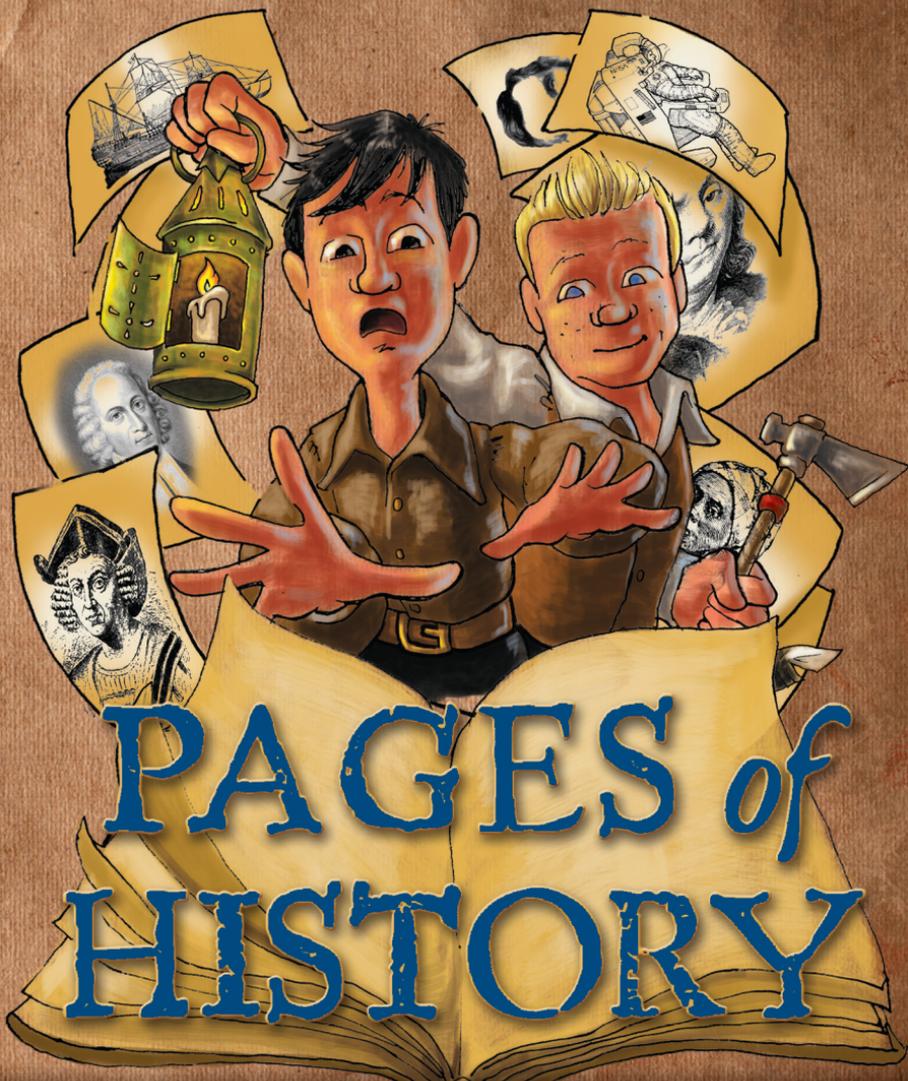


E T T E R A N D D E T W E I L E R



PAGES of HISTORY

V O L U M E T W O

Blazing New Trails

PAGES *of*
HISTORY

VOLUME TWO

Blazing New Trails

BRUCE ETTER AND
ALEXIA DETWEILER

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BRUCE ETTER AND
ALEXIA DETWEILER



*Special thanks to Dr. John D. Wilsey
for reading the first draft
and sharing with us his expertise
and vast knowledge of history.*

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To the five arrows in my quiver,
Isaac, Sarah, Zachary, Jack, and Micah:
May God use the stories of those who have
gone before you to imbue you with wisdom.

—Bruce Etter

Dedicated to my Memaw,
who has the strongest faith of anyone I know.

—Alexia Detweiler

CHAPTER I

THE LOST BOOK

1557

James hadn't been outside for three days. The only indication of passing time was the filtered sunlight that leaked through the poor excuse for a window twelve feet above the dirt floor. The light cut through the thick air of his cell as if it were taunting him to come outside.

It called to him like the kids at school who used to tease him from outside his bedroom window.

"Come play Church with us!" they'd yell. "Let's eat some flesh and blood!" James knew that "playing Church" was their mockery of Christianity. They'd tie a sheet around him like a priest's vestments. Then they'd give him a stick as a crosier and a hat made out

of a paper bag. They'd parade around him, chanting and bowing down to him, begging forgiveness for fabricated "sins."

James realized now that that childish bullying didn't seem so bad. Now he was in jail for treason against the Roman Catholic Church. Ironically, he was now being bullied by *Christians* for being a Christian. He sort of wished he had that sheet to wrap around himself so that he could sleep at night. It was getting crowded in the cell, and the only way to get warm was to snuggle up to his fellow prisoners. And he—and the rest of them for that matter—desperately needed a shower.

James looked up at the small window, hoping to see the dove again. He had visited James sporadically, but no less than once a day. Each day the dove would bring him something to eat (the prison only provided sustenance for a price) and news from the outside world.

"You lookin' for that talkin' bird?" said one of his cell mates, a woman who had been accused of witchcraft. It wasn't so hard to believe that this woman was a witch, though, given her smooth-as-sandpaper voice and exceptionally large nose.

James sighed, "He hasn't come yet today."

"Boy, I'll tell ya, that dove is bad luck! You wouldn't be in this mess if it wasn't for that bird bringing ya here."

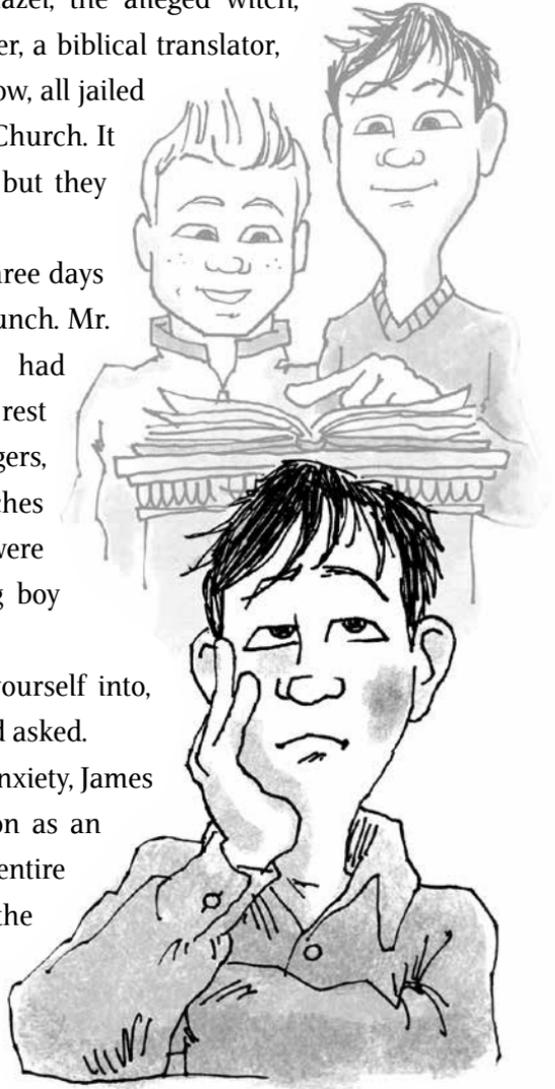
Of all the cell mates, Hazel was the only one who believed James's story the first time she heard it. Aside from Mr. Weberly,

the bookkeeper, and Hazel, the alleged witch, there was also a preacher, a biblical translator, a shoemaker, and a widow, all jailed for treason against the Church. It was an unlikely group, but they were all each other had.

James recalled just three days ago when he met this bunch. Mr. Weberly, of course, he had already known, but the rest of them were strangers, all sleeping within inches of each other. They were shocked to see a young boy had been arrested.

“What did you get yourself into, boy?” the shoemaker had asked.

Overwhelmed with anxiety, James took this simple question as an invitation to share his entire journey that started in the dusty old library. He told them that he was from a future time—



2152 to be exact—and that on a school field trip, he and his best friend, Lance, discovered a secret library that housed all of the Christian books of the known world. He explained to them that in his world, God had been erased from history, science, literature—everything. Christians, called Believers, had been dubbed lunatics and were not welcomed in his world. For once in his life, James realized he was preaching to the choir.

“So there is no God where you’re from?” Hazel asked. James explained that nobody could really erase God, because He cannot be contained and then disposed of. He is omnipotent, all-powerful. But yes, on the surface, James’s world seemed to be “God-less.”

He told them about how he and Lance had found this magical black notebook that transported them through time, stopping at spots where major events in history had taken place. Hazel and Mr. Weberly had clung to every word, while the rest of them dismissed his story as some sort of fairy tale. The boy was, after all, in a state of shock from being arrested and then abandoned by his best friend.

“So do you have the magical notebook?” asked the widow, obviously trying to believe that what James said was true.

James shook his head. “When we were at Mr. Weberly’s bookshop, a man came in and bought it. We didn’t notice until he was gone.”

Mr. Weberly looked ashamed. If only he had known what that notebook could do, then they wouldn’t be in this mess. Sensing his

guilt, James patted Mr. Weberly on the back.

“But it’s not your fault,” he said. “You didn’t know.”

The rest of the group thought James had a few screws loose, until later that day when the dove showed up. Well, nobody had seen (or heard) a talking dove before, and rather than admit they were going crazy, the cellmates decided to believe James’s story. Besides, it was their only hope at this point.

But on his fourth day in jail, the sun was starting to set and James was losing hope. He heard the clanking of utensils and dishes for dinner. The dove wouldn’t come during suppertime at the risk of being caught. James sighed. Another supper-less night.

• • •

Lance pushed his bowl of stew away. He wasn’t hungry. His stomach had been turning somersaults since he saw his best friend arrested a few days ago. He knew it was all his fault. If he would’ve just said something or jumped out from behind the bookshelf to create a diversion, then they both could’ve escaped. Now James was stuck in jail for treason, which had very terminal repercussions.

“Come on, boy! Eat your stew! I don’t have a lot of extra food around here that I just give to people,” said Agnes. She gave him a look like his mother used to give him when he refused to eat salad. Lance dragged the bowl closer to himself and slowly began to eat.

Agnes had been kind enough to let him and the dove stay with

her in her home above the seamstress shop. Actually, it was hard to tell where the shop ended and the living quarters began. There were yards and yards of different colored fabrics, garments stuck with pins, and piles of old clothes. On his first night there, Agnes told Lance to watch where he sat to avoid being pricked by a pin or needle that may have stuck in a cushion.

Just then, the dove flew in through the open window. Lance dropped his spoon in the bowl, splashing soup all over the table and ran over to him.

“What’s the word?!” he practically yelled.

“Well,” said the dove as he caught his breath, “his trial is in three days. I overheard a meeting between the parish constable and the judge.”

Lance’s face turned white. “So that means we have three days to find the notebook and get James out of jail . . .”

“That is correct,” said the dove solemnly.

“Oh dear,” said Agnes, “how are we doing on the hunt for the book?”

“Well, I’ve used the description of the man that Mr. Weberly gave me and checked everywhere on the east side of town, but I haven’t found him.”

“You don’t think . . .” said Lance. “Could he—?”

“Spit it out,” Agnes prodded.

“Do you think he could have figured out the notebook and

gone to another time?" He thought about being stranded in England during the Reformation forever. What would he do? His mom would be so worried. Who would feed Jaws, his goldfish?

"Not likely," said the dove. "The notebook only works for those who have a desire to seek the Truth. And according to Mr. Weberly, that man bought several secular books, if you know what I mean."

"Oh," said Lance, relieved. He wondered why it had worked for him. Surely, he didn't have a desire to seek the kind of Truth the dove was talking about. It must have been James who made it work.

"Well, I guess all you can do is peek in the windows of all the homes on the west side of town now," Agnes butted in. "You still have that drawing?"

The dove nodded. He motioned to the drawing that Mr. Weberly had contrived of the mysterious man who bought the notebook. He looked pretty typical: dark hair, full beard, slightly plump around the middle and average height. His appearance was nothing extraordinary, except for one distinguishing characteristic that could not be drawn on paper—his voice. It was boyish and airy, with a thick Dutch accent. In no way did it fit the face of the portly man they had drawn.

"Well, have a bit to eat before you two go out into town again," said Agnes. The dove and Lance had been sneaking around the town at dusk when the townspeople were home and the candles lit up their faces around the dinner table.

Lance retrieved a coat that Agnes had sewn for him and put his shoes on. He looked in the mirror. He was really starting to fit in. Three days with Agnes and he looked like a normal Englishman with his britches, high socks, and button-down. He even improved his accent; it had now advanced from Irishman to Australian (if that could be called an advancement).

“Cheerio, Agnes!” he yelled to the seamstress as he shut the door behind him.

• • •

The dove floated down the street a few steps ahead of Lance. The two had it down to a science now. The dove would perch on the windowsill of a house, and if he saw something interesting, he would coo, thus alerting Lance to come check it out. The system worked well, but unfortunately, they had not actually found the culprit.

They were already on their fifth house when Lance heard the dove coo. He walked briskly to the heavy wood of the small house and knocked. He glanced over at the dove who seemed to shrug his shoulders, even though he didn't have shoulders to shrug. The door creaked open and a portly gentleman greeted Lance with a quizzical expression.

“Good evening, sir,” Lance began his rehearsed speech. “I'm sorry to bother you at this hour, but as you may have heard, Weberly's Bookshop was burned down just a few days ago. As a

concerned neighbor, I am trying to find out who did it. Might you have been in the shop last Thursday and seen anything suspicious?”

“No, I’m sorry, boy,” the man responded. “I haven’t been to the bookshop in quite some time. What a shame that it was burned down.”

Lance sighed and thanked the man for his time. Lance knew it wasn’t him from the moment he opened his mouth—his voice was too gruff. The man they were looking for had an airy voice with a thick Dutch accent.

“Wait a minute!” Lance’s eye brightened, then his heart sank.

“What?” asked the dove.

“Well, the man had an accent, right?”

“That’s what Mr. Weberly said.”

“So that means he wasn’t from around here. So that means he doesn’t live here, so he must be staying at an inn or—“

“Or he already went home,” the dove finished. They both realized the situation had the potential to get worse. Lance stood in silence for a moment, processing all of the possibilities.

“Well,” said the dove, “I guess we check the inns and pray that we find him there.”

Lance shrugged and started walking. *Please help us find him. Please help us find him.* But his prayers were empty.

• • •

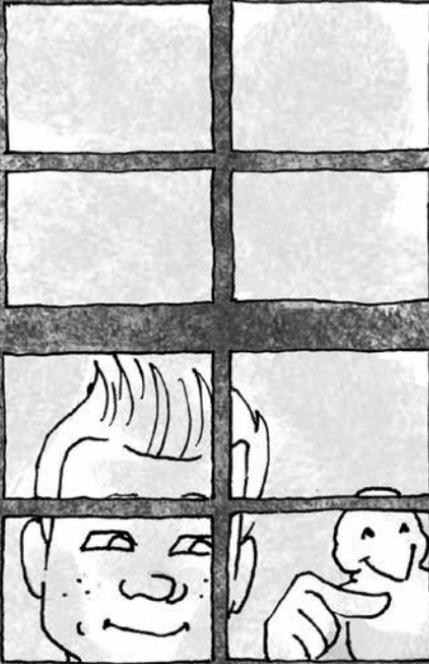
The two bypassed the rest of the homes until they arrived at the first inn. The sign outside the door read: Bilderberg Inn.

“What does that mean?” Lance asked.

“It’s Dutch!” said the dove. “This *has* to be where he would stay!” He was so excited he flittered frantically from window to window. Lance tried to remain calm, but it just wasn’t in his nature.

“What do you see?” he whispered. “Do you see him? Do you see the guy?”

The dove surveyed each room carefully. Then he saw it. There on a bedside table atop a pile of books was a black notebook. It looked worn and dog-eared. The dove’s coo was practically a squawk. It had to be the notebook!



Lance was so excited, to his surprise he scaled the wall, grasping onto the window ledge for dear life. He peered in the window where the dove had seen the notebook. Just then a man walked across the room. He had dark hair and a full beard, slightly plump around the middle and average height. It was him! Just one more characteristic to check off the list.

“Mrs. Janssen, I’m off to the tavern, would you mind tending the fire in my room?” he yelled across the hall. His voice was heavily accented, and his pitch unusually high. Lance practically fell off the ledge, he was so excited. It was him. They watched as the gentleman donned his coat and hat, then left the room. He left the door open, presumably so that Mrs. Janssen could tend the fire.

“That’s our cue,” Lance said to the dove. He jumped down from the ledge and casually walked into the inn. The dove flew to the window of the adjoining room to keep an eye on Mrs. Janssen. She had just started making the bed.

Lance crept up the stairs and into the room the man had left just minutes before. He walked briskly but quietly over to the side table and grabbed the notebook. He stuffed it in his pants and covered it with his shirt.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Janssen was tossing the pillow onto the bed and smoothing out the quilt. The dove noticed that she was finished and began cooing rather loudly. Lance heard the cooing and quickened his pace. He was at the top of the steps and didn’t want

to run out to avoid attracting attention, so he swiftly descended the stairs, looking as casual as possible.

Mrs. Janssen had heard the cooing as well and went to the window. “Well, what are you doing here on my windowsill?” she asked the dove. The dove turned on the charm. He fluttered his wings and murmured a soft coo. He let Mrs. Janssen pet his head. When he saw Lance standing on the street below him, he fluttered away romantically.

“I got it,” Lance said with a mischievous sparkle in his eye. He waited until they were several houses down before he opened it. It was blank.

“What?! But this has to be it! Where’s all the writing?” he said, perplexed. “Where’s the stuff about creation and Noah and Abraham and the acorn and the tree?”

“It will come back,” said the dove. “Remember, it works only for those who seek to know the Truth.”

“Oh, I get it. So we need to get James to make it work.”

“Partially.”

The two walked back to Agnes’s shop as the sun disappeared from the horizon. They were proud of their accomplishment, until reality set in. They only had three days to get James out of jail.

CHAPTER II

IT'S A NOT-SO-SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL

PRINCE HENRY TO THE SPANISH EXPLORERS

“Breakfast!” yelled the jailer as he violently rang the bell. James woke up immediately. He was a light sleeper and, given the circumstances, hadn’t slept very well the past few nights anyway.

Mr. Weberly yawned and stretched.

“Are you hungry, James?” he asked. He knew James didn’t have any money to pay for breakfast, so he had taken it upon himself to provide for him. Mr. Weberly felt somewhat guilty for James’s imprisonment. He knew James didn’t belong here.

James shrugged. He didn’t have an appetite but knew he probably should eat something. When the jailer came to the gate of their cell, Mr. Weberly bought two stale rolls and two cups of cof-

fee. There was no cream or sugar to doctor it up, so it tasted like dirt.

“Thanks,” he said quietly. Hazel stared longingly at the food. She didn’t have much money, so she usually skipped breakfast. James ripped his roll in half.

“Here, Hazel, I’m not that hungry,” he said, passing her the bread. She reached out eagerly.

“Thank you, dear, thank you, thank you.”

They chewed on their breakfast quietly for a few minutes. The widow, Mrs. Clarke, broke the silence and said, “So, James, tell us about where you’re from.”

James thought about how to describe this place in the future where he lived. It seemed so far away now.

“Well,” he started, “it’s called America—”

“America?” interrupted the preacher. “As in, the New World?”

“Um, maybe?”

“Yes, we’ve heard of the Americas,” the biblical translator chimed in. “Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas less than a century ago.”

“Actually,” corrected the preacher, “it goes back further than Columbus. Have you ever heard of Marco Polo?”

James nodded. “Yeah, he was an Italian who traveled to the Far East when he was just a boy with his father and uncle. He experienced the massive Mongol Empire and knew powerful men like

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Kublai Kahn. He wrote journals about the people, culture, and silk and riches he saw there.” James decided not to tell everyone that they had actually traveled to the Mongol Empire by way of the notebook before they arrived here in the sixteenth century. It would require too much explaining.

“You’re right! I am impressed by your knowledge,” said the preacher. “So you can imagine that after reading his riveting journal Europeans wanted to find a shortcut to this faraway land. Seventy years after the death of Marco Polo, a man was born whose curiosity would lead him to do something about it. Prince Henry, also called Prince Henry the Navigator even though he wasn’t technically a navigator, tried to find this shortcut to Asia. His idea was to sail from Portugal, head south, and go around Africa to get to the East.”



By now, the rest of the cellmates had awakened and were listening to the preacher. They had all heard of the Americas, but not everyone was educated enough to know the history.

“That’s right,” Mr. Weberly continued. “Henry gathered a group of experts who shared his interest in navigation and exploration. Among them were men who were well-versed in the art of making maps, navigation, and astronomy. Henry did not do the traveling himself, but rather sponsored these trips, more than fifty in all. Even though none of Henry’s trips reached that coveted land in the Far East, he set the stage as a trailblazer in the field of exploration.”

James was surprised they knew so much. They must’ve landed in a much later year than he thought.

“So when did Christopher Columbus come into the picture?” he asked. He had always been taught that it was Columbus who discovered America.

“1492!” said Jonathan, the biblical translator.

“Right,” said the preacher. “Christopher Columbus owed much to Prince Henry the Navigator. He used what he learned and became an experienced and skilled sailor.”

“He traveled all over the Mediterranean Sea, to parts of Africa, and maybe even as far as Iceland. No one knew the Atlantic better than Columbus,” said Jonathan.

“But he did not at all believe that he had come to possess these skills on his own,” the preacher added. “Christopher Columbus

was a deeply religious man who believed that God had given him these gifts and abilities. He once said, 'He has bestowed the marine arts upon me in abundance.'"

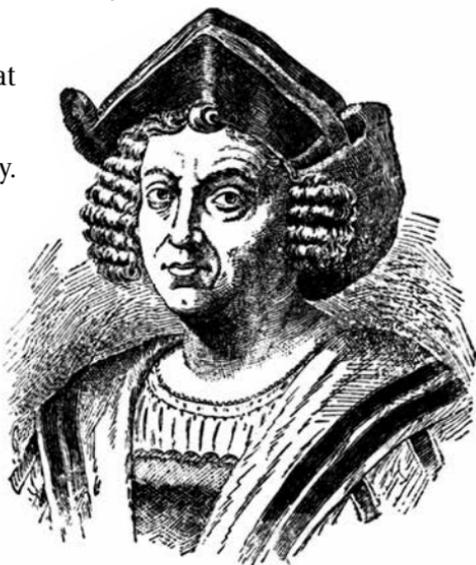
"I didn't know that," James said. Though he wasn't surprised; he learned about the discovery of America in a school that didn't acknowledge God. "I don't think I could be an explorer. I couldn't just up and leave my friends and family like that."

"But isn't that what you did?" Mrs. Clarke pointed out.

"Well... it's complicated," James said. "We didn't actually mean to go anywhere. That notebook had a mind of its own."

"I would find it difficult to leave my

family, too, James," said the preacher. "No one knew what was out there when Columbus embarked on his journey. The lure of riches in those lands still enticed Europe, but for Christopher Columbus there was much more than discovering wealth. Columbus believed that he was *taking* riches to those lands, the riches of his faith."



Christopher Columbus (1451-1506)

“Interesting,” said James. “I thought it was just a desire to explore a new world.”

“That’s what many people think,” said the preacher, inadvertently glancing over at the widow and the shoemaker.

“Why are you looking at us?” the shoemaker, Mr. Willingham, asked with an offended expression. “I may work with my hands, but I know more than you think. I knew why good ol’ Chris traveled to the New World. It’s no coincidence his name means ‘Christ-bearer.’”

James sensed the tensions of social hierarchy were heightened in their tight quarters. He attempted to get the conversation back on track by asking about the faith of Columbus.

“Those around Columbus would have observed a man who was consistently praying and depending on God every step of the way,” answered the preacher. “He and his men recited prayers daily together. His son Ferdinand even talked about what a godly example his father set before everyone. Columbus was so overtly religious that I think he may have been a member of the Franciscan Third Order, a religious order for non-clergymen.”

“I’m sure he was,” said Mr. Weberly. “I’ve read his journals; I sold copies at my bookshop. They clearly reveal that he believed he was on a divinely ordained mission to impart his faith to whatever lands he encountered. Columbus was determined that his voyage would not be viewed as a missed opportunity to make Catholic Christians of the heathens in foreign lands, like Marco

Polo missed his opportunity with the 'Great Kahn.'"

"See, in school I learned that Columbus was sent out by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to claim land for Spain."

"No, no, no, my boy," corrected the preacher. "They sent him out, as he described it, to 'win over the peoples of the islands to our holy Catholic faith.'"

"If I had my books, I could find you a copy of the letter he wrote back to the royals. He wrote about how the Great Kahn had sent to Rome asking for guidance in the Catholic faith, but to no avail. So the people of India fell into idolatry. Columbus, then, felt honored that he was chosen to sail there to see how their conversion might be undertaken."

"Oh, I see, it's all coming together now," said James. "So this all happened in 1492. Columbus sailed west thinking that he would hit the Far East, where the Great Kahn lived?"

"Right," said Jonathan. "No one knew the Americas were even there. And you know, Columbus tried to estimate the size of the ocean using passages from the Apocryphal portions of the Bible. In 2 Esdras it says, 'On the third day thou didst command the waters to be gathered together in the seventh part of the earth; six parts thou didst dry up and keep so that some of them might be planted and cultivated and be of service before thee.' From this passage Columbus surmised that from Portugal to the Far East was exactly one-seventh of the total circumference of the Earth. By

his calculations he could reach the Indies in thirty days.”

James was amazed at the length of time it would've taken him. In his own world, he could hop on a plane and fly to the other side of the world in less than a day. In school, he learned that Columbus actually landed in the Bahamas, but he didn't want to confuse everyone. He didn't want to dampen their vision of the great Columbus who died in 1506 not knowing that he had landed thousands of miles from the Indies, where he thought he had landed. He ended up returning home with natives whom he called 'Indians,' an incorrect name that stuck for Native Americans.

Much controversy had been stirred up in James's world in recent years concerning Christopher Columbus. Was he a man with purely selfish ambitions of wealth who destroyed the culture of the natives without care for them? Columbus was certainly not a perfect man. He set out with a fierce loyalty to the Crown of Spain and to his God. Whatever the case, Columbus was clearly determined to bring his faith to the West Indies, even though he had made some wrong calculations and had not encountered the people he thought he encountered. Due to his efforts in part and those of evangelists who came after him, Latin America has a higher percentage of people who profess to be Christians than anywhere else in the world. But James held his tongue. Instead of opening up that can of worms, he said, "It's called the Age of Exploration. From Columbus on, when Europeans were determined to figure it all out."

IT'S A NOT-SO-SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL

"I like that," said Mr. Weberly. "The Age of Exploration. It has a nice ring to it."

"That makes sense," said Jonathan. "The Spanish, Portuguese, and Italians in particular were persistent explorers. My favorite was a man from Portugal named Ferdinand Magellan."

"You're only saying that because you're of Portuguese decent," joked Mr. Willingham.

"Possibly," agreed Jonathan. "My real name is Juan," he said aside to James. "But Magellan wanted to find a shortcut to the Spice Islands, also known as the Maluku islands. He was financed by King Charles I of Spain and set out from southern Spain, headed south along the western coast of Africa, then down to the southern tip of South America.



“Yes, his fleet consisted of five ships; *Concepcion* (45 crew members), *San Antonio* (60 crew members), *Santiago* (32 crew members), *Trinidad* (55 crew members), and *Victoria* (43 crew members). The *Santiago* would be wrecked in a violent storm,” added the preacher.



“I remember him,” said James. “He was the first guy to sail from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. I think he sailed around the southernmost tip of South America. So they called his route the Strait of Magellan.”

“But he didn’t go *straight*, his path was rather curvy,” said a confused Mrs. Clarke.

“No, S-T-R-A-I-T. Like a narrow passage or something.” James felt weird correcting an elderly woman. Mrs. Clarke didn’t seem to mind. She just chuckled at her mistake.

“In March of 1521 Magellan’s crew reached the Philippines,” said Mr. Weberly. “The great sea captain met his end in a battle here, being hit with a spear. The crew suffered so many deaths in the Philippines that they could not justify continuing with three ships. They burned the *Concepcion* and continued. The *Trinidad* was eventually wrecked in a storm, and by the time they arrived back in Spain, the only surviving ship was the *Victoria*.”

“What a shame,” Mrs. Clarke said, now attempting to contribute more to the conversation. Mr. Weberly acknowledged her comment with a nod and continued, “Magellan is important for several reasons. First, his was the first crew to circumnavigate—meaning ‘travel around’—the entire globe. They traveled more than 37,000 miles in all. Second, he named the Pacific Ocean, calling it the *Mare Pacificum*, which means calm sea. Finally, he was the first to cross from the Atlantic Ocean into the Pacific Ocean. It took Magellan’s crew nearly three years to complete the voyage around the world, beginning with more than 200 crew and ending with only 18.”

James thought for a minute. He had a hard time imagining it taking three years to travel around the world, when in his day and age it was much faster.

“I hate to rain on your parade,” James started.

“What parade? There’s no parade,” Mrs. Clarke said.

“No, I mean—it’s a figure of speech,” James explained.

“Anyway, I know it’s amazing that Magellan traveled around the world in three years, but where I’m from, it would take us 50 hours to travel around the world, because we have more advanced methods of transportation.”

“Impossible!” said the preacher.

“Inconceivable!” said the translator.

“Amazing!” said Mrs. Clarke.

“It’s true,” James continued. “But we don’t travel by boat. We travel by these vehicles called airplanes. They fly in the sky!”

Now, even Mrs. Clarke looked doubtful. After a lull in conversation, Mrs. Clarke attributed James’s claim to dehydration. “My dear, you could use some water, you must be dizzy in the head.” She went to the cell’s gate and asked the guard for a cup of water.

There was an awkward silence as James drank the water. Then he set the cup down and in his cheesiest voice said, “Now I feel better!” Mrs. Clarke smiled and the rest of the group seemed to let out a sigh.

“Now where were we?” she asked.

“Well, Mr. Weberly was talking about Magellan’s circumnavigation of the world,” offered the shoemaker.

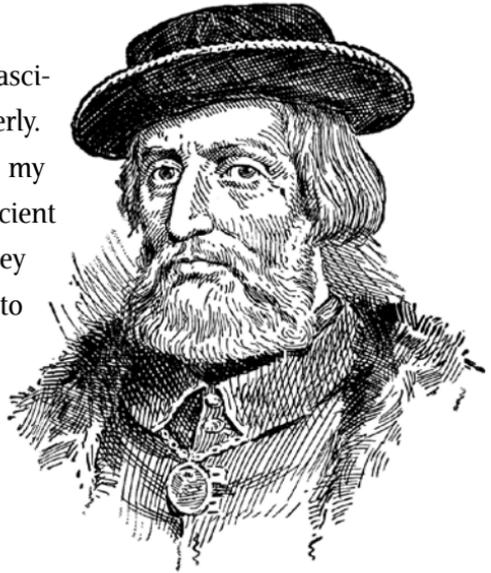
“Ah, yes,” said Jonathan. “The Spanish crown continued an aggressive campaign to explore and claim lands in the ‘New World.’ You know, many of the indigenous peoples over there speak Spanish now.”

“Yes, there’s yet another gentleman by the name of Hernando Cortes who traveled to the New World from Spain. He lives on an island over there called Square, or Cube, or something like that.”

“Cuba?” James offered.

“That’s it! My, you’re sharp,” Jonathan said. “Cortes eventually worked his way up to a high position in the Cuban government. After serving for nearly fifteen years in Cuba, Velasquez, the Governor of Cuba, placed Cortes in command of a mission to explore Mexico—that’s what they call a part of the Americas. He fought against the Aztecs, the peoples inhabiting Mexico at that time, conquered them, and ruled Mexico himself for a while.”

“Oh, the Aztecs! What a fascinating culture!” said Mr. Weberly. “I have a small section of my book shop dedicated to ancient cultures such as that. They built pyramids dedicated to their gods, and they also participated in human sacrifice and cannibalism. Before the Europeans arrived the Aztecs had sacrificed thousands of



Hernán Cortés (1485–1547)

people to their gods.”

James made a disgusted face. It wasn't news to him, but it still made him queasy when anyone mentioned cannibalism.



Aztec artifact

“But whatever we think of the Spanish entering Mexico and conquering the Aztec civilization at its high point, the reality is that eventually the gospel came to them and these pagan practices ceased,” said Mr. Weberly.

“Well, I know a lot of explorers were trying to spread the Word of God and stuff,” said James, “but I heard in history class that they were also looking for some sort of Fountain of Youth or streets paved with gold or something.”

“That's true,” said the preacher.

“Hernando de Soto—again a Spaniard—was inspired by Ponce de Leon, who started this whole rumor about the Fountain of Youth. He wanted to find what he thought would be a magical spring which would heal all of his infirmities and give him long life. So what did he do? After fighting off the Muslims to take back Spain in 1492, Ponce de Leon set out for new adventures and arrived somewhere in the

Caribbean in 1493.

“He eventually became the governor of this island called Puerto Rico. It wasn't until 1513 that de Leon set out from Puerto Rico to explore lands to the north, calling it *La Florida* for its greenery and beautiful landscape.”

La Florida sounded an awful lot like the state of Florida. Florida was where all the old people lived; no way was there a Fountain of Youth there.

“But whatever he found there, it was not able to give him long life because he died in 1521 at the age of 47,” scoffed the preacher. “Ha!” laughed Mr. Weberly. “James, have you ever heard of the *Seven Cities of Gold*?”

James nodded. He didn't know details, but he knew that they were mythical cities supposedly filled with limitless treasures. The stories about the cities went all the way back to the eighth century. “Well, you know that they are complete and utter myths, but one explorer named Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, actually believed the stories and set out to find them. And all he found was a giant hole in the ground!”

The Grand Canyon, thought James. Not *just* a giant hole in the ground, but it didn't matter to them.

“Let's not leave out one more famous explorer,” came a voice from the corner of the room. The others were surprised to hear that the shoemaker had something to say. “Vasco Nunez de Balboa.

The adventures continue for James and Lance, the dove, and the mysterious notebook as their journey finds James jailed for treason in sixteenth-century England. Will they be able to escape the evil reign of Bloody Mary? Will they live to witness the age of the explorers and the emergence of the New World? Will James ever get over his struggles and be able to help Lance really understand God's hand throughout history? The answers can be found between the covers of this captivating final volume of *Pages of History*.

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