*The Wordy Shipmates* is *New York Times*'s bestselling author Sarah Vowell's exploration of the Puritans and their journey to America to become the people of John Winthrop's "city upon a hill"—a shining example, a "city that cannot be hid."

To this day, America views itself as a Puritan nation, but Vowell investigates what that means—and what it should mean. What was this great political enterprise all about? Who were these people who are considered the philosophical, spiritual, and moral ancestors of our nation? What Vowell discovers is something far different from what their uptight shoe-buckles-and-corn reputation might suggest. The people she finds are highly literate, deeply principled, and surprisingly feisty. Their story is filled with pamphlet feuds, witty courtroom dramas, and bloody vengeance. Along the way she asks:

- \* Was Massachusetts Bay Colony governor John Winthrop a communitarian, a Christlike Christian, or conformity's tyrannical enforcer? *Answer: Yes!*
- \* Was Rhode Island's architect, Roger Williams, America's founding freak or the father of the First Amendment? *Same difference.*
- \* What does it take to get that jezebel Anne Hutchinson to shut up? *A hatchet.*
- \* What was the Puritans' pet name for the Pope? *The Great Whore of Babylon.*

Sarah Vowell's special brand of armchair history makes the bizarre and esoteric fascinatingly relevant and fun. She takes us from the modern-day reenactment of an Indian massacre to the Mohegan Sun casino, from old-timey Puritan poetry, where "righteousness" is rhymed with "wilderness," to a Mayflower-themed waterslide. Throughout, *The Wordy Shipmates* is rich in historical fact, humorous insight, and social commentary by one of America's most celebrated voices. Thou shalt enjoy it.

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