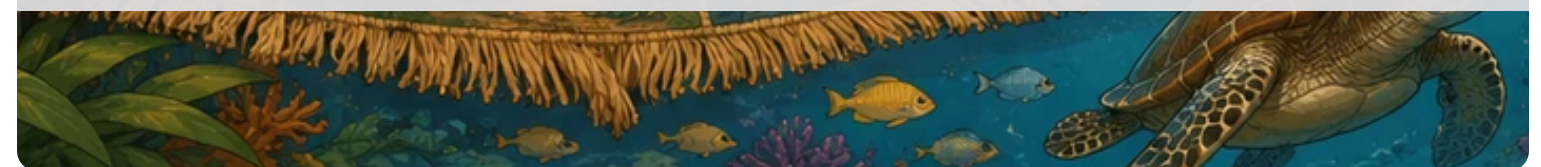




The Tapestry of the Three Islands: A Caymanian Journey

Safiyah





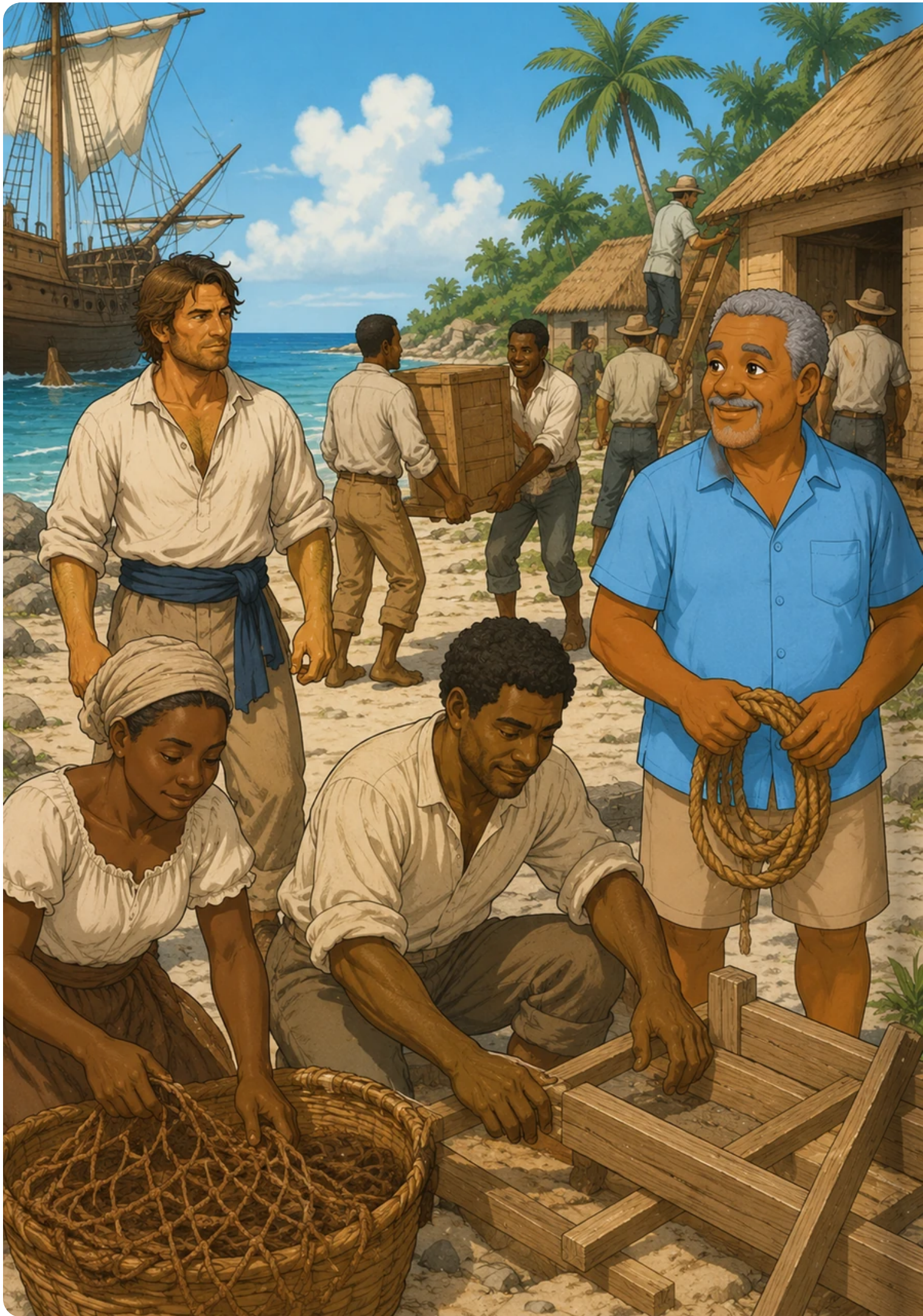
In 1503, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Caribbean and spotted two small islands teeming with sea turtles. He named them Las Tortugas, marking the first time these peaceful shores appeared on a world map.



Later, the islands were renamed the Caymanas, after the large rock iguanas and crocodiles that roamed the land. These rugged shores became a haven for pirates and sailors looking for fresh water and food.



The first permanent settlers arrived in the 1700s, including shipwrecked sailors and adventurous families from Great Britain. They built small homes from ironwood and thatch, learning to survive on what the ocean provided.



As the settlement grew, people of African descent were brought to the islands, contributing their skills and labor to the developing community. Despite the hardships of the era, their culture and resilience became a foundational pillar of the islands' identity.



In 1835, a monumental change occurred when the proclamation of emancipation was read at Pedro St. James. Freedom allowed the diverse population to begin building a unified society based on shared dreams and mutual respect.



For many years, the Caymanians were known as the people the world forgot, living simply by fishing for turtles and weaving strong thatch rope. Every family, regardless of their origin, worked side-by-side against the harsh tropical elements.



Over the generations, the different groups of settlers married and raised families together, blending their traditions and heritages. This beautiful mixing created a unique ethnic identity that is neither purely European nor purely African, but distinctly Caymanian.



As the islands transformed into a global hub for finance and tourism, new people from all over the world arrived to call this paradise home. This modern era added even more colors to the islands' social fabric, making it a true melting pot of the Caribbean.



Today, the Caymanian people represent a rich blend of backgrounds, with about forty percent identifying as mixed, twenty percent as black, and twenty percent as white. The remaining percentage includes a vibrant community of expatriates from over one hundred different countries.



Grandpa Isaac looks out over the turquoise water, reminding Maya that being Caymanian is about more than just numbers or history. It is a spirit of Caymankind—a commitment to kindness, heritage, and the beautiful harmony of many cultures living as one.