

Christopher Columbus

Once there was a little red haired boy who lived by the sea. His father was a weaver and every day he watched his mother and father hard at work weaving the cloth for the people of his village. Though the little boy was a devoted son, he never failed to help his parents and loved them dearly, he longed only for the neighboring sea. "Christopher," his father would call to him, "come and help me cut this cloth." And Christopher would always go, but not before heaving one last sigh as he turned from the window and the tangy salt air.

Each day, after his work was through, he would race to the big wharves and watch the ships coming and going. He loved to see their billowing sails and hear the deep voices of the sailors as they sang their rich songs that spoke of adventure and far off places. At night he would lie in bed, listening for the clanging of ships' bells and the groaning of the rigging as the wind played in and around the great ropes. When Christopher said his prayers, he was always certain to add a request that he might, someday, be able to climb aboard one of those giant vessels and sail away with the strong men who climbed their masts and told stories of lands of gold and alabaster. Christopher was not foolish, however, he understood that some of the stories he heard were true, and some were untrue. But he did not care. Christopher wanted only to see for himself what lay outside his little village.

While the sea around his village was crystal clear, blue, green, and beautiful, the sailors spoke of the sea far away, the Sea of Darkness. "No one has ever gone there, my little friend," they laughed. "And no one ever will!" But Christopher was not so sure. "I will," he said to himself, "I will go." And so he grew. He worked and he grew and he listened to the stories the sailors told. And he learned. He watched them work and learned their trade and when it was time, he bid farewell to his mother and father and went on his way to ask the King and Queen if they might send him to explore the world for them. His mother wrung her hands and the villagers shook their heads, but Christopher's father knew his son and said only, "If it will be, it will be. The boy knows his way. And he will surely find it."

And so it was. Time and time again Christopher asked to see their Royal Highnesses. At last, when the King and Queen saw this fiery haired young man standing before them, as confident and clear as the sea itself, they thought to themselves, "Well, perhaps it may be that he falls upon great riches, at any event it seems certain this lad should find what he is looking for, if anyone can." With that, Christopher was given three ships and given the task to explore the Sea of Darkness and shed light on its secret treasures.

Many months Christopher sailed, and many songs he sang. As the dark swells rushed and flew about, the sailors would gasp and hope for land. But Christopher would only look up at the night sky and be grateful for the sea beneath him.

One night as Christopher sat looking out over the dark ocean, the clouds parted and the starlight danced and played on the gentle waves. There, in the darkness of the night, Christopher saw a light, like a candle flame, that flickered on the horizon. And so they waited for daybreak. As the sun lifted its head over the world, Christopher and his men saw it at last, land. And there, on the beach, stood men of a strange and wonderful sort waiting for them. They stood adorned in bright beads with painted, dark skin. They came to the great ships in canoes, bearing gifts of cotton and food. They were pleased to

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receive the bells, beads, and scarlet caps that Christopher gave them. These people were gentle and friendly. This was a strange and new world, wonderful to behold.

Many times Christopher sailed the Sea of Darkness, and many stories he told, but none were greater than that of the new land he found and the peoples that greeted him there. Christopher, the weaver's son, went looking for adventure and, at last, he found it. And with it, a whole New World awaited.
