

Then Basamanaco looked out into the water. He saw another short, fat canoe coming from one of the giant birds. This time, it carried other Guanahaníyanos, people from other islands, and more pale skinned strangers. When that canoe landed, the man, whom the boy called Admiral Colón, waved to the newly arrived Guanahaníyanos to bring a large, wooden box from their fat boat. He also instructed other Guanahaníyanos to carry over a large, cloth sack. When the box was placed near the man called Admiral Colón, he unlatched its lock and lifted its lid. Basamanaco walked over to peer in it. Admiral Colón reached in and took out some dried leaves, which Basamanaco could smell, even at a distance. Their odors were interesting, but unfamiliar.

"Spice!" Admiral Colón said. "Where?"

As the people around Basamanaco imitated Admiral Colón, Basamanaco did not copy him. He watched. Admiral Colón brought out other kinds of dried leaves.

"Where?"

Suddenly Basamanaco began to understand. He wished that Lida were here, because maybe she might know where to find those leaves. In his travels, he had never seen any of them before, not even among the goods that came from Guanine.

When the Indians did not answer his questions, Admiral Colón finally turned to Semola.

"Ask these people where we can find these spices," he said. When Semola hesitated, Colón said, "What are ye waitin' for? Did my men not teach ye Spanish well enough?"

Semola finally spoke.

"Yocahu wants to know if any of you know where to find these leaves."

Some of the people pointed south. Another said *east*. Two said *northeast*. And someone said, *Guanine*.

As Basamanaco stared at the leaves, he wondered what illnesses they cured. He knew that the people were only guessing, where they could be found. He watched as Admiral Colón put the leaves away and started to bring out other objects from that box. He heard Semola also ask about them, but nobody knew anything about them, either. Admiral Colón brought out shiny bowls and flat round objects with curious, bright designs that looked like they were made of stone and referred to them as *china*. He displayed shiny, smooth,

colored, fine cloth that he said was *silk*. There were dark, carved objects of strange woods and many other goods that Basamanaco had never seen before. As he stared at them in awe, no one knew anything about them. So like the dried leaves, Admiral Colón put them away, looking exasperated. He finally closed the lid.

The strangers nudged Semola, and one of them pointed to the large sack that the Guanahaníanos brought from the fat boat. Semola nodded and spoke again.

"Yocahu has *turey* to give you."

The people clapped and laughed, when they heard that they would receive gifts from heaven.

The Guanahaníanos went over to the sack and opened it, and the people crowded around. Basamanaco also inched forward. When he was close to the foreigners, he could smell them. Their odors were different from any of the people he had met. Even their bone structure did not seem to be the same as his people's. Their noses were thin and high, their faces narrow; their arms and legs appeared to be unusually long; and as they spoke, they used their tongues in strange ways. Basamanaco wanted to touch their cheeks, to feel their arms, to clutch their bodies beneath their robes, so he could see if they felt the same, as his people did. He suppressed the compulsion to run his hand across their robes of various colors, like he always would, when he examined goods he bartered for. He yearned to feel the texture of the shiny, stiff, gray clothes some of them wore. He stepped forward and pretended to accidentally bump into a man with a shiny robe. It felt hard and smooth. The man stiffened and reached for his flat, thin stick, which hung from his waist, but stopped, as if to catch himself. When he relaxed and smiled at Basamanaco, Basamanaco saw wariness in his eyes.

Then Basamanaco saw the light-haired boy walk over to the large sack.

As Mateo pushed his way to the sack, he called to Admiral Colón.

"Please let me give th' Indians th' beads."