

*Adventures on the American Frontier*

# EXPLORERS in a NEW WORLD

Part One

Westward to a New World



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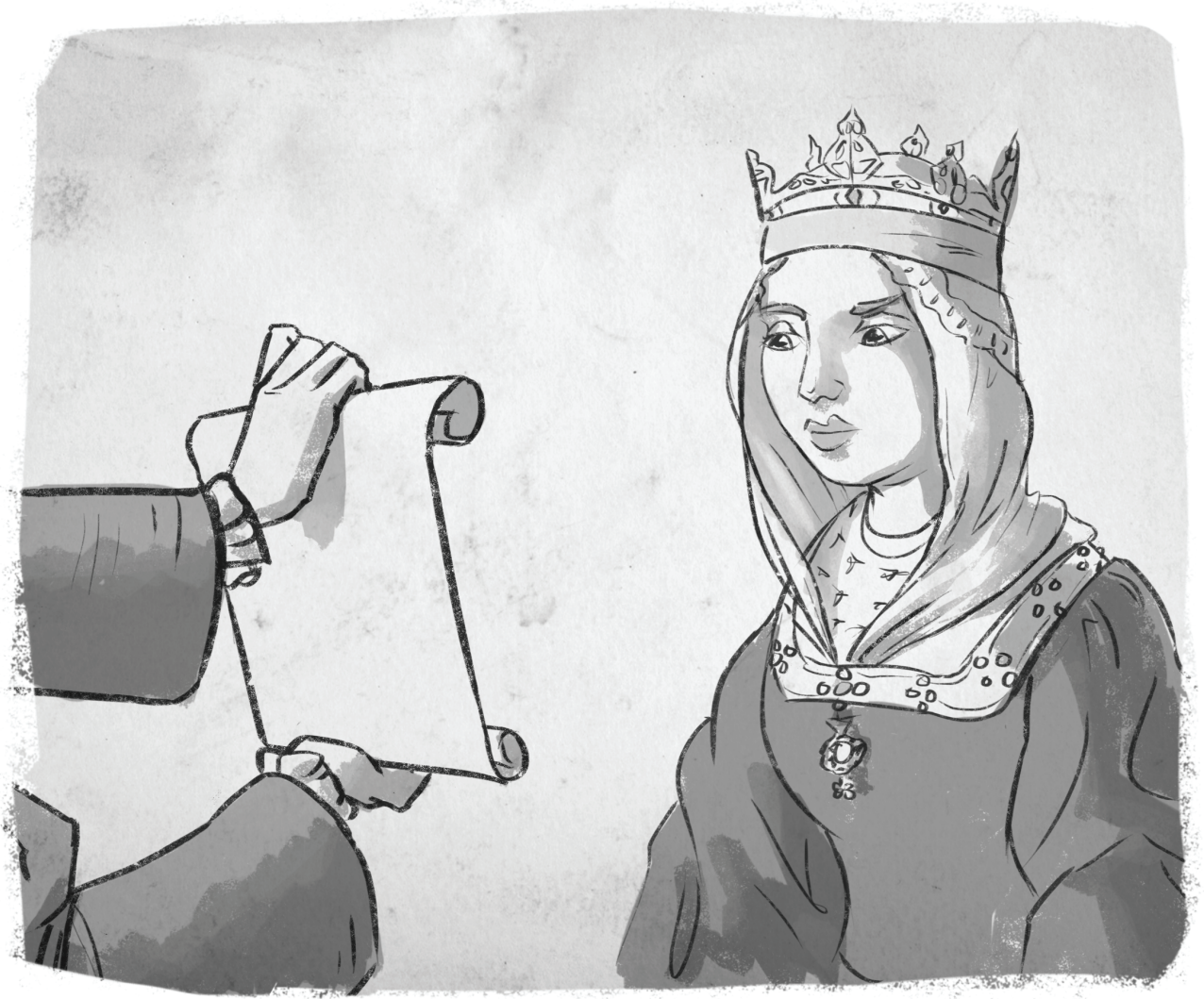


Christopher Columbus was disappointed.

“I can sail west to China and the East Indies,” he had told the Queen of Spain. “If I find any unknown islands, I’ll claim them for Spain. Then, when I’ve marked the way to the rich islands of the Indies and to the great cities of China, Spanish trading ships can go back and forth easily.”

He showed the queen a map of how he believed the world to be. It had on it one large continent of Europe, Asia, and Africa together, with one ocean.





“The Earth is round, like a ball,” he told the queen. “Ships going in any direction can sail around it and get back to land. But to go north is to go into the cold lands and icy seas.”



Columbus put his finger on the map and traced a route from Spain south along the African coast. "Not long ago, a ship went from Portugal south around the tip of Africa, but it's a very long journey. Now see how easy it should be to sail west to China." His finger went across the small mapped ocean, coming quickly to the shores that all of the European countries wanted to reach.

The queen studied Columbus's map with great interest.

Nearly 200 years before Columbus met with the Queen of Spain, Marco Polo had found the way to China across the land, but the journey was long, and enemies had begun blocking the way. Everyone wondered if there was a better way. Columbus believed that he could find it simply by sailing west.

The queen agreed and set about raising money to buy ships. In 1492, Columbus sailed west as planned. When he landed on an island southeast of North America, he thought he was on one of the islands he



expected to find near China. He called the people he saw *Indians* because he believed the island to be one of the islands called the Indies. The islands he found later became known as the West Indies.

For ten years, Columbus tried to find the East Indies and China. He was sure that they could not be far away. He died in 1506, forever disappointed that he had not found the way through all of those islands to China. He'd had no idea how large North and South America were.