

A Historic Novella for Aboriginal People

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Introduction and Preface Notes

Dear Reader:

I am including the pulp fiction admissible title—*A Historic Novel for Aboriginal People* for this bit of prose. I have attempted fiction where very little hard facts exist. However, my main purpose is to explain what the colonizers were thinking, what motivated them and how they conducted their commerce. Into that pot, I am trying to give voice to those who are whipped about by events beyond their control.

Dr. Theal, the late Colonial historiographer, provided the translation from Portuguese state papers. The reproductive revelation described the monumental struggle to find a reasonable route to the enormous wealth of the Arabian Sea on the Malabar Coast as well as the Chinese port cities whose own caravans and boats on their major rivers brought coveted items for resale on the coastal cities of the Mediterranean Sea. The context was politicized, along religious belief systems, and the hunger for definitive nationhood with valuables in the vaults and excellent goods at all the ports.

Nation states were Spain, France, Portugal, and even little England who was willing to cut down any timber to make seaworthy ships. She became famous for building. Into this melange were the duchies of little nation states of Genoa and Florence. Germany was till then ruled by duchies all three hundred of them.

Christianity was seen as a great unifier for the moment. Successive rulers made sure by paper, the sword and plenty of raw nerve, that they obtained travel authorization by the Roman Pope. Portugal did this by 1450, obtaining its little Bulls giving them the opportunity to turn infidels into Christians. By this time, within a period of one hundred years, Portugal and Spain had decided that separately they were

big enough for the great search of wealth that translated into any language as fortune and fame and sustainable power.

Prince Henry one of the royal infants of Portugal was able to take action and conduct pure theory about safe ocean navigation after the following loss. This incident was personal. The Holy Sepulchre was in the hands of the "infidels," say Arab-Muslims. The Portuguese were involved in a fruitless and desperate war in North Africa. Finally, at Ceuta a short triumph was gained. Prince Henry was able to look around. He saw her perceived enormous wealth in the storage of gold and saleable goods, including every kind of incense and drugs. Before an assessment was finished, his army fell back at Tangiers. His brother, Prince Ferdinand was captured and held for the ransom or leverage for the town of Ceuta. Even though Prince Henry had consulted every kingdom in Europe with a definitive say in that turn of events, Prince Ferdinand met his fate under the scimitar. The Portuguese sacked Ceuta in revenge uncovering silver, gem stones, great storage barrels of honey, oil and spices of every kind. This was in 1415, a humbled beginning on the African continent, but it was to continue for six hundred years as far East as Japan and as far West as the western borders of Brazil.

Prince Henry was inconsolable and sought to regain his peace of mind. His privilege and rank in social wealth had not been wasted on him. His theoretical framework was that where there is wealth, there is a way to acquire it, and to use for other advantages.

The wealth he had personally seen in Ceuta came from the Indies. Therefore, the Muslim world had a number one advantage: the ports were within easy navigable range of the far reaches of the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, and the Eastern African ports. Short of ransacking every port of call, an international trade was being established systematically. Trade was the given and how it was financed was not to be a matter of speculation. The Muslims were the sea and desert navigators, the buyers then the sellers. From the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, to Constantinople and Cairo, the taxes or tariffs were high enough to bring in the gold bullion. Prince Henry figured it out. The Saracens had an endless supply of goods to replenish their war chests and keep the Europeans at bay.

The West-African Atlantic Ocean had to be circumnavigated. The personal reading list of Prince Henry included all the mathematics having to do with the astrolabe, astronomy, geographym including the Medici Atlas still at the Laurentian Library in Florence. He worked through all the works of Marco Polo, Jordanus of Severac, Macuda the Moor, Abraham Zakut the Jew. Prince Henry read every source available to him where he had established a college at Sagres, and had invited scholars to come and teach what had to be learned about navigation and how to makes notes. His sailors had to be able to read and write at the officer level.

Then at Lagos, he commissioned the ship builder Cadamosto, the Italian, who said that the caravels built there were better than any ship built at Genoa. With extremely well-equipped and well-manned vessels, he sent forth the Portuguese man of war to conquer the fear of the legends of monsters of the Green Sea of Darkness, frolicking water unicorns, and the poured liquid fire on the water by the sun's rays; it is a long list of horrors. The incentive to sail into the unknown is the same today. The heroes of these ventures were given a written dispensation from the Pope of a place in good eternity for making this kind of venture. If a sailor could not survive this mortal place at least eternal bliss was guaranteed in writing. On all the sailing ships were the symbols of Christianity. Literally, the sailors hung on to their lives past the Grand Canary, then Tenerife to round Cap Bajador. Once these waters were entered, the sailing was as the coast of Portugal. Indeed on the shore they found flowers called St. Mary's roses.

Then, on the coast of Guinea they encountered slavers. Within Prince Henry's lifetime the energy of the nation found easy cash in the slavery as the Middle Ages exploded into the circumnavigation and sudden compounded wealth came in every conceivable way from the shorelines of Brazil.

This novel starts where it has to: Gaspar Corte-Real reached Newfoundland even Labrador by 1500. By 1501, he had kidnapped over 57 Beotuks, loaded them into two vessels to be sold as slaves.

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Brilliant sun hurt her eyes. Brightness interfered with the peripheral vision and the heavy-handed jostling fatigued her even more. The otherwise curly auburn hair was matted with thirty days of nondescript dirt. Her filthy leather dress was torn where it had been speared. She felt inhuman as different people now gathered to stare at them. Them: a group of captured and now shackled Beothuks, at least those who had endured and survived a North Atlantic spring voyage past the Azores into this port town of Lisbon, Portugal, a spacious harbour facing south.

The air was hot this early morning. Luis, a minor slave owner and buyer had ordered his horse to be groomed and saddled. He was going to find his way to the slave market. An order had been given to two of the many fishing boats that left Lisbon for the Northern Atlantic waters to capture some potentially "worthy," thus marketable bodies. A "cargo" was reported in the stream waiting to be docked.

Luis arrived at the market feeling warm and ready for a drink. He preferred his own spring water and his own counsel. He hated adventure. His estate holdings had been handed down through the generations. His short physical stature did not distinguish him from all the other people now gathering more quickly. His two distinguishing features were green-coloured eyes and excellent mane of very dark curly hair. His movements were quick. He stopped drinking from his water canteen. Luis walked forward to stay with the merging sweep of people.

Somehow, he was no more than the second line of the pushing and shoving men, a normal crowd that met slave ships and slavers that haunted the African coasts. Thus the Portuguese had immersed themselves forever into the history of international slave trade transmorphing into national capital gain. Several years earlier, in keeping with official paper kingdoms, the Portuguese monarch had obtained from Rome paper access "to reduce to servitude all infidel people," to be read as non-Portuguese. By 1493, Isabella of Spain and the Portuguese monarch had divided continents for themselves. The feudal systems of both countries were firmly in place. There was no other system yet, devised allowed to replace them.

The morning heat was going to be brutal. The men were there mostly to view this "new line" of slaves from the northern most trading routes of Portuguese long haul fishing fleets. This group of shackled "up rights" were news after all.

Suddenly, a heavy murmur went through the crowd. It had started at the back. By the time Luis understood, there was a different kind of commotion. He saw an official party from the palace come forward. Words flew back and forth. To the crowds chagrin, the entire shackled group was shuttled away. The chains made a familiar noise on these old streets. The king or someone in authority had wanted to see this cargo first had. This was either for amusement or certainly self-indulgence. Slave wars were a matter of fact in these Middle Ages. The dependency on the riches of the newly plundered far Western continents was now in the realm of pure commerce. Was there an underlying interest in this cargo from the palace?

Luis was an educated Portuguese man of his time. Catholicism had guided his line of ancestors. He could read and write. The estate was his responsibility. Commerce ruled his life. Slaves were well fed on his estate. Not all imported slaves survived to make buying them a good gamble. Portugal had its own microbes. Luis knew his ability to read and write set him apart from most of his countrymen. Yet, even he could not appreciate what kind of transition period the world was experiencing as Europeans were unfurling flags on all the continents. Brazil was to prove so huge, so profitable; the importing of slaves from Africa directly to Brazil became an entrenched way of getting wealthy for the Portugal mariners and the owners of the same fleets.

Luis, the slave owner of an estate in Portugal, did not need an army of slaves. What was going to be so different about the manacled and dirty captives with matted hair now on their way to the palace grounds? This was a nagging question for Luis. He did not burn with knowing causes and effects. He was interested in results, what could work weighed against the costs.

In 1500s Lisbon, in that growing and swelling heat of early May, it was not at all cosmopolitan. Slavery had enriched the capital. Thus the inhabitants had a little more, but in ways they were not aware. Life was cruel and short for the majority. Women died

in their homes in the injustice of improperly attended childbirth. Women were expendable. Marriage and childbirth were the only marks of a movement toward their eternity. Nobility was perceived to be the rank and the mark of civilization; thus privilege. Children of the common people died quickly and in such great numbers, few of their graves were marked. Wives, children, estate, slaves, horses, and marketable commodities occupied a man's point of view. Luis' education allowed him only the barest of intellectual challenge. This was Luis' lot in life. He decided not to wait in the shade of buildings beside the shining waters of the Lisbon harbour. He decided not to melt into the sidewalk of animal urine soaked and feces caked dirt and straw. A relative's home with stout stucco walls would give him respite right through the coming siesta hour. Upon his arrival, the gate was opened to him and he was ushered into a cool courtyard reflecting Moorish influence.

The siesta finished. As Luis returned, a small rise gave him another view of Lisbon harbour. He was able to see the returning people to the quayside. He managed a third line position in a larger crowd of interested persons. Something had happened to the manacled up rights. Someone had decided to soak them in fresh water and loosened their manacles. The matted hair was auburn coloured or dark gold and curly. Luis counted fifty-seven captives both men and women. From his position he was able to look at the features of all the captives about to be sold as slaves. The captives now faced each other. They moved among each other, gesturing quietly, talking it seemed about ordinary things. They touched each other's shoulder, a few embraced as if they were acknowledging this moment of freedom to see each other for the last time. When they smiled at each other, their whole face changed into a most pleasant feature of genuine happiness. Luis should have felt uncomfortable but this was a matter of fact slave market. Every up-right was to be sold in rapid consignment numbers into the bondage of slavery.

This was a good day. For his estate of tightly-controlled expenses, he bought an auburn curly haired and to his surprise, green-eyed very young woman. Every inch of her body touched by manacles had left her with deep abrasions, her ankles looked raw.

Yet there were no outward signs of deep skin infections. She was fully formed. Her leather dress has pierce marks from rough handling. She did not look too frightened. She looked at him freely without a guarded stare. She seemed to be studying him. That he was not used to.

She will make a good slave for mother he thought as he was buying her. There was no point in speaking to her. He gestured to her in the universal sign of "walk behind me." He went to the stable again to get his horse. In a sudden moment of awareness of the needs of another human being, Luis asked to hire a horse drawn cart big enough for his cargo and a few purchases. His mind turned to the smiling between the captives when the cart came, he gestured with a smile for her to get in. She hesitated. He saw other carts with people riding in them. He pointed thus and then to the cart. He saw her swallow hard and climb on board. He wondered if there were horse drawn carts where she came from.

Luis' society had marked him for a very singular path. He was a member of the small bourgeoisie class within a strict feudal system. His class arranged everything only from landed families; marriage, children's education was always negotiable. If his money did not fail him, the entire state would be passed on to the heir of his choosing. This entire state had been his inheritance.

He had a favourite uncle, a fast-speaking man of commerce. They visited often in the front rooms. At ease with one another they spoke of Lisbon society, the latest from the palace, the international news of newly-gained riches and always of the slave markets. Uncle spoke of women in the third person. He had been to Brazil, survived the entrance of the treacherous Amazon. He regaled his nephew with the sounds of the jungle and stories of the Los Indios. He always showed him his jungle wounds. And he sounded his emphatic wish of wanting to be that young again. Luis smiled and spoke quietly feeling the older man needed his company for these memorable reminders of adventure. His uncle's stories had cured Luis of wanting such adventures still very possible for men like he.

Luis brought his "cargo" to his estate, and visited his mother in the common areas of the house. At some point, Luis asked for the newly-acquired slave. She was now dressed in Portuguese slave clothing. Still, she did not look frightened. His mother remarked on that.

"She is used to bathing," his mother said. She asked to see her hands. Luis gestured to the girl and conveyed this request. In a split second he remembered her days of manacled captivity. So instead of asking her to spread her hands in a flat manner and away from her body, he drew his arms toward his body and held his palm up hands outward but close to the chest. She followed suit. His mother leaned forward, touched and examined each hand. Then, as if in acknowledgement of her human status, she smiled at this girl. The girl demurred by a slight bow of the head. Another household slave was summoned and instructed to teach every word this girl needed to know to function as a house slave. Luis asked his mother to have her treated gently. She had no where to run away to. She was here to stay till she died or was sold. Neither Luis nor his mother knew how the simple gesture of acknowledging the "inninew" made all the world of difference about their level of humanity.

Every Sunday, Luis went to Mass. Beyond obeying the Ten Commandments, there was nothing to distinguish his society from any other un-baptized set of human beings. He visited his mother on a regular basis. This was a well-to-do household based on a patriarchal set-up of segregated partitions within. The women of the household had their own comfortable quarters; thus their own kind of society. All the education for women occurred behind estate walls.

Luis did not see the new slave for a long time. One day after asking to see his mother in the Common room, a very beautiful girl with surprisingly green eyes who had been asked for by name by his mother came into the room. He recognized the sea green eyes but not the rest of her.

"She has a new name," his mother said. The demeanour between slave and owner status was maintained. The girl was dismissed almost right away. She was part of

the furniture now, a chattel. Luis had no reason now to maintain even any semblance of recognizing her humanity. It was not required by civility or civil law.

Luis' business on the estate was a full time occupation. Lisbon's society demands reached and received his attention sparingly.

Deep in the women's quarters, a decision had been made. He was to acquire a wife from an equal status and opportunity household. His uncle and his wife had come to visit in the common rooms. They had come at Luis' mother's behest. She emphasized all the estate grounds were well maintained. The books and record keeping were first class. Only the sustained interest of Luis had to be captured. Everything was now in order to bring forth the name of a potential marriage partner. The selection was abundant but not clear. Luis' uncle, who has a hundred words where three did suffice, had drawn from him no clear line of female attribute preferences. Luis was not however indifferent, just busy.

His mother, if Portuguese women could joke, said off-handily in this mixed company, "He bought this slave for me. Maybe we could get someone who looks like her."

They laughed whole heartedly. But the very discreet aunt had seen her. His mother lamented her husband's unforeseen early death, leaving Luis the burden of class investiture and estate duty too early to have created a young man comfortable in society salons. His personality had shown a work driven, responsible and fair young man. His formal education had allowed him to fully develop his business sense. His mother was busy selling his personal attributes. He was good-looking, gentle, polite and not loud-ever. His religious devotion seemed of his own making. Most of all he was the sole heir to this considerable estate. He did not avail himself of the household maids as a young man could in his position of authority. His uncle made a slight rude joke about that to Luis' mother. She cast a withering eye on him as if to say not on my watch.

The widow status for Luis' mother made a difference. None of this kind of discussions could have taken place even between men and women of equal status. Uncle

Faria remembered his brother who as her husband had not acquired a mistress at her request.

Luis had not escaped society's notice. Marriageability backed by estate value and his physical attributes made the news of the social rounds very quickly. No one told Luis. He had discerned a vague notion of some kind of movement in the women's side of the house that was his mother's territory and business. Arrangements had to be made around his activities. He was getting noticed in the church on Sunday and receiving certain invitations that he could not ignore. He could devote two hours of his time to being seen once a week. He did not have to choose anybody; his mother could do that very well.

Inside the women's household, the dependence on the male side for commercial success and successful arranged marriages created an unspoken tension. A shift was about to occur. The slaves of the household were about to experience a new mistress of unknown quality. Amongst themselves, they knew their lucky status under the old regime. Luis' mother was even handed. The appointed mistress of the slaves had been a good teacher of household chores without the whip and other rituals of subjugation. Her insider discretion was above reproach. An unruly slave was never kept on. The estate had also escaped the wrath of the African gods and poison makers. Every once in a while, there were suspected poisonings detected among the other estates. Here it was quiet. There were unwanted children running about on other estates; at this slave quarter, very few older children appeared, but they came and went right on schedule. This household was kept quiet. Now a new mistress meant more duties, unknown quality infants and maybe a cranky, maladjusted, incompetent or sickly mistress.

Jacinta, the green-eyed slave had imported her reasonable friendliness. She spoke little but seemed to notice or observe a lot more than she would ever comment upon. Slaves knew jealousy could spark an internal feud and at times a vicious struggle. Jacinta who had come with an inner strength never allowed herself to lose a cool exterior. She listened to chatter rather than join the flow of conversation. She faded into the recesses of shadows as soon as her labours were finished. She did not seek close

company of the others. Her spoken Portuguese was manageable. No one bothered to guess how much else she understood. Luis' mother had singled her out only once, to show her son how much she had changed. The other slaves wanted to know what had been said. Since nothing had been said in front of her, she had no information to wonder about or pass on. The common rooms were always forbidden territory. The master never came in there unannounced and only to see his mother. His mother could go everywhere on the estate. Everyone was assigned specific duties to certain areas of the property. Luis' quarters were assigned to the same valet and butler, no women entered there.

The grounds of the estate were another matter. Food had to be fetched by the kitchen slaves and cleaned from common water sources. Jacinta quickly surmised the outside property had areas that anyone was welcome to occupy. It has been guessed correctly, she had many abilities and skills. She had to be taught the Portuguese way of performing household tasks. She sewed very well and quickly. She now sewed cloth of different weights. Cloth was now cut by different means. The iron tools were advanced but not unknowable. She mastered clothes washing and laying out of clothes. She had to clean hard shoes; not make soft pliable ones. She was shown how to lay clothes on rocks to bleach in the sun. The whiteness of tablecloths and other linens were maintained that way. She was shown huge wardrobes of hard wood. Clothes had to be stored there to be cleaned or after being cleaned.

Jacinta was very clean. Her femininity was undeniable in her posture and movement. Her unusual beauty was noted by other slaves, and among themselves spoke of whom among the slaves could make her their partner. She was a slave of this well-off and well maintained household, and official serfdom was a complete life sentence of potential abuse. Jacinta had acquired some cloth and had made a bundle of herbs to ward off the evil of possession. She wore it on her person and out of sight.

It was noted that she often sought the same free zone, an almond tree that grew in splendid isolation near the estate's main house. During her free time, sometimes her sewing was taken outside. The current mistress of the house realized soon she could

groom this one as the personal slave/maid to her perspective daughter-in-law. Her illnesses were short and appropriate for her womanhood. The mistress' choice for her son was coming to a very few prospects. It was time to enlighten her son.

Jacinta knew nothing. She was a slave. She just had to be placed. Jacinta had blocked out her "rock" of origin. Under the dense-leaved umbrella of the almond tree, she let her mind move across the ocean to a colder climate. She could hear the calls of a different land and sea birds, the pounding waves against high coastal rock formations, the slightest swish of animals in the forest, but could not recall her parents' faces, never the faces of her relatives. She was serving this life sentence. She was among fifty-seven women who had made it to this shore. Her parents had died slow horrible deaths within hours of each other on the crossing over. Everyday as a free Beothuk she had marked her existence as moving toward becoming a parent. As her Portuguese vocabulary improved, she waited for the words from the slaves as they spoke among themselves to let her know when this might happen. All the familiar words for family, children, and husband were gone. She felt it in her bones, she had no future. Somehow this was the hardest to accept among all the hard things she was learning. Children were a future. There seemed to be no leaving these grounds. She knew death could come swiftly. She could not see the herbs she needed to take care of all her ailments when they came. The North Africans grew some herbs but the language barrier still existed and the cultural ways and means eluded her. They too led secret lives.

Jacinta knew nothing about the history of the North Africans.

During the time of Saint Augustine, their vast acreages were the bread baskets of Roman Italy. Christianity had come in its own from a very painfully aware body of people who could read and write. Here in Portugal, the Africans could claim to know so much more for over a millennium and a century and a half. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Turks, then the Arabs became the occupiers of these Moors made up of three types of peoples—Kabyle, Raughas, and Tauregs. The farmlands now bereft of trees, crisscrossed with irrigation canals in the hot southern part of the Mediterranean climate lost the battle for its enriched topsoil to burning sands.

One clear morning among many others in the dry season so well known in Lisbon, Jacinta noted what seemed to be a celebration far away in the common rooms. Tables had been laid, the crisp linens called for. The entire household had been given one more cleaning. A massive output of food had occurred. The wine cellar had been raided. A young woman appeared in the household, definitely at the master's side. Jacinta was summoned. She understood that she was now to see to the needs of the new mistress of the house. This was almost at the end of the second year of captivity. By now, she understood enough Portuguese to recognize the pattern of selection of a marriage partner. She had not been to the church, nor had she witnessed the signing of papers. Those marker events might have meant something to her and maybe not. In her limited experience this was a happy time for the partners to get to know each other. The new mistress spent some time just being in bed and looked very lost. Before she was dressed, warm water was fetched for her to wash herself. The master spent considerable time with his new bride, but he arose earlier to give orders for the day. He inspected estate produce, the daily inventory of goods and supplies and urged the movement of perishables to the market. Nothing really changed in the household. The woman seemed an object of the master's amusement for now.

The old mistress started to seek out the new bride to appraise her of the household's operation. The new mistress did not resist and seemed to enjoy her new surroundings. Visits were arranged to her parents' home, and Jacinta experienced a different, although similar world. The 15th century cart and roads around Lisbon were bereft of beauty and comfort. Nonetheless, this movement gave another look to another enclosed world. Jacinta looked after the mistress exclusively. The master was pleased because this gave his bride a special energy she could devote to him. Jacinta knew enough to wait for the first signs of pregnancy. Soon the mistress was looking quite ill some mornings and robust by the afternoon siesta.

Jacinta prepared for the event of the new baby and prepared her mistress who seemed to know so little on how to look after her stretching skin. Jacinta found oils for her. Soon, the mistress and she were an unspoken team. Jacinta told her of the coming

birth ordeal or simple event. As the final trimester became very evident, she arranged long walks on the grounds for the mistress. A medieval way at looking at this event came into force. Jacinta was disturbed by the lack of preparation. She was a slave with no voice, no opinion sought from her. She spoke frankly to her mistress who had enough common sense to seek out the old mistress to discuss the arrangement of a birthing room. Was not the marriage bed good enough? No, why disturb the master? Jacinta noticed her mistress, though not being a slave had several mechanisms working against her.

Not knowing what they were exactly, Jacinta sought out the Africans by describing the effects of certain herbs that she needed to prepare for the event. By now she was very devoted to her mistress and the coming child. The Africans found the generic ingredients for her. As the medicine woman for her clan she knew so much but was without her known herbs. Here she has to improvise by describing the desired effect of her medicines to the Africans.

By now, the older Africans recognized in Jacinta the hands of a gifted medicine woman. They had to secretly help her. They would need her knowledge among themselves too. They produced children in the slave quarters. They needed the care she could provide. She had the knowledge for intensive nursing care. Her description of fever conditions, subsequent care and how to express festering wounds was something she did with flawless ease. She could stay up all night and not fall asleep. Her value in child birthing was immensely precious. The washing of her hands before and after every new procedure was noted. They surmised this was a ritual of her medicine. What these slaves knew and they shared this knowledge with her is that no slave can ever possess an unknown power of any kind; even the perception of knowing too much can be seen as a threat to the authority of the estate owners.

In this feudal system, the old mistress was not treated as blind. From the cloisters where herbs were cultivated, she had the right to seek new and old medicines for the household. In this she sought out the most able of her household to be told of this practice since the old herbalist had died. The selection had come down to Jacinta. She

had come with a clear idea of how to make tinctures and mix infusions. The old mistress recognized the hands of a 'healer' the very first day she saw her upheld hands. The sudden death of the herbalist left the household in limbo only for a short while. It was found that Jacinta, whose intense powers of observation were noted, had a full appreciation of herbal medicine and applications from her previous life experiences and of what she had been asked to learn here. Now she was being asked to go with the old mistress to the cloisters. This was an introduction to Latin and her Portuguese now included medical terminology. Her value increased now within the household in a fundamental way. In her mind, this gave her access to information that everyone needed slaves, freemen and owners. This was the fifth year of captivity. Jacinta remained healthy.

Western herbal medicine has had a longitudinal application and its written texts began with the Greeks. In Roman times, Claudius Galenus, (A.D. 131-199) the physician to the court of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, had openly opposed the enormously profitable trade in herbal medicines. He took the texts of Hippocrates and made them intelligible on the theories of the humours. His texts are available in Unami medicine today. In a most practical sense, Galenus became the textbook authority for Arabic peoples and Medieval Europe. Somebody had to grow the best quality herbs. This task fell to the cloisters.

For that fact, we venture into the life of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). Hildegard of Bingen was a mystic who wrote everything she knew about plants and their medicinal powers. She had been cloistered from an unusual early age at five. Bingen was near the city of Mainz. She was a revering person existing as a cloistered nun at the conjunction of the Rhine River and Nahe River. At a synod hearing via Archbishop Alberio of Mainz, Hildegard's work became a spiritual matter deemed worthy of scrutiny by Pope Eugenius III (1145-53). A commission was given and the delegates were sent to investigate Hildegard's existence. She received a letter of commission by the authority of the Pope based on their findings. Within her life we are

apprised about the value system placed on land as property. Nuns came with a dowry, usually of land. By the time Hildegard moved to Bingen. Her former monastery at Disibodenberg was miffed and muffled. Noble and moneyed gentry were allowed burial within monastery and cloistered walls. Hildegard had allowed common, but baptized people burial sites within her walls. A major dispute came about and the result was the withholding of sacred services to the nuns by the monks charged with providing those services.

In between all this noise about appropriate behaviour and rigorous control, Hildegard wrote *Physica and Causea*. By the level of interest and the demand of uncultivated space, she could call for her own observation of plants. If we look very closely to the cultivation and the gathering of wild herbs to be rendered into medicine, the cloisters and monasteries were the best places for pharmacology to occur and evolve.

Jacinta was worried in an unspoken way. The dark cloth dresses, plus head to toe cover and hard shoes gave her no leeway to make herself attractive. And to whom? She had to cling to hope-filled thoughts, as despair could kill her. In spite of this growing awareness of this kind of obstacle, she also knew her best child-bearing years numbered the most six more years. At twenty-eight years, she would decline in strength, even health. In her remembering, for decades her people had eluded strangers by slipping into the deeper forests. Then one day she was a captive, sailing east. Stranger things have happened than not finding a father for a child. She told herself this in her own language.

In this feudal belief system, of black magic, and the deadly fear of black mantic arts, and the suspicions of witchcraft, gossip was one of the ways of carrying stories as the first avenue of defence. The household was very disciplined as the traffic from the outside was kept to the very minimum. Vendors did not come to the door unless summoned. Produce left the estate and it was self-sufficient. Slaves did not have any hard currency. A freed man was hard to come by as the system profited greatly from the

slave labour and trade. Even the clothes worn in labour and leisure were charged to them. The tax collector allowed the practice. The un-worded system of buying freedom was actively discouraged.

Jacinta was summoned close to the Christmas season to join the master and his family for a visit to her family. Someone was leaving for Brazil, a place with a huge river and golden coastline of untold riches. That was the gossip. Her heart leapt to her mouth. Perhaps they meant a northern coast and the presence of a huge cold water river.

Among her acquaintances, at that estate, was a family of intergenerational slaves. She did move among them frequently. Her Portuguese had improved enough to ask questions of their place of origin. They were blancos from a captured boat from a North Atlantic European coast-line. Their grandfather had remembered for them a cold salt water ocean on a rain-soaked fog bound Western European coast. They had only one thing of his remembrance, a crude cross of hewed stone.

One piece of information was astounding to her. If the sons wanted to they could become part of a sailing crew on a long voyage fleet. If they stayed at their landfall and did service or opted to stay to establish a colony they could change their status to freedmen after so many years. Opportunity had eluded them so far. Such an adventure was of a cold cash capital, a speculative investment given from such as this house. Men and goods were to be bought for a sturdy sailing vessel to be part of a fleet ... Yes, a commissioned man had emerged from this estate, a third son with no prospects for inheriting a sizeable chunk of this estate if he stayed. If he stayed, any of his children could become part of the unpaid labour pool without any great future prospects either.

Not quite slaves but serfs, for certain, owning a piece of property made such a difference. Much value was made of the commission of berth in a sailing ship. The third son was not expected to return if he survived the voyage. He would arrive as a freedman on the other side. He could return if he made a fortune in some way still a freeman with money to buy any kind of property, if any was available. The earliest of colonizers died anywhere along the journey there and back.

Jacinta knew the words and strained to understand these differences. Her previous society had no slave system, but a hard-working system of common interest in survival. All the work was performed on lake, sea, and river depending upon the season. Everyone had to help out thus benefitted.

As soon as her head hit her sleeping palette, she started to dream of children running through open meadows, eating just picked blueberries, drinking from cold water ponds, the sound of granite rocks pounded by relentless waves, good-eating birds flying everywhere and large mammal haunches roasting over tempered roasting pits dug in rock formations. She heard bursts of laughter of men and women, together, speaking in an unforgotten tongue. Next morning, she woke to the certainty she had dared to dream of a future. Did women go on these ships? No, only men and boys as young as fourteen years old need apply. You were captured and sold as a slave she was told—the first generation of her slave line. On the estate she belonged to, children were sold rather than kept. So not only were the odds of finding a good partner to have healthy children a terrible uncertainty, the future of children was one of slavery. The visitors left the next day before she could speak again to the family of bonded slaves.

In her seventh year of captivity, her Portuguese had improved well enough to catch subtitles of meaning and recognise the nuances of gestures. On a return visit to that estate, she made certain she spoke a little bit more to the same family. Why were they kept together? The father had arrived carrying the inherited stone cross, a mark of Christianity. He knew a lot about the Catholic faith and its administration. Even more luck for this household, he had information he knew what to do with. He had married a woman from a freeman household. He had demanded a Christian ceremony of matrimony to indicate his patrimony. Thus, he was written into a book. His children were baptized, given Christian names and written into the same book. Three boys have survived well enough to carry into a third generation. He read and wrote in Latin, the official language of the Church, the courts and the fraternal kingdoms of Europe. Thus, the slave who interpreted laws for his master was allowed some freedoms, one wife and

the care of his own children. The children were educated by their father. The household had not cared while that was happening.

When his father died, his family was allowed to remain. He had not quite bought their freedom. The mother surmised they were valuable together. The laws of property for slaves was not going to change in their lifetime. Sending one of their own across the angry Atlantic Ocean was uncertain freedom for at least one of them. So Jacinta learned one of these men was going with the freeman as his indentured servant. His passage bond was paid for by the other two and his mother by arranging several more years of unpaid labour for the other members of the family. This was an immense sacrifice at one level. Yet this was a Medieval Portugal where typhus, malaria, bubonic plague were rampant outside estate walls. Survival was the operative word.

Jacinta now had more dreams of children. She was determined to have a child or children in a meaningful kind of arrangement. But not in Luis Varga's household, they sold the children of slaves. What was the difference? The family now were used to her questions and answered her knowing a smart one when they were standing next to such a being. They showed her a small wooden box. Inside were written words on parchment. She could only stare at the whole box it had no organized meaning, no human reference to her mind, her body parts, nothing. The parchment described in some detail a future freedom. They could not be sold as slaves to another household.

This generation could buy its freedom in one of two ways. A sum of money could be offered for the father, everyone was in separate lots. At this point in their history, they had acquired the price of a berth on a ship for one indentured labourer to a colony or a working Portuguese ship with African ports of call.

Jacinta who had nothing like this parchment wept like a wounded animal. Her life situation was one who was sold for that price that day. Her life was worth the price for the day of sale. She could not buy her freedom. Her only value was in what she knew as a medicine woman. Her other worry was her child being sold never to know each other maybe moving into a short very brutal existence. In her mind, she had only one son for

the world and one girl for her clan. Yet, she slept with that dream close to her waking moment.

The bonds of slavery impinged on the future. Debts of freemen could put them back into bondage. Courts of law administered by feudal kingdoms could put entire blocks of families into several types of bonded slavery. Jacinta heard of prisons. Dungeons built to keep sentenced prisoners there. Families had to find food and clothing for their jailed family members. If family members could not feed them, the prisoners came out more dead than alive. Offending slaves did not go to prison: they were killed often on the spot. Jacinta vowed to keep her sanity. Portugal was a prescribed madhouse whose authority lived by the written words for those who could read and write; the hard currency of gold and silver and a not so genteel society of armed militias. Behind those walls, she was growing older, but staying alive and was processing more information.

Reports from Brazil were coming back, and the slave trade went into the highest gear known in Portuguese society. Reports from Spain were wrapped in gold and fabulous tales of emeralds, diamonds, and islands of unimaginable splendour. More often, even from behind these stone walls, the pounding of frantic pacing of horses, the culture of violence was escalating. Luis, the landowner, still held firm to his way of doing business. He now had an armed bodyguard in order to go about his business beyond the walls. His mother was now ailing from the infirmities of advancing age. Luis and his wife had days of other decisions to make.

"Can I become Christian?" Jacinta placed this question to the family.

"Yes," they said, "And your name will go into a book." Yes, they could teach her. But how and where? They had to ask permission to even begin to speak to her about such a move. Being a Christian, it was argued, was an assigned personification of a Christ-like image. Human beings, persons could become the adopted brothers or sisters of Jesus Christ. Devout Christian women worked closely to attend chapels to afford a lifetime of praying to Christ for bountiful graces for family and country. For Jacinta, the European ideas about God were chaotic, yet centralized on wealth acquisitions.

"Can I learn to read?"

"Not as a slave."

"Can I learn to answer the questions for Christianity?"

"Yes, by rote."

Did her mistress know the questions and the answers? Yes, she could sponsor her legitimately and the family could take her to church.

Jacinta could be baptized and her name written into a book. Can she risk asking for this favour? They could speak to the mistress' family. Perhaps, they could speak to their daughter about Jacinta. The family brokered her Baptism into the Roman Catholic Church in record time. Lessons by rote were arranged. Jacinta, an eager learner, appeared calm. Inside, she churned with anticipation that a future was perhaps possible. Her children could be baptized and written into a book. On this alien land, among these alien people with savage and family breaking written laws, her life was worth less than nothing. But she could now place herself and her future into a book.

If she received one sacrament then she could receive the others. Her spiritual life in this society was worth something only if she glorified the society's idea of God. These were her connecting ideas. Her dreams were filled with children.

Jacinta took to looking and observing a few new people who came and went. Clothes made the man, a servant, a slave and sometimes freemen were certainly distinguishable. A fate-filled day found her under the almond tree sewing. She saw no one but felt someone was looking at her. She kept on sewing, but sat up straight as if alerted to something. This was to happen several times over a few months. Still she saw no one. As a child of the deep forest she sensed whoever it was meant her no harm.

Finally, one of the servants asked casually if she knew such and such a person. No. He spends a lot of time looking at you she was told. He was a buyer of wholesale produce not someone of this estate. There was no gossip attached to him. Here Jacinta heard the term middleman for the first time. Jacinta was sure this was to tell her she might be sold. Night came and on her palette she did not subject her emotions to fear-filled thoughts. She prayed instead for deliverance and guidance. This was a bold prayer

said only in her language of birth. She created another medicine bag of selected herbs, this time as a sign she was ready for her future.

The person looking at her knew she was worth something beyond the obvious sale price of a slave. This person bought and sold only one kind of goods. He came to this estate to buy it. The fact that he saw Jacinta was directly a result of her taking her sewing outside under the almond tree as a habit. Her skin colour, auburn curly hair and green eyes were her best features. The rest of her was clad in the house slave non-descript clothing. He was attached to a household engaged in the manufacture of oil. The best markets were the ongoing colonies as fast as they emerged. At this point, they were paid up front in this business. His estate as a manufacturer meant he owned slaves who processed his product. The Varga estate had excellent olives with the possibilities of soap making. Thus, his position as a middleman existed in the fact that he manufactured the product and sold it directly on the open market to the best bidder. He sold his goods in lots. He bottled nothing.

His interest in this slave Jacinta was based on his male instinct. Perhaps she was a simple household slave far from the center of the estate. He was not looking for a wife or mistress. The family made those arrangements. His family was an unusual family in the Portuguese society. This was a multiple dwelling household of Spanish and Portuguese infusions of newer bloods. Even in these times, they were already filthy rich without the nobility, but they paid the nobility excellent commercial fees and taxes. Portugal was better than Spain for them. While everyone else was getting into the slave market, his family quietly surmised based on purely commercial reasons, the long-term investments had to lead to a gold bullion mass. Commercial banking was going to happen. Even the furthest nations yet to be conquered would require banking. The Chinese already had investment houses, based solely on money exchanges, currencies based on solid gold, silver and precious stones.

The Florentine, Machiavelli removed ethically-motivated moors in doing anything from the theoretical framework of conducting business among the upper classes. They alone did business of any consequence. He was not alone in this thinking.

"For it may be said of men in general that they are ungrateful, voluble, dissemblers, anxious to avoid danger, and covetous of gain: as long as you benefit them, they are entirely yours; they offer you their blood, their goods, their life, and their children. As I have before said, when the necessity is remote, but when it approaches, they revolt."

When he wrote these words, only the upper classes could read and write so when he said revolt, he meant raising an army or a militia for armed attack. Or in the political sense strategy became everything.

So this Medieval-raised Spaniard of mixed-blood standing out of sight and looking at Jacinta finally admitted he was very concerned about owning in some way this slave of the Varga household. He had at this point no way of knowing her actual worth to the household. He did not even know if she was a house slave for sure. It was exactly at this time that the Christian Jacinta surrendered her fate to the Manitou she knew by rote and in her direct experience of His many interventions.

But even he had to tread carefully. Asking to buy a certain slave from an established household could be considered raiding. Therefore, it was seen as bad manners. Over the next twelve months he timed his business visits. He made sure she never saw him. His life to this point was rigidly controlled. His world experience was based strictly in the man's world of business. He had decent manners when introduced to women and all the mannerism burned into his machismo heart were ready to flare. These mannerisms were meant to inflame the heart, especially the body of the intended. Every gesture and look were loaded to lock in the emotions of the female. No matter how lascivious one male could be in the house of an associate business or other, friend or relative approaching any female was just bad manners. He was not stupid. What could be done? He asked the priest attached to the neighbourhood church. No one asked about people casually. Questions were seriously imposed in a time when wrongs perceived could lead to serious consequences. Jacinta, the slave, was signed in as a Christian. Her sponsor has been the wife of Luis Varga. Yes, she was a practicing

Christian, and was going to receive the other sacraments. Within a few minutes Senior Montano had all the information he could use.

The one intriguing fact that struck his fancy was that she came from a northern climate of the western iceberg-infested Atlantic waters. The other two facts were points for bargaining. Being a Christian and the family herbalist increased her value to the Vargas. He had to negotiate the sale by making a solid inquiry. This was not an open slave market. This was going to be a conditional sale. If she did not work out, she was going back to the Vargas. She would be allowed to remain a Christian. If she was not happy at his estate she might kill herself under adverse conditions. That would affect his reputation adversely. Senior Montano, given all his European qualities, was being magnanimous in his qualitative and quantitative gestures about this slave. Maybe he was all wrong in two ways. No price was right or a right price could be struck very easily. Indeed, she came from a rare breed of humans of a now-known quality. There was no need for self doubt. This was not high diplomacy. A slave is a slave and they came at a certain bracket price. He could afford this acquisition out of his own purse. He did not have to ask anyone whether it was right or wrong morally or ethically. However, manners gave a man a certain reputation. Society was never indifferent.

Inside the business room, he made a bold assumption before his host Luis Varga. "You have a Christian slave named Jacinta, could she be for sale?"

Luis seemed to ignore the statement and the question. A few minutes went by in silence. Montano was not going to change the subject. Finally, Luis called a servant for more refreshments. This was a serious inquiry, it required deliberations. This mixed-blood stood a foot taller than his host. But there had never been a hint of intimidation about anything between the two men. Luis decided to stick to the facts. Jacinta was a first generation slave. She had never known any other estate except this one. Her health was extraordinarily good because she had knowledge about good health habits for men and women. Did she have any children? No, and all impediments possible do not exist.

"She has first hand knowledge about my family. My wife values her above all the other slaves and bonded servants. Why do you want this slave?"

"I have never seen anyone like her."

Luis laughed. "I never saw my wife before she accepted my betrothal. Jacinta cannot become anyone's slave unless I release her from this bondage."

Montano heard himself say, "What will that cost me?"

"She cannot go as your slave or the slave of any household. You have to buy her freedom."

"If I buy her freedom then I have to offer a position in my household." This is unusual, is it necessary he thought. Luis looked at Montano for a full minute.

"Let me offer you some advice. You came to my household to buy one type of product. You are now in my household buying what may be the rarest type of human. If you are a collector of mere humans, the answer is no. You have crossed the threshold to ask for a fine quality person who has become the jewel of this household. If we sell her, the condition is her freedom."

Luis had no idea why he was saying all of this. Yes, he did. She had bestowed on his family the rarest of compassion a fact he did not want to forget. He had never known how he could pay it back. Yet, here was a mixed-blood asking for her price.

The advice: "Take her right out of this society and marry her before your family finds out all the details. We will be your witnesses. Please make no commitments right now. I have to speak to my wife and she will speak to her. This is either a miracle or a disaster. God already knows this design."

Montano stopped at the church and spoke to the Padre.

The Padre looked at him. Finally, he said "those are the conditions? What do you want me to do?"

"Draw up the necessary papers. It will take a few days for me to round out my business route. When I return, I am going back to Luis Varga's to get Jacinta." He had no doubts, he had no anxiety. He slept like a log, and performed all his business with the ease of accustomed form.

Jacinta was summoned into the business room. Luis and his wife sat there waiting. She was offered a chair. She coughed in hesitation. If she was being sold she

wanted to be standing up. First, they thanked her for all the services to their household. They had sold her. Jacinta breathed in and out. No, they did not thank slaves. Jacinta listened. Her freedom had been bought by the man who was going to marry her in a Christian ceremony. She tugged at her ear. They stopped talking for awhile, she sat down. Can she ask a question? Was she still a slave? No, her freedom meant she could live anywhere she could afford. Or anywhere her intended husband wanted her to. There was a queasy area of uncertainty about husband, marriage, and place. She had to leave here and go with him. He did buy her in a fundamental way.

"Was he a Christian?"

Yes. They knew him well enough they said. He will fulfill his intentions which were obligations.

He had already sent her a suit of clothes. She put them on to change her appearance before everyone else. She now had to stay in the guest room till he came for her. She cried so she could release all the tension from her body. Then she wrapped herself in a blanket to comfort herself. The other slaves came to see her. Thank goodness, she did not have to go down to them. All of them had received her extraordinary kindness and supreme compassion. This development had no history in this household. The Africans giggled and told her stories. They said don't forget us.

They came for her. He was not alone. He was introduced by the Vargas. Then, they all sat down in the common room and the Varg's shared a drink with them. The Vargas told her story to him. How Luis saw her in the slave market twice. How she saw to the birthing of their two children, and how her vast knowledge of medicinal herbs had been a grace to them. They were making a sacrifice too. Then, they told her you will be married today to this man and we will be the witnesses. There was quickness in this man that she could discern. Was it in the gestures? He was different from the Portuguese men. His grandparents had come from Spain. His Mother was Portuguese. He was not of the nobility, but came from a family of real worth. He was independently wealthy. Jacinta had no idea what that meant.

Jacinta looked at this man the way she always studied human beings. He could not afford a celebration for the marriage, but this union was not arranged in the customary way. He had made all the arrangements. He paid for the bride as a slave to free her for a civil and Christian marriage. This was so unusual the Vargas remarked about it afterwards to Uncle Faria.

"We had no idea how wealthy the family has become. They come from two wealthy families from two countries. One side of their business is putting money into risk ventures. They never lose money. But they are not nobility. They buy raw goods and manufacture new materials," said Uncle Faria. They speculated about the Montano origins of money. This was going to be the way to remain wealthy. There was an untold price to be paid for being part of the nobility.

Jacinta found out this husband had his own money. All members in his family had inherited money from two sets of grandparents. For now she had a problem. Somewhere along the way, he had learned a machismo way with women. With Jacinta this was ridiculous. In her mind, she would have to teach him how to approach her. In their apartment, totally alone, she spoke to him very gently and intelligently. She gave him a summary of her life before captivity. In that society men and women were equal partners. Domination for the purposes of sexual unity was not a reasonable sentence. This dominate action defeated all the presence of mind, body and soul that a man and woman had to bring to their union. This was a gift to be shared. Her smile disarmed him completely. She was not on call for sex. They both had to help each other enjoy this time together. She wanted and needed to be respected for her entire person because she came from a background of holistic living. He started to think and say, but you were a slave.

He caught his mind. She was important to every fibre of his being. What she was presenting to him was her whole being not just bits and pieces of herself at his convenience. All of a sudden he felt the rush of total discovery of another human being. His smile gave her an unexpected thrill. At that moment she vowed to love him forever.

The first test of her marriage came swiftly. This was the most independent-minded son of three equally handsome, educated, and intelligent sons, no sisters. He

had told his parents he was getting married. The announcement came the way a person announces to no one in particular that "I am changing my socks." No paternity suit had ever reached their doorstep, but they were positive his travels had taken him into several liaisons. His manufacturing plans were the one thing he discussed with his father.

His father was a very ascetic-looking Spaniard in a contemplative manner. His Portuguese mother had very dark almost brooding eyes. To say the family were religious was not true. Yet, both parents had a strong sense of spiritual matters, but their belief systems were their business. His Father, Romero had never spoken harshly to his mother in front of them. At different times during his childhood, he had heard her crying. When the father was gone she had always mourned his going like an impending doom was about to occur. When the Spanish Inquisition came with the question are you a Jew masquerading as a Christian, it became a far-fetched but troubling question.

So the morning after their religious union had occurred and their passion for each other had consummated, both parents wanted an audience with their son. The woman Jacinta was the cause for the intrusion. She was in the apartment and she was not chattel. She was in his bedchamber. They were never given to ranting and raving, they did not start that day. Concern for their son was on their faces. They confronted him in his common room.

"I told you I had my eye on a woman. I studied her for almost a year. She never saw me. I need a new kind of woman. I never wanted a woman from this society. This is my wife Jacinta," he said very gently after he called her to meet his parents.

Jacinta had acquired European manners and did a deep curtsy because they were his parents. She was radiant this morning. The father understood his son's heart. The mother waited for her to speak. As it happened, so often in the real life of Jacinta, people who were to become significant in her life felt her deep compassion. As she spoke her intelligence was evident. Then his mother understood her son's mind and purpose. He had always wanted a soul mate. So this morning they spoke animatedly of many things. It was as if all four of them had met many times over. In that morning setting everyone

relaxed. At some point, servants were summoned to prepare an extra large and better sumptuous table. The rich can do that they have no problem with quantity or quality. If they are generous it shows right away. His parents were generous.

Jacinta set up her household. She did not abandon her medicine bundle. Her husband travelled extensively buying goods of raw material.

One question came up, "If you had enough land in one place, will you stop travelling? The countryside frightens me."

While some people were becoming more comfortable, others were losing everything. Highway robbery became a fact of life. She was restless. A boy had been born within the year of their marriage. Jacinta whose enormous intelligences, high spiritual development and vocation as a herbalist still had room in her day to think. She told her husband about her visions about their future. She had considered, his time on the road, the cost of shipping raw material to the factory and the manufacturing site itself.

One day she asked him, do you know that across the ocean there are hundreds of different tribesmen living in vastly different regions whose wealth is measured in a totally different way? Montano had recently read the Spanish accounts of the riches of El Dorado. As she spoke he shivered. He knew what she was talking about. He had acquired copies of the most recent cartography from Spanish-chartered fleets. One place had interested him. An island called Trinidad, exceptionally close to the South American continent where Columbus had landed. They were already calling it the gateway to El Dorado. This made it quasi-property of Spain by discovery alone. Cannibals roamed freely it was speculated. The explorers had described a northern range of mountains. On the Caribbean side they described long beaches. Toward the northern side they described a beach full of debris from the ocean as if it came from the outlet of an especially large river on the continent. A mountain range meant freshwater mountain streams, flatland meant swamps or arable land. What if it was both? The cost was heavy. He decided to say nothing till he had real facts to match his speculations. This meant a trip to Spain. He polished his Spanish by speaking frequently to his wise father. His

father was not without influence. He gave a letter of reference to approach a certain learned man of law and letters.

Within a fortnight of reaching the Spanish capital, he was before the court asking for family immigration papers to this place called Trinidad. A ship was being readied within the year. Could he contribute how much in gold bullion? There was no guarantee of reaching the destination or ever returning. On his return home, he managed to see his father first. This was a major feat; his wife and mother were waiting for him. He had the money, he had the passage, now he needed his father's blessing. The elder Montano shook with unexpressed joy.

His mother cried real tears mourning him as if she was seeing him for the last time. Then he went to Jacinta. She cried out in fear and joy at the same time. But as he had cautioned his father and mother, he asked her not to even whisper about their going not even in her dreams.

"Nada! I want to be landing and far from the boat before I will be alright about everything. In the meantime everything has to be as usual." He cautioned Jacinta about the level of civility she could expect. She had seen the worst. She had never lived far from the Atlantic Ocean. This was the other end of the gulf stream right in the tropics. The time went slow because of the silence and great acceleration because of the preparations that had to occur all in Spain. Montano went back and forth buying a year's supply of everything. He had decided to be a soap and candle maker. They cost far more than he anticipated. He consulted textile makers about the best cloth for a dry hot season and hotter monsoon weather. Then he bought threads to match and buttons. He packed that very carefully. That was Jacinta's gift package.

For the children he bought books. He would have to teach them to read and write in Spanish. Then he thought of Jacinta and her Portuguese. He bought two dictionaries in each language. He had to teach her Spanish. Then he did something strange only to a person who did not know his wife. He packed a book on herbal medicines and practices. Oh, God what was he doing to his family! Then, he had a clear vision of standing half way on a side of a mountain, feeling incredibly cool breezes,

hearing every kind of tropical bird, experiencing the rich smells of jungle forest! When he reached that place he would establish his family there. As he rocked back and forth on his heels he even heard music. These were his hopes flaming higher than any tree he had ever seen.

From Portugal they carried seeds. They were partial to almond trees. Without her choice of an almond tree to do her sewing, he never would have seen her. They came in the year 1515 among the very first Spanish settlers. A promising place had been a hilltop they named San Jose de Oruna. Then, he went in search of his mountain side. With the help of some very large black slave men, he hacked his way through a thick jungle on a mountain side inside the northern range.

Maracas Valley was well known to the Carib people, they lived there close to a freshwater mountain stream. Every once in a while someone shouted, "Water coming down." A flood of water came rushing down making great noise as if destruction was going to happen. Well yes, you just had to scramble out of the way. He found it just as he had dreamed it. He took the slaves to work out there with all the supplies they needed.

He managed with many levels of understanding to settle the Carib people on the estate or plantation. He called their village Santa Rosa. He built sturdy slave quarters. The way he saw it, at some point the big slave men would seek marriage partners. They needed homes for their children. By the time he built his work house out there, Jacinta had made comfortable quarters for them in San Jose. She was busy. Like his father, he was now the father of three sons. They were a golden colour of skin if they turned to look very suddenly their hazel eyes fooled you. Their mother's eyes, the colour of icebergs, sea green lingered. Their hair was curly with flecks and streaks of auburn against the black. They chattered in Spanish and Portuguese. They picked up a patois noted first in San Jose. When Jacinta saw the mountain side deep in Maracas Valley she cried out to its awesome beauty. Huge tropical trees provided the first canopy. Then every variety of jungle plant grew and snakes curled around everything.

She longed for a daughter. Since no more children came, she adopted a girl like she had experienced in such a distant past because it had been so different there. The first girl born from the slaves was given to them. The girl was a gift not a throw away. Her parents had made this gesture out of respect. So the little Creole grew up speaking Spanish, Portuguese, her mother's first language Carib and her father's African language. When she married, they dressed her in the finest material they could buy. Her lineage was to be traced for five hundred years revealing a new people. Her descendents find themselves laden with talent, exceptionally good looks, and an enormous appetite for life and books and songs.