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Cast of Characters

RAYMOND, A Young Man Digging Himself In, 14.

GRANDMA, An Old Lady Digging a Way Out, 50s-70s.

SACAGAWEA, A Young Woman on the Edge of History.

CAMEAHWAIT, Her Older Brother.

SACAGAWEA'S MOTHER

SACAGAWEA'S FATHER

HIDATSA MAN, A Potential Friend.

CHARBONNEAU, A Potential Husband, a French-Canadian
Trapper.

MERIWETHER LEWIS, A Man About to Change a Nation.

WILLIAM CLARK, Another Man About to Change a Nation.

YORK, A Slave Hoping the Nation is About to Change.

VARIOUS MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT TRIBES AND THE EX-
PEDITION.

Place

The Northwest Corner of the World.

Time

Today through 1799.

Production Notes

Sacagawea can be performed by 9-20 actors with a drummer and pianist, and/or with a group of musicians, extra cast members and native dancers.

Music from the original production is available; contact Play-scripts for details.

Acknowledgments

Sacagawea premiered at the Oregon Children's Theatre (Stan Foote, Artistic Director) in January, 2003. It was directed by Stan Foote, with Executive Musical Direction by Marv Ross, Musical Direction by Mel Kubic-Bondy, Music composed by Marv Ross, Mel Kubic-Bondy, Chenoa Egawa, and Phil Newman; Scenic Design by Curt Enderle, Lighting Design by Robert Peterson, Costume Design by Susan L. Bonde, Choreography by Rebecca Payne, Sound Design by Pete Plympton, Props by R. Dee, and Native American Consulting by Thomas Morning Owl. The cast was as follows:

RAYMOND..... Albert Little Bear Worthington
GRANDMA Karen Kitchen
SACAGAWEA..... Chenoa Turia Yoshe Egawa
CAMEAHWAIT Francisco Garcia
FATHER/HIDATSA MAN Cecil Cheeka
CHARBONNEAU..... Alan King
MERIWETHER LEWIS..... Brian Russell
WILLIAM CLARK Kevin Connell, S.J.
YORK Garfield Wedderburn
DANCERS..... Kyle Payne, Rebecca Payne,
David Spotted Eagle
THE TRAIL BAND Mick Doherty,
Gayle Neuman, Phil Neuman,
Eddie Parente, Dan Stueber

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

Sacagawea premiered at Oregon Children's Theatre, Portland, Oregon (Stan Foote, Artistic Director) in January, 2003.

Author's Note

These were the principal resources used in the creation of this play:

The Hidatsa by Mary Jane Schneider

Lewis and Clark Among the Indians by James P. Ronda

The Mandans by Emilie Lepthian

The Native Tribes of North America: A Concise Encyclopedia
by Michael Johnson

The Nez Perce by Alice Osinski

North American Indian Sign Language by Karen Liptak

The Shoshoni by Dennis B. Fradin

The Shoshone Indians by Nathaniel Moss

The Truth About Sacajawea by Kenneth Thomsma

*Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and
the Opening of the American West* by Stephen Ambrose

What Do We Know About the Plains Indians? by Dr. Colin
Taylor

SACAGAWEA

by Eric Coble
music by Marv Ross

(AT RISE: RAYMOND GEORGE sits alone in the dark on a comfy recliner, reading a book. He's a 12-year-old member of the River People tribes. Beside him sits a portable stereo, currently turned off.)

(Then faintly we hear a song—traditional Native American lyrics and rhythms...and on walks Raymond's GRANDMOTHER, sweeping and singing to herself.

RAYMOND sighs, shifting himself in his chair, still reading. She walks over, still singing, and cranks back the recliner lever, almost sending the BOY sprawling—his feet waving in the air. She never misses a beat—sweeping under his kicking feet:)

RAYMOND. Grandma!! What are you tryin' to do—give me whiplash?

GRANDMA. There's dust under your feet.

RAYMOND. Does it have to be cleaned now? I'm trying to read.

GRANDMA. You go ahead. I'll take care of the ground under you.

(She pushes the recliner lever and he snaps forward again—stumbling out of the chair.)

You don't have to stand up. Here, sit down. Read. What are you reading?

RAYMOND. Homework.

(He flops down, trying to get comfortable.)

About Louis XIV and his palace.

GRANDMA. Well, that is important.

RAYMOND. Did you ever study it?

GRANDMA. No. But maybe it's more important now than it used to be. You better read.

(He settles in. She resumes sweeping and singing.)

RAYMOND. Do you have to sing that song?

GRANDMA. No.

(She pauses, then starts a different Native American tune.)

RAYMOND *growls and reaches for his stereo, CRANKING the volume—a hip-hop song BLASTS on.*

He settles back in his chair. GRANDMA pauses... then starts moving to the music, a gentle dance to the rhythm.

RAYMOND *laughs and turns down the stereo.*

The music continues thumping quietly in the background.)

RAYMOND. Nice moves, Grandma. What is that—the Reservation Shuffle?

GRANDMA. Come over here. I'll teach you some steps.

(RAYMOND laughs.)

You think I don't remember? Come here.

RAYMOND. I got enough problems at school without dancin' like my grandma.

GRANDMA. What's wrong with that? I danced like my grandma.

RAYMOND. Yeah, but you were supposed to. I gotta live in the real world.

GRANDMA. You sayin' I'm not real?

(Pinching his ear.)

Does that feel real?

RAYMOND. Ow! No! I'm sayin' you're not modern. Dancing like you is not cool. It's not right.

(She looks at him.)

I mean, it's right for you, but not for us. You can live the old way, but I have to live right now. You know?

GRANDMA. You think you're the first kid to have to make that

choice?

RAYMOND. No, but the choice is harder now.

GRANDMA. Like you're standing in the middle of a huge river and you have to choose which side to build your home on.

(Pause.)

RAYMOND. Yeah.

GRANDMA. Why don't you dry your pants and build a bridge?

RAYMOND. Yeah. "Live in both worlds at once" and all that. It doesn't work. You just end up drowning.

GRANDMA. There was another child many years ago who saw both sides of the river. A lot of people tried to make her choose too.

RAYMOND. Let me guess. That little girl grew up to be... you.

GRANDMA. Don't be stupid. This girl lived 200 years ago. She'd never even heard of America. At least not when she started out. But you can't hide forever.

RAYMOND. Which side did she end up on?

GRANDMA. She didn't find a side. She found a circle.

RAYMOND. What?

GRANDMA. Where she ended up was where she started out. And where she started out... was here.

(She touches Raymond's heart and turns up the hip-hop music—the beat begins to transform... dissolving into complex drumming...)

(Native American drumming...)

(And chanting...)

(Growing louder... and louder...)

(Raymond's chair disappears. The stage itself begins to transform...)

(Into a huge open yellow prairie under a wide blue sky...)

(Drumming and chanting louder...)

(RAYMOND looks around in awe...)

(Drumming and chanting louder...)

(And silence.)

(Down Center stage is a young Native American GIRL, 14, in simple fur clothes, kneeling on the ground... and singing. A quiet simple tune...)

(The same tune GRANDMA was singing earlier.)

It was right before the 1800s, I guess. The Lemhi Shoshoni tribe lived out around Salmon River, out in Idaho. 'Cept they didn't know the word "Idaho" then. Nobody did. But they knew that Wolf and Muskrat created the world, and that Coyote had accidentally let people into it. Their people.

(The GIRL sings another verse.)

(RAYMOND draws close to her. She doesn't notice.)

RAYMOND. Wow. She looked good.

GRANDMA. All young girls are good looking. They just don't know it.

(A HOWL from offstage. A war-cry?)

(RAYMOND jumps—he turns to see a YOUNG SHOSHONI MAN race on—heading for the GIRL who doesn't move. With a final SHRIEK, he leaps in the air and crashes to the ground.)

(He lies face down in the dust.)

(The GIRL keeps on cleaning rabbit skins.)

(The BOY rolls over, gasping for breath.)

BOY. I made it... to the Bighorn Cliff...

GIRL. Good for you.

BOY. I didn't stop. Not once. All the way there and back.

GIRL. I heard Pocatello can run all the way to the sand ridge and back.

(Pause.)

BOY. What?

GIRL. Nothing. Someday maybe you'll make it that far too, huh.

BOY. Who cares how far he ran? Pocatello's two years older—

GIRL. I know.

BOY. And he cheats—he takes the shortcut down the creek, I've seen him—

GIRL. All I know is what I hear.

BOY. I'll do the Ridge tomorrow. Watch. Pocatello's gonna still be lookin' for his moccasins and I'll be there and back and eating breakfast. And you're gonna make it for me.

GIRL. Anything to help my big brother.

(Pulls a string from her belt.)

Hold out your hands.

BOY. Aw, no.

GIRL. Help me.

BOY. What if the other boys see me?

GIRL. I'll be done before you can blink. I have an idea for a new pattern.

(The BOY looks around... and holds out his hands as she proceeds to quickly wind the string back and forth in a "cat's cradle" game.)

BOY. If you can't make a basket by now, practicing isn't gonna help.

GIRL. I can always get better.

(She moves with amazing speed.)

BOY. You're good.

GIRL. Quiet.

BOY. Pocatello told you himself, didn't he? Next thing he'll be telling you he caught a falcon bare-handed and it's a sign you should marry him—

GIRL. Quiet!

BOY. *(Making kissing sounds:)* “Ooo, Pocatello, did you really catch a huge, dangerous falcon just for me, using nothing but those big strong muscles... between your ears?”

(She stops.)

GIRL. Cameahwait! You made me mess up!

BOY. I don't think Pocatello's gonna marry a girl who can't even make a basket.

(She cuffs him on the neck.)

(A man's voice calls from offstage:)

VOICE. Cameahwait? Cameahwait!!

BOY. Father!

(Trying to free his hands.)

Untie me. Quick!

GIRL. *(Smiling:)* Let me just finish cleaning this one fish...

BOY. Aannaaahhhh!!

(He charges off—smashing into a large Shoshoni man walking on. They look at each other:)

Sorry, father.

FATHER. If you could catch rabbits as easily as you caught your fingers, we might have a meal tonight.

(The BOY growls as the man laughs and walks off—the BOY following. Then he turns back.)

BOY. I'm gonna make you pay for this, Sacagawea. That's a promise.

(He starts to charge off... then RAYMOND freezes the action in mid-motion.)

RAYMOND. *(Moving forward.)* Sacagawea... Wait, wait, wait. Sacajawea? You didn't tell me the girl was Sacajawea! She's about to meet up with Lewis and Clark, right?

GRANDMA. *(Stepping forward to join him.)* For one thing her name

is Sa-kah-gah-way-ah, not Sack-a-ja-weeah. There are as many ways to say her name as there are legends about her life. But her family—her first family of many—called her Sacagawea. It means “Bird Woman.”

RAYMOND. Right, right, right. I’ve still heard “Bird Woman”’s story a hundred times.

(Calling out:)

Bring in the American explorers!

GRANDMA. No. This isn’t their story. Not this time. This is hers.

(Gently stroking the girl’s face.)

And she has no idea it’s about to start.

(The action unfreezes and the BOY runs offstage, his hands still tied. The GIRL, SACAGAWEA, turns to look at GRANDMA as the old woman pulls a blanket around herself, now acting as SACAGAWEA’S MOTHER.)

SACAGAWEA. Please, mother? Can I?

GRANDMA. What did I say?

SACAGAWEA. They asked Cameahwait—can’t I go too?

GRANDMA. He’s a boy, about to become a man—of course they want him—

SACAGAWEA. And I’m about to become a woman—

GRANDMA. Ha. Have you had your ceremony yet? Have you got a husband yet?

SACAGAWEA. I’m not asking to get married. I’m asking to go on a Buffalo hunt.

GRANDMA. Next year.

SACAGAWEA. You always say “next year.”

GRANDMA. And every year I mean it!

(Taking the GIRL by the arm.)

Look outside. Close your eyes and look!

(SACAGAWEA pauses, eyes closed.)

What does the air say?

SACAGAWEA. Winter's coming. Fast this year.

GRANDMA. And?

SACAGAWEA. And that's why they need my help with the buffalo—

GRANDMA. And that's why I need you here! We have to prepare the rabbit fur—finish the new moccasins—

SACAGAWEA. Mother, I've learned all I can here. You've taught me well, all the women have... now let me take that learning out and use it. Please.

GRANDMA. When you leave the tribe and go out into the world, you become the tribe's eyes and ears and mouth and hands. Everything you see, everything you touch and learn becomes a new part of the people as sure as if all of us were right there living it with you. You make our people stronger and wiser, and you have to do it with an open heart and a clear mind. That's a lot to ask of a little girl.

SACAGAWEA. Look at me, mother. Really look at me. I'm not so little anymore. I'm ready to help our people see things they never saw.

(Pause. They look at each other.)

I might even come home with something new to teach your grandchildren.

(The OLD WOMAN pauses a moment longer...)

GRANDMA. You're gonna need warmer clothes.

(SACAGAWEA kisses her and begins charging around collecting traveling materials.)

SACAGAWEA. I've got furs. My baskets are ready—

GRANDMA. You remember how to make pemmican—

SACAGAWEA. Dry the meat, grind it, mix it with berries and fat—

GRANDMA. What about medicines? What if you get sick?

SACAGAWEA. Cedar pitch for cuts—

GRANDMA. Use the grapes—

SACAGAWEA. Eye problems, I know—

GRANDMA. For—

SACAGAWEA. Stomach pains, snakeweed, I know.

(Kissing her MOTHER as she passes her again.)

I told you I was listening all those times.

(And she charges off and on again, still packing, like a kid going on a sleep-over.)

GRANDMA. You don't know half of what you think you do!

(CAMEAHWAIT runs on.)

CAMEAHWAIT. I can't believe you're letting her come with us!

GRANDMA. She knows more than you think she does. You're going to need her. She's been listening all this time, not like my son.

CAMEAHWAIT. What did you say?

GRANDMA. This is hopeless. I'm losing all my children in one day—one hour and they're gone—

CAMEAHWAIT. And they'll be back with enough buffalo meat to last the winter!

GRANDMA. *(Stops both children, holding them:)* Stop. Listen. This is serious. You're going east—

CAMEAHWAIT. To the Three Forks, I know—

GRANDMA. Those lands where the buffalo graze... something else grazes with them.

SACAGAWEA. What.

GRANDMA. The Hidatsa tribe.

CAMEAHWAIT. We know. If any of the Hidatsa want to fight over our catch... they'll have to go through me!

GRANDMA. Brave. Very brave words from a pup.

CAMEAHWAIT. I'm no—

GRANDMA. You are.

(To SACAGAWEA:)

And so are you. But you're my pups. And if you got killed or captured... You just take care of each other. Keep watching with your eyes closed. All the time. All the time.

(She stomps her foot in rhythm.)

And keep this drumming in here.

(She touches their chests, stomping again in rhythm.)

The music will always lead you home. Always.

(SACAGAWEA and CAMEAHWAIT grin and stomp with her. Their footsteps blend with real drumming.)

(A prayer for a good hunt.)

(She holds them a moment longer...)

(And lets them go.)

(The drumming continues.)

(The two Shoshoni CHILDREN rush away as GRANDMA removes her blanket and comes to stand beside the watching RAYMOND.)

(Drumming continues.)

(A blur of movement—)

(Silhouettes with spears and baskets move past—sounds of horses hooves...)

(More drumming and chanting...)

(An eager, joyful atmosphere.)

(SACAGAWEA is moved with the crowd, watching, chanting,

hugging her brother goodbye and spinning into one corner of the stage.)

(Two Other WOMEN are in other areas.)

(The music stops.)

(The WOMEN begin bending for food and tools on the ground, scooping and dropping them in their baskets.)

GRANDMA. The women picked berries and caught grasshoppers. They made the camp. The men went out on horses looking for buffalo. Young men on the fastest proudest animals hunting a thousand-footed thunderstorm on the prairie. Circling the animals, hurling arrows and spears they'd spent months bringing to a point—racing alongside the beasts as the cliff came into view, pulling away at the last possible moment as the buffalo fall to the rocks and hunters below. Either the buffalo or the tribe would eat that winter. Not both. And the women made camp. The tipis ready to shelter, the fire ready to warm, medicines ready to cure. The women made camp. Sacagawea made camp. But on this day, this clear cold day in Fall... the men hunted thunderstorms... and other men hunted their women.

(Drumbeat begins.)

A war party from the Hidatsa. They saw an enemy tribe coming onto their lands, hunting their animals... and they attacked.

(One WOMAN SCREAMS—SACAGAWEA and the other WOMAN turn...CAMEAHWAIT charges on.)

CAMEAHWAIT. Hidatsa! Run! Run!!

(He grabs for SACAGAWEA—they turn to flee...)

(Drumming louder...)

(The scream of horses offstage—the way is blocked...)

(SACAGAWEA and CAMEAHWAIT run in another direction...)

(The sky going blood-red above them...)

(More yells and screams...)

(Drumming harder...)

SACAGAWEA. Cameahwait!!

CAMEAHWAIT. Sacagawea—

(They're separated.)

(RAYMOND breaks free from his grandmother—tries to help SACAGAWEA escape...)

(Drumming harder...)

(Spears from all directions...)

(Horses wailing...)

(Thundering hoofbeats...)

(A nightmare... Chaos...)

(SACAGAWEA and RAYMOND now separated...)

(She's trapped in a smaller and smaller space...)

(Drums echoing off the walls...)

(She falls... Silence.)

(A trembling RAYMOND holds his GRANDMOTHER, crouched to one side.)

(SACAGAWEA doesn't move.)

RAYMOND. What... what happened?

GRANDMA. Shoshoni lives were lost that day. Some died. Some were captured. Four boys and a few girls were taken back to a Hidatsa village.

(SACAGAWEA pulls herself to her knees.)

Sacagawea was one of them.

(SACAGAWEA quietly tries to sing her song again... barely getting the words out... as the sky clears behind her.)

(Another drumming begins in the background—a different rhythm though—a foreign language.)

(NEW PEOPLE begin to drift onstage in different clothes—a new tribe. They walk around this new GIRL giving her suspicious—but

not hostile—looks, singing and chanting as they go. Several build a fire in one area.)

(SACAGAWEA tries to stand, closing her eyes, trying to maintain her song against the growing chorus around her. She's getting lost, forgetting the words and rhythms.)

(The new music is overpowering.)

(She falters... and stops.)

(An OLDER HIDATSA MAN walks up to her as all singing stops.)

HIDATSA MAN. Are you all right?

SACAGAWEA. I can't remember the words.

HIDATSA MAN. What?

SACAGAWEA. The... your music—your words—are too different here.

HIDATSA MAN. You should not have come onto our land.

SACAGAWEA. That land's ours as much as yours. The animals belong to no one but the Great Spirit.

HIDATSA MAN. Maybe. But you belong to the Hidatsa now. You do what we say.

SACAGAWEA. Where's my brother?

HIDATSA MAN. I haven't seen any Shoshoni boys. I think all of you are in different villages.

SACAGAWEA. He might not have been caught. He was running for the trees—

HIDATSA MAN. *(Handing her a bag of grain.)* Make yourself useful. Grind this.

SACAGAWEA. What is it?

HIDATSA MAN. It's white corn. You grind it and mix it with fat to make cornballs. Or in the stew or roasted—

SACAGAWEA. Where do you get it?

HIDATSA MAN. Those fields over there. Where the children play. We grow it.

SACAGAWEA. And you just leave it when you move?

HIDATSA MAN. We don't move.

SACAGAWEA. You have to. With the seasons, following the fish and buffalo—

HIDATSA MAN. Look at those houses—mud and logs. You can't move those. We stay here.

SACAGAWEA. But... don't you feel trapped? I'd die if I had to live in one place my entire life—

HIDATSA MAN. And we'd go crazy if we had to keep moving every week just to stay alive! Just grind the corn!

SACAGAWEA. *(Starts grinding the corn on a stone:)* How come you understand me? Where'd you learn Shoshoni?

HIDATSA MAN. I get around more than most people. Speak a lot of different languages. Shoshoni, Mandan, Crow. If you're smart you'll start learning too.

SACAGAWEA. Who cares, as long as I grind the stupid corn into stupid balls, who cares what I say?

HIDATSA MAN. Listen. Listen to this. Right now you are worth nothing. You learn our ways, our language, get some kind of value... your life will be a lot better and a lot longer. For someone who likes to move, you don't know very much.

SACAGAWEA. I do too.

HIDATSA MAN. You ever see the ocean?

SACAGAWEA. The what?

HIDATSA MAN. The water beyond the mountains. It's bigger than all the land you'll ever see. And it tastes like salt. The people who live there got me these—

(He holds out his necklace.)

SACAGAWEA. What are these?

HIDATSA MAN. Bones from a whale. A great sea monster bigger than ten buffaloes. But you wouldn't have seen one those either. Bet you never even seen a white man.

SACAGAWEA. I have too. My grandparents saw ghosts all the time.

HIDATSA MAN. *(Laughing.)* Not ghosts. White men. They're like us, but really pale. They move through here all the time, trading and hunting. You live in the world long enough, you'll see things you could never dream of.

(SACAGAWEA tastes the white corn.)

SACAGAWEA. This is good. I think I like corn.

HIDATSA MAN. *(Grins.)* Welcome to the world.

(The Hidatsa rhythm begins again.)

(Lights shift as SACAGAWEA listens. The man leaves. She begins feeling the beat—trying out some of the phrases.)

(And she stands, carrying the corn to a group of women who practice bouncing a small leather ball on their feet—counting the number of bounces and trying to outdo each other as they sing...)

(They look at SACAGAWEA... one tosses her the ball—she tries and fails to kick it. They laugh and welcome her to try again.)

(More music flowing...)

(SACAGAWEA getting more of it—looking older and more confident—perhaps incorporating some of her own words and tune into the larger one around her:)

(Then a new strain can be heard...)

(The sounds of FRENCH-CANADIAN MUSIC.)

(SACAGAWEA stops, even as village life continues on.)

(She turns... to see a large white man in a big beard and furs walk on wearing a huge backpack, trading with the townspeople and singing.)

(This is TOUSSAINT CHARBONNEAU.)

(SACAGAWEA backs up nervously.)

(The HIDATSA MAN enters behind her.)

CHARBONNEAU. *(Singing:)*

I'm the big dog with the big jaw,
Le Grand Chien... Charbonneau!

I'm a Frenchman from the North land,
Le Grand Chien... Charbonneau!

I'm a trapper, a trader, a mountain man, a scout,
And I'm here to make a big deal, bring your best trade goods out—

HIDATSA MAN. Told you they were white.

SACAGAWEA. Is he not eating right?

HIDATSA MAN. They're born that way. They can't help it.

SACAGAWEA. I can't understand anything he's saying.

HIDATSA MAN. He's speaking what they call "French." I think.
I've seen him around—he speaks Hidatsa too.

CHARBONNEAU. *(Singing:)*

You like this belt? Three pelts... it's yours.
Aren't these beads nice? Your price? Ten furs.
You fancy this cleaver... five beaver...

(Seeing SACAGAWEA.)

...Or her...

SACAGAWEA. Is he always so loud?

CHARBONNEAU. *(Singing loudly:)*

I'm a trapper, a trader, a lover, and alone...
And I'm looking for a little wife,
The Big Dog needs a bone!

(Yelling and slapping HIDATSA on the back.)

Who's got some drink? I'm sweating like a skunk in a wolverine pit!

HIDATSA MAN. Smells like one too.

CHARBONNEAU. *(To SACAGAWEA:)* Bonjour, little flower. I'm
Toussaint Charbonneau. What's your name?

SACAGAWEA. ...Sacagawea.

CHARBONNEAU. Which of these lucky dogs is your husband?

SACAGAWEA. *(Hesitates.)* ...Nobody.

HIDATSA MAN. She's a Shoshoni. A captive. Been with us a few years now.

CHARBONNEAU. That so, that so?

(He gulps down an offered ladle of water.)

Well, that's mighty interesting, friends, 'cause let me tell you why I'm here. You all know me, right? A fair dealer, a good eye for a trade—I'm like a brother, right?

(He tightly hugs a HIDATSA MAN, who breaks free and keeps his distance.)

But even brothers get lonely. Am I right?

(They stare at him.)

What I'm saying is, as rich as I am, as well-loved, as admired for the savvy entrepreneur that I am—there's more to life than that, am I right?

(They stare at him. Someone giggles in the background.)

What I'm saying is that it's time for old Charbonneau to hitch himself to a new dogsled.

(Pause.)

To throw my bachelor boots into the river.

(Pause.)

I'm looking to take a wife.

CROWD. Aaah.

(They nod and smile, slaps on the back, laughs, then...)

HIDATSA MAN. There's nobody here who wants to marry you.

(Beat.)

CHARBONNEAU. Well, now, I did think of that possibility. Even with all my obvious charms, it takes time for a woman to ease into

love.

(Pulls out a beautiful fur from his bag.)

So I am prepared to buy a wife.

(The crowd reacts with surprise—immediate whispering.)

HIDATSA MAN. We don't sell our women.

CHARBONNEAU. How about captives? Do you sell prisoners of war?

(More whispering—some looks at SACAGAWEA.)

SACAGAWEA. No. No, no, no. I'm just settling in here—I've just learned the language, I've got new friends—I don't even know him—

CHARBONNEAU. I've got fifteen prize pelts. The best small animals—plus two mountain lions... and a full bear skin.

(The crowd reacts in awe, more fevered whispering.)

SACAGAWEA. *(To HIDATSA MAN:)* You can't trade me for animal skins! Please, if there's more work I can do here, I will—

(Another MAN steps forward from the crowd.)

HIDATSA MAN #2. You have a deal. Your furs and knife... for her.

(He points toward SACAGAWEA who looks like she's been hit.)

CHARBONNEAU. *(Reaching for her:)* Deal!

HIDATSA MAN #2. No, not her. *Her.*

(He points behind SACAGAWEA to the crowd. They step aside leaving another WOMAN standing in shock like she just won a dubious beauty pageant.)

Her name is Otter Woman. We captured her a year before Sacagawea. We'll trade for her.

CHARBONNEAU. *(Pauses.)* That's fine. I'll take her.

(OTTER WOMAN stands in shock.)

But I'll throw in two rifles if you give me this one too.

(He takes Sacagawea's arm.)

SACAGAWEA. No!

(The crowd whispers and nods.)

HIDATSA MAN #2. Five more pelts and three rifles.

(CHARBONNEAU winces... looks at SACAGAWEA, checks her out...)

CHARBONNEAU. Done. The wedding's tomorrow.

(The crowd cheers and moves off.)

(The first HIDATSA MAN and SACAGAWEA look at each other a few more moments...then she's pulled away by CHARBONNEAU, also dragging OTTER WOMAN.)

(A French-Canadian song floods over them as they start across the stage—SACAGAWEA gathering her belongings as quickly as possible.)

CHARBONNEAU. Welcome to the world, girls!

(He whisks them from place to place, never giving them time to get their bearings as the music unfolds.)

(The background turns deeper shades of green, then brown...RAYMOND and his GRANDMOTHER watch from one side.)

RAYMOND. You said Sacagawea built bridges between the worlds. Looks to me more like she's drowning in the river.

GRANDMA. She's still finding her feet. Feet she'll need for the longest journey of her life.

CHARBONNEAU. Wheee-ooo! Isn't this the life?

(He shoulders the women with large packs.)

You can carry more furs can't you, mes cheries? Come on!

(More travels back and forth to the music.)

SACAGAWEA. Can't we stay in any one village for more than a

week?

CHARBONNEAU. I want to make it down to the Knife River before winter. I hear the Hidatsa and Mandan villages there are good places to hole up during the snow.

(Another turn and walk.)

Besides, I hear tell there's a crew of English heading up the Missouri River—we might meet 'em there and make a profit. English will buy anything.

SACAGAWEA. How does that make them different from you?

CHARBONNEAU. They speak English! They're all proud of their new United States—you'll see.

SACAGAWEA. Please, can we rest—I need to tell you—

CHARBONNEAU. I hear the two leaders are called “Red Hair” and “Long Sword.”

(The music stops.)

(And on step MERIWETHER LEWIS and WILLIAM CLARK, in furs and leather. CLARK indeed has red hair. LEWIS wears a sword on his belt.)

(They all freeze and look at each other.)

(The background changes to one of clear white snow. A Mandan Village.)

You must be the English.

LEWIS. I'm Meriwether Lewis. This is William Clark. Representatives of the United States of America. And you must be... French.

CHARBONNEAU. Toussaint Charbonneau. At your disposal.

SACAGAWEA. What are they saying?

CHARBONNEAU. *(Quietly to SACAGAWEA:)* What did I tell you interrupting me when I'm talking business?

SACAGAWEA. I'm sorry. I guess I didn't know we were in business yet. Can I sit down?

(LEWIS and CLARK kneel with other HIDATSA MEN and WOMEN looking at a map drawn in the snow.)

CHARBONNEAU. Ah, gentlemen, these are my wives. My women. Thought you... might like to meet them. They're my wives.

LEWIS. Well. Good for you.

(He returns to discussing his map with the others.)

SACAGAWEA. Toussaint, please, is this a good time to—

CHARBONNEAU. (To LEWIS:) I, ah, I hear you're sailing up the Missouri.

CLARK. Not if we can't figure this map out, we're not.

LEWIS. We've got all winter to figure it out. Let's get some rest—

CHARBONNEAU. Seems to me you gentlemen will definitely need the skills of the world's greatest hunter and tracker on such a journey.

LEWIS. If you come across such a person, feel free to send him our—

CHARBONNEAU. He's already here, sir. You're looking at him.

LEWIS. I was afraid you were going to say that. Thank you, but—

SACAGAWEA. (To CHARBONNEAU:) What are they saying? They don't want you to come with them?

CHARBONNEAU. (To SACAGAWEA:) Do you speak the English here or do I?

LEWIS. We don't want you to come with us.

CHARBONNEAU. But—

CLARK. (To the HIDATSA CHIEF:) Which way is north? If I could even figure out which way was north on this map, maybe I could get somewhere—

LEWIS. Calm down, William—

SACAGAWEA. (To CHARBONNEAU:) Is he having trouble understanding the map?

HIDATSA CHIEF. *(Standing to leave:)* These white men, they don't even know how to read a map!

CLARK. What? What did he just say?

HIDATSA CHIEF. I can't even understand them—they can't understand me—

(SACAGAWEA steps over to look at the map in the snow.)

CHARBONNEAU. Did I mention I'm the world's greatest translator of Hidatsa?

CLARK. *(To the CHIEF:)* Is this the river? Or a hunting trail? Which way is north??

CHARBONNEAU. For a small fee, I can—

CLARK. How are we getting up the river when they can't explain where "up" is?

HIDATSA CHIEF. They're good people, but stupid—

CHARBONNEAU. I'm sure we can work out a deal—

LEWIS. *(Stopping everyone:)* Please! Not now!

(Pause.)

(SACAGAWEA speaks from the map.)

SACAGAWEA. This is what you call "north."

CLARK. What? What did she just say?

CHARBONNEAU. This is north—over here.

SACAGAWEA. This is sunrise over here and sunset over here. This is the river.

CLARK. Is this the river or a hunting trail?

SACAGAWEA. *(To CHARBONNEAU:)* Tell them this is the river.

CHARBONNEAU. *(To CLARK:)* This is the river.

SACAGAWEA. These are war routes.

CHARBONNEAU. These are war routes.

SACAGAWEA. *(To the CHIEF:)* Right?

HIDATSA CHIEF. Right. Isn't it clear?

CLARK. Now we're getting somewhere.

HIDATSA CHIEF. Why do they care about the river? Don't they know where the best hunting is?

CHARBONNEAU. *(To LEWIS:)* Told you I could be of help. Now about my fee—

CLARK. Who is this woman? What tribe is she?

CHARBONNEAU. My tribe. She's my wife. Her name is Sacagawea. She's my wife. I'm Charbonneau—

HIDATSA CHIEF. She's a good woman.

CLARK. This is a good woman to have around, Meriwether.

CHARBONNEAU. Of course, if you hire me as your interpreter and guide, she'd come along. She speaks Hidatsa, Shoshoni, French—

CLARK. We're heading into Shoshoni territory next spring. A translator of her skill—

CHARBONNEAU. Oh, we're skilled all right, and our fee is modest—

SACAGAWEA. *(To CHARBONNEAU:)* Are they talking about me?

CHARBONNEAU. About us. Let me handle this—

LEWIS. Mr. Charbonneau, this is not a little pleasure cruise we are undertaking. Next spring we're moving our group of thirty men over at least 2000 miles of land and water, on which foot of civilized man has never trodden.

CLARK. What he means is we're on a mission from President Jefferson to explore this country all the way to the Pacific. There are uncounted tribes to face and befriend, wild animals, rapids and mountains ahead of us—

CHARBONNEAU. Nothing I haven't seen before. Where do I sign on?

SACAGAWEA. Toussaint—

CHARBONNEAU. Will you shut up? They're about to hire us!

SACAGAWEA. All of us?

CHARBONNEAU. The two of us—keep quiet—

SACAGAWEA. The three of us.

CHARBONNEAU. Otter Woman can stay here—

SACAGAWEA. Not Otter Woman. Our baby.

(Pause.)

(CHARBONNEAU looks at her. She holds her belly.)

We're about to be parents.

LEWIS. What did she just say?

CHARBONNEAU. Um...

CLARK. Is she pregnant? Either she just said she's got an upset stomach or she's pregnant.

CHARBONNEAU. She's, ah... she's a little pregnant.

LEWIS. Oh, for heaven's sake.

CLARK. Then we can't take her—the wilderness is no place for a newborn.

CHARBONNEAU. But—

LEWIS. Absolutely not. Thank you for your offer.

SACAGAWEA. Are they saying they don't want us?

CHARBONNEAU. You. They don't want you.

(To LEWIS and CLARK:)

My services are still available—and I don't eat nearly as much as she does—

SACAGAWEA. Are they going west?

CHARBONNEAU. Yes, but—

SACAGAWEA. Back into Shoshoni territory?

CHARBONNEAU. Past it. To the great ocean, but—

SACAGAWEA. I want to go.

CHARBONNEAU. They're not—

SACAGAWEA. I'm not going to have another chance to go, am I? You're not ever going there. This is the time—

CHARBONNEAU. Look, they don't want you! They don't want you, they don't want your stupid baby—

SACAGAWEA. I don't care what they want. I want my baby to see the land of his mother and grandmother and his great— grand-mother. The land created by Wolf and Muskrat. If this is our only way of getting there... then I'm going with them.

CHARBONNEAU. What do you care? You never said anything about wanting to go “home” before—you don't even know where your real “home” is!

SACAGAWEA. Does the salmon know where she's going when she's fighting her way upstream to have her children? She just knows she has to get home. My child has to get home.

(To LEWIS and CLARK:)

I can go.

CLARK. What?

LEWIS. What did she say?

SACAGAWEA. You need me. I need to make this journey.

CHARBONNEAU. She says she can do it. That you'll need her.

SACAGAWEA. I'll take care of the child. I'll take care of my husband and everyone on your boats if I have to. I'm strong enough, wise enough, I'm old enough and if you can't see that then your “United States” will never spread past this camp without withering and dying like corn in the first blast of winter.

(Pause.)

CHARBONNEAU. She, ah, she says she's sure she can make it.

LEWIS. She sounds convinced.

CLARK. If she's got that kind of spirit—

LEWIS. She'll be the only woman in the crew of the Corps of Discovery—

CHARBONNEAU. That's no matter to her. As long as she's got me she's as happy as a bear in a bee's nest.

LEWIS. Then may I offer you a gentlemen's agreement: Mister Charbonneau—accompanied by his wife...

SACAGAWEA. Sacagawea.

LEWIS. ...Sacagawea—shall be hired by the United States of America government, she as an interpreter and he as a guide on our fateful expedition.

(They shake on it. SACAGAWEA grins shyly, holding her belly.)

CLARK. We launch in April!!

(Music swells and the stage turns into a small ship with a large sail.

Clear spring sunlight floods the stage as CREWMEN race back and forth loading supplies and making ready to start upriver—singing an English/American worksong.)

CHARBONNEAU. *(Singing:)*

Was you ever in Quebec launching timber on the deck,
Where you'd break your bleedin' neck, ridin' on a donkey!

ALL. *(Singing:)*

Way, hey, and away we go, Donkey riding, donkey riding,
Way, hey, and away we go, riding on a donkey!

(An African-American man, YORK, carries a large box.)

YORK. Was you ever in O-Hi-O? Where them gals put on a show,
Waggle and wiggle with a roll and go, riding on a donkey!

ALL. *(Singing:)*

Way, hey, and away we go, Donkey riding, donkey riding,
Way, hey, and away we go, riding on a donkey!

CLARK. *(Yelling out to a crewman:)* Get those seeds and clothes onto the keelboat! Careful with the pottery!

(YORK pauses with his crate next to CLARK.)

YORK. Why are we takin' Indian stuff with us, Mister Clark?

CLARK. It's not going with us, York. It's going back to St. Louis—all the items we've collected in our journey so far. I'm sure the President will be delighted to see them.

YORK. Yeah, 'specially all 26 pieces of that one bowl—

CLARK. What?

YORK. Jokin', sir, joke.

(And he's gone as the flurry of action and music continues.)

CREWMAN #1. *(Singing:)*

Was you ever in old Saint Joe where them yanks wear coon cha-
peaus

And the gals dance heel-to-toe, riding on a donkey!

ALL. *(Singing:)*

Way, hey, and away we go, Donkey riding, donkey riding,

Way, hey, and away we go, riding on a donkey!

(SACAGAWEA enters with a newborn in a bundle:)

CLARK. Ah! Here she is! We're about to set sail, little lady... and the youngest member of our crew, eh?

SACAGAWEA. *(Pointing to her child.)* Jean Baptiste.

CLARK. What?

SACAGAWEA. His name is Jean Baptiste. Toussaint named him. He's only two months old—

CLARK. Can't understand a word you're saying. But he's a cute little pomp.

SACAGAWEA. *(Offering the baby to CLARK:)* Would you like to hold him?

(CLARK hesitates, takes the bundle awkwardly as LEWIS walks by with a stack of books:)

CLARK. Look, Meriwether, Sacagawea's baby! Darling, isn't he?

LEWIS. *(Hesitates:)* I don't... I'm not terribly good with children, I'm afraid.

CLARK. No work really. Just admire them and hand them back to the women as quickly as possible.

(He hands LEWIS the BABY who instantly cries. CLARK hurries off.)

LEWIS. Oh... oh dear... is he... he isn't going to spit on me now, is he?

(Quickly handing the BABY back to the laughing SACAGAWEA.)

Where's that husband of yours?

SACAGAWEA. What?

LEWIS. Husband? Charbonneau. The thick-skulled Frenchman—

(CHARBONNEAU stumbles on with several heavy packs.)

CHARBONNEAU. Did someone call my name? Ah, I see you've met my son.

LEWIS. You best be getting aboard. We set sail in ten minutes!

(And LEWIS leaves.)

(SACAGAWEA hugs OTTER WOMAN goodbye—CHARBONNEAU gives her a kiss, then helps SACAGAWEA and the baby onto the boat... but then hesitates...)

SACAGAWEA. Come on, Toussaint. We need to get settled.

(CHARBONNEAU doesn't move.)

Toussaint?

(CLARK walks back on.)

CLARK. What's the matter, Charbonneau? Get on.

CHARBONNEAU. I'm just not easy in the water, that's all—

CLARK. You're afraid of the water?

CHARBONNEAU. Not afraid! I can swim. A little. And I take baths.

SACAGAWEA. He does take baths. Once a month whether he needs it or not.

CLARK. Very few of our men can swim, but we're still exploring the *Missouri River*, Charbonneau. How could you sign up for a river expedition if you're afraid of the water?

CHARBONNEAU. I'm not afraid!

(He steps onto the boat, immediately wobbles, almost goes over the edge, but SACAGAWEA catches his arm:)

You see? Set sail! The greatest sea-dog east of the Rockies is aboard!

(CLARK laughs and walks off as other crewmen continue loading, singing:)

CREWMAN #2. *(Singing:)*

Were you ever in New Orleans where them gals all spark and sing,
See them dancing with a tamborine, riding on a donkey!

ALL. *(Singing:)*

Way, hey, and away we go, Donkey riding, donkey riding,
Way, hey, and away we go, riding on a donkey!

(YORK jumps aboard and prepares to raise the sail. He almost bumps into SACAGAWEA, who flinches back:)

YORK. Sorry, ma'am. Gotta raise this sail.

SACAGAWEA. *(Pointing:)* Your skin...

YORK. Huh? Oh, the color. Yeah. Here. Touch my face. Come on, touch it. Come on.

(He gently guides her hand to his face and rubs it over his cheek.)

CHARBONNEAU. Here, here, that's my wiiii—

(He stands and almost loses his footing again.)

YORK. *(To SACAGAWEA as he starts raising the sail:)* The color don't come off. Every village we come to I get Indians rubbing my skin to see the paint come off. But this ain't no paint. This is all God

and my mama saw fit to give me. I'm York.

SACAGAWEA. I don't... you speak too fast...

YORK. *(Pointing to himself:)* York.

SACAGAWEA. York.

(Pointing to herself.)

Sacagawea.

(Holding up her baby.)

Jean Baptiste.

YORK. Pleased to meet you. I think you and me got more in common than you know.

SACAGAWEA. ...What?

CLARK. *(Calling out:)* York, haven't you hoisted that sail yet?

YORK. Just on it, Master Clark.

(To SACAGAWEA:)

There's a lot of white folks ready to tell us what we can and can't do, am I right? You look around at who's givin' the orders on this trip. Your man, my men. You and me may die explorin' this country, but they're the ones gonna get to live in it.

LEWIS. York!

YORK. Comin', sir!

(To SACAGAWEA:)

Us nobody's gotta look out for each other, right?

SACAGAWEA. *(Pauses, not understanding much of this:)* ...Yes.

YORK. That's my girl. And you got a beautiful baby.

(Tickling the child:)

Ain't you beautiful? Ain't you beautiful?

LEWIS. *(Climbing on with his books:)* York! Clark needs you on the third canoe!

YORK. Yes, sir, right away, sir.

(He leaps to land and charges off:)

LEWIS. Charbonneau, open those cases.

CHARBONNEAU. What do I look like? A servant?

LEWIS. You look like a crewman on our ship. I'm Captain here, and I'm telling you to open those cases!

(CHARBONNEAU grudgingly opens the cases on the deck:)

CHARBONNEAU. What do you need to hide in there? Your precious little books?

LEWIS. These, sir, are the most valuable items on this boat. More precious than your life or mine. They are Captain Clark's and my journals. Everything we've seen, every tribe we've met, every plant, every animal, every hour of every day in this new world is in these books! We must guard them with our lives.

(Putting the books carefully into the cases:)

If anyone is going to remember the name Charbonneau one hundred years from now, it will be because of these journals.

CHARBONNEAU. You hear that, Sacagawea? Your name's gonna live forever.

SACAGAWEA. I just want to live long enough to see the ocean.

CLARK. *(Yelling out:)* All away?

LEWIS. All away!

CLARK. Then farewell, Fort Mandan—greetings to the New World!!

(And the sail blows huge in the wind—the water rises and we're sailing as triumphant joyful music engulfs the travelers.)

SACAGAWEA stands with her baby for a better view. CHARBONNEAU pulls her down.

The journey has begun.)

ALL. *(Singing:)*

Way, hey, and away we go, Donkey riding, donkey riding,
Way, hey, and away we go, riding on a donkey! Way, hey, and
away we go, Donkey riding, donkey riding,
Way, hey, and away we go, riding on a donkey!!

(The singing stops and immediately transforms into Sacagawea's lullabye to her BABY.)

(As the sun sets and shadows grow long, various crewmen climb on and off the boat.)

(SACAGAWEA puts the BABY in a wooden backpack, singing, and climbs off as well.)

(LEWIS, holding a rifle, climbs down beside her:)

LEWIS. What are you doing?

SACAGAWEA. Getting food.

(She picks up a sharp stick and starts digging:)

LEWIS. You don't have to do that. We still have buffalo meat on board. Besides, there's no food here. Only driftwood.

SACAGAWEA. Mice hide roots around here. You can always...

(Pulling out plants:)

...tell. See? It's good to eat. Try some.

LEWIS. *(Hesitates, takes a bite:)* Mmm. Like a wild artichoke.

SACAGAWEA. You need fruits and roots to go with your buffalo meat. Else your stomach cramps up.

LEWIS. Wait. Wait, let me write this down—Charbonneau? I need you to translate for me—

(CHARBONNEAU leans over the side of the boat, looking ill:)

CHARBONNEAU. I'm coming. The waves... seem to still be... getting to me...

YORK. The greatest sea-dog seems to be the greatest sick dog.

(The American music starts back up, the journey continues.)

(Lights shift.)

(CHARBONNEAU *climbs off the boat to walk along with SACAGAWEA and the crew—scouting campsites, finding food as they move...*)

(*They begin swatting themselves.*)

CLARK. Are there this many mosquitoes all the way from here to the ocean?

CHARBONNEAU. They're eatin' me alive, that's no lie.

SACAGAWEA. (*Pointing to LEWIS' hand:*) You have one on your hand.

LEWIS. Don't swat it! It's the first perfect one I've gotten—I'm trying... to describe it in my journal...

YORK. Gonna be hard to write anything when you ain't got no blood left.

(*The music continues. Lights shift again.*)

(*We get a sense of the daily routine—the grind of mile to mile travel...*)

(*CLARK steps forward from the crowd.*)

CLARK. No Indians here.

LEWIS. But I count 126 scorch marks. That makes 126 fires in 126 tipis—that's a lot of Indians who suddenly moved on.

CLARK. Probably saw us coming?

LEWIS. Like the one hundred already abandoned lodges back up there. Where are they all going?

CLARK. Think it could be a trap?

LEWIS. Only if it's the Assiniboins. From what I've seen, we don't want to meet them—

CLARK. (*Grabs up something.*) One person here might know who we're dealing with.

(*Calling out:*)

Sacagawea!

LEWIS. She doesn't know much of anything—she can't even tell us if we're getting close to the Shoshoni—I don't know why we brought her and that baby along—

(SACAGAWEA approaches.)

CLARK. These moccasins. What tribe?

(She examines them:)

Assiniboins? Shoshoni?

SACAGAWEA. *(Shakes her head “no”:)* These are Atsinas moccasins. See the bead work?

CLARK. *(To LEWIS:)* Atsinas. There you are. I think she has her uses.

(The wind blows over them as SACAGAWEA and CHARBONNEAU get on the boat with several other crewmen.)

(LEWIS and CLARK continue to walk the shore.)

(The wind picks up...)

(The boat rocks unsteadily...)

(A drumbeat begins.)

(CREWMAN #1 stands, fighting with the sail in the wind:)

CREWMAN #1. *(To CHARBONNEAU:)* This wind is too much—I have to signal the captain we're pulling ashore—take the sail!

CHARBONNEAU. But I'm not—

CREWMAN #1. Just hold her steady!

(He shoves the rope into Charbonneau's hands, and moves for the back of the boat.)

(Drumbeat increases.)

(SACAGAWEA is nursing her baby...)

(A huge gust of wind ROARS over them...)

(CHARBONNEAU panics—turning the sail broadside into the wind...)

SACAGAWEA. No!

(Everything seems to move into slow motion, except SACAGAWEA...)

(The wind rips the rope from Charbonneau's hands...)

(The boat rolls on its side...)

(All scramble to hang on as water FLOODS in over them...)

(LEWIS and CLARK turn from the shore—screaming silently over the wind...)

(Drumbeat increases...)

(The oarsmen dig in their oars to keep the boat from completely going over...)

LEWIS. Clark! The journals! They're sinking—

(SACAGAWEA keeps moving—getting her baby on her back—sees the precious supplies washing away...)

(We may begin to hear the baby crying...)

(Crewman #1 rips a cord to bring down the sail...)

(All are panicking...)

(CHARBONNEAU is frozen...)

(Drumbeat increases...)

(The crew is bailing water—others rowing madly for shore—all in slow motion...)

(Nobody's trying to save the supplies of medicine, compasses... and the journals—all sinking fast...)

(SACAGAWEA acts without thinking—leaning over the edge to grab items—pulling them from the water and shoving them to dry space above her on the still tipping boat...)

(She's almost out of the boat... hanging on with one hand, using the other to grab supplies...)

(And the boat settles right, running aground:)

(Full noise and movement resume—LEWIS and CLARK scam-

bling on to the ship—men bailing water...)

(CHARBONNEAU stumbles off onto shore, in shock.)

(LEWIS pulls SACAGAWEA back onto the boat as the wind begins to die down:)

(The men climb ashore—gathering around a hastily-built fire as darkness falls—clapping each other on the back and marveling at their good fortune.)

(CHARBONNEAU simply stares.)

(SACAGAWEA tries to comfort her baby.)

(Men spread out supplies to dry:)

GRANDMA. *(To RAYMOND:)* She did it. She knew if they lost those bundles of medicine, tools... and those journals—that this whole mission might be doomed. And she saved them. She wasn't thinking only of herself or her baby or her old tribe—though all those things were in her, made her act—but at that moment she was a part of that crew. And she acted like it.

LEWIS. *(To CREW:)* I think we could all use a little relaxation, don't you? Break open the spirits, Cruzatte.

(CREWMAN #1 opens a bottle and pours a bit into several cups. SACAGAWEA takes a cup, smells it, and hands it back.)

(CHARBONNEAU continues to sit alone in his blanket.)

CLARK. Here's to "Janey" and little baby "Pomp" and their calm under pressure—

CHARBONNEAU. What'd you call them?

CLARK. Janey and Pomp. Nicknames, Charbonneau. You can't expect us to keep calling out "Sacagawea" and "Jean Baptiste" all the time, can you? Quite a mouthful.

(CHARBONNEAU growls and pulls the blanket tighter around himself:)

LEWIS. Never mind him. Here's to the rest of the crew of the Corps of Discovery! The bravest, fastest-thinking men... and woman... to grace this new nation!

(The crew raise a toast and cheer.)

(SACAGAWEA smiles, rocking her baby:)

And here's to the United States herself, on her 29th birthday—as her greatness continues to grow and grow with every mile that we explore! Happy Fourth of July, everyone!

(They cheer again and one crewman pulls out a fiddle and begins to play. Others join in, clapping and passing food and drink around the glowing fire.)

(SACAGAWEA approaches CHARBONNEAU, reaches out to touch the shivering man off on his own. He pulls away. She tries again and he SHOVES her away, storming off to a far corner of the stage away from the celebration.)

(She sits in pained shock...)

(Then YORK walks over and helps her up—brings her back to the small celebration.)

(Two crewmen are dancing, and YORK joins them, others clapping.)

(They invite SACAGAWEA to join in the dance... She laughs, hesitates... almost tries the steps... then bows out, sweetly rejecting other offers, choosing to clap as the other men dance.)

(LEWIS and CLARK also refuse to dance, huddling together with their journals instead.)

RAYMOND. *(Stepping forward:)* Why doesn't she dance? She wants to.

GRANDMA. No. That moment on the boat, she was one of them. But now she's had time to think. She's right back here with you—which world does she belong to?

RAYMOND. I would've danced.

GRANDMA. Give her time. Give her time.

(The music lifts to a gleeful finale, and all applaud as stars appear overhead like fireworks for the Fourth of July:)

(The men disperse, settling into a routine of hard labor—waist deep in cold water, walking on jagged rocks—to a slow steady beat.)

(They begin to look exhausted...)

(CLARK and LEWIS come to the foreground, scanning the horizon...)

(And the stars themselves dissolve into something huge, majestic...)

CLARK. The Rocky Mountains. Have you ever seen such beauty?

LEWIS. Have you ever seen such an impossible thing to cross? If we don't find the Shoshoni and get horses from them, we'll never make it over those mountains before winter—we'll all freeze—

CHARBONNEAU. *(Hobbling up beside them:)* If my feet were frozen at least I wouldn't feel every sharp rock and prickly pear—my moccasins are torn clean through—

(SACAGAWEA steps forward on another part of the stage, looking into the distance:)

SACAGAWEA. There. Those rocks above the valley. That's Beaver's Head.

(The three men stagger over to her:)

CHARBONNEAU. She recognizes those rocks—she does!

LEWIS. Is she sure?

SACAGAWEA. The rocks are shaped like the head of a beaver. Do you see it?

CHARBONNEAU. I see it.

CLARK. I see it.

LEWIS. We see it! She knows where we are!

SACAGAWEA. We're close to the three forks of the great river. My people hunt here.

CLARK. *(Yelling back to the crew:)* We're close to the source of the Missouri, men! We'll have horses any day now!

(A cheer from the crew—a flurry of activity.)

(CHARBONNEAU kisses SACAGAWEA and starts off.)

(She continues to stand, holding her baby, looking out at her old

land...)

SACAGAWEA. This is where it happened.

CHARBONNEAU. What?

SACAGAWEA. This clearing. Five years ago. This is where the Hidatsa captured me. We hid in those trees—they came after us...

(We hear a faint echo of the drums, horses and screams of her earlier capture:)

My brother, my friends... If I hadn't been here that day... my whole life would be different.

CHARBONNEAU. Then I, for one, am glad you were here.

(He kisses her again and hobbles off.)

CLARK. *(To LEWIS, watching SACAGAWEA:)* What must that feel like? To see the place where your whole life changed?

(SACAGAWEA just stares, showing no emotion, taking it all in—lost in thought.)

LEWIS. She doesn't care. Look at her. She's happy wherever she is. As long as she has enough to eat and a few trinkets, she's perfectly content.

(They go back to work moving the ship:)

SACAGAWEA. *(Stares, nods to herself... and points:)* That way. If you follow that path, you'll save two days travel time.

CLARK. You heard her, men. The path to the right!

(SACAGAWEA walks with them as they struggle along, moving as if she's in a dream...)

(LEWIS steps forward.)

LEWIS. I'm taking three men and scouting ahead.

CLARK. I'm not so sure—

LEWIS. We can move faster, William. Besides, it just may be that our great band of thirty loud men may be scaring off any Indians before we ever see them. Let me go ahead. I'll leave notes along the

trail saying which way we've gone. We'll meet again when I've got horses!

(And he's off with a few crewmen:)

(Lights shift. SACAGAWEA slows her pace, looking fatigued.)

(CHARBONNEAU staggers up to CLARK:)

CHARBONNEAU. Sir, I hate to be the bearer of bad news—

CLARK. Of course you do.

CHARBONNEAU. Our canoes are overturning. The tow ropes are breaking—

CLARK. I know.

CHARBONNEAU. You, yourself, sir, and Mr. Whitehouse are injured—our trade goods and powder and medicine are wet and damaged—

CLARK. And is any of this going to improve by your constant moaning about it?

CHARBONNEAU. Somebody's got to tell the God's honest truth, sir! We can't go on like this!

CLARK. Are you suggesting we turn back? We tuck our tails between our legs and run for Virginia? And are you going to be the one to face President Jefferson and tell him we were wet and cold and tired and so we came crying home??

SACAGAWEA. Listen.

(They stop.)

(A low rumble in the distance.)

YORK. Perfect. Now it's gonna rain on us.

CHARBONNEAU. That's hoofbeats.

CLARK. A lot of hoofbeats. Horses approaching—get ready!

(And on charge LEWIS and his men.)

LEWIS. Clark! We found them—Shoshoni—sixty warriors—they're

coming—they're—

(And suddenly the group finds themselves surrounded by silhouettes and the sound of voices—horses—rising like a tidal wave around them.)

(The group huddles together—some going for guns are stopped by LEWIS and CLARK.)

LEWIS. *(Pulling SACAGAWEA forward:)* I told them I had a Shoshoni woman and child with me—they'll know we're not a war party if they see a woman and child...

(SACAGAWEA steps forward.)

CLARK. This is it, Janey. This is why we brought you. Tell them we come in peace.

LEWIS. Tell them we need horses—

CLARK. Tell them we'll trade—

LEWIS. We come in peace—

LEWIS & CLARK. Tell them!

(The noises stop.)

(SACAGAWEA stands out in front of the Corps. She puts her fingers in her mouth:)

CLARK. Why is she sucking her fingers?

CHARBONNEAU. It says she's part of the tribe.

(A few ARMED SHOSHONI in war paint step forward—one MAN cautiously in the lead. It's CAMEAHWAIT.)

LEWIS. That's Black Gun. He's the chief. I think.

(SACAGAWEA stares at him—everyone stands waiting... ready to attack...)

CAMEAHWAIT. *(Staring at her:)* Sacagawea?

SACAGAWEA. Cameahwait?

(A moment more... and with a YELL, they fall into each other's arms, crying, laughing, pulling a blanket over and around

themselves as the other SHOSHONI laugh.)

SACAGAWEA. Tila!

CAMEAHWAIT. Ithla!!

LEWIS. What?

CHARBONNEAU. I think the chief... is her brother.

LEWIS. Oh my word.

(The two hold each other tightly, emotions pouring out that had been sealed for years.)

CLARK. I think we'll get our horses.

(The other SHOSHONI yell out "Ah-Hi-e!" and move to embrace the CORPS—much shouting and embracing on both sides—the war paint rubbing off on all faces.)

(LEWIS produces a peace pipe and they sit down to smoke. The SHOSHONI pull off their moccasins as they sit with the whites:)

SACAGAWEA. *(Holding up her child:)* Cameahwait. This is my baby. Jean Baptiste. Jean, this is your uncle, Cameahwait. These are your people. This is your home.

(A loud drumbeat—a gleeful YELL from all—CAMEAHWAIT holds the baby aloft in joy and pride...)

(And a new celebration begins.)

(English, French, Shoshoni music and rhythms blend and burst forth—the men of both groups dancing—learning each other's steps...)

(The SHOSHONI checking out York's dark skin as he shows them new dance steps...)

(A whole new culture being born.)

(CAMEAHWAIT, CHARBONNEAU, CLARK, YORK and LEWIS all extend invitations for SACAGAWEA to join in the dance... and she does.)

(The crowd cheers and claps as she and her baby move, finally dancing to the brand new music...)

(Suddenly RAYMOND jumps into the scene, adding his own moves, pulling his Grandmother in —)

(Everybody moving, laughing—looking like they're a family.)

(Music crescendos and stops with most everybody falling to the ground exhausted, elated.)

(RAYMOND and his grandmother stay close as CAMEAHWAIT pulls SACAGAWEA aside.)

SACAGAWEA. Look at you. You're a chief.

CAMEAHWAIT. I finally ran all the way to Sand Ridge and back, and they put me in charge.

(They laugh.)

Look at you. Leading white men all over the world.

SACAGAWEA. I finally got married and had a baby and they put me in charge.

(Pause.)

I wish mother and father were here to see it...

CAMEAHWAIT. Their spirits are here. Can't you feel them?

SACAGAWEA. There's not a day goes by I don't feel them. I just hope they'd be proud of me. Of their grandchild.

CAMEAHWAIT. How could they not be? You got home. And we'll meet up with the other groups at the main winter camp—

SACAGAWEA. But the Corp is heading west.

CAMEAHWAIT. Right. The white men are. You're coming with us.

SACAGAWEA. But—

CAMEAHWAIT. We'll give them Old Toby as a guide. He knows the mountains, and that way you can come back to the plains with us for the winter.

SACAGAWEA. Cameahwait—

CAMEAHWAIT. We'll start raising your son the right way. You can be *our* interpreter.

SACAGAWEA. No.

CAMEAHWAIT. What?

SACAGAWEA. I can't go with you.

CAMEAHWAIT. What are you talking about? You got all the way here—you came back from the dead to be with us—

SACAGAWEA. And I promised the white men I'd go with them to the ocean and back.

CAMEAHWAIT. These people aren't even gonna make it through the mountains—they got no sense—they're trading us good rifles for our worst old horses. And they're lucky to get those! How are they gonna deal with all the tribes who *don't* like them?

SACAGAWEA. Then they'll need me even more.

CAMEAHWAIT. They don't even know you—they don't even know your name—they call you "Janey". Call your son "Jean"—what kind of names are those?

SACAGAWEA. French names. English names.

CAMEAHWAIT. They're using you! Come with us. The Great Spirit got you home once. He may not do it again.

SACAGAWEA. You live in the world long enough, you'll see things you could never dream of. Mother told me when I left the tribe I had to become its eyes and ears and hands, Cameahwait—that everything I learn becomes a new part of our people, remember? It makes us stronger and wiser. I've seen more villages and more people and heard more music than anyone in this camp. I promised them and myself and my child I'd keep going and keep learning—that I'd see the ocean. The Great Spirit has led me home. But our home is so much bigger than I ever dreamed. And it's still growing. I have to go with them.

(She stands and starts to walk away.)

It's only Fall. If we can get to the ocean and back before heavy winter... maybe my son will eat buffalo with his uncle on the plains.

(They hold hands a moment longer. CAMEAHWAIT nods.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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