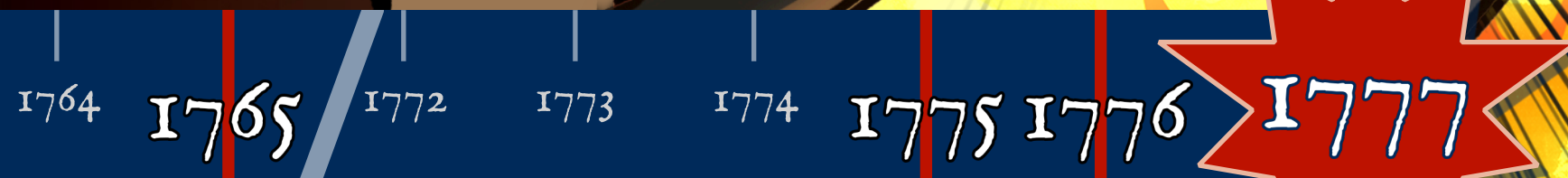


I2

PETER FRANCISCO, THE HERCULES OF INDEPENDENCE

By Fiona Aquilo

An orphan boy from Portugal shows up on the docks in Hopewell on the James River, gets adopted and grows up exceptionally strong as he learns to be a blacksmith. What will this young man choose to do with his strength in the American Revolution?

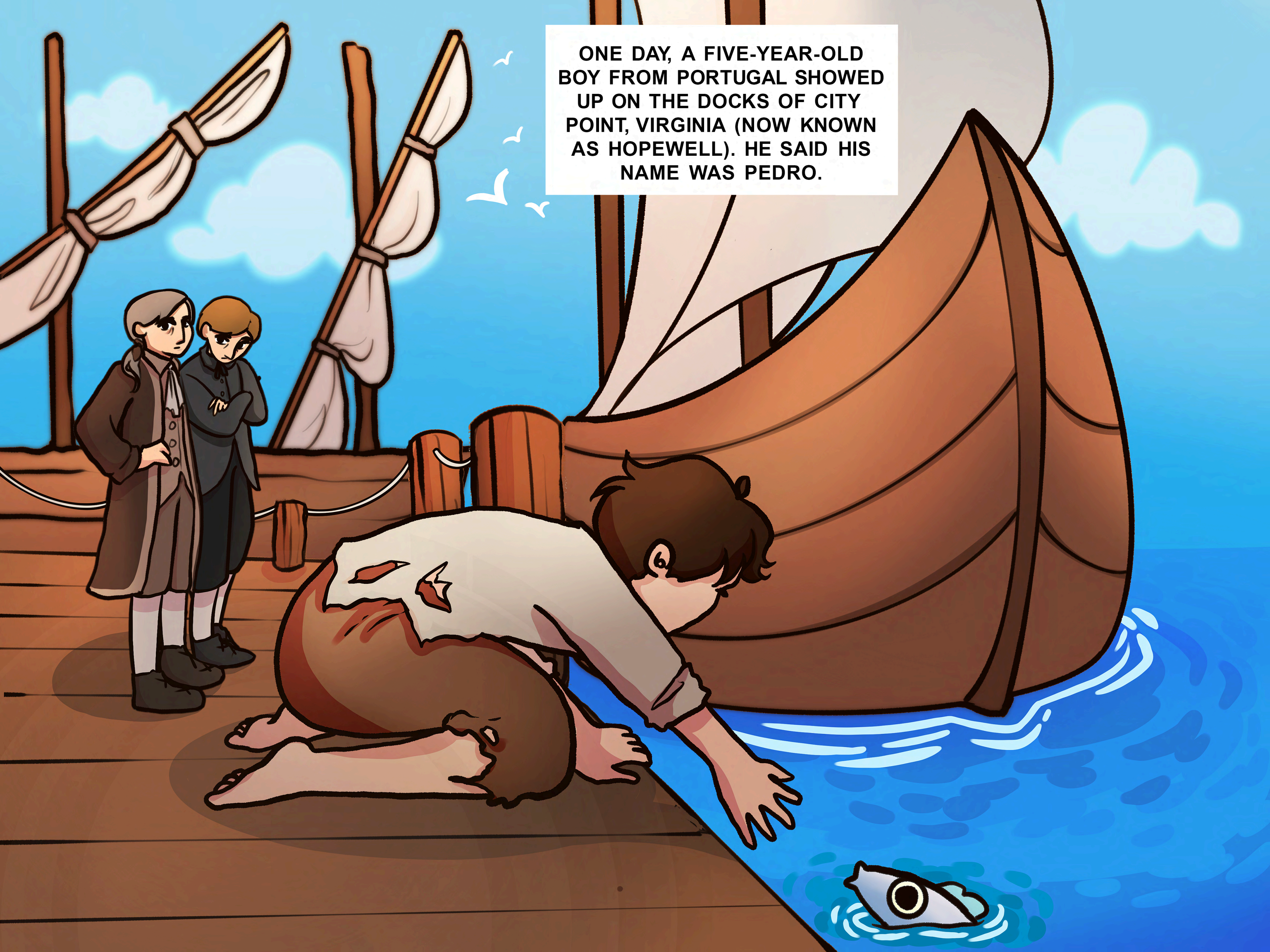


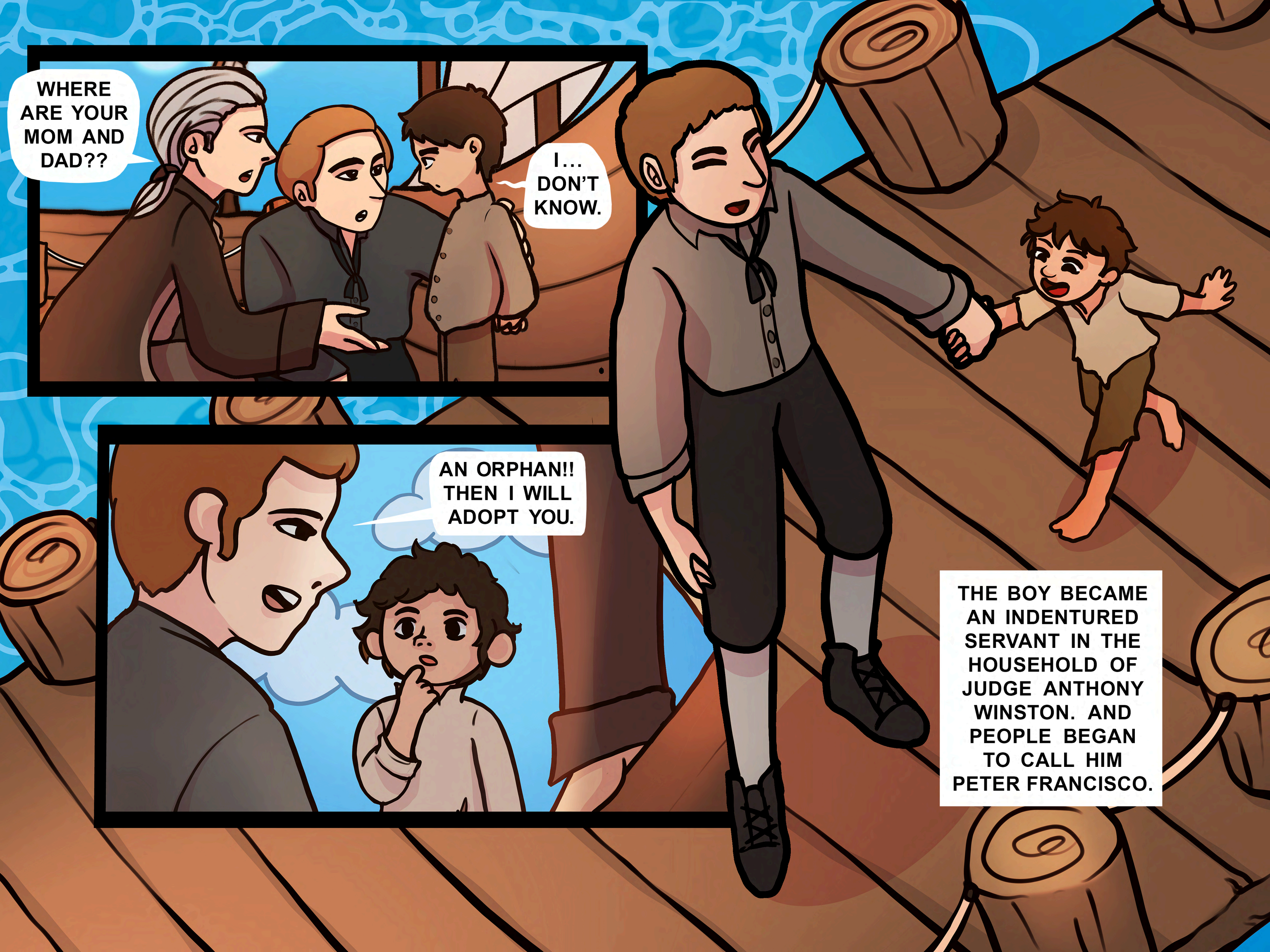
An orphan named Pedro appears in Henrico, Virginia

Virginia's Royal Governor offers emancipation to slaves owned by rebels

The Declaration of Independence is signed

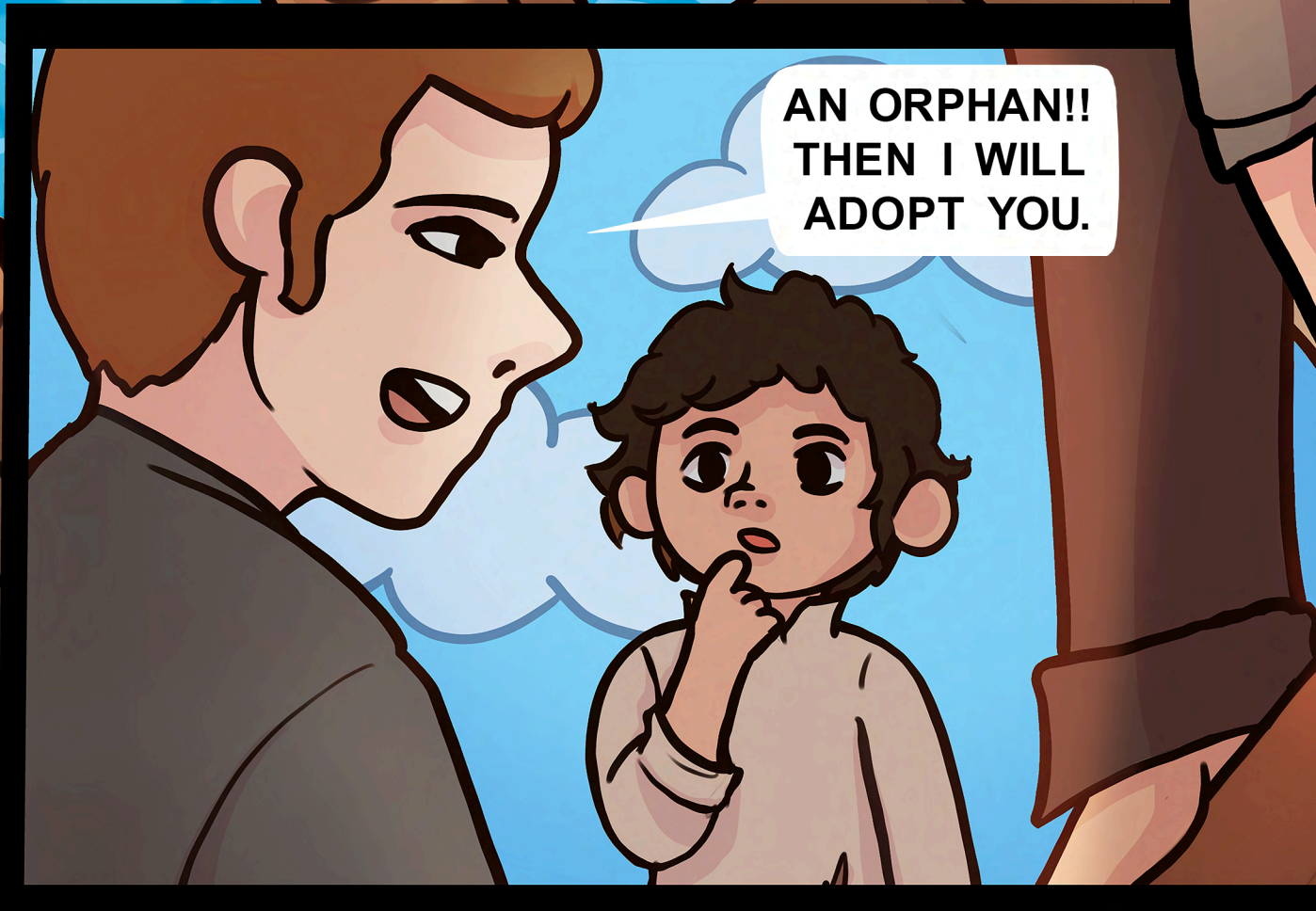
ONE DAY, A FIVE-YEAR-OLD BOY FROM PORTUGAL SHOWED UP ON THE DOCKS OF CITY POINT, VIRGINIA (NOW KNOWN AS HOPEWELL). HE SAID HIS NAME WAS PEDRO.



A comic book illustration showing a boy being rescued from a log raft. The boy is wearing a grey shirt and dark pants, and is being held by a man in a grey shirt and dark pants. The man is standing on a log raft, and the boy is being pulled up. In the background, there are other people on the raft, and a speech bubble from one of them asks, "WHERE ARE YOUR MOM AND DAD??" The boy's response is "I... DON'T KNOW." The scene is set on a river with blue water and brown logs.

WHERE
ARE YOUR
MOM AND
DAD??

I...
DON'T
KNOW.

An inset comic panel showing a man with brown hair and a grey shirt talking to a young boy with dark curly hair and a light grey shirt. The man is looking at the boy with a surprised expression, and the boy is looking back at him with a thoughtful expression, his hand on his chin. A speech bubble from the man says, "AN ORPHAN!! THEN I WILL ADOPT YOU." The background of the inset panel is a simple blue sky and brown ground.

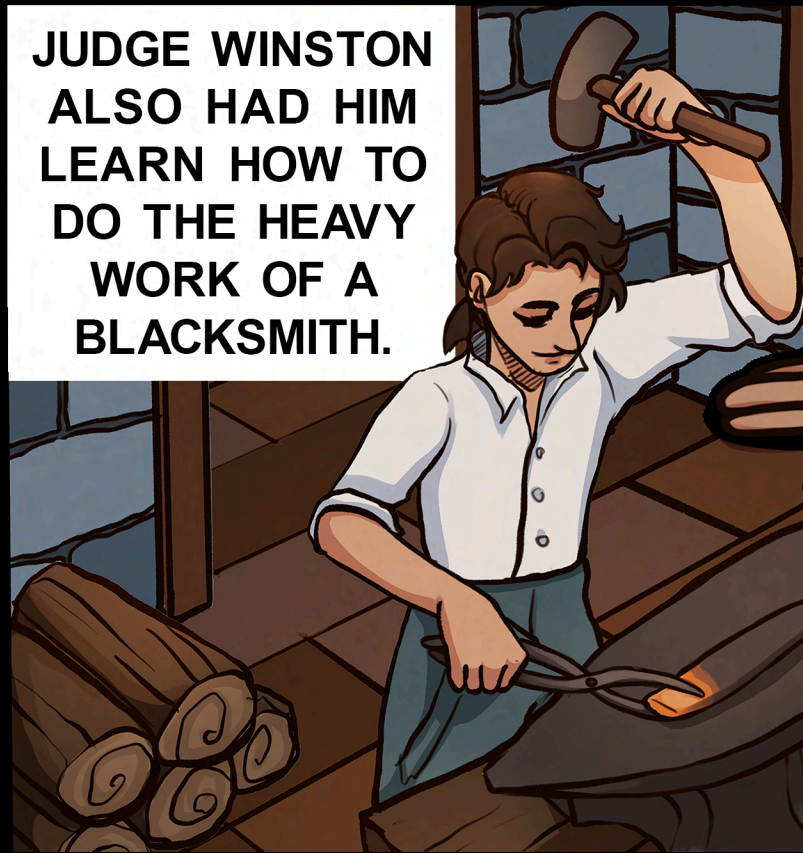
AN ORPHAN!!
THEN I WILL
ADOPT YOU.

THE BOY BECAME
AN INDENTURED
SERVANT IN THE
HOUSEHOLD OF
JUDGE ANTHONY
WINSTON. AND
PEOPLE BEGAN
TO CALL HIM
PETER FRANCISCO.

PETER GOT
A SIMPLE
EDUCATION
— AND A LOT
OF WORK.



JUDGE WINSTON
ALSO HAD HIM
LEARN HOW TO
DO THE HEAVY
WORK OF A
BLACKSMITH.



WITH THE PHYSICAL WORK
IN THE HOT FORGE AND A
HOME OF PLENTIFUL FOOD,
PETER GREW INTO A BIG
MAN: 6 AND A HALF FEET!





PETER JOINED
THE PATRIOTS IN
THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION.
IN THE BATTLE
OF CAMDEN IN
1780, LEGEND
SAYS PETER
CARRIED OFF A
CANNON TO KEEP
IT FROM THE
BRITISH!

PETER WAS WOUNDED
IN THE BATTLE OF
GUILFORD COURT
HOUSE IN 1781 BUT KEPT
FIGHTING THAT DAY.

WHEN HE LATER MET
SOME BRITISH RAIDERS,
THE UNARMED PETER
GRABBED ONE OF
THEIR SWORDS AND
DROVE THE GROUP
OFF - KEEPING EIGHT
OF THEIR NINE
HORSES!

AFTER THE WAR WON AMERICA'S FREEDOM, HE RETURNED TO HIS WORK AS A BLACKSMITH. IN OLD AGE, PETER BECAME SERGEANT-AT-ARMS FOR THE VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES, WHICH HONORED HIM FOR HIS WAR SERVICE.



WHEN PETER DIED AT AGE 70 IN 1831, HE WAS GIVEN A STATE FUNERAL AND BURIED WITH MILITARY HONORS IN RICHMOND.

STUDY GUIDE **I2** PETER FRANCISCO, THE HERCULES OF INDEPENDENCE

Questions to Consider

1. What was the most important point of this chapter?
2. Peter Francisco was born in Portugal. Where is that in relation to your home?
3. He grew up in Hopewell. Where is that in relation to your home?
4. He took part in multiple battles outside Virginia. Where were those battles in relation to your home?
5. What are some ways you can become physically stronger?

Learn More

-  [“Peter Francisco: The Hercules of American independence,” by Randy Walker, Cardinal News](#)