

The Merchant's Map

Figure 1: A bustling Renaissance-era harbour in Genoa (or Florence's port at Pisa), teenagers in period clothing standing near wooden crates and rolled maps, tall trading ships.

Lucia's uncle unrolled a map on the dock at Pisa, the port that served Florence. "Genoa argues theirs is better," he laughed. "Every city-state competes for trade."

Her friend Marco pointed at a ship. "That captain sailed past Portugal, past places nobody here has seen."

"Trade brought silk, spices, and new ideas," Lucia said. "Painters study bodies like scientists now. Priests argue with astronomers about the stars."

Marco frowned. "My father says the old ways were fine."

"Times change," Lucia answered. "Where you live and when you're born shapes what you believe. Doesn't mean either of us is wrong."

Marco watched the ship shrink toward the horizon. "Maybe I'll ask that captain what he saw, instead of guessing."

Lucia smiled. "That's how new worldviews start."

Words to know

- **City-state:** An independent city that governs itself and its surrounding territory, like Florence or Venice.
- **Worldview:** The overall way a person or society understands life, based on beliefs and values.
- **Humanism:** A Renaissance way of thinking that focused on human ability, reason and achievement.
- **Age of Discovery:** The period when European explorers sailed to new regions, expanding trade and contact with other cultures.

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