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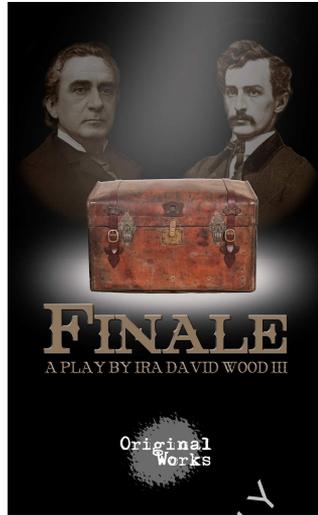
*Bea[u]tiful in the Extreme*

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Trade Edition, 2017

ISBN 978-1-934962-70-1

*Also Available From  
Original Works Publishing*



**FINALE by Ira David Wood III**

**Synopsis:** A haunting tale of family, history, regrets and shame. The Booth family was America's greatest acting clan. Generations of Booth sons tread the boards of American stages garnering great acclaim and riches until the youngest and arguably most famous of them all, John Wilkes, turned the country upside down. Eight years after the assassination of President Lincoln, Edwin Booth returns to his family's theatre in New York to sort through his younger brother's storage trunk which the government has recently returned. Ghostly memories of his father and brother appear to him as he struggles to rectify issues that have plagued his family name since that fateful night at Ford's Theater.

**Cast Size:** 5 Males, 3 Females

# **Bea[u]tiful in the Extreme**

**a full length play**

**by**

**Leon Martell**

SAMPLE ONLY

Originally commissioned and developed by  
A.S.K. Theater Projects

Title is from Meriwether Lewis' descriptions of the Great Plains. There were no standardized spellings at the time.

The editor of his journals added the "u" to beautiful.

*Bea[u]tiful in the Extreme* received its premier at The Colony Theater in Burbank California, 2003.

Director - David Rose, Producing Director - Barbara Beckley, Choreographer - Ameenah Kaplan, Scenic Design - Stephanie Kerley Schwartz, Lighting Design - David Flad, Sound Design - Michael Hooker, Costume Design - A. Jeffrey Schoenberg, Properties Design - Richard A. Hardin, Production Stage Manager - Dale Cooke, Assistant to the Director/Production Assistant - Anjali Bal

**CAST:**

General George Rogers Clark, Sergeant Gass,  
Lewis Senior  
TOM DUGAN

York, Big Horse, Mrs. Grinder, Voice of the Bear,  
Twisted Hair, Blackfoot  
PATRICK HUEY

Boat Boy, Soldier, Shannon, Boat Worker, Postmaster,  
Nowaykesugga,  
Mandan, Ruben, Peg  
ANDREW DAVID JAMES

Meriwether Lewis  
DONALD SAGE MACKAY

William Clark  
TONY MAGGIO

Thomas Jefferson, Shields, Black Buffalo, Cameahwait  
KENNETH MARTINES

Boatman, Dr. Rush, Colter, Charbonneau, John Adams,  
Old Toby  
BLAISE MESSINGER

Boat Builder, Drouillard Hunter  
JONATHAN PALMER

Sacagawea, Mary, Julia Hancock  
DELANNA STUDI

Mrs. Lewis, Cruzatte, Partisan, Frederick Bates  
KEVIN SYMONS

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## **Playwright's Notes:**

**Time and Place:** The play happens in the mind of Meriwether Lewis in 1809 - flashing back to 1795 and the time in between. Act One happens on a flatboat on the Mississippi. Act Two in a cabin on the Natchez Trace.

The characters are all visions - abstractions of Lewis' accounts and observations - not an attempt at historical recreations.

There are several physical leitmotifs that should become almost ritualized. The loading of muskets, the slapping of mosquitoes, the men dancing, the "sign language," the "Shoshone hug," the rowing of the boats, the climbing of the mountains, "the Bear Nothing Can Kill," - all of which need to find a vivid theatricalization. In past productions, placing the opening scene under water has been successfully accomplished by the ensemble filling the stage and silently signing: "water" "river" "fish", etc. while Lewis does his opening speech.

Several of the speeches in the play are taken from the letters, speeches, and writing of historical figures. They have been adapted for use in the play.

Since the members of the ensemble are playing "visions," there is a justification, actually a necessity, for trans-gender and trans-racial casting. I would hope that any cast would be multiracial. I would encourage having an African American actor play York, and when at all possible to include Native American actors in the ensemble. In the past Thomas Jefferson has been very successfully played by women and Native American actors. This choice lets the audience know... this is not a conventional history pageant.

There are a number of ensemble pieces that are intended to be almost musical fugues. Though specific character names are attached to lines, feel free to adapt the casting as need be. Since there are multiple characters and doubling and tripling of roles may be necessary, adjusting which member of the Expedition delivers any particular line is flexible to meet the needs of the specific production. (I.e.: If “Cruzatte” needs to make a change to enter as Twisted Hair, by all means give his line to Drouillard...) The play has been successfully done several times with as few as nine actors.

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## CHARACTERS:

MERIWETHER LEWIS - Governor of Upper Louisiana, ex-military officer and explorer. In his early thirties.

BOATMAN - A flatboat captain

BOY - a crew member

THOMAS JEFFERSON - President and political leader. Late 50's but more a demi-god than a man.

MRS. LEWIS - Meriwether's mother. A respected midwife and expert in plant remedies.

SOLDIER - a non-com on the frontier. A little drunk.

WILLIAM CLARK - Ex-military officer and map maker. A little older than Lewis and the other leader of the expedition.

DR. RUSH - The most respected mind in the United States at the time.

MR. LEWIS - Meriwether's father. Drunk and dying.

BOAT BUILDER - A drunken corrupt contractor.

GENERAL GEORGE ROGERS CLARK - Old warrior now dogged by creditors. A serious drinker.

DR. PICKERING - Another physician, a bit more whimsical than Rush.

SERGEANT GASS - Career military with a noted sense of humor.

RUBEN - One of the Field brothers. A great hunter and marksman. Unschoolled but game for anything.

COLTER - Another great hunter.

CRUZATTE - French boatman and most importantly, fiddler. Blind in one eye.

**YORK** - Clark's slave, valet, and companion since childhood. Noted for his educated speech and physical strength.

**JOHN** - The other Field brother, also a noted hunter.

**SHANNON** - Youngest member of the party. He tends to lose things, including himself.

**SHEILDS** - The oldest member of the expedition and the company blacksmith.

**THE OTO - CHIEFS BIG HORSE AND NOWAYKE-SUGGA.** Indians from a tribe of the lower Missouri.

**CHARBONNEAU** - French Canadian, hired as a translator. Known for panicking in moment of stress and causing continual friction. Major asset, married to Sacagawea.

**SACAGAWEA** - Young Shoshone woman who is guide and translator. Known for her resourcefulness and calm under stress. Even more generally loved than Charbonneau is disliked.

**DROUILLARD** - Half French, half Shawnee translator and hunter, liked and admired by everyone. The ultimate woodsman.

**LAKOTA CHIEFS - BLACK BUFFALO AND PARTISAN.** The power of the plains and they know it.

**CAMEAHWAIT** - Shoshone chief and brother of Sacagawea.

**TWISTED HAIR** - A Nez Perce chief, leader of a dignified mountain tribe who helps the expedition.

**MRS. GRINDER** - The old proprietress of a way station on the Natchez Trace.

**VOICE OF THE BEAR** - A mythic Grizzly from nightmare memory. "The Bear Nothing Can Kill."

PEG - A belle of the ball

MARY - Another eastern belle

JOHN ADAMS - Ex-president and political enemy of Jefferson and the expedition.

BLACKFOOT - Member of a very powerful plains tribe. Canadian ally and no friend of the Americans.

BATES - A petty bureaucrat and political opportunist.

The men of the expedition ranged in age from 19 to 35.

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## Bea[ul]tiful in the Extreme

### ACT I

*(The set needs to be a versatile area that can become anything from the open plains, to a log fort, to the white house. Since the ensemble must change identities very quickly, it would be very useful for them to never have to leave the stage, changing through some small detail, in view of the audience. There should also be the possibility for Lewis to seem completely alone).*

*SCENE 1: 1809. Meriwether Lewis stands in a small pool of blue light. He is under water.*

LEWIS: Peace. I bring you word from the father. He wishes you love. He sends word of the greatest love there is, liberty. And the sound of peace. The sound of tree branches, under water. Large trees, where there are none on the shore. Caked brown with mud from the plains, drawn through their limbs by the current. From how far up river... we do not know.. How far before the river, over the falls, becomes a stream, becomes a rill, trickling off the side of a mountain. Then up and over and follow a rill down the other side, to a stream, to a falls, to a river, to the ocean, to China. I open the door. Do you recognize me, or do you run in fear like a child from a ragged stranger? Is it the champion from the frontier, or the bloody intruder? Do I walk a path of knowledge or leave a trail of decay? What do you see?

*(There is a disturbance and Lewis is hauled into the air.)*

*(Lights shift. Captain Lewis is on the deck of a flatboat, soaked and unconscious. He has a long rope tied around his neck. The boatman tries to revive him.)*

BOATMAN: Captain Lewis? Captain Lewis? Are you all right?

*(Lewis snaps awake in a panic.)*

LEWIS: Save the equipment.... keep middle of the river... burn their... Shannon!? Is this... What river is this? Are we behind?

BOATMAN: It's the Mississippi, sir. You're on your way to Washington. You fell overboard sir.

*(Lewis rises creakily.)*

LEWIS: Yes. Of course. Just a temporary setback.

*(Lewis runs for the rail and is restrained by the crew.)*

BOATMAN: Sir! Sir!! I don't know what afflicts you sir.

LEWIS: The desire to be a fish. I've spent so much time on this water, I want to breath it.

BOATMAN: I can't let you do that, sir.

LEWIS: Why not? I'm my own man Lord Christ. I'm the governor of Louisiana, I can't swim in my own river?

BOATMAN: But I am the captain on this boat, and I will not be the one they say lost Captain Meriwether Lewis in the river. I'll have to ask you to go below.

LEWIS: Please, no. No. I don't want to go below. I want to see the water. I want to see the bank pass. I will not go below.

BOATMAN: Then you have to give me your word that you'll not end up in the river again. As a waterman, will you give me your word?

*(Pause.)*

LEWIS: Yes. Yes, I will sir. I give you my word.

BOATMAN: Thank you Captain.

LEWIS: I'm pleased my word still carries weight on the river.

BOATMAN: Of course sir. Your and Captain Clark's trip to the west. Exploring the territories to the Pacific. Every riverman knows. *(The boatman retrieves a pile of books.)* I suspect you'll be wanting these.

LEWIS: *(He doesn't move.)* Our journals. Captain Clark's and mine. All our experiences are in there.

BOATMAN: It must make you very proud, sir.

LEWIS: You can't imagine. *(Beat.)* I need a drink, could I get a drink?

BOATMAN: I think that might not be wise, sir.

*(The Boatman exits. Lewis slowly approaches the journals - he hesitates, unable to open them. The lights and sound shift slightly indicating that we are in Lewis' mind. Sacagawea approaches him.)*

SACAGAWEA: *(She speaks and signs.)* Captain? Your heart is on the ground. Why?

LEWIS: After all we've done, I can't seem to look back.

SACAGAWEA: After all you've done, you need to tell them.

LEWIS: I can't. Nothing good will come of it.

SACAGAWEA: Not true. I remember everything. Ask your brother. Ask Captain Clark.

*(She exits and Lewis slowly approaches the books, and unbinds them. A cacophony of sounds and voices from his past explode from the pages. He snaps the book shut and there is silence.)*

*(The lights shift. William Clark enters. He is handsome, virile and self-assured.)*

CLARK: Do you miss me?

LEWIS: Like flint without a steel. William, what happened? Where did I lose the path? I am still traveling but I have lost the path.

CLARK: It's here in ink. Remember. Remember the Shoshone?

LEWIS: The most generous people I ever met, of any color.

CLARK: The way they hug everyone...

LEWIS: Complete strangers.

CLARK: Always the same... *(He demonstrates on Lewis.)*  
Left over right shoulder...

LEWIS: Right arm under and clasp the hands...

CLARK: Left cheeks pressed together.

*(They stand embracing. Clark lets go and faces Lewis.)*

LEWIS: I remember.

*(Clark hands the journal to Lewis and exits. Lewis opens the journals and lights shift. Thomas Jefferson enters.)*

JEFFERSON: Ah! Young Mr. Lewis, I called you from the Ohio because I require your services.

LEWIS: President Jefferson. It's an honor to meet you.

JEFFERSON: You needn't bow. *(They shake hands.)*  
Welcome to Monticello.

LEWIS: Actually, I grew up within sight of here...

JEFFERSON: Yes, I knew your family.

LEWIS SR.: *(From off)* Meriwether?! Bring your father a drink! Meriwether?!

LEWIS: Did you know my father?

JEFFERSON: No I didn't have the pleasure, but your mother was known across the county...

*(An old woman, Lewis's mother, crosses.)*

MRS. LEWIS: Look for the wild leek in July, where the water runs clear in the stream. Put in broth to cut phlegm in the lungs.

LEWIS: She had a talent for herbs and midwifery.

JEFFERSON: Can I offer you something...?

LEWIS: Whiskey.

JEFFERSON: At ten a.m.! You are a frontiersman. Get him a whiskey. I need a personal secretary. A young man of intelligence. You've been a soldier, woodsman, hunter ...

LEWIS: Since I could walk. Been accused of preferring hounds to people.

JEFFERSON: You have been west?

LEWIS: I've wandered a fair piece of it. As far as the Mississippi.

JEFFERSON: You have done military service?

LEWIS: Sir, you did say it was a secretary you were needing.

JEFFERSON: Did you see fire?

LEWIS: That which there was sir.

*(The lights shift. It is 1795 in an army camp on the frontier. Sounds of chaos. A soldier enters and approaches Lewis.)*

SOLDIER: My advice would be to wait 'til this shoot out's over.

LEWIS: Isn't dueling against army regulations?

SOLDIER: General Mad Anthony has said that saving the expense of courts martial is preferable whenever possible ... and if dueling can reduce the inflated officer corps, so much the better.

*(The drunken officer corps passes. Lewis tries but is unable to get their attention.)*

LEWIS: General Wayne's office? Headquarters of the "Chosen Rifles?"

*(Clark enters from the opposite direction, with a surveyor's rod and transit in hand. He steps up to Lewis and puts the rod in Lewis' hand.)*

CLARK: Can you hold this rod straight.

LEWIS: Yes sir.

*(Clark goes off a distance, then turns back to take a reading.)*

LEWIS: What are we doing? Sir.

CLARK: Finding the length of a straight line.

*(Shot is heard off stage)*

CLARK: That's that.

*(They continue surveying. The Soldier runs through from the direction of the duel.)*

SOLDIER: Lieutenant Clark, Ensign Cullum stumbled and shot one of his seconds.

CLARK: Well, fetch the surgeon.

SOLDIER: I am sir.

CLARK: Go! *(To Lewis)* The surgeon's no doubt drunk as well.

LEWIS: This is not what I anticipated the army to be.

CLARK: What did you think it would be? Killing Indians? If you want make your mother proud, hold that rod straight. Once we have our straight line, we can build a triangle. Once we have a triangle, we can build another, and another, until we know the distance to everything in sight. Then we put it on a map. You can't do that with a dead Indian.

LEWIS: Is this mapping all in your hands?

CLARK: Knowledge is power. And the first step in knowledge is to know where you are.

*(The Soldier and the Surgeon run through. Another shot is heard.)*

CLARK: Well, that's that.

SOLDIER: *(Running back in)* Ensign Chase has gone and shot the surgeon.

CLARK: Is it bad?

SOLDIER: Just a muscle shot, but it's his cutting arm, so they are putting off the duel until the surgeon is healed.

LEWIS: Is there anyone else engaged in productive activity here?

CLARK: Not to my knowledge You can spend the days of your service in a warm canteen, carousing with fellows of rank, or you can spend them standing in the cold rain, holding that stick with me.

*(The group of officers stumbles through, bloodied. Lewis weighs the alternatives, then holds the rod with conviction).*

LEWIS: *(Having chosen)* Is this straight enough?

CLARK: *(Taking a reading)* I believe we have the makings of our straight line.

*(Clark backs up with the transit and goes off.)*

*(Lights shift. JEFFERSON emerges from the darkness. He holds a gigantic tusk. He carries it easily. It's a bit stained and old looking.)*

JEFFERSON: Mr. Lewis, do you recognize this?

*(Lewis studies the object.)*

LEWIS: I would say it's a tooth or a tusk.

JEFFERSON: From what beast?

LEWIS: Though I have never seen one, I would say, an elephant from Africa.

JEFFERSON: Not an elephant. This tusk weighs 180 lbs. It is from a mammoth.

LEWIS: Would you like help with that sir?

*(He tries to lift it and feels the immense weight, to which Jefferson seemed oblivious. Mrs. Lewis enters.)*

MS. LEWIS: I'll take it son. You listen to the President.

*(The old lady carries off the tusk effortlessly.)*

JEFFERSON: That was found just under the surface in New York. There are bones on open ground in Kentucky. The mammoth may be alive on the plains in the west. Do you think the west harbors such wonders?

LEWIS: Stories are it's a terrible difficult place. Dry flats. No trees for shelter nor fire. Winds that pick up man and horse and take them up into the sky.

JEFFERSON: Do you believe that?

LEWIS: Makes me curious.

JEFFERSON: We are but a small fraction of what we might be, Mr. Lewis.

LEWIS: Sir?

JEFFERSON: We have the potential to spread from sea to sea across the entire continent, but we must know, what is in the west and who are its people. They are unknown to us. They can go from free hunters to free citizens in a democratic nation. And upon the completion of our nation, from coast to coast, we find no foreign power between ourselves and trade with the Orient. All that is needed is to locate the route that will make this trade practical. The prize sought by every explorer since Columbus, will be ours. *(Pause.)* Will you be my officer? There is no one better.

LEWIS: Sir, I cannot believe my fortune at being chosen.

*(Mrs. Lewis enters.)*

MRS. LEWIS: Son, your father is dead ... Fell off his horse drunk and died. But I've remarried and we are moving to Georgia ...

LEWIS: I'll pack my things ...

MRS. LEWIS: No. Wait. Your stepfather has died and we need to move back to Virginia. Death, death, death, death,...

*(She exits.)*

JEFFERSON: You will live in my home and be as one of my family. The while, you will prepare in Biology, Botany, Languages, Medicine... The greatest minds of our age will prepare you. I am handing you our future.

LEWIS: I promise I'll not fail you, sir.

JEFFERSON: Of course you won't.

*(Jefferson takes a paper out of the journals and gives it to Lewis to take to Dr. Rush. Mrs. Lewis yells from off.)*

MRS. LEWIS: You get an education, son. I never had the Latin.

JEFFERSON: I send you to Dr. Benjamin Rush.

*(The lights shift to DR. BENJAMIN RUSH. In his fifties. Energetic, dignified. [This scene has a Felliniesque quality as Lewis is swept up into his accelerated education.]*

*RUSH takes the paper. Takes his pulse and looks down his throat.)*

RUSH: I created the rules for maintenance of health for the Continental army!

LEWIS: (*Mouth open*) Ah knah. ["I know"]

*(They are joined by the ensemble as a chorus of assistants.)*

ENSEMBLE: DIET!

RUSH: Eat chiefly of vegetables. Avoid rum, which wears away the system.

ENSEMBLE: PERSONAL CLEANLINESS!

RUSH: Frequently wash clothing, utensils, and bedding. The body at least three times a week.

ENSEMBLE: CAMP CLEANLINESS!

RUSH: The camp must be clean. Latrines dug deep and penalties levied for men relieving themselves inside the living area. Lastly...

ENSEMBLE: IDLENESS!

RUSH: Idleness causes morbidity in the brain. You will battle fevers. What causes fevers? (*Before he can answer.*) The excessive morbid action of blood vessels. Nature has given the body the deleting modalities of ...

LEWIS: ... purging, vomiting, blistering, sweating and bleeding to cleanse the body of morbidity.

RUSH: At times when alternative modalities should be stimulated, this pill (*He produces a large pill from his sleeve.*) will be the strongest weapon in your arsenal.

THE ENSEMBLE: Rush's Thunderbolts!!!

RUSH: They have been called that due to their immediate efficacy and their purgative power. And remember, never bleed more than  $\frac{4}{5}$ ths of a patient's blood at one time.

LEWIS: How much is  $\frac{4}{5}$ ths?

RUSH: Use your best judgment.

*(Rush exits. Lights shift. Jefferson returns.)*

JEFFERSON: And did Dr. Rush speak of Melancholia?

LEWIS: No. My father had it. I'm told.

JEFFERSON: And you?

LEWIS: I have my dark moments.

JEFFERSON: Everything is hopeless. Your insignificance is monumental ... I feel that often.

LEWIS: You?

JEFFERSON: Yes. Idleness is the disease.

RUSH: (*Leaning in*) Idleness causes morbidity in the brain.

JEFFERSON: Melancholia can be beaten, by work.  
Work for the good of mankind. I envy you your task.  
Your eyes will behold what no civilized man has seen  
before. It will never exist in that pure state again. You  
must capture it in ink.

LEWIS: Sir, I would think it prudent to bring another of-  
ficer, on the expedition. If I were to be incapacitated or  
killed ...

*(Lewis immediately writes.)*

Dear Clark,  
During the last session Congress passed an act initiat-  
ing the exploration of the interior of the continent of  
North America. The mission is to establish friendly  
relations with the Indians that inhabit this area and to  
gather scientific information. If there is anything in this  
enterprise, which would induce you to participate with  
me, there is no man on earth with whom I should feel  
equal pleasure in sharing them as with yourself. Your  
friend & Humble Servant. MERIWETHER LEWIS

*(The letter is carried to Clark who replies.)*

CLARK: Dear Lewis,  
I received your letter with much pleasure. This is an  
undertaking freighted with many difficulties, but my  
friend I do assure you that no man lives with whom I  
would prefer to undertake such a Trip as yourself. Your  
obedient servant, William Clark.

*(Lights shift back to the Flat Boat. 1809. The Boatman  
and his deck boy enters.)*

LEWIS: Why have we stopped moving?

BOATMAN: Hit a snag. Be off it shortly. Getting dark.  
You might want to go below.

LEWIS: Thank you, no, I work best in the open air. I'll  
be in soon.

*(The Boatman reluctantly exits. The boy lags behind.)*

LEWIS: Did you get it?

*(The boy pulls out a small whiskey bottle. Lewis takes it, then flips him a coin. The boy lingers. Lewis takes a drink. Lights shift slightly. We are still on the flatboat, but in Lewis' mind. LEWIS SR. (Meriwether's father) sick with pneumonia, appears to him.)*

LEWIS SR.: Meriwether, get your father a drink. Meriwether?!

LEWIS: *(Sounding like a child)* There's water on the stand, Father.

LEWIS SR.: Not water. A drink.

LEWIS: Mother says it's bad for your fever.

LEWIS SR.: The fever's past. Get me the whiskey...

LEWIS: I'll get mother...

LEWIS SR.: NO! I need YOU to help me. Why can't you help me!

*(He exits. Lights shift back.)*

BOATMAN: *(from off)* The Snag is clear!

VOICES OFF: Clear! We're clear ...

*(Lights shift back to past. Lewis confronts a cantankerous government contractor who speaks with a thick Scottish accent.)*

BOAT BUILDER: Clear as glass.

LEWIS: So my proportions are clear, and you have the supplies you need.

BOAT BUILDER: For the most part, yes. We've still to test the flex of some of this timber.

LEWIS: *(Losing patience)* Its been here since spring. Summer is nearly over. I need this boat, in the water, in the next two weeks or I may not clear the Ohio before freeze. I have promised the President. Do you understand?

BOAT BUILDER: Aye, and that is why we are moving as fast as we can...

LEWIS: As fast as you can isn't fast enough....

BOAT BUILDER: Oh? What then? Maybe you should get someone else.

*(Lights shift. Lewis talks to Clark through letters.)*

LEWIS: I want to blast his brains across the boat yard. I feel so helpless.

CLARK: You are. You have let his apathy pull you down. You must drive him to action with your passion for the work. Make him wish you were down river in your boat.

LEWIS: You're right.

*(Lights shift. Again, he speaks to the Boat Builder.)*

LEWIS: I want to thank you.

BOAT BUILDER: For what?

LEWIS: Until now my focus has been divided. From now on I will be singular. I will be here every day, all day, until my transport is finished. If the boat is not completed in one week I will follow you home and dog your steps until it is. I will make it my life's work to see you never earn another coin. Do I make myself clear?

BOAT BUILDER: Look lively lads, we've a boat to finish.

*(Workmen move with new energy. The lights shift. William and General George Rogers Clark enter, drinking.)*

CLARK: Meriwether, my brother, General George Rogers Clark.

LEWIS: It's a honor and a pleasure, sir.

GEN. CLARK: I can assure you, not near as big a pleasure as this. *(Hands him the drink.)* So, you go to hunt elephants?

LEWIS: Mammoths. We have reason to believe these beasts inhabit the grasslands ... *(pause)* Do you doubt it?

GEN. CLARK: In the war I lost an entire patrol ... disappeared. Only to find them headless, upside down in the tree tops, one hundred miles away. I doubt nothing. That is why my door is oak, my jug is never empty, and I keep this double-barreled pistol, one for the intruder and, if need be, one for me.

*(Pause)*

CLARK: So, up the Missouri, to the Mandan Indian villages.

LEWIS: Beyond that is terra incognita.

GEN. CLARK: I've never seen a river trip without a portage.

LEWIS: There are rumors of a Great Falls. We'll send the keel boat back and build canoes for the rest of the journey.

GEN. CLARK: Must be a hill or two, or the river wouldn't flow.

LEWIS: We know of mountains. Possibly as high as the Appalachians. We'll find a pass and portage in a day or two.

GEN. CLARK: You're hauling considerable equipage.

CLARK: We will trade with the western Indians for horses.

GEN. CLARK: And how do you plan to talk with these "western Indians?"

LEWIS: Hire a friendly translator.

GEN. CLARK: Your bacon's in the fire if you don't.  
(*Beat*) Well, here's hoping horse flesh is easy to come by in the "Terra Incognita." Remember, little brother, Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness, and near went insane. And that was Jesus.

CLARK: We have the support of the entire federal government.

GEN. CLARK: Oh! The "Federal Government". Good luck.

LEWIS: You should come with us.

GEN. CLARK: (*Laughs*) It's a young man's game, exploration.

CLARK: You're not that old...

GEN. CLARK: Every day the dogs don't drag me off and eat me is a gift.

(*The lights shift. Jefferson enters. Gen. Clark exits. The company begins loading the boat.*)

JEFFERSON: It is of the utmost importance to the nation that you explore the Missouri river, and whatever river may offer the most direct water route across this continent. A "Northwest passage." To aide in the incorporation of this territory, it is essential you learn the names of the Indian nations in this country and take stock of their numbers. I have the keenest desire for knowledge of these people, for both the public good and my own curiosity.

CLARK: I have the list of, "Inquiries relative to the Indians of Louisiana" from the scientific community.

*(Dr. Rush and Dr. Pickering enter and join in his questions.)*

CLARK: What is the state of their life as to longevity?

DR. RUSH: Are rheumatism, pleurisy or bilious fevers known among them?

PICKERING: ... are palsy, apoplexy, madness and venereal disease?

*(The scene becomes a Fugue, the voices overlapping and continuing under each other. It should have the energy and business of preparing for the expedition. Lewis returns to his lists.)*

LEWIS: Camp equipage: 6 copper kettles, 25 falling axes, 1 small permanent vice...

CLARK: What vices are common among the Indians?

DR. PICKERING: Is their passion for the female sex as disposed to excess as among civilized people?

LEWIS: 24 dozen files, 2 steel plated handsaws...

DR. RUSH: Are their excretions by stool regular?

CLARK: ... Have they any Monuments?

MRS. LEWIS: *(Walking across.)* Do they use powdered rattlesnake rattle to reduce the pain of childbirth, and does it work?

LEWIS: ... 2 pick axes, 3 coils of rope...

CLARK: ...What is the ceremony for the declaration of war?

JEFFERSON: Do they burn or torture their prisoners?

CLARK: What are their implements of war?

DR. RUSH: Do they sacrifice animals in their worship?.

DR. PICKERING: ... Do the faculties of the mind decay sooner?...

JEFFERSON: ...How do they dispose of their dead?

LEWIS: ...3 bushels Rock Salt...

DR. RUSH: ...Is suicide common among them? ...

*(The lights shift. All float away except Lewis who continues.)*

LEWIS: Medicine: Three kegs whiskey, 12 oz. Opium, 4 pewter penis syringes.

*(Clark enters. This is the expedition's St. Louis headquarters.)*

CLARK: *(Off Lewis' line.)* May we never have to use them.

LEWIS: William, you made it. Welcome to our temporary headquarters. How did the boat test?

CLARK: She rode like a pregnant cow in a steeplechase, but we'll shift the load to compensate... She's a sound boat. For better or for worse, this journey is all ours.

*(They drink. The soldiers of the "Corps of Discovery" filter in. Jefferson appears in a separate time and space.)*

JEFFERSON: In all your intercourse with the natives, treat them in the most friendly & conciliatory manner...

BOTH LEWIS & CLARK: Yes, sir.

*(The men gather around Sergeant Gass. They seem a gangly unschooled bunch. As the Sergeant speaks he passes out the rifles. The men handle them with absolute comfort and ease. The Sergeant orders them using the military terms of the day: i.e. "Company Form Up! Attention! Front! Etc." These terms should be used to advantage to contrast military order of "civilization", and the wildness of the frontier.)*

GASS: These are the U.S. model 1803 Pennsylvania Rifles, the first rifle designed specially for the U.S. Army. You should be able to get off two aimed shots in under a minute. Load!

*(They rapidly load as Jefferson speaks.)*

JEFFERSON: Our purpose with the Indian is twofold. First, to encourage them to abandon hunting and apply to agriculture ...

GASS: Fire. Reload.

JEFFERSON: Secondly to multiply trading houses among them.

GASS: Fire. Hold

*(Clark's black slave has been standing by watching.)*

GASS: Sir?

CLARK: Sergeant?

GASS: Is your Negro to shoot? You said all members of the party, but in most parts they don't want slaves to handle weapons. Sir?

CLARK: He'll eat, so he'd best shoot.

*(Gass throws York a rifle. He joins the line.)*

GASS: You been watchin'.

YORK: Yes, sir.

GASS: Load 'em up!

*(The men load rifles.)*

JEFFERSON: In leading the Indian thus to agriculture, & civilization, I trust we are acting for their greatest good.

LEWIS AND CLARK: Yes, sir.

GASS: Ready to disembark , sir!

CLARK: Give us a send off!

GASS: Foregun ready! Fire!

ENSEMBLE: Huzzah! Huzzah! Huzzah!

*(Musket volley! Cannon fires. A roar of cheers goes up from the shore. Sound of oars in the river. The men shift from muskets to oars, performing some theatrical gesture of rowing.)*

CLARK: Put your backs into it boys. It's against the current all the way.

LEWIS: If we're still here tomorrow, the crowd'll be sore disappointed.

CLARK: May 22nd 1804. St. Louis. Latitude - 38 degrees - 55 minutes - 19 seconds - North of the Equator. Longitude - 89 degrees - 57 minutes - 45 seconds West of Greenwich. Heading, due ...

ENSEMBLE: WEST!

*(Lights and Sound shift. All focus on Lewis. The rest freeze.)*

LEWIS: I could swear, as I stood on the foredeck, at that moment a wind came out of the west and searched my face with its fingers. It asked "Who are you to come here?" I thought, I am Meriwether Lewis, emissary of Thomas Jefferson. I have come in peace with my closest friend, William Clark. If not I, he, is an example of what man can be. We ask your acceptance. We will earn it.

*(Lewis slaps a mosquito on his face. The intense sound of buzzing mosquitoes. The men all swat at mosquitoes.)*

CLARK: HOLD! Rest. They've got to chop at the snag.

*(Lewis and Clark exit. The men breathe heavily and sit.)*

GASS: I expected I'd be fighting Indians but it's moskeeters that's drawing my blood. *(To CRUZATTE)* You going to sit in the mud?

CRUZATTE: Can't get no muddier than I am.

GASS: Least we didn't get out the rope and haul today.

CRUZATTE: We have rowed, poled, dragged... everything but pushed this boat.

GASS: Trip ain't over yet. *(Yelling off)* Somebody bring up the fat!

SHANNON: *(To YORK)* Is this what you do as a ... what they call you?

YORK: *(To SHANNON)* Valet.

SHANNON: You do like this at home in Clarksville?

YORK: No. In Kentucky Master Clark's appearance is my responsibility. On a usual day, I awaken before him. I've polished his boots, set out his clothes, fresh from being laundered... coat brushed, never a button missing.

CRUZATTE: *(To Gass)* How many miles you think we come today?

GASS: *(To Cruzatte)* Two.

CRUZATTE: No more than that?

GASS: No, two miles.

SHANNON: *(to YORK)* Valletin' sounds better'n this.  
Think you'd be hungry to go back.

YORK: No. *(Beat)* In Clarksville you would not be talking with me. A valet is not seen, even when standing in front of you.

SHANNON: Beats rolling in the muck with the rest of us.

GASS: He's a slave you damn fool.

SHANNON: A valet slave gets to stay clean in a warm house.

GASS: *(To Shannon)* Tell me somethin', Shannon, you like huntin'?

SHANNON: Nothin' better.

GASS: York?

YORK: When we go out on the open plain and track the wild herds, we split up and I am on my own, nothing between me and end of the world but my strength and my rifle... there is nothing better... and it is everything a valet slave is not.

GASS: I trust Captain Clark knows what he's doing, putting a gun in your hands.

YORK: We were raised together since we were children.

CRUZATTE: That why he send you to trade with the Indians?

YORK: The Indians are curious about my black skin. It causes them to show me respect. It helps with the trading.

SHANNON: Why is it you don't talk like a Negro?

YORK: I speak as I have been spoken to.

*(Lewis enters with a bucket of fat. The men reach in and smear it all over their faces and exposed areas.)*

CRUZATTE: Cap'n what you think? We ain't gettin' no wheres today.

LEWIS: The day's not over yet. *(Pats a bug on Cruzatte's forehead)* We get off this snag, catch a wind up stream, we could make twice what we made so far. You've seen it happen.

CRUZATTE: Why did the Lord put moskeeters on earth?

LEWIS: To remind us he is the Captain. This is his world and we're just passing through.

CLARK'S VOICE *(from off)*: She's clear.

LEWIS: The men have kept high spirits. Even after a strenuous day's labor they amuse themselves dancing to the fiddle.

*(A fiddle plays. One of the men starts a step dance, then another, and another. They revive. [Dancing should appear several times in the play.] They dance for Lewis. Clark dances for Lewis. It varies from fun to mildly threatening. The dance finishes.)*

GASS: Roll 'em out boys. Sun'll be in yer face afore you know it.

*(The men lay out on the ground "pitching camp". One is "look out".)*

SHANNON: *(To Lewis)* Captain, how come they got more sky out here?

LEWIS: This is where they keep it. They just let some blow back east as needed.

SHANNON: What?

*(The crew enjoys Shannon's confusion.)*

CLARK: Consider, there are no mountains, few trees, you can almost feel the curve of the earth falling away in every direction.

SHANNON: Makes a fellow feel small.

GASS: Nowhere to hide out here.

SHEILDS: That's why them barking squirrels dig in the ground.

LEWIS: Drouillard found a whole city of them today.

DROUILLARD: You can tell from de river, you see de hawk circle over and over dere.

LEWIS: The squirrels post sentries that stand on mounds of earth. When the hawks get too near the sentries bark and all the squirrels run into their holes.

GASS: Hope our centuries are good as that. Colter, first watch (“aye”) followed by Shields (“aye”) Cruzatte (“aye”) and Shannon (“aye”).

LEWIS: I'd like a better name for them than barking squirrels.

DROUILLARD: De French call dos squirrel, "Chien de prairie", prairie dog. You should call dem prairie dog.

*(Two beats.)*

ENSEMBLE: Nah.

*(Lewis and Clark both stand.)*

CLARK: The stars are up, I'd best get a reading... make sure we're not in Asia.

*(Clark exits. Lewis retires to his area and writes.)*

LEWIS: Laboring under these open skies I have not suffered the dark moods that plagued me at home. The President was right, there is no time for such indulgence. I don't know what I would do if William were not here. He manages the boat while I explore the land.

*(The men begin to rise.)*

LEWIS (*cont*): Today, as the first light of dawn illuminates the soft curve of the riverbank, it gives the plain the appearance of a beautiful bowling green. The water, yellow brown by day, shimmers with silver at this time of morning.

GASS: Captain, look on the bank, must be thousands of 'em.

LEWIS: This scenery already rich, and pleasing is still farther heightened by immense herds of buffalo, deer, elk, and antelope, which come to drink from the river.

*(The men stop and take in the awe-inspiring sight.)*

LEWIS: The country today, like yesterday, is beautiful in the extreme.

*(The lights shift. Sgt. Gass approaches Clark.)*

GASS: Capt'n, Shannon hasn't returned from the hunt, sir.

CLARK: Send Ruben and Joseph to fetch him out. We'll wait.

GASS: Y'sir.

*(Gass spins on his heel and is back to Clark.)*

GASS: Cap'n. Ruben and Joseph are returned, they looked for eight hours and can't find him sir.

CLARK: Colter. Drouillard. Stay behind. Look for Shannon. Good Christ he's only 19. Track him. Find him.

RUBEN: Maybe that bear got him. The one the Indians told us. The bear nothing can kill.

LEWIS: That's just a story. You'll find him. We have to keep moving.

*(Rowing resumes. The "Course and Distance" are done as "call and response" between Clark and the men.)*

CLARK: Course and Distance: South 63 deg. - West,

MEN: 4 miles.

*(The following is performed simultaneously [unless otherwise noted] with Lewis speaking over the rhythm of Clark and the men.)*

LEWIS: We were floating on the surface of this land. If we lost our equipment, if we lost order for a moment, we could have been pulled down.

CLARK: ...to the starboard side, then S. 68 deg. West...

MEN: 3 miles.

CLARK: ... to the Larboard side then S. 75 deg. West

MEN: 3 miles.

CLARK: ... to the starboard side. Distance for the day:

MEN: 10 miles.

*(Cadence stops.)*

DROUILLARD: Cap'n. We found Shannon's rifle, but not him.

LEWIS: Keep looking. We can't leave him out there with no rifle.

*(Cadence continues.)*

CLARK: Course and distance: West...

MEN: 3 miles

CLARK: ... North, 57 deg. West

MEN: 5 miles.

CLARK: .. North 20 deg. West

MEN: 2 miles.

CLARK: ... Distance for the day:

MEN: 10 miles.

YORK: Sir, tracks ahead ... I think they're Shannon's.

CLARK: Who's the fastest afoot?

GASS: John Field, he's the antelope a' the group.

LEWIS: John, chase Shannon down and stop him.

JOHN: Yes sir.

*(He turns on his heels and is back again, out of breath.)*

JOHN: I'm sorry, sir. Shannon's running like the devils after him.

DROUILLARD: It's been a near two weeks, sir.

RUBEN: He must be pret' near crazy by now sir. Could do anything.

GASS: Odds are all against gettin' him, sir.

LEWIS: I will not lose a man.

*(Mrs. Lewis appears in Lewis' mind. The cadence continues.)*

MRS. LEWIS: Meriwether. Ginger, black pepper, and vinegar in water.

LEWIS: To revive the spirits and sharpen the mind.

MRS. LEWIS: Knowledge is power. You can pull yourself from this ill humor... I count on you... you brought our medicine to the Indian...

LEWIS: Yes..

MRS. LEWIS: So you relieved their suffering.

LEWIS: No... for a time...

MRS. LEWIS: Then why aren't you at the task?

LEWIS: I am, I'm on my way to Washington to explain... I can't be everywhere at once.

MRS. LEWIS: But you must, and Meriwether, do the Indians use powdered rattle snake rattle for childbirth and does it work? I still need an answer.

CLARK: *(alternating with the MEN)* West. West. West. West. West. West...

MEN: *(alternating with CLARK)* Miles. Miles. Miles. Miles. Miles. Miles...

GASS: Man on the larboard shore!

*(An emaciated and crazed looking Shannon falls into the stage. He tries to keep running. With great difficulty they catch him. He thrashes.)*

LEWIS: Shannon! It's all right. It's Captain Lewis.

SHANNON: *(still panicked)* ...oncet I lost my gun, ... nothing ... game all around. I lost my gun... couldn't... could a been killed... et by wolves. No fire. Gun. My hands... Losin' my eyes... Kill me.

LEWIS: It's all right. I won't let anything happen to you.

SHANNON: *(realizing it's the Captain)* Captain Lewis! I saw the bear! It's out there, like a mountain with teeth.

LEWIS: I won't let anything harm you.

*(Shannon calms. All exit leaving Lewis alone.)*

LEWIS: Without a gun, we had less protection than a buffalo calf. The prairie would swallow us. We were the eyes and ears and fingers of our country. We the people. That was my responsibility and privilege. To make the first impression. The open hand. It had to be done correctly. I didn't know how.

*(An Indian girl enters.)*

SACAGAWEA: *(She signs as she speaks to him)* I will help. You need help.

LEWIS: *(He signs as he speaks to her)* Sacagawea. I am trying to make sense of what happened. All my memories are melting into each other.

SACAGAWEA: We can still meet for the first time at the Mandan Villages.

LEWIS: My strongest memories are of all of us, together, on the river. In the worst of it, you never complained.

SACAGAWEA: Then I will stay.

*(Two Oto Chiefs, BIG HORSE and NOWAYKESUGGA come forward, speaking intensely in sign language.)*

BIG HORSE: *(Signing)* You want us to stay? Who are you? What do you want with us?

NOWAYKESUGGA: *(Signing)* It's a trap. I don't trust them.

*(SACAGAWEA comes forward to help. Two men in buckskins, CHARBONNEAU and DROUILLARD, join her. Clark also enters.)*

LEWIS: We need to speak with these Oto Chiefs.

CHARBONNEAU: *(To Sacagawea)* Let's sport.

SACAGAWEA: Would you shame me in front of all these people?

CHARBONNEAU: We go behind a rock... in the bush there..

SACAGAWEA: I must help the captain...

CHARBONNEAU: I your husband! You must me do it! I still badger.

SACAGAWEA: What?

CHARBONNEAU: I am badger.

SACAGAWEA: Does my husband mean leader?

CHARBONNEAU: Almost same word. Leader. Badger.  
Listen to me!

LEWIS: Tell him we need to talk to these Indians!

CLARK: And he's damn lucky neither of us speak  
French.

*(When Charbonneau and Drouillard speak to each other, they do so in thick, French Canadian accents. As many lines as is tolerable end in a nasal "Enh?" Drouillard should never use "Enh?" when speaking "English.")*

DROUILLARD: Enh ,Charbonneau? What are you  
talkin' 'bout, enh?. We need to talk to dese Indian 'ere,  
enh?

CHARBONNEAU: I'm trying to get my wife straighten  
out 'ere, enh?

LEWIS: What is it?!

BIG HORSE: We're going to leave.

NOWAYKESUGGA: It's a trap!

BIG HORSE: I don't get these guys...

NOWAYKESUGGA: It's a trap!

LEWIS: *(Indicating Charbonneau)* Tell him to settle  
down. We must have a clear chain of understanding  
here!!

DROUILLARD: The captain is getting much angry, enh?

CHARBONNEAU: He is not de boss of me.

DROUILLARD: So, who you gone to complain to, enh?  
You want your gold at de end of dis trip, enh? Settle  
down and say de right word.

*(Charbonneau settles in.)*

LEWIS: Are we ready?

DROUILLARD: *(to Charbonneau)* Are we ready, enh?

CHARBONNEAU: *(to the girl)* Ready to talk, you, me,  
you?

SACAGAWEA: Yes.

*(The team nods back to Lewis.)*

LEWIS: *(Takes a formal stance)* I bring greetings from  
your new father.

DROUILLARD: I bring greeting from your new fadder,  
enh.

CHARBONNEAU: New father, hello you, say, him.

SACAGAWEA: You have a new father. He sends his  
love.

LEWIS: His only wish is to make your lives better.

DROUILLARD: He wishes to make your life better.

CHARBONNEAU: He wishes you were better.

SACAGAWEA: He wishes you all the best in life.

*(Jefferson steps forward and does his own speech as the others continue the translation in silence. Lewis duplicates Jefferson's gestures...)*

JEFFERSON & LEWIS: We are descended from the tribes beyond the great water...

JEFFERSON: ...but we no longer consider ourselves of the old nations, but as family with our red brethren here. We have prospered and are now as numerous as the leaves on the trees. Our way of life has provided us with many things we wish to share, in exchange for the furs of the animals so abundant around you. The father, through his beloved one, sends his blessing and wishes to know what are the things which his children need?

LEWIS: What are the things his children need?...

DROUILLARD: What are the things de children here need?

CHARBONNEAU: What do you want, you children?

SACAGAWEA: What would make his children happy?

OTO CHIEFS: *(Pause)* Guns! Guns! Guns!...

BIG HORSE: Then we can protect ourselves.

*(The translation goes back immediately to Lewis.)*

LEWIS: You must understand. The father will protect you...

*(Translation in the middle.)*

DROUILLARD: Understand, de father protect you, enh.

CHARBONNEAU: Stand under the father for protection.

SACAGAWEA: Understand the father's protection...

BIG HORSE: YOU must understand. The father is far away. Our enemies are near. The Teton Sioux are very powerful and take what they please.

LEWIS: No. Let us begin with trade, as brothers...

BIG HORSE: *(To the others)* No guns.

NOWAYKESUGGA: What's the point?

*(The Otos start to exit. Lewis cuts them off.)*

LEWIS: *(Signing "Stay")* No! Please.

*(Lewis signs "Peace" to Sacagawea. She approaches the Otos.)*

BIG HORSE: *(to the Sac.)* You've been with these men. What do you think?

SACAGAWEA: Captain Lewis, the beloved one, and Captain Clark... they have been very good to me. Good to my son. They treat me like a true sister and my son like a nephew. I believe they are as many as the stars in the sky... and they all have guns. It is best to make peace.

*(The Otos confer.)*

BIG HORSE: Tell him... good ... We'll find the spot on the river to set a trading post.

*(They exit)*

SACAGAWEA: *(to Lewis)* You see. You made peace.

*(Rain sound starts. Grows.)*

GASS: Rain. *(He slaps his face)* Even that doesn't keep the mosquitoes off.

*(Lights shift. The rain pounds. A tiny tent. Lewis and Clark sit huddled together. Lewis is trying to write.)*

LEWIS: Drip!

CLARK: Where?

*(Lewis points straight up. Clark places his hat over the place to catch the drips.)*

LEWIS: Good. Now, where are we?

*(Clark reaches back up into his hat and gets out a scrap of paper.)*

CLARK: 44 degrees, 18 minutes and 22 seconds. Latitude. 100 degrees, 28 minutes and 13 seconds Longitude.

LEWIS: That can't be right. Drip!

*(Clark spots another drip and catches it in his hand.)*

CLARK: Switch.

*(They trade places, Lewis moving all his writing equipment to the place where Clark was standing a few inches*

*away. All must be done in the confines of their tiny tent. When they are in position, Clark still hovers over Lewis, and Lewis over the page.)*

LEWIS: Where?

*(Clark searches himself for the paper. It takes a while. He finds it.)*

CLARK: 44 degrees, 18 minutes, 22 seconds latitude,  
100 degrees, 28 minutes, 13 seconds longitude.

LEWIS: That was yesterday.

CLARK: We didn't have a reading yesterday.

LEWIS: Check the log.

CLARK: Can't risk getting it wet.

LEWIS: Just to check. If we fall behind in recording we are opening the door to confusion. "The first step in knowledge is to know where you are."

CLARK: At least wait until the rain lets up.

*(They sit still. Listen to the rain. It's intense, constant, and endless.)*

LEWIS: Elk! You smell elk? Cooking?

CLARK: No. It's the rain.

LEWIS: No, I smell elk.

CLARK: When the men get wet they smell like elk.

*(Long pause. The feeling of waiting for weather.)*

LEWIS: I've got to check.

*(He digs out the journal and protecting it from rain, gives it to Clark. Clark records the entry and stows the journal.)*

LEWIS: Were the co-ordinates correct?

CLARK: Yes. I made the entry.

LEWIS: Good then.

CLARK: Eight hundred sixty six and four tenths miles from the mouth of the Missouri. We know where we are.

LEWIS: At least for a couple of days. I'll think I'll write some.

CLARK: Good, it's good you're writing again.

LEWIS: Some days the words refuse me.

CLARK: I give the statistics. When you write you give the breath of the land. I write an assessment, you write a love letter.

SHANNON: *(From off)* Cap'n Lewis! Cap'n Lewis!

*(Lights shift. Shannon and York run in. Lewis goes to them.)*

SHANNON: Up in the rafters with the barn owls, am I? Thought I was crazy?

YORK: *(to Lewis)* Sir, we have seen the beast...

LEWIS: A mammoth?

SHANNON: That what EATS mammoths! *(Yelling off)*  
I told you!

YORK: A mountain of roaring flesh. All five of us shot  
it direct to the heart...

LEWIS: What!?

YORK: The "bear nothing can kill."

SHANNON: If York hadn't pulled me up I'd be bear meat  
now.

YORK: As fast as it was on us, it was gone. We had a  
grandmother told us tales from Africa, of a lion that  
could eat a whole village, claws as long and sharp as  
the reaper's blade. I thought such things fantasies, until  
I saw this bear. In all its fury, it was a wondrous  
thing.

LEWIS: We will have occasion to wonder at it again.

YORK: We will be ready, sir.

LEWIS: We must always be ready.

*(York exits and Drouillard, carrying Lewis' Military dress  
regalia, enters.)*

DROUILLARD: Ready, sir? The one is called "Black  
Buffalo." The other is "Partisan."

LEWIS: And they represent the Teton Sioux?

DROUILLARD: As good as I can tell. Sign she is not always perfect clear.

CLARK: Looks like they have some five hundred warriors with them.

DROUILLARD: Dey can't be as bad as everyone say, or dey have horns an a tail.

*(LEWIS, CLARK, and Drouillard, address two Lakota/Teton Sioux, chiefs, BLACK BUFFALO and PARTISAN. Lewis is in the "father" speech. Drouillard "signs" along.)*

*(From their bearing it's apparent that the Teton Sioux, who have been listening, are amused and bemused by his efforts.)*

LEWIS: Who is the chief of all chiefs?

BOTH: I am.

*(They laugh amongst themselves.)*

PARTISAN: Who is your "chief of chiefs"?

BLACK BUFFALO: We are the Lakota. We are numbered as the stars. If the Father is so prosperous, what gifts did he send to his new Lakota allies?

DROUILLARD: He wants presents.

*(Lewis steps up to Black Buffalo, with a present of a red coat and hat in hand. A large shadow of warriors, dark, huge and numerous, is cast over the back wall.)*

BLACK BUFFALO: That's it?

PARTISAN: The Lakota receive twice this from fur traders. "The Beloved" should have better to offer.

LEWIS: What is he saying?

DROUILLARD: He's not happy with the presents.

CLARK: We can give them a flag.

LEWIS: After all, they are the Sioux. Make it clear. This is the highest honor we can give, and the greatest symbol of our friendship.

*(DROUILLARD signs as Clark hands the Sioux a flag. The two accept it together.)*

BLACK BUFFALO: So, this is supposed to be a symbol of friendship?

PARTISAN: Do you think we're simple? This is what you carry in war to frighten your enemies.

BLACK BUFFALO: Let's divide it up.

*(They laugh. They each take an end and start pulling the flag.)*

CLARK: They're mocking us.

*(The Flag rips and Clark grabs hold to stop them. The two pull on one end with Lewis and Clark on the other. The "Sioux" are playful. Lewis and Clark don't know what to do.)*

LEWIS: If you mock our gifts, we will take them back.