

# Count Down to Columbus Day 4

## Christopher Columbus: A Family Adventure and A Plague of Bunnies

AFTER HIS NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE WITH FRENCH PIRATES, CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS SWAM SIX MILES TO THE SHORES OF PORTUGAL. FROM THERE, HE MADE HIS WAY TO LISBON THE CAPITOL AND EVENTUALLY MADE IT HIS HOME.



# Welcome To Lisbon

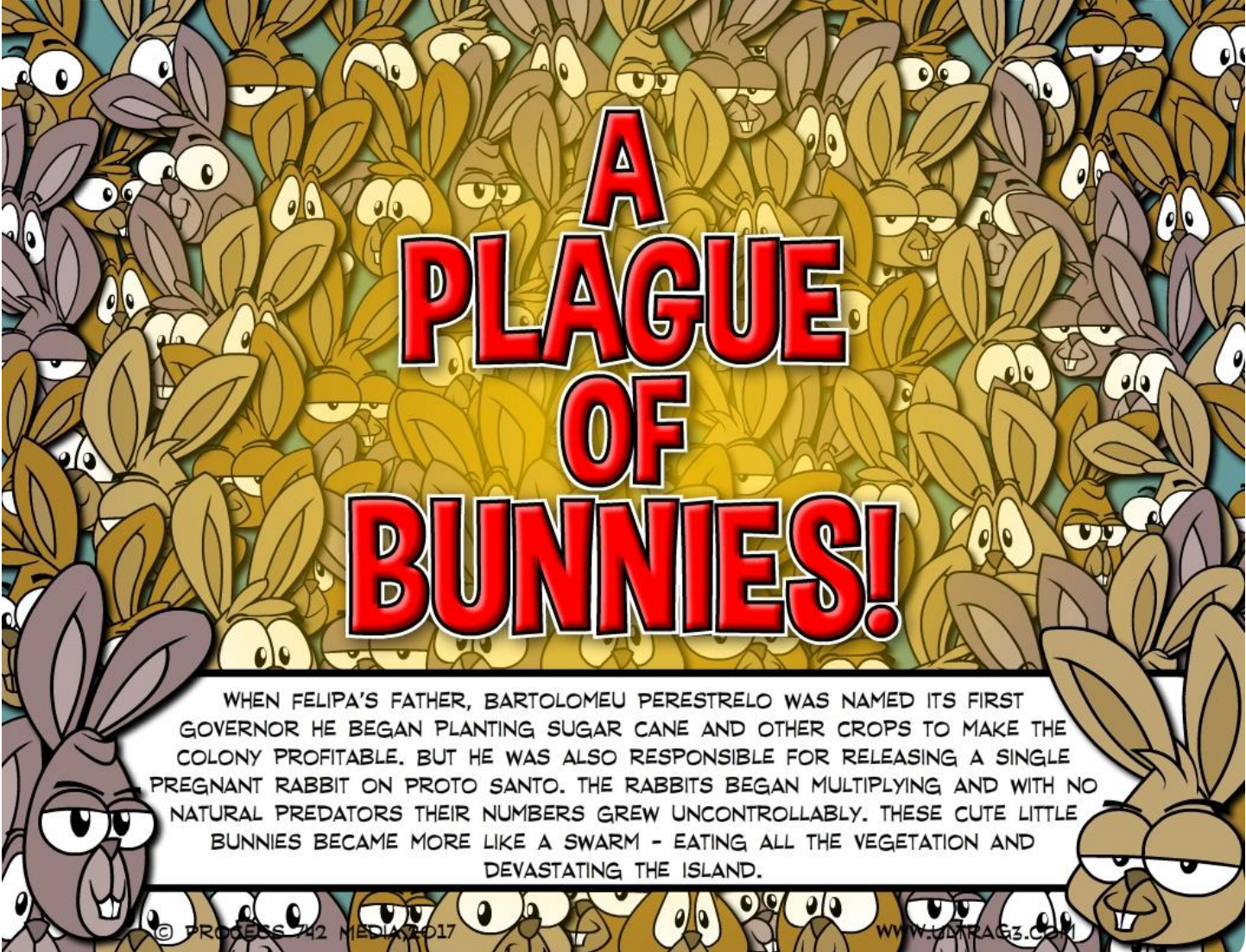


IN LISBON, HE MET AND MARRIED FELIPA PERESTRELO. THIS MARRIAGE WOULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT IMPACT ON THE DIRECTION THAT COLUMBUS'S FUTURE WOULD TAKE. FELIPA CAME FROM A FAMILY OF PORTUGUESE ADVENTURERS AND EXPLORERS.

HER GRANDFATHER SERVED PRINCE HENRY THE NAVIGATOR, AND HER FATHER BARTOLOMEU PERESTRELO WAS ONE OF THE DISCOVERERS OF THE MADEIRA ISLANDS OFF THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA.



THEY MOVED TO THE ISLAND OF PORTO SANTO. FELIPA'S FATHER WAS THE FIRST GOVERNOR OF THE ISLAND BEFORE HE DIED MANY YEARS EARLIER. HER MOTHER GAVE COLUMBUS BARTOLOMEU'S CHARTS AND MAPS, AND WHILE ON THE ISLAND, COLUMBUS HEARD MANY STORIES FROM PORTUGUESE EXPLORERS. MANY OF THE STORIES PROBABLY HAD TO DO WITH SEEING THINGS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT THAT NO EUROPEAN HAD SEEN BEFORE. BUT THE STRANGEST STORY HAD HAPPENED RIGHT THERE ON THE ISLAND OF PORTO SANTO. IT INVOLVED A PLAGUE OF BUNNIES.

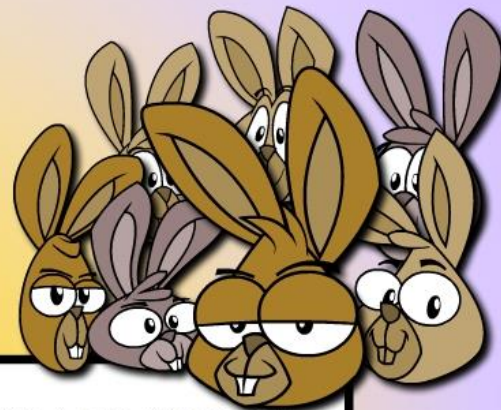


# A PLAGUE OF BUNNIES!

WHEN FELIPA'S FATHER, BARTOLOMEU PERESTRELO WAS NAMED ITS FIRST GOVERNOR HE BEGAN PLANTING SUGAR CANE AND OTHER CROPS TO MAKE THE COLONY PROFITABLE. BUT HE WAS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR RELEASING A SINGLE PREGNANT RABBIT ON PROTO SANTO. THE RABBITS BEGAN MULTIPLYING AND WITH NO NATURAL PREDATORS THEIR NUMBERS GREW UNCONTROLLABLY. THESE CUTE LITTLE BUNNIES BECAME MORE LIKE A SWARM - EATING ALL THE VEGETATION AND DEVASTATING THE ISLAND.

THIS PERIOD OF COLUMBUS'S LIFE - LIVING OUT IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN; LEARNING OF PAST ADVENTURES; SEEING FIRST-HAND THE EXCITING PORTUGUESE DISCOVERIES - HELPED SHAPE HIS FUTURE AS AN EXPLORER. UNFORTUNATELY, HIS WIFE FELIPA SOON DIED AND COLUMBUS WOULD MOVE ON. HE WOULD CALL THE NEXT FEW YEARS OF HIS LIFE THE YEARS OF GREAT ANGUISH. BUT THEY WERE ALSO THE TIME COLUMBUS WOULD STRIVE TO PREPARE AND FIND A PATRON FOR THE GREATEST ADVENTURE OF HIS LIFE.





SOMETIMES SEEMINGLY SMALL CHOICES CAN MAKE A BIG IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE - LIKE WHEN COLUMBUS SETTLED IN LISBON WHERE HE MET AND MARRIED FELIPA PERESTRELO; OR WHEN BARTOLOMEU PERESTRELO CHOSE TO TAKE ONE PREGNANT BUNNY WITH HIM TO PORTO SANTO. CAN YOU THINK OF A SMALL CHOICE YOU HAVE MADE THAT ENDED UP AFFECTING YOU IN A BIG WAY? WRITE ABOUT THAT CHOICE AND HOW THE RESULTS MADE A BIGGER IMPACT THAN YOU EXPECTED.